

ANDREW MORROGH

THE PALACE OF THE ROMAN PEOPLE:
MICHELANGELO AT THE PALAZZO DEI CONSERVATORI

For Craig Hugh Smyth

While working on this study, I have incurred many debts of gratitude. There is, first, the obligation that any student of Michelangelo's architecture must owe to the work of James Ackerman – which is not the less strongly felt, if I have reached very different conclusions about the Campidoglio. I received a J. Paul Getty Post-Doctoral Fellowship for the year 1986/87, which I held at the Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University. There, discussions with David Coffin, John Shearman, and other members of the faculty proved very valuable. I presented some of the material at seminars organised by Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York, when I held a Kress Fellowship there in 1985/86, and by Henry Millon at M.I.T. in 1988. Ralph Lieberman read a version of the text, as did Craig Smyth. I am

especially grateful to Professor Smyth, who not only made very helpful editorial suggestions, but insisted that I read Theodor Hetzer, "Erinnerungen an italienische Architektur" (reprinted in: Theodor Hetzer, *Italienische Architektur*, Stuttgart, 1990, 371–442). Together, he and Hetzer posed the questions I have tried to answer in the final section of this article. Dieter Graf, of the Bibliotheca Hertziana, kindly arranged for some necessary photography. I am indebted to the staff of the Musei Capitolini for photographs and other courtesies. My wife, Andrea Kirsh, has once again given me invaluable help of every kind. During the preparation of this paper, I became aware that I could not possibly encompass all the relevant issues in an article. I intend to cover them in a monograph on the sixteenth-century transformation of the Campidoglio.

CONTENTS

<p>The Background 132</p> <p>The Roman People and the Popes at the Campidoglio 135</p> <p>Civic Palaces of the Cinquecento: Some Ideals 139</p> <p>The Palazzo dei Conservatori: an Overview 142</p> <p>The Dating of Michelangelo's Project 148</p> <p>Michelangelo's Share in the Palace's Design: the Evidence of his Drawings 153</p>	<p>The Original Structure, and the Remodelling 158</p> <p>Michelangelo's Grand Design 165</p> <p>Bartolommeo Ammannati, Source and Conduit of Ideas 169</p> <p>The Facade 174</p> <p>The Interior 178</p> <p>The Square 181</p> <p>Appendix: Uffizi 3422A and Related Drawings 184</p>
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By the early sixteenth century, the Roman Capitol was little better than a wasteland (figs. 1, 2). Access to it was by winding paths, and the square was unpaved. On two sides there were old-fashioned, rather ramshackle palaces, and on a third, broken ground leading up to the church of the Aracoeli. It was all a sad disappointment to men who had read of the Capitol's ancient splendour as the heart of the Roman Republic.¹ Now, the site did indeed serve as the centre of the civic administration of Rome, which had been attracted there by its Republican associations; but in comparison with civic centres elsewhere in Italy, it was a disgrace.

Between the 1530s and the 1560s the Commune, encouraged and compelled by the popes, undertook projects for the improvement of the square and the buildings around it. These culminated in Michelangelo's overall project, which in large part we see today (figs. 3, 4). In returning the Capitol to a Renaissance version of its ancient splendour, Michelangelo created a civic centre *par excellence*, whose influence is still being felt by architects.² That the

