"Amore regolato"

Papal Nephews and Their Palaces in Eighteenth-Century Rome

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For Elisabeth Kieven

In 1753, Cardinal Neri Maria Corsini (1685–1770) was content.[1] His beloved gardens were among the largest and most admired in Rome. He indulged himself with his favorite things—his books and conversations with learned men, enjoying both (along with his *cioccolata vanigliata*) in great quantities. Scholars and *dilettanti* came from all over Europe to admire his library and his paintings. He had outlived his uncle, Pope Clement XII, with whom he had had a volatile relationship. Although the recent death of his brother saddened him, he doted on his nieces and nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews. Their marriages into some of the most important families in Rome were a source of great pride for the cardinal. He was grooming a young grandnephew for an ecclesiastical career that he hoped would outshine his own. But his greatest satisfaction probably came from the fact that after seventeen years of construction, his palace was finally complete. The substantial palazzo was undeniably one of the most magnificent in the city of Rome (Figure 1). Although it had taken some work, he had transformed a small sixteenth-century palace into an eighteenth-century showplace much in the way he himself had metamorphosed from an unsuccessful diplomat who was rarely paid on time—if at all—into a wealthy and powerful cardinal. Unlike generations of papal nephews before him, Neri could take added pride in the fact that he had done it all on his own, relying on his wit rather than access to the papal coffers.

Papal families had long had an extraordinary ability to shape the architectural and urban fabric of Rome. From the end of the Babylonian captivity, they embellished the city with sumptuous, jewellike chapels, splendid villas, and luxuriant gardens. *Piazze* were carved out on their orders to accentuate the visual prominence of their own architectural creations. They funded practical projects such as fountains and charitable organizations. Celebrations they sponsored spilled out into public spaces and their festival decorations and ephemeral architecture temporarily transformed areas of the city into sites of self-glorification. But the single most important architectural project of any papal family was its palace. Often grand in scale and always replete with splendor, the construction of these palazzi provided work for some of the most important architects and artists in early modern Italy.

These princely residences were always architectural manifestos of family ambition and political alliances. A new palace built by a papal nephew stood as the latest move in the brutally competitive game of *rappresentanza*, which consumed papal families, their architects and artists, as well as the papal treasury.

After the glorious residences built by seventeenth-century papal families like the Aldobrandini, Altieri, Barberini, Borghese, Chigi, Ludovisi, and Pamphili, the efforts of their eighteenth-century successors seem paltry both in magnificence and number. While Neri Corsini's accomplishment in building a family palace in Rome would have been ordinary by seventeenth-century standards, it was an excep-

Figure 1 Ferdinando Fuga, Palazzo Corsini, Rome, 1736–53, view of the palace from the Janiculum hill

tional event in the eighteenth-century papal city. Of the ten popes who reigned between 1689 and 1799, nearly all had nephews living in Rome during their pontificates, a factor that usually boded well for Rome's palace construction industry. Yet only three of these papal families built or bought residences in the Eternal City. The family of Benedict XIII Orsini (1725–30) already owned real estate before he was elevated to the throne of St. Peter.[2] Even wealthy papal families like that of Clement XIII Rezzonico (1758–69), who had both a cardinal and a princely nephew, never purchased a palace in Rome. Originally a Genovese family, the Rezzonico bought their way into the Venetian aristocracy in 1687 for 100,000 ducats, with an additional 60,000-ducat donation to charity.[3] Although finances certainly did not constrain this family, both nephews lived in temporary quarters in Rome during their uncle's eleven-year reign, one in an apartment in the papal palace on the Quirinal hill and the other in the Palazzo del Senato in a splendid apartment designed by Piranesi.[4] Like most other papal nephews in eighteenth-century Rome, the Rezzonico left no permanent domestic architectural legacy in the city.

The architectural marvel of the Roman palace quietly disappeared in the 1700s after shaping the Eternal City for centuries. Palazzo Corsini and Palazzo Braschi are the only two palaces built by papal families in eighteenth-century Rome. By examining these two palaces, as well as the Palazzo Albani—a palace purchased by a papal family—one can clarify the political exigencies and social circumstances that led to the extinction of this architectural form. These conditions had an impact on the design and building of each of these palaces and help explain why other eighteenth-century papal families did not have palazzi in Rome.[5]

In this essay, after briefly surveying where other papal relatives lived in the city in the 1700s, I turn to the Corsini family and their search for a Roman palace.[6] I then consider a papal bull that completely changed palace construction in *settecento* Rome and seriously hampered papal nephews' abilities as patrons of art and architecture. While Ludwig von Pastor and other historians of the papacy have studied the bull, precisely how it affected papal families and their architectural ambitions has not been explored. An examination of the Palazzo Albani, purchased by the nephews of Pope Clement XI—the author of this restrictive new policy—reveals how his family adapted their desire for a traditional palace to these new limitations. Further changes in the papal court (particularly a nasty financial scandal in 1730) served to make circumstances even more difficult for papal families and had a striking effect on the construction of the Corsini palace. I conclude with a discussion of the Palazzo Braschi, the last palace built by a papal family in the city of Rome.

Our understanding of the architectural, social, and cultural world of palaces in papal Rome has been greatly enriched in the last few years. Patricia Waddy has analyzed the seventeenth-century Roman palace as a space fundamentally shaped by ceremony, as a machine for calibrated courtesy and social display.[7] Patrizia Cavazzini has demonstrated that careful consideration needs to be given to such

essential questions as who built and lived in these buildings in the late 1500s and early 1600s.[8] Studies of wealth and the composition and definition of nobility in Rome have also enhanced the study of Roman palazzi.[9] The palace as a stage to display political allegiances and fealty to foreign powers has recently been explored.[10]

In this article I examine exceptions rather than the rule. A few eighteenth-century families, led by crafty papal nephews, managed to come up with clever solutions to the problem of creating representational palaces after the demise of nepotism. Redefining the three buildings under consideration as rarities, rather than cheap imitations, I show how money affected what they looked like and how they were built. Relying on both previously published material as well as new archival research, I attempt to answer the question of how the papal palace died out in the 1700s.

"Perfect Nepotism"

When Lorenzo Corsini (1652–1740) came to Rome in 1667 at the age of fifteen to study at the Collegio Romano, he stayed at his uncle's rented palace.[11] The uncle, Cardinal Neri Corsini senior (1624–1679), was instrumental in helping his nephew pursue a career in the Roman prelature. Lorenzo entered the priesthood at the late age of thirty-three after the death of his father, who had objected vehemently to his son's choice of profession. On completion of a degree in law at the University of Pisa, he became *tesoriere generale* in 1696 and gained intimate knowledge of the finances of the papal state.[12] After being elevated to the purple in 1706, Lorenzo and his household lived—as most cardinals did—in a series of rented palazzi in Rome, including Palazzo Sforza Cesarini, Palazzo Baccelli, Palazzo Manfroni on the Corso, and finally, from sometime between Easter 1710 and Easter 1711 until Lorenzo's election to the papacy,[13] the Palazzo Pamphili in Piazza Navona. His nephews, Bartolomeo and Neri junior, accompanied by their households and families, lived with him intermittently during this period.[14]

Lorenzo Corsini was elected the successor to the throne of St. Peter as Clement XII on 12 July 1730. Although widely quoted as saying "The higher I rose, the lower I descended. I was a wealthy *abate*, a comfortably well-off bishop, a poor cardinal, but I am a ruined pope," Corsini had vast financial resources.[15] Lorenzo was a part of a noble Florentine family that had played a role in governing the Tuscan city-state since the fourteenth century. The family was related to the Medici and other important Tuscan noble houses. Lorenzo's mother was a Strozzi, his grandmother a Machiavelli. The Corsini made their fortunes in the silk and wool trade, through advantageous marriages, and by setting up an international bank in England in the seventeenth century. In the 1600s, they increased their social status through the purchase of feudal lands in the Papal States, which had been raised to marquisates by Urban VIII.[16] The family had also been connected to the Roman prelature for centuries; by the seventeenth century, it could boast three cardinals.[17] In 1629, Urban VIII honored the clan when he canonized a member of the family, Andrea Corsini (1301–1374). But Lorenzo Corsini was probably thinking much more about the future than the past as the fireworks and festivities exploded on the hills of Florence to celebrate his election. As pope, he inherited a sovereign state on the edge of bankruptcy with an annual deficit of 120,000 scudi and a total debt of 60 million scudi, a situation he understood well from his days as papal treasurer.[18]

While Lorenzo was poring over the papal account books, his nephews were also thinking about money. Like papal nephews since the time of Sixtus IV della Rovere, the Corsini brothers Neri (1685–1770) and Bartolomeo (1683–1752) wanted a palace in Rome.[19] Other privileges traditionally associated with papal largesse were quickly heaped upon the family. Neri was tonsured eleven days after his uncle's election and less than a month later, on 14 August 1730, he was made a cardinal *in pectore* by Clement XII, narrowly beating the record set by Paul V Borghese, who elevated his nephew Scipione from secular prince to cardinal in one month.[20] The brothers had reason to hope that their uncle would help them secure a palace that would be large, magnificent, and provide spaces for all members of the family, present and future.

Neri and Bartolomeo were seemingly the perfect papal nephews. One was a secular prince and the other a cardinal. According to a formula proposed in a seventeenth-century Roman manuscript, the combination of a cardinal nephew and a "*prencipe nepote*" equals "*nipotismo perfetto*" in a papal family.[21] However, this recipe for perfection did not hold true for the Corsini family. Lorenzo and Neri had such a strained relationship that Lorenzo kicked his nephew out of his house in July 1728.[22] Bartolomeo, undoubtedly frustrated by the uncertainty of the succession of the Medici line in Tuscany and the prospects for his family in Florence, aligned himself with Carlo Borbone, the son of Elisabetta Farnese and Philip V of Spain, whom he was to serve as a most trusted advisor from Carlo's arrival in Florence in 1731 until Bartolomeo's death in 1752. Bartolomeo, who later became viceroy of Sicily, was literally on Carlo's righthand side in 1735 when he was crowned King of Two Sicilies in the cathedral of Palermo. By aligning himself with a foreign power that bordered the Papal States directly south of Rome, Bartolomeo,

along with his client Carlo, was watched with a wary eye by the papal court. Clement XII did not officially recognize Carlo as king until 1738, a situation that undoubtedly created further familial disharmony.

The brothers' resentment of their uncle apparently ran deep and did not dissipate with Clement's death in 1740. Soon thereafter, in the ultimate act of *damnatio memoriae*, Neri took two portraits of his uncle as a cardinal that hung in the family villa outside Florence and had the faces repainted, transforming the paintings into likenesses of other cardinals who were members of the family.[23]

After their uncle's *possesso*, Bartolomeo returned to Naples and Neri moved into an apartment in the Palazzo Quirinale. The rest of the family returned to the rented Palazzo Pamphili.[24] The brothers then began to consider real-estate possibilities in the city of Rome. Bartolomeo was quite clear in his letters about what mattered to the family in looking for a palace. For him, important factors included the grandeur of the stairs and the courtyard, the comfortable disposition of apartments, and the absence of commercial establishments on the ground floor. The family considered several palaces in Rome, including the Palazzo Manfroni on the Corso, which their uncle rented from 1708 to 1711.[25] Bartolomeo rejected the building, writing that it was "a fine palace for a private person but it could never be called a palace for nephews of a pope," and making clear that even though he had only lived in Rome for a few months at a time, he had developed unambiguous criteria for what was and was not architecturally appropriate for a papal family.[26]

Bartolomeo then suggested that the family consider expanding the palace that he already owned in Piazza Fiammetta. This property, which during the sixteenth century was owned by a Spanish family, the Ruiz, was purchased in 1647 by another branch of the Corsini family that died out in 1723, leaving the property to Bartolomeo.[27] Consisting of two floors and a mezzanine attic story with a long *androne* opening onto a courtyard, the palace had been slowly enlarged throughout the *seicento* with the purchase of adjacent buildings (Figure 2). While Bartolomeo considered this palace seriously, the wide-ranging alterations and expansions that were deemed necessary to make it an appropriate home for his family could not have been carried out because of the limited availability of property for sale in the piazza. The idea was soon rejected. Other palaces were considered and discarded; the search dragged on.[28]

Unfortunately for the brothers, by the time they began to shop for real estate in 1730, the system that had provided financing for such purchases by papal nephews no longer existed. The papal court began to entertain the idea of ending nepotism in the conclave of 1691 where there was open

Figure 2 At right, attributed to Bartolomeo Ammanati, Palazzo Ruiz-Corsini, Rome, sixteenth century with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century additions

discussion of suppressing the practice by means of a papal constitution.[29] Immediately after the conclave, the new pope, Innocent XII Pignatelli, formed a committee to examine the system of nepotism. Its findings detailed the staggering sums of money that popes lavished on their families in the seventeenth century. The commission concluded that from Camera Apostolica funds alone Paul V Borghese's nephews received 260,000 scudi, Urban VIII Barberini's 1,700,000, Innocent X Pamphili's 1,400,000, Alexander VII Chigi's 900,000, Clement X Altieri's 1,200,000, and Alexander VIII Ottoboni's 700,000 scudi.[30]

Despite the opposition of several cardinals—Altieri and Ottoboni among them—on 22 June 1692 the bull *Romanum decet pontificem* was finalized and became papal law.[31] Written by Cardinal Gianfrancesco Albani, later Pope Clement XI, the document made extraordinary provisions to end papal nepotism and was largely a reaction to the lavish spending on his family by the previous pope, Alexander VIII Ottoboni. The bull was both comprehensive and harsh.

Figure 3 Giuseppe Vasi, Palazzo Albani del Drago, Rome, 1752, engraving from *Roma antica e moderna*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1752), pl. XLIV.

