

# THE MOSAICS OF THE MUSEUM OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO (VATICAN CITY): AN EXAMPLE OF THE INFLUENCE OF ANTIQUITY ON ARTISTIC AND INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

## LOS MOSAICOS DEL MUSEO DEL CAMPO SANTO TEUTÓNICO (CIUDAD DEL VATICANO): UN EJEMPLO DE LA INFLUENCIA DE LA ANTIGÜEDAD EN LA PRODUCCIÓN ARTÍSTICA E INDUSTRIAL DE FINALES DEL SIGLO XIX

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### Abstract

In the 1880s, the rector of the Campo Santo Teutonico in the Vatican State, Monsignor Anton de Waal, commissioned the Villeroy & Boch company to provide antique-style floors for his archaeological museum. This was a typical small museum set up as a series of period rooms, who brought to the heart of Rome a very common practice in the panorama of historicism and the revival of early Christian archaeology in German art and industries. This essay analyses this story and presents many unpublished archive documents. The text contributes to the reconstruction of an artistic and industrial product intended for a museum that is now lost, and to its reading in an international context.

### Keywords

Campo Santo Teutonico; Villeroy & Boch; museum; mosaic; nineteenth century; historicism

### Resumen

En los años 80 del siglo XIX, el rector del Campo Santo Teutónico en el estado papal, monseñor Anton de Waal, encargó a la compañía Villeroy & Boch los nuevos

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suelos en estilo antiguo para el museo arqueológico. Este museo tenía la típica configuración con una serie salas de época, que trajo al corazón de Roma una práctica muy común en el panorama del historicismo y del revival de la primera arqueología cristiana en el arte y la industria alemanas. Este artículo analizará esta historia y presentará un gran número de documentos inéditos, para contribuir a la reconstrucción de un producto artístico e industrial, hoy perdido, destinado a un museo. Así mismo estudiará su inserción en el contexto internacional de la época.

### Palabras clave

Campo Santo Teutónico; Villeroy&Boch; museo; mosaico; siglo XIX; historicismo

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THIS ARTICLE was born after extensive archival research in the archive of the Campo Santo Teutonico (Teutonic Cemetery) in the Vatican City<sup>3</sup>. This research uncovered many documents from the correspondence between the rector of the Campo Santo and the director of the Villeroy & Boch company. The company was at the forefront of producing materials that recaptured the aesthetics of Roman antiquity, reproducing them for wall and floor decoration in public spaces and for an extensive production of objects for private homes. All this documentation is only partially known, and the aim of this essay is to describe and contextualise it in order to contribute to the understanding of the role played by industries in museography and art in the late-nineteenth century between Germany and Rome. In recent years, the revival of early Christian art in Germany has been investigated in interesting ways<sup>4</sup>: according to these recent studies, Villeroy & Boch's work at the Campo Santo Teutonico can be understood within a strongly international context.

The essay begins with the history of the Campo Santo Teutonico and its museum in 1880s-1890s. It then presents the archival documentation relating to the work by Villeroy & Boch held in the archives of the Campo Santo, focusing in particular on the floors created for the museum. In the final part of the article, this story will be interpreted in the context of Villeroy & Boch's international work and in the light of German historicism, museology, and revival of early Christian art in the second half of the nineteenth century.

## THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO: HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY<sup>5</sup>

The Campo Santo Teutonico, the oldest of the German foundations in Rome, plays a prominent role both in the history of relations between Italy and Germany and in the reconstruction of the past of the Eternal City. It is located between St Peter's Basilica and the Paul VI Audience Hall, within the Vatican City walls<sup>6</sup>, in an area known for the presence of Nero's circus.

Although the interpretation of the archaeological traces *in situ* of the pre-existing phases of St Peter appears complex, the picture that emerges is quite reliable<sup>7</sup>. This involves the Campo Santo Teutonico, which is located south of the basilica

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4. Reiß, Anke: *Rezeption frühchristlicher Kunst im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der christlichen Archäologie und zum Historismus*. Dettelbach, Röhl, 2008.

5. This section and the next one are authored by Roberta Ruotolo

6. For a general overview see De Waal, Anton: *I luoghi pii sul territorio vaticano*. Roma, Tipografia della Buona stampa, 1886.

7. Liverani, Paolo: «Un destino di marginalità: storia e topografia dell'area vaticana nell'antichità», in Parisi Presicce, Claudio; Petacco, Laura (eds.): *La spina. Dall'Agro Vaticano a via della Conciliazione*. Roma, Gangemi Editore, 2016.

and includes the college for the priests who came to Rome to study archaeology and church history, the cemetery itself and the church of Santa Maria della Pietà. The archaeological investigations were carried out between 1873 and 1906, and subsequently in the second half of the twentieth century, allowing the recovery of numerous materials that were exhibited in the Museum and Lapidarium of the Campo Santo, as well as scattered in the cemetery itself<sup>8</sup>.

The first excavations, supervised by Monsignor Anton De Waal, resulted in non-systematic explorations of the area. In fact, they uncovered bone remains that indicated a funerary purpose for this area from the seventeenth century. In addition to these findings, archaeological surveys recovered the floor plans of several sixteenth-century dwellings, various masonry structures and three *cappuccina* burials. Research in the 1960s during the restoration of the college uncovered an aquifer, as well as walls which were only partially documented. Finally, restoration works were conducted in the church of Santa Maria della Pietà in the early 1970s<sup>9</sup>.

The investigation here briefly summarised reveals the strong link that the Campo Santo Teutonico has always had with archaeology: in a limited area of approximately 2000 square metres, centuries of fragmentary history can be unravelled<sup>10</sup>.

Below the foundation of the Campo Santo Teutonico lies the so-called *Schola Francorum*, known by medieval sources. The northern façade of present-day Campo Santo is decorated with a tiled image of Charlemagne by the nineteenth-century painter Albert von Rohden, which bears the Latin inscription *Carolus Magnus me fundavit*<sup>11</sup>. The story of a Carolingian foundation of the Campo Santo has always been linked to certain privileges mentioned in ancient texts and in the *Liber Pontificalis*, which records a *Schola Francorum* associated with other similar guilds in the year 799<sup>12</sup>. The presence of such *scholae* is related to the arrival of pilgrims from the north who made their way to Rome to venerate the tombs of the first martyrs of the Christian faith. These structures were created to support travellers by offering supplies and hospitality, and, if necessary, a place of burial. The Vatican hill and the

8. Weiland, Albrecht: *Der Campo Santo Teutonico und seine Grabdenkmäler*. Roma, Herder, 1988, pp. 116-124. For an in-depth look at the history of the museum, see most recently Heid, Stefan: *Wohnen wie in Katakomben*. Regensburg, Schnell und Steiner, 2016.

9. Weiland, Albrecht: *op. cit.*, pp. 117-123.

10. Liverani, Paolo; Weiland, Albrecht: «Inquadramento topografico», in Liverani, Paolo (ed.): *La topografia antica del Vaticano*. Città del Vaticano, Edizioni Musei Vaticani, 1999, pp. 13-43.

