The Historical Vignettes in the Vatican Galleria delle Carte Geografiche

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<u>The Historical Vignettes in the Vatican Galleria delle Carte Geografiche</u>

Figure 1: The Gallery of Maps

Walking along the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, henceforth, the Gallery, visitors are presented with a unique and monumental work of art: a mural map cycle that intricately details every corner of the Italian peninsula. The 120-metre corridor was conceived, built and decorated during the papacy of Gregory XIII (1572-1585). This Bolognese pope, Ugo Boncompagni, hired some of the brightest minds to assist in the completion of his project. He contracted Ottaviano Mascherino to draw up the architectural plans for the Gallery, and commissioned the Dominican cartographer, Egnatio Danti, to survey anew the Papal States and to design the enormous maps of the Italian peninsula that adorn its walls. A small host of artists, including Antonio Tempesta and Mathijs Bril, worked quickly to execute the floor-to-ceiling frescoes in just four years (1578-1581). The result is both visually appealing and scientifically impressive: thirty-two vast maps of the regions of Italy, including Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin, are accompanied by eight smaller maps of the peninsula's main ports and islands as decoration for the walls of the corridor. Contained within the maps are at least twenty-three scenes from history, and at most twenty-seven, depending on the count. Overhead, the vault is painted with four cycles, dealing with subjects ranging from the Old Testament sacrifices, scenes from the lives of Saints, and allegories of virtues, to Italian birdlife. It is the historical vignettes on the maps that are the central focus of this essay, which will explore questions about their selection, meaning, and historical reliability.

Recent scholarly attention has been interested in the vault: in particular, the two largest and most complex cycles, dubbed by Antonio Pinelli as the cycles of "miracles" and "sacrifices".[1] Scholars have mostly agreed that the vault is a visual rebuttal to the Protestant outrage concerning the administration of the Church by the Papacy, whilst also offering a reaffirmation of the Eucharist as a sacrament of paramount importance. Some have attempted to incorporate the maps and even the historical vignettes therein into this religious worldview, but, in my opinion, these theories are insufficient. Typically, the 'programme' of historical scenes is made to fit the conclusions of the vault. Thus, current thinking holds that the Gallery – and the vignettes – puts forward a Catholic view of world history; however, pronouncements on it have ranged from "triumphant" to "pessimistic". This essay will attempt to rectify the deficit in scholarship concerning the historical vignettes in the Gallery by devoting in depth study to them and by asking as yet unanswered art historical questions.

It will first be necessary to review the secondary literature, during which I will outline my main criticisms. One of the foremost problems with the theories is methodological,

[1] Pinelli, 'Above the Vault', pp. 128-140. See also Goffart, 'Christian Pessimism', pp. 790-792 for the objection to labelling them "miracles".

namely that historians of the Gallery have neglected to consider what can be learned from a visual analysis. In addition, many are too enthusiastic in applying the post-Tridentine Catholic iconography of the vault to the historical scenes below. This survey will be followed by an examination of the contemporary documents that can inform us vis-à-vis the Gallery's design and purpose. These range from personal letters and inscriptions found within the maps themselves, to a dedicatory poem written shortly after its completion. I also examine literature concerning the reception of the Italian wars. Contemporary art theory and a review of the restorations are important to my approach because they help inform my reading of the images.

The main focus of this essay will be an aesthetic evaluation of the historical episodes themselves. This is followed by a brief investigation into the principal artist. Not being able to draw on every episode, owing to their number and to their diverse nature resultant from the restorations, I will draw upon a balanced selection. Principally, I will be concerned with the stylistic choices of the artists, their sources and intentions, and their attitude towards representing history.

Furthermore, throughout this essay, I will be considering what is really being depicted, and why: are the vignettes intended to be decorative, historically accurate, or propagandistic? With the Gallery's self-proclaimed 'instructive' purpose in mind, I will speculate as to what viewers were able to learn from these depictions of history. After applying these image-focused analyses on the maps, it is difficult not to conclude that the Gallery does not have a historical programme. Apart from a minority of more detailed scenes, very little about the history of the events depicted can be learned from the images themselves. Instead, our reading is informed by the geography and the informative *cartelli*. They amount to an erudite decorative system that functioned as an administrative aid.

Review of Secondary Literature

Most modern interpretations look at the vault paintings, which are primarily concerned with the Eucharist and stand as a reassertion of authority on the part of the Catholic Church following the Reformation. Accordingly, historians of the Gallery have attempted to fit the historical vignettes into this scheme, but they do not match. One third are Roman, mostly about the Hannibalic Wars, some later scenes do not involve the Church at

all, and the majority are large or famous battles in which there was vast loss of life. I argue that the logic of these theories is not sound, and that any art historian who looks in depth at what is being depicted cannot reach the conclusion that the scenes are part of a providential world history. To date, there has been no visual analysis of the historical vignettes and their attitude towards representing history.

The first conclusions about the artwork were tentative. Confronted with the immense nature of the corridor, Ludwig von Pastor, in his expansive history of the Popes, refrained from making an analysis of the Gallery: 'The restless impression of the whole is increased by the fact that at first the spectator cannot understand the connexion between the pictures'.[2] Moving forward, we again find little artistic analysis in Roberto Almagià's seminal work, *Le pitture murali della galleria delle carte geografiche*, which was instead concerned with the technical aspects of the maps.[3] However, his position on the historical scenes in the maps can be inferred: 'The three groups of combatants and the other decorative elements (trees etc.) are meant to fill up empty space or to mask gaps in the true and proper cartographical representation'.[4] Whilst I agree with the decorative aspect, I do not believe they were added simply to cover lacunae.

Almagià's work stood as the fundamental study of the Gallery for over thirty years, until recent analyses began to propose that the maps 'are actually ideological fictions intended to promulgate a particular version of providential history'.[5] The discussions concentrated on the meaning of the images in the vault in terms of the Eucharist, and attempted to link it to the maps and historical scenes below. Connecting the historical-religious imagery of the vault to the depiction of temporal, secular space in the maps, these variable theories assert that Italy is central to world history, that Italy is a new Holy Land, or that the battles painted in the maps demonstrate 'trials overcome' by the Church and thus a guiding Divine Will. It is my opinion that any theory propagating a 'providential' view of history has gone too far in its creativity, and is not supported by visual analysis. Considering the allegorical implications of the fresco of the *Repulse of Attila* by Raphael, made elsewhere in the Vatican during a particularly turbulent period in Italian history, John Hale observed: 'Such deliberate historical allusions to contemporary military crises have led to some perhaps

[2] Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, p. 217.
[3] Milanesi, 'The Historical Background', p. 118.
[4] Almagià, *Le pitture murali*, p. 21: 'Le tre figurazioni di fatti d'arme ed altri elementi decorativi (alberi ecc.) sono intese a riempire spazi vuoti o mascherare lacune della rappresentazione cartografica vera e propria'.
[5] Watts, 'The European Religious Worldview', p. 397.

overimaginative parallels-spotting'.[6] I am proposing that, on the whole, historians of the Gallery have suffered from such over-imagination in relation to the historical scenes within the maps.

The tone and direction of the most recent interpretations was laid out by Jürgen Schulz and Iris Cheney in the 1980s. Both decided that the Gallery presented a progressive view of world history from the viewpoint of the Catholic Church. In his survey of mural map cycles in sixteenth-century Italy, Schulz states: 'The gallery presents us with a digest of world history'.[7] For her part, Cheney attempts to tie the cycle of saintly "miracles" on the vault to the historical vignettes on the maps. Noticing the vignettes' focus on military activity, she concludes that the suffering therein must represent an 'epic and militantly Catholic concept of an Italy forged through centuries of unceasing conflict as the predestined home of the Church'.[8] This argument falls down for a number of the scenes, but in particular the Hannibalic scenes, as most of the Roman gains during the Second Punic War came outside of Italy in Spain or in Africa.

The monumental work by Gambi and Pinelli remains broadly in agreement with Cheney. In the introduction to the three-part series, the editors clearly state their views on the historical vignettes: 'These events were chosen from amongst the most hazardous of the dangers braved by the country in Roman times, or the various trials faced by Christian Italy as it struggled to overcome internal and external enemies'.[9] In their opinion, the historical vignettes are a catalogue of perils faced and overcome – triumphant even. The fallacy of this argument is plainly revealed in an essay by Pinelli: while discussing the Christian victories over the Turks in Malta and at Lepanto, he claims that the 'emphasis on the threatened danger also serves to enhance the Church's victorious reaction to it'.[10] While this may be true for the most recent of the depicted historical events, it disregards many others. The Battles of Pavia and Ceresole can hardly be classified as 'Christian victories', since they were fought between two Christian powers they simultaneously Christian victories and defeats. Therefore, not only do these theories take a selective eye to the scenes, but in fact ignore the contemporary literature surrounding the Italian Wars.

Among general agreement, there has been one dissenting view: that of Walter Goffart. Disagreeing with previous ideas, Goffart sees in each of the three periods a decidedly

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[6] Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, p. 145.
[7] Schulz, 'Maps as Metaphors', p. 108.
[8] Cheney, 'The Galleria delle Carte Geografiche', p. 37.
[9] Gambi and Pinelli, 'The Gallery of Maps', p. 13.
[10] Pinelli, 'Above the Earth', p. 127.

miserable tone. Drawing on his expertise in the study of the Late Roman Empire, he concludes that both the ancient scenes and later episodes were 'wholly Orosian in spirit', believing that they adopted a similar tone to the Church historian Orosius, who held that the human condition was suffering and emphasised the gloomy nature of the past, particularly the pagan past.[11] However, he claims that the perception of the Italian Wars between 1494 and 1559 is 'not easily known'.[12] On the contrary, we are able to discern the mood in Italy during these years: the contemporary literature exhibits a similarly morose disposition, especially after the sack of Rome in 1527.[13] My principal criticism of Goffart's essay is that since the inscriptions written by Danti display no linguistic similarity to Orosius, there is thus no provable connection to him. Nevertheless, I agree with him that the tone of the episodes is not triumphant, and that these works of art were not intended as instructive, but decorative, in line with Almagià.[14] Additionally, Goffart conducts no analysis of the episodes as works of art, simply viewing them as events in time.

The same lack of aesthetic analysis is evident in Francesca Fiorani's otherwise well-researched work, *The Marvel of Maps*. Following Cheney and Schulz, she believes firstly that the Gallery's vault and its maps 'placed Italy at the center of world history' and emphasised 'papal primacy in ecclesiastical matters' throughout the peninsula.[15] Secondly, she claims they are a unique symptom of Danti's attitude towards cartography: 'The historical vignettes primarily illustrated the participation of a locale, a region, a city or an area in historical events'.[16] Following this train of thought, Fiorani speculates a third meaning, namely that the illustration of the maps with historical scenes might be the fulfilment of two failed bids to provide illustrations for Leandro Alberti's chorographic work, *Descrittione di tutta l'Italia*.[17] Fourthly, Fiorani agrees that the maps had some administrative purpose.[18] Desirous of presenting an all-encompassing theory, her conclusions require the historical vignettes to operate on too many levels. Artistic analysis confirms only her argument about Danti's attitude towards Chorography and the visual aspect of description.

[11] Goffart, 'Christian Pessimism', p. 809. For a short introduction on Orosius, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 145.
[12] Goffart, 'Christian Pessimism', p. 809.
[13] Chastel, *The Sack of Rome*, pp. 119-126.
[14] Goffart, 'Christian Pessimism', p. 820.
[15] Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, p. 209. See also p. 202.
[16] Idem, pp. 195-198.
[17] Idem, p. 192.
[18] Idem, p. 182.

This administrative aspect has been highlighted throughout the literature, particularly by Pauline Watts, who believes that the corridor acted as space in which Gregory could reflect upon how best to govern the Papal States, both as a temporal ruler and as a religious figurehead.[19] In her scheme, the vignettes are there to reinforce the responsibilities of leadership upon the observing pope, but she does not explain why these events in particular would help his ruminations. In support of her view, she adduces the inscriptions within the Gallery itself and also Giovanni Battista Stella's poem dedicated to Gregory XIII and his corridor, entitled the *Ambulatio gregoriana*.

Figure 2: Pope Leo I and Attila, vault scene above Mantuae Ducatus

[19] Watts, 'A Mirror for the Pope'.

The conclusions concerning the religious iconography of the vault are understandable within context of the vault, but I do not believe that they are applicable to the secular vignettes on the walls. The distinction between the two is made clear by the only comparable couplet between ceiling and the wall: the repulse of Attila by Leo I the Great (figs 2 and 3). Whilst the vault propagates a divine causation, visualised through Attila's revelatory vision of saints Peter and Paul, the wall scene is divorced from the religion.[20] We can discern this by the map's *cartello*, which states that Attila turned back because of the 'the force of [Leo's] speech'.[21] We have also seen that, despite repeated assertions by modern critics, the scenes are not all triumphant displays of Italian or papal power. Indeed, the two more relevant issues to be explored in detail are Danti's views on cartography and topography, and the administrative function of the Gallery.

Figure 3: Matthijs Bril, Pope Leo I and Attila, map of Mantuae Ducatus

[20] Vicenzi, *La Galleria*, p. 91.
[21] 'Vi sermonis'.

Sources for the Gallery's Design

I will now examine some of the primary documents from which we can learn about the design of the Gallery, principally concerning the cartographer Egnatio Danti. Three main points emerge: firstly, that the primary sources do not mention the inclusion of historical scenes. Instead, they focus on the mapping of Italy to the corridor's space and the inclusion of Avignon. Secondly, Danti's scholarly view on Chorography is paramount to our reading of the Gallery. He valued and read ancient literature on places, and the combination of historical vignettes and informative *cartelli* add to the holistic description of the regions of Italy. Finally, the Gallery was used both as an administrative tool and as a personal space for reflection by Gregory XIII and later Popes.

