

Restoration as Fabrication of Origins
De la restauration comme fabrique des origines

Henri de Riedmatten, Fabio Gaffo, Mathilde Jaccard (Eds.)

Restoration as Fabrication of Origins

A Material and Political History of Italian Renaissance Art

De la restauration comme fabrique des origines

**Une histoire matérielle et politique de l'art à la Renaissance
italienne**

DE GRUYTER

With the support of the Swiss National Science Foundation and the University of Geneva.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. For details go to <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Conditions of the Creative Commons license apply only to original material. Re-use of material from other sources (marked with source citation) such as charts, illustrations, photos, and text excerpts may require further permission to use from the respective rights holder.

ISBN 978-3-11-107227-2

e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-107273-9

DOI <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111072739>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023930644

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2023 with the author(s), editing © 2023 Henri de Riedmatten, Fabio Gaffo, Mathilde Jaccard, published by Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston. This book is published with open access at www.degruyter.com.

Proofreading and additional translating: Patrick (Boris) Kremer

Cover image: *River God (Arno/Tigris)*, 2nd century AD, restored in the early 16th century, marble, 153 × 248 cm, Vatican Museums, Pio Clementino Museum, Octagonal Courtyard, inv. 168.

Photo: © Governatorato SCV – Direzione dei Musei. Tutti i diritti riservati.

Typesetting: LVD GmbH, Berlin

Printing and binding: Beltz Grafische Betriebe GmbH, Bad Langensalza

www.degruyter.com

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Foreword	7
Avant-propos	11

ON THE NOTION OF RESTORATION / DE LA NOTION DE RESTAURATION

Kathleen W. Christian	
<i>Translatio and Restauratio</i>	
Text and Image in Renaissance Rome	17
Mateusz Kapustka	
The Reason of Distance	
Iconoclasm and Antiquarianism in the 16th Century	37
Arnold Nesselrath	
<i>Ex Uno Lapide</i>	61

OF SPACES AND PLACES / D'ESPACES ET DE LIEUX

Caroline S. Hillard	
Raffaele Maffei and the Discovery of an Etruscan Tomb in 1508	81
Florian Métral	
Une poétique de l'archaïque	
Sur la Loggia de Raphaël (1516–1519)	99
Jérémie Koering	
Temps mêlés	
La Galleria dei Mesi au palais ducal de Mantoue comme restauration artistique et politique	119

RECENT RESTORATION PRACTICES / PRATIQUES RÉCENTES DE LA RESTAURATION

Neville Rowley

Transparence ou opacité

Restaurer la Renaissance italienne (xx^e–xxi^e siècles) **137**

Victor Lopes

La mise au tombeau de Véronèse

Traces, histoire matérielle et restauration **157**

A COLONIAL RENAISSANCE? / UNE RENAISSANCE COLONIALE ?

Beat Wyss

Nova Atlantis

The Colonial Renaissance **171**

Acknowledgments / Remerciements **187**

Credits **188**

FOREWORD

In April 2019, Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris was engulfed in flames. In the aftermath of the disaster, the focus has shifted to its restoration. Should the intervention go beyond mere conservation? If so, which state is to be recreated—the 12th-century construction or its last known iteration, which includes the spire added by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc in the 19th century? While instances of renovation due to natural damages are not uncommon, it is not necessarily clear which procedures should be followed. To cite but one example, Avignon Bridge has been repeatedly damaged by the flooding of the Rhône but there are no plans to rebuild it in its entirety.

Discussions around conservation and restoration practices were codified in the West in the framework of the Athens Charter of 1931. The Second World War temporarily put an end to the debate, but it was quickly revived in the wake of the considerable material losses it caused. These discussions culminated in the Venice Charter in 1964, a compromise between intergenerational transmission and structural integrity.

While the Venice Charter specifically concerns built heritage, it clearly illustrates the general tendency towards preserving assets in their current state. If there is to be an intervention, it should be aimed at keeping things as they are—as in the case of Sénanque Abbey, which might have collapsed if work had not been undertaken since 2019. However, Sénanque Abbey is a special case to the extent that the original nucleus of the abbatial church was built over a short period of time and the function of the building has not changed since its foundation, which lends it a certain architectural coherence despite the workings of time and a few alterations. As a result, it was easier to lay down the procedure than in other situations where the layers of time intertwine and can hardly be distinguished.

