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Paolo Francesco Spinola (1746–1824) and the Decoration of the Spinola Palace in Pellicceria. Palace Furnishings of the Genovese Aristocracy between Accepted Permanence and Modest Change

Previous studies on the decor of the Spinola palace in Pellicceria have favored two main phases of work: the renovations undertaken between 1614 and 1624 by Tommaso Grimaldi, and those headed by Maddalena Doria Spinola between 1734 and 1736.¹ They have been treated as independent artistic phenomena.

Our interest in Paolo Francesco Spinola (1746–1824), owner of the palace at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, is first of all documentary. With the help of unpublished archival documents (and with no pretense of giving an exhaustive study) we will examine certain objects in the current collection of the Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola that bear witness to the personal taste of Paolo Francesco Spinola.

The history of the *domus magna* of Pellicceria is centuries old, the construction of the building

having begun at the end of the 16th century. Eight heads of household had preceded him when Paolo Francesco Spinola became proprietor on the death of his father, Francesco Maria Spinola, in 1769 (appendix).² All of them belonged to the old line families (*nobiltà vecchia*) of Genoa; such continuity is impressive. The artistic choices of Paolo Francesco Spinola express at once attentiveness to the patrimonial objects of his ancestors as well as his desire to decorate his home in keeping with contemporary tastes. We will demonstrate that the tension between a respect for the past and the constraints of the tastes of the day is at the heart of the Genovese decorative system of the *Settecento*. The case of Paolo Francesco in the Palazzo Spinola represents a common attitude among the majority of his peers, comparable to other neighboring experiences.³

* My thanks to Peter Fuhring, Christian Michel and Katie Scott for their invaluable advice. This article was already in the hands of the editors of the *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* when the exhibition catalogue (eds. Graziano Ruffini, Farida Simonetti and Gianluca Zanelli, *Paolo Francesco Spinola, un aristocratico tra Rivoluzione e Restaurazione*, exh. cat., Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola, Genoa 2010) was published. Certain documents I first discussed as unpublished have since been published in that catalogue, but since I propose a different reading of Spinola's actions, this publication still seems timely to me.

¹ On the decor of the palace in the 17th century, see Giovanna Rotondi Terminiello, *Gli affreschi del salone d'onore del secondo piano nobile di Palazzo Spinola*, in: ed. eadem, *Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola: interventi di restauro* (Quaderno della Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola 1), Genoa 1979, 22–23; Farida Simonetti, *Committenti e collezionisti per il Palazzo*, in: eds. Ezia Gavazza, Giovanna Rotondi Terminiello, *Genova nell'età barocca*, exh. cat., Genoa, Palazzo Reale, Bologna 1992, 471–478; Farida Simonetti, *Il recupero dei decori parietali del primo piano e l'intervento di Lazzaro Tavarone a Pellicceria*, in: eds. Giovanna Rotondi Terminiello, Guido Rosato, Farida Simonetti, *Due musei in una dimora storica: Palazzo Spinola a Pellicceria* (Quaderno della Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola 14), Genoa 1994, 13–27; Farida Si-

monetti, Agostino (1577–1649) e Ansaldo (1621–1660) Pallavicino e il palazzo di Francesco Grimaldi a Pellicceria, in: ed. Piero Boccardo, *L'Età di Rubens. Dimore, committenti e collezionisti genovesi*, exh. cat., Genoa, Palazzo Ducale/Galleria di Palazzo Rosso/Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola, Milan 2004, 510–515. The work of 1734–1736 is covered in the following articles: Anna Dagnino, *Il libro mastro di Maddalena Doria Spinola: una fonte per la ristrutturazione settecentesca del Palazzo*, in: *Palazzo Spinola a Pellicceria: due musei in una dimora storica* (Quaderno della Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola 10), Genoa 1987, 39–59; Farida Simonetti, *L'Arredo delle dimore aristocratiche genovesi: testimonianze a Palazzo Spinola di Pellicceria*, in: Gavazza/Rotondi Terminiello (op. cit.), 385–402; Giovanna Rotondi Terminiello, *La Dimora dell'aristocrazia*, in: eds. Ezia Gavazza, Lauro Magnani, *Pittura e decorazione a Genova e in Liguria nel Settecento*, Genoa 2000, 207–254.

² For a general survey of the different owners from the construction of the palace at the end of the 16th century, see Giovanna Rotondi Terminiello, Guido Rosato, Farida Simonetti, *Galleria Nazionale Palazzo Spinola Genova*, Rome 1991; Carlo Bitossi, *Dai Grimaldi agli Spinola di San Luca*, in: Gavazza/Rotondi Terminiello (as note 1), 467–477.

³ For a reflection on the specificity of the local material culture, notably distinct from the French example, see

As opposed to previous studies, ours will exclude a strict, formal appreciation. Our approach will consider the local material culture, namely the objects from the perspective of their possessors. From this point of view, the reasons that govern the elaboration of the decor of the palace will appear. What is more, we may form a better definition of these objects, allowing us to write a history of furnishings in which each *item* (paintings, decorative textiles, furniture and curios) participates in the overall elicited effect. This approach also questions the value conferred on the objects, and their status throughout the centuries.

Paolo Francesco Spinola, an Inheritor Responsible for a Familial Patrimony

When Paolo Francesco Spinola became *padrone di casa* in 1769, the Spinola Palace in Pellicceria was not a creation *ex novo*. Thus it is fitting to begin the study of his decor, not with those changes made by the nobleman but with the pre-existing patrimonial environment. The objects that formed the familial patrimony constituted a material reality that Paolo Francesco, for reasons tied to his status, could not ignore or suppress. Among the criteria that defined Genovese nobility, that relative to heritage was primary. It was through the agency of those documents related to the transfer of property that certain members were recognized as worthy or not of possessing part or whole of their family's wealth. It was at

this moment that someone charged with transmitting the familial property was designated to ensure the protection of this patrimony; in other words, to guarantee the continuity of lineage. A rapport of reciprocity existed between the quality of the possessor and that of the object possessed, between the modalities of possession and the value conferred on an object. The successions are at the origin of the symbolic demarcation between the objects: only one category of these served the discourse on the *casata* while the majority had but one utilitarian use. In other words, some were conserved in perpetuity while others were bequeathed to the inheritors to be used or disposed of at their discretion.

A document of the Archivio Spinola of Genoa entitled *Testimonij che depongono del patrimonio del Magnifico Paolo Fran[ces]co Spinola e del trattamento che tiene in sua casa* took stock of the scope of the inherited property and furnishings of the nobleman and of the sumptuousness of his way of life.⁴ Dated 1779, the text compiled a series of testimonials in repetitive and often evasive terms. The official nature of the document was trimmed away because the text consulted is a copy made at the time of the interested party. It concerned the trial held for the annulment of the marriage between Paolo Francesco Spinola and Maria Brignole-Sale, for reasons of impotency. The principal theme is explicit: the declarations of the four witnesses recognized above all Paolo Francesco Spinola as inheritor. One after another, they insisted on the quality

Anne Perrin Khelissa, *Décor et décorum dans les palais de l'aristocratie génoise au XVIII^e siècle. L'exemple des objets mobiliers et de l'ameublement du palais Spinola a Pellicceria*, Ph.D. diss., Université Paris X-Nanterre 2007, currently in press with C.T.H.S./I.N.H.A.

⁴ Genoa, Archivio Spinola di Genova (cited hereafter as ASpG), A2, P6, Sc37, p233.

⁵ Document cited at note 4 above: «[...] possiede molti vasti stabili alla Benedetta, in Ovada, e Novi e molte case e palazzj nella presente città e suo distretto, con impieghi conspiciui di denaro si nel Dominio che co' principi forestieri».

