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***Cives romani in marmoris arte periti:* the Classical World and the Renewal of the Cloister Model in 13th century Rome**

In Central and Southern Italy the cloister appeared later than in Central Europe and Rome was no exception in this regard¹. The oldest one surviving, in fact, is the eastern wing of the cloister in the Cistercian abbey of *Tre Fontane ad aquas salvias*, dated to the second quarter of the 12th century², but it's only during the second half of the century that this element had a moderate spread in the city, as shown by the cases of S. Maria Nova [23], S. Cecilia in Trastevere [41, pp. 81–82] and S. Lorenzo fuori le mura (Ill. 71). The latter is the only certainly dated, thanks to the indication of the *Liber Pontificalis* that assigns it to the time of Pope Clement III (1187–1191) and more precisely to the year 1189³. The structures of S. Maria Nova and S. Cecilia, however, should not be placed too far from S. Lorenzo, as evidenced by the similar characteristics of the three monuments: the uncovered brick masonry, the use of the crowning cornice with elements in brick and marble in progressive projection, the type of quadrangular pillar with a marble frame, the preference for the single columnette with pulvin capital⁴. In particular, these characters suggest to ascribe those cloisters to the same workshops that built the Roman bell towers, in which we find the same structural and decorative elements [39–40].

By the early 13th century, however, the appearance of the Roman cloisters changes radically. The key moment in this evolution is represented by the southern and eastern wings of the cloister in S. Scolastica in Subiaco⁵, one of the papal stronghold on the border with the

¹ In Central Europe the presence of the cloister is attested by the High Middle Ages, while in Central and Southern Italy the first cloisters appear only in the middle of the 11th century in the main monasteries of the area, as S. Scolastica in Subiaco at the time of the abbot Umberto (1051–1060), Montecassino under the abbot Desiderius (1058–1086) and S. Martino sul Monte Acuziano near Farfa at the time of Berardus II (1090–1099) [35, p. 705; 36].

² It is important to remember that in the same period a cloister, now disappeared, is also recalled at S. Giovanni in Laterano [17]. The east wing at Tre Fontane precedes of at least thirty years the northern gallery of the same complex [3, pp. 149–157; 43, p. 22].

³ In this site the erection of the porch enclosure started a long building season culminated in the years of Pope Honorius III (1216–1227), which changed the face of the sanctuary [1].

⁴ If in S. Lorenzo the double columns underlined the central arch of the *poliforae*, in S. Cecilia and S. Maria Nova there is a preference for the simpler one column solution, but equipped with a plastic furniture that, at least in the better preserved case of S. Cecilia, is homogeneous compared with the case of S. Lorenzo. Particularly significant is the type of capital used in S. Cecilia, similar to those used in the north wing of Tre Fontane, which supports its dating to the second half of the century [41, pp. 81–82].

⁵ According to the recent hypothesis [38].

Kingdom of Sicily and then closely related to Urbe, both in cultural and political terms⁶. The artist signature states immediately who is the responsible for the innovations to the prototype: *Magister Iacobus*, the second member of a famous family of marble workers, the so-called “Cosmati”⁷. These artists reworked motifs and forms derived from the classical world and used marbles obtained from ancient monuments, conscious that they gathered an important heritage from the Roman times. Therefore, they proudly proclaim their *romanitas* in the inscriptions that accompanied their creations: they call themselves *Romani Cives in marmoris arte periti* in the wings realized in the twenties of the 13th century by Cosma, son of *Magister Iacobus*, again in S. Scolastica in Subiaco⁸ or *Magistri doctissimi romani* in the porch of Civita Castellana Cathedral, built in 1210 by *Iacobus* with the partnership of his son [14].

As is well known, since the 11th–12th century the workshops of marble workers were usually engaged in realizing pavements and liturgical furniture for Roman churches but, at the beginning of the 13th century, the role of these artists increased up to cover also architectural planning. In this regard, the work of *Iacobus* in Subiaco, realized between 1202 and 1205 [38], is precisely one of their first attempts in this new field of activity. In Subiaco cloister the traditional model was transformed in an antique style (Ill. 72): all the usual elements are present, but they take unusual appearance. Moreover, there is a new attention towards the plastic equipment with the insertion of coupled columns to mark the eurhythm of the *poliforae* and the use of phytomorphic motifs on the capitals, for the most part still the pulvin type. Furthermore, the uncovered brick masonry of the previous models is abandoned for a refined marble covering mainly made by remains from the Villa of the emperor Nero (54–68 a. C.), which stood just nearby in Subiaco valley [19]. Another novelty is the insertion of the mosaic band, now almost entirely disappeared, which originally contained an inscription, as shown by the letters remaining marks⁹. In parallel with the latter case of S. Paolo fuori le mura and S. Giovanni in Laterano, it can be assumed that the inscription reminded the patronage, and perhaps mentioned the symbolic function of the cloister in relation to the regular life¹⁰. In

⁶ The monastery was one of the twelve abbeys founded in the Aniene Valley, 45 miles east of Rome, in the early 6th century by St. Benedict from Norcia [21].