11. Regarding the *scholae peregrinorum* see De Waal, Anton: *La Schola Francorum fondata da Carlo Magno e l'ospizio teutonico nel Campo santo nel secolo XV. Indagine storiche e topografiche*. Roma, Tipografia della Società del Divin Salvatore, 1897; Reekmans, Louis: «Le développement topographique de la région du Vatican à la fin de l'antiquité et au début du Moyen-Âge (300-850)», in Leonardy, Ernst (ed.): *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art offerts au prof. Jacques Lavalleye*. Louvain, Presses universitaires de Louvain, 1970, pp. 214-223; Bianchi, Lorenzo: «Le scholae peregrinorum», in Ermini Pani, Letizia (ed.): *Christiana loca. Lo spazio cristiano nella Roma del primo millennio*. Roma, Palombi, 2000, I, pp. 211-215; Perraymond, Myla: «Le scholae peregrinorum nel borgo di S. Pietro», *Romanobarbarica*, 4 (1979), pp. 183-200; Cassanelli, Luciana: «Gli insediamenti nordici in Borgo: le «Scholae Peregrinorum» e la presenza di carolingi a Roma», in *Roma e l'età carolingia*. Roma, Multigrafica, 1976, pp. 217-222; Giuntella, Anna Maria: «"Spazio cristiano" e città altomedievale: l'esempio della civitas leoniana», in *Atti del VI Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Cristiana I*. Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1986, pp. 309-325; Benoci, Domenico: «Defensores fidei: die Rolle der scholae peregrinorum in den epigraphischen und urkundlichen Quellen», *Römische Quartalschrift*, 144, 1-2 (2019), 43-55.

12. Duchesne, Louis (ed.): *Le Liber Pontificalis*, Paris, Thorin, 1892, II, p. 6, chap. XCVIII, sect. XVIII-XIX.

Constantinian basilica in particular represented a reference point for the settlement of such foreign communities in the city. The *Frankenschola* thus became part of the properties surrounding St Peter's Basilica, evolving into a complex of buildings consisting of a church, a pilgrims' shelter, and a cemetery. Some documents mention a transfer of relics in the year 844 in a church dedicated to the Saviour within the complex, as well as liturgical furnishings donated by Charlemagne, along with an annual income paid. The *Schola Francorum*, with the church of Christ the Saviour and the adjoining cemetery, seems to be located in the area currently occupied by the Campo Santo Teutonico.

Above its entrance gate, one can read the formula *Teutones in pace* followed by the initials of the author, Anton de Waal<sup>13</sup>. As a Christian archaeologist, writer and historian, De Waal dedicated himself to German-speaking pilgrims visiting Rome, and he also distinguished himself as chaplain of the German national church of Santa Maria dell'Anima in Rome (from 1868) and later as rector of the Teutonic college (from 1873)<sup>14</sup>. Always considered one of the most important scholars in Rome between the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, he was in charge of research on the Campo Santo in the Vatican<sup>15</sup>. Of great interest is his *Chronicle of the House*, which he wrote while in role of rector. Through its pages, it is possible to follow the stages that led to the opening of the museum of the Campo Santo Teutonico<sup>16</sup>.

Over the years, the Campo Santo Teutonico had become a collection point for many objects of ancient and medieval archaeology and art. De Waal and his pupils were responsible for many archaeological excavations at important sites in early Christian Rome (such as various catacombs), and materials from these excavations often remained at the Campo Santo. In addition, the Campo Santo frequently received donations of works from Germans in Rome. Thus, it became necessary to arrange these objects and offer a museum to the German community in Rome and the Vatican. Given the Christian vocation of the collected objects and the institution of the Campo Santo itself, De Waal envisioned a museum where the history of early Christian art would be displayed didactically, in a setting that could both educate and evangelise<sup>17</sup>.

The history of the museum can be divided into four main phases<sup>18</sup>, which reveal the precariousness of the various arrangements, and the problems that De Waal encountered in his attempt to set up a permanent exposition, divided by context and type of material. For the reconstruction of the history of the museum the main

13. On De Waal's thinking and work related to the Teutonic Cemetery see De Waal, Anton: *Der Campo Santo der Deutschen zu Rom. Geschichte der nationalen Stiftung zum 1100jährigen Jubiläum ihrer Gründung durch Karl den Großen*. Freiburg im Brisgau, Herder, 1896.

14. Heid, Stefan: «Anton De Waal», in Heid, Stefan and Dennert, Martin (eds.): *Personenlexicon zur christliche Archaeologie*. Regensburg, Schnell und Steiner, 2012, pp. 410-411.

15. Bettoni Pojaghi, Marco: *Il Campo Santo Teutonico*. Roma, Pagine, 2019, p. 72.

16. Heid, Stefan, *Wohnen...*

17. Heid, Stefan, *Anton...*

18. Heid, Stefan, *Wohnen...*, pp. 93-127.

sources are the *Chronicle of the House* written by De Waal, his correspondence, and the *Book of the Congregation*, all kept in the archives of the Campo Santo Teutonico.

De Waal, in 1880-1885, aimed not only to open the museum, first located at the entrance to the cemetery in the old building known as the *Hospiz*, but also an archaeological library, as well as the reproduction of a catacomb. De Waal's wish, as he himself wrote in 1880, was to create an archaeological cabinet in which artefacts of various kinds would be housed: sculptures, oil lamps and coins, drawings, photographs and plaster casts<sup>19</sup>. Financial difficulties and complaints from the other residents at the college, prompted him to set up a first, minimal museum in the ancient changing room of the confraternity. A quadrangular niche was then adapted to accommodate a sarcophagus previously placed in the cemetery, and the Swiss painter Joseph Bolzern frescoed the rooms in the style of the catacombs. As early as 1884, however, the space seemed to have been abandoned and was used for a different purpose<sup>20</sup>.

Shortly after, de Waal sought a relocation of the museum to the direct premises of the oratory, housed within the women's convent, even if this too was intended as a temporary measure. The structure of the new museum included an entrance vestibule and, in addition, a double chamber in imitation of a catacomb. It was at this time that de Waal made his first contacts with the Villeroy & Boch, to whom he decided to entrust the execution of the mosaics for the new «permanent exhibition»<sup>21</sup>.

No photographic documentation seems to have been made of the entrance vestibule, while the core of the museum, the so-called «cubiculum duplex», was photographed probably before the partial demolition of the women's convent (FIGURES 1-2). The exhibition opened in mid-1885 and de Waal was proud to present the new museum to Giovanni Battista de Rossi, one of the most important Christian archaeologists at the time, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1885<sup>22</sup>.

The rooms were painted to resemble a catacomb<sup>23</sup> and had mosaic floors by the firm Villeroy & Boch of Mettlach. Two coloured drawings of the design by the company can provide an idea about the division of the rooms and the chosen floor, as we will see. These mosaics served to delineate the museum's spaces and expressed a clear desire to decorate the floor with «antiquated» motifs. The mosaic floor is a central part of the setting of the exhibits. In fact, Anton de Waal aimed to recreate an «ancient» backdrop to the exhibits of the early Christian collection of the Campo Santo, and this can be clearly seen in the room of the «cubiculum duplex»<sup>24</sup>. The floor covering, although not consistent with the early Christian style, helps to create a generic ancient setting, not philological but of absolute visual

19. Heid, Stefan: *Wohnen...*, pp. 97-98.

20. Heid, Stefan: *Wohnen...*, p. 99.

21. Heid, Stefan: *Wohnen...*, pp. 99-109.

22. Heid, Stefan: *Wohnen...*, p. 106.

23. Cecalupo, Chiara: «Catacumbas en museos: archivos documentales y fotográficos para la historia de la museografía», *Anales de Historia del Arte*, 32 (2022), pp. 235-253 [en línea] <https://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/ANHA/article/view/83070> [Consultado: 09/06/2025]

24. Heid, Stefan: *Wohnen...*, p. 103.





FIGURE 1. FIRST ROOM OF THE MUSEUM OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, C. 1885. ARCHIVE OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO. Property of Römisches Institut der Görres Gesellschaft



FIGURE 2. FIRST ROOM OF THE MUSEUM OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, C. 1885. ARCHIVE OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO. Property of Römisches Institut der Görres Gesellschaft

impact and in line with the style and taste of eclectic re-proposition of ancient models, typical of the late-nineteenth century.