The first clause states that papal brothers, nephews, any other family members, or any other people associated with the pope are to receive no monies, benefices, *monti* shares, offices that are for sale, nor the profits from offices, revenues generated by the papacy, credits owed to the papal treasury, or gifts of any kind.[32] The edict further specifies that no money is to be given to relatives or friends of the pope from the Datary, the Cancelleria Apostolica, the funds of the Secretary of Briefs, ecclesiastical spoils, any portion of the monies used to run the Apostolic Palaces, or from any other title that comes with or without benefits, direct or indirect.[33] The sources of income mentioned in these two provisions amount to a checklist that every papal nephew from the time of Sixtus IV della Rovere would have used to gain funds for himself and his family. The document goes on to state that if a brother, nephew, relative, or associate is destitute, the pope may ease his poverty in the same way he would alleviate the neediness of any poor person.[34] The fourth clause stipulates that if a papal nephew, brother, relative, or associate becomes a cardinal he is allowed an annual salary of no more than 12,000 scudi total from all of his ecclesiastical benefices and lands.[35] At least at face value, the *Romanum decet pontificem* ended papal nepotism and endangered the once-assured right of papal families to build palaces and to undertake other artistic endeavors in Rome.

Regia vs. *Strada*: The Palazzo Albani

It is not evident how efficaciously the bull was first administered. Clement XI Albani (1700–21), who authored the decree when he was a cardinal, nonetheless felt obliged to provide his nephews with an adequate residence in Rome when he became pope.[36] The Palazzo Albani del Drago on the via Felice (the modern-day via delle Quattro Fontane) offered a relatively modest home for the pope's three nephews, don Carlo (1687–1724), Alessandro (1692–1779), and Cardinal Annibale (1682–1751) (Figure 3).[37] After considering and rejecting the Palazzo Barberini ai Giubbonari and the Palazzo Carpegna, the Albani family settled on the Palazzo Nerli in 1719, nearly twenty years into Clement XI's reign. Built by Domenico Fontana for the Mattei family in the late 1500s, the palace later belonged to Cardinal Cammillo Massimo. The palazzo was neither large nor in a particularly fashionable part of town. Its main attraction seems to have been that the Albani anticipated that Cardinal Nerli, Clement's secretary of state, would leave them the palace in his will. Instead, on his death in 1708 he left it to the hospital of Santa Maria della Pietà dei Poveri Dementi, a charitable hospice devoted to the care of the destitute insane. Undeterred, after eleven years of wrangling, the Albani brothers managed to purchase the palazzo in 1719 from the nuns of Santa Maria della Pietà for the low price of 23,000 scudi, 2,000 less than Nerli paid when he purchased the building forty years earlier.[38] The value of the palace did not depreciate over the course of these four decades. Why the Albani were able to pay such a low price remains a mystery and bears further investigation.[39]

Immediately after buying the palace, the Albani sought to expand their exiguous property and enlarge their modest palazzo. These attempts were thwarted by a number of

Figure 4 G. B. Nolli, plan of Rome, 1748, engraving. This detail shows the Palazzo Albani del Drago, which is marked "190" (see center right)

forces. Surrounded by Carmelite and Trinitarian nuns, as well as the Jesuit novitiates at Sant'Andrea across the street, the property offered few possibilities for expansion (Figure 4). Powerful neighbors like the Barberini family and the pope himself (the Quirinal gardens sit just across the strada Pia) further limited the prospects of adding on to the property. Ten months after the sale of Nerli's palace, Carlo Albani bought the "*palazetto*" next door, which was part of the original Maffei property, for 9,500 scudi.[40] Years later, the Albani acquired two small properties, both of which are described as "*casini*" in their deeds.[41] Both were quite a distance away from the palace itself.

Attempts at expanding the Albani palace vertically, by adding another floor to the two-story structure, proved difficult; height restrictions existed to protect the *clausura* of the nuns of S. Teresa alle Quattro Fontane. These Carmelite sisters possessed both legal documents and a very old boundary wall to assert their rights. Efforts to renovate the Palazzo Albani resulted in legal action. For two years after they purchased the palace, the Albani were constrained from undertaking any building at all because of a lawsuit filed by the nuns, a suit that finally concluded in October 1721, six months after Clement XI's death.[42]

After paying the nuns 8,000 scudi in cash, the family was finally able to finish tearing down an apartment on the east end of the palace, making space for a new staircase and a *salone*. The palace already had a double-ramp staircase suitable for visitors' use. It ran from the *cortile* to the *piano nobile*, where it opened onto a loggia that then led to apartments overlooking the via Felice. But the Albani clearly deemed it too modest to support their social ambitions. Essential status symbols in palaces throughout Europe in the early modern period, staircases were one of the central elements in palazzi in early modern Rome.[43] The ceremony and protocol associated with the papal court dictated a particular importance for stairways in the palaces of papal nephews. Ambassadors, cardinals, distinguished guests, court officials, and visiting dignitaries all ascended the staircase and were greeted by their host either on the stairs or soon afterward in a reception room, depending on the visitor's rank. Although Clement XI was dead by the time work began on the new staircase, the Albani clearly wanted to build the largest and most magnificent stairs they possibly could and were willing to seek legal recourse to do so. Although the architect could only create windows that allowed light deemed "necessary" according to the April 1721 agreement reached with the sisters, the finished staircase was imposing.[44] While the switchback ramps are relatively narrow, the staircase is quite tall. Both the courtyard and the staircase were embellished with antiquities. This strategy was inexpensive but yielded impressive results.[45] Ancient busts greeted visitors in the *cortile* and the staircase was studded with bas reliefs, inscriptions, and mosaics. The two *stipiti* that surrounded the doorways on the landing of the *piano nobile* were luxurious *pavonazzetto*, a white marble with rich purple veins quarried only in antiquity, a particularly appropriate choice for a palace that was home to two cardinals.[46] Apartments for Carlo and Cardinal Annibale were arranged on the *piano nobile*, where the brothers shared the new "*gran sala*" or *salone*. These apartments included golden *giallo antico* marble door surrounds. The new *salone* also provided access to Cardinal Alessandro's apartment on the *secondo piano*, which was filled with antiquities and housed his rich library.

Although a new staircase and *salone* added to the prestige of their palace, a lack of funds and the presence of powerful neighbors conspired to quash the family's desire to construct a princely *regia*. Since their political and economic situation prevented them from investing the capital necessary to build a grand, unified palace, the Albani did something else. Through the accumulation of properties on the via Felice and other areas adjacent to the street, the Albani set about creating a *strada* Albani.[47] By constructing a neigh-

borhood all their own, the Albani followed a different mode of architectural *rappresentanza* than that enshrined nearby at Palazzo Barberini.

The Barberini, a family of humble origins, had heralded their arrival by locating Bernini's Triton fountain in the center of the piazza. The smaller Bee Fountain was placed at the northwest corner of the square, where it directed visitors' attention down the strada Felice, past the main entrance of the Palazzo Barberini, and on to the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. The Barberini clan's use of fountains and a piazza to show off their towering palazzo situated on Sixtus V's strada Felice was quite different from the Albani's attempt to mark their presence through a collection of humbler buildings lining the same street. Rather than build a single, massive palazzo as had a host of papal families, the Albani seem to have turned for inspiration to earlier examples, like the area that surrounded the Palazzo Farnese and Leo X Medici's urban interventions in the city.[48]

The three Albani brothers faced a number of challenges. They had to spend nineteen years shopping for a palace, a very long period of time for a papal family. The precarious health and advanced age of most popes demanded that papal families act swiftly. Although Clement XI Albani was a youthful fifty-one-year-old when he was elected in 1700, his nephews certainly realized that they could not allow too much time to pass if they wanted to undertake major expenditures. The Albani hoped that they would be willed the Palazzo Nerli; when they were not, they secured the palace at a very advantageous price.[49]

Constrained by limited funds, legal difficulties, and existing buildings, the Albani brothers nonetheless managed to construct an impressive if narrow staircase, apartments for each member of the family, and their own neighborhood. Though less grand in their accomplishments than *seicento* papal families like the Barberini, the Albani, while working within the restrictions of the antinepotism law, achieved a great deal.

"Amore regolato"

The *Romanum decet pontificem* might have been largely ignored by successive popes and the papal court, and the *nipoti* could have gone about business as usual, had it not been for the papacy of Benedict XIII Orsini (1724–30). Benedict announced early on in his reign that he did not wish to concern himself with the secular business of the papacy. He left governing up to his trusted ancillary, Niccolò Coscia. Coscia quickly proved himself to be spectacularly corrupt. He sold offices, accepted cash gifts and other presents, and generally took every opportunity he could to avail himself of the papal coffers. Within a year of the election of his patron, he was rumored to have amassed a fortune of 2,000,000 scudi. Adept at limiting access to the pope, and in securing monopolies on sundries like shoe leather and soap, he crushed anyone who dared criticize his spending. When his patron died in 1730, Coscia fled the Vatican in a covered litter. The palace where he took refuge was then attacked by a mob, prompting him to flee the Papal States in disguise.

One of Clement XII Corsini's first actions as pope was to set up a commission to look into the Coscia scandal. Coscia was swiftly sentenced to ten years imprisonment in the Castel Sant'Angelo, restitution of 400,000 scudi, payment of a 100,000-scudi fine, forfeit of all of his ecclesiastical benefices, and excommunication.[50]

The Coscia scandal rendered the endangered practice of nepotism extinct. Papal finances, precarious at best in the 1600s, were utterly compromised by the early 1700s. The papacy was bankrupt, owing in part to the profligate largesse of seventeenth-century popes. The splendor of Baroque Rome had helped to destroy the papal treasury. A series of conflicts, from the War of Spanish Succession (1701–14) to the War of Polish Succession (1733–35), devastated the papacy, which lost both territory and prestige in these political skirmishes. Eighteenth-century popes keenly understood this disastrous financial situation. Both their actions and their unrealized plans demonstrate that they believed that it could be improved or at least that bankruptcy could be forestalled. Contemporary documents, like Lione Pascoli's *Testamento di un Accademico fiorentino in cui con nuovi e ben fondati principi si fanno vari e diversi progetti per stabilire un ben regolato commercio nello stato della Chiesa, e per aumentare notabilmente le rendite della Camera* . . . , which circulated in manuscript form in the 1722 conclave, advocated a remarkably detailed plan to reform the finances of the papal government and "*abbelir Roma*" simultaneously.[51] A number of projects designed to stimulate the papal economy were launched, from the reintroduction of the lottery to the creation of free ports to encourage trade. Cutting expenses was also a necessary step toward salvaging the papal treasury.

One of the largest single costs in any pope's budget was maintenance of the papal *famiglia*, or household, which consisted of both blood relatives and paid retainers. Eighteenth-century popes used a number of different strategies to curtail these expenses. The simplest solution was for a new pope to prevent his relatives from coming to Rome. On becoming pope in 1740, Benedict XIV Lambertini (1740–58), for instance, sent word to his nephew Egano in

Bologna that he should come to the papal capital only when summoned. Increasingly frustrated, Egano waited eighteen years for an invitation that never came.

Neri Corsini would have been especially aware of the Coscia scandal, as he was a member of the commission that meted out the sentence. Despite this, he and his brother Bartolomeo still believed that they would receive a substantial contribution from their uncle to buy a palace. The growing bitterness that marred Clement's relationship with his nephews was glossed over during his pontificate. One chronicler writing early in Clement's reign noted the "*amore regolato*" the pope had for his nephews.[52] Because the family was the richest in Florence, the chronicle continues, the pope would contribute "*splendore esterno*" to the family, but nothing more.

While rancor within the family was kept out of print, it was frequently the subject of family letters. Neri and Bartolomeo's correspondence with each other is filled with acidic discussions of their uncle and his attempts to block their building schemes. Neri was provided with, on average, 630 scudi a year for his maintenance as a cardinal, a sum that did not even cover his household expenses.[53] From the 1540s to the 1680s, a cardinal nephew could expect a large income, rarely less than 30,000 scudi a year and often more than 100,000 scudi.[54] By comparison, Neri's support was pitiful. It paled in comparison even to the relatively low amount stipulated by the anti-nepotism law: 12,000 scudi per annum.

According to letters between the two brothers, Bartolomeo Corsini's eldest son Filippo was the representative of the family selected to approach the pope about making a contribution for the purchase of a palace. He met with little success. Bartolomeo caustically wrote to Filippo that he hoped the pope would find a way to give them something without "aggravating his conscience."[55] It seems that his principles only allowed him to give the brothers 10,000 scudi in 1735. This paltry sum, according to Neri, served only to help erase previously accumulated debts.[56] Neri and Bartolomeo's anger over Clement's continued unwillingness to give them money to buy or build a palace was undoubtedly fueled by the fact that the family had supported their uncle's large household and luxurious lifestyle as he worked his way up through the ecclesiastical ranks.[57] The pope then went on to reject the family's request for funding from the Camera Apostolica and deny the brothers credit to build a palace.[58]

In a letter to his brother written sometime near Christmas 1737, Neri explained to Bartolomeo that Clement XII planned to spend 200,000 scudi to complete such projects in the city as the portico of S.M. Maggiore and the Trevi Fountain. Neri concluded bitterly, "As for other new things, he leaves [these] to others in the household."[59] This letter was penned just after the brothers learned that the pope had not given them a Christmas present that year.[60] There is further evidence that the Corsini received very little, if any, money from their uncle.

