

The rise and fall of the Musée Marcello

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Only seven women artists had works on display at the Musée du Luxembourg in France at the end of the nineteenth century, and only one of them was a sculptor: Adèle d’Affry (1836–79), the Duchess Castiglione Colonna, known professionally as Marcello. In an attempt to secure a permanent place for the display of her art for future generations, Marcello planned the creation of the Musée Marcello, to be opened after her death in her birthplace of Fribourg, Switzerland. The museum, which opened in 1881, presented both the artist’s own sculptural work and the art of her friends, among them Courbet and Delacroix. At the time of its opening, the Musée Marcello was the only public museum in Europe funded and planned by a female sculptor and which contained a large selection of her own works. Although the museum had been well received by visitors and critics, by 1936 its demise was assured. This paper presents a historical overview of the Musée Marcello, its creation and ultimate downfall, and the critical reception of both the institution itself and the sculptor who carved out a place for sculpture in nineteenth-century Europe.

In 1908, a geographical, historical and political survey of Switzerland singled out a certain ‘Musée Marcello’ as one of the country’s most significant art collections open to the public:

The Swiss possess, relative to its small size, a number of rather considerable museums and collections, of which many have high importance ... In Fribourg, it is the Musée Marcello which attracts attention; it was founded by the Duchess Colonna, who gave her collection to the town of her birth; besides a great number of works by the generous and celebrated donor herself, this museum contains an important collection of paintings by great masters.¹

This Musée Marcello (sometimes also referred to as the Musée Colonna) was the dream of Adèle d’Affry (1836–79), the Duchess Castiglione Colonna, who was best known in nineteenth-century artistic circles as the sculptor who exhibited under the pseudonym Marcello (Fig. 1). Realizing that her death from tuberculosis was imminent, Marcello planned for the future of her own sculpture and paintings, and of her personal art collection. Most of the paintings in her collection were acquired directly from some of the major artists of the century, including Gustave Courbet, Eugène Delacroix and Henri Regnault. Planning for the future museum, to be opened after her death, consumed the final two years of Marcello’s life and developed into the artist’s ultimate creative project. The Musée

Marcello became one of the first private museums in Switzerland, opening in the same year as the Museo Vincenzo Vela in Ligornetto (1881), but pre-dating the Vela family’s gift to the canton of Ticino by eleven years. Few artist-created museums existed in the late-nineteenth century and Marcello’s personal collection was, at the time, a unique gift to the canton of Fribourg. As there were at the time few places for sculptors – particularly for women sculptors – to exhibit their works on a permanent basis, Marcello had created what she hoped would be a permanent place for the continuous display of her art for the enjoyment of future generations, as well as for the objects she acquired through her friendships with other artists of her day.

Although the museum received many favourable reviews following its opening in 1881, its closure around 1936 was initially met with little public resistance. The Musée d’Art et d’Histoire in Fribourg, which eventually inherited the Musée Marcello’s complete holdings, today displays only a few works from the original bequest. Yet the history of this small, lost museum is instructive to the understanding of the difficulties in maintaining a collection and complying with a testament long after the death of the benefactor.

Although nineteenth-century exhibition checklists and a short catalogue essay from a retrospective exhibition of Marcello’s works in 1980 discuss the collection in brief,



Fig. 1. Édouard Blanchard, *Portrait of the Duchess Castiglione Colonna*, 1877. Oil on canvas. Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Fribourg [M 61]. Fribourg Museum, this work is exhibited at the Museum. Photographer's name: Primula Bosshard.

the contemporaneous literature published regarding the museum at the time immediately following its establishment has yet to be analyzed.² Additionally, the twentieth-century attempts to reconstruct the museum in order to conform to the artist's original wishes have yet to be chronicled. This essay provides the first historical account of the original Musée Marcello, based on the observations of the original organizers, curators involved in its formation, and art critics. Archival materials relating to the attempts to restore Marcello's original intentions play an additional historical role in the posthumous life of this vanished museum.