Unfortunately, this phase of the museum no longer exists today, replaced by new layouts as early as 1890<sup>25</sup> and it can only be reconstructed through archival materials.

## ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

An examination of the relationship between Anton de Waal and the Villeroy & Boch company and, consequently, an analysis of the company's activities, reveal a significant role for the documentation preserved in the archives of the Campo Santo Teutonico<sup>26</sup>. The documentation presented here consists of letters, invoices, project proposals and a few photographs.

In order to understand the genesis of this mosaic floors, it is possible to browse through very detailed proposals, price lists and invoices from Villeroy & Boch: These documents include various items such as material colour, weight, type, number of pieces, and packaging, followed by the price for the individual tiles of floor and wall coverings.

The work undertaken in 1885 for the museum is documented in various sources. First, the *Chronicle of the House* written by Anton de Waal as a sort of diary, bears valuable information regarding the museum pavement. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of February he reported having written to Eugene Boch «to obtain the mosaics for the new museum»; on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May a new pavement was installed in the oratory, the paintings on the walls of the museum were almost ready, and the mosaics for the pavement were about to arrive. Finally, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1885, de Waal wrote that the mosaics had been installed in the museum at a final cost of 150 marks and 200 francs for the transportation. Regarding this final phase of the museum's construction, there is also a deed entitled *Lavori da Scalpellino: Conto dei suddetti lavori eseguiti con ordine di S. Ecc.za Rev.ma Monsig. Antonio De Wall direzione de sott.o Architetto a spese e fatture del Capo d'Arte Filippo Luppi*<sup>27</sup>. The document is divided in two sections: one concerns the entrance hall of the new museum and the second the staircase above the residence of the rector. A series of works carried out by the stonemason and his workers are listed, with an indication of the days of work.

Along with these documents, there are also other written sources from the Mettlach factory itself. The earliest receipt related to the actual floor chosen for the museum is dated of May 1885: An invoice from Villeroy & Boch was issued to

25. Heid, Stefan: *Wohnen...*, pp. 110-118.

26. The documents described here represent only part of what appears to be a working relationship and, at the same time, a friendship between Eugen Boch and Monsignor De Waal. Broader evidence is presumably to be found in the archives of the company founded in the mid-1850s. Luitwin von Boch reorganized the central archive, which was followed by the creation of a larger archive associated with the Merzig factory. In 1993, the two archives were merged: users can consult the manuscript materials along with images of the objects produced. (<https://www.villeroyboch-group.com/de/unternehmen/unsere-geschichten/tradition.html> [Consultado: 09/06/2025]).

27. All quotes come from Archive of the Campo Santo Teutonico, Chronik Anton de Waal, 1885, 27<sup>th</sup> of February, 27<sup>th</sup> of May, 3<sup>rd</sup> of July.



de Waal for 144.7 marks for the floor of the museum and the vestibule, here clearly referred to as «romanising»<sup>28</sup>. The first drawing of the floor dates to 13<sup>th</sup> April 1885 and shows two mosaics designed for the vestibule and the first room of the museum (FIGURE 3)<sup>29</sup>. They are clearly inspired by ancient geometric mosaics with black and white tesserae, but are brightened with coloured tesserae and very eclectic patterns. The mosaic designed for the vestibule is decorated with rows of squares with crosses and sandglass in the centre, in contrasting colours. It is then framed by a line and a meander in blue tesserae on a black background. The floor decoration in the first room of the museum was instead more intricate. The frame alternated rows of black, white and green tiles, and a thicker strip with black tiles on an ochre background, decorated with rows of circles with palmettes<sup>30</sup>. In the centre of the mosaic there was a decoration of concentric circles in black and white tesserae, with polychrome flowers inside, in a style typical of Roman mosaics<sup>31</sup>.

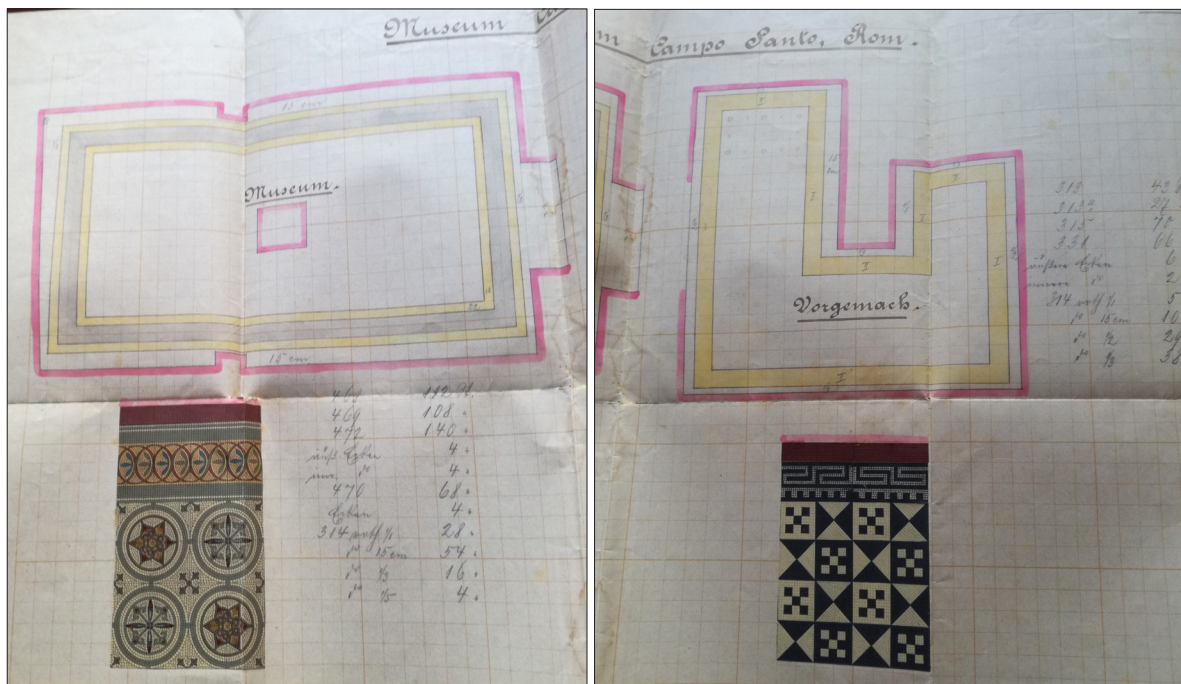


FIGURE 3. PROJECT OF MOSAIC FLOORS BY VILLEROY AND BOCH FOR THE MUSEUM OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, 1885. ARCHIVE OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, 06 101. Property of Römisches Institut der Görres Gesellschaft

The second drawing is dated 30<sup>th</sup> May 1885<sup>32</sup> and presents a significantly more dynamic mosaic design, an excellent example of eclectic reuse of ancient decorations

28. Archive of the Campo Santo Teutonico, 06 101, unnumbered loose sheet.

29. Archive of the Campo Santo Teutonico, 06 101, unnumbered loose sheet.

30. Balmelle, Catherine et alii (eds.): *Décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine. I. Répertoire graphique et descriptif des compositions linéaires et isotropes*. Paris, Picard, 1985, 13h, 17g, 33f, 44d.

31. Balmelle, Catherine et alii (eds.): *Décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine. II. Répertoire graphique et descriptif des compositions centrées*. Paris, Picard, 2002, 267b and p. 39.