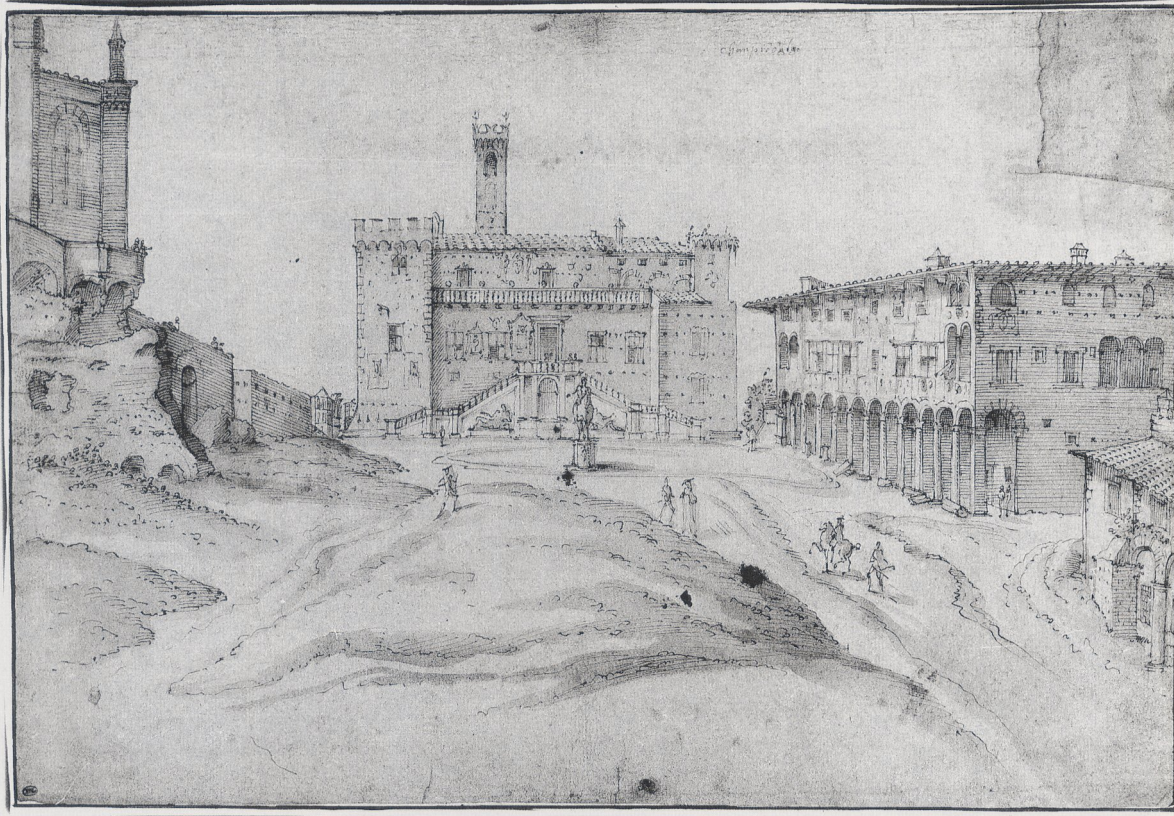
potent symbolism of the Capitol should have survived to the present day, is largely due to Michelangelo.³

The present study will be concerned primarily with the Palazzo dei Conservatori (figs. 6, 13), the most important building in the square, and the one in which Michelangelo took the greatest interest. To date, scholars have treated the palace as essentially a facade created for the sake of the piazza; Michelangelo is thought to have designed little or nothing of the interior. It will be argued instead that Michelangelo was responsible for much of the present interior, at least in its main lines; and that if we neglect the interior, our understanding of the facade, and hence of the piazza itself, will be seriously impaired. Indeed, Michelangelo planned the (partly executed) courtyard of the palace and the piazza as *related* statements, both serving for the representation of the Roman Commune.

1 F. SAXL, "The Capitol during the Renaissance – a Symbol of the Imperial Idea," in *Lectures*, London 1957, 200–14.

2 See, for instance, the Lincoln Center, New York.

3 Cp. Ackerman, 1986, 282: "Yet if Michelangelo had not reluctantly become an architect... the [Washington] Capitol surely would have had another name." Ackerman's chapter, "The Capitoline Hill," has been reprinted in: JAMES S. ACKERMAN, *Distance Points: Essays in Theory and Renaissance Art and Architecture*, Cambridge MA and London, 1991, 385–416. The chapter concludes with comments on literature published since the first edition of his work.



