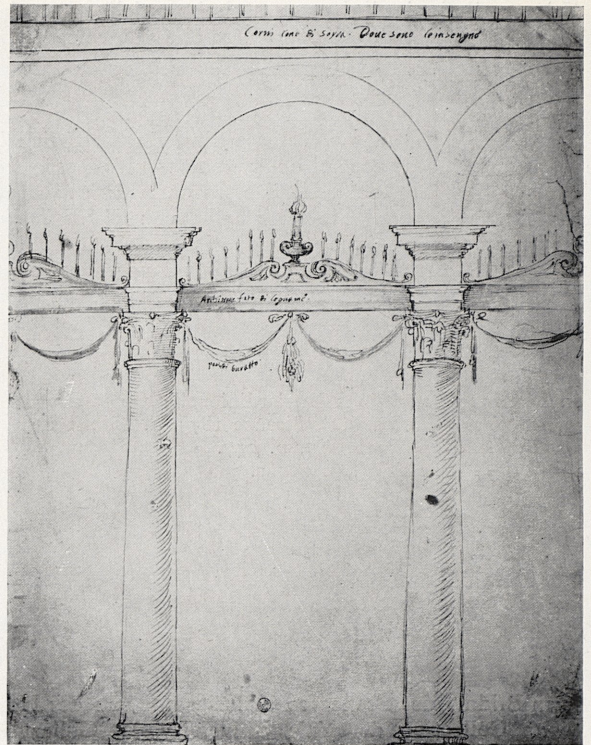


1 Buontalenti, elevation of the chapels in an aisle of San Lorenzo. Uffizi 2359A.



2 Buontalenti, decor for the nave arcade of Santo Spirito. Uffizi 2358A.

*Eve Borsook*: DRAWINGS FOR THE FUNERAL OF COSIMO I DE' MEDICI

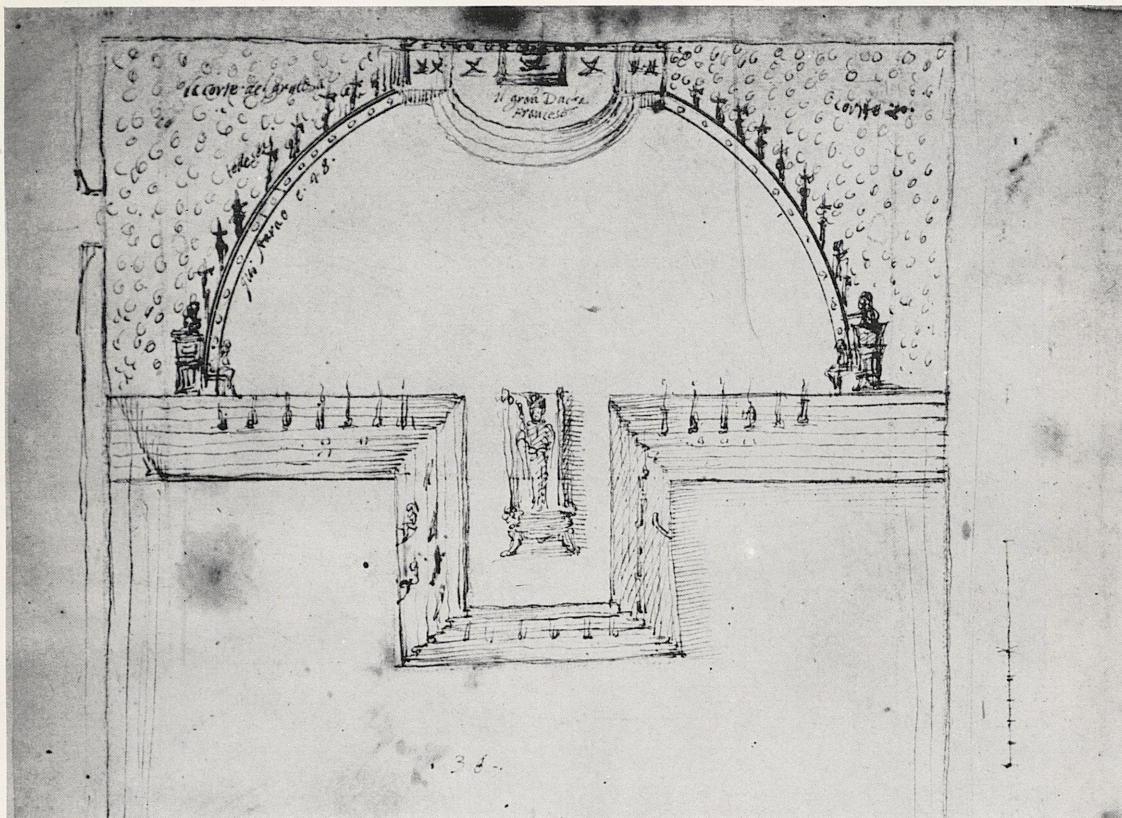
More than thirty years ago, Vera Giovannozzi listed several drawings in the Uffizi by Bernardo Buontalenti of decorations for Cosimo I's funeral celebrated in May 1574.<sup>1</sup> Recently, when an essay on this ceremony was prepared for the last issue of the "Mitteilungen",<sup>2</sup> it proved impossible to check these unpublished drawings due to the closing of the Gabinetto di Disegni for two long periods. It is with much pleasure that we are now able to illustrate these sketches and to confirm Signora Giovannozzi's identification of them as designs for Cosimo's obsequies.<sup>3</sup>