In the early modern period, buying land in the Roman *campagna* was one if not the chief means for wealthy Roman families to invest their money. Accordingly, papal families typically had extensive properties in the countryside beyond the city gates. The Corsini, who were the largest landholders in the *campagna* among eighteenth-century papal families, had only three *castelli* (fiefs), while the families of popes who reigned in the 1600s claimed considerably more property. The Borghese had thirty-two *castelli*, the Pamphili twelve, and the Barberini-Colonna eleven.[61]

Not only do family letters and other documents make clear that the brothers obtained very little money from their uncle and the resources of the Papal States, they also reveal that the pope's justification for his parsimoniousness was the bull. Bartolomeo wrote his son on 3 September 1735 about the status of financing to buy a palace. This letter includes the only discussion, as far as I know, of the reasons why Clement XII turned down his family's requests to subsidize a palace. Bartolomeo is clearly responding to Filippo's description of yet another of his failed attempts to secure money from Clement. "I suppose [then] that the Pope will not have difficulty in making the Camera [Apostolica] pay, since he has the example of the two nephews of Clement XI, a literal and rigid observer of the noted Bull, and [our request] would be a bagatelle in comparison to the others."[62] Not only does Bartolomeo indicate that Clement used the bull as a reason for not contributing to the family's palace expenditure, but he also attacks his uncle's rationale for applying the bull to his family. Clement XI Albani, Bartolomeo claims, even though he was a "literal and rigid observer of the noted bull," gave his nephews money. Further evidence of Clement XII's invocation of the bull comes from a document written by Giovanni Bottari (1689–1775), a trusted Corsini family retainer, to an unnamed "Eccelenza," in which he evaluated the chances of each cardinal going into the 1740 conclave.[63] The first cardinal he discusses is Lorenzo Altieri, who, he says, "being Roman, from a princely house, and rich, could fare well. Because it is very evident that due to the extreme meagerness of the Pontifical finances, and for the noted *Bolla Innocenziana* [that is, the *Romanum decet pontificem*], that ties the hands of the popes, we need from this point on to choose cardinals from rich families, or [ones that will] behave themselves [in such a way] that their

Figure 5 Hyacinthe Rigaud, portrait of Neri Corsini, 1710, oil on canvas, Galleria Corsini, Florence

nephews [will] cut a miserable figure if they do not want [them] to rob or sell themselves to foreign princes."[64] That Bottari mentions the bull at the beginning of his report points to its importance at the time he was writing. His emphasis on the fact that the bull "ties the hands of the popes" indicates that the *Romanum decet pontificem* had altered the papal court as well as the financial circumstances of papal relatives.

Begging, Borrowing, and Stealing

After several years of repeated attempts and growing acrimoniousness, the brothers had received nothing. As Elisabeth Kieven has pointed out, the pope gave no money toward the building of the palace they eventually erected.[65] This leaves the question of how the brothers financed the purchase of a palace. They proved to be wily and creative financiers. Like the members of most other papal families, the brothers were extremely hesitant to spend any inheritance on buying or building a palace. Therefore, the money had to come from outside the family. Neri and Bartolomeo accumulated funds from three main sources.[66] Before becoming a papal nephew and a cardinal, Neri Corsini was a diplomat. Although the only real success of Neri's career as an envoy was a gorgeous portrait in which he wears gossamer silks and a cascading wig, painted by Hyacinthe Rigaud in Paris during yet another round of doomed negotiations for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, he decided to return to this profession in order to finance a Roman palace (Figure 5). Neri's first step was to become the protector of the king of Portugal.[67] A protector was a cardinal who promoted the interests of a religious order, nation, or kingdom within the papal court.[68] Cardinal protectors were typically given a stipend by the foreign power or entity they represented.

Neri chose well in Portugal; King John V was the richest man in Europe. Fifteen percent of every piece of gold or diamond that came out of the mines of the Portuguese colony Brazil went directly into his coffers. Neri worked tirelessly for John to get the Portuguese a crown cardinal

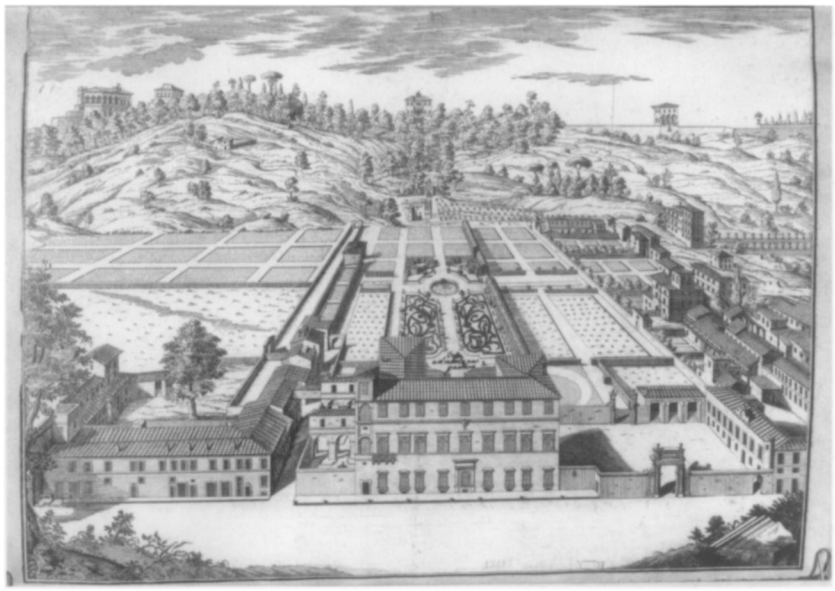

Figure 6 Anonymous, Palazzo Riario, late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, engraving

and thereby to revive Portuguese diplomatic status in the papal court, placing them on a par with the other major Catholic monarchies of France, Austria, and Spain.[69] Although he was nominated for the post in 1739, Neri's uncle did not allow him to become protector during his reign. Benedict XIV, Clement XII's successor, was the one who finally made him protector of the Portuguese crown. Neri announced his new position by adding the Portuguese royal arms to the façade of his palace and by hanging portraits of the king and queen in his *stanza nobile d'udienza* along with a portrait of his uncle and the reigning pope.[70]

Being the Portuguese protector was certainly lucrative, and Neri's household accounts as well as family letters make it clear that the main purpose of assuming the post was to get money to build a palace for the family in Rome.[71] "I think it is very prudent not to embark on extraordinary expenses *senza biscotto*," Bartolomeo wrote Filippo in 1741, "and I imagine that what you expect from them [the Portuguese] will not be equivalent to the fleet of Brazil and Peru, [but] it will be enough for the gardens and for the building, and for the dowries."[72] It was a profitable enterprise; Neri's household accounts record that he took in about 3,780 scudi in official income from 1739 to 1744 for being a cardinal. One can see how little money this was by noting that in the first six months of Clement XII's papacy it cost more than 630 scudi just to dress the family.[73] In that same period, 1739 to 1744, Neri received 74,580 scudi from the Portuguese as protector.[74] Of this, he spent nearly all—66,677 scudi—on building projects. Neri's *maestro di camera* set up a double-entry bookkeeping system to track the Portuguese money.[75] Two columns recorded monies paid in and out respectively on building projects, evidence that the main purpose of being a protector was to get construction funds.

The second way the family got money was through bribery. Clement XIII Rezzonico (1758–69) owed his elevation to the cardinalate to Neri, who intervened on his behalf with Clement XII. Carlo Rezzonico's cardinal's hat, which had been earmarked for Daniele Dolfin, was probably purchased from Neri for 30,000 scudi.[76] The family letters indicate that Bartolomeo Corsini considered Rezzonico to be in Neri's debt but never say directly that he received any kind of payment from the Venetian nobleman.[77] However, the rumor that Neri had accepted a bribe circulated for years after Rezzonico became a cardinal in 1737, a year in which Neri was desperate for money.[78] Payment was the Rezzonico family's preferred means for gaining social status. Fifty years before Carlo Rezzonico supposedly bought his cardinal's hat, his family bought their way into the Venetian aristocracy. Neri would also have been following in a time-honored tradition; Clement XI's nephew, Cardinal Alessandro Albani, peddled everything from archeological finds to political information about the house of Hanover to any buyer he could find.[79]

The third source of money was embezzlement. Neri was accused in private by Benedict XIV (1740–58) of taking 300,000 scudi in Camera Apostolica funds sometime near the end of his uncle's life or just after his death.[80]

This unusual financing had a role to play in both how the brothers built their palace and in deciding what it would look like. On 12 May 1736, Bartolomeo and Neri signed a contract to buy the Palazzo Riario (Figure 6). Bartolomeo examined the floor plans of the palace by studying drawings

Figure 7 Detail of the Nolli plan of Rome, 1748. The number 1210 indicates the courtyards of the Palazzo Corsini; 1211 marks the Villa Farnese; 705 marks the Palazzo Farnese across the Tiber. The Villa Corsini is in the lower left-hand corner of the map. (The numbers have been enhanced for greater legibility.)

that were sent to him in Naples.[81] The palace had been built in the sixteenth century by Cardinal Raffaele Riario (1451–1521), nephew of Pope Sixtus IV della Rovere.[82] It had its drawbacks; in Neri's opinion, the palazzo was not very commodious and its owner, Duke Nicola Riario Sforza, was a hard bargainer.[83] The palace and its property did offer several attractive features. The size of the property was vast in Roman terms and it was located not far from the family villa just outside the Porta di S. Pancrazio (Figure 7). The palace was also in close proximity to the traditional Florentine quarter of the city. Additionally, the property had a connection to Carlo III Borbone (Bartolomeo Corsini's patron) and his holdings in the city. The Villa Farnesina that belonged to him was right across the street, and the Palazzo Farnese was directly across the Tiber.

Duke Riario asked a high price, mistakenly believing that the pope would be contributing to the purchase of the palace.[84] The contract for the sale stipulated that 70,000 scudi were to be paid over eighteen years with a first payment of 20,000 scudi.[85] Desperation over how to pay for the palace set in almost immediately. In addition to possibly accepting a bribe from Rezzonico, Neri was forced into the undignified position of having to borrow money. This embarrassment was reported in the 5 April 1737 edition of the *Diario ordinario*, the tiny newspaper that chronicled the papal court.

Achieving "External Splendor"

Ferdinando Fuga (1699–1781), the Florentine architect who served Clement XII and Benedict XIV as architect of the *palazzi apostolici*, began drafting plans for the renovations of the palace (Figure 8).[86] He would ultimately oversee almost all the construction. Since Fuga also worked for Carlo Borbone, his commutes between Naples and Rome allowed him to consult directly with both Neri and Bartolomeo while he was erecting the palace.[87] At first, the family undertook no major renovating or construction; they simply painted the building and moved in their furniture and other possessions (Figure 9). The Corsini finally took up residence in July 1738 after a month spent moving cartloads of belongings from the Pamphili palace in the Piazza Navona.[88]

After the family settled into their new home, Neri Corsini started working on the huge garden behind it, a sweep of rising land that extended to the Aurelian walls.[89]

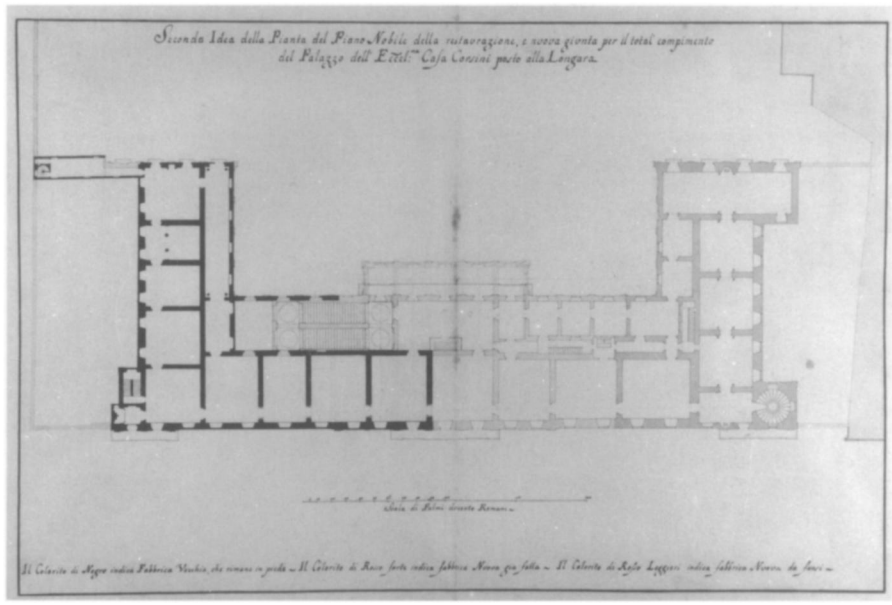

Figure 8 Ferdinando Fuga, "*seconda idea*" for the reconstruction of the *piano nobile* of the Palazzo Corsini, ca. 1746–48. The "*prima idea*" in the Archivio Corsini in Florence shows the staircase wing as it was built. FN 1220, Gabinetto delle Stampe