For this is one of the main issues: should one choose one narrative over another? As a matter of fact, the anti-interventionist approach raises as many questions as answers. Among other things, the Krakow Charter, which complemented the Venice Charter in 2000, recommends to distinguish contemporary additions from prior structures—an approach that can sometimes result in visual dissonance. Beyond the purpose of preserving essential information that allows us to understand the object's history, the main risk of preservation at all cost is a museification, if not disneyfication, of heritage.

It is equally damaging to disregard the phenomena of appropriation and projection, past or present. To cite another Parisian example, the Bourse de Commerce has served successively as a grain shed, ballroom, and trading house before it was transformed by the Japanese architect Tadao Andō into a museum of contemporary art in 2021. However, not all spaces are suitable for upgrading, and day-to-day management of repurposed buildings can be problematic, especially in urban areas. This explains why the architectural complex of Les Halles in Paris, for example, suffered a different fate from the Bourse de Commerce.

It is in the context of this debate that the present publication took shape. It emanates from an international online conference organized in March 2021 by the Department of Art History of the University of Geneva in collaboration with the Museum of Art and History of Geneva. It comprises contributions in French and English and, like the symposium itself, forms part of the project *Restoration as Fabrication of Origins: A Material and Political History of Italian Renaissance Art* supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

The aim of this volume is to clarify the relationships between material restoration and politics in Italian Renaissance art. The focal point of this research is the question of origin as a foothold for political, patrimonial, and cultural identity. Indeed, the 15th and 16th centuries bear witness to the emergence and consolidation of political consciousness. In order to establish their legitimacy and ensure their longevity, local and regional governments started to model themselves on earlier political regimes, predominantly the Roman Republic and ancient Greece. Concurrently, patrician families now asserted ancient, mythical or historical, genealogies.

These claims were enacted within a system which, rather than restoring the initial forms and meanings of existing objects, remodeled the past according to new identity needs: spaces were reorganized, and works of art invested with new meanings. Their material and aesthetic reality was thus transformed and redefined. For the contemporary researcher, the aim is therefore to analyze the potential physical modifications of these artefacts in light of their symbolic recoding.

The question is to what extent restoration is an invention of a new state of the work—an imaginary fabrication of its original state. Which mechanisms are at work, consciously or not, in the shift from restoration to foundational myth? This book also looks at the recasting of past events in later historical contexts, more specifically through narratives of origin that aim to found the present rather than testify to a past time.

On the notion of restoration

The first part of this volume questions the semantic ambiguity of the concept of restoration in the Renaissance and the still imprecise contours of its use in the context of the reception of antiquity. Restoration could include practices of adding, mutilating, substituting, or even displacing works with a view to their reuse. Kathleen W. Christian traces the emergence of the notion of *restauratio* in the world of antiquarians and analyzes its association with the

concept of *translatio* based on various textual and visual examples. Mateusz Kapustka's contribution confronts restoration with iconoclasm, focusing on the reception of the figure of Emperor Constantine as a destroyer of idols. Arnold Nesselrath's study focuses on the *Laocoön Group*, using this paradigmatic example to show how restoration, reconstruction, and addition can affect or even define a work of art.

Of spaces and places

The second part offers case studies of characteristic arrangements and rearrangements of spaces and places in the dynamic context of the rediscovery of antiquity. These undertakings had the particular effect of adding a material reference to the postulates of an antique origin and/or of supporting a foundational myth. Caroline Hillard describes the discovery of an Etruscan burial chamber and its objects at Castellina in Chianti near Florence in 1508, which was among the most significant archaeological events in Renaissance Italy. It provided a heritage basis for the celebration of Florence's Etruscan origins, cultivated by the humanists and politicians of the time, including Pier Soderini, gonfalonier of the Florentine Republic. The essay by Florian Métral highlights the poetics of "the archaic" at play in Raphael's Loggia (1516–19) in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican. Developed by the artist at the request of the first Medici pope, Leo X, this *all'antica* aesthetic supports the political program of *restauratio Urbis* and *renovatio Ecclesiae*. The contribution by Jérémie Koering focuses on the Galleria dei Mesi (1572–79), an architectural and decorative ensemble within the Ducal Palace of Mantua created during the reign of Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga, which is here analyzed from the point of view of artistic and political restoration, that is, of a *restitutio* ensuring a subtle transition between different eras, ancient and modern.

