



## BENI ARTISTICI COMUNALI - 2

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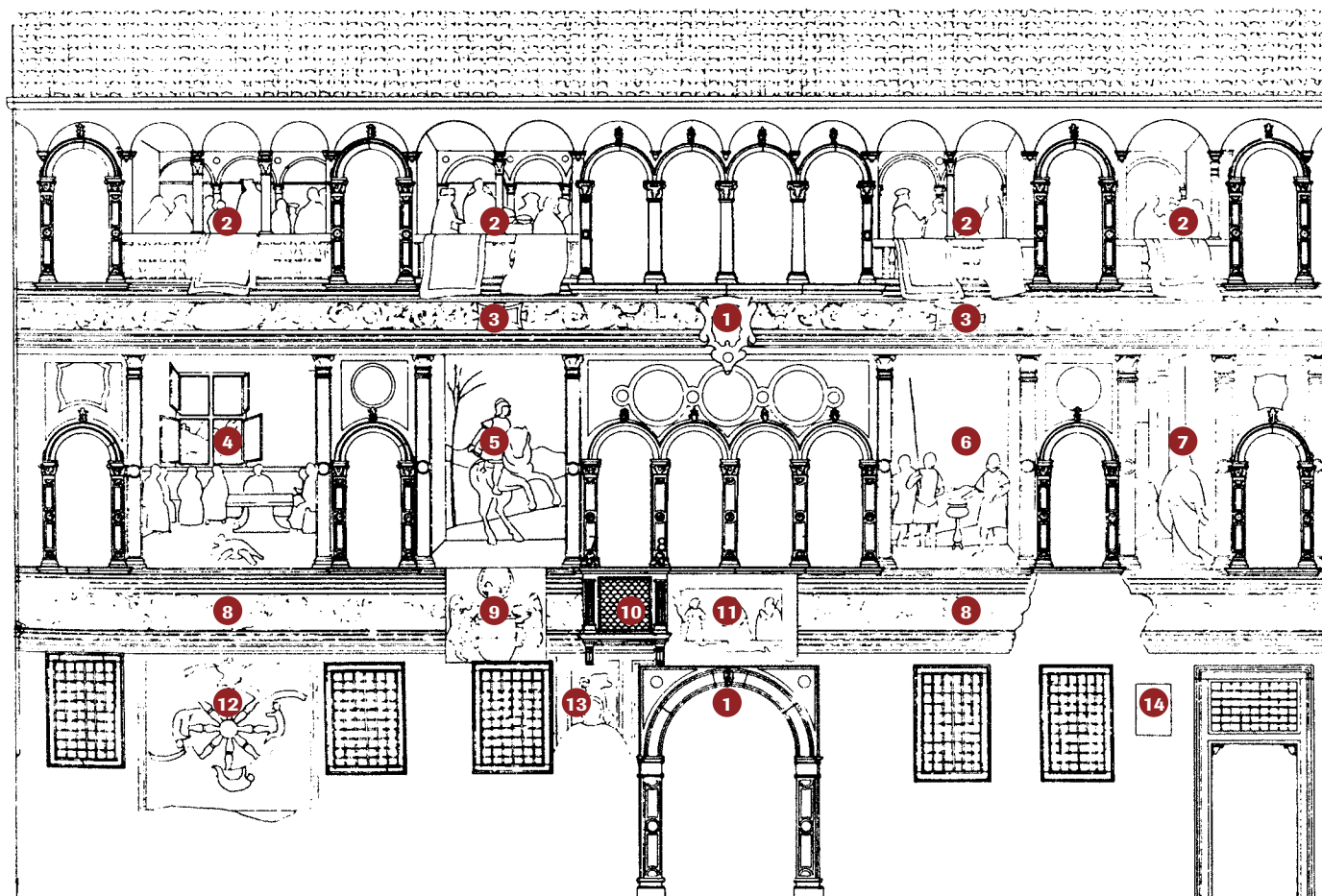
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### READING PLAN OF THE FACADE OF PALAZZO GEREMIA

- |   |  |    |   |
|---|--|----|---|
| 1 | Pona-Geremia coat of arms  | 8  | Grotesque frieze  |
| 2 | The Emperor Maximilian I of Hapsburg grants nobles an audience                                     | 9  | Brunswick coat of arms  |
| 3 | Motto and monogram of Maximilian I of Hapsburg   | 10 | Balcony in red stone with lions holding coats of arms   |
| 4 | Consensus amongst the dignitaries who observe fighting scene (allegory of the Battle of Calliano?) | 11 | Holy Conversation: The Virgin Mary with Baby Jesus between Saint John the Baptist and Saint Anthony the Abbot |
| 5 | A knight (Marcus Curtius throwing himself into a chasm?)   | 12 | Wheel of Fortune  |
| 6 | Mucius Scaevola trusting his hand onto the flames  | 13 | Armiger on guard at the door  |
| 7 | The sacrifice of Lucretia?   | 14 | Memorial inscription in memory of Gerolamo de Tevini, fallen during the First World War                       |

# PALAZZO GEREMIA



## A SHORT GUIDE



Comune di Trento  
Servizio Cultura e Turismo

## HISTORY

Palazzo Geremia, one of Trento's most beautiful Renaissance jewels, was built at the end of the 15th century as a residence for Giovanni Antonio Pona, son of the noble Geremia Pona of Verona and his wife Elisabetta Calepini. The Pona Geremia crest, representing an arm armed with a knife, appears twice on the façade of the palace and in various internal settings, together with the heraldic devices of the related Trento families: a Prato, Calepini, Mirana, Galasso and Firmian.

