

the Virgin Mary against the plague. After Napoleon's suppression the banner was moved the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna where it can be admired today. The present layout of the Red Hall dates back to the mid 19th century and its visual impact is due to the big Bohemian crystal chandeliers (allegedly the wedding present of Napoleon to his sister Elisa Baciocchi), the decorations of the barrel vault by Luigi Samoggia, the decorator, and by Luigi Busi, the figure painter. Recently it has been restored without altering its peculiarities.

4. Farnese Hall

This ceremonial hall used to have a painted vaulted ceiling, which was demolished in the late 19th century and replaced with today's lacunar (panelled) ceiling. Since the mid 16th century a marble statue of Pope Paul III Farnese had been placed against the background wall, but it was removed during the French occupation, at the end of the 18th century. In 1660 a cardinal from the same noble family, Girolamo Farnese, ordered the restoration of the adjoining chapel and the fresco cycle depicting the glorious times of the Papal rule over the town. The frescoes are due to a team of painters led by Carlo Cignani, among them Lorenzo Pasinelli, Luigi Scaramuccia, Girolamo Bonini, Giovanni Maria Bibiena. The monument dedicated to Alexander VII, located in the adjoining Swiss Hall in 1660, was moved against the background wall during the 1845 restoration work. The archaic technique of hammered and gilded copper foil wrapped on a wooden core was employed here by the Siense goldsmith Dorastante d'Osio.



Farnese Hall

5. Farnese Chapel

The Chapel, one of the major ceremonial places of the city, was built by architect Aristotele Fioravanti in the mid 15th century, at the time of the work promoted in the palace by Cardinal Bessarione. Between 1561 and 1565, on commission of Cardinal Legate Girolamo Sauli, it was enlarged by architect Galeazzo Alessi from Perugia, also respon-

sible for the outer façade – originally in sandstone – and covered by a scagliola layer (stucco painted to resemble marble) in the mid 19th century during the restoration of the Farnese Hall. The fresco decoration dates back to 1562, when Pope Pius IV was ruling and his representatives in town were the legate Cardinal Carlo Borromeo and deputy legate Cardinal Pier Donato Cesi. The latter ordered and followed the monumental restoration work in the town centre (Archiginnasio, arcade of Ospedale della Morte, Palazzo dei Banchi, Neptune Fountain). The artist who painted the fresco cycle (only fragments remain now) with Stories of the Virgin's Life was Prospero Fontana, at the time a leading painter of the "Mannerism" school in Bologna and Rome. Today's layout is the result of the town's events throughout the centuries: the 17th-century restoration ordered by Cardinal Girolamo Farnese; the unsuitable use as archive and warehouse in Napoleon's period and during the 19th century, until its latest restoration in 1991.



Farnese Chapel

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Palazzo d'Accursio

Entering Palazzo d'Accursio means to enter the place where the city has been governed for a thousand years.



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The building consists of two separate units. The one on the left, the older one, belonged in the XII century to the Accursio family, which gave the name to the whole palazzo. In 1336 it became the seat of the local Magistracy of the Elders. The Clock Tower was made taller in the second half of the XV century. In the same century the sculptor Nicolò dell'Arca made the terracotta statue of the Virgin with Child (1478) that is still visible on the façade. The right side of the building, fully Gothic in style, is characterized by eight windows with pointed arches on the first floor. They were made by Fioravante Fioravanti in 1425 and enriched with mullioned windows in 1930. In the lower part of the façade a big window was built by Galeazzo Alessi in the Mid-Fifteenth century. Alessi also built the triumphal entrance dominated by the bronze statue of the Bolognese Pope Gregory XIII, who reformed the Julian calendar. From the XVI to the XIX century the building, which is now the City Hall and therefore the seat of the local government, has been the official residence of local rulers and papal legates. Inside the building, at the top of the monumental staircase attributed to Donato Bramante, one can visit the Hercules Hall and the City Council Hall on the first floor and the Farnese Chapel and Hall on the second floor. The Municipal Art Collections are located on the second floor in the former apartments of the cardinal legates. From there you can enjoy magnificent views of the city. The collections include works of art from private collections (Collina Sbaraglia, Palagi, Pepoli, Baruzzi, Rusconi) donated to the City of Bologna. Paintings which are particularly noteworthy are those made by local artists of the XIV century (Vitale da Bologna, Pseudo Jacopino, Simone dei Crocefissi, Jacopo di Paolo), works by the Carraccis and their school, and a series of 18 paintings by Donato Creti. Among the works by worldwide known artists are those by Jacopo Tintoretto, Luca Signorelli, Francesco Hayez, Artemisia Gentileschi and Antonio Canova. Among the richly decorated museum rooms stands out the Sala Urbana: its walls are completely covered with the coats of arms of the papal legates from Mid-Fourteenth century to 1744. Another room worth seeing is one of the most beautiful examples of boschereccia open to the public. This decoration, faking an space open on a garden with trompe l'oeil flowers, landscapes and plants was very fashionable between the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. Outside, from Piazza Nettuno one can enter the former Sala Borsa (Stock Exchange), now the city multimedia library. Inside, the archaeological ruins dating from the II century BC to the XVI century AD are visible through the glass floor. Among them note the remains of the Roman basilica of Bononia.