Recent restoration practices

In a bid to enable an interactive relationship between past and present, this book also looks at the reception and restoration of Renaissance art objects in the following centuries up to the present day. In this way, the history and practices of restoration allow for a better material understanding of the object and its successive historical layers, between its destructions and restorations over time. Neville Rowley surveys the restorations of emblematic works of art from the Italian Renaissance in the 20th and the early 21st century. His contribution details their complex dynamics, and the theoretical and practical choices underpinning them, between transparency and opacity. The essay by Victor Lopes is an in-depth examination of Veronese's *Entombment* (c. 1575–80, Geneva, Musée d'art et d'histoire) and the journey that led it from Venice to Geneva, via Versailles and Paris. It explores the changes in its material condition, caused in particular by its varying status and function, up until the most recent restoration carried out by the author himself.

A colonial Renaissance?

The contribution of Beat Wyss, acting as a conclusion that opens onto another field, probes the myth of Atlantis from Plato to our days, with a focus on *The New Atlantis* (1627) by Francis Bacon. Summoning Aby Warburg, Walter Benjamin, and Erwin Panofsky, it questions the very concept of Renaissance and considers the power of political or even colonial legitimacy it carries.

AVANT-PROPOS

En avril 2019, la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris subissait l'assaut des flammes. La question se pose à présent concernant sa restauration. Doit-on intervenir au-delà de la simple conservation ? Si oui, quel état reconstituer, celui de sa construction au ^{xiii}^e siècle ou le dernier état connu, incluant la flèche ajoutée par Eugène Viollet-le-Duc ? Les cas de rénovation en raison de dégâts naturels ne sont pas rares, mais la démarche à suivre n'en est pas pour autant plus évidente. Pour n'en citer qu'un exemple, le pont d'Avignon a subi au fil des siècles les crues du Rhône et seule une partie a pu être à ce jour conservée, sans projet de reconstruire l'ensemble du bâtiment.

Les discussions autour des pratiques de conservation et de restauration avaient été codifiées en Occident dans le cadre de la charte d'Athènes de 1931. La Seconde Guerre mondiale a provisoirement mis fin à ces interrogations, mais les pertes matérielles considérables qui en ont découlé ont rapidement relancé le débat. Les discussions ont abouti à la charte de Venise en 1964, un compromis entre transmission intergénérationnelle et intégrité structurelle.

Même si la charte concerne le patrimoine bâti, elle illustre bien la tendance générale qui se veut de conserver les biens patrimoniaux dans leur état actuel. Si intervention il y a, cela sera essentiellement dans un but de maintien, à l'image de l'Abbaye de Sénanque qui aurait pu s'effondrer si des travaux n'avaient été entrepris dès 2019. Le cas de cette dernière est toutefois assez singulier. En effet, le noyau original de l'abbatiale a été construit sur une courte durée et elle n'a pas changé d'assignation depuis sa fondation, ce qui lui vaut de posséder une certaine cohérence architecturale en dépit des affres du temps et des quelques transformations apportées. En conséquence, la marche à suivre est plus aisée à définir ici que dans d'autres situations où les couches temporelles s'entremêlent et sont difficiles à appréhender.

C'est d'ailleurs l'un des principaux enjeux : faut-il choisir un récit au détriment d'un autre ? La démarche anti-interventionniste génère de ce fait autant de questions qu'elle fournit de réponses. La charte de Cracovie, venue compléter en 2000 celle de Venise, demande notamment de distinguer les ajouts contemporains des structures antérieures, pouvant parfois créer des dissonances visuelles. Au-delà de vouloir maintenir des données

essentielles à la compréhension de l'histoire, le risque principal de la préservation à tout prix est une muséification, voire une disneylandisation, du patrimoine.