It will further be argued that the Conservatori project should be dated to 1560/63, rather later than is now customary. It then becomes possible to see Michelangelo's relations with his contemporaries in a new light: he is no longer the isolated genius, but an architect inspired by the ideas of others. We find that he took from Sansovino's Library, Palladio's Basilica, and Vasari's Uffizi (figs. 9, 10, 11) some key notions of the architectural language appropriate for the palace of the Roman People. Essential to this rhetoric was an emphasis on ingenuity of design, which he found not only in the great civic palaces just mentioned, but also in the drawings of his friend Ammannati (figs. 46, 47, 48). The Uffizi gave Michelangelo an integrated conception of a government square, marked both by architectural symmetry and by the buildings' functions. The extraordinary resonance of the Palazzo dei Conservatori, and of the Campidoglio, becomes easier to understand when one realizes that Michelangelo developed the achievements of others. Finally, it is a remarkable fact that the Campidoglio, alone of Michelangelo's architectural works, was considered a "reconstruction" of antiquity. Together, site and patron helped to determine both his response to the commission and its interpretation.

The Background

The popes divided the administration of Rome between their own officials and tribunals, and those of the city government. This latter had at least nominal independence in certain fields; but in practice was very much subject to the pope's wishes.⁴ The city government, representing the whole body of Roman citizens, was led by elected officials drawn from an elite, here called the Roman People. Laurie Nussdorfer has described this group as "a vague but privileged body with the right to represent the city of Rome and to act through their councils and officers."⁵ In 1569 there were, according to this definition, 1,256 members of the Roman People.⁶ It was natural that the interests of that

4 PIO PECCHIAI, *Roma nel Cinquecento*, Bologna, 1948, 209–66, correctly stresses the Commune's progressive loss of rights vis-à-vis the papal administration; but this issue has only tangential relevance for the present article, since by the mid-sixteenth century the Commune had long ago lost any real power. For our purposes, the nuanced account of Nussdorfer (even though primarily concerned with a later period, when the Commune's *auctoritas* had further declined) is more helpful.

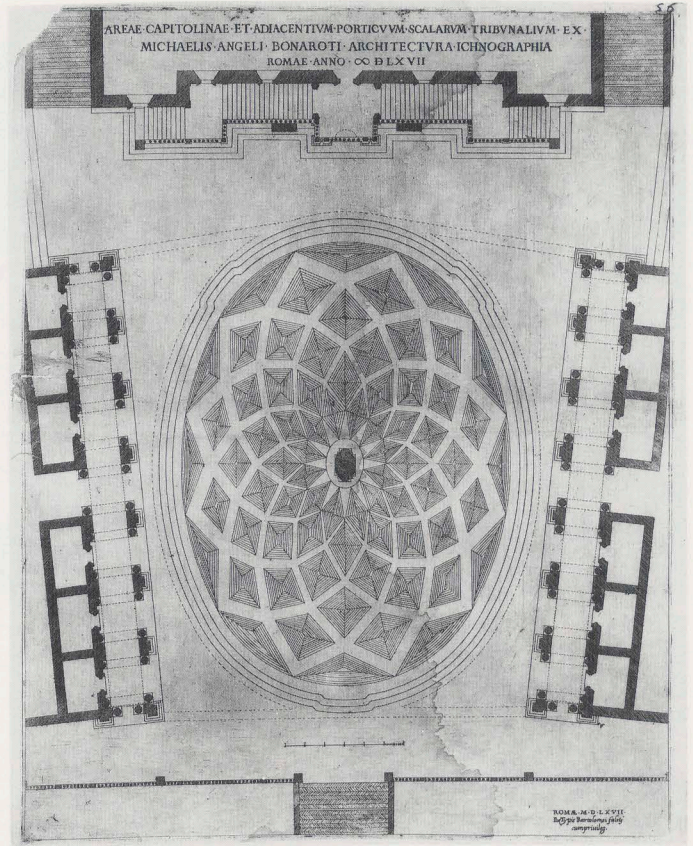
5 Nussdorfer, 67.

6 *Ibid.*, 68.

group, and those of the pope, should often differ; but on the whole it was to the advantage of both parties that they should get along with each other. Together, if not always in complete harmony, they produced the Campidoglio that we see today.