During the construction period, Danti wrote a letter to Abraham Ortelius explaining the guiding principle behind the project:

> *[The Pope] brought me to Rome in order to make a description of Italy in a gallery which His Holiness has had made. After splitting Italy into halves along the Apennine Mountains, I have placed that part which is washed by the Ligurian and Tyrrhenian Seas on one side, and on the other, that which is bound by the Adriatic Sea and the Alps. Then I divided the whole into 40 panels according to the States and Prefectures.*[22]

In this letter, Danti's brilliance is clear. The novelty with which he planned the Gallery, making the corridor's central axis act as the Apennine mountains, forces the physical space both to conform to and to interact with the maps of Italy depicted on the walls. The viewer must take a figurative walk along the spine of the Apennines as he observes the Italian regions laid in geographical order to either side of him. The maps follow an imaginary route through Italy, tracing a path from Liguria down the Tyrrhenian coastline, through the islands of Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily, and then up north from Puglia along the Adriatic before finishing in Piedmont. This principle of division is also found in the Gallery itself, above the north door there is a dedicatory marble stone (fig. 4), part of the inscription of which states:

[22] Hessels, *Abrahami Ortelii*, pp. 240-242. (letter 100): '[Il Papa] mi ha poi condotto in Roma a fare una descrittione d'Italia in una Galleria che S. Santità ha fatta, ove havendo divisa l'Italia per il mezzo del monte apennino ò posta da una banda della Galleria quella parte che è bagnata dal Mare Ligustico, et Tirreno, et dall'altra, quella che è cinta dall'Adreatico, e dall'Alpi, dividendola poi secondo gli stati et le prefetture de governi in quaranta parti, secondo che la Galleria è divisa in 40 quadri'.

‘Just as Italy is split by the Apennines in nature, so again here it is divided into two parts’.[23] The wording of this inscription follows Danti’s explanation to Ortelius very closely, proving both his authorship of the plaque and his direct involvement in the planning.

Figure 4: Inscription above north door

Given Danti’s explanation above, it is strange, at first glance, that there is a map of *Avenionensis ditio et Venaisinus Comitatus*. However, its existence is explained by the cartouche alongside it. The Catholic Church claims spiritual possession over the territory, owing to the papacy’s withdrawal to France in the Fourteenth century. This much is made clear in the cartouche (fig. 5): ‘The ancient city of Avignon, the Comtat of Venaissin and its capital, Carpentras, the other cities and towns relate very little to Italy, however, because they truly belong to the Roman Church, for this reason they are depicted here’.[24] Therefore, we must slightly modify our position on the cartographical content of the Gallery: it is not simply the mapping of the Italian peninsula as achieved in writing by Alberti, nor is it any making any claim to some political unity. Instead, it is the mapping of the territories over which the Pope considered he had spiritual dominion, what Fiorani calls a ‘utopian construction of a place under the ecclesiastical authority of the papacy’.[25]

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[23] ‘Italia… ut natura ab Apennino secta est hoc itidem in duas partes… dividitur’.
[24] ‘Avenio urbs antiqua Venaisinus item Comitatus eiusq[ue] caput Carpentorace atq[ue] aliae urbes et oppida etsi ad Italiam minime pertinent tamen quia Ecclesiae Roman[ae] sunt propria ideo hic describuntur’.
[25] Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, p. 182.

Figure 5: Cartouche for the map of Avenionensis Ditio et Venaisinus Comitatus

Another *cartello* in the Gallery further reaffirms Danti as the creator of the cartographic elements in the Gallery. It is a *trompe l'oeil*, taking the form of a piece of white paper pinned onto the map of *Sallentina Hydrunti Terra* (fig. 6). Scholars have taken this to be his "signature", for it states: 'We have taken care, however, that the degrees and minutes of the more famous places correspond exactly [to their actual location] (as far as it is possible in chorography). This the Perugian Egnatio Danti, Brother of the Dominican Order, wished to be understood'.[26] The mention of chorography in this *cartello* leads to one of Danti's previously published works on mathematics, *Le scienze matematiche ridotte in tavole* (1577),

[26] 'Curabamus tamen, ut longitudinum, latitudinumq[ue] gradus et minuta insignioribus loci (quoad Chorographia ferre poterat) exacte responderent. Atque id F[rater] Egnatius Dantes Perusinus ord[inis] Praed[icatorum] admonitum esse volebat'.

in which he provides us with his own definition of Chorography. From this he developed his own cartographic language that included many elements from the tradition of written chorography.[27] Fiorani's argument is persuasive in that we find many of Danti's idiosyncratic approaches to geographic science visualised in the maps of the Gallery. In the section defining the various geographical sciences, we read that Danti defines both sciences as ones that describe particular places.[28] Crucially, however, he states that, while geometry is necessary knowledge for chorography, 'it can also be achieved as a mechanical art by a mere painter', whereas Topography, 'making such a description with words, has no need of Geometry or drawing'.[29] Interestingly, he offers two exemplars of written descriptions of places that appear on the walls of the Gallery: Polybius's description of the Battle of Lake Trasimene, and Livy's account of the Battle of Cannae. Evidently, he was aware and admired these descriptions, and later I will investigate how these scenes were translated visually onto the maps.

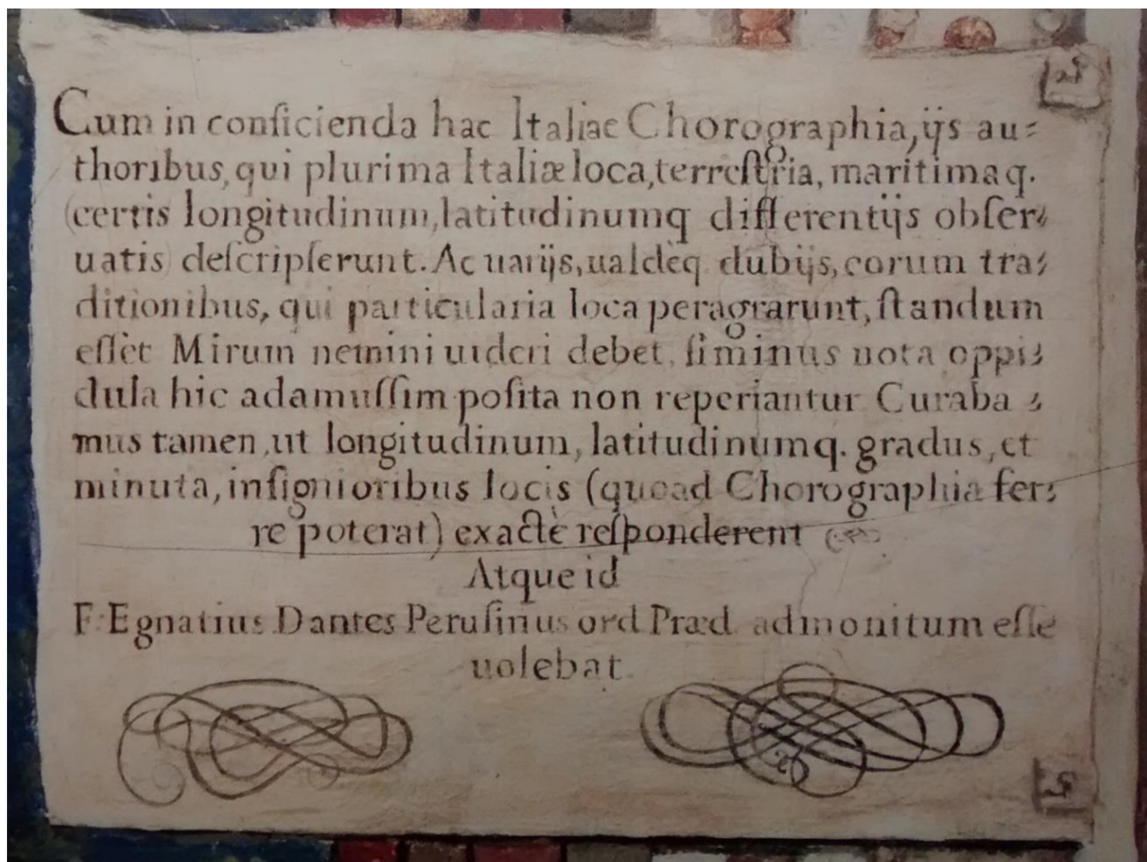

Figure 6: trompe l'oeil *scroll on the map of* Sallentina Hydrunti Terra

[27] Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, pp. 194-199.
[28] Danti, *Le scienze*, p. 44: Chorography: 'che suona in lingua nostra descrittione di luogo particulare'; Topography: 'che anco essa descrive i luoghi particulari'.
[29] Ibid.: 'Può anco essere come arte mecanica esercitata dal semplice Pittore'; 'Facendo cotale descrittione con parole, non ha bisogno ne della Geometra, ne del disegno'.

Although the division of Italy into maps such as these was novel, it did have literary precedents. Chorography is a sub-science of Geography harking back to Ptolemy, who defined it through an artistic analogy as 'an impression of a part': Chorography is the drawing of an ear or an eye if Geography relates to the whole head.[30] During the Renaissance, Chorography regained popularity as a form of literature, coming to the fore in Italy with Flavio Biondo's *Italia Illustrata*. All these works aimed at a deeper description of place, far beyond mathematical coordinates on a Cartesian plane. Particularly relevant is the *Descrittione di tutta l'Italia* (wording that Danti echoes in his letter to Ortelius, above) by Leandro Alberti, not only because of its near-contemporaneous publication (first published in 1550, but republished multiple times, including in 1577), but also its peculiar layout. Diverging from his predecessors, Alberti's work circumnavigates Italy starting from the Tyrrhenian Sea. The similar geographic programme between the book and the maps strongly suggests that Alberti's work had an influence on Danti, especially given his scholarly interest in this field. Moreover, Fiorani argues that Alberti's book was also innovative through its meticulous sourcing of information about the people, places and events – military, religious, and otherwise – that constituted the various regions of Italy.[31]

A common feature of Renaissance cartography, all of the maps include reference cartouches that briefly inform us about the main historical and geographical features of the region. Often, an ordinary map was transformed into a 'historical' map by way of a contextual title and an inscription lifted from the particular text that the map was illustrating.[32] For example, in illustrated Bibles, maps modelled on the Ptolemaic projection of the Eastern Mediterranean were recycled by including the title, 'The Travels of Saint Paul', in order to alter their concept fundamentally.[33] Whilst there were clearly literary influences on the cartographic programme of the Gallery, most of all Alberti's *Descrittione*, the inscriptions were not lifted from any text – Danti concocted them himself. In the letter to Ortelius previously quoted, Danti makes reference to 'the inscriptions, which I made in that Gallery'.[34] Whilst Danti does not elude to the vignettes in the maps, we can recognise the ordering scheme of the "miracles" through the marble stone inscription above the north door.

[30] Berggren and Jones, *Ptolemy's Geography*, pp. 57-59.
[31] Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, pp. 188-194, for a general survey of Italian chorography.
[32] For the distinction, see Goffart, *Historical Atlases*, pp. 1-25.
[33] Delano-Smith and Ingram, *Maps in Bibles*, pp. 99-120.
[34] Hessels, *Abrahami Ortelii*, pp. 240-242 (letter 100): 'Le inscrittioni che in essa Galleria io ho fatte'.

The vault displays 'the deeds of saintly men in the places which they were done'.[35] Moreover, this is corroborated by Danti, who writes to Ortelius: the images 'represent some noteworthy miracle that happened in that province'.[36] Thus, the religious imagery of the vault is arranged geographically according to the order of the maps, which explains the temporal disconnection between the scenes. This system also applies for the historical vignettes: the most important guiding principle of the scenes is geographical because they were arranged by the region in which they took place. No reason of chronology or of theme – triumphant or Catholic – ranks higher.

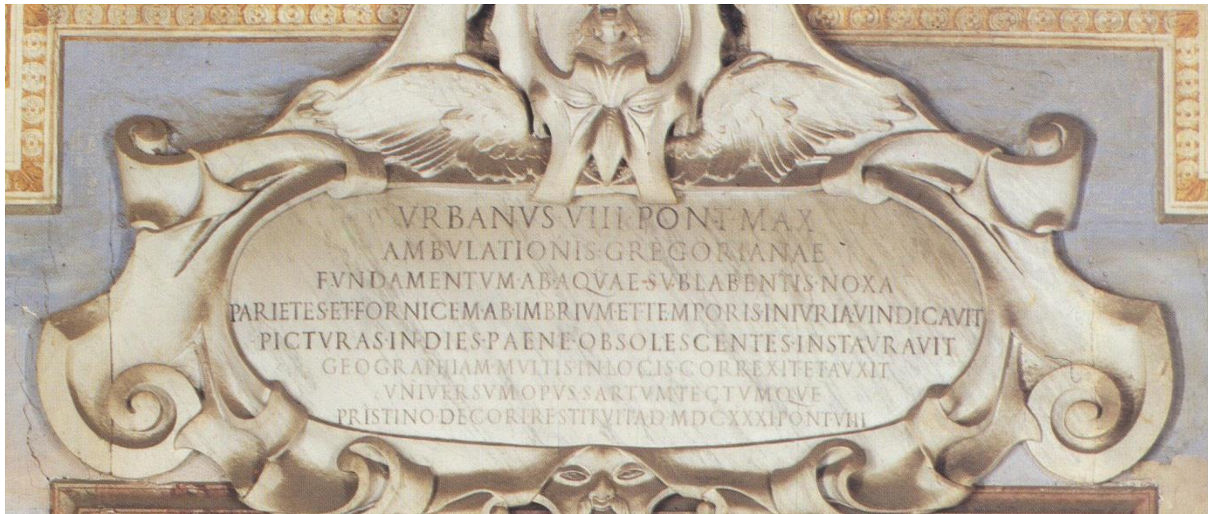

Figure 7: Inscription over south door

Restoration work began soon after the completion of the Gallery, the most important phase of which came under the reign of Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644). Geographical accuracy was paramount for him. It seems that the leaking roof had caused much damage to the frescoes, and Urban VIII took this opportunity to update the cartography. A marble plaque (fig. 7), positioned over the south entrance to the Gallery, reads: 'Pope Urban VIII… restored those paintings that were nearly ruined and corrected and improved the geography in many places'.[37] The emphasis on exactitude suggests that, far from being entirely decorative, the maps were prized for being correct, both for Gregory XIII and for later Popes. Whether this exactitude was needed for administrative uses or simply for pride remains to be seen. This inscription highlights the issue of restorations, and I will illustrate later why we must be

[35] 'Pia sanctorum virorum facta locis in quibus gesta sunt'.
[36] Hessels, *Abrahami Ortelii*, pp. 240-242 (letter 100): 'Rappresentando qualche segnalato miracolo occorso in quella provincia'.
[37] 'Urbanis VIII Pont. Max… picturas in dies paene obsolescentes instauravit geographiam multis in locis correxit et auxit'.

cautious in assigning a predetermined programme to the Gallery given the extensive and repeated work that has been conducted on it.