The complex consists of three separate buildings: the main building facing out onto via Belenzani (once Contrada Larga); the middle body, separated from the first by a court, which is accessible through a large hallway and a portico; the third, a lower and more modest service building overlooking via delle Orfane (formerly via dei Forni) and the garden. The first two structures are the result of the changes made at the end of the 15th century to the medieval buildings, renovated according to the aesthetic models of the Italian Renaissance.

The presence in the portico of a fresco representing the crest of Udalrico Lichtenstein, the bishop prince of Trento from 1493 to 1505, fixes the chronological coordinates of the architectural modernization works. The third body was likely erected a few years after, and features a small portal bearing the family crest on the keystone.

The Geremia family lived in the palazzo for over three centuries and participated very actively in administering the city as consuls. Following the extinction of the Geremia family, the residence became property of the Tevini family, who soon after 1880 sold it to the Podetti's.

Purchased by the local administration in 1912, today it is the representative seat of the Municipality of Trento. The building was radically renovated in 1883, and the frescoes on the façade underwent several renovation campaigns in 1941, 1960 and in 1973, not always with satisfying results.

The most recent overall renovation, directed by the architects Michelangelo Lupu and Massimo Deutsch, was completed in 1993.

Today Palazzo Geremia is also used for public meetings and exhibitions.



## THE COUNCIL

During the third stage of the Trento Council (1561-1563), the cardinal and bishop of Lodi, Ludovico Simonetta, lived in the palazzo. Nominated Pope Pius IV's legate, he arrived at Trento on December 9, 1561 with an entourage featuring 62 people and 16 horses. A letter written by Muzio Calini, archbishop of Zara, reveals that Simonetta "upon his arrival could not occupy the palace immediately since the rooms needed some refurbishment in order to give them a more courtly appearance and more comfortable amenities". For a few days the prelate was a guest of the cardinal Gonzaga, in the Thun palace, before moving to Palazzo Geremia. Among the Council's highest members, Simonetta was the head of the curialist party, i.e. the faithful supporters of the pontifical prerogatives.

At the time, the Quetta, Thun and Geremia palazzos were joined by a suspended wooden bridge which was later extended to reach the Santa Maria Maggiore church. In 1673 Michelangelo Mariani wrote that "they had built hillocks, or wooden bridges that went undetected from one Contrada to another; so as to make visits and private conferences more freely, prior to and in preparation of the public sessions that followed. In some places it is still possible to see traces of such bridges".

## ART

The building, fruit of anonymous workmanship, is one of the most prestigious in Trento, both for the refined architectural solutions that outline the passage from the late Gothic style to the Renaissance, and for the high artistic level of the frescos. The three-light, two-light and single-lancet Gothic windows overlooking the internal courtyard, the hallway entrance staircase and the capitals of the pillars holding up the portico represent elements of Gothic-Venetian style, cherished at that time by the bishop-prince Johannes Hinderbach. On the other hand, the façade boasts a full Renaissance style, quite similar to the coeval architecture of Vicenza and Verona.

The main façade centres around a sequence of openings consisting of a portal and two magnificent overlapping four-lancet windows, on the sides of which stand two pairs of single-lancet windows. From the centre of the façade, yet in an asymmetrical position, emerges an open-work balcony, guarded over by two small sculpted lions. Perfectly integrated with the architectural score is the fresco decoration, which is developed on three levels alternated by horizontal fascia belts with grotesque motifs. In the upper half, various lavishly dressed characters occupy an imaginary loggia, from which hang precious oriental carpets. Among these figures one can easily recognise Emperor Maximilian I of Hapsburg, portrayed three times while granting ambassadors and notables a hearing. In the middle fascia four large panels contain four narrative scenes: a group of dignitaries watching a fight; a knight (Marcus Curtius?); Mucius Scaevola and a fourth scene no longer decipherable (The Sacrifice of Lucretia?). On the lower register one can still distinguish, though very deteriorated, the wheel of Fortune and the giant figure of a warrior bearing the heraldic colours of Pona Geremia. A fresco depicting the *Holy Conversation* embellishes the wall above the portal. There is a long-standing debate on the date and paternity of the cycle: the most reliable hypothesis so far says this decorative project was completed by the end of 1515 by Gian Maria Falconetto of Verona or by a pupil, assisted in the figurative part by another painter, probably Bartolomeo Montagna.

The series of higher register panels depict one of the frequent visits of Maximilian I to Trento, between 1501 and 1511, probably that of 1508, when the sovereign attended his proclamation as "elected emperor" in the cathedral. To this regard, it must be remembered that Giovanni Antonio Pona had received the privilege of familiarity from Maximilian since 1486, and that on

October 31st, 1501 he had been raised to the rank of Count palatine, with improvement of the family coat of arms.

Inside the large entrance hall you can admire a beam ceiling enriched by 84 wooden panels painted with feminine and virile heads, crests and grotesque figures.

The adjacent terrestrial hall hosts a beautiful 16th century fireplace frescoed with a warrior figure sitting on the lorica, to whom a lady is handing over a helmet bearing the arms of the Geremia on the crest. On the first floor is a large hall, decorated by fragments of a painted grotesque frieze with winged putti, sea monsters and busts of Roman emperors. The style and the repertoire are very close to the style of Falconetto, to whom a great part of the interior decorations have been ascribed. Similar monochrome decorative motives with battle scenes among tritons and sea gods characterize the second floor hall in the main body, and the two adjacent rooms located on the first floor of the middle body. Finally, in a small hall on the ground floor of the middle body are displayed seven stucco busts representing the Seven Kings of Rome, dating back to the second half of the 16th century.

Among the precious furnishings of the palazzo, especially noteworthy are several paintings of 17th century sovereigns set in stucco frames, the large painting by Domenico Zeni representing *The Civic Guard of Trento in 1801*, and a series of busts and plaster sculptures belonging to the collection of Andrea Malfatti, the best 19th century sculptor from Trento.