32. Archive of the Campo Santo Teutonico, Pianta, unnumbered loose sheet.



FIGURE 4. PROJECT OF MOSAIC FLOORS BY VILLEROY AND BOCH FOR THE MUSEUM OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, 1885. ARCHIVE OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, 06 101. Property of Römisches Institut der Görres Gesellschaft

(FIGURE 4). In the centre of the mosaic appears a hexagonal pseudo-emblem composed of three rows of black, blue, yellow and white tiles, with a polychrome oval featuring a flower and the inscription «SALVE». The inscription is composed of black tesserae in ancient script and is set in a tabula. This pseudo-emblem is surrounded by a polychrome band, while the remainder of the mosaic is decorated with lines of black tesserae and blue bands on a white background, dividing the floor into trapezoidal or triangular sectors. At the top and bottom of the mosaic one can recognise a *pelta* decoration in green and pink<sup>33</sup>, while the other sectors are occupied by generic phytomorphic decorations.

The presence of the mosaic epigraph, which contains a greeting, may suggest the possibility that this section of the floor was intended for the entrance near the door. However, due to the lack of any kind of photographic record, the structure of the final execution remains unknown. The Chronicle and the two mentioned letters prove

that the laying of the floors took place between the end of May and the very first days of July 1885, when the entire arrangement was completed<sup>34</sup>.

We cannot gather other information about the floors of this phase of the museum from the existing photographs<sup>35</sup>: in a picture of one of the rooms (FIGURE 2) we can glimpse the small corridor to the oratory, where the floors are made in geometric tiles. In the photographs of the rooms of the first floor a mosaic-like floor can be seen, consisting of two frames of different sizes, composed of rows of octagons and rhombuses (FIGURE 5).

There is another invoice issued by Villeroy & Boch to de Waal, with a floor plan attached. It is a document of 19<sup>th</sup> May 1886 with some accounts on the price of mosaic plates. Attached to it there is a drawing of a grey mosaic with a geometric «carpet» pattern, in which black frames surround rows of white hexagons (FIGURE 6). It is yet unknown which area of the Campo Santo it refers to, or whether it was actually completed.

In addition to this crucial set of documents, which provide an overview of the final floor decoration for the museum, other official documents concerning the work of Villeroy & Boch for the Campo Santo Teutonico in Rome have been found. The most detailed proposal relates to the decoration of two chapels of the

33. Balmelle, Catherine *et alii* (eds.): *Décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine. I...* 32f, 58c.

34. Heid, Stefan: *Wohnen...*, p. 104, n. 604.

35. Archive of the Campo Santo Teutonico, 06 101, unnumbered loose sheet.





FIGURE 5. UPPER ROOM OF THE MUSEUM OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, 1885. ARCHIVE OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, 06 101. Property of Römisches Institut der Görres Gesellschaft



FIGURE 6. PROJECT OF MOSAIC FLOORS BY VILLEROY AND BOCH FOR THE MUSEUM OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, 1886. ARCHIVE OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, 06 101. Property of Römisches Institut der Görres Gesellschaft



FIGURE 7. PROJECT OF MOSAIC FLOORS BY VILLEROY AND BOCH FOR THE MUSEUM OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, 1892. ARCHIVE OF THE CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO, 06 101. Property of Römisches Institut der Görres Gesellschaft

Campo Santo, one dedicated to the Mother of God and the other to the Sacraments. The document is dated 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1892<sup>36</sup>, and attached to it there is a price list and two sample drawings. The price list presents the costs for the wall and floor mosaic plates for the two chapels, with an estimated total cost of 1149.6 marks. The two designs show two mosaics samples (FIGURE 7). Drawing A shows two bands of crosses and leaves framing a field of floral and plant motifs. Drawing B, on the other hand, shows two frames of ivy leaves and a field with red and gold geometric decoration, with a square module, with stylised leaves and flowers inside.

The material for these mosaics was selected and sent to Rome in the following weeks, as evidenced by a receipt to de Waal of the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 1892, for the purchase of coloured slabs for the chapels of the Mother of God and of the Sacrament, for a total amount of 510.6 marks.

These kinds of drawings are extremely rare, yet they stand as important samples of the rich and captivating production repertoire for which the Villeroy & Boch group is still today known worldwide<sup>37</sup>. The coloured plans, although very schematic, are accompanied by decorative proposals illustrating the company's expertise in the

36. Archive of the Campo Santo Teutonico, 06 101, unnumbered loose sheet.

37. For an overview of the family's history and the products it markets, see <https://www.villeroy-boch.de>. Please refer to the German language webpage for more complete information.

production of mosaic coverings. Geometric, mixtilinear patterns alternate with abstract, floral, coloured and black-and-white motifs inspired by Roman tradition.

Beyond the «official» documentation, the private correspondence between De Waal and the founder of the company is of particular interest during the years 1876, 1885, 1892 and 1894<sup>38</sup>.

The oldest of these letters, dated March 1876, is a response of Eugen Boch to an earlier message from de Waal, informing him of the shipment of some mosaic plates. The correspondence indicates a clear commitment of Villeroy & Boch to provide the floors of the Museum of the Campo Santo Teutonico: there are suggestions on decorative motifs and workmanship, as well as the offer of a discount on orders, or free delivery of materials to Rome in the letters of the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of March, and on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1885<sup>39</sup>. The correspondence seems to come to a sudden halt at this point: Boch, indeed, apologises for the lack of response; the company seems have delayed in delivering his mail. In spite of this, business operations continue: the Roman-inspired models are being processed and the full balance of the supply is requested (invoice follows).

The letters dated 1892 appear more complex to understand due to the illegible handwriting. The dates are 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2<sup>nd</sup> June and 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1892, and are all addressed to de Waal in person. From the initial letter, sent on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1892, one can sense the cordiality between the two men. Boch shared the joy of the days he had just spent with his family celebrating his fiftieth wedding anniversary. The whole family, he said, is in excellent health, and the discussion about the commissioned mosaics has not waned despite family commitments.

In the first of the two letters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1892, regarding the decoration of the Chapels of the Mother of God and the Sacraments, Boch proposed to accommodate simple coloured mosaic panels, and presented other possible alternatives, such as monochrome slabs to be repainted to one's taste. He suggested the shipment of a few specimens, presumably as samples, pending a final decision. Upon completing the purchase, the company would commit to delivering the goods within five weeks. On the same date, a telegram was then sent to de Waal containing a receipt for a 500 marks payment to the company<sup>40</sup>.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 1894, de Waal wrote to Boch that «For our new library in the Campo Santo I wanted a floor made of Mettlach slabs imitating ancient mosaics»<sup>41</sup>. De Waal then asked not for mosaics, but for slabs that imitate ancient Roman mosaics.

38. Archive of the Campo Santo Teutonico, o6 101, unnumbered loose sheet.

39. In particular, on the 29th of March, the factory - through possibly a sales advisor named C. Mü<n>gler whose signature is not clearly legible - writes to De Waal that they are all very happy to provide materials for the museum of the Campo Santo (in German: «freue ich mich Ihnen die Vorschläge für das Museum auf dem Campo Santo in Rom ergebenst zu unterbreiten»).

40. The telegram also bears the signature of the above-mentioned C. Mü<n>gler: that he may have been one of Villeroy's sales consultants can be deduced from the header of the documents, which name the man with the honorific title of «Herr Commezienrath».

41. In German: «Für unsere neue Bibliothek im Campo Santo wünschte ich einen Flurbelag Mettlacher Platten in Imitation der alten Mosaiken». Archive of the Campo Santo Teutonico, o6 101.