⁶ The principle documents of the archives relating to the succession of the father of Paolo Francesco Spinola, Francesco Maria Spinola *quondam* Niccolò, are: Genoa, Archivio di Stato di Genova (cited hereafter as

ASG), Notai Antichi (cited hereafter as NA) (Troilo Castiglione), 11283, doc. 157 (will, August 21, 1763); ASG, NA (Troilo Castiglione), 11283 (codicil, July 26, 1764); ASG, NA (Troilo Castiglione), 11283, doc. 221 (will, May 6, 1769); ASpG, A12, P6/7, Sc7A, p449(1)23-51 (will, August 26, 1769; copy at ASG, NA (Troilo Castiglione), 11283, doc. 230); ASpG, A4, P6, Sc47, p109 (*Addizione d'eredità fatta da fedecommissarij dell' Ill[ustrissimo] Sig[nore] Paolo Francesco Spinola*, September 20, 1769); ASG, NA (Troilo Castiglione), 11279 bis, doc. 284 (certificate of death, September 20, 1769); ASpG, A8, P3, Sc33, p800 (*Inventario oggi cominciato in Pellizeria*, July 2, 1770; a full transcript is available in Perrin Khelissa (as note 3), 391–403. Concerning the succession of the mother of Paolo Francesco, Giulia Maria Fieschi *quondam* Ugo, the main docu-

and value of the property and goods amassed through the successions to which he was beneficiary. »Pingue« (rich), »grossa«: such are the adjectives that qualify the inheritance of Paolo Francesco Spinola. It was a question of the »larghezza del patrimonio« of the nobleman. The text describes his land holdings, movable and immovable goods, as well as »his considerable financial investments, both in the Genovese Republic as well as among foreign princes«.⁵

The assembly of inherited goods was highly diverse. They were principally left to him by his father, Francesco Maria Spinola, who had himself inherited them from his maternal and paternal ancestors, Doria Pallavicini and Spinola di San Luca respectively. This archival document demonstrates a lineal and transgenerational conception of family. The family inheritance did not rely only on direct succession (that from father and mother⁶) but also on the inheritor's link to prominent ancestors. Even if Paolo Francesco Spinola benefited from the collateral legacy,⁷ the text underlines the importance of that which connected him to his most illustrious ancestors, and conjointly, to the urban familial palace. Evoked are Niccolò Spinola, Doge of the Genovese Republic between 1740 and 1742, and his son Girolamo, named cardinal on September 24, 1759, respectively grandfather and paternal uncle of the nobleman. Each was designated as former inhabitant of Pellicceria. Paolo Francesco Spinola was identified as the representative of the moral qualities of the Spinola family. In this capacity,

ments are: ASG, Notai di Genova (cited hereafter as NG), 1 Sezione (Stefano Remondini), 1048 (will, June 15, 1783); ASG, NG, 1 Sezione (Stefano Remondini), 1048 (*Foglio ritrovato nel burro scuro della fu Illustrissima Giulia Maria Fieschi Spinola*, June 29, 1783); ASG, NG, 1 Sezione (Stefano Remondini), 1048, doc. 115 (inventory, January 15, 1784); ASpG, A10, P5, Sc5, p813 (*Inventario de mobili della casa di Genova e argenti* [undated]); ASpG, A10, P6/7, Sc3, p810 (*Nota dei mobili tutti stati consegnati dal Signore/ Paolo F[rances]co Spinola alla Signora/ Lilla sua madre* [undated]).

⁷ He is notably designated as inheritor of his paternal uncle, Pasquale Spinola, who died childless and ab intestate: ASpG, A4, P6, Sc47, p109 (*Atti d'adizione d'eredità dell' Ill[ustrissimo] Sig[nore] Pasquale Spinola,*

he was responsible for the urban *domus magna*. The outline of the genealogy served to recall the antiquity of the Pellicceria residence, and notably one of the steps marking its history: the renovations conducted between 1734 and 1736. Why was this episode placed at the heart of the question of familial inheritance, and why was it most apt in representing the clan?

In one of the testimonials of 1779, the work undertaken in 1734 is specified as »reconstruction« because it was adapted to the construction and decorative environment of the preceding centuries. It is worth remembering that the renovation touched first of all the external and internal architectural parts of the palace, and that it aimed for a new arrangement of the apartments. The *piano nobile* (the main story of state rooms) was placed on a second story, no longer on the first as before; it was dedicated to the state rooms, relegating those rooms designated for private life to the upper stories. In the 17th and at the beginning of the 18th century, the *piano nobile* combined these public and domestic functions. The next change concerned the frescoes: the pre-existing works of Lazzaro Tavarone (1556–1641) were »restored«; on the ceiling of the north rooms and the *galleria degli specchi* (hall of mirrors) of the second story, new compositions were painted. On the inner wall, a *trompe l'œil* served to frame the collection of paintings that were formerly presented in a gallery on the lower floor built for this purpose. The furnishing of the rooms was then completely

October 11, 1784): »Nei scorzi giorni è passato da questa all'altra vita l' Ill[ustrissimo] Sig[nore] Pasquale Spinola del fù Ill[ustrissimo] et Ecc[ellentissimo] Sig[nore] Niccolo senza aver fatto alcun testamento, codicillo, o altra disposizione di ultima volontà, che si sappia, e di cui si abbia notizia, e senza aver lasciato dopo di se alcuna prole legittima, e naturale, supermiteme [sic] solamente l' Ill[ustrissimo] Sig[nore] Paolo Francesco Spinola di lui unico nipote exfrate, e non altri in pari, o più prossimo grado di succedere nella sua eredità«. Note that it is as a result of this succession that Paolo Francesco would receive the paintings of Marcantonio Franceschini entitled *Agar et Ismaël* and *Noli me tangere*, today held at the Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola, which formerly belonged to Fieschi, Perrin Khelissa (as note 3), 158–159.

modified: the new curtains and *portières* transformed the aspect of the interior henceforth furnished with several imposing pieces. These formed part of the integrated mural decoration of the room through series of glass *trumeaux* and side-tables. Contrary to what some art historians have asserted, this decor conceived by Maddalena Doria Spinola was not created for her husband, Niccolò Spinola, before he assumed the rank of Doge. Nor was it an evocation of the marriage of Maddalena herself.⁸ Instead, these works served to celebrate the nuptials of the elder son of the marquise, Francesco Maria Spinola with Giulia Maria Fieschi.⁹

The extent of the work and the importance of the sum of money spent underscore the renown of this decor for nearly forty years after it was undertaken. The social reasons that necessitated this undertaking give an indication: the marriage represented a determining episode in the life of the nobility as it sealed a strategic alliance between two families. The union between Francesco Maria Spinola and »Lilla« Fieschi surpassed their personal interests in order to embrace those of their *gens*. At the heart of the decorative

ensemble, the highlighting on the collection of paintings of the ancestors and several patrimonial objects attest to the symbolic dimension of the work launched in 1734. The specific value conferred on these objects demonstrated that Paolo Francesco Spinola, and not his elder brother, who was mentally deficient, would be designated as inheritor of the palace. Inheritance customs in Genoa favored equality between the male children, rather than honoring seniority of birthright, but the first-born son generally received the *domus magna* and the principle goods therein. This rule was overturned if the integrity of the patrimony of the *casata* was in danger, and mental deficiency constituted a major obstacle to the inheritance, considering the risk of gross mismanagement. In his will of August 26, 1769, Francesco Maria Spinola designated his younger son, Paolo Francesco Spinola, as his universal inheritor¹⁰ and asked that his eldest son, Pasquale, be aided by a tutor »as long as he will persist in his present state of debility«.¹¹ Francesco Maria Spinola here followed the instructions of the will set forth by his mother, Maddalena Doria Spinola.¹² Through a legal document, the

8 For example, interpretations made by Rotondi Terminiello 2000 (as note 1), 228 (the political ambition of Niccolò), 242 (the identification of one of the nymphs represented in the gallery with Maddalena) and in Boccardo (as note 1), 476.

9 On the origins of the order of 1734–1736, implying a complete re-reading of the iconographic program of the frescoes on the second *piano nobile* and a full account of numerous related expenditure, see Perrin Khelissa (as note 3), 143–154. The unpublished marriage contract that we have brought to light is signed on November 18, 1734, ASG, NA (Gio Cristoffaro Massa), 9882.

10 ASpG, A12, P6/7, Sc7A, p449(1)23-51 (will, August 26, 1769): »E volendo io per degne cause che [morono] l'animo mio valermi della facoltà, o sia arbitrio à me come sopra conferto perciò per il presente atto d'ultima volontà alla successione del detto palazzo e mobili sudetti come sopra vincolato, invece del Sig[no]re Pasquale mio figlio primogenito ho nominato e nomino il Sig[no]re Paolo Francesco mio figlio secondo genito il quale doppio di me intendo che resti sostituito nella successione di detto palazzo di Pellicceria e mobili sudetti colle sostituzioni, e chiamate, vincoli, proibizioni, condizioni, e dichiarazioni, e sotto li modi e forme in tutto e per tutto secondo il dis-

posto et ordinato da detta Sig[no]ra Maddalena mia madre nella riferita lista o sia nota de 30 aprile 1759 segnata no. 3 alla quale mi rimetto«.