⁷ In general about the different families of Roman marble workers see 12, but in particular on *Iacobus* activity [5; 15; 37].

⁸ According to P. F. Pistilli [38], after the intervention of *Iacobus* the Subiaco's cloister was finished by Cosma (northern and western wings) in the 1230s, but about the dating of the different wings see also [25; 26, pp. 217–221].

⁹ Unfortunately the inscription is not recorded by any source, but still existed in the 18th century as shown by the documents (Roma, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, AA.BB.AA., I vers., Beni delle corporazioni religiose, 1860–1890, b. 24, *Relazione sullo stato dei monasteri*, 1879).

¹⁰ [38, p. 240]. Today, the cloister of S. Giovanni in Laterano shows a fragmentary inscription that is entirely known thanks to the old transcriptions [13, pp. 262–263], “*Canonicam formam sumentes discite normam. Quam promissistis, hoc claustrum quando petistis. Discite sic esse, tria vobis adesse necesse. Nil proprium, morem, castum servando pudorem. Claustri structura sti vobis docta figura. Ut sic clarescant animae, moresque nitescant*”. Even in S. Paolo fuori le mura the text refers to the symbolic importance of the monastic enclosure and to the patronage [22]: “*Agmina sacra regit locus hic quem splendor honorat. Hic studet atque legit monachorum cetus et orat. Claustrales claudens claustrum de claudio vocatur. Cum Christo gaudens fratrum pia turma seratur. Hoc opus exterius pre cunctis pollet in Urbe. Hic nitet interius monachalis regula turbe. Claustri per girum decus auro stat decoratum. materiam mirum precellit materiatum. Hoc opus arte sua quem Roma cardo beavitus natus de Capua Petrus olim Primitiavit. Ardea quem genuit quibus abbas vixit in annis cetera disposuit bene provida dextra Johannis*”.

any case, due to this new presence, the cloister of Subiaco can be considered the first example of that “speaking vocation” which will become the very essence of the Roman cloister model: a cloister where are not the sculptural elements — mostly aniconic — to evoke the function of the place, but the visual power and the solemnity of the epigraph, whose forms recall the commemorative inscriptions affixed on Roman monuments¹¹.

The cloister of Subiaco, furthermore, gave the start to a great renewal of the entire abbey which lasted the whole of the 13th century and it is highly probable that such architectural renovation has been provoked by the stay of Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) in 1202 and by his efforts to reform the local community [18]. After all, the corrective action of this Pope marked other Roman monasteries, involved in the reorganization of their structure: SS. Quattro Coronati, S. Paolo fuori le mura and perhaps S. Saba on the Aventinus hill. In all these cases, in fact, the new building sites started with the construction of a cloister, around which the new residential wings were organized.

The erection of the cloister of San Saba took place during the architectural renovation of the monastery which, once again, was characterized by the intervention of the sculptor *Iacobus*, who signed the main portal of the church in 1205¹². Unfortunately, today it is not possible to appreciate the innovations of this cloister, which was destroyed in the 1930s, and whose form appeared seriously compromised even in the old photos¹³. The historical plans, however, show the original presence of a ceiling system, a novelty for Roman cloisters that at this time usually had a wooden roof, with the exception of S. Lorenzo and Tre Fontane, in which the vaults supported the upper levels¹⁴.

The cloister of SS. Quattro Coronati can be dated to the first decade of the 13th century too¹⁵. In this case, we neither have documentary evidences, nor we know the name of the artist, but it is reasonable to suppose its pertinence at the time of Innocent III and the participation of the Cosmatesque workshops who were often involved in the sites of indirect patronage of the Pope [29; 30; 33]. The first reason is that this site was a priory of S. Croce at Sassovivo near Foligno, one of the key monasteries in the papal reform of the religious life and then, similar to the previous examples, it is highly probable that here too the spiritual reform started the material renewal of monastic structures [31, pp. 239–246].

The second reason is that the appearance of this monument shows ambivalent characters that report their belonging to the experimental phase of the beginning of the century. On the one hand, SS. Quattro Coronati's cloister borrows elements from the tradition of the previous century, such as the blind arcades on corbels or the crowning cornice in brick and marble. At the same time, however, it introduces the marble panelling, although limited compared to

¹¹ For an overview on the medieval use of epigraphy see, in particular for the High Middle Ages, 8; 9; 10.

¹² *Iacobus* also realized the *protirus* and part of the liturgical furniture of the church [24; 37].

¹³ [7]. The old photos representing the cloister are preserved in Roma, Istituto centrale per il catalogo unico, Gabinetto fotografico nazionale.

¹⁴ See for example the plan published in 28, p. 154, fig 14. The vaults appeared in later cloisters of S. Giovanni in Laterano, where the original vaults still exist, and S. Paolo fuori le mura where, on the contrary, they were replaced during a restoration campaign [20].

¹⁵ We disagree with the chronology proposed by L. Barelli [4, p. 60], where the SS. Quattro Coronati cloister is linked with that of S. Croce di Sassovivo, realized in 1229 by *Petrus de Maria*, that seems completely different.