The Musée Marcello: origins

As her struggle with tuberculosis intensified in the 1870s, Marcello thought more seriously about the

future of her paintings and sculptures, created over the twenty-year span of her short career. She hoped to establish an art museum bearing her name, with her own works at the core of the collection. While convalescing in 1876 in Castellammare, Italy, Marcello enlisted the help of her mother, Countess Lucie d'Affry, and her brother-in-law, Baron Maurice d'Ottensfels, to ensure that her last will and testament would be properly executed. At this time, she sent a letter to Ottensfels in Austria explaining her final wishes in detail:

My days are numbered. They have been shortened by the fatigues and concerns that are inseparable from artistic life. Restricted within the limitations that prevented my development, I have not been able to accomplish all that I had dreamed of doing. It is thus natural that in compensation for what I have not been able to produce, there should remain a collection of what I have made, and these works, the products of my artistic life, should be brought together in my birthplace of Fribourg in Switzerland.³

In her will of 1877, Marcello further noted, 'I want this collection to remind one in its arrangement, as much as possible, of an atelier'.⁴ The testament, which was finalized on 28 November 1877, framed her wishes within ten legal articles. The gift to the canton was described in article no. 9. One of its stipulations required that the works remain together as a group and that they should never be given away, sold or otherwise disseminated. The article also included terms with regard to publishing a description of the donation and to following specifics concerning pedestals and entrance design. For example, Marcello instructed that the entranceway have gold letters emblazoned above the door reading 'Musée Colonna d'Affry [Marcello]'.⁵ She also provided a fund totalling 55,000 Swiss francs (a remarkable sum for the time) for maintaining the collection and for reproducing in marble and bronze her most successful sculptures. The marbles were to be completed by her preferred *praticien*, Narcisse Jacques (1849–1904), and the Thiebaut Frères foundry in Paris cast a bronze reduction of her most successful work, the *Pythia*, for the museum (Fig. 2). The *Pythia* was, and is, best known in Paris, where a life-sized version has graced the space under the grand staircase at Charles Garnier's Opéra since 1875.

Marcello succumbed to her illness on 16 July 1879, without having left written instructions as to which works of art should be placed in the Musée Marcello.



Fig. 2. Marcello, *Pythia*, 1870 (this cast, after 1879). Bronze. Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Fribourg. [M 15]. Fribourg Museum, this work is exhibited at the Museum. Photograph: Primula Bosshard.

The process of how specific pieces were selected for the museum remains a mystery. The only work of art explicitly mentioned in the testament to be destined for the museum was her painted portrait by Édouard Blanchard, originally shown in the Paris Salon of 1877 (see Fig. 1). Even with regard to her own sculptures, Marcello's testament stipulates only that some of the money bequeathed to the canton be used for the reproduction in bronze and marble of some of her 'principal works', those being the sculptures for which she received acclaim in Paris during

the 1860s. Marcello's correspondence suggests, however, that she had given oral instructions for her family (her mother and brother-in-law, in particular) to be in charge of the final decisions.

The State Council of the canton of Fribourg, however, took control of the Musée Marcello as early as 1880, nullifying some of Marcello's expressed wishes. For example, on the day before her death (15 July 1879), she wrote a codicil to be added to her testament stating her family should have permission to change the location of the Musée Marcello from Fribourg to

either Bern or Geneva if, after five years of its being open to the public, ‘this appears preferable to my family for making my works better known’.⁶ The family could not act on this codicil upon the fifth anniversary of the museum in 1886 since the State Council demanded that even before they could accept the collection, it had to be given and considered as the sole and exclusive property of the canton of Fribourg. Additionally, the State Council would be responsible for finding a location for the display of the collection, but would be obliged to consult the family on its choice of space.

The bequest of the collection was mentioned in both the Swiss and French press soon after Marcello’s death.⁷ In her obituary notice, published in the Swiss journal *Freiburger-Zeitung* on 2 August 1879, an anonymous author noted: ‘As announced, the museum [of the canton] of Fribourg, according to the last will of the artist, has received the complete collection of her works [or at least replicas of them carved by the hands of her *praticien* after the originals] as a gift from the artist’.⁸ It was decided at an early date that the Musée Marcello would be incorporated into the Cantonal Museum which had been established in 1823. The journal report suggests, incorrectly, that the transfer of works to the Cantonal Museum was immediate; in reality, the motion to accept the gift was not passed until 14 May 1880, almost a year after Marcello’s death.