He mentioned two sections of the library<sup>42</sup>, one shorter and one longer. The latter would be divided into three naves, as in a basilica. The mosaics would have been placed in the centre of the nave and in the side aisles, where the edges of the mosaic slabs would have been secured with cement. He also inquired about the taxes for the material when crossing the Italian border. In this letter, de Waal also recalled how several years earlier Boch and his wife had contributed to the decoration of the choir, and that a marble inscription commemorated the event<sup>43</sup>. He finally hoped that the price of the mosaic could be reduced, as the finances of the Teutonic College appeared very limited due to the purchase of new books for the library.

## CRITICAL ANALYSIS<sup>44</sup>

De Waal's choice of a company like Villeroy & Boch responded to some broader cultural logic linked to the German historical background, the company's history, and its vocation.

It is no coincidental to speak of vocation. The second half of the nineteenth century was the period of *Rerum Novarum*, the workers' encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, which had a significant influence in Germany, so much so that in 1880, some German companies committed to Catholic social renewal united in the Association of Catholic Industrialists<sup>45</sup>. Among them, Villeroy & Boch. Indeed, since the end of the eighteenth century, the Boch brothers had been engaged in setting up a factory with welfare and social policies. One of their aims was to promote the development of the company by providing assistance to workers and their families in accordance to Christian principles whilst also fostering their overall human development of the workforce. From a practical point of view, Jean Françoise Boch -founder of the Mettlach factory, which produced mosaic for a long time- created the Brotherhood of St Anthony in 1819, for the material and moral well-being of both his workers and the broader population of the province. The Christian vocation of the Villeroy and Boch families was also expressed in the foundation of charitable institutions and with donations to the local ecclesiastical institutions. So much so, in fact, that Eugene Villeroy was elected Roman Count by the Pope in 1910, in gratitude for the family's virtuous service to the community<sup>46</sup>.

A certain family unity transpired not only in the company's development in the social field, but also in its active participation in the cultural and artistic revival of ancient styles. Generally, the interest in the architectural revival of ancient art dominated Eugene Boch's entire life, even in his work as an industrialist in applied

42. It is likely that the parts in question refer to the subdivision of the library's rooms into two spaces that differ in size.

43. EUGENIA. BOCH. METLACENSIS/ TREVIR. DIOC. CHORVM. VERSICOLORI/ PAVIMENTO. ORNAVIT. ANNO. MDCCCLXXVI.

44. This section is authored by Chiara Cecalupo.

45. Gorges, Karl-Heinz: *Der christlich geführte Industriebetrieb im 19. Jahrhundert und das Modell Villeroy und Boch*. Stuttgart, Steinerl, 1989.

46. Gorges, Karl-Heinz: *op. cit.*

arts. Eugene von Boch, son of Jean Francois, was the company's managing director and then owner from 1836 to 1878, remaining as a central figure in the company until his death in 1908<sup>47</sup>, and maintaining important relations with Rome, just as the work for the Campo Santo Teutonico.

His willingness to experiment with historicist artistic tendencies in the company placed him fully within the cultural current that dominated nineteenth century Germany, as we shall see shortly. Eugene Boch was an enthusiast of ceramic artefacts from antiquity and an aficionado of antiquity: this had an influence in the design and production of the company's first phase, and the establishment of a company museum. Already at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Jean Francois Boch, Eugene's father, had started the establishment of a tradition of displaying ceramic specimens within the company premises to inspire designers, thus initiating Eugene's museum practice. Eugene then created a sizeable collection of technical and archaeological works, also thanks to exchanges and donations<sup>48</sup>. Boch laid the foundations of his museum in 1844 to show employees, designers, and workers ceramic products from various eras and countries. The objective of this initiative was to stimulate and educate, as was the case with other technical and industrial museums that were widespread throughout Europe in the nineteenth century. It was indeed a practice with many implications. It was the case of the Museum of Manufactures, later Victoria and Albert Museum, founded in London in 1852, whose main goal was to be a 'schoolroom for everyone' with the aim of educating manufacturers and customers to raise the standards of British industry in the first period of the Universal Exhibitions. There was also the case of the Museo Artistico Industriale, opened in Rome in 1874 as a permanent exhibition to support the lessons of the adjoining Art and Industrial School. These were experiences not far from the concept of the *gyptoteca* of the academies throughout the eighteenth century, which then proliferated at universities until the early twentieth century. In Eugene Boch's small museum it is possible to see the roots of the now famous and widespread company museums. One of the first of these museums was precisely a chinaware, porcelain and glass museum, the Ginori Museum, which was opened in 1884 in the company's headquarters near Florence.

In this context, Eugen Boch's work connected with the international museum scene, also due to company participation in international exhibitions and fairs to promote his products. Starting with the 1851 London World's Fair<sup>49</sup>, Villeroy & Boch's presence at universal exhibitions became consistent, and mosaics were often presented<sup>50</sup>. Eugene pushed the company to invest in design and unique pieces along the lines of the Arts and Crafts concept, promoting a focus on aesthetics in all production: not only through the museum, but also by opening drawing schools

47. Gorges, Karl-Heinz: *op. cit.*

48. Martin, Thomas: «Inspiration und Industrie: Antikenrezeption bei Villeroy & Boch im 19. Jahrhundert», in Martin, Thomas et alii (eds.): *Inspiration Antike: Eugen von Boch und die Archäologie im 19. Jahrhundert*. Darmstadt, Philipp von Zabern Verlag, 2016, p. 170.

49. Martin, Thomas: *op. cit.*, p. 170.

50. Martin, Thomas: *op. cit.*, p. 176.

for apprentices. In this regard, Boch's work aligns with the European landscape of the educational union of art and work.

It can certainly be said that Eugene Boch, even in his educational endeavours, was a social pioneer and a true promoter of the spread of antique styles in Germany and Europe. Antique ceramic forms soon appeared in the Villeroy & Boch catalogue, and their decorations recalled antique models: as typical of historicism, there were no exact imitations, but reinterpretations inspired by antique formal language.

In the field of mosaic production, the company also worked to imitate ancient Roman tiles and their themes. The floor mosaic slabs produced at Mettlach embodied the idea of cost-effectiveness, aesthetic and production versatility: they consisted of tesserae that allowed each slab to be composed according to different patterns, which could be assembled in an ever-changing manner<sup>51</sup>. In fact, Villeroy & Boch developed the technique of the clay pin mosaic, in which the ceramic tiles were small and cubic, imitating stone. The true innovation of the Mettlach company's production was the use of these tesserae cast on tile: the so-called Mettlach tile, in its variants with a smooth surface or slightly grooved to imitate the gaps between the tesserae of the original ancient mosaics, became an identifying product: «small cubes are put together according to the pattern, Portland cement is poured and tiles of up to 40 cm per side are created»<sup>52</sup>. These are the tiles asked by de Waal in 1894.

From an artistic point of view, the connection to Roman architectural decorations is undeniably strong. Eugene's main inspiration for creating a catalogue of antique mosaic production is most likely to be found in Wilhelm Zahn's colour plates reproducing the paintings of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae, which allowed for a wide dissemination of Vesuvian mosaic motifs in Germany between 1828 and 1852. These volumes were well known to Eugen von Boch: a careful analysis of these plates reveals close comparisons to the motifs proposed in the Villeroy & Boch catalogue and presented to Monsignor de Waal (FIGURE 8)<sup>53</sup>.