11 Document cited at note 10 above: »sino à che continuerà nella presente sua imperfezione«.

12 The archival documents relating to the succession of Maddalena Doria Spinola are: ASpG, A12, P6/7, Sc7A, p449(1)23-51 (copy of the assembled wills and codicils, August 31, 1760); those documents corresponding to ASG, NA (Troilo Castiglione), 11283, doc. 57 (will, September 14, 1752); ASG, NA (Troilo Castiglione), 11283 (codicil, September 12, 1753); ASG, NA (Troilo Castiglione), 11283 (codicil, August 20, 1755); ASG, NA (Troilo Castiglione), 11283 (codicil, April 30, 1759).

13 Jean-Marie Augustin, Successions, in: Lucien Bély, *Dictionnaire de l'Ancien Régime. Royaume de France XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle*, Paris 1996, 1184: »inaliénables, indivisibles et insaisissables entre les mains de l'héritier qui doit le rendre en totalité à l'appelé«.

14 Document cited at note 12 above (will, September 14, 1752): »Chiamo in primo luogo il Sig[no]re Francisco M[ari]a Spinola mio figlio primogenito, sua vita naturale durante, con obbligo di dare abitazione in detto palazzo al Sig[no]re Pasquale suo fratello e mio figlio secondogenito sua vita naturale durante, e

marquise had made sure that the decor of 1734–1736 would be preserved through successive generations, until the very present day. She instituted a perpetual *fideicommissum* (*fidei commissum*), a legal disposition by which all successive inheritors were bound to observe the stated terms. The *fidei commissum* of the marquise rendered the palace of Pellicceria and much of its decor »inalienable, indivisible and to be transmitted to successive generations without loss or dispersion«.13 She contributed to the definitive integration of the inherited goods and their fundamental protection. Although the will of September 14, 1752 attached a clause of masculine primogeniture, it was annulled in the third codicil of April 30, 1759.14 Francesco Maria Spinola was obliged to exclude Pasquale from his benefit of *fideicommissum* and to name in his stead another of his legitimate sons.

The history of objects of the Genovese aristocracy of the 18th century is closely linked to their legal status, itself dependent on the symbolic value that they encapsulated. The dynastic significance given to the patrimonial objects is the essential quality that permits us to distin-

guish them from other objects. Certain typological and formal characteristics, however, also sheltered these objects from dispersion and deterioration. The will of Maddalena Doria Spinola specified that the *fidei commissum* be applied to the Pellicceria palace: »with all the paintings in the three painted rooms [north], of the *sala* [great room, west] and the others on the same floor as the *sala*, only those that are properly mine [and not those of her husband Niccolò Spinola15], and the great mirror of Paris,16 the double crystal doors,17 all the *trumeaux* (carved panelling and pier mirrors) of the gallery,18 the small mirror and the *trumeaux* of the two unpainted rooms [south] and the little tables, those that are properly mine, and the silver chandelier of the *sala*, the crystal chandelier of Milan, the same in crystal of the gallery and of the little room, that is properly mine, and the silver ornament of the chapel, the chandeliers, and the silver reliquaries, paintings, curios and all that is necessary for the use in the said chapel, for the pleasure of the aforementioned palace, silverware, furniture, and other objects mentioned above«.19

dopo la morte di detto Sig[no]re Francesco Maria, succeda in detto fedecommissum, ed al beneficio di esso il suo primogenito maschio legittimo e naturale, sino a che naturalmente viverà, e così successivamente, e gradatamente di primogenito in p[ri]mogenito maschio legittimo e naturale nato di vero e legittimo matrimonio del suddetto Sig[no]re Fran[ces]co Maria, talmente che il figlio primogenito escluda il zio paterno; (codicil, April 30, 1759): »Perciò in forza della presente nota scritta di mio ordine da persona mia confidente, conforme dichiaro, e da me sottoscritta da registrarsi sotto il suddetto mio testamento come parte sostanziale del medesimo, e da perpetuamente osservarsi, ordino, dispongo e voglio che dopo la morte naturale del predetto Sig[no]re Fran[ces]co Maria mi figlio primogenito, alla goduta di detto perpetuo fedecommissum e primogenitura di detto palazzo di Pellicceria, e dei mobili et altro in esso esistenti e che restano descritti in detto mio testamento, invece del figlio primogenito legittimo e naturale di esso Sig[no]re Fran[ces]co Maria, succedo uno dei figli legittimi e naturali dello stesso Sig[no]re Fran[ces]co Maria mio figlio per atto fra vivi, o per atto d'ultima volontà in suo arbitrio [...]«.

15 On the collection of paintings in Pellicceria began by the Pallavicini, see Piero Boccardo, *Per la storia della*

quadreria di Palazzo Spinola, in: *Palazzo Spinola a Pellicceria* 1987 (as note 1), 63–86; Simonetti 2004 (as note 1), 471–478, 511–540.

16 Still *in situ* in the first room north on the second floor of the Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola. On the circumstances of the order of the great mirror of Paris by the intermediary, Victor-François Louat, a banker residing at rue Bertin-Poirée, between the Louvre and the Châtelet, in the neighborhood of *marchands-merciers*, see Perrin Khelissa (as note 3), 127–131.

17 Now lost, they were similar to those known at the Palazzo Carrega-Cataldi Strada Nuova, presently the Chamber of Commerce. The originals are held at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, Alvar González-Palacios, *Il Mobile in Liguria*, Genoa 1996, 160–161; Cristina Bartolini, Gianni Bozzo, Elena Manara, *Palazzo Carrega-Cataldi. Camera di Commercio*, Genoa 2000, 43–48.

18 On the mirrors of the *galleria degli specchi*, see Cristina Cándito, *Le Gallerie degli specchi a Genova. Rilettura di alcuni documenti dell'Archivio di Palazzo Spinola a Pellicceria*, in: *Studi di storia dell'arte* 11, 2000–2001, 275–290.

19 Document cited at note 12 above (will, September 14, 1752): »Item lascio e sottopongo a perpetuo fedecommissum il mio palazzo posto in questa città sulla

As Anna Dagnino has remarked, the selection of the numerous objects bequeathed by the perpetual *fidei commissum* were chosen by dint of their monetary value. The mirrors, the crystal, the silverware were among the most costly luxury products.²⁰ The choice responds otherwise to criteria of immobility. The *trumeaux*, the side-table and the chandelier are as such objects that integrate architectural decor. With respect to frescoes or stucco, they were assimilated in the architectural envelope in which they were contained.

By contrast, the furniture of the palace that was bequeathed to Francesco Maria Spinola without stipulations, and which Paolo Francesco had not conserved in his time, highlights more the decoration rather than the decor. By »decoration« we mean an ornament of decor, bound to change along with the times, subordinate to the system of the ensemble. Maddalena Doria Spinola gave full possession and use to her elder son: »all the crimson velour wall-hangings of the three painted rooms, *portières*, curtains, baldaquins of the entire house [...], the tapestries of the two chambers and all the fittings used with those, namely in the storage [most likely those items acquired by Agostino and Ansaldo Pallavicini, described among the stored goods of Nic-

colò Agostino Pallavicini in 1709 and bequeathed to Maddalena Doria Spinola²¹], all the furniture therein designated for daily use in all of the apartment of the story of the *sala* [*secondo piano nobile*] and likewise the two rooms of new crimson damask [south] with the curtains therein, in addition to all the gold trimmings, the fringes of crimson velvet [...] the thirty-two new armchairs and the twenty stools that accompany them, the forty-two crimson velvet upholstery with their somewhat less modern golden fringe [...] the eight sofas of the gallery, gilt and upholstered with green fabric with their golden plaits and the green canvass day-covers, the curtains, likewise green of said gallery [...]«.²²

We must now consider the temporal attribute qualifying these particular furnishings: by »new« is meant those objects in keeping with their time, contemporary practices and tastes; »less modern« refers to those objects superseded by technical or artistic innovations, or what had gone out of fashion. The term »daily« references quotidian use. In their essence, these home furnishings were intended to be used until otherwise altered or worn out.

The dichotomized conception of the objects, originating from the perpetual *fidei commissum*,

piazza di Pellisaria dove abito presentem[en]te, assieme tutti li quadri delli tre salotti dipinti, della sala, ed altri a piano di sala quelli però solam[en]te che sono miei propri, e lo specchio grande di Parigi, le controporte di cristallo, tutti li tremò della galleria, lo specchio piccolo, e tremò delli due salotti non dipinti e li tavolini miei propri, e la lampada d'argento per la sala, la lampada di cristallo di Milano, quelle parimente di cristallo della galleria, e del piccolo sito mio proprio, e l'ornamento d'argento per la capella, candelieri e reliquiari d'argento, quadro, suppelletti, e tutto ciò che ci vuole per uso di detta capella, alla goduta del quale suddetto palazzo, argenti, mobili, et altro descritti, come sopra, e da me come sopra soggetti a perpetuo fedecom[ess]o, da non potersi in alcun tempo avvenire vendere, alienare, ne in alcune modo obbligare direttamente, ne indirettam[en]te dagli infrascritti chiamati a detto fedecommissso, conforme così espressamente ordino, voglio e proibisco loro di fare«.