Consisting of almost 100 artworks including Marcello’s personal sculptures, paintings and graphic works, together with a selection of her collection of works by friends, Gobelins tapestries and other *objets d’art*, the Musée Marcello finally opened to the public on 29 July 1881, more than two years after the benefactor’s death. It was located inside the Cantonal Museum of Fribourg, in two rooms on the ground floor. Both collections were housed in a building known as the Lycée, or the Lyceum of the Collège Saint-Michel in Fribourg (Fig. 3). Shields of arms representing the families of Colonna and Affry were placed in a decorative cartouche above the door of the main room on the ground floor, where it remains today as a clue to what was once contained within. Although photographs of the first room do not survive, period images of what appears to have been the second room do exist (Fig. 4).

The opening of the museum was expected to attract a large audience, as shown by a notice published in

Fribourg’s oldest daily newspaper, *La Liberté*, on the day before the opening:

On Thursday, 28 July, the inauguration of the Musée Colonna will take place. On this occasion, a requiem mass, sung by the Choral Union of Fribourg, will be celebrated at 9 a.m., in the church of the Collège [of Saint-Michel] for the repose of the soul of the generous donor. The State Council and many invitees will officially attend the ceremony.

After the funerary service at the church, the opening of the Musée Colonna will take place, in the Lyceum building, with the executrix of the testament [Countess Lucie d’Affry, the artist’s mother] formally donating the collection to State Council.⁹

Unfortunately, the museum’s beginnings were fraught with difficulties. Two days after the inauguration (30 July 1881), another local newspaper, *Le Chroniqueur suisse*, registered distaste at the sparse attendance of members of the general public and of some communal officials at the event. The anonymous author suggested that the event had not been well publicized, but it was also possible that many *Fribourgeois* felt that the funerary service was a private, family affair. Concerned, the author wished to express appreciation to Marcello’s family for the gift of the collection:

We have learned, as always from the same source, that the inauguration ceremony was opened by a requiem mass brilliantly sung by the Choral Union of our city. We believe we can be assured that if the public of Fribourg had known about it at the time, it would have borne witness by its presence, its respectful sentiments and sympathetic gratitude towards the family of the generous donor ... However, what matters most to all of us today is that we convey, from all the inhabitants of Fribourg particularly, all our gratitude to Madame Countess d’Affry. Thanks to her and to the



Fig. 3. The Lyceum of the Collège Saint-Michel, Fribourg. View of exterior, 2004. Photograph: author.



Fig. 4. *The Painting Salon in the Musée Marcello, after 1881. From *La Femme Suisse, un livre de famille* (Neuchâtel, 1910), p. 269.*

artist, deeply missed, who has left to us her remarkable works, Fribourg finds herself endowed with an artistic collection that can well be the envy of other Swiss cities.¹⁰

Eventually, the Musée Marcello did gain visitors and received positive attention from the press. The recently opened museum was even reported in the United States, where Marcello's works were sold but where she had never visited. According to the *New York Times*, the new museum's collection was rich in old and modern masters:

A museum was opened at Freiburg [German spelling of Fribourg] last summer, in which are not only [Marcello's] own works, but several old masters, and a superb Vélasquez, and some forty specimens of modern masters in oils, water-colors, charcoal, or pencil. Many of the latter are personal gifts and souvenirs from friends and admirers among the artists. Specimens of work by Delacroix, Fortuny, Courbet, Regnault, Rude and Carpeaux have thus come into the ownership of Freiburg and are open to the traveling public.¹¹

Some of the information in the *New York Times* article was misleading. If the earliest exhibition lists are to be taken as accurate, there were no works by the French romantic sculptor François Rude at the Musée Marcello. It would be unlikely that she owned such a piece since the majority of her collection consisted of works by artists whom she knew personally and there is no evidence that she knew Rude. The 'superb Vélasquez' on view was in fact a work by the lesser-known eighteenth-century painter Luis Gonzales Vélasquez, and not by the more famous Diego

Vélasquez. And although Marcello owned a number of unique drawings by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, a close friend, they remained in her family's possession, and there is no indication, textual or otherwise, that her family parted with any of them when the choices for the museum bequest were made. In any case, the Delacroixs, Fortunys, Courbets and Regnaults were there, even if the journalist had not been.