In addition, the repertoire included clear iconographic references to the mosaic discoveries from the Moselle region, unearthed in the mid-nineteenth century. Prominent among these are the mosaics depicting gladiatorial games from the Roman villa in Nenning and those found in Otrant. These excavations were well known to Eugene Boch, as it was his company that supplied materials for their restoration in 1870. In particular, they produced mosaics with bands and frames featuring classical motifs, such as concave diamonds on a white circle, which we also encounter among the floors of the Campo Santo Teutonico (FIGURE 9)<sup>54</sup>. These antiqued-style tiles, which were indeed very durable, were used both as flooring and for external façades: a striking example is the Pompeian-style frieze created by Villeroy

51. Villeroy & Boch: *Ausgeführte Arbeiten, mit Erzeugnissen der Werke*. Dresden, Villeroy & Boch, 1929, p. VI.

52. Martin, Thomas: *op. cit.*, p. 176.

53. Zahn, Wilhelm Johann Karl: *Die schönsten Ornamente und merkwürdigsten Gemälde aus Pompeji, Herculaneum und Stabiae*. Berlin, Reimer, 1828-1852. 1828, volume I, mosaics: 12, 22, 116, 125 / motives: 24, 35, 50, 61, 65, 71, 88, 97, 101, 114, 123. 1842, volume II, mosaics: 67, 94, 112, 115, 118, 120 / motives: 12, 35, 46, 58, 90, 102. 1852, volume III, mosaics: 8, 20, 32, 46 / motives: 9, 11

54. Martin, Thomas: *op. cit.*, p. 177.



FIGURE 8. DRAWINGS OF THE MOSAICS FROM THE VESUVIAN CITIES. ZAHN, OP. CIT. VOL 1, PL. 12

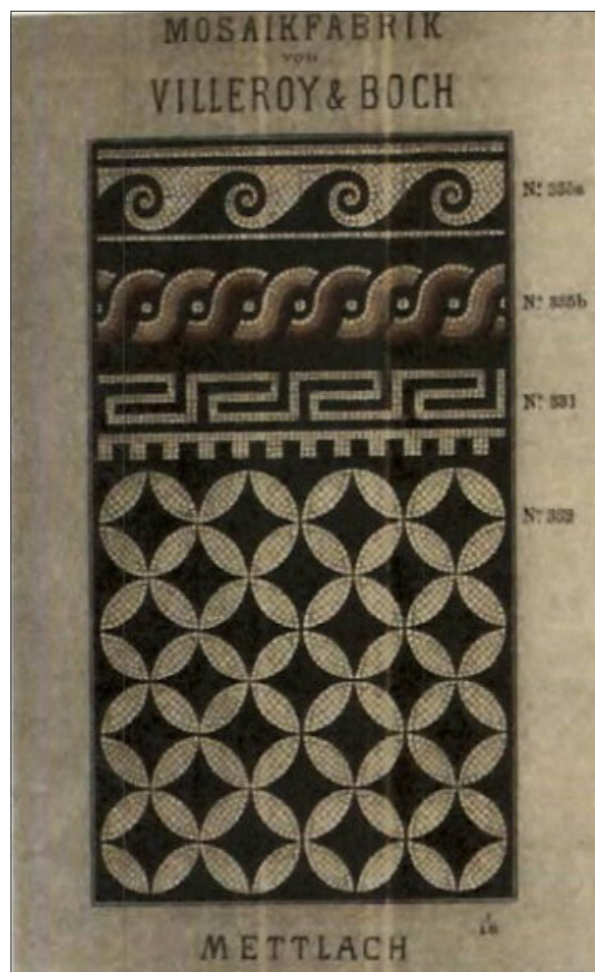


FIGURE 9. ADVERTISEMENT OF MOSAICS IN ROMAN STYLE BY VILLEROY & BOCH. MARTIN, OP. CIT., P. 176

& Boch for the rectory of the cathedral in Mettlach<sup>55</sup>. Additionally, administrative documents such as those presented in the previous paragraphs show that the company also routinely sold entire floors with antique motifs, just as in the case of the Campo Santo<sup>56</sup>.

The reception of antiquity was therefore manifold and stylistically varied in all Villeroy & Boch's production sectors, in response to the culture of the time. There was a fair amount of attention to the Middle Ages in tableware ceramics, Byzantine art for mosaics and mosaic restorations<sup>57</sup>, and in general numerous terracotta decorations with Christian themes (the Stations of the Cross, angels, and saints)<sup>58</sup>. Throughout its history, and in particular from the beginning of the twentieth century, Villeroy & Boch tiles and mosaics were installed in many German churches<sup>59</sup>. In the case of the *Tonstiftmosaik* in the Chapel of St Anne in the Church of St Martin in Emmerich (FIGURE 10), the decorations on the slabs produced by the company are very similar to those purchased by de Waal, with geometric frames and scale motifs filled with flowers<sup>60</sup>. In the late nineteenth century Villeroy & Boch supplied slabs made of clay tiles for the buildings of the town of Mettlach itself, where the production of its mosaic slabs was based. In these cases, they also succeeded in combining their floor mosaics with examples in glass tesserae in the vaults: these tesserae were, however, imported, perhaps purchased first from the famous Salviati family in Venice, and then from specialised factories in Mainz<sup>61</sup>.

All Villeroy & Boch's work, including the execution of the floors of the Campo Santo Teutonico, was part of an artistic strand and cultural process of appropriation of antiquity that involved all German-speaking countries during the nineteenth century. This strand, known as Historicism, is not a stylistically pure revival, nor a copy, but the union in all the arts of ancient elements mixed eclectically and often according to exaggerated stylistic forms<sup>62</sup>. The decorative arts of the nineteenth century were strongly characterised by widespread and versatile reception of antiquity, making it a significant social phenomenon that was not solely driven by imperial patronage: with the economic stabilisation of the middle class, there was a growing demand for higher quality artistic and decorative products, reflecting a need for self-representation in one's own home.

The phenomena associated with Villeroy & Boch's production in antique style, and hence its participation in the design of the museum and church of the Campo Santo Teutonico in the Vatican, are, thus, historical, architectural and museological.

To trace the historical horizon in which the roots of the Campo Santo experience lie, we can begin with the quest for identity that pervaded the kingdom of Prussia

55. Martin, Thomas: *op. cit.*, p. 176.

56. For example, in 1897 a complete copy of the Nenning mosaic was sent to South America: Martin, Thomas: *op. cit.*, p. 177.

57. As in the Aachen restoration site: Müller, Dorothea: *op. cit.*

58. Martin, Thomas: *op. cit.*, p. 175.

59. Villeroy & Boch, *op. cit.*, pl. 118-125.

60. Villeroy & Boch, *op. cit.*, pl. 124.

61. Schreiber, Rupert: «Mosaiksteine in Mettlach», *Die Denkmalpflege*, 73, 1-2 (2015), p. 145.

62. Martin, Thomas: *op. cit.*, p. 169.





FIGURA 10. VILLEROY & BOCH, TONSTIFTMOSAİK IN THE CHAPEL OF ST. ANNE, LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY, CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN IN EMMERICH. VILLEROY AND BOCH, *OP. CIT.*, PL. 124

at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This prompted scholars to focus on the origins of national history, in particular the medieval period and its most majestic artistic manifestations: the Byzantine mosaic and «local» Gothic architecture. At the same time, Germany found itself receptive to the news of the rediscovery of early Christian monuments in Rome and Ravenna, which led to a considerable revival of architectural mosaics throughout the nation<sup>63</sup>.

Moreover, the context of the propaganda of the time, in which German rulers aspired to distinguish themselves as builders, is also of relevance to understand these demands. In Prussia the monarchy after the Restoration of 1815 endeavoured to return architecturally to the historical models of the sixteenth century. It was there that recourse to the oldest traditions of church architecture played a decisive role in overcoming the forms of eighteenth-century building, looking not to industrialisation but to the traditional image of an absolutist ruler<sup>64</sup>. The first significant moment at this juncture was the reign of Ludwig I von Bayern (1825-1848), a great connoisseur of Italian art, who throughout his reign promoted Catholic churches on the Roman model in many places, a kind of Teutonic «copy» on the models of Italian early Christian basilicas<sup>65</sup>.