The simplest drawing of the group, Uff. 2359 A, is an elevation of the chapel entrances in an aisle of San Lorenzo (Fig. 1). In the lunette are the figures of two mourning women who crouch on either side of a fluttering scroll inscribed with Cosimo's name. His arms mask the oculus just as the chapel entrances below were screened off by, what we know from other sources to have been, black cloth or

<sup>1</sup> *Vera Giovannozzi*, Ricerche su Bernardo Buontalenti, in: *Rivista d'Arte*, XV (1933), p. 313-314 note. The drawings are listed without further comment. Of the drawings cited by Signora Giovannozzi we have not illustrated Uffizi 2353A (because its relation to the obsequies is uncertain) and 2357A (a ground plan of the church of San Lorenzo indicating the seating arrangement of the court). To Signora Giovannozzi's original list we are pleased to add here Uffizi 2356A (Fig. 5).

<sup>2</sup> *Eve Borsook*, Art and Politics at the Medici Court I: The Funeral of Cosimo I de' Medici, in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XII (1965), p. 30-54. See Corrigendum p. 371!

<sup>3</sup> For kind permission to reproduce these drawings I must thank the directress of the Gabinetto di Disegni, D.ssa Anna Forlani Tempesti. Until there was opportunity to compare the accounts of other Medici funerals (Giovanna d'Austria and Francesco I), I was uncertain which of these drawings (aside from Figs. 1 and 3) could definitely be associated with Cosimo's obsequies. The problem at first seemed more difficult because no record mentioned decorations for a lying-in-state in the Salone dei Cinquecento.



3 Buontalenti, funeral decor projected for the Salone dei Cinquecento. Uffizi 2354A (detail of the recto).

rascie. The drawing suggests only a partial view of what these decorations were like. Eyewitness accounts inform us that chiaroscuro medallions of Cosimo's achievements were affixed to the black hangings obscuring the chapel entrances and that figures of mourning skeletons were set in front of the pilasters separating them.<sup>4</sup>

Although nothing is known of decorations commemorating Cosimo's death in Santo Spirito, another drawing in the group, Uff. 2358 A, shows an ornamental scheme for the nave arcade of this church (Fig. 2). Perhaps this sketch was only a proposal which was never carried out.