Administration and pride of ownership are both factors governing the initial purpose and subsequent restoration of the Gallery. Scattered across the maps of the Papal States are the heraldic crests of not only Gregory XIII but also the Borghese pope, Paul V, and the Barberini pope, Urban VIII. Their presence is explained by a scroll painted onto the map of *Flaminia* (fig. 8). With an inscription following a copy of the golden dragon, it states: 'I wanted you to know that those locations on the maps painted here that show the image of a gold dragon, like this one, were returned to papal jurisdiction by Pope Gregory XIII'.[38] It is logical to extend this to the later popes' crests as well. Why, then, did these popes feel it necessary to add their crests to the map murals? The answer must surely be twofold. There is no doubt that the exhibition of their family crest had a self-aggrandising effect, but more importantly, it indicates that the maps had an active function. The constant updating of the panels, testified by archival evidence, as State borders changed adds an administrative level to their function.[39] It has been shown that States were using maps as governing aids throughout Europe more and more in this period.[40]

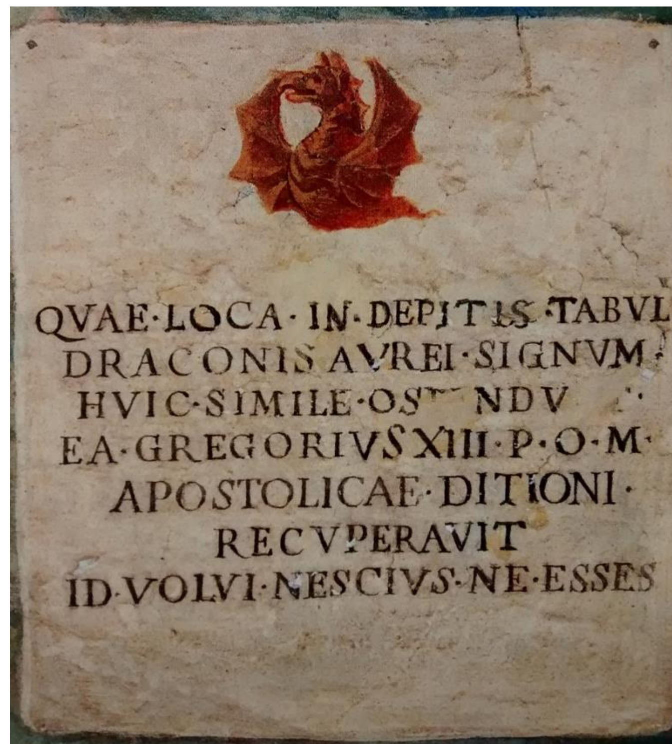

Figure 8: trompe l'oeil *scroll in the map of* Flaminia

[38] 'Quae loca in depi[c]tis tabul[is] draconis aurei signum huic simile ostendunt ea Gregorius XIII P. O. M. Apostolicae ditioni recuperavit id volui ne nescius ne esses'.
[39] See n. 51 in Fiorani, 'Post-Tridentine *Geographia Sacra*', p. 146.
[40] Kagan and Schmidt, 'Maps and the Early Modern State'.

To recap our stance, we have established that the creator of the maps was Danti, who designed them to reflect the Church's spiritual dominion, which explains the inclusion of the map of Avignon. Whilst there is no explicit mention of the vignettes in primary documentation, we know that Danti drew on ancient authors' descriptions of places from his discussion in *Le Scienze* on the topic of topography. This provides us with some clue as to how he conceptualised the historical scenes within the scheme of the maps, and we have good reason to believe that he wrote the Latin inscriptions accompanying them. Moreover, the administrative function of the maps is certainly interesting, but the scenes do not help this on a practical level, as they block the view of the map.

Purpose of the Historical Vignettes

Let us now consider the purpose of the Gallery and its decoration, and, in doing so, examine closer some modern theories. As we have already established that the Gallery was used in both and an administrative and a recreational way by Gregory XIII and later popes, we must now investigate if the historical vignettes fit into this idea. Watts and Pinelli both believe that the overriding message is positive, but I refute these arguments since they do not logically follow the evidence of the Gallery. The negativity perceived by Goffart reminded him of Orosius's view of Roman history, and, despite his asserting its unfeasibility, I investigate how contemporaries viewed the Italian Wars. I find that they had a similarly morose perception, but instead of concluding that the lessons of the Gallery must be the futility of human endeavour (following Orosius), I argue instead that this led them to portray the images in a manner divorced from the distressing reality.

Watts argues that the corridor acted as a space for Gregory XIII to contemplate the dual nature of his persona: namely, as temporal ruler of the Papal States and as spiritual leader of the Catholic Church.[41] She theorises that the twelfth-century treatise *De consideratione ad Eugenium papam tertiam libri quinque* by Bernard de Clairvaux was instrumental in developing this attitude towards the pope's dual persona. As evidence for the use of the Gallery in this way, she notes firstly the inscription above the north door, which claims that Gregory XIII desired the Gallery to be created with great skill 'so that the

[41] Watts, 'Mirror for the Pope', pp. 177-179.

advantage of considering things and places might not lose any of its pleasure'.[42] It appears, then, that Gregory XIII wanted a space not only in which he could reflect upon the business of state (*rerum*) and geographical knowledge, but also one in which he could enjoy this activity. In order to clarify the meaning of this inscription, Watts cites Stella's *Ambulatio gregoriana*.

The *Ambulatio gregoriana*, a poem in hexameter dedicated to the Gallery, styles Gregory as a new Augustus, a bringer of the Golden Age, and reflects glory on its creator for his good government.[43] Regarding the purpose of the Gallery, it claims firstly that catching a breeze whilst walking up and down the corridor considering the paintings revitalised Gregory: 'A healthy breeze is almost enough to restore him, and if weary he secretly snatches the odd hour for a walk, it is reward for his services'.[44] Secondly, the maps were designed to aid him in the contemplation of ruling: 'The two rows of paintings, which he can gaze on again and again, depict the whole of Italy. He can consider how best to administer and govern it, how to resolve civil discord and maintain lasting peace for his people'.[45] Whether or not this was the original intention, and it is very plausible that it was, the *Ambulatio gregoriana* gives strong evidence that this was how specifically the maps were used, but not the vignettes.

Contrary to Watts, I do not agree that the historical scenes were there 'to remind the papal prince of actual historical moments when his territories were threatened from without and defended at great cost'.[46] Watts does not fully explain why the Pope would want to be reminded of these incidents in particular. Furthermore, for those scenes that do not directly relate to the papacy, we are left to wonder how he would have reacted. This is expressly so for the Roman defeats at the hands of the Carthaginians during the Second Punic War that are displayed on the walls, such as the Battle of Lake Trasimene or of Cannae, and I am not convinced that they were employed in order to stir the pope's *consideratio*.

The prevailing opinion amongst academics is that, considered as a whole, the Gallery represents 'Italy's proud claim to the continuous trust placed in her by Divine Will. Central to this theme are the twenty or more tiny episodes from history which are occasionally included in the Maps'.[47] My principal thesis is a reaction against claims of this sort; despite being frequently repeated in the secondary literature, they do not follow logically. In fact, very little

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[42] 'Ne iucunditati deesset ex rerum et locorum cognitione utilitas'.
[43] Ferri, 'A "Walk through Italy"', p. 74.
[44] Idem, p. 78.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Watts, 'A Mirror for the Pope', pp. 183-184.
[47] Pinelli, 'Above the Earth', p. 127.

points directly to a "providential" view of history: neither the portrayal of the event, nor the informative *cartelli*, nor their position in an overarching programme.

It is difficult to understand – and left unexplained – how the vast loss of life between two non-Christian armies at Cannae or even between the two Christian armies at Ravenna contributes towards a progressive Christian worldview. The first few years of the Second Punic War were unambiguously disastrous for the Romans, and one of the lowest points in Italian history. Although the first significant victory won by the Romans was the First Battle of Beneventum in 214 BC, the first depicted Roman victory was decade later at Metauro in 207 BC. The weighting of the Hannibalic episodes is clearly one-sided: they are not so much a catalogue of 'threats overcome' as one of catastrophic Roman defeats with only a vague reference to the eventual outcome of the war. This disproportion suggests another aspect of the episodes, namely that there was a disinterested in recounting an accurate and balanced history.

It does not make sense, either, that all the episodes are exercises in papal propaganda. Although clearly a degree of pride influenced the addition of heraldic crests, many maps display unfavourable defeats or do not even involve Rome or the papacy. What's more, the battles between Christians and Muslims or pagans are in the minority. It is true that to a certain extent Gregory is promoted, given the emphasis on Bologna, his birthplace, and inclusion of his namesakes. However, this is to be expected: he had already shown a predisposition towards self-promotion in the commission of the Sala Bologna, and the elevation of the patron's status was commonplace in glorifying works of art such as these.[48] It was extremely rare for a Renaissance artist to exhibit the defeat of his patron in a decorative battle painting.[49] In fact, the level of bias shown towards one side in military art could be so extreme that it turned reversals into victories. Despite the losing the Kingdom of Naples and northern Italy as a result, only three months after the Battle of Fornovo the outcome was manipulated in France to be 'a triumphant feat of extrication from a hazardous situation'.[50] Nevertheless, it is clearly not the case with the Gallery of Maps that the painting is operating on a solely propagandistic level, so we must turn to other modes of thought.

The feeling in the Sixteenth century towards the Italians Wars is discernible through a large body of literature and it does not accord with the triumphant rhetoric of most modern scholars. At first, there is an understandable indignation to recent events: chapter XXVI of

[48] Fiorani, 'Cycles of Painted Maps', pp. 811-812.
[49] Oman, 'Early Military Pictures', p. 342.
[50] Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, p. 145.

Machiavelli's *The Prince* is famously titled 'An exhortation to liberate Italy from the barbarian yoke', in which he wrote, 'This foreign domination stinks in the nostrils of everyone.[51] Following the Sack of Rome in 1527, a common trope, called the *lamento di Roma* by André Chastel, affected Italian, and particularly Roman, writing, which was namely a melancholic defeatism.[52] It is typified in the anonymous sonnet *La presa di Roma*, written shortly after the sacking: 'Wretched Italy, subjected to the fate which you so often fought off, where have you been led? Glory, virtue, and vitality, all of which had previously been granted to you by the highest gods, are no more'.[53] Moreover, this attitude can also be detected later in the century. Guicciardini's *La Storia d'Italia* has been characterised as an in depth and tragic analysis of Italy's terrible decline since the Italian Wars, and that what it 'most strongly and repeatedly impresses upon us is the weakness and impotence of humanity in the face of destiny'.[54] Published in 1558, Giovanni della Casa's *Galateo*, a book on manners, still displays a similar sentiment of despair to recent events. Discussing a new ceremony, della Casa bemoans what has happened to Italy and how it has been changed, for the worse in his opinion, by the invasions:

> *It is not native, but foreign and barbaric, and recently crossed into Italy from where it originates. Our poor country, it has been debased and humiliated both by what has happened and by the consequences; it has only gotten worse and now is given honours of empty words and meaningless titles.*[55]

In short, the events of the Italian Wars, and in particular the Sack of Rome, were catastrophic on the morale of Italian writers, and Chastel believes that this moroseness and defeatism persisted until the Risorgimento.[56] Hale is surely perceiving the same phenomenon when he notes that only three direct images of battles from the Italian Wars (1494-1529) were created by Italians for the Italian market, whereas such depictions proliferated north of the

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[51] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 91, tr. by Skinner and Price: 'Ad ognuno puzza questo barbaro dominio'.
[52] Chastel, *The Sack of Rome*, p. 22.
[53] Mango, *La Guerra di Camollia*, p. 173:
'Misera Italia, a che condotta sei,
Suggetta al nome che più fiate hai vinto;
La gloria, il pregio e quel vigore è estinto
Che già dato ti fu da' sommi Dei'.
[54] Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, p. 128.
[55] Giovanni della Casa, *Galateo*, p.82: 'Non è originale, ma forestiera e barbara; e da poco tempo in qua, onde che sia, trapassata in Italia; la quale misera, con le opere e con gli effetti è abbassata ed avvilita, è cresciuta solamente ed onorata nelle parole vane e ne' superflui titoli'.
[56] Chastel, *The Sack of Rome*, pp. 122-123.

Alps.[57] There was an evident reticence on the part of Italian patrons and artists towards portraying the battles, which stemmed from the devastation and distress that they caused. The events pictured in the Gallery, being somewhat removed in time, cannot be classified as "direct" images of the battles in the Italian Wars. In any case, the near constant warring in the first half of the Sixteenth century would have had a large effect on the following generations of artists and thinkers, including those men who worked in and around the Gallery of Maps.

Thus, we see a very similar tone in Italian literature to that perceived by Goffart, who for his part argues that the planned lesson (recalling the inscription over the north door: 'ex rerum et locorum cognitione utilitas') of the Gallery is derived from Orosius. So, aside from a perceived likeness in tone, there is no documentary evidence to suggest that Orosius was consulted. Although often highlighting the dire consequences of the battles with words such as *clades* (disaster), the inscriptions themselves are not directly influenced by Orosius. Neither is the depiction of the battles particularly suggestive of suffering, in spite of the subject of war: for the amount of battles there are, very few corpses are on display.