The era of Ludwig I von Bayern was highly representative of a movement of restoration and church building promoted by the ruler in the first half of the nineteenth

63. Müller, Dorothea: *op. cit.*

64. Reiß, Anke: *op. cit.*, p. 134.

65. Müller, Dorothea: *op. cit.*

century. Ludwig did not exclusively choose one architectural style but was rather inspired by historicism to freely select and combine styles from the past, seeking an «antiquated» harmony of the architectural whole<sup>66</sup>.

The dissemination of early Christian art experienced a revival during the reign of Ludwig I, as evident in the history of the construction of the church of St Boniface in Munich, one of the first examples of the revival of early Christian art in Germany<sup>67</sup>. In 1816-1827 the architect Leo von Klenze worked with the king on the church, envisioning a classical appearance for the exterior, while the interior should be as compatible as possible with the Catholic liturgy, as expressly requested by the king himself. For the church, relief friezes were ordered in 1817 from the sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, whom the king had met during his travels to Rome. In Klenze's vision, the basilica freely followed ancient forms re-elaborated in a modern context and was not strictly based on a direct model to be copied, although it did adhere to the classical basilica form, which represented for him the ideal type of Christian sacred building<sup>68</sup>. However, Ludwig I changed his mind during his second trip to Rome in the winter of 1817-1818. Indeed, he seized the opportunity to travel to Italy many times between 1817 and 1824, and it was his stays in Rome that sparked his interest in early Christian art and architecture<sup>69</sup>. After these trips, he commissioned the architects Gutensohn and Knapp to document the early Christian basilicas for dissemination of Italian models in Germany. However, the idea that the interior of his church in Munich should be designed in imitation of St Paul outside the Walls (at the time the last early Christian five-aisled basilica to survive in its original state) was reinforced when the church burned down in July 1823, leaving a long-lasting impression on Ludwig. He was dismayed by the disaster and in reaction designed a five-nave church as a direct copy of St Paul outside the Walls, assigning the work to architect Georg Ziebland. He was sent to Italy for several years to study the basilicas, draw them, and then present the plans<sup>70</sup>.

Apart from personal cultural interests, Ludwig I's building initiatives were also influenced by religious and political sentiments. For him, religion was an indispensable component of the internal order of the empire, and contributed significantly to the peace, education, and well-being of the people<sup>71</sup>. In his view, it was essential for the king to strengthen the Catholic Church and the link between it and the sovereign. His attitude towards the Church was also reflected in the construction of new churches, or the reconstruction of suppressed monasteries. In these institutions, science, teaching, and the interaction between art, religion and study were promoted. Ludwig I thus became the most important patron of the Catholic Church in Bavaria, firmly believing that sacred architecture could also serve the purpose of educating the people, remembering and exalting the glorious past of

66. Reiß, Anke: *op. cit.*, p. 100.

67. *Idem*, p. 101.

68. *Idem*, p. 102.

69. *Idem*, p. 112.

70. Reiß, Anke: *op. cit.*, p. 113.

71. *Idem*, p. 112.

the Catholic Church. This art-historical romantic tendency was also reflected in the interior decoration of religious buildings. For Ludwig I, style and furnishings were always associated with an educational mission for the people. Here we see one of those seeds that will blossom in a very similar way in the case of the museum and the Campo Santo Teutonico.

From the middle of the century onwards, this artistic trend received yet another boost thanks to the spread of the Venetian glass mosaic company of Antonio Salviati in Europe. This company was keenly interested in German artistic movements, so much so that it opened its own office in Berlin. Salviati contributed to the restoration of Aachen Cathedral in 1865, the International Exhibition in Vienna in 1873, and undertook a whole series of restorations of churches in smaller towns in Germany from 1875 onwards<sup>72</sup>.

The driving force behind this initiative was Friedrich Wilhelm IV von Preussen (1840-1861), who marked his political aim of reuniting the entire empire under Christianity with a revival of the Italian Byzantine style throughout Prussia. This led to a strong push for historicism and to a general interest of the German cultural elite in early Christian art. During his reign, he proposed a series of building projects characterised by a marked historicist stylistic pluralism, with strong influences from early Christian architecture<sup>73</sup>.

The origins his personal interest dated back to 1822, when he saw the first plates of Bunsen's work on the «Basilicas of Christian Rome» (disseminated in Germany from Ludwig I's Bavaria) and began to be interested in building churches in early Christian style<sup>74</sup>. On his trip to Italy in 1828, Friedrich Wilhelm himself produced thousands of small architectural sketches, and throughout his life as a ruler and book collector, he always kept himself very well informed about the state of research in Christian archaeology. He was always on friendly terms with Carl von Bunsen (1791-1860), closely following his research on early Christian style in architecture and liturgy<sup>75</sup>. Bunsen's lectures on the construction of ancient churches had a lasting influence on the prince, as from this point onwards his church projects would only be in the early Christian style.

He wanted to give the Protestant faith an early Christian guise and hoped to generate Christian enthusiasm for the faith of the first centuries and its monumental expressions<sup>76</sup>. He strove to preserve Prussian traditions by expressing them in revised forms, and through the free implementation and imitation of ancient styles. He was an enthusiast of early Christian art, as well as of medieval castles and Gothic forms as an expression of national tradition. In all his building projects, the boundaries between early Christian and medieval architecture were fluid, and the diversity of his aesthetic aspirations was also reflected in the design and furnishing

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72. Müller, Dorothea: *op. cit.*

73. Reiß, Anke: *op. cit.*, p. 113.

74. *Idem*, pp. 132-133.

75. *Idem*, pp. 134-135.

76. Reiß, Anke: *op. cit.*, p. 133.

of his new churches, including the purchase of valuable ancient mosaics<sup>77</sup>. Whilst stylistic purity was not the top priority, the aesthetic and ideological impact was.

The adoption of early Christian forms by the Prussian monarch was therefore not only an aesthetic expression, but also a material representation of his goals for church and state. The reception of early Christian architecture resulted from the religious and political will of Frederick Wilhelm, who also saw himself as the head of the Church, ruling over a Christian state with an alliance between throne and altar<sup>78</sup>. Although Protestant, Frederick William IV was also deeply involved with the Catholic Church, and certainly the aim of his ecclesiastical policy was the unification of all believers in the manner of early Christianity, and within a Christian state. This therefore required a comprehensive recovery of Christian history and art.

The reception of early Christian architecture was certainly important for the growing interest in ancient mosaic art and its reproduction<sup>79</sup>. The first efforts for the development of mosaics in Germany under Ludwig I von Bayern saw striking examples, such as the mosaics imitating Roman ones installed in the *Pompejanum* in Aschaffenburg<sup>80</sup>. Regarding mosaics within ecclesiastical architecture, the revival of early Christian and Byzantine basilicas throughout the century contributed to the spread of mosaics in Germany<sup>81</sup>. They were installed in all late historicist churches, in numerous private representative buildings and even in private chapels in the noble and aristocratic residences. This trend made Villeroy & Boch remarkably successful. It should be noted that the ceramic material used to produce these mosaics was also at the centre of nineteenth-century industrial interest due to principles of building economy and public health: mosaic tiles and mosaic slab floors were not only cheaper and more versatile but were also used for hygienic and sanitary reasons<sup>82</sup>.