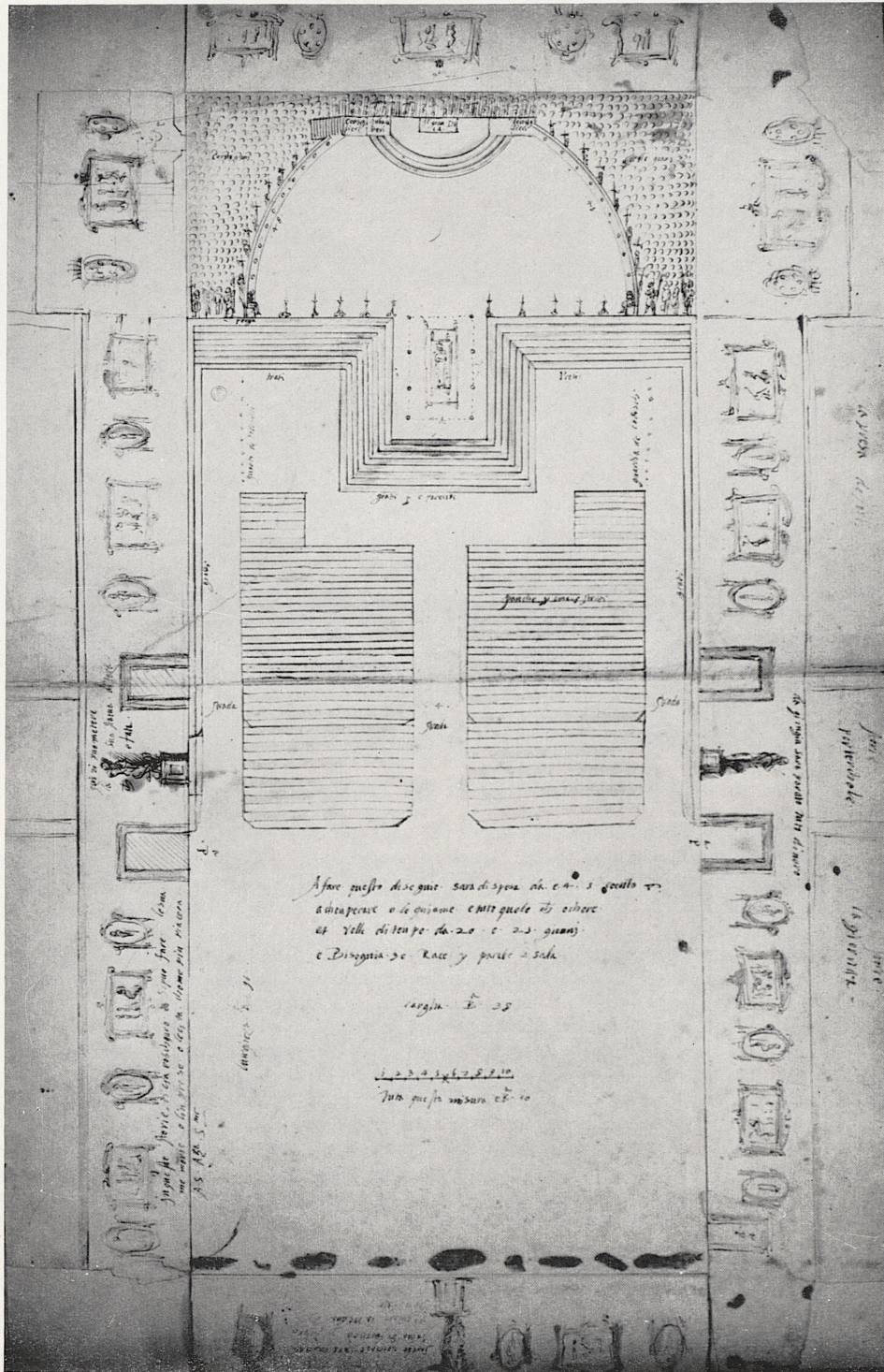
The most interesting drawings of the series are in fact projects for a scheme which was never realized. Following Cosimo's death on April 21st, it appears that the programme of events for the great funeral to be held on May 17th was not immediately decided upon. We know that the actual ceremony on that day began with an assembly of the funeral cortege around Cosimo's catafalque in the Cortile and on the Ringhiera of the Palazzo Vecchio.<sup>5</sup> However, two drawings, Uff. 2354 A and 2355 A, reveal that at one point early on in the planning the Salone dei Cinquecento was considered for the lying-in-state which preceded the procession to San Lorenzo (Figs. 3 and 4).<sup>6</sup> The plan was grandiose. The walls were to be hung in black and all around the room were to go framed grisailles representing scenes from Cosimo's life — "memorie" is how Buontalenti described the subjects.<sup>7</sup> At the centre of the two long

<sup>4</sup> E. Borsook, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 37-38.