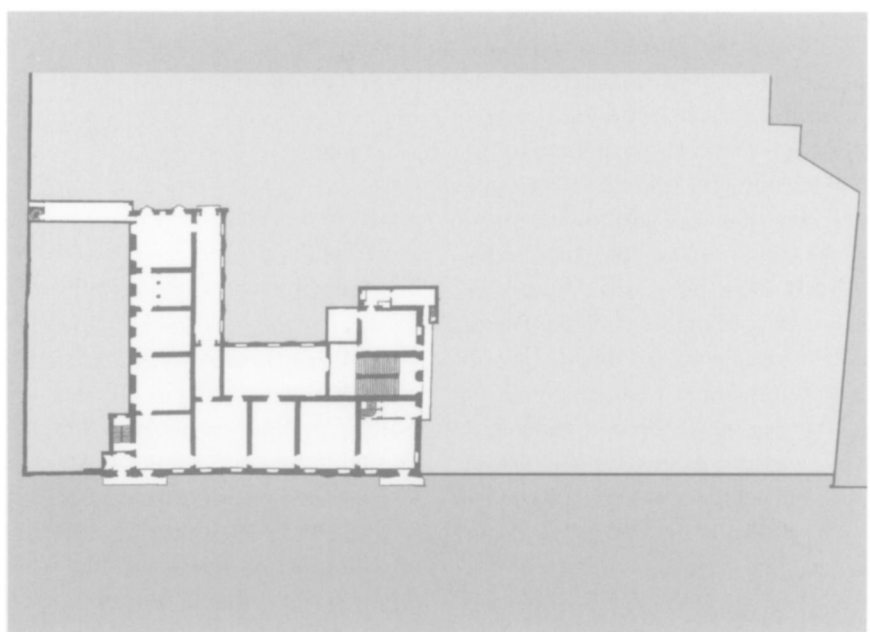

Figure 9 Reconstruction of the Palazzo Corsini, Rome, in 1738, based on Ignazio Brocchi's 1738 ground plans of the palace, Cart. Roma, Archivio Corsini, Florence

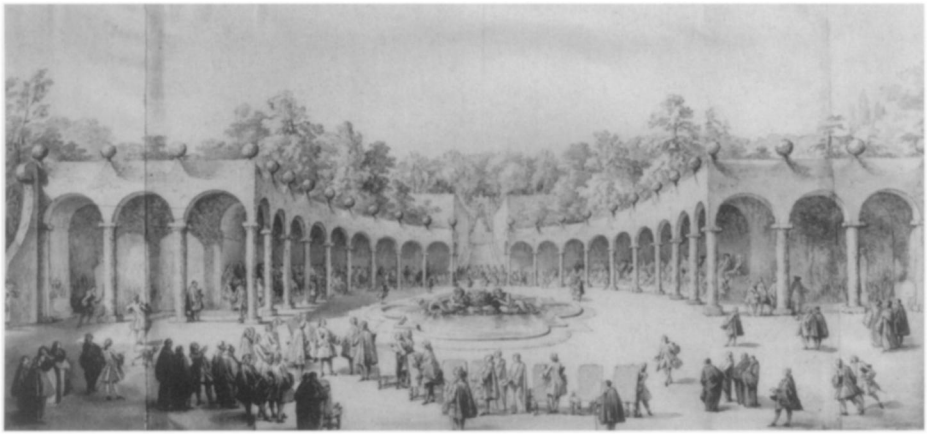

Figure 10 Francesco Panini, *Meeting of the Accademia dei Quirini in the Garden of the Corsini Palace*, ca. 1750, black chalk and ink with watercolor on paper, FN 49625, Gabinetto delle Stampe, Rome

This lush site was groomed into a French parterre, an English-style garden, a theater made of hedges, fountains, and a labyrinth, all tended by a French gardener who lived in his own house adjacent to the palace (Figure 10).[90] Over time, the Corsini spent at least 14,159 scudi to buy various properties and *orti* in order to enlarge the grounds. The lavish scale and design of the grounds reflects Neri's tastes. Gardens were one of the cardinal's passions; he had visited many of the most important examples in Europe on his travels as a young diplomat in the service of the Medici.

The family slowly continued to work on the palace. Progress became more vigorous in 1740 when funds from the king of Portugal began to arrive. Neri moved into the palace after the death of Clement XII. His apartment on the *piano nobile* included a *salone* at the top of the stairs of the old palace and two *anticamere*. Following these rooms was his *camera contigua alla cappella* and his cardinal's chapel outfitted with a Corrado Giaquinto fresco and an altar made from fragments of a *giallo antico* column that stood in the courtyard of the palace when it was purchased. He also had two audience chambers, as was common from the second half of the seventeenth century onward. His apartment included a room called the alcove and a cabinet, as well as a gallery.[91] There was a *zampanaro*, or representational bed, in the alcove.[92] Screened by a pair of columns, the room where the *zampanaro* stood was connected by a private staircase to a room on the mezzanine where the cardinal actually slept (Figure 11).[93] Bartolomeo's son Filippo and Bartolomeo's wife lived upstairs on the *secondo piano nobile*.[94] The old Riario stair serviced all of these apartments.

After living in somewhat cramped conditions for six years, in 1744 the family purchased more property to the north of the palace and began demolitions for the construction of a new wing, known as the *braccio nuovo* (Figure 12).[95] This was the first of three major stages of building that expanded the palace. When the first new part of the

Figure 11 Palazzo Corsini, Rome, south elevation. The two small square windows open onto the room where Neri Corsini slept, on the mezzanine between the *piano nobile* and the second floor

residence was built, several buildings the family owned and rented out to generate money were razed.[96] New property was also purchased to the west. Within two years, the *braccio* was complete. The library that was housed on the ground floor of the palace was moved into the *piano nobile* of the new wing where it occupied seven rooms.[97] Ottavia Strozzi, Filippo Corsini's wife, moved into a new apartment on the *secondo piano* above the library. Both the apartment and the library were accessible via a circular staircase made of travertine. This staircase allowed the *braccio nuovo* to function independently until it could be connected to the *braccio vecchio*. Although the circular staircase in this new wing was simple, its risers were crafted from single slices of travertine rather than smaller pieces cobbled together. This indicates that it was intended to be more than a service stair. Its design hearkens back to the circular staircases at the Vatican and Quirinal palaces, as well as the one in the Palazzo Corsini in Florence. The staircase was suitable for social use; when a visitor came to see the library, for instance, he

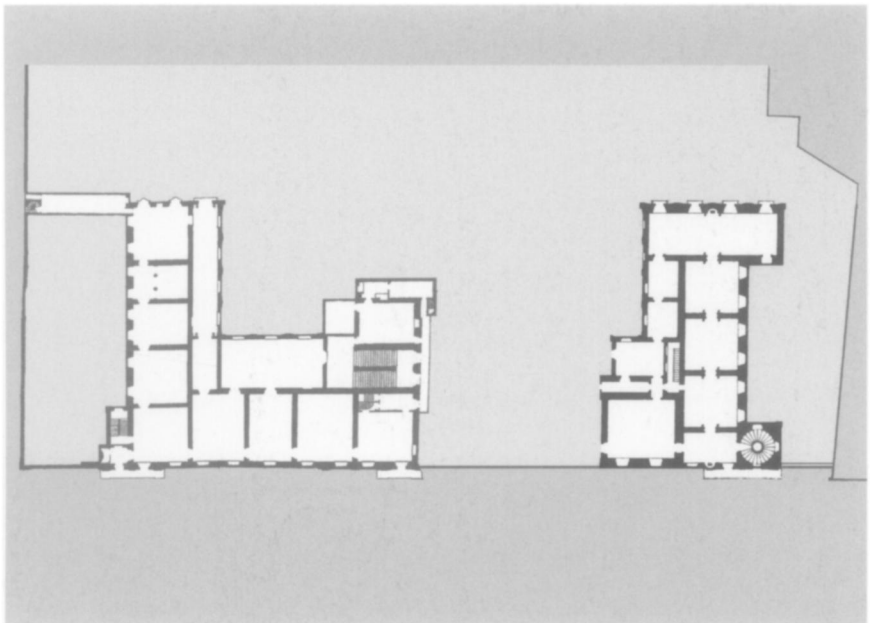

Figure 12 Reconstruction of the Palazzo Corsini in 1744–46, based on Fuga's "*seconda idea*," ca. 1746–48, FN 1220, Gabinetto delle Stampe, Rome, and Ignazio Brocchi's 1738 ground plans, Cart. Roma, Archivio Corsini, Florence

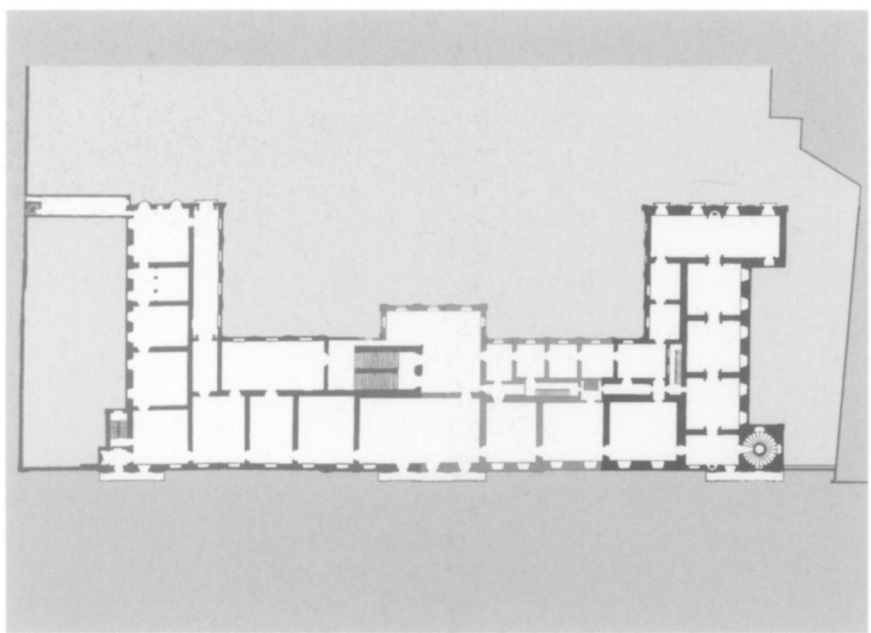

Figure 13 Reconstruction of the Palazzo Corsini in 1748–50, based on Fuga's "*prima idea*," ca. 1746–48, Cart. Roma, Archivio Corsini, Florence, and Brocchi's 1738 ground plans

or she could use this stair. The cost of building the new structure, exclusive of decoration and furnishing, came to just over 51,483 scudi.[98]

For two years, the *braccio vecchio* and the *braccio nuovo* were not connected and functioned like two separate palaces, although Fuga was making drawings for a connecting block and for a new staircase throughout this period. He recommenced work in 1748 and continued until 1750 when the central part of the palace that connects the two arms was completed for a total cost of just over 22,000 scudi (Figure 13).[99] This work resulted in the construction of a spacious vestibule with a balcony and a grand *salone* that was nearly identical to that in the Palazzo Corsini in Florence. A new apartment with five rooms was also created on the northwest side of the palazzo. The *salone* was then decorated with two baldachins announcing that the family could claim both a cardinal and a prince as members.[100] After the central part of the palace was built, the old Palazzo Riario staircase was still in use, although it is clear that both Neri and Fuga had plans for a new monumental stair (see Figure 13).[101] The underside of the central portion of the structure that connected the *braccio vecchio* and the *braccio*

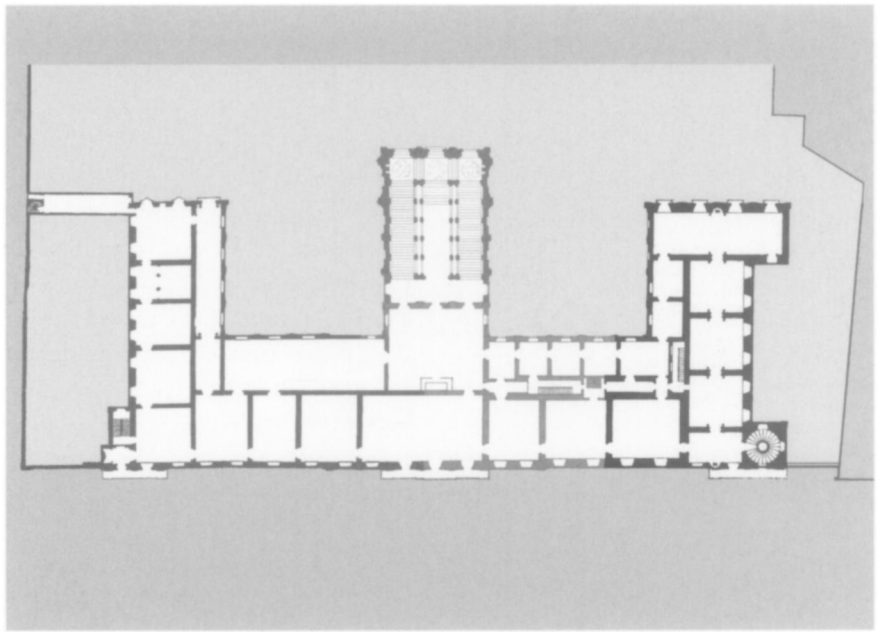

Figure 14 Reconstruction of the Palazzo Corsini in 1751–53, based on Fuga's "*prima idea*" and Brocchi's 1738 ground plans

Figure 15 Palazzo Corsini. The staircase wing is in the center of the photograph

nuovo was vaulted; this created an entryway into the palace from the street and gave direct access to the foot of the Riario stairs. Fuga would later slide a new monumental double staircase into this space.

Finally, in 1751–53 the last major part of the palace, the staircase wing, was built (Figures 14, 15).[102] Demolition of the old Riario staircase began late in 1751.[103] The elegant new stairs were one of the largest and most impressive palace staircases in Rome. Besides its scenographic qualities, the staircase was designed with an eye toward accommodating modern traffic.