²⁰ Dagnino (as note 1), 54.

²¹ In 1642, Agostino Pallavicini procured in Venice a series of Flemish tapestries representing episodes from the *History of Aeneas*. As for his son, Ansaldo, he bought from his brother-in-law, Tommaso Gri-

maldi, a series of five tapestries from Brussels depicting scenes from *The History of Tobias*. In the inventory of goods of Niccolò Agostino Pallavicini in 1709, the tapestries are described as follows: ASpG, A5, P6, Sc53, p160 (*Inventario o sia repertorio de beni mobili ritrovati nel detto Palazzo, fatto ad istanza dell' Illustrissima Anna Maria Pallavicina Doria*, August 21, 1709): »Nella stanza nominata il guardarobbe maggiore di casa [...] tapezzarie otto di Fiandra Istoria di Tobia, altri pezzi otto tapezzarie simili Istoria di Ciro, altri pezzi sette tapezzarie simili Istoria della Regina Ester, due colonate simili, altri pezzi sette compreso il sopraporta tapezzarie simili Istoria di Enea, pezzo uno di tapezzarie simile Istoria di Scipione, altro pezzo simile di cui non si sà l'Istoria, pezzi sei di tapezzarie ordinarie fatte a fogliami che servono per coprire gradini e palchi, altro pezzo di tapezzaria boscareccia [sic] con caccie simile di quelli così si crede che sono a Pegli. E perche Pora è tarda si è tralasciato di proseguire detto inventario, o sia repertorio, con animo di ripigliarlo e continuarlo domattina«. In her will, Maddalena Doria Spinola bequeathed to her eldest son »due salotti di tapezzarie con quel di più dell'istessa istoria che sono nel guar-

echoed what Kzrysztof Pomian designates on the one hand as »*sémiophores*, the objects that have no practical use« in the sense that they are not used but endowed with meaning, and on the other hand, »things, useful objects, which one uses«. ²³ By excluding certain objects from the obligation of conservation, Maddalena Doria Spinola wished to assure a reasonable progress of the useful transformations of the decoration of the palace, permitting conformity to the tastes of the day. The emphasis placed on the decorative textiles is telling, given that textiles – especially those of the 18th century – are the most sensitive barometers of passing fashion.

*Paolo Francesco Spinola, a Man of Taste
Confined to a Certain Conservatism*

Compared to the role of his mother, Maddalena Doria Spinola, as commissioner of works, that of her elder son diminished considerably. This is shown by the account books of Francesco Maria Spinola, in which were kept only those expenses that related to the maintenance of the palace and certain lesser orders of furniture. ²⁴ The inventory of 1770, compiled following his death, also shows that most of the interiors of the *piano*

darobbe«, perhaps the two series in question. In the inventory of 1770, neither of the two tapestries are mentioned; but in the inventory of 1824–1858, we find in the storage: ASpG, Registro 518 (*Inventario degli effetti mobili di proprietà del M[archese]se Giacomo Spinola q. Fran[cesco] Maria esistenti nell'infra indicati luoghi, cioè: 1° nel palazzo di Pellicceria (in Genova), 2° in quello di villeggiatura d'Ovada (Acqui), 3° in quello idem delle Colombarie (Novi), 4° in quello idem di Pagana (Rapallo), 5° in quello idem di Bavari (Staglieno), 1824–1858*): »no. 284: undici tappezzerie di Fiandra di diversa grandezza e disegno, 500 lire«. Their location today is unknown.

²² Document cited at note 12 above (will, September 14, 1752): »Item lascio a detto titolo di prelegato al sudetto Sig[no]r[e] Fran[cesco] M[aria] mio figlio primogenito le vesti di veluto lavorato cremesile per li tre salotti dipinti, portiere, tendine, baldachini per tutta la casa, ossia palazzo, miei propri, e li due salotti di tappezzerie con quel di più dell'istessa istoria che sono nel guardarobbe, compreso tutti li mobili che adornano giornalm[en]te tutto l'appartamento a piano della sala, et ancora li due salotti di damasco cremesile moderno, con quelle tele, che ci sono di più, e

nobile had remained in the same condition since the 1730's, without even a partial renovation of the decorative textiles. The *fideicommeso* tended to emphasize immutability more than it in fact forbade change: Francesco Maria Spinola was far more conservative than was specified in the legal institution. In order to maintain the coherence of the decor established by his mother, he preferred to modify nothing, not even those elements that he was authorized to replace. In the following generation, the attitude of Paolo Francesco Spinola noticeably changed and the emergence of a particular taste appeared, distinct from that of his predecessors. Here, the nobleman responded to another of the exigencies tied to his rank, besides that of assuming the responsibility of inheritor. He needed to know how to undertake several sumptuary expenditures.

True description of the profile of a Genovese nobleman, the attestation of wealth previously mentioned exalts the sumptuous way of life of Paolo Francesco Spinola: »I hereby attest and affirm that the said Most Illustrious Lord Paolo Francesco has always dwelt and lived in the splendor and the magnificence customary among Gentlemen of the first rank in the present city, as much in the richness of furnishings in his palatial

tutte le trine d'oro per detti apparati, friglie di veluto cremesile, [contrine] e frangia per sudetti due salotti e baldachini, li schaffi numero trentadue moderni, e numero venti scabelletti compagni, le vesti di veluto con trine d'oro, compagne alle trine numero trentadue, e numero venti simili de scabelletti, portiere con più guarnizione, tendine di damaschetto, e tutto il damasco in tele simile, e portiere non guarnite, e le vesti delle sedie di veluto di due colori per detti schaffi, che servono giornalm[en]te; le vesti numero quarantadue di veluto cremesile guarnito di guarnizione d'oro meno moderna, numero dodici vesti di scabelletti simili, le portiere di veluto guarnite di detta guarnizione, lo scaffo del cannapé, il veluto per detto, e guarnito dell'istesso gallone, e la veste di veluto, che serve giornalmente gli otto cannapé della galleria indorati e fasciati di stoffa verde, ossia contratraglio con oro, e la veste verde giornale, le tendine pure verdi per detta galleria, le cadreghe per la sala, e tutto ciò, che vi è di mio proprio per le fonzioni«.

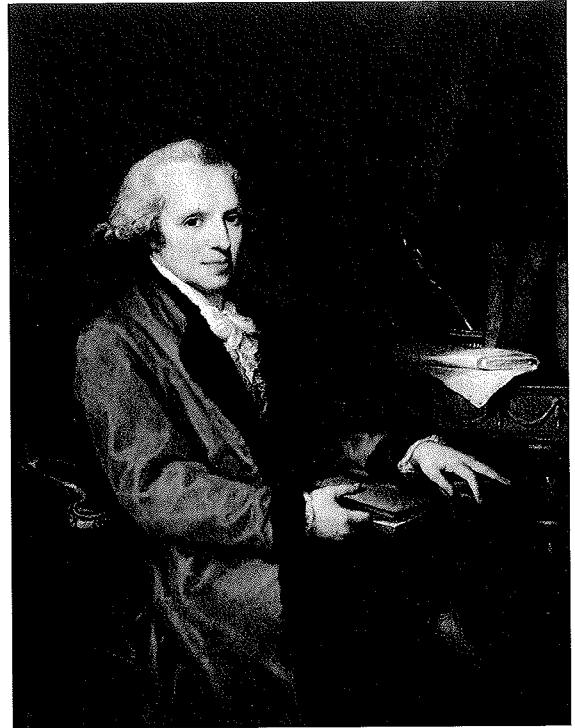
²³ Kzrysztof Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux. Paris, Venise, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècles*, Paris 1987, 43–47.