<sup>6</sup> This lying-in-state should not be confused with the one which took place in the Palazzo Pitti on April 22nd and 23rd. See Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze, Manoscritti, Nuovi Acquisti No. 1025, c. 6 verso; Borsook, op. cit., p. 38 note 37. Figure 4 is published as "Disegno per la stanza mortuaria di Ferdinando I" by G. Silli, Una Corte alla fine del '500, Florence, 1927, Tav. 45.

<sup>7</sup> The note on 2355A reads: *in queste storie di chiaro schauro et si puo fare le sua memorie o linprese o lecita chome piu piacera.*



4 Buontalenti, decor projected for the Salone dei Cinquecento. Uffizi 2355A.



5 Buontalenti, study for a detail of the Salone dei Cinquecento scheme described in Fig. 4. Uffizi 2356A.

walls statues were to be set — one of which was a figure of Cosimo in “*tera*”.<sup>8</sup> For the southern end of the room, a figure of “*Forenze*” (Florence, or *Fiorenza* as the city was then often spelled) was proposed as the centre piece (Fig. 6).<sup>9</sup> Notes on the margin of one of the plans (Fig. 4) refer to the subjects of Vasari’s murals on the eastern side of the room: the capture of Siena, Porto Ercole, and victories of Cosimo’s youth.<sup>10</sup> On a sheet attached to this plan is an estimate of the expense and time it would take to realize the programme. Buontalenti calculated the costs at between four and five hundred ducats and the necessary time as between twenty to twenty-five days.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: *qui si può mettere la sua statua di tera che e fata.*

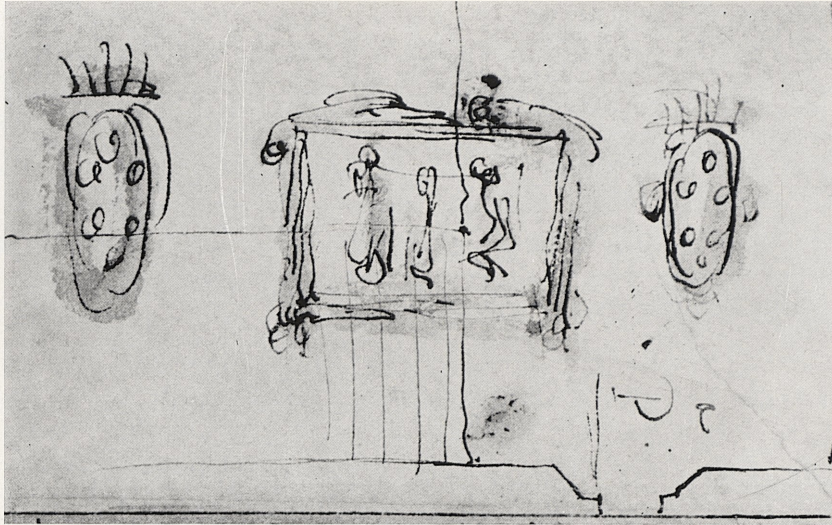
<sup>9</sup> Ibid.; the note is written below an elevation of the southern end of the room (our illustration does not include all of the long tab attached to the end of this sheet): ... *faciata tuta choperta di race dal corridore in giu*; (lower down on same tab:) *sarebe necesajo fare qui una statua di forenza p(er) Achonpagniare laltre dua che sono fate.*

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.: *la presa de forti | storie porterchole | storie la gioventu.* Beneath these murals is the note: *da q(u)i ingiu sara parato tuto di nero.*

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.: *A fare questo disegno sara di spesa da c. 4 5 coento ducati a chonperare e legniam e tuto quello che qchore et volle di tempo da 20 o 25 giornj e Bisognia 30 Race p(er) parare la sala largha Braccia 38.* A further note on the verso of the attached sheet reads: *A parere tuta la sala c(i)oe soto le storie e la faciata di verso sa(n) piero (scheraggio) Bisognia 30 race.*