Of the two main palaces housing the civic administration on the Campidoglio, one was much more closely associated with the Roman People than the other. The Palazzo del Senatore (at the end of the square) housed the Senator, a judge appointed by the pope; while the Palazzo dei Conservatori (to the right) served for the elected officials of the Commune (figs. 4, 6, 7). We need say only a few words about the Palazzo del Senatore. It is an old, much-modified structure. Michelangelo designed the front stairway (built probably c. 1541–1552);⁷ and provided a design for the two main storeys of the facade and the tower, which were altered in execution (1593–1612; 1578–82).⁸

The Palazzo dei Conservatori, another pre-existing structure, was substantially rebuilt following Michelangelo's (and, scholars would add, Giacomo Della Porta's) designs. It has the front loggia that, since the Middle Ages, had been typical of many communal palaces. Behind there are, or were, small rooms for the use of six of the guilds of Rome (figs. 3, 36).⁹ On the *piano nobile*, richly decorated rooms served for the two councils of the Roman People and the three Conservators, the top elected officials of the city.¹⁰ They were in no danger of overcrowding, even at sittings of the larger council, the *Consiglio Pubblico*; for the normal attendance, of less than one hundred, could be fitted into the second-largest of the halls available.¹¹ The remodelling of the palace with which we are concerned started in 1563, and was substantially complete by 1586.¹² It included only the front side of the courtyard, not the three others that were planned (figs. 16, 34). In 1576, some land was acquired, presumably so that the courtyard scheme might be completed; but in the same year it becomes likely that the



3. Anonymous engraver after Michelangelo, plan for Campidoglio, 1567. Foto Biblioteca Vaticana

building of the Palazzo Nuovo was to take priority.¹³ In the event, the rear side of the courtyard was closed by a service wing (1582–1583); but that has been replaced by a grandiose structure recalling the original design (1719–1720).¹⁴

The Palazzo Nuovo (to the left of the square) was a completely new palace, whose function, as intended by Michelangelo, is not altogether clear (figs. 3, 4). On the ground floor are six small rooms, as in the Conservatori. They would presumably have served for the offices of six further guilds.¹⁵ Perhaps the large rooms on the upper floor were to house meetings of the *Consiglio Pubblico*, even though the rooms of the Palazzo dei Conservatori were quite sufficient for that purpose.¹⁶ It has been suggested, with much plausibility, that the real function of the Palazzo Nuovo was

7 CESARE D'ONOFRIO, *Renovatio Romae*, Rome, 1973, 195; Pecchiai, 85.

8 Pecchiai, 102–7; Siebenhüner, 109–11.

9 G. GATTI, "Le 'Scholae' delle arti in Campidoglio," *Bullettino Comunale*, XXVII, 1894, 360–64; Rodocanachi, 168–71; ANTONIO MARTINI, "Le corporazioni: loro sedi e chiese," *Capitolium*, XL, 1965, 203–11; Pecchiai, 146–47; Nussdorfer, 134.

10 Güthlein, 96–98, 113.

11 *Ibid.*, 98.

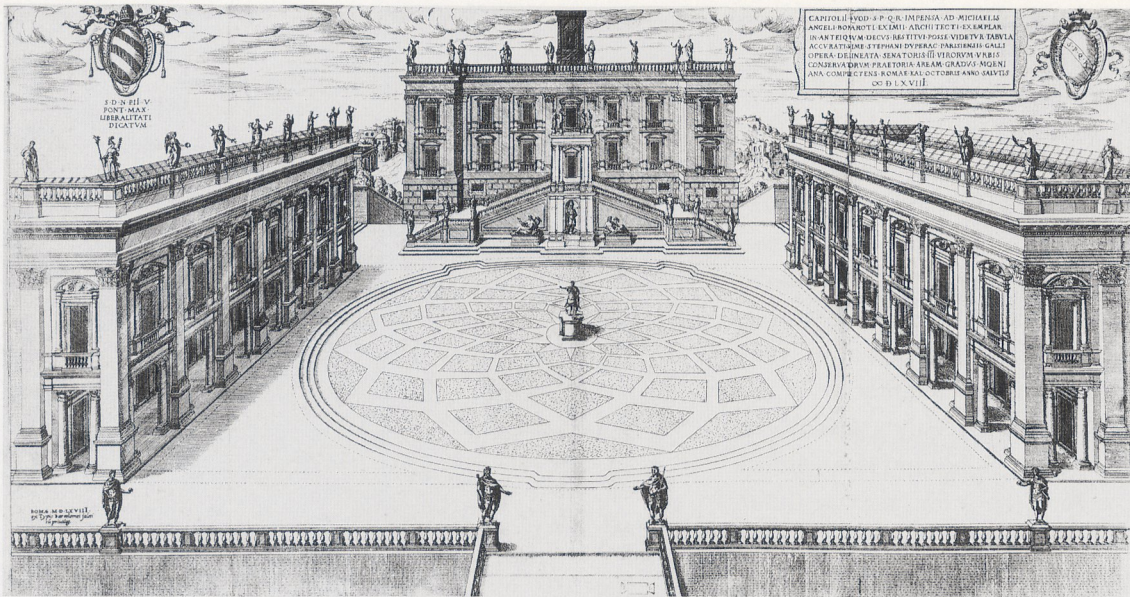
12 This is the date of the erection of the last statue on the facade: Pecchiai, 144.