An effort had been made to promote the museum both within the city of Fribourg and to the rest of the world. Publicity postcards were produced (Fig. 5) and art nouveau-style brochures containing photographs of Marcello's sculptures and poetry by her sister, Cécile d'Ottensfels, were published by the turn of the century (Fig. 6). Fribourg's leading photographers Ernest Lorson (1843–1923) and his son Alfred (1868–1945), took the photographs of the second room of the museum, detailing for posterity its atelier-style setting and its eclectic mixture of antique furniture, paintings, sculptures and *objets d'art* (see Fig. 4). Many of the Lorsons' images illustrated *Fribourg artistique à travers des âges*, a cultural journal founded by the director of the Cantonal Museum, Louis Grangier, and published from 1890 until 1914. Discussions of the sculpture by Marcello and the terms of her gift to Fribourg were, as required by her testament, published in small, simple brochures produced separately from those written on the Cantonal Museum. Such printed material led to positive results and visitors were drawn to the museum; Juliette Courbet, the



Fig. 5. Librairie Josué Labastrou, Fribourg. Publicity postcard for the Musée Marcello, showing the *Pythia*, not dated (after 1881). Archives, Bibliothèque Cantonale et Universitaire, Fribourg. © BCU Fribourg. Collection de cartes postales.

sister of the painter, visited the Musée Marcello in 1904, admired her brother's portrait of Marcello that was displayed there (now at the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Reims) and was impressed by the collection given to Fribourg by her brother's great friend.¹²

The Musée Marcello: historiography

The Musée Marcello became the envy of the neighbouring towns of Bern and Neuchâtel. More than one

year before the museum's opening to the public, the Neuchâtel newspaper *Le bien public* published a two-part article congratulating the citizens of Fribourg on the acquisition. The article's author, one A. Bachelin of Neuchâtel, expressed his sentiment that Fribourg should consider itself lucky to have received such a treasure trove:

One can only be delighted at an event that will make the city of Fribourg a place of pilgrimage, obligatory for all who love the arts. We must confess that many cities,



Fig. 6. Sadag. Front cover illustration for *Souvenir du Musée Marcello, Fribourg en Suisse* (Fribourg, 1905). Photograph: author.

among those which devote the most money to paintings and statuary, envy the fate of the city of Marcello's birth, which finds itself thus the possessor of one of the most beautiful collections in Switzerland, while so many others collect them with great effort of patience, cost and difficulty.

We congratulate our Fribourgeois neighbours on their good fortune; they should appreciate the importance of the gift that is being made to them; the collection that has just been entrusted to their care is the work of a great artist, and those who saw her sculptures in the exhibitions in Paris are still under the charm they inspired.

It is thus a veritable fortune for the arts that all of Marcello's creations are reunited; we hope that the museum that will contain them will be worthy of them, we hope that there

they will find a space and the light that suits these dreams which have become marbles and bronzes, and that viewing them elevates the mind and touches the heart.¹³

Thus, the importance of the collection was acknowledged at an early date, even before its opening to the public. Bachelin's enthusiasm was infectious and negative reviews of the Musée Marcello during its fifty-five year history are not to be found.

An early description of the rooms within the Musée Marcello, unsigned, appeared in a one-page article published in *L'art moderne*, a journal published in Brussels. The piece begins with a brief biographical sketch of the artist and is followed by a discussion of the bequest and the opening of the museum that summer. This is followed by a description of the first room:

The museum occupies two rooms of the ground floor, simply decorated and well-lit by three large windows. In the first, a portrait of the Duchess, full-length and life size, painted by Blanchard, seems to be the soul and the genius familiar to the place. A dozen busts in marble, among them the *Bianca Capello* [Fig. 7], exhibited in 1863, which introduced the artist to the public right away, her bust of the *Dauphine*, and of *Marie-Antoinette at Temple Prison*, presented in 1867, her *Tired Bacchante*, *Phoebé*, her *Ecce Homo*, the *Abyssinian Chieftain*, and *Medjé*, all stand out against the crimson of the wall coverings.¹⁴