In the eighteenth century, carriages made of carved and gilded wood and festooned with opulent silks were preferred above horseback as the means of transportation for the nobility and the papal court. Although present in the city from the 1500s, the coach as conveyance and status symbol came into its own in the 1700s. Carriages became popular in the middle of the sixteenth century; in 1594 one estimate puts the total

Figure 16 Palazzo Corsini, view of the three central doors in the main façade

number of coaches in the city at 883.[104] That number had certainly increased several-fold again by the eighteenth century. While in the 1600s up to one hundred carriages accompanied particularly honored visitors to the city, by the 1700s retinues had ballooned to 350.[105]

The new Corsini staircase allowed for three carriages to enter the palace simultaneously. Coaches could move through the three large doors at the center of the main façade and proceed to drop guests off at the bottom of the double staircase (Figures 16, 17). Each of the doors measured 15 Roman palmi across, so even the largest ceremonial carriages could be comfortably accommodated. Coaches could then turn left or right into courtyards, or continue straight into the garden. A disk in the center of the spacious androne (70 Roman palmi wide by 30 Roman palmi deep) at the base of the stairs could be used to guide turning coaches. Long trains comprised of many carriages could move efficiently and gracefully through the entryway. Giuseppe Vasi's engraving of the palace shows a train of three carriages entering through the central door. Probably inspired by the vaulted entry space and staircase on the ground floor of the Palazzo Barberini, Fuga managed in the case of the entrance and stairs at the Palazzo Corsini to turn the complex structural problems involved in uniting the two free-standing buildings into an elegant space. He had to unite structural supports left over from the Palazzo Riario, newer piers from the 1748–50 construction of the central fabric of the palace, and the approach to the new staircase wing built in 1751–53. Thus the piers in the entry serve two purposes: to support the central fabric of the palace and to provide a magnificent and orderly entry to the staircase.

After descending from a coach, a visitor could pause and enjoy the first of two spectacular enfilades, one outdoor and one indoor. A series of landscape and garden features unfolded on axis from the central door in the rear façade. The vista started with a fountain with two tritons surrounded by a giant topiary theater and then moved along a wide drive that ended in stairs leading to another fountain with six basins. A casino that was a part of the Villa Corsini on the summit of the Janiculum hovered above the tree line. Some sense of the impression this view must have made can be gleaned from a drawing made just before construction

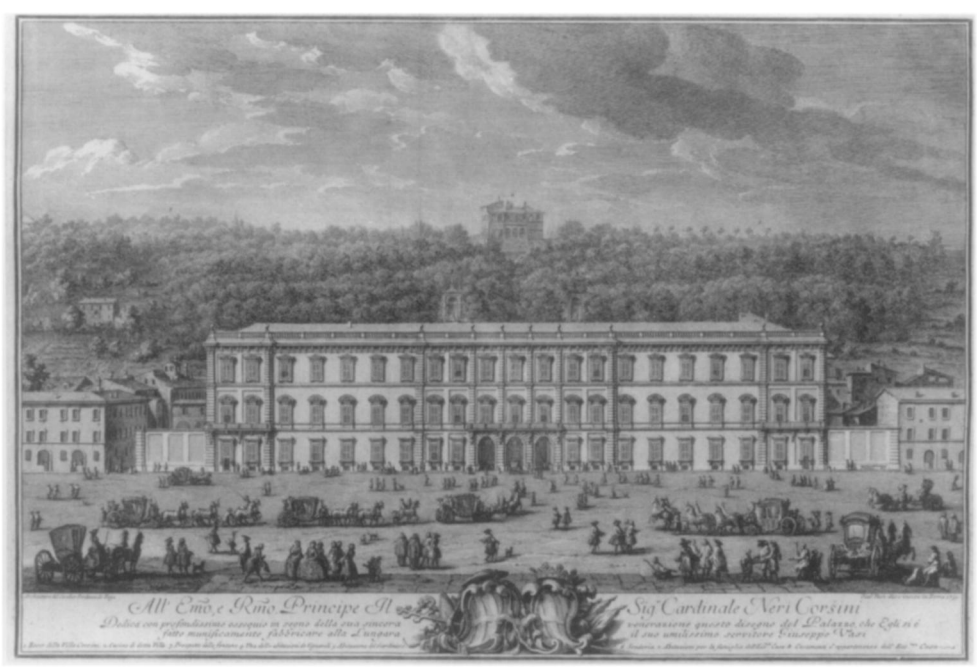

Figure 17 Giuseppe Vasi, *Palazzo Corsini*, 1751, engraving

Figure 18 Palazzo Corsini, staircase

Figure 19 Palazzo Corsini, staircase

of the staircase wing that depicts a meeting of the Accademia dei Quirini in the garden (see Figure 10). The viewpoint of the artist aligns perfectly with the central door in the rear façade.

After arriving and perhaps stopping to admire the expanse of gardens behind the palace, the visitor who continued on and climbed to the *piano nobile* could further experience the magnificence of the stairs. Fuga made use of this area to create a distinctive scenographic affect. Rather than enclose the two ramps of stairs with walls on either side, the architect left each staircase open to the carriage route, which ran between them on the ground level (Figure 18). He installed balustrades on either side of each staircase ramp; thus, as one ascends the stairs, the balustrades on both sides of the two staircases are visible. On the stairs, openings allow visitors to see through a series of three balustrades (Figure 19), the planimetric recession of their railings and balusters articulating depth. While these openings are shaped as parallelograms on the stairs, inside the route that cuts through the ground floor, dividing the two stair ramps, the apertures are fashioned as regular rectangles. As the visitor ascends, a complex play of geometric forms unfolds as the rising diagonal of the stair ramp, echoed by the handrails of the balustrades and the top of the parallelogram openings, intersects with the horizontal plane at the top of the rectangular openings. The vertical elements that appear in both the rectangular and parallelogram breaks also participate in this geometric theater. The play of fleeting angles generated by these intersections creates an architectural performance, imbuing the staircase with grandeur and magnificence.

Although the staircase as it was built is gracious, Bartolomeo Corsini tried to make it even more spectacular. He wanted the stairs to be made of marble. Bottari and Neri talked him out of it, assuring him that there was only one marble staircase in Rome (in Palazzo Ruspoli) and that travertine was the material of choice in the city.[106] Kieven has published two drawings belonging to Neri Corsini that show the staircases at Palazzo Ruspoli and the Quirinal.[107] Clearly, these drawings were used to assist in the design of the Corsini staircase. The Corsini may have also been interested in the relationship between the garden and the staircase by Martino Longhi at the Palazzo Ruspoli. The airy Ruspoli staircase opened onto a large garden where the Piazza San Lorenzo in Lucina is located today.[108] Neri fretted over the design of the stairs; he wanted the ascent to be both commodious and magnificent.

After seventeen years and roughly 200,000 scudi, the palace was essentially complete. It was so large that visitors approaching it from the porta Settimiana or the Vatican

Figure 20 Palazzo Corsini, as viewed from the north on the via della Lungara

could not see the entire façade as it appears in Vasi's 1751 engraving (Figure 20). The palazzo was visible in its entirety only from the Janiculum hill (see Figure 1). The Palazzo Riario and successive construction phases were all hidden from view by the unified façade that stretched along the via della Lungara. The long sweep of Fuga's elegant and somber façade not only concealed the fact that the palace began as two separate buildings but also drew visitors' attention to the massive property that the Corsini owned. The walls on either side of the palace, shown in Vasi's print, structurally and visibly linked the palace proper to the buildings on either side of it, both of which were owned by the Corsini family. The lush expanse of gardens behind the palace covered the Janiculum up to the Aurelian wall and connected the palace to the family villa on the summit of the hill.

Each stage of building coincided with an infusion of money from the Portuguese crown. Since the family relied almost solely on Neri's salary as protector to fund the expansion and reconstruction of the palace, the structure had to be built in segments. Again, Neri's account books make clear that each payment from Portugal was followed by the construction of yet another section of the palace. The reliance on Portuguese funds resulted in a very complicated and unusual building history, as well as considerable headaches for the architect who had to plan carefully ongoing demolition and new construction in such a way as to keep apartments and necessary ceremonial spaces available for every member of the family during successive stages of building.

One example of how financing dictated the construction process can be seen in the design of the staircase wing. Since the palace was raised in stages, the building and demolition of staircases had to be carefully planned so that access to the palace was assured throughout its many incarnations. Neri and the rest of the family could not sacrifice etiquette by remaining without a grand staircase while the new portions of the palace were being built. Throughout the nine-year construction, staircases had to be constantly available to represent visually the family's prestige and satisfy the demands of decorum. When the Corsini moved into the palace, they had no money to build, so they used the old Palazzo Riario staircase (see Figure 9). In stage two, when the *braccio nuovo* was built, it was constructed with its own plain but dignified staircase, so the new wing could function independently until it could be connected to the *braccio vecchio* (see Figure 12). When the central part of the palace was built in 1748–50, the old Palazzo Riario staircase was still in use (see Figure 13).[109] The new block that connected the two independent wings of the palace sat on vaults, creating an entryway into the palace from the street that provided direct access to the foot of the Riario stairs. As we have seen, Fuga would later neatly slip the new monumental double staircase right into this space (see Figure 14).

Despite the constrictions imposed by their uncle's enforcement of the *Romanum decet pontificem* and their reliance on sources of funding that differed from those typically used by nephews to build a palace, the brothers endeavored to build the most elegant and traditional papal family palace they could. The result of their prolonged building campaign is one of the largest papal palaces in the city of Rome. At over 500 Roman palmi, the main façade was longer than that of the Palazzo Barberini but shorter than that of the Palazzo Borghese. Ceremonial spaces, like the *salone*—where two baldachins were displayed—and Neri's apartment, were particularly spacious. Doors could be opened to create an enfilade that ran the whole length of the *piano nobile*. A visitor standing in the vestibule of the library could take in a magnificent vista extending approximately 128 meters and spanning ten rooms that ended in the cardinal's chapel. This enfilade can be compared with spaces in some of the most splendid palaces in the city, like Palazzo Barberini and Palazzo Borghese.

The Corsini were not able to enjoy the fruits of nepotism, a system that allowed papal nephews to flourish and create impressive palaces in Rome for more than 250 years. However, they were able to represent the attributes of glory and fame associated with papal nepotism by building a residence imbued with architectural magnificence. Their strategy was to purchase and enlarge an existing palace, relying on creative financing. This was something that no other papal family in eighteenth-century Rome achieved, with the exception of that of Pius VI Braschi's (1775–99) at the end of the century.

There is no way to determine how the Palazzo Corsini would have turned out if Neri had been able to get his hands on the virtually unlimited funds awaiting the Barberini nephews on their uncle's ascension to the Throne of St. Peter. But one can argue that Neri's great efforts to overcome his uncle's stinginess, often passed off as pious observance of papal law, motivated him to make ever grander gestures with the nearly gargantuan proportions of the Corsini palace's façade and the magniloquent splendor of its gardens. He strove to become an indispensable ecclesiastical tool for John V of Portugal and the Rezzonico family, just so he could continue to pay for his kin's needs and represent their honor. Although it required decades of work, he succeeded fabulously in garnering and spending great wealth. Because Neri and Fuga plotted and planned the Corsini palace in sections, floors, staircases, and stages over a number of years, they could see their ambitions and ideas develop and flourish. Beginning with the relatively

cramped quarters of the Palazzo Riario, they ended with a palace boasting nearly the longest façade and certainly the grandest staircase in Rome. With no help from his uncle, Neri Corsini ended his days rich, fat, satisfied, and sumptuously housed.

Epilogue: "St. Peter's Last Miracle"

The Palazzo Braschi, known as "St. Peter's last miracle," was the only other palace built by a papal family in Rome in the 1700s.[110] Pope Pius VI purchased the Palazzo Santobuono and some smaller buildings at the southwestern edge of Piazza Navona for his nephews for 42,000 scudi in 1790.[111] Demolition of these structures to make way for a giant family palace began soon after. Architectural theorist and biographer Francesco Milizia saw the designs of a number of architects, including the final designer, and estimated the total cost of building the palazzo to be 400,000 scudi.[112]

On the irregular building site, Cosimo Morelli constructed a trapezoid-shaped palace with three long façades punctured only by evenly spaced windows. The enfilades behind consist of rectangular rooms, where, because of the "hypnotic ranks of marble doorways, guests might well forget the awkward site and fancy themselves in a vast rectangular palace that had existed for centuries."[113] The finished palace is like an enormous ocean liner cruising in to dock at a tiny port, its tall prow sailing into the piazza. By selecting the Piazza Navona as the site for their new home, the Braschi joined another papal family, that of Innocent X Pamphili (1644–55), whose magnificent palace was built by Carlo Rainaldi and Francesco Borromini in 1644–50. The Palazzo Pamphili was accompanied by the church of Sant'Agnese in Agone and a separate building for priests, known as the Collegio Innocenziano.[114] Bernini's Four Rivers Fountain at the center of the piazza claimed the entire *platea* for the family, in a gesture emblematic of the kind of urban politics and architectural splendor associated with seventeenth-century papal families. The aggressive manner in which the Palazzo Braschi muscles its way into the adjacent *piazze* (both Pasquino and Navona) suggests that the Braschi were appropriating seventeenth-century methods of papal family urbanism.

Like the Corsini and the Albani before them, the Braschi sought to create the most magnificent residence they could. Working closely with the architect Cosimo Morelli, Pius and his nephew Luigi emphasized spaces in the palace—the courtyard and the stairs—traditionally associated with the art of *rappresentanza* as practiced for centuries by papal families. While the exterior harkens back to a series of palaces built for popes or their nephews, the graceful octagonal *cortile* was inspired by a royal example, the Bourbon palace at Caserta.[115] Emblazoned with lions (Luigi Braschi's personal heraldic device), family coats-of-arms, and portals adorned with tall *cipollino* columns, the exterior of the palace announced the arrival of this new papal family, relying on an architectural vocabulary that would have been familiar to any careful observer of the papal court from the 1500s onward.