13 According to Rodocanachi, 112, in 1576 Prospero Caffarelli sold land to the Conservatori, "in order that they might enlarge their palace." This presumably refers to the project for lengthening the courtyard. In April that year, arrangements were made to procure travertine for the Palazzo Nuovo: Güthlein, 113. At this stage, the courtyard project does not seem to have been so far advanced.

14 Bedon, 77; Liebenwein, 78–81.

15 Nussdorfer, 128, shows that the number of guilds greatly increased in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. According to Pecchiai, 146–47, some guilds requested rooms in the Conservatori, but were turned down – presumably because all the available rooms were already in use. There would then have been a demand for the rooms in the Palazzo Nuovo.

16 Güthlein, 87–98.



4. E. Dupérac
after Michelangelo,
project for
Campidoglio,
1568

the formal one of balancing the Conservatori.¹⁷ But Michelangelo probably intended that it should have at least some notional civic use, since the Commune would no doubt have paid for it. In 1576 arrangements were made to procure travertine for the palace.¹⁸ However in that year came the plague, and with it a loss of the momentum that had sustained construction on the Conservatori. The foundations of the new palace were laid in 1603-1605; but the main construction and decoration took place only from 1644 to 1663.¹⁹ In 1734, the Museo Capitolino, consisting of ancient statues belonging to the Commune, was set up in the palace.²⁰

In a general sense, it has long been recognised that Michelangelo's overall project for the square is illustrated in the plan published by Faletti in 1567 (fig. 3), and in two views engraved by Dupérac in 1568 (fig. 4) and 1569. As regards the Palazzo dei Conservatori, scholars tend to assume, without argument, that what does not appear in the engraved plan, Michelangelo did not design. One of the main points of this article will be that, on the contrary, he designed a functioning palace, with courtyard and staircase; and that Giacomo Della Porta, who supervised nearly all the construction work, had a very limited creative role. I

will return frequently to this issue, examining it from different angles.

One issue has been the subject of much scholarly interest during the last forty years: the dating of Michelangelo's overall project for the piazza, and of his project for the Palazzo dei Conservatori in particular. Following Ackerman, most scholars date the overall project – however vague in its general lines – to 1537/39, when Michelangelo set the ancient equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius on its base in the centre of the square.²¹ The erection of the statue then becomes the incentive for the new design of the piazza, which is taken to include the remodelling of the Palazzo dei Conservatori and the building of a new palace opposite. Moreover, the statue, with its base, is deemed to be the focal point of the whole composition. A natural consequence of this approach is to treat the side palaces as little more than facades.

I will argue instead that Michelangelo designed the Conservatori between 1560 and 1563. The late dating opens up new possibilities for interpretation. Divorcing the palace's design from the setting-up of the statue, it enables us to see the building more clearly in its own right. Indeed, its functions and iconography indicate that it is no mere facade, but a civic palace, whose relationship with other members of its genre deserves investigation. We see too that certain questions about its patronage assume a sharper focus.