6 Buontalenti, detail of Fig. 4.



7 Buontalenti, detail of Fig. 4.

What is so interesting about the programme is the inclusion of a cycle of history scenes concerning the dead ruler. Nothing of this kind had been attempted in Medici funerals before. What pictorial biographies had been carried out in the city (Michelangelo's funeral decor and Vasari's murals in the Palazzo Vecchio) were mixtures of history and allegory rather than an orderly cycle of scenes disposed about a room. Another drawing, Uff. 2356A (Fig. 5), is an elaboration of a detail on the larger sheet (Fig. 7) with Buontalenti's suggestion that *in queste istorie si puo fare tuto quello che pia (sic) piacere a S(ua) A(ltezza) S(erenissima), ecc.* Apparently, it pleased Cosimo's heir otherwise, for in the end his father's career was illustrated in San Lorenzo not by a cycle of scenes but by a series of compositions based on medals struck during his reign.<sup>12</sup> The final programme of decorations was concentrated in the church and instead of Buontalenti it was Alessandro Allori who designed and supervised the scheme. Buontalenti's contribution appears to have been limited to the catafalque and towering baldachino, or *Capella Ardente*, which framed it.<sup>13</sup>

The briefer version of the Salone dei Cinquecento project (Fig. 3) adds nothing further to our knowledge of the scheme save the explanation that the un-named Grand Duke whose seat is marked in the richer drawing (Fig. 4) is here identified as Francesco I. The verso of the sheet, however, has an amusing sketch of Cosimo's effigy on an elaborate litter which is shown being carried in to the Salone dei Cinquecento (Fig. 8). The appearance of this catafalque corresponds with a written account of the one used for the lying-in-state held in the Sala Maggiore of the Palazzo Pitti on April 22nd and 23rd which included a large cross fixed behind the defunct Grand Duke's head.<sup>14</sup> On April 23rd, Francesco was formally "elected" Cosimo's successor in the Salone dei Cinquecento<sup>15</sup> but his father's effigy was not present at this affair. Perhaps it was the sight of this ceremony which inspired the committee appointed to prepare Cosimo's obsequies to consider using the huge hall again a month later. The idea had to be abandoned probably because there was simply not enough time to execute such an elaborate scheme there as well as in San Lorenzo. Buontalenti's plan for a Grand Ducal biography was thus laid aside, or rather, it was held in reserve for an occasion which took place fifteen years later: Francesco I's funeral of 1587 when the artistic jack-of-all-trades of the Medici court was left in charge of the entire decorative production.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> E. Borsook, op. cit., p. 39, 44 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 36-note 26; BNCF, Nuovi Acquisti 1025, op. cit., cc. 3 recto and verso.

<sup>15</sup> E. Borsook, op. cit., p. 36-37.

<sup>16</sup> An account of this funeral will be included in an article to appear in a future issue of the "Mitteilungen".



8 Buontalenti, sketch of Cosimo's catafalque probably from the lying-in-state held in the Palazzo Pitti. Uffizi 2354A (detail of the verso.)

### RIASSUNTO

A seguito dello studio apparso nell'ultimo numero delle „Mitteilungen“ sulle esequie in onore di Cosimo I de' Medici, si pubblicano ora schizzi eseguiti dal Buontalenti per progetti mai realizzati per il funerale del Gran Duca. Fra questi, un grandioso schema per l'addobbo della Sala dei Cinquecento in Palazzo Vecchio che il Buontalenti voleva allestire con un ciclo di scene o „istorie“ biografiche tratte dalla vita di Cosimo I.

Photo Credits :

*Soprintendenza alle Gallerie, Florence : Figs. 1-8.*

### CORRIGENDUM :

We would also like to take this occasion to correct several misprints occurring among the Latin inscriptions in our first article on Cosimo's funeral. They are as follows : on page 40 and notes 54 and 58 on the same page, the words should read : FIRMA STATIONE ; QUID EGI(T) VIVET, VIVET(QUE) SEMP(ER) ; PIETAS HEC MITIGAT ULLA ; on page 44, note 71 : CATHOLICAE.

E. B.