²⁴ ASpG, Libri di conti, 74 (*Manuale*, 1753–1769).

dwelling as in those of his servants, butlers, valets, pages, lackeys, porters, coachmen, cooks, scullery maids and the priest of the house, who is the Reverend Father Cesare Chiappe of Lucca». ²⁵

The sumptuousness of the furnishings present in the palace of Pellicceria was given priority because it constituted a noble way of life, a reflection of his status and his practices. As for the staff, their number added to the display of luxury, their livery readily identifying each servant as a member of the Spinola household. ²⁶ Farther along in the testimony, the witness also states to have »seen the said Most Illustrious Lady Brignole [Maria Brignole-Sale, daughter of Emilio Ridolfo], wife of said Most Illustrious Lord Paolo, caparisoned and dressed according to her rank [...]«. ²⁷

Recognized above all as lavish and prone to luxury, Paolo Francesco Spinola wished to be seen as a cultivated man of taste and a lover of novelties. Thus, the portrait that he commissioned from Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807) in 1793 placed in the fore his intellectual qualities and his eagerness to be a man of the latest fashions (fig. 1). ²⁸ The choice of painter was not due to



1. Angelica Kauffman, *Portrait of Paolo Francesco Spinola*, oil on canvas, 1793. Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola

25 Document cited at note 4 above: »Attesto inoltre e depongo che il detto Ill[ustrissi]mo Signore Paolo Francesco è sempre vissuto e tuttavia vive con quella splendidezza e magnificenza che si costuma da i primarj Cavaglieri della presente città, tanto nella ricchezza de mobili nel suo palazzo d'abitazione quanto nel treno di servitù, maestri di casa, camerieri, paggi, staffieri, portantini, carrozzieri, cuochi e sottocuochi e prete di casa, che è il R[everen]do Cesare Chiappe Luchese«.

26 On Genovese domestics and the question of livery, see Marzia Cataldi Gallo, Portantini, Lacché, Paggi... Il personale domestico dell'aristocrazia genovese, in: eds. Farida Simonettia and Marzia Cataldi Gallo, *Farsi portare in carega: portantine e livree per la nobiltà genovese* (Quaderno della Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola 15), Genoa 1995, 72–128.

27 Document cited at note 4 above: »[...] aver vista detta Ill[ustrissi]ma Signora Brignole moglie di detto Ill[ustrissimo] Signore Paolo adornata e vestita da suo pari, con tutta la servitù [...]«; »[...] quando la detta Ill[ustrissi]ma Signora Maria Brignole coabitava col sudetto Ill[ustrissimo]mo Signor Paolo Francesco era dal medesimo mantenuta e trattata al pari dell'altre Dame di pari rango (primo rango) [...]«; »[...] so che da detto

Ill[ustrissi]mo Signor Paolo Francesco è stata provvista conspicuamente [...] assegnare di spillaria di due mila e più lire et è stata trattata con quella magior splendidezza [...]«.

28 Until the donation of the palace to the state in 1958, the portrait hung in the third room north on the second *piano nobile*, Document cited at note 21 above (inventory, 1824–1858): »no. 754: altro [quadro] rappresentante ritratto del M[arche]se Paolo Spinola d'Angelica Kaufman, 100 lire«; Pasquale Rotondi, *La Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola a Genova*, Milan 1967, 185, no. 49. Today, the portrait rests in the second room south, Rotondi Terminiello/Rosato/Simonetti (as note 2), 104, no. 7, fig. 4; Graziano Ruffini, *Libri e letture nella dimora degli Spinola* (Quaderno della Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola 16), Genoa 1996, 124, no. 61. These authors refer to the account book of Paolo Francesco Spinola, referenced in ASpG, Libri di conti, 283 (*Spese fatte in assenza del Signore] Paolo Francesco*, from 1792), and specify a payment on April 15, 1796, for »spedizione e la gabella della cassa del ritratto di Signor Paolo e la cassetta di stampe ambedue venute da Roma«. In the later account book of Paolo Francesco, on June 6 1824 and on August 1, 1824, we find two other pay-

chance: in Rome from 1781 onwards Angelica Kauffman was known to frequent a milieu of artists and men of letters and for having created the effigy of the archeologist and art historian Winckelmann (1764, Zürich, Kunsthaus).²⁹ Paolo Francesco Spinola was thus depicted seated in front of a writing-desk covered with leather-bound volumes, an exemplar in hand. This activity of reading referenced his vast collection of books, which numbered at his death around two thousand, five hundred volumes.³⁰ One may note that the writing-desk in front of which sat Paolo Francesco is a work of ebony, influenced by classical antiquity. This detail made much of his personal taste for fashionable artistic forms. Exactly what was the place of these fashions in the context of the familial urban palace described before? Despite the obligations of conservation present in his material environment, did Paolo Francesco Spinola succeed in creating an ambience properly his own?

The painting of Angelica Kauffman broke with the genre of formal portraiture by presenting a more intimate view of aristocratic life. The subject is seen in his apartments engaged in an ordinary

activity. Although clad in a purple robe evoking his rank among the *Magnifici* of the city, that is to say among the magistrates, he appears at ease. In the 18th century, a part of the social life of the Genovese aristocracy took place in the private apartments located on the upper floors of the palace, generally on the mezzanine called the »mezz'arie«. Less formal than those on the state floor, these apartments hosted activities of regular reading, music and parlor games, suggesting a select circle of guests. Paolo Francesco Spinola seems to have favored the occupation and the furnishing of the upper floors of the Spinola Palace in Pellicceria. Before the inventory of Giacomo Spinola di Luccoli around 1824–1858, the archival evidence remained evasive on this subject. The inventory of 1770 mentions only one antechamber and one bedchamber with wardrobes and storage. The will of Paolo Francesco Spinola composed in 1821 confirmed the presence of three additional rooms not mentioned in the inventory of 1770: a study, a library and a room reserved for archives.³¹ To this day there remains no material trace, as they were destroyed during the aerial bombardment of the Second World War.³²

ments, perhaps pertaining to the portrait, ASpG, Libri di conti, 120 (*Libro delle spese*, 1819–1824), fol. 42: »a Giovanni Maggi per la cornice del ritratto del Signore Paolo pagate come da ricevute no. 25 [lire] 112«; *Ibidem*, fol. 43: »all'indoratore Laviosa per l'indorature della cornice datta fare per il ritratto del Sig[nore] Paolo come da ricevute no. 31 [lire] 105«.

29 On Angelica Kauffman, see Angela Rosenthal, *Angelica Kauffman. Art and sensibility*, New Haven/London 2006.

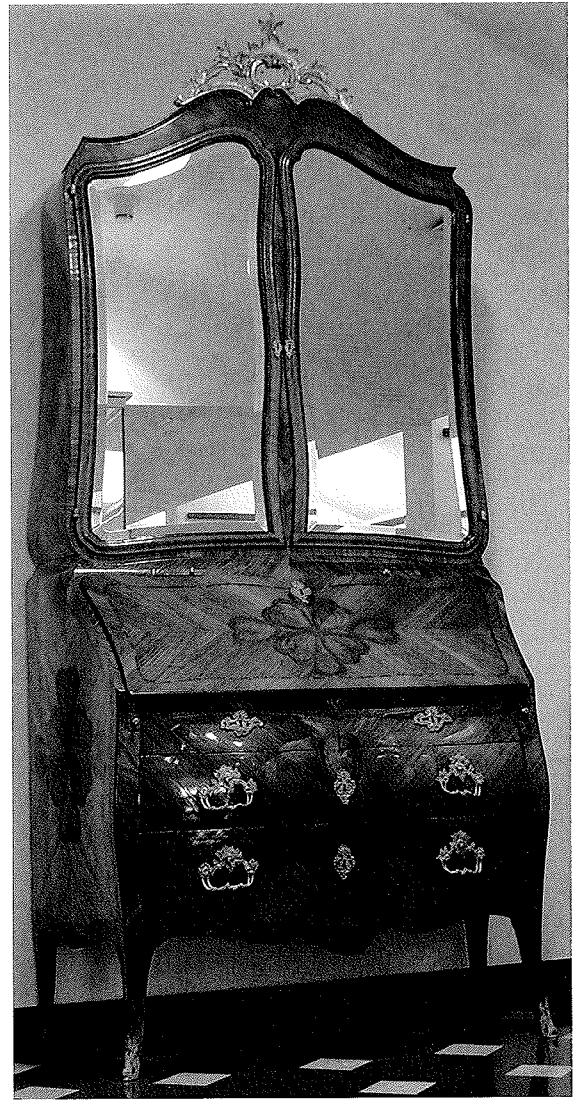
30 On this question, see Ruffini (as note 28). Similarly, he collected prints, some of which were executed by contemporary artists. A fine example, dated June 14, 1808, he bought two perspectives on the decor of Perino del Vaga au Palazzo del Principe, ASpG, Libri di conti, 188 (*Libro di spese*, after 1804), fol. 110: »ad Alberto Nattini per compra fatta dal signore Paolo di due stampe una di Giove che fulmina i giganti e l'altra il trionfo di Scipione, ricavate dalle pitture di palazzo de principe Doria dipinte da Perino del Vaga e da ricevuta no. 84 [lire] 64«. At least one of them is currently under conservation in the prints collection of the Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola, badly damaged by the fire after the bombardment of November 13, 1942. My thanks to Maria Luce Repetto for her guidance. It concerns the work of a contem-

porary of Marquis Spinola, Giuseppe Longhi (1766–1831). Active in Paris and Rome, the Milanese engraved was professor at the Accademia di Brera and author of a work on the technique of chalcography and painting.