Crowned by a coffered dome with an oculus, the staircase joins the Palazzo Corsini stairs as one of the most glorious in Rome. Eighteen red granite columns grace the open stair, contrasting with white stuccoes, panels of opulent marbles, and granite door frames.[116] Although it has often been described as "un-Roman" because of its use of marble and an open-well (rather than ramp) design, the grand staircase can be seen as the final move in the very Roman game of architectural one-upmanship in palaces belonging to papal nephews.[117] While Luigi Braschi could no longer make powerful alliances with foreign powers that could sway treaties and alter the contours of the map of Europe, he wanted to live in a palace that made it look as if he enjoyed these and all the other privileges of papal nephews from earlier times.

Pius VI bought his nephew Luigi an impressive palace, something Clement XI Albani and Clement XII Corsini refused to do for their families. However, Luigi Braschi had to wait fifteen years, until his uncle was seventy-three years old, for a princely residence. While the precise source of the money Pius used to buy the buildings that became Palazzo Braschi is unknown, it is probably not a coincidence that he settled a substantial (and scandalous) inheritance claim just one year before he made the purchase.[118] Although the papal treasury was beyond resuscitation by the time Pius VI was elected in 1775, he clearly decided to use art, architecture, and the treasures of the city of Rome to create an image of himself as a simultaneously traditional and modern ruler.[119] Since there was no hope of repairing the wholesale destruction of the papal finances or staving off the dangerous political forces that threatened to engulf the Papal States, Pius allowed himself and his *gens* to live as popes and their nephews had in prior centuries. The conservative exterior of the palace, combined with the royally inspired courtyard and the glorious stair outfitted with precious marbles, served to announce that the Braschi were taking their place in a long line of papal families. Nepotism and palaces were alive again, if only for the reign of one pope.

Palaces served for centuries as one of the most visible and permanent means for a papal family to achieve fame and longevity. In the eighteenth century, the few palazzi that were built or bought by papal nephews continued to repre-

sent the social standing and status of their owners, as they had for centuries. Although neither these palaces nor their inhabitants were supported by the papal treasury as their seventeenth-century predecessors had been, the Albani, Corsini, and Braschi families—representing a little more than a third of papal families in the eighteenth century—maneuvered, plotted, and bargained like entrepreneurs to vie with their illustrious predecessors. As a result, even when families could manage to finance a palace, the design often was a compromise between the old *gusto romano* (the grand baroque style) and modern aspirations modified by financial exigencies. The very difficulties of achieving what they did gave proof to their toil and ambitions. Perhaps it was the case with other papal families in the eighteenth century and afterward that the struggle was not worth the candle. The Albani, Corsini, and Braschi palaces all stand as defiant rejoinders to the quiet annihilation of papal palaces and the end of nepotism. They remain testaments to a handful of clever and resourceful papal families determined to realize their social ambitions in brick and marble.

Notes

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1. On Neri Maria Corsini, see Marina Caffiero, "Neri Corsini," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 29 (1983), 651–57, and Luigi Passerini, *Geneaologia e storia della famiglia Corsini* (Florence, 1858), 176–81.

2. The Orsini bought their residence in the theater of Marcellus in 1716, eight years before Benedict XIII Orsini became pope.

3. Hugh Honour, *Companion Guide to Venice*, 3rd ed. (London, 1990), 165.

4. On the Capitoline apartment, see Bruno Contardi, "Piranesi in Campidoglio," *'700 disegnatore, incisioni, progetti, caricature. Studi sul Settecento Romano* 13 (1997), 161–82. The family also rented the Palazzo Bonelli in Piazza Santi Apostoli.

5. For a history of the palace, see Enzo Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini alla Lungara. Storia di un cantiere* (Rome, 1988). Borsellino does not discuss nepotism or the sources of the funds used to build the palace. See also Elisabeth Kieven, *Ferdinando Fuga e l'architettura romana del settecento* (Rome, 1988), 51–55, 140–45; Tommaso Manfredi, "Funzione e rappresentazione nell'insediamento dei Corsini a Roma e Anzio," in Giorgio Simoncini, ed., *L'uso dello spazio privato nell'età dell'illuminismo* (Florence, 1995), vol. 2, 399–411; Francesco Eleuteri, "Le residenze dei Corsini a Roma," *Q.U.A.S.A.R.*, nos. 4–5 (1990–91), 43–45; Giovanni Belardi, ed., *Palazzo Corsini alla Lungara. Analisi di un restauro* (Savigliano, 2001); and Oronzo Brunetti, "Residenze corsiniane fra Firenze e Roma," in Mario Bevilacqua and Maria Luisa Madonna, eds., *Il sistema delle residenze nobiliari. Stato Pontificio e Granducato di Toscana* (Rome, 2003), 95–106.

6. On the Corsini family, see Passerini, *Geneaolgia*; the entry on the family in *Archivi dell'aristocrazia fiorentina* (Florence, 1989), 83–90; and Andrea Moroni, "Le richezze dei Corsini. Struttura patrimoniale e vicende familiari tra sette e ottocento," *Società e storia* 9 (1986), 255–92.

7. Patricia Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces: Use and the Art of the Plan* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990).

8. Patrizia Cavazzini, "Famiglie e palazzi romani all'alba del barocco," *Quaderni di Palazzo Te* 6 (1999), 23–31.

9. Richard Ferraro, "The Nobility of Rome, 1580–1700: A Study of Its Composition, Wealth, and Investment," 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1994). Richard Spear's recent "Scrambling for *Scudi*: Notes on Painters' Earnings in Early Baroque Rome," *Art Bulletin* 85, no. 2 (2003), 310–20, provides further useful information about money in early modern Rome.

10. Thomas Dandelet, "Setting the Noble Stage in Baroque Rome: Roman Palaces, Political Contest, and Social Theater, 1600–1700," in Stephanie Walker and Frederick Hammond, eds., *Life and the Arts in the Baroque Palaces of Rome: Ambiente barocco* (New Haven, 1999), 39–51, and Dandelet, *Spanish Rome, 1500–1700* (New Haven, 2001).

11. "Memorie del Pontificato di Papa Clemente XII," 38 G 20, 1v, Biblioteca Corsiniana, Rome [hereafter BCR]. On Lorenzo Corsini, see Alberto Caracciolo, "Clemente XII," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 26 (1982), 320–28, and Passerini, *Geneaolgia*, 157–72.

12. 38 G 20, 1v, BCR.

13. Stati d'Anime, S. Lorenzo in Damaso, 1710 and 1711, vs. 84 and 85, Archivio Storico del Vicariato, Rome [hereafter ASVR]. In 1710, Prince Camillo Pamphili and his wife were still living in the palace but by Easter 1711, Corsini and his household had moved in. Before that, Lorenzo did not live in the Corsini palace in Piazza Fiammetta as has been assumed. See, for example, Kieven, *Ferdinando Fuga*, 51, and Eleuteri, "Le residenze," 43. The Corsini who lived in Piazza Fiammetta were a different branch of the family. There is no mention in census records from 1694–1715 of Lorenzo living with the other members of the Corsini family in the palace. Stati d'Anime, S. Salvatore in Primicerio, 1694–1715, v. 14, ASVR. Lorenzo Corsini lived in the Palazzo Sforza Cesarini (also known as the Palazzo Borgia or the Cancelleria Vecchia) from 1688 to 1690, the Palazzo Baccelli from 1691 to 1692, the Curia Innocenziana from 1696 to 1707, the Palazzo Manfroni between 1708 and 1710, and Palazzo Pamphili from 1711 to 1730.

14. For example, in 1713 Bartolomeo Corsini and his family moved into the palace with their household. Stati d'Anime, S. Lorenzo in Damaso, 1713, v. 87, 39r–v, ASVR. They left by Easter 1715. Neri moved into the palace in 1714 with his household of six, including two German musicians. Stati d'Anime, S. Lorenzo in Damaso, 1714, v. 88, 39r, ASVR. He, too, only stayed a short period; he was recorded in the palace in 1715 but by 1716 he was gone. Stati d'Anime, S. Lorenzo in Damaso, 1715, v. 89, 40v and 1716, v. 90, ASVR.

15. Charles de Brosses, *Lettres d'Italie du Président de Brosses*, ed. Frédéric d'Agay (Paris, 1986), vol. 2, 126.

16. Bartolomeo Corsini (1545–1613) purchased the feudal territories of Sismano, Casigliano, and Civitella in Val di Chiana in 1607. Clement XII raised the status of the properties to principates on 23 June 1731.

17. These cardinals were Ottavio (1647–1696), Neri senior (1624–1679), and Pietro (d. 1405).

18. Ludwig von Pastor, *Storia dei papi* (Rome, 1958), vol. 15, 680.

19. Sixtus IV della Rovere (r. 1471–84) was considered the creator of the

system of nepotism by seventeenth-century authors: "Non e da maravigliarsi dunque se cio comincio da Sisto il Nipotismo di Roma, giache Sisto fu il primo, che diede per cosi dire Roma ed il Pontificato al Commando de'suoi nepoti con stupore e meraviglio di tutti." 36 G 21, 41r, BCR.

20. Cardinal *in pectore* is a promotion made by the pope at his desire. No discussion is held in the Sacred College; they are consulted only for the publication of the new cardinal's name. Neri's promotion was published 11 Dec. 1730.

21. 36 G 21, "Il nepotismo di Roma, discorso diviso in tre parti," 97v, BCR, written during the reign of Gregory XV (1621–23).

22. See Cors. 2487, BCR, for letters from Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini during this time.

23. I wish to thank Dott.ssa Nada Bacic for kindly bringing this to my attention. See also 44 E 21, Giovanni Bottari to Bartolomeo Corsini, 14 Sept. 1742, 140r, BCR, where Bottari discusses the transformation of the portrait of Cardinal Lorenzo at Villa Le Corti as "mutar la testa."

24. It is unclear how the Corsini used the apartments in Palazzo Pamphili. Ottavia, Filippo Corsini's wife, occupied an apartment on the Piazza Pasquino side of the palace; when she gave birth to twins on 13 October 1733, Clement XII ordered the via S.M. del Anima and the piazza closed to all traffic so that she could recover. Francesco Cancellieri, *Il mercato il lago dell'acqua Vergine ed il Palazzo Panfiliano* . . . (Rome, 1811), 135.

25. Stati d'Anime, S. Lorenzo in Lucina, 1708–11, vs. 203–6, ASVR.

26. Cors. 2481, Bartolomeo Corsini to Filippo Corsini, 17 Dec. 1735, nn, BCR. See also Cors. 2487 bis, Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini, 13 Dec. and 23 Dec. 1735, nn, BCR, and Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 142 for summaries of these letters (see n. 5).

27. When Francesco Mario Corsini (who was Bartolomeo's second cousin, once-removed) died in 1723, his widow, Livia Maccarani, left the Palazzo Ruiz. The next year, the shift in ownership to Bartolomeo is noted in the Stati d'Anime. Stati d'Anime, S. Salvatore in Primicerio, 1723, v. 4, 257r, ASVR. Borsellino mistakenly believed that Bartolomeo and Neri's branch of the family owned the palace before 1723. See Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 41 n. 2. For the Palazzo Ruiz, see Alessandra Eula, "Precisazioni su alcuni edifici collegati alle licenze rilasciate dai Maestra di Strada di Roma (sec. XVII): I palazzi Boncompagni Corcos, Corsini a Piazza Fiammetta . . . ," *Quaderni del Dipartimento Patrimonio Architettonico e Urbanistico* 8 (1994), 64–69.

28. Palazzo de Cupis in Piazza Navona and Palazzo Rucellai (now Ruspoli) on the Corso were also considered. Misc. Roma, cs, Archivio Corsini, Florence (hereafter ACF), contains assessments of those properties.

29. Ludwig von Pastor, *History of the Popes* (St. Louis, 1941), vol. 32, 637. See also Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Il tramonto della Curia nepotista. Papi, nipoti e burocrazia curiale tra XVI e XVII secolo* (Rome, 1999), 110–16. On papal nepotism in early modern Rome, see Irene Fosi, *All'ombra dei Barberini. Fedeltà e servizio nella Roma barocca* (Rome, 1997); the numerous studies of Wolfgang Reinhard, including "Finanza pontificia, sistema beneficiale e finanza statale nell'età confessionale," in Hermann Kellenbenz and Paolo Prodi, eds., *Fisco religione. Stato nell'età confessionale* (Bologna, 1989), 459–504; *Freunde und Kreaturen. 'Verflechtung' als Konzept zur Erforschung historischer Führungsgruppen Römische Oligarchie um 1600* (Munich, 1979); "Papal Power and Family Strategy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in Ronald Asch and Adolf Birke, eds., *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450–1650* (London, 1991), 329–56; *Papstfinanz und Nepotismus unter Paul V (1605–1621)*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1974); *Papauté, confessions, modernité* (Paris, 1998); Daniel Büchel and Volker Reinhardt, eds., *Die Kreise der Nepoten. Neue Forschungen zu alten und neuen Eliten Roms in der frühen Neuzeit* (Bern, 2001); and Markus Völkel, *Römische Kardinalshaushalte des 16. Jahrhunderts. Borghese–Barberini–Chigi* (Tübingen, 1993).

30. Pastor, *History*, 637. For a survey of the many sources of income available to papal families in the 1500s and 1600s, see Reinhard, "Papal Power," esp. 334–39. Not all seventeenth-century popes opened the papal coffers to their families. Clement IX Rospigliosi, for example, was very parsimonious with his relatives. The family was forced to make their fortune through an opportunistic marriage to an unattractive, but extremely wealthy, Pallavicini heiress. See Sebastiano Roberto, "Affermazione sociale e politica patrimoniale di una famiglia pontificia dalla Toscana a Roma. I Rospigliosi," in *Residenze nobiliari*, 81–94 (see n. 5).

