



PASSAGGETTO OF URBAN VIII

This narrow corridor originally connected the Pope's summer apartment with his winter apartment. It was the Pontiff's private passageway and this explains the rich fresco decorations on the walls, partly disclosed during recent restoration work.

The Passagetto was first painted with frescoes in 1613, at the time of Pope Paul V, born Camillo Borghese, by the principal decorator of the Palace, Annibale Durante. This is when the fake architecture and frieze were installed in the top portion of the walls, where it is possible to see the dragon and eagle which recall the coat of arms of the Borghese family.

Under Pope Paul V, the corridor was only 8 metres long and was extended by 3 metres in 1634, under the rule of Pope Urban VIII, born Maffeo Barberini. On that occasion, painters Simone Lagi and Marco Tullio Montagna embellished the walls with numerous scenes of monuments and places associated with the reign of Urban VIII.

The most interesting scenes are the ones of the bustling panorama of the city of Ancona seen from the sea, the Vatican Gallery of Maps, which is painted with the accuracy of a miniature, and a beautiful view of the Vatican Armoury. Note should also be taken of the scene with the siege of Casale Monferrato, which recalls the historical events of 1630.

The opposite wall displays two views, one hanging on top of the other, of St. Peter's Basilica: both images feature the cross-section of the

façade of the Basilica, showing the inside of the portico in which the rites of the opening and closing of the Holy Door took place during the Jubilee of 1625.