31 ASpG, A10, P6/7, Sc3, p810, doc. 63 (will, July 7, 1821): »Lascia come sopra al medesimo Signor Marchese Giacomo Spinola tutte le seggiole, tavolini, canterali, scrivanie, specchi e quadri, come pure i letti montati che si ritroveranno in tutte le altre stanze di altre mezzarie tanto da padrone che da servitù del detto palazzo posto in piazza Pellicceria, dovendo però intendersi esclusa dal legato e rimasta a vantaggio degli eredi universali tutta l'altra roba che si ritroverà in dette stanze, compresa quella che si ritroverà nei cassettoni, scrivanie, canterali, armadij, e ripostigli tutti dette sudette stanze e più quanto esisterà nelle stanze ad uso di scrittojo e libreria e nelle stanze ad uso di guardaroba [...] E più ancora dovrà intendersi escluso del detto legato quanto si ritroverà nella stanza a mezze scale delle mezzarie, all'ingresso della quale stanza c'è un cancello di ferro come pure quanto si ritroverà nella stanza annessa alla suddetta che serve ad uso di archivio«.

32 Since 1992, they are the exposition halls of the Galleria Nazionale della Liguria; cf. Farida Simonetti,

Respecting the principle of vertical distribution inaugurated by his grandmother, the aristocrat freely invested in one place, the *mezz'arie*, where no element of decoration was subject to the *fidei commissum* and where the rules of decorum were more relaxed.³³ He affirmed a distinction between two types of furniture that accorded with the vertical division of the interior, favoring the practical differentiation of habitation. Social changes were matched by corresponding changes in architecture, in turn prompting a new arrangement of rooms and their furnishings. The first category of furniture, with which Paolo Francesco Spinola seldom bothered, was intended for more ceremonial purposes. These were located on the *piano nobile* of the palace. Linked to the architectural envelope that they adorned and protected by legal injunction, these objects confirmed the sense of permanence cherished by their owners. The second category of furniture, in which Paolo Francesco invested more lavishly, applied to the ebony pieces less dependent on the decorative cadre of the ensemble. Mobile, these furnishings were shifted to the interior according to need and season, and found a place of favor in the private zones of the residence. By reason of their status and use, unlike the architectural furnishing remaining most often *in situ*, the occasional furniture has long disappeared since it was not protected by the *fidei commissum*. The Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola conserves an example of furniture with *quadrifogli*, a specialty of the local workshops to which a description from the inventory of 1770 corresponds: in the bedroom of Paolo Francesco Spinola, there was in effect a »burro di



2. Genoese workshop, »Burro«, rosewood veneered, gilded bronze, mirror, second half of the 18th century. Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola

Gianluca Zanelli, *Galleria Nazionale della Liguria*, Genoa 2002.

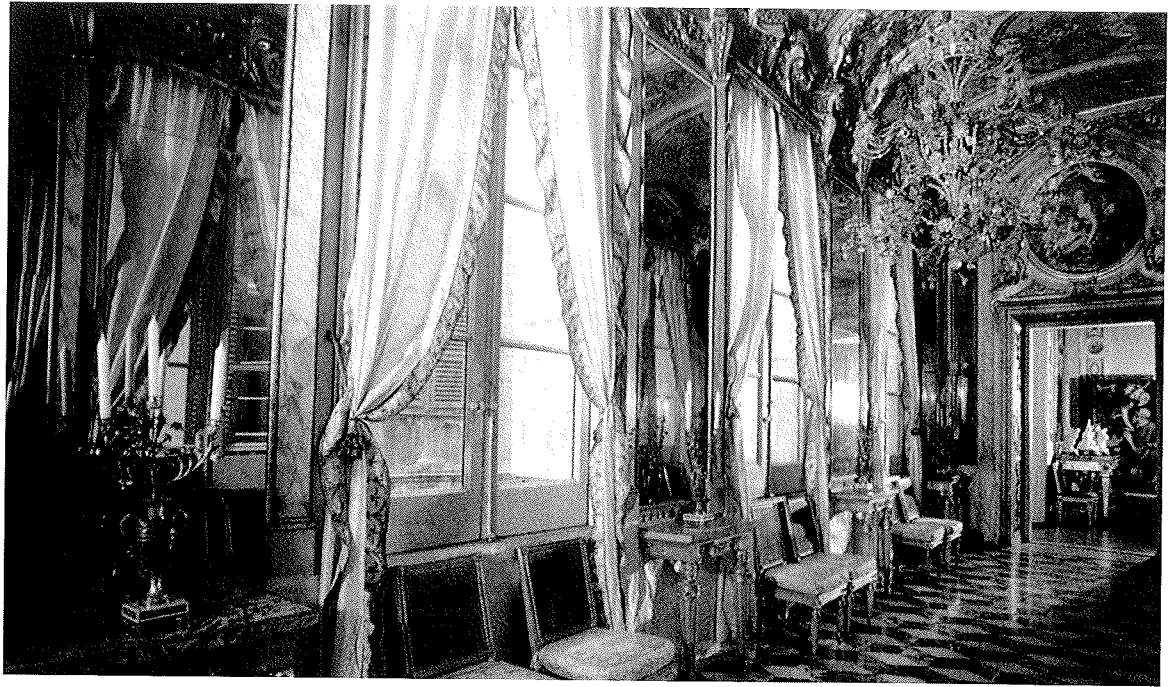
33 On the development of the distribution of the interiors of the Spinola Palace in Pellicceria and notably the different agencements before and after the work of Maddalena Doria Spinola, see Perrin Khelissa (as note 3), 183–211. The reasoning behind the vertical distribution is opposed to the reasoning of horizontal distribution defined in the palace inventory drawn up in 1709.

34 Document cited at note 6 above (inventory, July 2,

1770). A descriptive review of the furniture may be found in Giovanna Rotondi Terminiello (presentazione), *Interventi di restauro* (Quaderno della Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola 6), Genoa 1983, 71–73, no. 13; Ruffini (as note 28), 127, no. 66.

35 ASpG, Libri di conti, 188 (*Libro di spese*, after 1804), fol. 30.

36 Lauro Caumont Caimi, *L'Ebanisteria genovese del Settecento*, Parma 1995, no. 268, no. 269; González-Palacios (as note 17), 289; Lauro Caumont Caimi, *Bancalari ed artigiani dei mobili d'arredamento*, in:



3. General view of the Galleria degli specchi. Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola

noce con spalliera di cristallo a specchi aperto in due parti»³⁴ (fig. 2). Elsewhere, without specifying the location, an account book of the aristocrat records the payment on March 22, 1805, »allo scagnettaro milanese Gaetano Rinaldi per prezzo di quattro quadri di mosaico di legno a vari colori rappresentanti vedute di mare del disegno del Vernet [lire] 500«.³⁵ It concerns a piece of marquetry destined to be mounted *en tablette*, which depicting a seascape after Claude Joseph Vernet (1714–1789). The identity of the cabinet maker was revealed in a hand-written note affixed to an exemplar located in the Galerie Kugel in Paris (»opere di Gaetano Renaldi, ebanista Milanese abitante in Genova Strada Novis-

sima [presently Cairolì Street]; 1798«).³⁶ In the manner of Giovanni Maffezzoli of Cremona and Tommaso Pezzoni active at Plaisance, Rinaldi was a follower of the celebrated Milanese *ébéniste* Giuseppe Maggiolini (1738–1814), maker of light furniture inspired by English or Dutch models.³⁷

On the *piano nobile*, Paolo Francesco Spinola checked his initiatives merely so as not to neglect certain variations. His taste expressed itself by the renovation of the ornamental vocabulary of certain furnishings that he ordered. The harmonization with the pre-existing decorative cadre was realized in accordance with the classification inaugurated by his grandmother Maddalena

Atti della società ligure di storia patria XLIV/CXVIII/2, 2004, 288–289; Enrico Colle, *Il Mobile neoclassico in Italia: arredi e decorazioni d'interni dal 1775 al 1800*, Milan 2005, 382, no. 88 (gaming table of Gaetano Rinaldi, private collection).