Monumental staircase

1. Hercules Hall



Hercules Hall

This is the oldest part of the building, developed around the original group of houses of the jurist Accursio (that has given the name to the whole building complex), acquired by the Municipality in 1287. At the end of the 13th century its spaces included a warehouse for the public grain supplies (from which it was originally named "Palazzo della Biada" – Forage Palace). It

still shows the original Medieval structure, though refurbished in the 17th and 18th centuries. The hall owes its name to the large bronzed terracotta statue depicting Hercules triumphant over the Hydra of Lerna (1519) by Alfonso Lombardi (also the author of Bologna's Four Patron Saints placed under the Podestà vaulted arcade). The statue may refer to the fall of the Bentivoglio family and the permanently re-established Papal rule over the city, after the Bentivoglio had tried to return to Bologna in 1511-12. On the right wall note a fresco by Francesco Francia depicting the Madonna of the Earthquake. It was originally painted on the wall of the nearby Elders' quarters as ex voto for the 1505 earthquake, then moved to the adjoining chapel at the end of the 17th century and finally settled at its present location in the 19th century. At the entrance we find bas-relief casts of Fontaine des Innocents in Paris, a gift of France to Bologna Municipality in the 1930s, in remembrance of the French sculptor Jean Goujon who was active in Bologna in the second half of the 16th century.

2. City Council Hall

The Senators' Gallery was frescoed in 1676 by Angelo Michele Colonna (1604-1687) with the help of young Gioacchino Pizzoli (1651-1731). This is a splendid example of Baroque art and a typical interior decoration which made Bologna school famous throughout the world: the quadratura, where the skilled use of perspective opens up to illusory views and landscapes. The architectural quadratura covers a 34 m-long and 8.5 m-wide area. Four painted columns support the mock moulding, thus creating the illusion of supporting another vaulted ceiling hosting of five allegorical scenes, making reference to Bologna's virtues. The first shorter wall of the hall depicts the town Coat of arms supported by two Virtues (Concord and Loyalty) together with the symbols of local and papal powers. The central vault depicts:

- 1) Minerva (goddess of wisdom) and Mars (god of war) convince Fame to announce the town's virtues and glories to the world.
- 2) Cybele points out to Bologna (depicted as a woman on a lion-driven cart, symbolising strength and power) the glory of Olympus where



City Council Hall

Jupiter is waiting for her. 3) Bacchus, Pomona and Caeres (referring to wine, fruit and harvest) are the symbols of the fertile soil of Bologna. On the second shorter wall: Vigilance and Prudence and the symbols of the Arts.

3. Red Hall

This hall derives its name from the colour of the tapestry liming the walls from the 20th century. During the Ancient Regime it was part of the quarters belonging to the city Senate. The Senate was the local political representative body that ruled the city together with the Cardinal Legate appointed by the Pope. At the end of the 16th century it used to be a representative hall where the most important meetings of the Senate took place, while the chambers along the corridor overlooking Piazza Nettuno were used as secretaries, treasury and administrative offices. The present Mayor's lobby, the Press Office and the adjacent rooms were used to host the "Assunterie" (Senators' commissions dealing with special Government branches). In 1677 the major hall for the meetings of the Senate was moved to the wing overlooking Piazza Maggiore, thus creating the current City Council Hall. The "Pallione della Peste" ("Plague Processional Banner") painted on silk by Guido Reni with the Madonna and Bologna's Patron Saints was hung in this hall.



Red Hall

It was commissioned by the Senate in 1631 to celebrate the end of the plague and every year it was carried in a procession from the City Hall to San Domenico where the column of the Vergine del Rosario (Madonna of Rosary) represented the other centre of public celebration to invoke the help of