Historicity is another problem highlighted by Goffart: the selection of scenes is extremely disproportionate and very unrepresentative of "world history".[58] There is a concentration of scenes relating to the Second Punic War, and to the most recent battles (post-1494) in the northern half of Italy. On the one hand, there are some of the most important battles on Italian soil included; on the other, many more are not present. For every Battle of Pavia, there is a Marignano not included. And where is the Battle of the Allia, considered 'a disaster equal in renown to the Battle of Cannae' by Livy?[59] Critics asserting that the Gallery showcases the most famous battle on Italian soil have yet to tackle this problem. Therefore, it must be said that if the Gallery's historical scenes are meant to be instructive, they are not effective in teaching a balanced view of history. Moreover, because they have not conducted a visual analysis of the paintings, historians of the Gallery have not yet pointed out that many of the images are ineffective without the inscriptions. Take for instance the depiction of the army sent by the Marche in defence of the Pope at the time of the Sack of Rome (fig. 9); without the informative *cartello*, this scene would be practically impossible to identify. There are only the three cannons to indicate that this was a near-recent event; the standards carried by the troops are various and fictive, but in other respects the depiction is highly conventional and visually similar to many other scenes.

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[57] Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, pp. 140-145.
[58] Goffart, 'Christian Pessimism', pp. 807-808.
[59] Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, XXII.l.1: 'haec est pugna Cannensis, Alliensi cladi nobilitate par'.

Figure 9: Matthijs Bril, The army sent to Rome by The Marches, map of Picenum

The lessons that we derive from the Gallery depend upon how we view its tone. Although most modern scholarship has emphasised a triumphant, progressive attitude towards Italian history, Goffart perceives a pessimistic, "Orosian" outlook. Whilst I do not agree that the Gallery presents itself in a positive manner, I am not convinced by Goffart's reasoning for pessimism; Italians were understandably downcast about the near-constant invasions into Italy by both French and Spanish-Imperial forces since 1494, and this is a more likely cause than the fourth-century Church historian Orosius. This led the artists to portray the historical scenes in the rather distant, emotionless manner. Indeed, the depiction of so many defeats and seemingly irrelevant events would be a strange and historically unprecedented way of forming a progressive world history concerning the Catholic Church. For these reasons, I do not believe that the Gallery was attempting to create a Christian view of history through the vignettes or that they might aid the Pope in his reflections.

Restorations of the Gallery

Understanding the various restoration works that have been undertaken in the Gallery is vitally important to our reading of the vignettes, as many changes to the frescoes have

taken place. We must be very cautious when constructing programmes because it is clear from visual and archival testimony that the historical vignettes were not painted simultaneously or by the same artists, nor has the full set survived.

Almost immediately upon completion, the Gallery went through restoration during the papacy of Sixtus V (1585-1590).[60] However, the most important and extensive works were carried out under Urban VIII, as indicated by the dedicatory inscription above the southern entrance. The corridor was restored to its foundations to stop damp, and the ruined frescoes were redone with the intention of updating the scientific accuracy of the maps. Lukas Holste was the main artist responsible for these works, and some lasting touches of his are noticeable. Almagià maintained that Holste added some of the classical names to some maps, arguing, for example, that the 'Vestigi di Recina' in *Picenum* were added because Holste had visited the site himself.[61]

The restoration work most relevant to this essay was conducted under Clement VIII (1592-1605). Pietro Oldrado, considered a 'generally scrupulous artist' by Almagià, repainted a number of the damaged maps, some of which contained historical scenes.[62] Archival records of *conti* detail that Oldrado worked on four scenes. Firstly, in *Perusinus ac Tifernas* 'a little history was made, called *Consul Hannibal*', which must relate to the scene of the Battle of Lake Trasimene.[63] The wording of the document suggests that it was not there before; indeed, Danti's original drawing only featured the caption 'Rotta de' Romani' but no scene.[64] Secondly, in *Pedemontium et Monsferratus*, he redid the top half of the panel, including painting the scene, *Hannibal on the promontory* – for which no scene exists – and retouching *The fierce Battle of Ceresole*.[65] Finally, for the map of *Mediolanensis Ducatus*, he repainted the bottom half *a secco* and, in the process, retouched the vignette called *Marcellus and Priomato*.[66] There is no identifiable scene on the map for this last item, although there is a *cartello* celebrating Marcellus's victory over the Insubres at Clastidium in 222 BC. During the battle, Marcellus defeated in single combat the enemy general called Virdomaro by the

[60] On the various phases of restoration, see Schütte, *Die Galleria delle Carte Geografiche im Vatikan*, pp. 22-27, and Franzoni, 'The Restoration of the Gallery of Maps', pp. 169-174.
[61] Almagià, *Le pitture murali*, p. 35.
[62] Idem, p. 38: 'era pittore assai scrupoloso'.
[63] Bertolotti, 'Autografi di Artisti', p. 193: 'In detto quadro ci si è fatto … una Historietta che si chiama Anibale Consule'.
[64] Vicenzi, *La Galleria*, p. 116.
[65] Idem, p. 194: 'Il quale prima si è incollato dalla metà in sù a fresco e poi si è ritocco a secco insieme con tutto il quadro… et una historietta che dice *Anibal ac in promontorio* et si è ritocco la historietta che dice *accerimus ad Ceresolam conflictus*'.
[66] Idem, p. 195: 'Il quale prima si è rifatto dalla metà in giù tutto a secco… nell'istesso quadro si è rittocco la historietta di Marcello et Priomato'.

cartello.[67] This Insubrian leader's name varies in the ancient histories, but this event must be the one mentioned in the *conto*. His name is closest to the document's 'Priomato' in Plutarch's *Life of Marcellus*, where it appears as 'King Britomatos'.[68] Florus, who generally followed Livy, uses both 'Viridomarus' and 'Brittomarus' in his *Epitome of Roman History*, though the former is the one killed at Clastidium. Livy, however, calls him 'Vertomarus'.[69] We can therefore conclude that 'Priomato' is an Italianised version of the Insubrian leader's name, Britomatos from Plutarch. Incidentally, Alberti calls him 'Viridomaro', and cites as sources for the battle, Polybius, Plutarch, and Florus.[70]

Figure 10: Landscape detail in the map of Avenionensis Ditio et Venaisinus Comitatus

These are the only recorded changes to have taken place to historical vignettes in the Gallery. However, the disappearance of the historical vignette, *Hannibal on the promontory* is troubling, as this may have been the case elsewhere but there is no record of it. Almagià suggests that it could have been so damaged that it was deleted, or that the painting was botched by the 'incompetent restorations of the Nineteenth century, or even earlier'; both

[67] 'Duce hostium Virdumaro'.
[68] Plutarch, *Life of Marcellus*, 6.3: 'ὁ βασιλεὺς Βριτόματος'.
[69] Livy, *Ab Urbe condita*, periocha to book XX: 'Gallorum Insubrium duce, Vertomaro'.
[70] Alberti, *Descrittione di tutta l'Italia*, p. 414: 'Viridomaro Capitano de' detti Galli Insubri… come etiandio scrive Polibio, & Plutarco… & L. Florio'.

events could apply to many other maps and vignettes in the Gallery.[71] He also notes that, although the *cartello* of the scene no longer exists, there are faded letters of a regional name between Crescentino and Palazzo just above the River Po in the centre right of *Pedemontium et Monsferratus*.[72] Potentially the scene was nearby to these faded or cancelled letters. This is another reason why I am cautious about drawing conclusions about an iconographic programme: clearly at least one vignette has been painted over and maybe more, so we do not have all the evidence to form a judgement. There are some figures – horsemen, footmen, and pack animals – in the map of *Avenionensis Ditio et Venaisinus Comitatus* (fig. 10); are these the remnants of a lost historical vignette or is it a generic hunt scene in the landscape? Certainly, it is possible that other episodes have not survived to our time. Bearing this possibility in mind, I will now turn to an analysis of the historical vignettes.

The Historical Vignettes

The historical vignettes that enliven the cartography within the Gallery are unequally distributed both in terms of geography and in terms of chronology. The panel for *Mediolanensis Ducatus*, for instance, contains four episodes, whereas twenty-five out of forty maps have none; except the Battle of Lepanto and the Siege of Valletta, which are roughly 130x139cm, all of the scenes take up no more than one metre squared. The episodes range from the ancient Battle of Pandosia in 330 BC, right up to the very recent Battle of Lepanto in 1571 AD, only ten years prior to the Gallery's completion. Most are battles or include an army in some capacity. For ease of reference, I include a table of all twenty-seven historical vignettes, listed chronologically in Appendix One.

I will conduct a visual analysis of the vignettes and principally I will be looking at what these images tell us about history. The reason for this approach is due to their appearance: modern classifications designed to aid our reading of military art would class them as 'documentary' rather than 'heroic' art, which aims at aggrandising a central character or the patron. Before exploring the historical vignettes in detail, I will first examine art literature from the Sixteenth century so that my analysis of the paintings can be informed by contemporary practice and custom. What we find is that in the genre of battle painting, the recommendation is very much to tailor the composition to the subject.

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[71] Almagia, *Le pitture murali*, p. 17: 'Forse fu cancellata dagli inabili restauri del secolo XIX, o ancora prima'.
[72] Ibid. and n. 5.

Literature on Military Art from Ancient Rome to Italy in the Sixteenth century

The precedents for military art and writing thereof hark back to at least the Third century BC at Rome, although very few works of art of this kind have survived to our times.[73] Firstly, Pliny notes that the first publicly displayed painting was a battle scene from the First Punic War: '[M. Valerius Maximus Messala] was the first man to exhibit a painting of a battle, in which he had beaten the Carthaginians and Hiero in Sicily, on the side of the Curia Hostilia in 264 BC'.[74] Additionally, regarding how Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus commemorated a victory, Livy writes: 'And so, because of his accomplishment he gave a panel as a gift to Jupiter. It was a painting of the island of Sicily, and on it were depicted representations of battles'.[75] It bears a remarkable similarity to some of the maps in the Gallery.

Unfortunately, sixteenth-century Italian theorists did not focus on the type of battle painting mentioned by Livy. Instead, they address monumental, glorifying military art, such as the Battle of the Milvian Bridge by Giulio Romano. Leonardo's instructions in the chapter, 'Come si deve figurare una battaglia', in his *Trattato della pittura* are concerned artistic considerations such as colour, the depiction of smoke and dust, light and air. Though the papers were not published until 1651, Leonardo's style did have an influence on his contemporaries, as evidenced by the considerable interest in his lost *Battle of Anghiari*.[76]

Two other important art theorists of the Sixteenth century who considered battle scenes were Lodovico Dolce and Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo. Dolce advises the artist to take into consideration the time at which the event took place and the nations involved, and to adjust the dress, weapons and equipment accordingly, as seen in this extract from his *Aretino* (1557):

> *The painter should always pay attention to the quality of the persons, and no less to the nations, the costumes, the places and the period; such that if*

[73] The most famous exception is the Alexander Mosaic from the House of the Faun in Pompeii, which is believed to be based on a lost Greek original. Post-Republican military art is largely triumphal, such as Trajan's column or the Arch of Septimius Severus.

[74] Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, XXXV.22-25: '[M. Valerius Maximus Messala] princeps tabulam picturam proelii, quo carthaginienses et Hieronem in Sicilia vicerat, proposuit in latere curiae hostiliae anno ab urbe condita CCCCXC'.

[75] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, XLI.xxviii.10: 'Cuius rei ergo hanc tabulam donum Iovi dedit. Sardiniae insulae forma erat, atque in ea simulacra pugnarum picta'.

[76] Wilson, 'Military Science', pp. 26-28; Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, pp. 163-164.

he were to depict a military action of Caesar or Alexander the Great, it would not be right if he armed the soldiers in the way in which we dress nowadays. Moreover, he should make one style of equipment for the Macedonians and another for the Romans, and if he was commissioned to represent a modern battle, we should not find that he has devised it like an ancient one.[77]

Although his work was published after the completion of the Gallery, in 1584, and we cannot, therefore, regard it as a direct influence, Lomazzo expounds a similar view to Dolce.[78] Nevertheless, the sixteenth-century theoretical attitude aimed at culture and period appropriate costume and equipment. Despite the clear instructions in these two works of art literature, in reality not all artistic production achieved historical authenticity for a variety of reasons. Far more typical in the Renaissance Italy was the glorifying battle painting, in which the patron or central figure would be made to look heroic at the sacrifice of historical truth. The documentary, as opposed to the glorifying, battle painting are modern interpretations of this ancient theme created in order to understand better the meanings of battle art.[79] The distinction between the two pertains to whether art attempts to portray historical truth or not. The topographical battle scene with figures in the foreground was developed in the north under Sebastian Vrancx and his pupil Pieter Snayers, and in general northern artists were more concerned with portraying historical fact than Italians.[80] The paintings in the Gallery look very much the northern, documentary style of battle paintings being produced around this time, such as Jerome Commelin's *Battle of Tournhout* (fig. 11) from his *Life of Maurice of Nassau*. They certainly do not resemble or operate as propaganda pieces in the manner of Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen's *Conquest of Tunis* series from 1535, which, although described as 'unprecedented in all military art in the Renaissance' for its accuracy, focus on the victories of Charles V.[81]

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[77] Dolce, *Dolce's* Aretino, p. 118: 'Terrà sempre riguardo alla qualità delle persone, ne meno alle nationi, a costumi, a luoghi, & a tempi: tal, che se depingerà un fatto d'arme di Cesare, o di Alessandro Magno, non conviene, che armi i soldati nel modo, che si costuma hoggidì, & altra guisa farà le armature a Macedoni, ad altra a Romani: e se gli verrà imposto carico di rappresentare una battaglia moderna, non si ricerca, che la divisi all'antica'.

[78] Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte*, Chapter XXIX: 'Composizioni delle guerre e battaglie'.

[79] Cederlöf, 'The Battle Painting' and Pfaffenbichler, 'The Early Baroque Battle Scene', pp. 493-497 propose 4 categories; Oman, 'Early Military Pictures' and Plax 'Seventeenth-century French Images of Warfare', pp. 133-140, propose 2: documentary and heroic.

[80] Vander Auwera, 'Historical Fact and Artistic Fiction'. For a comparison between northern and southern styles of depicting battle, see Hale, *Artist and Warfare*, pp. 137-199.

[81] Horn, *Vermeyen*, p. 273.