31. On this bull, see Ippolito, 110–16.

32. Habita igitur super his cum venerabilibus fratribus nostris eiusdem S.R.E. cardinalibus deliberatione matura, ac de illorum consilio pariter et assensu, ad omnipotentis Dei glorium, Apostolicae Sedis honorem, ac antistitum, praelatorum, aliorumque ecclesiasticorum aedificationem et bonum exemplum, hac nostra perpetuo valitura constitutione statuimus atque decernimus, salutarem hanc de cetero in dicta S.R.E. servari rationem atque disciplinam ut nec a nobis, nec ab ullo Romanorum Pontificum successorum nostrorum, ad favorem nostrorum sive suorum respective fratrum, nepotum, aliorumque quorumcumque consanguineorum, seu affinium, sive illorum quos in locum nepotum aliorumque consanguineorum per cooptationem in familiam aut aliter adlegi seu adscisci contigerit, de bonis, pecuniis, locis montium vacabilium et non vacabilium, officiis venalibus, illorumque pretio, creditis, redditibus, rebus et iuribus quibuscumque ad Sedem et Cameram praefatas quovis modo spectantibus vel quandocumque spectaturis . . ." Luigi Bilio et al., eds., *Bullarum Diplomatum et Privilegiorum Sanctorum Romanum Pontificum* . . . , (Turin, 1870), vol. 20, 441.

33. ". . . etiam ex emolumentis Datariae, Cancellariae Apostolicae, Secretariae brevium, spoliorum ecclesiasticorum, et quarumcumque palatii apostolici portionum seu distributionum provenientibus, liberalitatis et donationis aliove quovis gratuito seu lucrativo titulo, directe vel indirecte, etiam servitiorum et meritorum, quae tamen talia non sint ut ex lege iustitiae eam exigant remunerationem, aliove quolibet colore seu praetextu, sive etiam supra veram ipsorum servitiorum et meritorum rationem, ullo modo in posterum disponatur." Bilio, *Bullarum Romanum*, 441–42.

34. "Quoad si fratres, nepotes, consanguinei, vel affines, seu illorum loco adlecti sive adsciti praefati, inopia laboraverint, poterit Romanus Pontifex pro tempore existens, pro timorata sua conscientia, illorum paupertatem eodem omnino modo sublevare, quo pauperum extraneorum inopiae subvenire fas est." Bilio, *Bullarum Romanum*, 442.

35. "Quod illos autem ex fratribus, nepotibus, aliisque consanguineis seu affinibus Romanorum Pontificum pro tempore existentium praefatorum, sive veris, sive, ut praefertur, adlectis et adscitis, quos, eximiis eorum ita exigentibus meritis, ad sublimem cardinalatus dignitatem assumi contigerit, eam quoque de cetero servari volumus moderationem, ut ecclesiae, monasteria, commendae, aliave cuiusvis generis beneficia et officia ecclesiastica ac pensiones annuae super illorum fructibus unicuique eorumdem respective conferenda, commendanda et concedenda, ac reservandae et assignandae, verum valorem annuum duodecim millium scutorum monetae romanae, computatis insimul beneficiorum et officiorum quibuscumque fructibus et pensionum quantitatibus, in totum non excedant: in ea tamen taxatione non comprehendantur emolumenta officiorum eiusdem Apostolicae Sedis et Romanae Curiae S.R.E. cardinalibus demandari seu concedi solitorum, aliorumque munerum, quae ipsis non ad vitam vel in perpetuum, sed ad tempus seu beneplacitum Romani Pontificis pro tempore existentis demandata seu concessa fuerint. Declarantes, quod deinceps praefati, qui vitam ecclesiasticam elegerint, seu ad sublimem cardinalatus dignitatem fuerint assumpti, quoscumque titulos fructuum reservationibus gravatos, sive praeventivas vel eventitias pensiones, ultra moderationem ut supra respective praescriptam, nullatenus assequi valeant." Bilio, *Bullarum Romanum*, 443.

36. After considering and rejecting the Palazzo Barberini ai Giubbonari, the

subject of the *concorso Clementino* in 1704 was to design a plan to convert Palazzo Carpegna into a residence for the family. This plan fell through and the Albani family finally managed to get Cardinal Nerli's palace near the Quattro Fontane. For the transaction, see Marco Buonocore et al., *Camillo Massimo, collezionista di antichità* (Rome, 1996), 63 n. 8. For Clement XI's papacy and his patronage of the arts, see Christopher M. S. Johns, *Papal Art and Cultural Politics: Rome in the Age of Clement XI* (Cambridge, England, 1993).

37. Gabriella Delfini Filippi, "Il Palazzo Albani alle 'Quattro Fontane.' La residenza romana," in *Papa Albani e le arti a Urbino e a Roma, 1700–1721* (Venice, 2001), 124–26; Delfini, "Committenze Albani. Il Palazzo alle Quattro Fontane e Giovan Paolo Panini," *Ville e palazzi, illusione scenica e miti archeologici; Studi sul settecento romano* 3 (1987), 13–29; and Delfini, "Il Palazzo alle Quattro Fontane," *Committenze della famiglia Albani, Note sulla Villa Albani Torlonia; Studi sul settecento romano* 1/2 (1985), 77–108. On Alessandro Albani, see Leslie Lewis, "Alessandro Albani," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 1 (1960), 595–98; on Annibale, see Gianni Sofri, "Annibale Albani," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 1 (1960), 598–600.

38. On the transaction, see Buonocore, *Camillo Massimo*, 63 n. 8.

39. Other papal families paid less than market value for Roman palaces. But these purchases usually included considerations other than money. For example, the Borghese family bought a palace in the Borgo from the Campeggi family for only 12,000 scudi ("prezzo così basso ch'a gran fatica paga le pietre della facciata"). But part of the sale included arranging for a cardinal's hat for a member of the Campeggi family. Anna Coliva, "Casa Borghese. La commitenza artistica del Cardinal Scipione," in Anna Coliva and Sebastian Schütze, eds., *Bernini scultore. La nascita del barocco in casa Borghese* (Rome, 1998), 391.

40. Delfini, "Palazzo Albani," 77.

41. On 5 October 1726, Alessandro Albani bought "un casino" across the street from the Villa Negroni. This property was almost adjacent to S. Pudenziana. In 1739, Annibale Albani purchased another "casino" near the church of San Vitale. Delfini, "Palazzo Albani," 78.

42. Delfini, "Committenze Albani," 80–87.

43. For the growing importance of staircases in Italy in the 1600s, see Alice Jarrard, "The Escalation of Ceremony and Ducal Staircases in Italy, 1560–1680," *Annali di architettura* 8 (1996–97), 159–78.

44. Delfini, "Palazzo Albani," 85. Both Alessandro Specchi and Filippo Barigioni are mentioned as working on the palace. Further archival research is necessary to determine who was in charge of the modifications.

45. As papal nephews, Alessandro, Annibale, and Carlo would have had access to free or very inexpensive antiquities from a host of sources, from the Maestri di Strade to the Museo Ecclesiastico at the Vatican, propitiously dismantled in 1716. Alessandro was renowned for his collecting prowess. He controlled digs throughout the Roman campagna and sold collections to Augustus of Poland in 1728 and Clement XII in 1734. He also was adept at helping Grand Tourists, especially the English, skirt antiquities law and export statues.

46. According to a 1854 document, all the marbles used for the door surrounds were ancient. Delfini, "Palazzo Albani," 98.

47. Mario Bevilacqua and Maria Luisa Madonna, "Sistemi di residenze nobiliari a Roma e a Firenze. Architettura e città in età barocca," *Residenze nobiliari*, 11 (see n. 5).

48. For Leo X's projects, see Manfredo Tafuri, "Strategie di sviluppo urbano nell'Italia del Rinascimento," in Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur, ed., *D'une ville à l'autre. Structures matérielles et organisation de l'espace dans les villes européenes, XIIIe– XVIe siècle* (Rome, 1989), 323–64, and Hubertus Günther, "Urban Planning in Rome under the Medici Popes," in Henry Millon and Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, eds., *The Renaissance from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo: The Representation of Architecture* (London, 1994), 545–49. On the Palazzo Farnese and its urban setting, see Luigi Spezzaferro, in collaboration with Richard Tuttle, "Place Farnèse. Urbanisme et politique," in *Le Palais Farnèse* (Rome, 1981), vol. 1, pt. 1, 85–123.

49. See Leslie Lewis, *Connoisseurs and Secret Agents in Eighteenth Century Rome* (London, 1961), on Alessandro's career as a spy and double agent. Alessandro spent 400,000 scudi on the villa. Lewis, "Alessandro Albani," 596.

50. Pastor, *Storia*, 673 (see n. 18).

51. It was later published in Perugia in 1733. On Pascoli, see Eugenio Battisti, "Lione Pascoli, Luigi Vanvitelli e l'urbanistica italiana del settecento," *Atti dell'VIII convegno internazionale di storia dell'architettura* (Rome, 1956), 51–64, and Battisti, "Lione Pascoli scrittore d'arte," *Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* 8, nos. 3–4 (1953), 122–51.

52. "Ama il Papa i nipoti ma si crede con amore regolato e siccome la sua casa è la più ricca di Firenze ed è positivamente ricca così pare che non vi aggiungerà altro che splendore esterno." Anonymous chronicler quoted in Pastor, *Storia*, 15: 666, n. 1.

53. Cors. 2481, Bartolomeo Corsini to Filippo Corsini, 30 Aug. 1735, nn, BCR.

54. Ferraro, "Nobility of Rome," 2: 1, 111 (see n. 9).

55. Cors. 2481, Bartolomeo Corsini to Filippo Corsini, 12 Aug. 1735, nn, BCR.

56. Cors. 2487 bis, Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini, 1 Nov. 1735, nn, BCR. "I dieci mila scudi che ha data il Papa serviranno ad estinguere quasi tutto il debito con Gabbrielli, ma quando poi da questi convenisse prendere maggiore somma, comprandosi il Palazzo, sempre si troveranno." See Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, for a summary of this letter (141) and a partial transcription (197) (see n. 5).

57. As *chierico di camera*, Lorenzo had a particularly large household that included nineteen servants and four secretaries. Stati d'Anime, S. Niccola ai Cesarini, v. 10, 911r–v, ASVR.

58. See Cors. 2487 bis, Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini, 16 Aug. 1732, BCR, for the Camera Apostolica's denial of funds to buy the palace.

59. Cors. 2487, non-numbered and undated piece of paper in Neri's handwriting, written after 24 Dec. 1737, BCR.

60. "Non ho sentito in questo Natale veruno sussidio, ne per la Casa, ne per la Fabbrica. Ditemi se abbiate almeno speranza di qualche cosa." Cors. 2481, Bartolomeo Corsini to Filippo Corsini, 19 Jan. 1737, nn, BCR.

61. Ferraro, "Nobility of Rome," 1: 43–44, n. 5.

62. Cors. 2481, Bartolomeo Corsini to Filippo Corsini, 3 Sept. 1735, nn, BCR.

63. Cors. 2461, 38r–49v, BCR.

64. Cors. 2461, 43r, BCR.

65. Elisabeth Kieven, "Lo stato della Chiesa. Roma tra il 1730 e il 1758," in Giovanna Curcio and Elisabeth Kieven, eds., *Storia dell'architettura italiana. Il settecento* (Milan, 2000), 206.

66. Money also may have come from other sources. For example, the sale of the family palace in Piazza Fiammetta in around 1740 netted Bartolomeo 25,000 scudi. Cors. 2481, Bartolomeo Corsini to Filippo Corsini, 12 Aug. 1735 and 19 June 1737, nn, BCR.

67. On this appointment and relations between Portugal and Spain in the 1730s and '40s, see Sandra Vasco Rocca and Gabriele Borghini, eds., *Giovanni V di Portogallo (1707–1750) e la cultura romana del suo tempo* (Rome, 1995), esp. 475–80.

68. This could specifically include working in the Consistory, directly with the pope, in the College of Cardinals and anywhere else necessary to assist his patron government. Giovanni Battista De Luca, *Il Cardinale della S.R. Chiesa pratico* (Rome, 1675), p. 170. De Luca's chapter entitled "De' cardinali protettori. Di diverse specie di protezzioni, e loro effetti," 165–71, gives useful information on protectors. The appellation comes from the book of

Daniel and the book of the Apocalypse; both books mention Persia having an angel protector. One of their chief ceremonial tasks was to introduce the new ambassador from the nation they worked for to the pope. Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastico da S. Pietro sino ai nostri giorni*, vol. 55, 328–29.

69. This was accomplished in 1737 with the nomination of Cardinal Tommaso d'Almeyda.

70. Inv. 1770a, f. 4, ACF. Maria Letizia Papini, *L'ornamento della pittura. Cornici, arredo e disposizione della Collezione Corsini di Roma nel XVIII secolo* (Rome, 1998), 162.

71. For example, on 31 January 1741, Neri tells Bartolomeo that the first payment of 5,000 scudi from the Portuguese will be used to work on the garden. Cors. 2487 terzo, Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini, 31 Jan. 1741, nn, BCR, summary in Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 148 (see n. 3).

72. Cors. 2483, Bartolomeo Corsini to Filippo Corsini, 13 Jan. 1741, n 1, BCR (see n. 5).

73. Neri Corsini, Libri delle giustificazioni, stanza 1, scaff. 2, v. 11, ACF.

74. Giustificazioni spett. all'Emo e Rmo dal 1741 al 1744, v. 257, 248r, ACF.

75. Neri Corsini, Libri delle giustificazioni, stanza 1, scaff. 2, v. 11, ACF.

76. This was the contention of the Spanish ambassador to the Holy See. See Edgar Peters Bowron and Joseph Rishel, eds., *Art in Rome in the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 2000), 87.