The essay continues with a description of the second room that closely matches the photograph of the room taken by Ernest Lorson (see Fig. 4):

In entering into the second part, all the severity of the critic disappears: one penetrates into the privacy of the Duchess; one again sees, arranged similarly to the disorder of the studio, her furniture, her favourite trinkets, her faïence, her tapestries ... There is also the brilliant mosaic of studies, paintings, sketches, tacked to the wall like butterflies, with which the friends of the Duchess took delight in decorating her studio.¹⁵

The opening of the Musée Marcello and the posthumous exhibition of Marcello's sculptures and paintings provided continued interest in her art for some years after her death. To the publications mentioned above can be added other primary sources. In 1883, Raoul Schropp's *Das Museum Marcello und seine Stifterin* (*The Marcello Museum and its Founder*, also printed in Paris as *Le Musée Marcello*) introduced the museum to a German audience. Additionally, Lina de Greyerz's *Notice sur le Musée Marcello à Fribourg* (1885) was translated into French from the original German by Louis Grangier.



Fig. 7. Marcello, *Bianca Capello*, 1863 (this carving in marble, after 1879). Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Fribourg [M 1]. Fribourg Museum, this work is exhibited at the Museum. Photograph: Bruno Jarret.

Greyerz devoted much of her forty-five-page text to a biography of Marcello and a historical discussion of her oeuvre, and she wrote little about the other artists whose works were included in the collection. Yet her description of the Musée Marcello, displayed within, and as part of, the Cantonal Museum, is instructive with regard to the odd nature of their juxtaposition. The confrontation with craft and historical

objects shown in close proximity to examples of fine works of modern art must have been mystifying to many visitors. One of the interesting inclusions in Greyerz's essay was a description of such peculiarities to be found at the museum:

In the hall that is used as the entrance, one notices on the left many treasures of national antiquities, including a

sizeable cannon occupying the centre. One would think they were entering an arsenal, and not a sanctuary of arts. After all, it is quite a transition just to imagine going from daily life to the contemplation of artistic works. Some steps lower one can find the door opening on to the first room, richly hung with burgundy damask and perfectly appropriate to the busts, statues, and the grand canvasses that present themselves, at the same time, to the visitor's gaze.¹⁶

The visitor's experience of the Musée Marcello was embellished, in 1905, with the publication of *Souvenir du Musée Marcello: Marcello et ses oeuvres* (see Fig. 6), which contained an introduction by Camille Roy and a selection of poetry based on Marcello's sculptures written by her sister, Cécile d'Ottensfels, a minor poet and playwright. The poetry, inspired by the sculptures and the close relationship between the sisters, provides an additional dimension to the museum. Ottensfels's poems present a description of the works and an almost palpable sense of standing in front of them in their original space. Visitors were meant to contemplate the sculptures, read the poetry and enjoy the photographs within the publication, produced for a multi-levelled artistic experience. This was a very modern way of viewing art in a gallery setting. In one set of particularly descriptive verses that mention some of Marcello's best-known works (such as her *Abyssinian Chieftain*, 1870, Fig. 8), Ottensfels's feeling that the act of making sculpture contributed to her sister's early death is revealed:

It is you, handsome shy Sheik
Which no charm can touch
Eye of an eagle or of a shark
Who shines like the blade
Of your proud yataghan ...
Ah! It is him, it is all of you
Idols of these arches
Legacy of the conquering chisel
It is you, children of stone
Whose murderous hand
Struck the artist at the heart!¹⁷

Although the Musée Marcello seems to have been in good financial and public standing in 1906, when a celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary was held, as early as 1917 museum officials suggested relocating both it and the Cantonal Museum to new premises. By 1940, the Musée Marcello had officially closed its doors; its significance along with its stature as the envy of neighbouring cantons was quickly forgotten.