From an industrial perspective, the growing interest in mosaic art from foreign companies inspired local production and the establishment of a local mosaic school. In fact, two industrial mosaic factories were founded in Germany to compete with Salviati in Berlin: Puhl & Wagner in Berlin, which produced glass paste, enamelled glass, and later gold-backed mosaics; and the Villeroy & Boch mosaic factory in Mettlach, which specialised in mosaics for Catholic buildings, including the Campo Santo Teutonico in the Vatican, between 1883 and 1928.

Lastly, the influences that nineteenth-century German museology had on Villeroy & Boch's involvement in designing the Campo Santo Teutonico should not be underestimated. De Waal's will prompted Boch to actively contribute to the creation of a stylish display that was meant to evoke the catacomb setting. This project, from a conceptual standpoint, was reminiscent of the period rooms of various chronologies that were prevalent in museums within German-speaking countries. These period rooms were characterised by careful attention to furniture, wall, and

77. Like the Friedenskirche in Potsdam and the Heilandskirche in Sacrow: Reiß, Anke: *op. cit.*, p. 132.

78. *Idem.*, p. 112.

79. Müller, Dorothea: *op. cit.*

80. Rieche, Anita: *Von Rom nach Las Vegas. Rekonstruktionen antiker römischer Architektur. 1800 bis heute*. Berlin, Reimer, 2012.

81. Müller, Dorothea: *op. cit.*

82. Villeroy & Boch, *op. cit.*, p. V.



floor coverings, a practice developed for many years in the field of museology. This is certainly a phenomenon related to the decorative arts, representing historicism in the dynamics of exhibitions.

The notion of period rooms in the early nineteenth century was linked to the rise of the historical novel, which played a significant role in the dissemination of antiquity within popular imagination. Such exhibitions had a distinctive influence on the history of museum interiors, antiquarian taste and trade, and the decorative arts<sup>83</sup>.

During the nineteenth century, educational museums strongly leaned towards the contextualization of objects in exhibitions. In this context, such museums increasingly pursued synthetic reconstruction, on a small scale and room by room, of individual epochs. These were reconstructions aimed at evoking suggestions and emotional journeys, like the museum of the Campo Santo, or they served the purpose of reconstructing national histories, strongly affirming culture and identity<sup>84</sup>.

The size of these spaces was rational. The displays always had an industrial dimension and were easy to reproduce: it was common to seek the completeness of the settings through casts, reproductions, assemblages and fakes, employing specialised craftsmen and experts in specific art forms or periods<sup>85</sup>. What is certain is that the museological and conceptual issues of the period rooms reflected, on one hand, an awareness of presenting an illusion, and on the other, a continuing tendency towards claiming scientific reconstruction<sup>86</sup>.

We have evidence of this by examining the main Prussian museological expressions of the nineteenth century. The public museum model gradually established itself in Berlin during the nineteenth century in the famous Museum Island. Historical reconstructions in Europe were indeed widespread at that time, but almost relegated to museums of decorative arts<sup>87</sup>. In 1821 the Berlin Museum of Art and Industry was opened<sup>88</sup>, and in the second half of the century this museum experienced a new impetus under the direction of Julius Lessing. His intention was to create exemplary exhibitions that brought the historical perspective to the centre of the museum. To fulfil this project, he organised a series of period rooms (*Epochenraum*) to house objects of the same chronology but different origins<sup>89</sup>. Each room was designed in every detail according to a single historical period and to a single artistic genre. In this way, the collections were organised according to chronological principles and with cultural and educational intentions, not far from the ideas and achievements of the museum at the Campo Santo Teutonico.

83. Costa, Sandra; Poulot, Dominique; Volait, Mercedes: «Introduction», in Costa, Sandra; Poulot, Dominique; Volait, Mercedes (eds.): *The period rooms. Allestimenti storici tra arte, collezionismo e museologia*. Bologna, Bononia University Press, 2016, p. 8.

84. *Idem*, p. 10.

85. *Idem*, pp. 14-15.

86. Schubiger, Benno: «Wohnräume im Museum: was ist ein „Historisches Zimmer“ und wie präsentiert man es?», *Hochparterre*, 24 (2001), pp. 14-17.

87. Trautmann-Waller, Céline: «Period room, Epochenraum et Stilraum à Berlin: Julius Lessing et Wilhelm von Bode», in Costa, Sandra, Poulot, Dominique and Volait, Mercedes (eds.): *The period rooms. Allestimenti storici tra arte, collezionismo e museologia*. Bologna, Bononia University Press, 2016, p. 49.

88. Trautmann-Waller, Céline: *op. cit.*, p. 50.

89. Trautmann-Waller, Céline: *op. cit.*, p. 52.



The second museum that contributed to the spread of this museum trend in Prussia was the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum directed by Wilhelm von Bode<sup>90</sup>. The museum was designed as early as 1870 with several sections (like the so-called Basilica or the Byzantine room), in which all objects, regardless of their type, were displayed together in the same settings. These *Stilräume* recalled the experiences of former private bourgeois collections, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in rooms structured according to different chronologies and styles. In these chronologically structured period interiors, visitors could obtain a complete art-historical perspective through the succession of rooms<sup>91</sup>. They were, however, always reconstructions that did not aim to enhance only a single object of value: it was a grouping of materials from the same period that contributed to recreating a unity of style, a global perception, and a form of recontextualization of the objects' primitive origin in the museum.

In the light of what has been said, then, the museum of the Campo Santo Teutonico in its phase of the 1880s fits fully into this trend of period rooms and plays a relevant role within the larger museological narrative described here. First of all, it is one of the very few cases of a museum translating this museological concept in Rome. Actually, while period rooms in the Germanic area were dedicated to Middle Ages, de Waal declined this trend in a «Roman» way by creating a period room for a purely archaeological museum.

Entering the museum rooms, the visitor must certainly have had the impression of having descended into a catacomb. Certainly, some inaccuracies in the philological reconstruction are visible, even from the photographs of the period, such as, for example, the coexistence within the exhibition of various artefacts of different provenance and different chronology, in particular the epigraphs, all displayed together within the walls, or the presence of the two statues (of the Vatican «Good Shepherd» and Carlo Maderno's St Cecilia) of completely different dates. As we have seen, however, the exact reconstruction of the settings was not the primary objective of the period rooms, which instead aimed to evoke the feeling of being in a historical environment.

Indeed, it is no coincidence that, in de Waal's vision, this museum, located just before the entrance to the inner Oratory, was also intended for the attendance of priests who, before the mass, could encounter the «sensation» of being in the catacombs, and thus in the heart of the most ancient Christian faith. Similarly, an educated visitor, or those who were just generically interested in the early Christian era, could see in the museum of the Campo Santo a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in an environment that was both strongly «inspirational» of the experience of the catacombs, and very didactic: in the museum one could in fact see up close, in all their details, calmly and carefully, with light and in a healthy surrounding, artifacts that were otherwise often hidden in the ancient underground tunnels and difficult

90. *Idem*, pp. 53-55. In general see Lindemann, Bernd Wolfgang: *Bode-Museum. Architektur, Sammlung, Geschichte*. München, Ed. Minerva, 2010.

91. Trautmann-Waller, Céline: *op. cit.* pp. 55-58.

for most people to reach. This experience, however, was not only to be related to the individual object and its enjoyment, but to its fruition in an environment as reminiscent as possible of its place of origin. In essence, the idea was to allow, within a single museum room, an experiential feeling of the objects reinserted in their original environment, through which one could also understand past eras via visually complete contexts. It is precisely this pedagogical feeling that, as we have seen, inspired de Waal in his process of creating his museum.

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