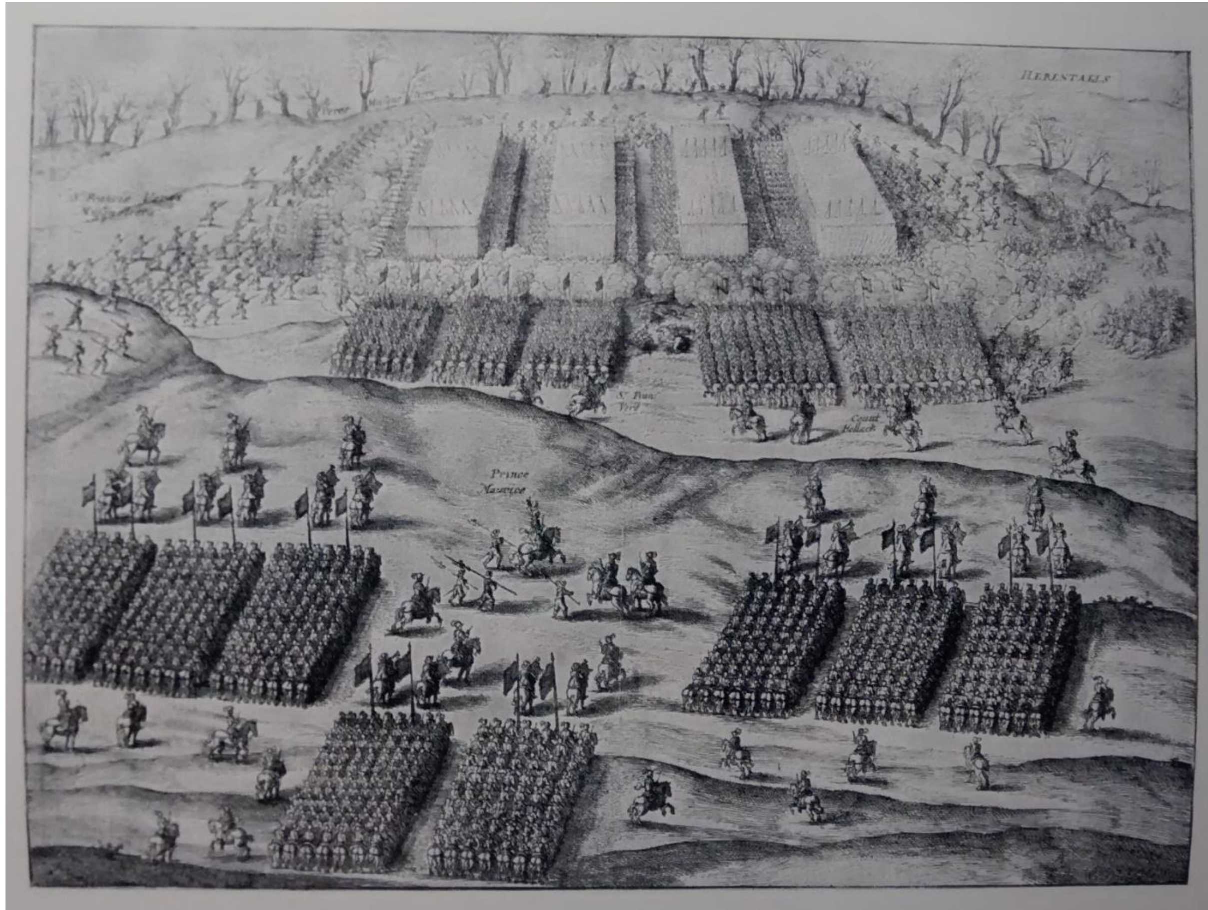

Figure 11: Jerome Commelin, The Battle of Tournhout, Life of Maurice of Nassau*, 1597*

The Artistic Styles of the Vignettes

Visual analysis of the historical vignettes quickly points to a plurality of artists at work in the Gallery. Having examined the evidence for some of the restorations in the Gallery above, and found that it points to a number of additions and alteration, it is simple to understand why this is the case. We know most about the restorations undertaken by Oldrado, who added one episode and repainted three others, one of which is now lost. This goes some way to accounting for differences in appearance between episodes. Despite this, I have identified one predominating hand that was responsible for at least thirteen of the vignettes. As there have been later additions and re-paintings in the Gallery, categorising the other scenes is a challenging task, the basis for which is laid in Appendix Two.

I will now proceed to lay out the fundamental characteristics of this principal style, which apply generally to the rest, by looking at one example: Julius Caesar's army crossing the Rubicon (fig. 12) in the map of *Flaminia*. Although there is no title or visual indication,

such as recognisable portrait of Caesar, marking out this scene, we can be certain of the subject from two details. Firstly, at the Rubicon, there are the words 'IACTA EST ALEA', alluding to his gamble.[82] Secondly, there is a reproduction of the pseudo-classical cippus of the Fifteenth century that forbids the crossing of the Rubicon in arms by order of the Roman Senate on the side of the map.

Figure 12: Matthijs Bril, Julius Caesar's army crossing the Rubicon, map of Flaminia

While the maps are seen from a bird's-eye view, the historical vignettes are always depicted as though from an imaginary, high vantage point at the bottom of the map, which one can equate to the Apennines. As such, not only do the figures decrease in size the further away they are (that is, higher up the wall), but also the angle of sight changes so that less of

[82] 'The die is cast', a phrase attributed to Caesar by Suetonius in *Divus Julius*, 32.

the tops of the figures are visible. Interacting with and blending into the map with its varied geographical features, they are seen walking along the Via Emilia, passing through the countryside with trees and hills, and crossing the rivers in their path. In this way, they transform the cartographic space into a topographical view. Regarding the figures themselves, the artist has a uniform manner and a small range of standard military subjects. First, a background layer of blue was put over the map's green terrain; then onto this layer, the detail of the figures or paraphernalia was added in other colours. The main colours used were principally white and yellow, and to a lesser extent browns, blues, reds, and greys. Most noticeable throughout the Gallery are the numerous compact regiments of pikemen and lancers, which are also depicted singly or in small groups, but he also painted horses with carts, pack animals, army tents, and artillery. Except the cannon, all of these are to be found in the scene of Julius Caesar's army crossing the Rubicon. It must be noted that all of the figures are portrayed in the same manner and costume regardless of the time period relevant to the scene – except the artillery, which is reserved for modern battles, going against not only the recommendations of Dolce and Lomazzo, but also of historical realism. This is true of all the scenes, regardless of artist.

Much in the historical vignettes is thus depicted conventionally. In particular, the distinctive style of portraying soldiers and horsemen follows the contemporary fashion. Hale notes that for Italian military art during this period: 'Whether the battle was ancient, medieval, or recent, the contemporary reliance on a majority of infantry brought the reinvention of a shorthand device, the "forest of pikes"'.[83] Looking at the depiction of Caesar's army, we can see two bands of pikemen and two of horse painted in this way. The first row of the regiment is painted fully, while a few disembodied heads suggest a greater depth than there really is; on top of these figures are straight yellow lines for the spear shafts; the crowning feature is a band of blue that is flecked with many small white strokes, made to represent the multitude of spearheads. The inclusion of these spearheads is central to the success of this device, since it enables the artist to imply a far greater number of soldiers than the space occupied could allow. Just as the infantry are standardised, the banners seen here are white and non-specific; elsewhere, they appear variably as coloured with generic patterns and seldom are historical flags attempted.

While this style is the most common, a brief contrast will demonstrate the variation within the Gallery. The most dramatic departure from this manner is the scene from Lucania,

[83] Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, p. 138.

in which the Roman consul, Marcellus, dies in a skirmish with Carthaginian outriders (fig. 13). Because of the difference, I believe that this scene was either added later, or it has been significantly repainted *a secco*, as the paint of some of the tents has faded significantly. To begin with, that the vignette has been inexpertly merged with the surrounding geography suggests *ad hoc* painting: the ground that forms the camps is flat but is uncomfortably situated on hilly terrain – the camp to the bottom right even overlaps with some trees. The appearance of the camps themselves is unique: the highly regimented olive-green barracks and the central tepees diverge vastly from other tents painted in the Gallery. In addition, the figures are painted differently; there is no characteristic "forest of pikes" for the infantry, and most of the horses are at a gallop and have longer forms. Furthermore, the italic script employed in the *cartello* is not found anywhere else in the Gallery.

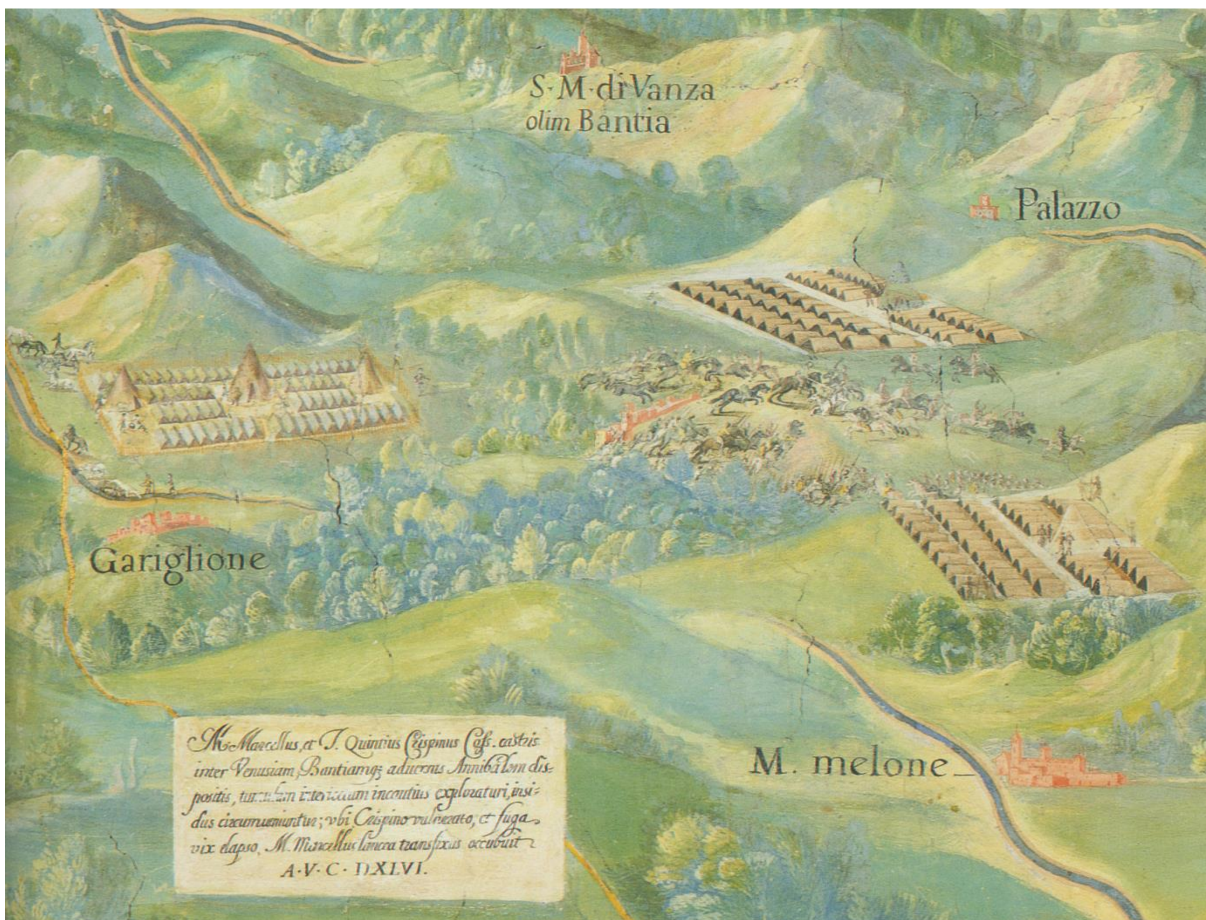

Figure 13:Marcus Marcellus dies in a skirmish with the Carthaginians, map of Lucania

Who Painted the Vignettes?

Identifying individual artists' work in the Gallery's painting is a difficult job: there are no signatures and it is likely that a number of artists worked on the same panel at the same time. All we have to go on are references in artistic biographies, such as those by Giovanni Baglione and Agostino Taja, and stylistic comparisons between the frescoes. As I have argued, I believe that a large proportion of the historical vignettes, at the very least thirteen, were painted by the same hand under the direction of Danti, and now it remains to investigate who this artist was. Of the nineteen artists mentioned by Baglione in connection with the Gallery's initial decoration, I believe that there are two prime candidates: Antonio Tempesta and Matthijs Bril, with other scenes by lesser masters or altered in later restorations.

Baglione records that Tempesta not only 'worked in the Gallery', but also 'demonstrated his skill in the small figures painted *a fresco*' there.[84] Fiorani tentatively suggests that Tempesta was the one responsible for the battle scenes, on the basis that Baglione described him as being famous for 'his paintings of cavalcades, of hunts and of battles'.[85] Indeed, Tempesta had a successful career in specialising in battle scenes, as can be seen in his accomplished later work (fig. 16). The manner in which Tempesta depicts large bodies of troops in the middle-ground certainly recalls the Gallery's scenes. First there is a row or two of soldiers to indicate a cohort, followed by the "forest of pikes", which is topped with empty space and flecked with small strokes to symbolise spearheads, finally standards rise like sails above the spears. It should be remembered, however, that this had become a conventional manner of depicting large bodies of troops. Although artistic licence like this is far more understandable in this series of battles from the Old Testament, Tempesta still included these flourishes in his works on recent battles.[86] Moreover, Taja asserts that Tempesta painted the majority of the religious history scenes on the vault, and throughout his account does not mention the vignettes in the maps.[87] A key difference in Tempesta's work is his employment of dominating, dramatic and heroising foreground subjects, but this is a trait

[84] Baglione, *Le vite de' pittori*, p. 314 [*recte* 214]: 'Operò nella Galleria… e mostrò il suo valore in quelle figurine piccole a fresco'.
[85] Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, p. 181. Baglione, *Le vite de' pittori*, p. 315 [*recte* 215]: 'Le sue opere di cavalcate, di caccie, e di battaglie'.
[86] Cederlöf, 'The Battle Painting', p. 139.
[87] Taja, *Descrizione del Palazzo Apostolico*, p. 293: 'Il Tempesta dipinse, come si può risconoscere, gran parte delle innumerabile istorie, si ammirano per tutta la volta di questa gran Galleria'.

much closer in likeness to the vault scenes, such as *Rainulph defeats his enemies with the prayers of Saint Bernard* (fig. 14).