17 Ackerman, 1986, 145–46; Lotz, 86.

18 See n. 13 above.

19 Güthlein, 116–52.

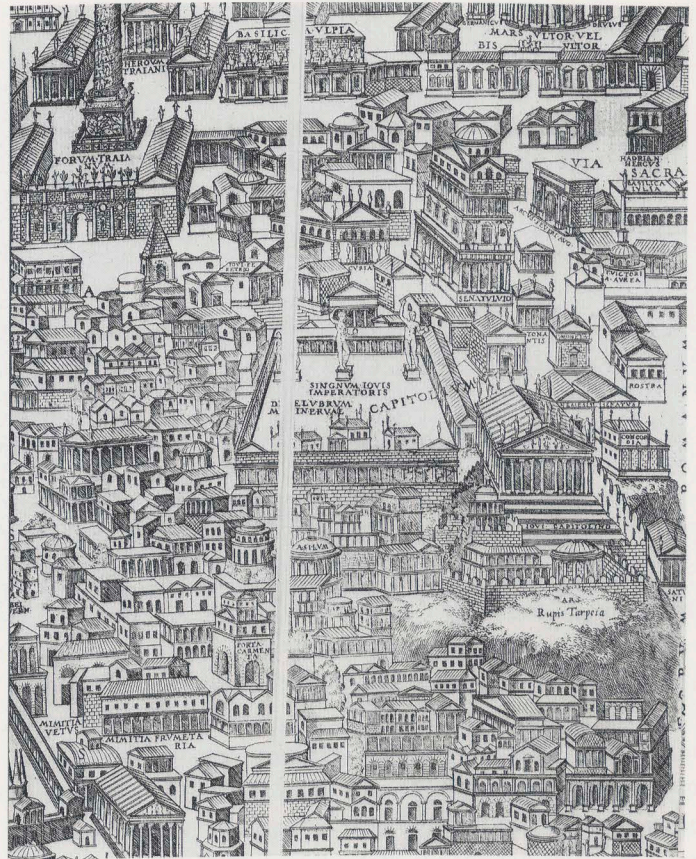
20 Siebenhüner, 115.

21 See the section below, "The Dating of Michelangelo's Project."

The Roman People and the Popes at the Campidoglio

From the twelfth century, the Commune of Rome had been based at the Capitol, and had seen itself as a recreation of the *Senatus Populusque Romanus* of antiquity. The Senator was understood as a reincarnation of an Imperial magistrate, the *Praetor urbanus*, at least in the seventeenth century; even his ceremonial robes and insignia were based on those of his counterpart.²² The image of the Roman People, on the other hand, was Republican. In inscriptions, the Conservators were abbreviated, like the Consuls, to COSS.²³ The *caporioni*, or chiefs of the wards, were seen as the successors of the Tribunes of the People.²⁴ So too, the frescoes inside the Palazzo dei Conservatori tended to glorify the Roman Republic; apart from some honorific statues of the popes, there was nothing to indicate where the true power in Rome lay. Nussdorfer says of a seventeenth-century diarist: "However he might grumble about contemporary realities, Gigli felt linked by the Capitol to the majestic Senate and Roman People of antiquity. In other European cities the governing elites might have to invent myths to ennoble their role, but in Rome the greatest secular myth of all was conveniently at hand."²⁵

In such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Michelangelo's buildings were seen as a reconstruction of the ancient Capitol. They did not, of course, represent the famous temples; rather, they formed part of a square which could stand as a re-creation of the Area Capitolina. We now know the Area to have been the porticoed enclosure surrounding the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.²⁶ In the Renaissance, the Latin word *area* was often used to signify a square; it was natural, then, to interpret the Area Capitolina in this light. Albertini, in 1510, lists the Area among the streets and squares of ancient Rome, locating it at the site "commonly known as *Sala di Cesare*."²⁷ In 1538, an



5. P. Ligorio, reconstruction map of ancient Rome, detail of Campidoglio, 1561. By permission of the British Library

inscription on the base of the *Marcus Aurelius* implicitly equates the square of the Campidoglio with the Area.²⁸ The learned Pirro Ligorio evidently found the identification persuasive, for when he published his reconstruction map of ancient Rome in 1561, he set the Area on the site of the piazza, attached to one side of the Temple of Jupiter (fig. 5).²⁹ In 1567, the engraved plan of Michelangelo's overall