³⁷ For a monograph on the *ébéniste* see Giuseppe Morazzoni, *Il Mobile intarsiato di Giuseppe Maggiolini*, Milan 1953. The Milanese delivered in 1784 to Domenico Serra a furniture for his palace of Strada

Nuova (formerly the palace of Cristoforo Spinola). In the second room south on the second floor, the Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola has on view a gaming table and a *commode* done at the end of the 18th century in a Lombard workshop; see Giovanna Rotondi Terminiello (ed.), *Acquisizioni e aggiornamenti critici per Palazzo Spinola a Pellicceria* (Quaderno della Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola 11), Genoa 1988, 61–62, no. 8; inv. 689 (*commode*).



4. *Appliqué candelabra*, sculpted, painted and gilded wood, second half of the 18th century-beginning of the 19th century. Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola



6. *Tripod*, sculpted and gilded wood, second half of the 18th century. Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola



5. *Sofa*, sculpted and gilded wood, second half of the 18th century. Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola

Doria Spinola, notably that of the architectural furniture in sculpted and gilt wood (such as the side-table, the *appliqué candelabra*, the glass *trumeau*). Paolo Francesco Spinola thus modified the appearance of the most sumptuous room on this floor, the *galleria degli specchi* (fig. 3). He kept the sixteen glass *trumeaux*, the four *appliqué candelabras* in the shape of dolphins and the crystal chandelier installed in 1734–1736, but removed the eight green satin-upholstered sofas, present in 1770, to replace them with small side-tables fixed to the walls beneath the glass *trumeaux* in repetition along the length of gallery.³⁸ Marble-topped, their sculpted wooden and gilt

armature drew a solemn line, discretely ornamented by classical architectural motifs. These accorded with those present on the chairs placed beneath the windows, inspired by the works of Georges Jacob (1739–1814) in the 1760's. A diary of correspondence of Paolo Francesco Spinola allows us to positively date the construction or acquisition of these tables between 1770 and 1788.³⁹

An archival gap prevents us from identifying in the collections of the Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola a number of furnishings that formal observation may identify as executions datable to the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th centuries. For example, the *appliqué* candelabras in the shape of winged women, on both sides of the great mirror of Paris, evoke the ornamental repertoire of Gaetano Cantoni (1745–1827) or, outside of Genoa, that of Giocondo Albertolli (1742–1839) (fig. 4).⁴⁰ The two sofas of the second room south

correspond to the forms elaborated at the end of the 18th century in the entourage of these two artists (fig. 5).⁴¹ This is also the case with the pair of tripods (fig. 6) and the side-table placed in the first room south located next to the *galleria degli specchi*. The sculpted motifs of the last side-table, notably the ram heads (fig. 7), make one think of those represented on the *trumeau de cheminée* of the second room north (fig. 8).⁴² With respect to the tripods, they appear later in the inventory of goods of Giacomo Spinola of 1824–1858 (in the first room north on the second floor, »n°30: due tripod di legno intagliato e dorato con due tazze di terra del Giappone rotte d'aggiunte«).⁴³ In the inventory of the 1958 donation, the tripods are always associated with »n°352/353: due coppe cinesi (una rotta)« now lost.

Paolo Francesco Spinola finally embellished his interior with fashionable luxury objects, often imported. Of a relatively modest scale, they enter into the category of curios that can

38 Document cited at note 6 above (inventory, July 2, 1770): »Nella galleria (tutto fideicomesso legato): no. 8 tremau grandi con piccola cornice dorata; no. 8 detti piccoli con piccola cornice dorata; no. 8 canape con piedi d'intagli dorati facciati di raso verde con raporte di tela d'oro guarniti di trene d'oro; no. 20 scabelletti di legno con intaglio di bassorilievo con spalle e sedile di canna d'India e coscine di velluto verde lavorato; no. 1 piccola lumiera di cristallo con faccia di taffetà verde; no. 4 piccoli delfini dorati negli angoli con loro braccie dorate«; Document cited at note 21 above (inventory, 1824–1858): »Art[icol]o 6. Galleria, no. 79: sedici sgabelletti dorati con sedile e spalla di canna d'India e cuscini imbottiti con fascia di stoffa verde, 160 lire; no. 80: otto tavolini di legno intagliato e dorato con chiappa di marmo diverso fillettati in metallo dorato, 400 lire; no. 81: otto vasi di marmo e metallo con tre rami per lumi e ciascuno pure di metallo, 160 lire; no. 82: otto specchj a due luci per [ciascuno] con cornice di legno intagliato e dorato ed otto striscie di luci per canti con loro fregi dorati e quattro delfini legno dorato, 800 lire; no. 83: una lumiera antica di cristallo di rocca, 80 lire«.

39 ASpG, Registre 538 (register of correspondence, 1787–1803).

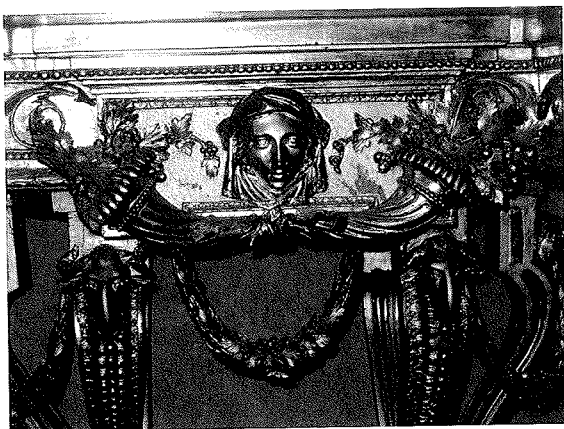
40 On these two artists, see the recent work of Piero Boccardo, Io e Luiggi lavoriamo indefessamente a disegnar mobili di nuova moda. Gaetano Cantoni e altri artisti ticinesi e genovesi nelle Nuove mezzarie di Palazzo Rosso nel 1783, in: Piero Boccardo, Clario Di Fabio, *Genova e l'Europa continentale (Austria, Germania, Svizzera): opere, artisti, committenti, colle-*

zionisti, Milan 2004, 222–245; eds. Enrico Colle, Ferdinando Mazzocca, *Il Trionfo dell'ornato. Giocondo Albertolli (1742–1839)*, exh. cat., Rancate, Pinacoteca Cantonale Giovanni Züst, Cinisello Balsamo 2005.

41 Rotondi Terminiello (as note 34), 74–77.

42 Concerning the ornament of the chimney *trumeau* in the second room north, we have excluded the attribution made previously to Francesco Maria Mongiardino in Dagnino (as note 1), 39–59. The stylistic observations and the evasive archival mentions that turned up in the *Manuale* of Maddalena Doria Spinola (ASpG, Libri di conti, 62 (*Manuale*, 1732–1752): »specchio piccolo« for a room »verso Pelisseria«) warrant caution. The inventory of 1770 does not indicate either the mirror or the chimney *trumeau* in the second room north; the inventory of 1824–1858, however, does: Document cited at note 21 above (inventory, 1824–1858): »no. 52: uno specchio sopra camino in due luci con cornice intagliata di legno dorato, 600 lire«.

43 Document cited at note 21 above (inventory, 1824–1858); Ferdinando Mazzocca, *Il Neoclassicismo in Italia da Tiepolo a Canova*, exh. cat., Milan, Palazzo Reale, Milan 2002, 514, no. XIII.36. In her review, Farida Simonetti considers that the tripods appeared for the first time in the inventory of the gift to the state in 1958 (in the third room north, »no. 350/351: due tripod brucia-profumi«); in Farida Simonetti, *Ceramiche. Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola*, Genoa 1999, 6, the author touches on the mention of the tripods cited in the inventory of Giacomo Spinola and their presence today in the first room south.