Figure 14: Antonio Tempesta (?), Rainulph defeats his enemies with the prayers of S. Bernard*, vault*

The other candidate, Matthijs Bril, was known to have been working in Rome from at least 1576, and he collaborated in a number of projects initiated by Gregory XIII, and even worked under Danti in Gregory's Tower of the Winds too.[88] Courtright attributes all of the frescoes in the six rooms of the rear block of the Tower of the Winds solely to Bril, whose Flemish manner of painting landscapes, she argues, was considered capable of achieving greater spirituality.[89] She also maintains that there are noticeable differences between Bril's landscape figures and other artists' who worked there, such as Antonio Circignani.[90] Stylistically, I believe that these figures are in fact very similar to those seen in the Gallery of

[88] Courtright, *The Papacy and the Art of Reform*, pp. 105-108; pp. 28-32. See Baglione, pp. 296-297 [*recte* 196-197].
[89] Courtright, *The Papacy and the Art of Reform*, p. 107.
[90] Idem, p. 107 and n. 15.

Maps: many of the solo figures have similar poses and proportions, including a characteristic lean forward, and they are slender, with a harshly contrasting use of shadow (fig. 15). Notice, also, the familiar design of and focus on the tents in this military context. Furthermore, that the scenes in the Gallery focus more on troop movements rather than glory or bloodshed, often have no central point or obvious hero, and have a perspective from a semi-bird's eye view, suggest a northern style. It is also noteworthy, that the scenes are, on the whole, blended expertly into the topography, a task much more suited to the talents of Bril than of Tempesta, whose battle images hinged around foreground action. Indeed, many of the maps have generic landscape scenes painted at the bottom, as a visual lead-in to the panels, which are also likely to have been executed by Bril. For these reasons, I believe that Matthijs Bril, under the direction of Danti, was the artist responsible for many of the historical vignettes in the Gallery of Maps.[91]

Figure 15: Matthijs Bril, Deborah prays at the Victory of Baracover Sisara*, Room of Old Testament Women, Tower of the Winds*

[91] Courtright also states that, 'It is probable that Mathijs painted the landscape elements of a vast majority of the maps and narratives in the Gallery' (idem note above, p. 105), but limits her analysis to the Tower of the Winds.

Figure 16: Antonio Tempesta, Abraham Loth ab hostibus eripit*, c. 1613*

The Vignettes' Attitude towards History

Having established the identity of the principal artist and his style, which is imitated in the other vignettes, I will now turn my attention to exploring the way in which the artists represented these historical events. To form my conclusions, I will look not only at the formal aspect of the images, but also the information supplied in the *cartelli* and also some extraneous literary sources.

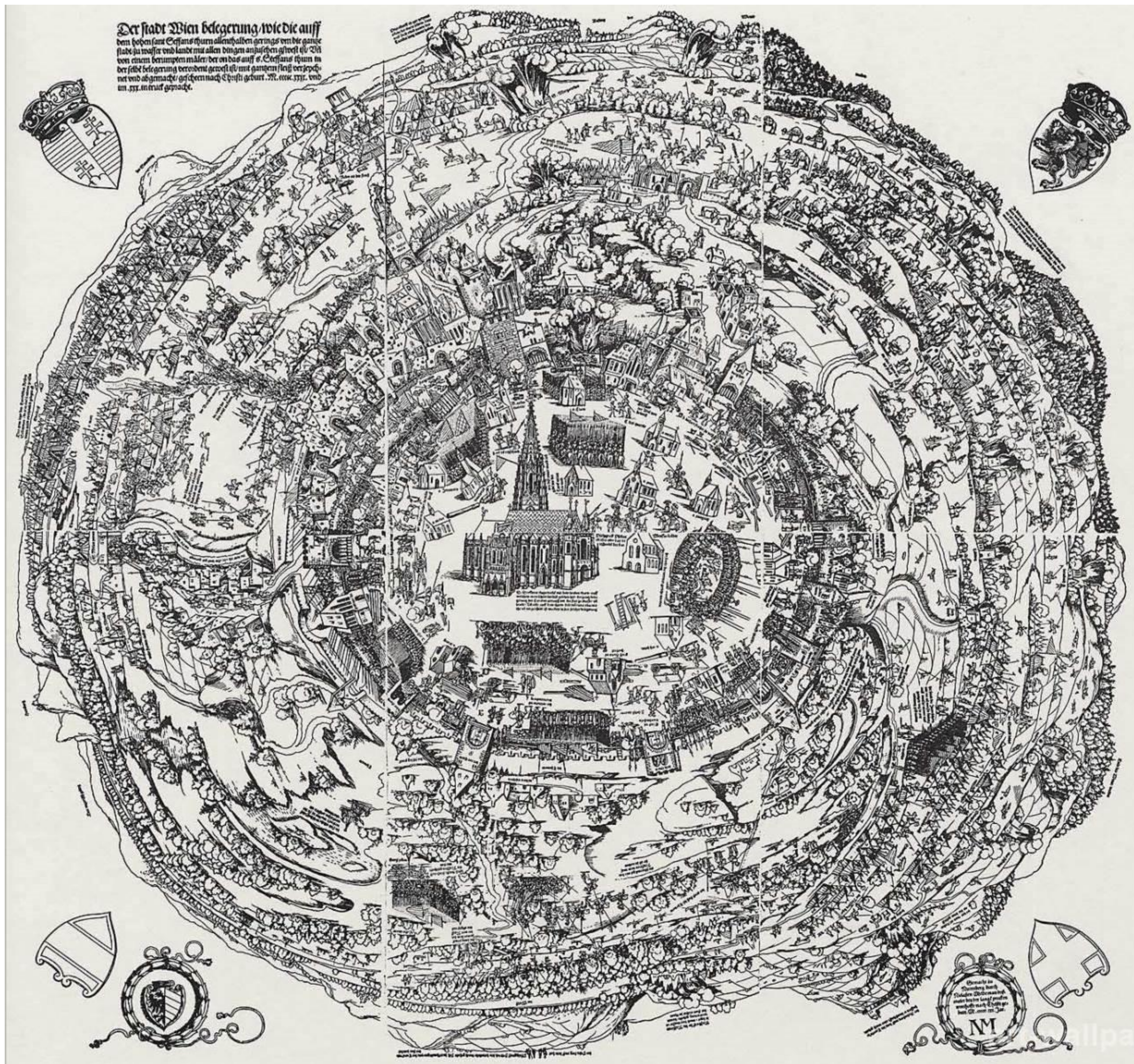

Figure 17: Hans Sebald Beham, Siege of Vienna*, 1530*

As we explored in the section on military literature above, by modern classifications these images fall into the documentary type of battle painting. They are not preoccupied with artistic concerns such as colour and movement, nor do they focus on a central figure or hero,

but rather attempt to give an overview of the event that is holistically understandable. As Hale has explained, when considering the historical element to the visual documentation of war in the Sixteenth century, we must be mindful of the confluence of two traditions surrounding topographical maps, that of the land surveyor and the artist.[92] Hans Sebald Beham's panoramic view of the Siege of Vienna drawn from atop a church spire in 1529 is a perfect example of the merging of these two traditions (fig. 17). In order to attain the highest level of accuracy in making a visual record of events, ideally the artist should be present when it happens, as was Beham, so that he can accurately sketch what is taking place. That being said, none of the artists working in the Gallery was present at any of the scenes since most took place before their time. Therefore, if they were interested in portraying the action with any degree of accuracy, they must have turned to other sources.

As the Sixteenth century progressed, the desire for printed news increased. Often, consumers of broadsheets clamoured not only for descriptions of events, but images as well. Reviewing the developments in France, Philip Benedict has shown that by the end of the 1550s, visual reports of current events were sold as single item broadsheets in Paris.[93] This developed concurrently with the innovation of illustrated bibles in the middle of the century. Both bible and news prints frequently incorporated maps so that their readers could follow events as they moved across the world.[94] For the events depicted in the Gallery, the best-documented battles were the most recent ones in the maps of Corfu and Malta. Considering first the Siege of Valletta of 1565 (fig. 18), Benedict has discovered that twenty-nine separate prints of the events were made in the same year. Moreover, this figure rises to fifty-five if one counts the multiple editions (for example, Niccolò Nelli planned weekly updates for his series) by the same printmakers as the four-month-long siege progressed.[95] Comparing the two versions, we discover from the positions of the Turkish camps and batteries surrounding St Elmo and Valletta that the date of the action taking place in the Gallery is mid-August. The artists working in the Gallery certainly used such printed map *avvisi* as models and Nelli's series is a prime candidate; Marica Milanesi argues that Antonio Lafréry's map of Malta from 1565 was the cartographical basis for the island.[96] Similarly, it is believed the Battle of

[92] Hale, *Warfare and Cartography*, p. 734.
[93] Benedict, *Graphic History*, pp. 85-95.
[94] Delano-Smith and Ingram, *Maps in Bibles*; Woodward, *Maps as Prints*, p. 93.
[95] Benedict, *Graphic History*, p. 97. See Woodward, *Maps as Prints*, pp. 94-97, for Niccolò Nelli's maps.
[96] Milanesi, n. 438, *La Galleria delle Carte geografiche* II, p. 381.

Lepanto was modelled on another engraving by Lafréry published in Rome towards the end of 1571.[97]

Figure 18: Matthijs Bril(?), Siege of Valletta, map of Melita

Of course, accurate topographical engravings were not available for all of the battles depicted in the Gallery, and so, for the vast majority, Danti must have turned to textual sources for accounts of the action. As we have discovered already, Danti had read ancient authors such as Polybius and Livy and considered them important for their contributions to topography, the former for his description of Cannae, the latter of Lake Trasimene.[98] We

[97] Idem, n. 436, p. 380.
[98] Danti, *Le Scienze*, p. 44.

have also established that Danti wrote new text for the cartouches adjoining every region compiled from multiple sources, and this also extends to the *cartelli* that accompany the historical vignettes. However, it remains to be seen whether the artists painting the frescoes followed these historical accounts under Danti's direction. An interesting case emerges if we cross-reference Livy's description of the Battle of Cannae with the painting in the Gallery.

Figure 19: Matthijs Bril, Battle of Cannae, map of Apulia

The *clades Cannensis* (fig. 19) is the most detailed example in the Gallery of a battle scene that follows a historical text directly. It is also the only vignette on land that has annotations on the map itself, and it would be a reasonable presumption to think that these were based on a text, which upon further examination proves to be Livy. The map of *Apulia*

bears witness to the moment immediately before the battle, after the generals have drawn up their troops. Livy gives a comprehensive description of the Roman formation:

> *On the right flank – the one nearest the river – were stationed the Roman horsemen, then the infantry; the cavalry of the allies held the extreme right wing, whilst foot-soldiers were in between, close to the middle where the Roman legions were; darters and other lightly-armed auxiliaries were formed up at the front of the line. The Consuls held the wings – Terentius on the left, Aemilius on the right – and Geminus Servilius was entrusted with safeguarding the centre of the battle.*[99]

As we can see in the map, not only are the troops positioned correctly, but they are also labelled with the same Latin words ('Equites sociorum'; 'legiones, pedites, iaculatores') used by Livy. The formation of the Carthaginians is also noted fully:

> *The Gallic and Iberian horsemen were nearer the river on the left wing, facing the Roman cavalry; the right wing was given to the Numidian horsemen; the centre of the battle line was shored up with infantry, such that on the sides were the Africans, while the Gauls and the Iberians were placed in between… The generals leading the wings were Hasdrubal on the left, Maharbal on the right, while Hannibal himself and his brother Mago held the centre of the line.*[100]

The annotations for the Carthaginian army and generals are again in perfect accord with Livy. However, we can tell that Danti actually based the information for the *cartello* on Alberti, since the numbers of casualties match up to his and not Livy's estimation. Danti rejected the highest estimate of Polybius at 'seventy thousand', and instead chose the forty thousand figure that was given by Alberti, either because it reflects better on the Romans or because he trusted the *Descrittione* as a compendium of sources.[101] The *cartello* states that 'forty thousand foot-soldiers and two thousand seven hundred Roman cavalry' died, which is the same as Alberti.[102] On the other hand, Livy numbers the casualties at 'forty-five thousand

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[99] Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, XXII.xlv.6-8: 'In dextro cornu – id erat flumini propius – Romanos equites locunt, deinde pedites; laevum cornu extremi equites sociorum, intra pedites, ad medium iuncti legionibus Romanis, tenuerunt; iaculatores cum ceteris levium armorum auxiliis prima acies facta. Consules cornua tunere, Terentius laevum, Aemilius dextrum, Gemino Servilio media pugna tuenda data'.

[100] Idem, XXII.xlvi.2-3… XXII.xlvi.7: 'Gallos Hispanosque equites prope ripam laevo in cornu adversus Romanum equitatum; dextrum cornu Numidis equitibus datum; media acies peditibus firmata, ita ut Afrorum utraque cornua essent, interponerentur his medii Galli atque Hispani… Duces cornibus praeerant, sinistro Hasdrubal, dextro Maharbal, mediam aciem Hannibal ipse cum fratre Magone tenuit'.

[101] Polybius, *Histories*, III.117: 'ἑπτὰ μυριάδας ἀπέθανον'.

[102] 'Quadraginta millia peditum duo millia septinginta equitum Romanorum'. Alberti, *Descrittione*, p. 246: 'Furono uccisi in tanta rovina circa quaranta mila pedoni, & 2700 cavalieri Romani'.

five hundred foot and two thousand seven hundred horse', but makes a point of saying that the deaths among the cavalry were divided equally between allied states and Romans, not reflected in the *cartello*.[103]

Whilst there was an effort to remain true to history through textual annotations, no such scruple exists for portraying troops in an accurate manner. If it were not for the labels, one would not be able to tell the two sides apart, because they are painted with no distinction in dress, heraldry or formation. The "forest of pikes" shorthand device that had developed to portray the Swiss-German landsknechts is employed universally. Ignorance cannot be an explanation since many Roman monuments such as Trajan's column portray the equipment of the standard Roman soldier. I highlight this because now we must ask what the intentions of the artists in the Gallery were – whether they were aiming at historical accuracy, at papal propaganda, or at cultured decoration. Nevertheless, the Battles of Cannae and Lepanto, and the Siege of Valletta have demonstrated that Danti was willing to adhere to the information provided by source material.