The death of the Musée Marcello and its later manifestations

The Musée Marcello no longer exists in its original form or location as agreed upon by the canton and by the artist's descendants. In 1917, the Hôtel Ratzé, a sixteenth-century mansion on the Rue de Morat in Fribourg, was selected as the new home of the Cantonal Museum, but the Musée Marcello was not initially moved there. The Cantonal Museum was renamed the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Fribourg and opened to the public at the Hôtel Ratzé on 10 December 1922.¹⁸ The contents of the Musée Marcello seem to have remained on public view at the Lyceum of the Collège Saint-Michel during that time.

The death-knell for the Musée Marcello rang in 1936. In that year, the Collège Saint-Michel and canton officials decided to use the Lyceum rooms as an *aula maxima*, or a large lecture hall. Both the high school and the nearby University of Fribourg needed the space. Moreover, the glory of Musée Marcello was fading. As indicated by the curator's report, the works in the Marcello collection were 'deteriorating imperceptibly', and he continued to explain that 'in effect, at the beginning of the year 1936, we seriously foresee transferring [the collection] to the Augustins [near the Chemin des Archives, formerly the location of the State Archives]'.¹⁹

The University of Fribourg was founded in 1889, some eight years after the opening of the Musée Marcello, but the school's growth in the early years of the twentieth century provided another reason for the closure of the museum. Construction for the new main building of the University on the site of the former Miséricorde cemetery began on the Avenue de l'Europe only a few kilometres away from the Collège Saint-Michel. The University building, begun in 1937, was completed in 1942 under the direction of the Turkish-born architect Denis Honegger (1907–81). During construction, the Lyceum at the Collège Saint-Michel was used as a temporary classroom for university courses, and the Marcello collection remained in storage for the duration of this period.

The canton's change of heart with regard to the Musée Marcello, and the ultimate reason why it closed (rather than being immediately redisplayed elsewhere) may have been the result of a simple



Fig. 8. Marcello, *Abyssinian Chieftain*, 1870. Marble, bronze and lapis lazuli. Musée d'Orsay, Paris [RF 3685]. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York. Photograph: Lagiewski.

change of aesthetic taste on the part of museum officials. By the late 1920s and 1930s, so much had changed within Europe's cultural landscape. Next to paintings by Pablo Picasso, films by Fritz Lang, the work of Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus, and to new movements in art by living Swiss artists such as Le Corbusier, Alberto Giacometti, Paul Klee and the Zurich Dada group, Marcello's sculptures and the works of her academically trained friends must

have looked quite *retardataire*. Today's appreciation for nineteenth-century art had not yet been cultivated. There may have been a conscious attempt by museum officials in Fribourg not only to preserve the Marcello collection by removing it from view but also to concentrate on their important medieval collection and to obtain and exhibit works by contemporary Swiss artists. The period was a tumultuous one in Europe's history, and the First World

War (and the onset of the Second) made lasting, disturbing impressions on people that nineteenth-century academic art could no longer salvage.

The closing of the Musée Marcello was followed by numerous attempts by the artist's descendants to revive it. Documents from the period seem to suggest that the placement of the collection in storage was meant to be temporary. It would have been difficult, however, to find a new space for the collection that would conform to the very explicit instructions pre-arranged for the museum in Marcello's testament, for the original museum was designed with the specifics of the lyceum rooms in mind. Her descendants worked hard to keep the museum from being totally disbanded; archival evidence documents more than two decades of propositions, agreements, disagreements and outright fighting between the family and museum officials over the problem of finding a permanent location for the collection.

Marcello's descendants, especially Franz d'Ottensfels and Odette d'Alcantara, managed to liberate the Marcello collection from storage and to arrange for its temporary exhibition at two separate venues in Fribourg. In 1947, Marcello's sculptures were sent to the Monastery of the Visitation at 232 Rue de Morat; her art collection was displayed at the Hôtel Ratzé. These two venues were both referred to as the 'new Musée Marcello' in newspaper announcements, such as those published on 11 October 1947 in *Le Fribourgeois*:

On Tuesday afternoon at the Hôtel Ratzé, the former prefecture, the new Musée Marcello was inaugurated, transferred from the ground floor of the high school and which has been without a stable location for several years. Because of a lack of space, the works were distributed in two rooms. The one at the Hôtel Ratzé contains works that were bequeathed by the Duchess Colonna [Marcello], but which were not created by her. Another space on the Rue de Morat contains a certain number of sculptures and paintings by the famous artist.²⁰