22 NUSSDORFER, LAURIE, *City Politics in Baroque Rome, 1623–1644*, Princeton University Dissertation, 1985, 35.

23 Güthlein, 109.

24 Nussdorfer (as n. 22), 47.

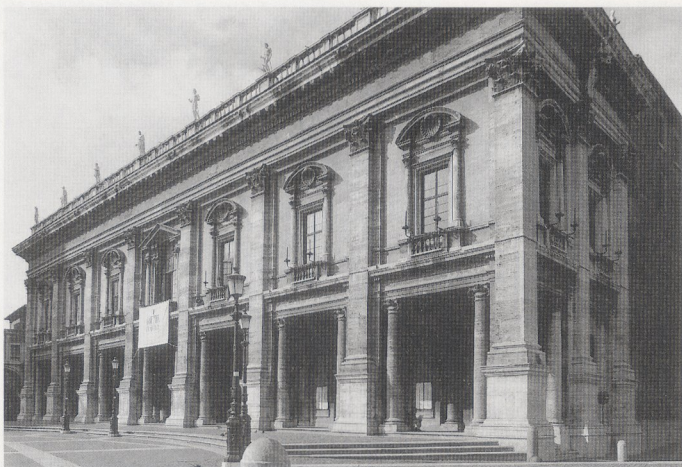
25 Nussdorfer, 114.

26 Rodocanachi, 28–29, 42–52; SAMUEL BALL PLATNER, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, completed and revised by Thomas Ashby, London, 1929, 47–50.

27 FRANCESCO ALBERTINI, *Opusculum de mirabilibus novae & veteris urbis Romae* (Rome, 1510), reprinted in: *Five Early Guides to Rome and Florence*, Farnborough, 1972, I, "De Viis & Plateis:" "Erant in ipsa Urbe multae Areae: ut area Capitolina in qua erant cellulae subterraneae teste Gellio lib. ii. ubi reponi solerent signa vetera: quae ex eo templo collapsa essent & alia quaedam religiose donariis consecrata & adhuc visuntur vestigia vulgo Sala Caesaris." I have been unable to determine this last location.

28 "PAVLVS III PONT · MAX · STATVAM AENEAM / EQVESTREM · A · S · P · Q · R · M · ANTONINO PIO ETIAM / TVM VIVENTI STATVTAM VARIIS DEIN VRBIS / CASIB: EVERSAM ET A SYXTO IIII PONT · MAX · AD / LATERAN · BASILICAM REPOSITAM VT MEMORIAE OPT · PRINCIPIS CONSVLERET PATRIAEQ · DECORA ATQ · ORNAMENTA RESTITVERET / EX HVMLIORI LOCO IN AREAM CAPITOLINAM / TRANSTVLIT ATQ · DICAVIT / ANN SAL · M · D XXXVIII." Cp. VINCENZO FORCELLA, *Iscrizioni delle chiese e d'altri edifici di Roma dal secolo XI fino ai giorni nostri*, 14 vols., Rome, 1869–1884, I, 33; Buddensieg, 219 n. 27. The connection with the Area Capitolina has been noted, only to be disregarded, by WOLFGANG LIEBENWEIN, "Antikes Bildrecht in Michelangelos 'Area Capitolina,'" *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XXVIII, 1984, 18.

29 On the map, see HOWARD BURNS, "Pirro Ligorio's Reconstruction of Ancient Rome: the *Antiquae Urbis Imago* of 1561," in *Pirro Ligorio: Artist and Antiquarian*, ed. Robert W. Gaston, Milan, 1988, 19–92; for the incorrect placement of the Forum between the Capitol and the Palatine, 34–35. On page 20, Burns provides a useful summary of the general theme of the restoration of ancient Rome.



6. *Conservatori, facade, seen from top of the Cordonata*

project again refers to the square as the Area Capitolina, implying, I think, that it should be seen as a reconstruction of the original (fig. 3). In both cases, the Area is lined with porticoes, giving a forum-like character to the whole; indeed, we shall see later that Michelangelo probably intended his square to evoke a forum. It seems likely that the two reconstructions stem from a common background of speculation about the Area, stimulated perhaps by reading the ancient authors,³⁰ or simply by a feeling for what the dignity of the place required. Once the square had come to be identified with the Area, there was a powerful motive to interpret any major remodelling of the piazza as a reconstruction of the original.