For those scenes less rigidly grounded in documentation, we must be cautious about treating them as historical sources. Pia Cuneo outlines the two extremes of this method: at one extreme, the images are a transparent window into the past, with no artistic licence on the part of the painter or patron. At the other, they form a mirror of the artist's conscious decisions and manipulations of his medium, and do not reflect at all on the actual event, simply existing within an aesthetic and formal realm.[104] We may lapse into thinking that these images, being so far from the kind of visual realism attained by photography, could never even be considered accurate depictions of events. However, it must be remembered firstly that the camera lens can be distorted by the human touch, especially when one starts adding labels to the results, but also that all images, taken as they are, have their own truth.[105] Although the potential accuracy of these painted representations of battles was constrained from the outset by a number of factors – the medium, the artist's tools and his skill, the reliability of the source – there is still much to learn from them if we can read them correctly. In order to create images that were both realistic and readable, artists had to adopt the visual 'language' of the times, by adapting familiar stereotypes to the particular of the thing being represented.[106] The historical vignettes therefore operate in the middle ground between the

[103] Livy, *Ab Urbe condita*, XXII.xl.15: 'quadraginta quinque milia quingenti pedites, duo milia septingenti equites, et tantadem prope civium sociorumque pars caesi dicuntur'.
[104] Cuneo, 'Introduction', pp. 4-5.
[105] Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, pp. 21-25.
[106] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, pp. 55-78.

polarities delineated by Cuneo, as demonstrated by the Battle of Cannae, which both sticks to and diverges from historical fact. However, as we shall see, the grounding in historical documentation is not so rigorous for all of the scenes. Instead, there is a range of stances in the Gallery, with many erring more towards aesthetic considerations and being less concerned with truthful reporting. It will become apparent that creating historically accurate events is not the principal intention of the artists working under Danti.

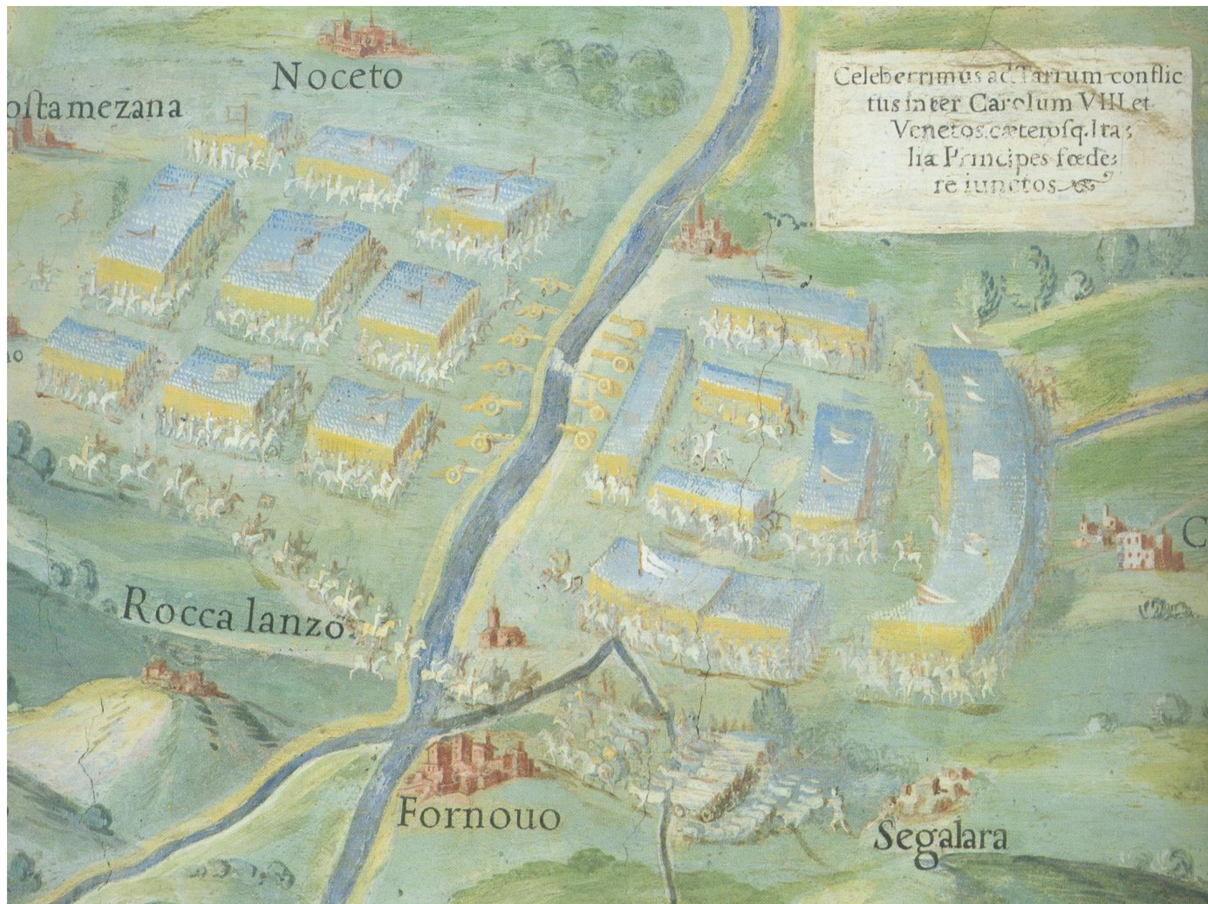

Figure 20: Matthijs Bril, Battle of Fornovo, map of Placentiae et Parmae Ducatus

The Battle of Fornovo (fig. 20), whilst it did expel Charles VIII from Italy and lose him northern Italy, was a heavy Italian defeat and a great victory of French cavalry. The scene in the map of *Placentiae et Parmae Ducatus* makes some attempt at historicity. The baggage train of the French is being attacked by a troop of cavalry, one of whom is clearly carrying a Venetian flag. This must relate to the Venetian *stradiots*, who were raised in the Balkans. They were stationed on the right-hand wing of the Italian army and they flanked the

enemy in order to harass, against orders, the French baggage train.[107] Perhaps, also, we can assume that the figure in all white, stationed in the middle of the right army (French) is King Charles VIII and the single horseman leading the rear-guard below is the celebrated general Gaston de Foix.[108] However, identifying the French on the eastern bank of the Fornovo means that the orientation of the battle is incorrect – Bril has painted the armies on the wrong sides of the river.[109] In fact, the scene falls foul of historical fact on a number of other counts. For instance, the Italian artillery is stationed by the river, when in fact it was on the higher ground to the northeast.[110] Moreover, although here emblazoned with two more Venetian banners, the centre of the Italian army was in fact composed of Milanese troops and headed by the Marquis of Mantua, Francesco Gonzaga; there is no depiction of a Milanese or Mantuan flag.[111] In this scene, therefore, we find a coexistence of fact and fiction, in which historical realism is not the primary concern but is a supplement that strengthens the visual narrative.

We find a similar ambiguity in the representation of history in the Battle of Ravenna (fig. 21) in the map of *Flaminia*. In general terms, the location of the battle is correct, with the forces to the west of Ravenna, aligned correctly Since the standards are non-specific, we are left to presume that the French-Ferrarese forces are to the right of the river Ronco, and the Spanish-Imperial forces are on the left with their Papal allies, as testified by accounts.[112] The flags of the right-hand army feature a white cross within a blue background, which relates neither to the French forces under Gaston de Foix nor his ally Alfonso d'Este of Ferrara. At the bottom of the battle, on what should be the Spanish-Imperial side, there is a regiment of reinforcements carrying a flag that depicts a white eagle on a blue background, again, not applicable to the Spanish or Papal forces. Otherwise, the flags are left blank. We see the artillery squaring off in the centre of the battle, firing at each other over the river. This belies an ignorance both of military affairs in general – the artists regularly place the artillery *in medias res* throughout the Gallery – but also of this battle in particular. All around, the empty space between the rivers around Ravenna is filled almost randomly with bands of pikeman or lancers in the shorthand style that we have seen before, and they do not adopt the crescent shape in which Gaston arrayed his troops.[113] Nevertheless, perhaps we can tolerate these

[107] Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 108.
[108] Idem, pp. 109-110.
[109] Idem, pp. 107-109.
[110] Idem, p. 108.
[111] Idem, p. 110.
[112] Idem, pp. 134-143.
[113] Idem, p. 135.

oversights since the artist was constrained by the scale of the map. In any case, I would argue that there was reason behind these decisions, and that the cannons adopt their central position because of their central part in the battle. Both sides suffered considerable casualties, which has been portrayed with a number of corpses littering the field in a manner rarely seen in the Gallery, because Gaston and Alfonso, who was famed for his appreciation of the cannon, bombarded the Spanish for more than two hours.[114] Therefore, aside from the deficiencies, the painting's relationship to historical truth is defined by its narrative rather than documentary style.

Figure 21: Matthijs Bril, Battle of Ravenna, map of Flaminia

[114] Idem, pp. 138-140.

Figure 22: Charlemagne defeats the Lombards near Piacenza, map of Mediolanensis Ducatus

Turning now to the representation of Charlemagne's victory over the Lombards in 774 (fig. 22), we see that the distinctive composition is guided by an overriding concern with the narrative sense emphasised in the literature. Of the Lombard King, Desiderius, the *cartello* states: 'Charlemagne defeated King Desiderius of the Lombards in war and reduced him to slavery'.[115] Similarly, Alberti only describes the consequences of the battle, writing that 'the Lombards were subjugated and their king Desiderius was put in prison by Charlemagne'.[116] Just as the incarceration of Desiderius is emphasised in the literature surrounding the battle, so too is it symbolised through its visual form. Closing in upon each other, the armies form a middle ground that is cut off from the outside, from which King Desiderius will not escape. Despite there being no description of the battle, the artist has still relied on source material in order to aid the reading of the battle's narrative. In terms of their style, I believe that this and the other two episodes in the panel for *Mediolanensis Ducatus* were painted by a different artist to the scenes covered so far, which are Bril's work. These

[115] 'Carolus Magnus… Desderiu[m] Longobardoru[m] Regem bello vicit & in servitutem redegit'.
[116] Alberti, *Descrittione*, p. 422v: 'Soggiugati i Longobardi, & fatto prigione Desiderio loro Re da Carlo Magno'.

figures have straight legs and distinctly wide, flat crotches; a more varied colour scheme is utilised as well. Perhaps this contributed to the rather unique design of the scene, which features the two armies meeting each other with curved chevron formations that culminates in one of the busiest and most attractive vignettes. In the middle, the most eager horsemen break rank to charge each other. Although the soldiers are designed in the familiar manner of yellow pikes with blue-topped and white-flecked spearheads, there are far more figures represented around the massed ranks of spearmen. However, this departs from historical representation, since Oman emphasises firstly the increased dependence on cavalry in warfare as the Middle Ages progressed, particularly the heavily armoured sort under Charlemagne, secondly that the Lombards in particular had a lot of knights at their disposal.[117] Therefore, the depiction of these soldiers as landsknechts even though cavalry was the more important troop demonstrates a preference towards conventional forms as opposed to historical realism.

Figure 23: Battle of Pavia, map of Mediolanensis Ducatus

The majority of the historical scenes are not based on sources in regard to their composition and are simply designed using conventional forms and artistic invention. The Battle of Pavia in 1525 (fig. 23) is the epitome of this method. Completed by the same artist

[117] Oman, *A History of the Art of War: the Middle Ages*, pp. 10-21 and 73-88.

as he who painted Charlemagne’s victory, we can see the familiar massed “forest of pikes” in a musty blue. The whole is a confusing mass of stock “genre” figures or groupings taken from army life: tents, pack animals and carts, and pairs of soldiers in various poses. There are no standards or distinguishing features between the two armies, which are in fact difficult to separate, although one would suspect that the regiments and camp to the east of Pavia belong to the Spanish-Imperial army, and those to the west and north to the French.[118] It is obvious that the artist has not attempted to depict the battle itself, which took place north of the town in the park of Mirabello.[119]

Figure 24: Pietro Oldrado, Battle of Lake Trasimene, map of Perusinus ac Tifernas

We observe a clear disinterest towards historical fact in the Battle of Lake Trasimene (fig. 24), which was a later addition by Pietro Oldrado. The result is neither coherent artistically nor grounded on historical accounts of the battle; we shall see a dissimilarity from Livy’s narrative. He made some attempt at imitating Bril’s style, but the depictions are different in each of the four painted battalions. In one case, the yellow background of the

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[118] Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 196-197.
[119] Idem, pp. 198-202.

spear-shafts extends behind the soldiers bodies; once there is no background wash behind the bodies; once there is a dark grey backing; and in the most prominent example, the horsemen on the sides and back are painted half over the yellow and half over the landscape green. Once again, the artist relies upon the image of the landsknecht as the stereotypical soldier that developed in the Sixteenth century, despite its being anachronistic.[120] Oldrado evidently did not follow Livy, who describes the Romans as ambushed and hemmed in by the Carthaginians: 'The Phoenician had his enemy caught between the lake and the mountains and surrounded by his own forces'.[121] This is not reflected at all in the vignette. Perhaps Oldrado was echoing the confusion evoked in Livy's account in passages such as this: 'It was not an ordered battle with lines of principes, hastati and triarii… nor did any soldier keep to his legion, cohort, or maniple: rather it was chance that grouped them together'.[122] However, it seems most likely that the battle is simply a hodgepodge of troops and stock military scenes following no real order. It is my opinion that Oldrado was not basing his composition on Livy because he did not have historical accuracy in mind; his intention was surely to give a decorative visual form to Danti's deleted caption, "Rotta de' Rotti". Given these facts, we cannot draw much from the image in terms of its representation of history, and, in relation to other scenes, I have grave doubts about its place within any predetermined iconographic programme.

