

An Italian Carved Giltwood Console Table, with a serpentine veneered *Pavonazzetto Romano* marble top above a pierced frieze with garlands and C and S-scrolls, on scrolled legs with pronounced C-scrolls and flowerheads terminating in hoof feet joined by an X-form shaped stretcher centred with a cartouche from which emerges a fan of elongated leaves and flowerheads, the whole carved with flamed rocaille, flowers and foliage.

Positively rare in its transitional, original shape and design, this console table was almost certainly once part of a larger, imposing suite of furniture.

Circle of Giacomo Bonario
Rome, ca. 1740–50

Height: 35,62 in. (90,5 cm)

Depth: 30,31 in. (77 cm)

Width: 83,46 in. (212 cm)

Literature:

E. Colle, *Il mobile rococò in Italia*, pp.138–39, Milan, 2003.

A. González-Palacios, *Il tempio del gusto: Roma e il Regno delle Due Sicilie*, vol. I, Rome, 1984.

A. González-Palacios, *I mobili italiani: il patrimonio artistico del Quirinale*, Rome, 1996.

This exceptional carved giltwood console table encapsulates the richness of Rococo in the Eternal City, underlying how relevant the decorative arts were for the full expression of this style. The *genre pittoresque*, as it was known at the time, developed in France, and had its greatest impact on interior decoration, including furniture, in the 1730s. The product of imaginative architects, skilled stucco workers, and carvers of great virtuosity, Rococo soon became a truly international style, leading to multiple local declinations.

The taste for rocaille interiors invested also Rome where, in spite of still prevailing late-Baroque currents, it prompted a series of inventive decorative solutions in the aristocratic palaces of the time. In the 1740s the Roman aristocracy renovated their private apartments to follow the new taste. The furniture that completed these ambiances was executed by a plethora of carvers that remain largely anonymous. Recent research, however, has shed light on a number of them, most notably Giuseppe Corsini, Nicola Carletti, Antonio Landucci and Antonio Mugetti.

The present table was certainly a product of this taste for renovation in the new fashion. It can be linked to a distinctive group of tables, probably by the same workshop, that share not only the same Roman 'alla franchesa' manner, but an overall identical design solution, quality of carving and similar sculptural motifs, such as the scrolling feet with carved leaves, the fan-shaped stretcher, the central ornament, or the protruding floral carved knees.

Our table is particularly close to one in Palazzo Colonna. They share carved garlands to the apron, impressive size and an extraordinary table top veneered with ancient excavation marble. Almost no area of the surface is left uncarved, in a fluid and harmonious composition that presents a surprisingly well-balanced result. Particularly successful is the bold fan-shaped leaf carved central element to the stretcher, as well as the carved knees; where traditionally masks were used, the carver opted for an organic arrangement of flowers on rocailles.

Of the several carvers known to have worked in this period, the most likely candidate for the attribution of this console table seems to be of Giacomo Bonario. He was active in Rome at least from 1742, when he bills the Corsini family for several pieces of furniture for the palazzo Corsini alla Lungara, including tables with four legs with ox hoofs.

The description in the archival documents are a close match to the design of the group of tables here discussed. The fact that Bonario seems to have been the carver with more console tables supplied to the family, leads us to believe that there is a strong possibility that they were indeed a product of his workshop. One should note that the use of the term *tavoli* in coeval documents can be ambiguous and would not necessarily implicate small scale.