Although the splitting of the Marcello collection between the two spaces at the monastery and the Hôtel Ratzé was meant to be temporary, it lasted over twelve years. Marcello's sculptures were finally moved to the Hôtel Ratzé, rejoining the rest of the collection in 1959. The move was prompted by the occasion of a retrospective exhibition entitled *Marcello et son temps*, for which there was no published catalogue. Again the descendants of the artist used the

opportunity to intensify their efforts to urge officials to find a permanent space for the collection and remount it according to her wishes.

As it happened, two years earlier the cantonal Museum received a gift of a building that had once belonged to Marcello's great-grandfather, Louis d'Affry (1734–1810), the first Chief of State of Switzerland. The seventeenth-century structure known as the Hôtel d'Affry (also called the Maison d'Affry) sits directly across the road from the Hôtel Ratzé.²¹ Inside, the rooms were small and in need of repair, but the building's final owner, Pierre Aeby, bequeathed it to be used for some didactic purpose, as either a museum or as a part of the University. It seemed so logical to refit the Musée Marcello into the Hôtel d'Affry, that such a move was publicly suggested by a journalist reviewing the retrospective exhibition in 1959:

After greeting the director of public instruction, the President and the members of the museum's commission, and the many family members of the artist, [Jean-Baptiste de Weck, director of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire at the Hôtel Ratzé] expressed the wish that the works Marcello bequeathed to Fribourg, somewhat separated for now, would be reunited one day as a whole. And what location would be more appropriate for this purpose than the Hôtel d'Affry, given to the museum by a great Fribourgeois? You will not be able to tear yourself away from such an atmosphere and such a presence. Perhaps you will take with you, as I did, the vision of the elegant portrait ... the engaging female who made Fribourg, her birthplace, appreciated in Italy, France, and elsewhere.²²

Numerous attempts were made to reorganize the Musée Marcello at the Hôtel d'Affry, but to no avail. The museum had insufficient funds to reconstruct the building and to install appropriate climate control. The Society of the Friends of Museums in Fribourg opposed the use of funds to support the venture and thought that the museum should be more concerned with the promotion of living artists, particularly those working in Fribourg. Eventually the Hôtel d'Affry was restored, but it opened in 1985 as the home of the Department of Antiquity and Classical Studies of the University of Fribourg.

Conclusion

While all of the works from the original Musée Marcello collection remain at the Musée d'Art et

d'Histoire at the Hôtel Ratzé, where they have been since 1959, only a small portion of the collection has been on view to the public over the last forty-five years. Since then, three significant publications on Marcello continued to promote her sculpture to a European audience during the second half of the twentieth century: Odette d'Alcantara's *Marcello, Adèle d'Affry, duchesse Castiglione Colonna, 1836–1879, sa vie, son oeuvre, sa pensée et ses amis* (1961); Henriette Bessis's *Marcello: Sculpteur* (1980) and Ghislaine de Diesbach's *La double vie de la duchesse Colonna, le chimère bleue* (1988). A retrospective exhibition held in 1980 to mark the 100th anniversary of Marcello's death (for which Bessis's book formed the catalogue) also helped to foster renewed interest in Marcello's life and work. The Musée d'Art et d'Histoire has continued to sponsor numerous lectures on Marcello as part of its annual public programmes in recent years. Yet many of Marcello's stipulations for the collection's display have not been upheld, the most important being that the collection is no longer displayed in the style of an atelier. Currently, there are plans to refit part of the nineteenth-century works in the collection into such an arrangement at the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, but whether all of the items from Marcello's gift will be reinstalled with her furniture, Gobelins tapestries and fine art remains to be seen.

Marcello's museum, a rare gem of its time, has been erased from the cultural consciousness. It fell victim to the change of times and to neglect of the testament by the state that benefited from it. Like all things of great consequence, however, it has left a trace of itself, and that trace reminds scholars of the tremendous effort that artists can put into finding a place for their art for when they have left this world. The strength of Marcello's heroic figures and her monumental sculptures, together with her deep admiration for Fribourg, remains palpable. Perhaps the true place of Marcello's collection in turn-of-the-century Europe was not as part of her museum, but as part of a history yet untold.