In addition to the painted scenes, there are numerous small historical references that provide supplementary detail to the chorography of the region, demonstrating Danti's interest in the connection between local history and place. They are not the same design as the vignettes, but do add to the overall antiquarian impression of the Gallery. For instance, in the map of *Calabria Ulterior*, the 'Castra Annibalis' (Hannibal's Camp) is marked near Crotone, recalling the three years (206-203 BC) that Hannibal spent in that region.. This can be further demonstrated by another minor reference: the 'Grotta della Sibilla' in the map of Umbria. Giving her name to the Monti Sibillini, the Sibyl who occupied this cave had an inconsequential classical presence and only really came to prominence in the Fifteenth century, when Antoine de la Sale made the Sibyl's grotto the focus of a chapter in his *La Salade* (c. 1440). After this, however, the cavern enjoyed considerable interest from a

[120] Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, p. 84.
[121] Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, XXII.iv.5: 'Poenus… clausum lacu ac montibus et circumfusum suis copiis habuit hostem'.
[122] Idem, XXII.v.7-8: 'non illa ordinate per principes hastatosque ac triarios… nec ut in sua legione miles aut cohorte aut manipulo esset: fors conglobabat'.

chorographic perspective, as is demonstrated by the full-page discussion in Alberti.[123] Whilst I have only adduced two examples here, they are indicative of the many other historical details that litter the maps. Enriching the landscape both intellectually and visually, these little details need not be thought of as contributing to a pre-determined, providential programme. I would argue, instead, that they were added in the spirit of enjoyment, highlighting places of interest for the viewer's delight, and this will be demonstrated through visual analysis.

We have seen a variety of approaches to history in the Gallery's vignettes, from detailed annotation to complete disinterest. What remains true for all of the vignettes, despite any visual flaws, is the relationship to the geography of the place and the scholarly effort of the *cartelli*. Thus, I would argue that the Gallery's designers were not primarily concerned with truthful reporting, but rather desired to make an erudite, decorative scheme that appealed both to historians and to geographers. For some of the episodes, we would be in the dark if we did not have the combined clues of the informative *cartelli* or were not able to locate the action. One rarely finds any form of propaganda espoused either in the *cartelli* or visually in the histories.

Conclusions

We started by reviewing the secondary literature on the Gallery. Recently, much effort has been devoted to elucidating the meaning of the religious iconography of the vault's series of "sacrifices" and "miracles". Having established that it is a Counter-Reformation assertion of authority, many scholars believe that the historical vignettes must operate as a providential view of history because of the Post-Tridentine argument of the vault. I have argued that this Catholic element does not match up with the historical vignettes on the walls of the Gallery. One major factor for this is the neglect by historians of an art historical method, which I conducted in the latter part of this essay. My aim was to address this deficit and to demonstrate what can be learned from such an approach both about the decorative scheme and from the paintings in isolation.

[123] Alberti, *Descrittione di tutta l'Italia*, pp. 278-278v.

Having presented the documentary evidence for the Gallery's cartographic programme, I established that Egnatio Danti, its designer, manipulated the corridor's space to his will. By dividing Italy in two halves, the corridor became the Apennine spine of the peninsula and the view was able to walk along it. The mapped territory extended to the district of Avignon as it was a spiritual belonging of the Church. It became clear from primary evidence that the Gallery was used as a space for not only reflection and enjoyment, but even for administrative purposes, testified by the later updating of the geography and the insertion of papal heraldry. From a scholar's perspective, Danti was interested in reaching a deeper understanding of place through the exercise of chorography. The frescoes that adorn the walls so vividly are the result of his labours: he combines beautifully painted maps with literary references to each region's past. Included in this system are the vignettes, which bind events in time with geographical space on the maps.

Moving forward, I asked how the vignettes fitted into this scheme. Certainly, they play no role in the administration function of the maps, as, on a practical level, they obstruct the view. Some scholars have stressed that they were a mental aid, designed to assist the pope in ruling the Papal States and leading the Catholic Church. However, I have argued that it is not logical for the vignettes to operate in this manner, nor is it actually explained why they should. On an artistic level, we discovered that the scenes are depicted in a conventional and indistinctive manner, not particularly recognisable when taken on their own. This led me to conclude that they were not intended to be instructive examples in history. In fact, I believe they are the opposite: first, one needs to find the location of the scenes within the maps, and then refer to the learned *cartelli* in order to identify the historical episode. Neither on a visual nor on a textual level is a providential Catholic continuum of Italian history emphasised. Indeed, we saw from the two scenes – one on the vault, the other on the wall – displaying the repulse of Attila that the historical vignettes highlight worldly causality.

There are many reasons to be cautious about grand iconographic programmes tying together all of the historical vignettes. First of all, there is a disproportionate evocation of some periods of history, and Rome or the papacy is on the wrong end of defeats on too many occasions for this to be so, as Goffart noticed. Another major problem results from the restoration works. That parts of the Gallery were rushed is clear from a number of mistakes, the most prominent of which being the placement of a *trompe l'oeil* depicting the murder of Archimedes during the Siege of Syracuse (fig. 25) on the panel of *Apulia*, when in fact the logical placement would be directly opposite on the map of *Sicilia*. Additionally, we know of at least one scene that has not survived – either through excessive damage or through bad

restoration – and others have been repainted. Both of reasons make the vignettes liable to over-interpretation.

Figure 25: trompe l'oeil *depicting the murder of Archimedes, map of* Apulia

So I returned to the fundamentals of art history and I examined the images objectively and in depth. What I discovered is that the emphasis of the histories lies chiefly in the location and in its recording, and not so much on the consequences of these events. Even as the map itself changes and is updated, these figures will forever be re-enacting the event in that space. Evoking the rich history of Italy, and moreover the scholarship thereon, the historical vignettes raise the prestige of the patron by highlighting his erudition. Working as learned decoration, it accounts for the inclusion of strange episodes that occasionally appear

on the walls: the Battle of Pandosia (fig. 26), insignificant to Italian history, relates more to its status as a topographical digression. Alexander of Epirus was warned via an oracle that he should avoid the river Acheron and the city of Pandosia, which he mistakenly assumed to be the likewise-named pair in Epirus.[124] Artistically, one would not be able to identify this event because there are no visual clues to clarify its obscure nature. Importantly, the cartouche for *Calabria Citerior* states: 'There was great cause for writing among historians with regard to the death of King Alexander of Epirus at Pandosia'.[125]

Figure 26: Matthijs Bril, Battle of Pandosia, map of Calabria Citerior

[124] Alberti, *Descrittione*, pp. 201 and particularly 209v.
[125] 'Haec ob Alexandrum Epirotarum regem apud Pandosiam trucidatum magnam scribendi ansam historicis praebuit'.

Artistically, as we have seen, there was a growing trend for maps or views of battles in the Sixteenth Century. For instance, during the forty years of Spanish campaigning in the Netherlands in the later Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Centuries, there were maps with military scenes produced with annotations in order 'to enable its owner to follow military events'.[126] Now this is not the case in the Gallery, since it is not attempting a true reporting: the high level of informed detail at the Battle of Cannae, or of detailed copying of printed maps for the scenes in Malta and Corfu, is notable if only for its rarity within the Gallery. Most other scenes do not have the same attention to historical detail, but instead focus either on portraying the narrative of the event, or simply on decoration. Rather it is both utilising and progressing the fashion. Just as Wolfgang Lazius appealed to history through decoratively old names such as 'Boiorum regnum' and 'Rhaetia alpestris' in his eleven-map circuit of the Austrian (Hapsburg) kingdoms known as *Typi chorographici provinciarum Austriae* from 1561, so do the manifold references to history in the Gallery.[127]

As a man interested in history and geography, having historical vignettes painted onto the walls would be a natural choice in decoration, especially given its fashionable status as a palace decoration during the Sixteenth Century.[128] The literary allusions both to current topographical works and also to classical histories visualised playfully on the maps demonstrates the sophistication and worldliness of the patron, as well as satisfying a highly personalised decorative scheme. Whilst we may not take away with us important lessons about warfare or history away from the walls, this Gallery gives us an unprecedented insight into the taste of Gregory XIII and rising status and versatile applications of maps among Renaissance patrons.

[126] Hale, 'Warfare and Cartography', p. 735.
[127] Goffart, *Historical Atlases*, pp. 26-27 and 64-66.
[128] Bourne, 'Francesco II Gonzaga and Maps as Palace Decoration'; Schulz, 'Maps as Metaphors'.

APPENDIX 1

Table of historical vignettes in the Gallery of Maps, ordered chronologically:

Historical Vignettes	Region	Date	Plate No.[129]
The Battle of Pandosia between Alexander I of Epirus and an army of Bruttians, Lucanians, and Samnites	Calabria Citerior	330 BC	139
The Battle of Clastidium between the Romans under Marcus Marcellus and the Insubrian Gauls	Mediolanensis Ducatus	222 BC	219
The Battle of the Ticinus between Hannibal and the Romans under Publius Cornelius Scipio	Mediolanensis Ducatus	218 BC	218
The Battle of the Trebia between Hannibal and the Romans under Tiberius Sempronius Longus	Placentia et Parmae Ducatus	218 BC	252
The Battle of Lake Trasimene between Hannibal and the Romans under Gaius Flaminius	Perusinus ac Tifernas	217 BC	65
Siege of Spoleto by Hannibal	Umbria	217 BC	91
The Battle of Cannae between Hannibal and the Romans under Gaius Terentius Varro and Lucius Aemilius Paullus	Apulia	216 BC	375
The Roman Consul Marcus Marcellus is slain in a skirmish with Hannibal's cavalry	Lucania	208 BC	127
The Battle of the Metauro between Hasdrubal and the Romans under Marcus Livius and Gaius Claudius Nero	Urbini Ducatus	207 BC	322
Julius Caesar's army crosses the Rubicon	Flaminia	49 BC	308
The formation of the Second Triumvirate between Octavian, Mark Anthony and Lepidus	Bononiensis Ditio	43 BC	295
Pope Leo the Great halts the advance of Attila's army	Mantuae Ducatus	452	264
Charlemagne defeats the Lombards near Piacenza	Mediolanensis Ducatus	774	220
Duke Vinichisius (Winiges) leads Pope Leo III to Spoleto	Umbria	C. 795	92
The Battle of the Garigliano between Christian forces and the Saracens	Campania	915	106
The Battle of San Ruffillo between Papal forces and the Visconti of Bologna	Bononiensis Ditio	1361	297

[129] These are the plate numbers given in Gambi and Pinelli, *La Galleria delle Carte geografiche* II, which supplies high quality photography.

The return of the Papal Court from Avignon to Rome	Avenionensis Ditio et Venaisinus Comitatus	1377	194
Allegory of Christopher Columbus commemorating his discovery of the New World[130]	Liguria	1492	41
The Battle of Fornovo between Charles VIII of France and the Italian Princes	Placentia et Parmae Ducatus	1495	253
Pope Julius II lays siege to and enters the city of Mirandola	Ferrariae Ducatus	1511	275
The Battle of Ravenna between the French and the Holy League	Flaminia	1512	307
The Battle of Pavia between Francis I of France and a Spanish-Imperial army	Mediolanensis Ducatus	1525	219
The army sent by the Marche in defence of the Pope at the time of the Sack of Rome	Picenum	1527	337
The Battle of Ceresole between Francis I and Charles V	Pedemontium et Monsferratus	1544	206
Andrea Doria's brigantine[131]	Liguria	C. 1550	38
The Siege of Valletta by the Ottoman fleet[132]	Malta	1565	442
The Battle of Lepanto between Christian forces and the Turks[132]	Corfu	1571	436

[130] Not strictly historical. Nonetheless, I include it as it differs from the other marine details in that it refers to a specific person and event.

[131] This scene is not listed by Goffart. Presumably, he did not consider it noteworthy because it does not occur on land. It could indeed be mistaken for one of the many generic ships painted in the Gallery, however, it is singled out by an inscription in the sail: 'Andreas Aureas piratarum acerrimus hostis' (Andrea Doria, the fiercest foe of pirates). I list it here as, like above n. 81, it refers to a specific person and campaign.

[132] Goffart ('Christian Pessimism', pp. 803-804) argues that the maps of the ports and islands should be thought of as appendices to the overall scheme of the maps, and therefore he discards these two scenes. Whilst he is correct in separating these maps from the main cartographic programme, I believe the principal behind their decoration remains the same.

APPENDIX 2

Attribution of historical vignettes

Matthijs Bril:
Siege of Spoleto (*Umbria*)
Duke Vinichisius (Winiges) leads Pope Leo III to Spoleto (*Umbria*)
The Battle of Pandosia (*Calabria Citerior*)
The Battle of Fornovo (*Placentiae et Parmae Ducatus*)
Pope Leo I halts the army of Attila (*Mantuae Ducatus*)
Pope Julius II enters the city of Mirandola (*Ferrariae Ducatus*)
The formation of the Second Triumvirate (*Bononiensis Ditio*)
The Battle of San Ruffillo (*Bononiensis Ditio*)
Julius Caesar's army crosses the Rubicon (*Flaminia*)
The Battle of Ravenna (*Flaminia*)
The Battle of the Metauro (*Urbini Ducatus*)
The army sent by the Marche to defend Rome in 1527 (*Picenum*)
The Battle of Cannae (*Apulia*)

Artist of the islands (Matthijs Bril?):
The Battle of Lepanto (*Corfu*)
The Siege of Valletta (*Malta*)

Artist of *Mediolanensis Ducatus*:
The Battle of the Ticinus (*Mediolanensis Ducatus*)
Charlemagne defeats the Lombars near Piacenza (*Mediolanensis Ducatus*)
The Battle of Pavia (*Mediolanensis Ducatus*)

Artist of the sea scenes:
Allegory of Christopher Columbus (*Liguria*)
Andrea Doria's brigantine (*Liguria*)

Pietro Oldrado
The Battle of Lake Trasimene (*Perusinus ac Tifernas*)
The Battle of Ceresole – retouched (*Pedemontium et Monsferratus*)
The Battle of Clastidium – retouched (*Mediolanensis Ducatus*)

Unattributed vignettes:
The Battle of the Garigliano, 915 (*Campania*)
The Roman Consul Marcus Marcellus is slain in a skirmish with the Carthaginians (*Lucania*)
The Papal court return to Rome from Avignon (*Avenionensis Ditio et Venaisinus Comitatus*)
The Battle of Trebia (*Placentiae et Parmae Ducatus*)

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