7. Detail of the side-table of the first room south, sculpted and gilded wood, second half of the 18th century. Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola



8. Detail of the trumeau de cheminée of the second room north, sculpted and gilded wood, stucco, second half of the 18th century. Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola

exercise a certain decorative charm, albeit secondary, without clashing with the general ambiance of the room. Without returning to the Parisian purchases that we have formerly studied (notably those of the marble vases mounted on the candelabra in the hall of mirrors, and the three groups of Sèvres porcelain today in the first room south),⁴⁴ we may note that they express a desire to be in keeping with the times. The interest of the nobleman for Parisian wares shows his willingness to follow the latest trends of his day. Like his mother, Lilla Fieschi, he came to appreciate certain Chinese imports, displayed in several places around the palace.⁴⁵ In 1770, there are mentioned in the corner of the antechamber of his apartments two vases of exotic inspiration («n°2 vasi di bucheri nelli angoli della stanza»). What is more, another article found in his will points to a ceramic ensemble presently in the museum. In the legacy of Giacomo Spinola di Luccoli, one article lists: »two Chinese porcelain conic vases with their pedestals in gilt wood and three large Chinese porcelains with identical lids and their pedestals in gilt wood«. ⁴⁶ This ensemble of five decorative pieces functioning as chimney decoration is identified with the two conic vases and the three large Chinese porcelain vases today on view in the Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola (fig. 9, 10).⁴⁷ In the middle of the 19th century, according to the inventory of Giacomo Spinola di Luccoli, the three vases and the two »trombe di terra del Giappone ad uso di vasi« were present in the first room north.⁴⁸ Then as well as today, the two conic vases were not placed on the pedestals.

Despite the fact that he made fewer changes to the Pellicceria Palace, Paolo Francesco Spinola

44 Perrin Khelissa (as note 3), 91–112; Anne Perrin Khelissa, Monsieur Piccaluga, un agent génois à Paris. Négoce d'argent et de marchandises de luxe à la fin du XVIII^e siècle, in: *Recherches en histoire de l'art* 4, 2005, 91–112.

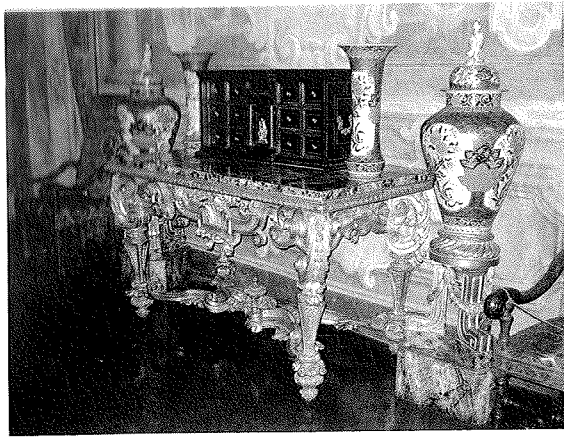
45 The taste of Lilla Fieschi for ceramics, particularly eastern porcelains, is evident in the inventory drawn up on January 15, 1784 (ASG, NG, 1 Sezione (Stefano Remondini), 1048, doc. 115).

46 Document cited at note 31 above (will, July 7, 1821):

»due vasi di porcellana della China fatti a tromba con suoi piedestalli di legno dorato e tre vasi grandi di porcellana della China con suo coperchio simile, e suoi piedestalli di legno dorati in qualunque parte di detto palazzo possano tutti questi oggetti ritrovarsi«.

47 Ed. Laura Zenone Padula, *Porcellane orientali nella collezione Spinola* (Quaderno della Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola 8), 1985, 45–47, no. 13.

48 Document cited at note 21 above (inventory, 1824–1858): »no. 22: tre vasi di terra del Giappone con

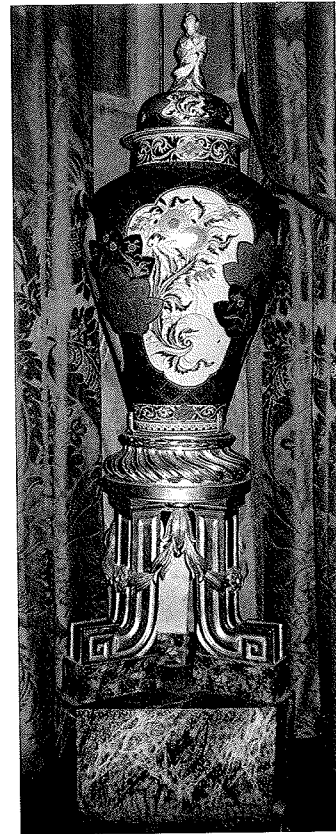


9. Elements of a chimney decoration, Japanese porcelain (Genroku, 1688–1703), sculpted and gilded wood, beginning of the 19th century. Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola

succeeded in creating a bold syncretism that his father had never dared to make. On the one hand, Paolo Francesco respected the choice of his grandmother to fix the appearance of the interior of the palace so as to reflect the familial splendor. On the other hand, he lavished his attention on the contemporary decorative language and indulged his attraction for beautiful objects. The last owner during the oligarchic Republic, he fully embodied the issues of conservation and the exigencies of representation incumbent to a man of his rank. As a patrician, he managed his patrimony and decorated his interiors. Childless at the time of his death, he nevertheless made provisions to ensure that the image of lineal transfer be preserved: the son of his cousin, Giacomo Spinola di Luccoli, was designated head of the *domus magna* of Pellicceria.⁴⁹ The palace remained a private residence in the fall of the Republic in 1797 until being ceded to the state in 1958. After the fall of the Republic, the Spinola di Luccoli family was unburdened by the social etiquette of republican governance,

coperchj e loro piedestalli in legno intagliato e dorato, 1200 lire»; »no. 26: due trombe di terra del Giappone ad uso di vasi, 300 lire«.

⁴⁹ The documents relevant to the succession of Paolo Francesco Spinola are: ASpG, A10, P6/7, Sc3, p810,



10. Elements of a chimney decoration, Japanese porcelain (Genroku, 1688–1703), sculpted and gilded wood, beginning of the 19th century. Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola

thus becoming first and foremost the guardians of the temple of their ancestors. What was once an assembly of patrimonial possessions with meaning and a determined function became a collection of objects with no purpose other than aesthetic delectation.

The case of Paolo Francesco Spinola is a particularly eloquent evocation of the rules that inspired the administration of a *settecentesco* Genoese aristocratic patrimony. The identity of the nobility and the incumbent social obligations

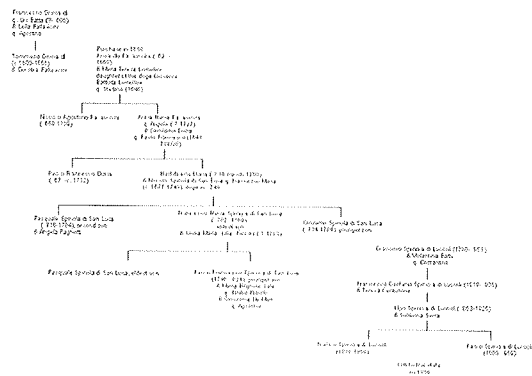
doc. 63 (will, July 7, 1821); ASpG, A10, P6/7, Sc3, p810, doc. 67 (codicil, January 11, 1822); ASpG, A10, P6/7, Sc3, p810, doc. 68 (codicil, March 18, 1822); ASpG, A10, P6/7, Sc3, p810, doc. 87 (codicil, October 7, 1823).

inform the meaning conferred on the objects and the basis of their existence. The analysis of the social practices gives a key to an alternative interpretation that an aesthetic reading alone cannot afford. Our project places itself in the continuity of a social history of art mindful of exterior factors that determined its creation. Moreover, it avoids reducing the history of the decorative arts to a simple history of styles and instead underlines the close rapport between decor and decorum, that is between decor and social conventions. Decor serves not only to elicit a harmonious aesthetic effect but also to create a meaningful system of objects representative of the owners and their social rank. Furthermore, the present study has tried to further the evolution of the objects themselves. Before being considered as works of art whose main value is intrinsic, expressed in technical or formal terms, these objects have been judged by those qualities sometimes responding to social exigencies of the group to which they pertain, at other times proper to personal tastes. Far from constituting the external realities of the objects themselves, these multiple definitions constitute the changing facets of a single entity. The social and symbolic

value of the object joins in its definition along with its material and artistic dimension. If he wishes to take into account the object in its full complexity, the art historian must restore the logical steps of its aesthetic composition, without presupposing that this last is either intrinsic or prevailing.

Appendix

Brief Genealogy of the Owners of the Spinola Palace in Pellicceria⁵⁰



⁵⁰ Last update of the genealogy published in Farida Simonetti (dir.), *L'eredità donate. Franco e Paolo Spinola*

la e la Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola, Genoa 2009, 74–76.

Photo credits: 1 Ruffini (as note 30), 124, no. 61. – 2, 4–10 photograph by the author. – 3 Marzia Cataldi Gallo, *Tessuti. Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola, Genoa 1999, 14*