Il est au même titre dommageable de faire abstraction des phénomènes d'appropriation et de projection, qu'ils soient passés ou présents. Pour reprendre un exemple parisien, la Bourse de Commerce a servi successivement de hangar à grains, de salle de bal puis de lieu de négoce avant de connaître l'intervention de l'architecte japonais Tadao Andō et de rouvrir ses portes en qualité de musée d'art contemporain en 2021. Tout espace n'est néanmoins pas adapté à la revalorisation, sa gestion pouvant s'avérer problématique, surtout en milieu urbain. Ainsi, l'ensemble du quartier des Halles n'a pas pu connaître le même destin que le hangar à grains.

C'est dans le cadre de ce débat que prend forme cet ouvrage. Ce dernier trouve sa source dans un colloque international organisé en ligne en mars 2021, conçu au sein de l'Unité d'histoire de l'art de l'Université de Genève avec la collaboration du Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève. Il accueille des contributions en langues française et anglaise et, à la suite du colloque, s'inscrit dans le cadre du projet soutenu par le Fonds national suisse de la recherche scientifique : *De la restauration comme fabrique des origines. Une histoire matérielle et politique de l'art à la Renaissance italienne*.

Le volume a pour but de clarifier le rapport entre restauration matérielle et enjeu politique autour de l'œuvre d'art à la Renaissance italienne. Le point de convergence de cette recherche est la question des origines, lieu d'ancrage d'une identité politique, patrimoniale et culturelle. Les ^{xv}^e et ^{xvi}^e siècles témoignent en effet de l'émergence et de la consolidation de consciences politiques. Afin de construire leur légitimité et d'assurer leur longévité, les différents gouvernements se revendiquent de régimes antérieurs, le plus souvent de la République romaine et de la Grèce antique. Au même titre, les familles patriciennes se réclament d'une généalogie antique, mythique ou historique.

Ces enjeux s'inscrivent dans un dispositif qui, plutôt que de rendre à des objets existants leur forme et sens initiaux, remodèle le passé en fonction des nouveaux besoins identitaires : les espaces sont réaménagés et les œuvres d'art sont investies de significations nouvelles. Leur réalité matérielle et esthétique peut s'en trouver ainsi transformée et redéfinie. Le but est donc d'analyser les potentielles modifications physiques de ces artefacts en vue de leur réinvestissement symbolique.

Il s'agit d'examiner dans quelle mesure la restauration est l'invention d'un état de l'œuvre dont elle fabrique et fantasme l'origine. Quels sont les mécanismes opérants, consciemment ou non, dans le glissement de la restauration vers le mythe de fondation ? L'ouvrage se penche aussi sur le remaniement d'événements passés dans un contexte historique postérieur. Et ce à travers des récits de l'origine qui visent à fonder le présent plutôt qu'à témoigner d'un temps passé.

De la notion de restauration

La première section du volume interroge particulièrement l'ambiguïté sémantique de la notion de restauration à la Renaissance, et les contours encore imprécis de son usage dans le contexte de la réception de l'Antiquité. Ainsi la restauration était susceptible de recouvrir également des pratiques d'ajout, de mutilation, de substitution, ou encore de déplacement des œuvres en vue de leur emploi. Kathleen W. Christian retrace l'émergence de la notion de *restauratio* dans le milieu antiquaire et analyse son association avec le concept de *translatio* à travers divers exemples textuels et visuels. La contribution de Mateusz Kapustka confronte la restauration à l'iconoclasme, avec pour centre d'intérêt la réception de la figure de l'empereur Constantin comme destructeur d'idoles. L'étude d'Arnold Nesselrath porte sur le groupe de marbre du *Laocoon* et développe à travers cet exemple paradigmatique la façon dont restauration, reconstruction et additions peuvent affecter, voire définir une œuvre d'art.