77. "E tornerà sempre bene al Cardinale Corsini di avere fra le Creature de Nazionali, come è succeduto al Camarlingo. Fate bene ad addoperarvi per Rezzonico, perche lo crederei più grato alla Casa, che il Patriarca nominatomi e potrebbe egli stare sempre in Roma." Cors. 2481, Bartolomeo Corsini to Filippo Corsini, 13 Sept. 1737, nn, BCR. "Suppongo ancora io, che Rezzonico sarà assai grato, essendo uomo di tutto onore, e probità, e riconoscente di essere fattura totale del Cardinale. Io ci ho avuto sommo piacere, essendo mio conoscente da parecchi anni. Vorrei sapere come farà a mantenersi in Roma. So che la sua Casa è ricca, ma non vorrano spendere tutto il bisognevole." Cors. 2482, Bartolomeo Corsini to Filippo Corsini, 17 Jan. 1738, nn, BCR.

78. Cathie K. Kelly, "Paolo Posi, Alessandro Dori and the Palace for the Papal Family on the Quirinal Hill," in Henry Millon and Susan Scott Munshower, eds., *An Architectural Progress in the Renaissance and Baroque: Sojourns In and Out of Italy* (State College, Penn., 1992), vol. 2, 821.

79. Lewis, *Secret Agents*, 38–62 (see n. 49).

80. Benedict alludes to this in a letter to Cardinal Tencin dated 29 May 1747. Benedict XIV (Prospero Lambertini), *Le lettere di Benedetto XIV al cardinal de Tencin*, ed. Emilia Morelli (Rome, 1955), vol. 1, 56. Neri discussed the accusations in a letter to his brother. Cors. 2487 terzo, Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini, 29 May 1747, nn, BCR.

81. "Ho ordinato la pianta di ciascuno piano del Palazzo alla Lungara, e delle soffitte in carta, e proporzione piccola, ed io poi ci farò a parte la descrizione stanza per stanza, in forma che spero che V.E. ne resterà sodisfatta." Cors. 1910, Giovanni Bottari to Bartolomeo Corsini, 17 June 1735, 4r, BCR. Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 40, n. 1.

82. On the history of the palace in the sixteenth century, see Christoph Luitpold Frommel, *Der Römische Palastbau der Hochrenaissance* (Tübingen, 1973), vol. 1, 99–100, vol. 2, 281–91, vol. 3, pls. 118–20; Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 21–40; and Mariella Piacentini, "Disegni inediti di Palazzo Riario (poi Corsini) alla Lungara," *Studi romani* 45, nos. 3–4 (1997), 301–13.

83. "La casa Riario come stà la stimo scomodissima, e due Sig.re impossibile ci possino stare." Cors. 2487 bis, Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini, 4 Nov. 1735, nn, BCR.

84. Cors. 2487 bis, Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini, 1 Nov. 1735, nn, BCR. See Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 141, for a summary, and 197 for a partial transcription. See also 8 Nov. 1735, nn, BCR. See Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 141, for a summary.

85. Stanza 1, scaff. 3, ACF. I wish to thank Dott.ssa Nada Bacic who found and generously shared this document with me. The brothers borrowed 50,000 scudi from Marchese Angelo Gabrielli to make the first payment. Misc. Roma, cs, 16 Apr. 1737, ACF. "I dieci mila scudi che ha dato il Papa serviranno ad estinguere quasi tutto il debito con Gabbrielli, ma quando poi da questi convenisse prendere maggiore somma, comprandosi il Palazzo, sempre si troveranno." Cors. 2487 secondo, Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini, 1 Nov. 1735, nn, BCR. See Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 141, for a summary.

86. Lidia Bianchi, *Disegni di Ferdinando Fuga e altri architetti del settecento* (Rome, 1955), 42–50; Roberto Pane, *Ferdinando Fuga* (Naples, 1956), 58–66; Kieven, *Ferdinando Fuga*, 51–55; 140–45 (see n. 5); and Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 45–54, 75–76, 85–86. On the drawings in the Corsini archive in Florence, see Enzo Borsellino, "Metamorfosi di un edifizio. Dalla villa Riario al palazzo dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei," in Belardi, *Palazzo Corsini alla Lungara: Annalisi di un restauro*, 23, 44–45 (see n. 5).

87. For example, 32 D 19, Bartolomeo Corsini to Giovanni Bottari, 15 Mar. 1748, 29r, and 8 Apr. 1748, 32r–v, BCR. Fuga would also bring books and letters for the family from Rome to Naples and vice versa.

88. The family possessions were moved from Palazzo Pamphili to Palazzo Corsini from 14 April to 12 May 1738. See Giustificazioni v. 26, n. 139, ACF. Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 146. The contents of the library moved from 22 April to 10 May 1738. The members of the family who moved in included Bartolomeo's wife, Vittoria Altoviti, who lived in the palace until her death on 20 April 1748, and their oldest son Filippo (1706–1767). Other members of the household were Filippo's wife, Ottavia Strozzi (d. 1762), and their four daughters and three sons. The daughters all left when they got married but the sons, as was traditional, continued to live in the building. It is interesting to note that Neri, Bartolomeo, and Filippo thought each one of Filippo's daughters should be allowed to decide themselves if they wanted to marry or enter a convent. All of them chose to marry. The marriages of Filippo's children to members of the Colonna-Barberini, Odescalchi, Altemps, Mattei, and Caetani families further demonstrate the status of the Corsini family in Rome even after Clement XII's death. One of the owners, Bartolomeo Corsini, rarely resided in the palace, spending his time in Naples and Palermo in the service of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies. According to the Stati d'Anime, he lived in the palace in 1740 and in 1749. He is listed in 1739 as a resident but "*fuori*." Stati d'Anime, S. Giovanni della Malva, 1739, v. 12, 830v, ASVR. The rest of the time he was either in Naples or Palermo.

89. On the garden, see Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 55–67.

90. Cors. 2487 terzo, Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini, 17 Jan. 1741, nn, BCR. The French gardener Renato Desportes was hired in July 1746 and at the time of his death in January 1753 was replaced by another head gardener, Antonio Pierozzi.

91. On the gallery, see Giuseppina Magnanimi, "Inventari della collezione romana dei Principi Corsini," *Bollettino d'Arte* 7 (1980), 91–126, and 8 (1980), 73–114; Sivigliano Alloisi, *La galleria Corsini a cento anni dalla sua acquisizione allo Stato* (Rome, 1984); Alloisi, "The Galleria Corsini in Rome," *Apollo* 126, no. 310 (1987), 414–22; Maria Letizia Papini, *L'ornamento della pittura. Cornici, arredo e disposizione della collezione Corsini di Roma nel XVIII secolo* (Rome, 1998); Alloisi, "La collezione Corsini," in Belardi, *Palazzo Corsini alla Lungara. Annalisi di un restauro*; and Alloisi, *Arcadie e vecchi merletti. Paesaggi della collezione Corsini* (Rome, 2002). On the expansion of the number of audience rooms, see Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Palaces*, 12 (see n. 7).

92. Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Palaces*, 13.

93. This arrangement was common. Cardinal Chigi's apartment in the

Palazzo Chigi was arranged this way. See Patricia Waddy, "Inside the Palace: People and Furnishings," in Walker and Hammond, *Baroque Palaces of Rome*, 34 (see n. 10).

94. Other members of the family residing in the palace included the Marchesa Corsini (the widow of Marchese Niccolini), who came from Florence to live with the family in 1739. Cancellieri, *Il mercato*, 137 (see n. 24).

95. See Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 67–74.

96. Cors., 2487 terzo, Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini, 3 Oct. 1747, nn, BCR. See also Chracas, *Diario ordinario*, 7 Nov. 1744, n. 4257, 5.

97. On the library, see Olga Pinto, *Storia della Biblioteca Corsiniana e della Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Lincei* (Florence, 1956); Panfilia Orzi Smeriglio, "I Corsini a Roma e le origini della Biblioteca Corsiniana," *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Memorie classe scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 8, 8th ser., no. 4 (1958), 293–331; Armando Petrucci, "I bibliotecari Corsiniani fra settecento e ottocento," *Studi offerti a Giovanni Incisa della Rocchetta, Miscellanea della Società Romana di Storia Patria* 23 (1973), 401–24; Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, "Note storiche sulle collezioni Corsini e Pio del Gabinetto delle Stampe," in Maria Catelli Isola, ed., *Immagini da Tiziano. Stampe dal sec. XVI al sec. XIX dalle collezioni del Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe* (Rome, 1977), 11–13; Rodinò, "Il Fondo Corsini," in Maria Catelli Isola et al., eds., *I Grandi disegni italiani del Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe di Roma* (Milan, 1980), 17–72; Enzo Borsellino, "Il Cardinale Neri Corsini Mecenante e Committente. Guglielmi, Parrocel, Conca, e Meucci nella Biblioteca Corsiniana," *Bollettino d'Arte* 46, no. 10, ser. 6 (1981), 49–66; Giulia Fusconi and Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, "Note in margine ad una schedatura. I disegni del Fondo Corsini nel Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe," *Bollettino d'Arte* 67, no. 16 (1982), 81–118; Ebe Antetomaso and Ginevra Mariani, eds., *La collezione del principe da Leonardo a Goya, disegni e stampe della raccolta Corsini* (Rome, 2004).

98. Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 70.

99. Ibid., 74–76.

100. The two baldachins are visible in the nineteenth-century plan of the *piano nobile* in the Archivio Capitolino, Rome. Sezione Biblioteca romana, cartella 48, tav. 5, ACR.

101. Borsellino believes that the old Riario staircase was torn down at the end of 1748. Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 79. However, he cites no documentary evidence for this. I do not think that the staircase was demolished until work commenced on the new staircase wing in 1751. The family would have wanted access to a ceremonial staircase for as long as possible. Tearing down the Riario stair in 1748 would have meant that the family would have been without a formal staircase for five years, an untenable situation.

102. Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 76–84.

103. Cors. 2487 terzo, Neri Corsini to Bartolomeo Corsini, 30 July 1751, nn, BCR. See Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini*, 170, for a summary, and 222 for a transcription. The staircase also provides evidence of the existence of a comprehensive building plan. Giovanni Battista Nolli's plan of Rome, printed in 1748, shows the two arms of the palazzo sandwiching a central staircase. Construction of the stairs, however, did not begin until 1751, almost three years after the map was printed. Fuga, the architect, or perhaps Neri, must have alerted the mapmaker of their building plans so he could represent the palace as it would be when it was finished instead of as it looked in 1748. See Mario Bevilacqua, *Roma nel secolo dei lumi. Architettura erudizione scienza nella pianta di GB Nolli 'celebre geometra'* (Naples, 1998), 73.

104. Wolfgang Lotz, "Gli 883 cocchi della Roma del 1594," in *Studi offerti*, 247–66.

105. For example, when Carlo Borbone visited the city in 1744, he traveled to the Quirinal in a train that, in addition to a large number of carriages, included twenty-four papal *palafrenieri*, the captain of the Swiss guard, fifty officials, representatives of the feudal families of the kingdom of Naples, and 480 royal bodyguards.

106. 44 E 21, Giovanni Bottari to Bartolomeo Corsini, 11 Dec. 1748, 198r–v, BCR.

107. Kieven, *Ferdinando Fuga*, 121, 278 (see n. 5).

108. The Corsini rented part of Palazzo Ruspoli after 1717 when the branch of the Caetani family that lived there went bankrupt.

109. On the staircase, see n. 101, above.

110. On the Palazzo Braschi, see Carlo Pietrangeli, *Palazzo Braschi* (Rome, 1958); Rosella Leone, "Cultura dell'abitare e gusto decorativo a Palazzo Braschi," *Bollettino dei Musei Comunali di Roma* 11 (1997), 67–92, and 12 (1998), 45–73. On the palace as part of Pius VI's revival of nepotism, see Jeffrey Collins, *Papacy and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Rome: Pius VI and the Arts* (Cambridge, England, 2004), 227–45. I am very grateful to Jeffrey Collins for discussing the Palazzo Braschi with me.

111. According to one contemporary source, "il S. Padre ha fatto acquisto per li suoi nipoti del palazzo Santobuono a Pasquino e du tutte le sue adiacenze per il prezzo di scudi quarantaduemila." Pietrangeli, *Palazzo Braschi*, 23.

112. Collins, *Papacy and Politics*, 233. In the same year, another observer estimated the cost of building the palace would be 150,000 scudi. Pietrangeli, *Palazzo Braschi*, 23.

113. Collins, *Papacy and Politics*, 238.

114. On the Pamphili palace, see Elisabeth Sladek, "Il Foro Pamphilj e piazza Navona," in Richard Bösel and Christoph Frommel, eds., *Borromini e l'universo barocco* (Milan, 2000), 173–91, with bibliography, and, more recently, Stephanie Leone, "Cardinal Pamphilj Builds a Palace: Self-Representation and Familial Ambition in Seventeenth-Century Rome," *JSAH* 63 (Dec. 2004), 440–71.

115. Collins, *Papacy and Politics*, 238.

116. The columns are described as 16 palmi tall by Chracas. Pietrangeli, *Palazzo Braschi*, 28.

117. Collins, *Papacy and Politics*, 241.

118. In 1783, Don Amanzio Lepri left Pius his entire estate of 1,500,000 scudi. Pius intended to turn over the money to his nephew Luigi but was prevented from doing so when Lepri's niece contested the will. The Sacra Rota decided against Pius and the matter was finally settled out of court in 1789. Although Luigi had to return several of the noble titles Lepri left him, he still received a substantial amount of money. Collins, *Papacy and Politics*, 228.

119. This notion is forwarded in Collins's excellent book, *Papacy and Politics*.

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