

La cappella Cerrini-Crescenzi al Gesù di Roma: storia e committenza artistica attraverso nuovi documenti

Abstract

This article offers an original contribution to the architectural and decorative history of the Cappella di Sant'Andrea in the Church of the Gesù in Rome, the last intervention completing the vast artistic decoration project undertaken in the church from the 1580s onwards. The core of the research is based on documentation found in the Serlupi Crescenzi Archive, currently being inventoried. This documentation allows for a precise chronological and historical reconstruction of the chapel's transfer from the Bolognese nobleman Giulio Folco, who promoted the initial works between 1588 and 1591, to Sallustia Cerrini, wife of Ottaviano Crescenzi. The noblewoman was responsible for financing the entire ornamental apparatus by 1601, as well as providing the liturgical furnishings. The research thus presents a new reading of the pictorial cycle executed entirely by the Florentine Agostino Ciampelli, examining the nature of his collaboration with the Society of Jesus and simultaneously providing a new profile of Sallustia Cerrini. She joins the ranks of female patrons who contributed decisively to the decorative arrangement of the Gesù in the post-Tridentine period, testifying to a widespread sensitivity among Roman noblewomen for devotional painting. The article gives particular attention to the task of reconstructing the dense web of relationships that tied together the expectations of the Jesuits, the complex interweaving of devotion and strategies of familial self-representation sought by the patron, and the expressive choices adopted by the painter. These aspects are analysed in constant dialogue with the broader decorative and iconographic program that unfolds, as a whole, in the church's other chapels, thus offering a contextual interpretation of the project.