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Notes and references

- 1 A. Aeppli et al. (eds.), *La Suisse, Étude géographique, démographique, politique, économique et historique* (Neuchâtel, 1907–8), p. 378.
- 2 Monique von Wistinghausen, *Qui est Marcello? Esquisse socio-historique de l'artiste* (Fribourg, 1980), pp. 11–23. (The Musée Marcello is discussed only on the final page of the article.) Brief consideration of the Musée Marcello collection and how it became part of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire is included in and article by Yvonne Lehnerr, 'Le Musée d'art et d'histoire de Fribourg', in *Fribourg et ses musées* (Fribourg, 1992), pp. 73–93.
- 3 Adèle Colonna (Marcello) to the Baron Maurice d'Ottenfels, undated, c.1876–7. Archives of the Fondation Marcello, Fribourg, Switzerland.
- 4 Testament of Mme la Duchesse de Castiglione Colonna, née d'Affry, 28 November 1877. Archives of the State of Fribourg (hereafter Archives AEF), RN 6055, documents 417–22.
- 5 Convention entre l'État de Fribourg et le Baron d'Ottenfels, 14 May 1880. Archives AEF, Titres de l'État, no. 665.
- 6 Testament of Mme la Duchesse de Castiglione Colonna, née d'Affry, 28 November 1877. Archives AEF, RN 6055, documents 417–22. See the codicil dated 15 July 1879.
- 7 The earliest mention of the bequest and the future Musée Marcello to come from it was published in 'Kanton Freiburg', *Freiburger-Zeitung* (2 August 1879), p. 3 and Le Masque de Fer, 'Échos de Paris. À Travers à Paris', *Le Figaro* (10 August 1879), p. 1.
- 8 'Kanton Freiburg', *Freiburger-Zeitung* (2 August 1879), p. 3. I must give special thanks to James Blakeley for his advice concerning the translation of this obituary from the original German into English.
- 9 'Musée Colonna', *La Liberté* (27 July 1881), p. 3.
- 10 'Canton de Fribourg', *Le Chroniqueur suisse* (30 July 1881), p. 2.
- 11 'Art Notes', *New York Times* (20 November 1881), p. 6.
- 12 Letter of Juliette Courbet to Louis Grangier, 1 September 1904. Archives of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Fribourg.
- 13 A. Bachelin, 'Variétés, Le Musée Marcello à Fribourg', *Le Bien public* (18 July 1880), p. 4.
- 14 'Marcello, Duchesse Colonna', *L'Art moderne* (27 November 1881), p. 309.

- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Lina de Greyerz, *Notice sur le Musée Marcello à Fribourg*, trans. Louis Grangier (Fribourg, 1885), p. 13.
- 17 Cécile d'Ottensfels, 'L'Ouverture d'un Musée', in Camille Roy, *Souvenir du Musée Marcello: Marcello et ses oeuvres* (Fribourg, 1905), pp. 16–22. The poem was originally published in Ottensfels, *Bouquet de Pensées* (Paris, 1888), pp. 138–41.
- 18 Lehnherr, op. cit. (note 2), p. 76.
- 19 *Extrait du Rapport annuel, de 1936, du Conservateur du Musée d'art et d'histoire*, Archives AEF, File 'Musée Marcello, B'.
- 20 'Le Nouveau Musée Marcello', *Le Fribourgeois* (11 October 1947), p. 2. The same text was published in *Journal d'Estavayer* on 14 October 1947.
- 21 For a more complete study of the Hôtel d'Affry, see Aloys Lauper, 'Rue Pierre-Aeby 16, Ancienne maison de Reynold-d'Affry', in *Les Fiches ville de Fribourg, recensement des biens culturels immeubles du canton de Fribourg* (Fribourg, 2003), fiche no. 017/2003.
- 22 M. F., 'Les Vernissages: Marcello et son temps (1836–79)', *La Liberté* (27 July 1959), p. 5.