D'espaces et de lieux

La seconde partie propose des études de cas impliquant de façon plus caractérisée des agencements et réagencements d'espaces et de lieux dans une dynamique de redécouverte de l'Antiquité. De telles entreprises ont notamment pour effet d'ajouter une référence matérielle aux postulats d'une origine antique et/ou de venir consolider un mythe de fondation. Caroline Hillard détaille la découverte d'une chambre funéraire étrusque et des objets s'y trouvant à Castellina in Chianti près de Florence en 1508, comptant parmi les événements archéologiques les plus marquants de la Renaissance en Italie. Cette découverte confère une assise patrimoniale à la célébration de l'origine étrusque de la cité de Florence, cultivée par les humanistes et les hommes politiques de l'époque, dont Pier Soderini, gonfalonier de la République florentine. L'article de Florian Métral met en évidence la poétique de l'« archaïque » qui se joue dans la Loggia de Raphaël (1516-1519) dans le palais apostolique du Vatican. Imaginée par l'artiste à la demande du premier pape Médicis, Léon X, cette esthétique *all'antica* nourrit une entreprise de nature politique liée à la *Restauratio Urbis* et à la *Renovatio Ecclesiae*. La contribution de Jérémie Koering se penche sur la Galleria dei Mesi (1572-1579), ensemble architectural et décoratif réalisé au sein du palais ducal de Mantoue sous le règne du duc Guglielmo Gonzaga. Il l'analyse dans une perspective de restauration artistique et politique, de *restitutio* assurant une transition subtile entre différents temps, anciens et modernes.

Pratiques récentes de la restauration

Pour une relation interactive entre présent et passé, le livre intègre également la réception et la restauration d'objets d'art de la Renaissance lors des siècles suivants et jusqu'à nos jours. De la sorte, l'histoire et les pratiques de la restauration permettent d'approfondir la

compréhension matérielle de l'objet et ses couches historiques successives, entre ses destructions et ses restaurations au fil du temps. Neville Rowley propose un cheminement à travers les restaurations d'œuvres d'art emblématiques de la Renaissance italienne, au xx^e et au début du xxi^e siècle. Il détaille la dynamique complexe de chacune d'entre elles et les choix théoriques et pratiques qui les déterminent, entre transparence et opacité. Le texte de Victor Lopes offre un examen approfondi de *La mise au tombeau* de Véronèse (v. 1575-1580, Genève, Musée d'art et d'histoire) dans ses pérégrinations la menant de Venise à Genève, en passant par Versailles et Paris. Il y explore les modifications de sa condition matérielle, causées notamment par ses changements de statut et fonction, jusqu'à la dernière restauration menée par ses soins.

Une Renaissance coloniale ?

La contribution de Beat Wyss, en guise de conclusion ouvrant sur un autre champ, sonde le mythe de l'Atlantide, de Platon à nos jours, en portant une attention particulière à *La Nouvelle Atlantide* (1627) de Francis Bacon. Convoquant Aby Warburg, Walter Benjamin et Erwin Panofsky, il s'interroge sur le concept de Renaissance et considère le pouvoir de légitimité politique, voire coloniale, que ce dernier sous-tend.