Subiaco; therefore, here we find the exclusive use of the coupled columns and a new type of capital: no more pulvins, but capitals decorated by the vegetal motifs — the so called “*nun-fari*” leaves — later widely used in other cloisters¹⁶. We can also observe several antique-style elements that will be used in later cloisters, like the classic pilaster strips placed next to the piers, but, on the other hand, there are experimental patterns that will remain substantially unfulfilled, like the taste for polychromy in the archway soffits¹⁷ and the peculiar crowning cornice where the corbels alternate with marble *sectilia* [27].

The Roman model of the cloister culminates in S. Paolo fuori le mura (Ill. 73). In this abbey the erection of the cloister started from 1208 when the reorganization of the monastic wings was undertaken, again connecting with the reform of Innocent III [44]. The gradual evolution of the building site is linked to the delay in completing the porch, whose authorship is still under discussion. It is now established that the construction of the north gallery of the cloister in the 1230s was made by the Vassalletto, another *marmorarii* family, working at the same time also in S. Giovanni in Laterano¹⁸. Here, all the novelties previously emerged are fully implemented and improved in the direction of greater monumentality and decorative complexity: the system of vaults, now sadly disappeared, was set on square brackets and, by the side of the windows, on pillars lower than the crowning cornice, creating an unusual rhythm in the interior corridors that is reflected outside in the projection of the supports.

The marble panelling derived from Subiaco and SS. Quattro Coronati is optimized and enriched with new references to the classical world: the lacunars in the intrados, the fluted pilaster strips, the variety of the capitals, the marble *sectilia*, the lion protomes, the anthropomorphic masks, the mosaics, the frieze of palmettes and triglyphs.

The S. Paolo cloister then resumed the invention of mosaic inscription, which remembers the patrons and declares the aesthetic and symbolic values of this place, stating it explicitly as “the most beautiful of Rome”: “*hoc opus exterius pre cunctis pollet in Urbe*”. A perfection exalted by classical forms that symbolically and visually lead back to the role of the Eternal City and to the *auctoritas* of the Pope of Rome. *Romanitas* and papal *auctoritas*: the two main concepts that moved the policy of Innocent III and of his immediate successors interested in bringing back the territories of the Papal State under the aegis of Rome.

Title. *Cives romani in marmoris arte periti*: the Classical World and the Renewal of the Cloister Model in 13th century Rome.

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Abstract. An introduction of the cloister in Rome starts in the 12th century (Tre Fontane, S. Lorenzo fuori le mura, S. Cecilia in Trastevere), but it's only in the 13th century that we find a systematic usage of the cloister as the main element in planning of old and new monastic foundations.

In parallel with its spreading the typical Roman cloister, as it was codified during the 12th century, undergoes a radical change, partly due to the involvement of the different artists of Roman *marmorarii* families: Cosmati and Vassalletto. These sculptors considered themselves descendants of Classical Rome and, in the name of that heritage, they reinterpreted forms and motifs of architectural sculpture from Roman period through the reuse and the reworking of marbles taken from

¹⁶ Like in the capitals of Cosma wings in Subiaco and those in the cloister of S. Sabina on the *Aventinus*, both built during the 1220s [2].

¹⁷ The painting were restored at the beginning of 20th century [32].

¹⁸ About the dating of the wings of S. Paolo cloister and the different workshops see [6; 12, pp. 126–138; 16]. For the Vassalletto in the Lateran see [13, pp. 255–273].

ancient monuments. This change started in the monastery of S. Scolastica in Subiaco near Rome under the *aegis* of pope Innocent III and then involved the main complexes of the *Urbe*.

Keywords: cloisters; medieval Rome; monastery of S. Scolastica at Subiaco; pope Innocent III; *Magister Iacobus*; Roman marble workers.

Название статьи. *Cives romani in marmoris arte periti*: античный мир и обновление модели клуатра в Риме XIII века.

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Аннотация. Появление крытых галерей в Риме относят к XII в. (Монастырь Трех источников, Сан-Лоренцо-фуори-ле-Мура, Санта-Чечилия-ин-Трастевере), но систематическое использование крытых галерей как основного конструктивного приема в старых и новых монастырских постройках относится к XIII в. По мере распространения типичный римский клуатр радикально изменился, отчасти в результате деятельности художников, представителей римских семей резчиков по мрамору — Козмати и Вассалетто. Эти скульпторы считали себя наследниками классического Рима и во славу этого наследия придавали формам и мотивам римской архитектурной пластики новую интерпретацию, вторично используя и перерабатывая мраморы, взятые с античных памятников. Первые изменения такого рода происходили в монастыре Св. Схоластики Нурсийской в Субиано близ Рима под эгидой папы Иннокентия III, а затем в главном комплексе в Урбе.

Ключевые слова: крытые галереи; средневековый Рим; монастырь Св. Схоластики Нурсийской; папа Иннокентий III; магистр Якобус; римские мастера по мрамору.

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