

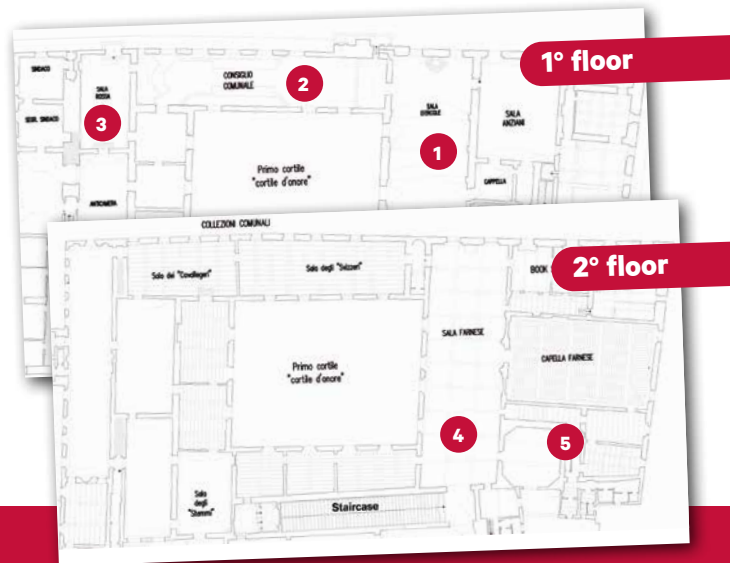
Farnese hall  
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## 5. Farnese Chapel

layer (stucco painted to resemble marble) in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century during the restoration of the Farnese Hall. The fresco decoration dates back to 1562, when Pope Pius IV was ruling and his representatives in town were the legate Cardinal Carlo Borromeo and deputy legate Cardinal Pier Donato. The monumental restoration work of the Ospedale della Morte, Palazzo Farnese, who painted the fresco cycle of the Virgin's Life was Prospero Fontana, a member of the "Mannerism" school in Rome. As a result of the town's events the restoration ordered by Cardinal Borromeo, the archive and warehouse in Palazzo Farnese until its latest restoration in 1980.



Texts by C. Bernardini and A. Mampieri – Photo by Giorgio Bianchi



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

The building consists of two separate units. The one on the left, the older one, belonged in the XII century to the Accursio family, which gave the name to the whole palazzo. In 1336 it became the seat of the local Magistracy of the Elders. The Clock Tower was made taller in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the same century the sculptor Nicolò dell'Arca made the terracotta statue of the Virgin with Child (1478) that is still visible on the façade. The right side of the building, fully Gothic in style, is characterized by eight windows with pointed arches on the first floor. They were made by Fioravante Fioravanti in 1425 and enriched with mullioned windows in 1930. In the lower part of the façade a big window was built by Galeazzo Alessi in the Mid-Fifteenth century. Alessi also built the triumphal entrance dominated by the bronze statue of the Bolognese Pope Gregory XIII, who reformed the Julian calendar. From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century the building, which is now the City Hall and therefore the seat of the local government, has been the official residence of local rulers and papal legates. Inside the building, at the top of the monumental staircase attributed to Donato Bramante, one can visit the Hercules Hall and the City Council Hall on the first floor and the Farnese Chapel and Hall on the second floor. The Municipal Art Collections are located on the second floor in the former apartments of the cardinal legates. From there you can enjoy magnificent views of the city. The collections include works of art from private collections (Collina Sbaraglia, Palagi, Pepoli, Baruzzi, Rusconi) donated to the City of Bologna. Paintings which are particularly noteworthy are those made by local artists of the XIV century (Vitale da Bologna, Pseudo Jacopino, Simone dei Crocefissi, Jacopo di Paolo), works by the Carraccis and their school, and a series of 18 paintings by Donato Creti. Among the works by worldwide known artists are those by Jacopo Tintoretto, Luca Signorelli, Francesco Hayez, Artemisia Gentileschi and Antonio Canova. Among the richly decorated museum rooms stands out the Sala Urbana: its walls are completely covered with the coats of arms of the papal legates from Mid-Fourteenth century to 1744. Another room worth seeing is one of the most beautiful examples of boschereccia open to the public. This decoration, faking an space open on a garden with trompe l'oeil flowers, landscapes and plants was very fashionable between the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Outside, from Piazza Nettuno one can enter the former Sala Borsa (Stock Exchange), now the city multimedia library. Inside, the archaeological ruins dating from the II century BC to the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD are visible through the glass floor. Among them note the remains of the Roman basilica of Bononia.



Monumental staircase  
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## 1. Hercules Hall

This is the oldest part of the building, developed around the original



Hercules Hall  
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group of houses of the jurist Accursio (that has given the name to the whole building complex), acquired by the Municipality in 1287. At the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century its spaces included a warehouse for the public grain supplies (from which it was originally named “Palazzo della Biada” – Forage Palace). It

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

## 2. City Council Hall

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

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



City Council Hall  
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Jupiter is waiting for her.

3) Bacchus, Pomona and Caeres (referring to wine, fruit and harvest) are the symbols of the fertile soil of Bologna.

On the second shorter wall: Vigilance and Prudence and the symbols of the Arts.

## 3. Red Hall

This hall derives its name from the colour of the tapestry liming the walls from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the Ancient Regime it was part of the quarters belonging to the city Senate. The Senate was the local political representative body that ruled the city together with the Cardinal Legate appointed by the Pope. At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century it used to be a representative hall where the most important meetings of the Senate took place, while the chambers along the corridor overlooking Piazza Nettuno were used as secretaries, treasury and administrative offices. The present Mayor's lobby, the Press Office and the adjacent rooms were used to host the “Assunterie” (Senators' commissions dealing with special Government branches). In 1677 the major hall for the meetings of the Senate was moved to the wing overlooking Piazza Maggiore, thus creating the current City Council Hall. The “Pallione della Peste” (“Plague Processional Banner”) painted on silk by Guido Reni with the Madonna and Bologna's Patron Saints was hung in this hall. It was commissioned by the Senate in 1631 to celebrate the end of the plague and every year it was carried



Red Hall  
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in a procession from the City Hall to San Domenico where the column of the Vergine del Rosario (Madonna of Rosary) represented the other centre of public celebration to invoke the help of