**ON THE NOTION OF RESTORATION
DE LA NOTION DE RESTAURATION**

TRANSLATIO AND RESTAURATIO

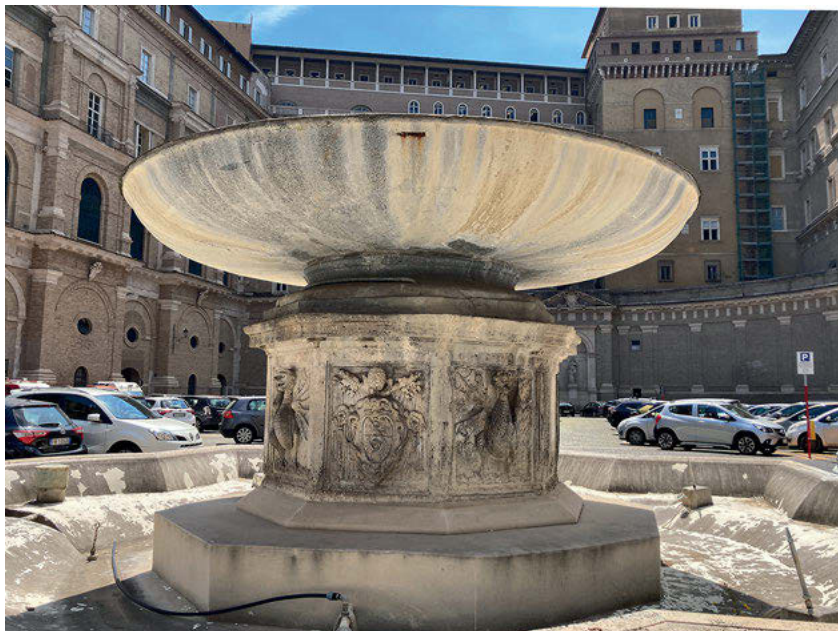
Text and Image in Renaissance Rome

The first establishment of an antiquities collection in the Belvedere might be traced not to the discovery of the *Laocoön*, or the transfer of the *Apollo Belvedere* and other famous statues to the Vatican, but to the movement in 1504 of an enormous granite basin (fig. 1). Today, this *vasca* is rather unceremoniously displayed in the middle of the parking lot familiar to those who cross it to visit the Vatican library and archives. It stands on the now-abraded marble base that Pope Paul V provided for it in the 17th century. In the time of Pope Julius II, when the basin was the centerpiece of Bramante's lower Belvedere court, its display was commemorated by an inscription, which has since been lost: "Pope Julius II brought to the Vatican gardens this basin, twenty-three feet wide, from the Baths of Titus and Vespasian, broken by the injustices of time, adorning and restoring it to its original condition, in the first year of his papacy, 1504."¹

Julius's engineers had dragged this massive object, one of the largest basins to survive from antiquity, across four kilometers of difficult terrain, through the narrow streets of Rome, across the Tiber until it reached its final destination at the Belvedere. A drawing by Giovannantonio Dosio shows it installed in the lower garden (fig. 2). It comes as no surprise that the dedicatory inscription gives Julius credit for moving such an enormous basin from a *vigna* near the Colosseum. More difficult to explain, however, is the emphasis the inscription places on the basin's repair: not only did the pope have this vessel transported across Rome, but he also had it restored to its original condition, having found it "broken by the injustices of time." While the basin's *translatio* is obviously praiseworthy, its history of *restauratio* remains uncertain. Today, the vessel reveals rather modest signs of restoration, and descriptions of the object in its Quattrocento state suggest that before its move to the Belvedere it was not extensively broken, but intact.²

1 The inscription was recorded by Giacomo Grimaldi in 1616, then reproduced in Vincenzo Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese e d'altri edifici di Roma*, Rome, Tipografia delle scienze matematiche e fisiche [and other publishers], 1869–84, 6, p. 55, n. 122. For the vessel, see Annarena Ambrogio, *Labra di età romana in marmi bianchi e colorati*, Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2005, L. 35, pp. 224–31.

2 See Giovanni Rucellai's description in his *Zibaldone Quaresimale*: "di giro da torno di braccia 40 et il diametro suo di braccia 12, ritratto a modo d'uno piattello." He located it in a "vigna appresso al Co-



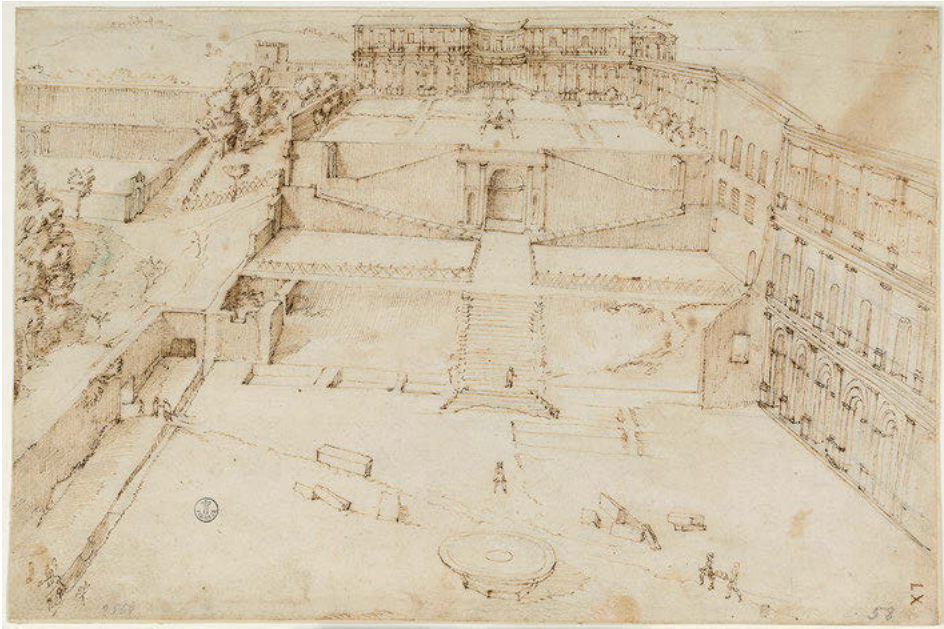
1 Basin on a 17th-century pedestal, 2nd century CE, granite, 680 × 75 cm, Vatican City, Cortile del Belvedere

Arguably, Julius II's inscription takes pains to emphasize the concept of restoration. By Julius II's day, while *translatio* was already an age-old concept, *restauratio* had more recently come into fashion as a desirable type of antiquarian intervention. By the 16th century, it appeared alongside *translatio* as a practice underpinning the early history of collecting amongst private individuals, and as an important point of emphasis in the patronage of popes.

Translatio (from *transfere*, to carry over or transfer), a symbolic or literal movement from one place to a supposedly better one, has been closely associated with the concept of *spolia*, notably in Maria Fabricius Hansen's book *The Eloquence of Appropriation*. "The use of *spolia*," she writes, was "a practice consisting of a transference of power from the past through a taking over of its cultural expressions and incorporating them into one's own."³ Hansen analyses *spolia* as a *translatio* of materials, of meaning, and of time. She understands *trans-*

liseo, dove si vede molte anticaglie, dove si mostra esservi stato una terme." Cited in Alessandro Perosa, *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone, I: Il Zibaldone Quaresimale*, London, The Warburg Institute, 1960, p. 77. The vase is represented schematically on the "Pianta Strozzi" in the 1470s, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Codice Rediano 77, fols 7v–8r. See Ambrogi, *Labra*...

3 Maria Fabricius Hansen, *The Eloquence of Appropriation: Prolegomena to an Understanding of Spolia in Early Christian Rome*, Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2003, p. 263.



2 Giovannantonio Dosio, *The Cortile del Belvedere*, ca. 1561, pen and ink on paper, 22.1 × 33.3 cm, Florence, Uffizi (GDSU, inv. 2559 A r)

latio as a form of appropriation, a process that involves finding suitable cultural expressions, transferring them to a new setting, and translating them so that they fit a new, Christian context and create new meanings. In the setting of Renaissance Rome, *translatio* had special significance. The large size of so many of the remains of antiquity meant that movement was difficult, richly symbolic, and easily exploited by the popes and powerful cardinals in possession of the required means. Examples of difficult movements abound long before the Belvedere granite basin: the bronze *pigna* brought sometime before the 12th century to the forecourt of St. Peter's for re-use as a fountain, the colossal *krater* moved to the front of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, or other, massive antique basins and urns sculpted in granite or marble dragged to the fronts of basilicas or curial residences. The granite basin moved by Cardinal Pietro Barbo (the future Pope Paul II) to the front of Palazzo Venezia was so large its transfer required the destruction of two houses, while Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, Sixtus IV, Leo X, Paul III, and Sixtus V are also known for ambitious *translationes*, most impressively that of the Vatican obelisk (fig. 3). The technical and logistical prowess, and political and military might required for such moves draws comparison with the powers of the ancient Roman emperors and their superhuman capacity to transport objects on the scale of the Egyptian obelisks. Papal *translationes* were rich with symbolic, religious, and political meaning, achieving the goal of self-celebration and adding splendor to the Christian *caput mundi*.



3 Obelisk from Heliopolis, 1835 BCE, red granite, 25.5 m, Vatican City, St. Peter's Square

By the time Julius II transferred the massive granite basin, *restauratio* had become another, much more widely practiced form of antiquarianism. *Restauratio* came into focus particularly during the 15th century, when attention shifted towards smaller, fragmented antiquities in white marble gathered in private collections. Arguably, a concept of *restauratio* first took shape in the Trecento, in connection with cultural phenomena outlined in Tilmann Buddensieg's classic article "Gregory the Great, the Destroyer of Pagan Idols."⁴ While Gregory had been praised in the medieval era for eradicating antique texts and

4 Tilmann Buddensieg, "Gregory the Great, the Destroyer of Pagan Idols. The History of a Medieval Legend concerning the Decline of Ancient Art and Literature," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 28, 1965, pp. 44–65.