Two inscriptions of 1568 in the vestibule of the Palazzo dei Conservatori further elucidate the official view of the piazza; they have especial value, for they were quite possibly composed by Tommaso de' Cavalieri, Michelangelo's friend and one of the two deputies in charge of the building.³¹ One inscription says that the Commune has handed over the Capitol from the protection of Jupiter to that of Christ. The other starts: "The Senate and Roman People, imitating, so far as was permissible, the pre-eminence of their forebears in deed as in character, have restored the Capitol, which had been disfigured by the injuries of time ..."³² In a similar vein, the new Palazzo dei Conservatori

30 The ancient texts refer only fleetingly to the porticoes, as follows. Vell. Pat. II, 1, 2: "tum Scipio Nasica in Capitolio porticus ... molit[us est];" *idem*, II, 3, 1: "Tum P. Scipio Nasica ... eius qui censor porticus fecerat filius ..."; Tac., *Hist.* III, 71: "inde lapsus ignis in porticus adpositas aedibus ... sic Capitolium ... conflavit." Alternatively, the Area could have been conflated with an otherwise unknown *atrium publicum* mentioned in Livy XXIV, 10, 9, as having been struck by lightning: "tact[um] de caelo atrium publicum in Capitolio."

31 Frommel, 1979, 84. For the text of the inscriptions, see Forcella (as in n. 28), 38. Buddensieg, 212–14, discusses them with reference to the statues set up in the Campidoglio.

tori appears as a setting for an antique triumph in one of the rooms of the palace, frescoed in 1569 (the Sala dei Trionfi: fig. 8).³³ Some stuccoes of 1575 in the *piano nobile* illustrate the buildings, streets and bridges in which ancient Rome had excelled. As an example of a group of imperial palaces, the modern Campidoglio is shown.³⁴

The popes displayed a remarkable interest in the Campidoglio. Indeed from Nicholas V (1447–1455) to Clement XI (1700–1721), they, not the Commune, provided the key initiatives for its development. Nevertheless, many of them had the Commune pay the bills. It was Paul III (1534–1549) who saw to it that the statue of Marcus Aurelius was moved to the square in 1538.³⁵ Pius IV (1559–1565) pressed repeatedly, in the early 1560s, for the implementation of Michelangelo's project.³⁶ On a visit of March 1563 to the Campidoglio, "His Holiness arranged about the work which has to be done in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, and said what was his opinion and desire."³⁷ And in fact preparations for building must have started shortly after that. That there were delays was due to the Roman People's chronic shortage of funds. Its income was sufficient to cover small building programmes, spread out over a period (the stairs of the Palazzo del Senatore took perhaps ten years' work), but not major new construction. The Pope would not accept excuses.³⁸ In April 1565 he ordered that the city government issue stock, whose proceeds be used, *inter alia*, for the building of the Palazzo dei Conservatori.³⁹ After that, we hear no more of a shortage of funds. Sixtus V (1585–1590) planned for a fountain that would display his Acqua Felice prominently at the base of the Palazzo del Senatore; and threatened to destroy the Campidoglio if the Conservators did not immediately remove the pagan statues from the tower of that palace.⁴⁰

32 "SPQR / MAIORVM SVORVM PRAESTANTIAM / VT ANIMO SIC RE / QVANTVM LICVIT IMITATVS / DEFORMATVM INIVRIA TEMPORVM / CAPITOLIVM RESTITVIT / PROSPERO BVCCAPADVILIO / THOMA CAVALERIO / CVRATORIBVVS / ANNO POST VRBEM CONDITAM / MM CCC XX."

33 Pietrangeli in De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 122–23.

34 Carlo Pietrangeli, "La scala del Palazzo dei Conservatori," *Capitolium*, XLII, 1967, 376; Liebenwein, 91: *idem* (as in n. 28), 6. The inscription reads "regiis;" the main verb is lost.

35 Paul Künzle, "Die Aufstellung des Reiters vom Lateran durch Michelangelo," *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Hertzianae zu Ehren von Leo Bruhns, Franz Graf Wolff Metternich, Ludwig Schudt*, Munich, 1961, 256–70.

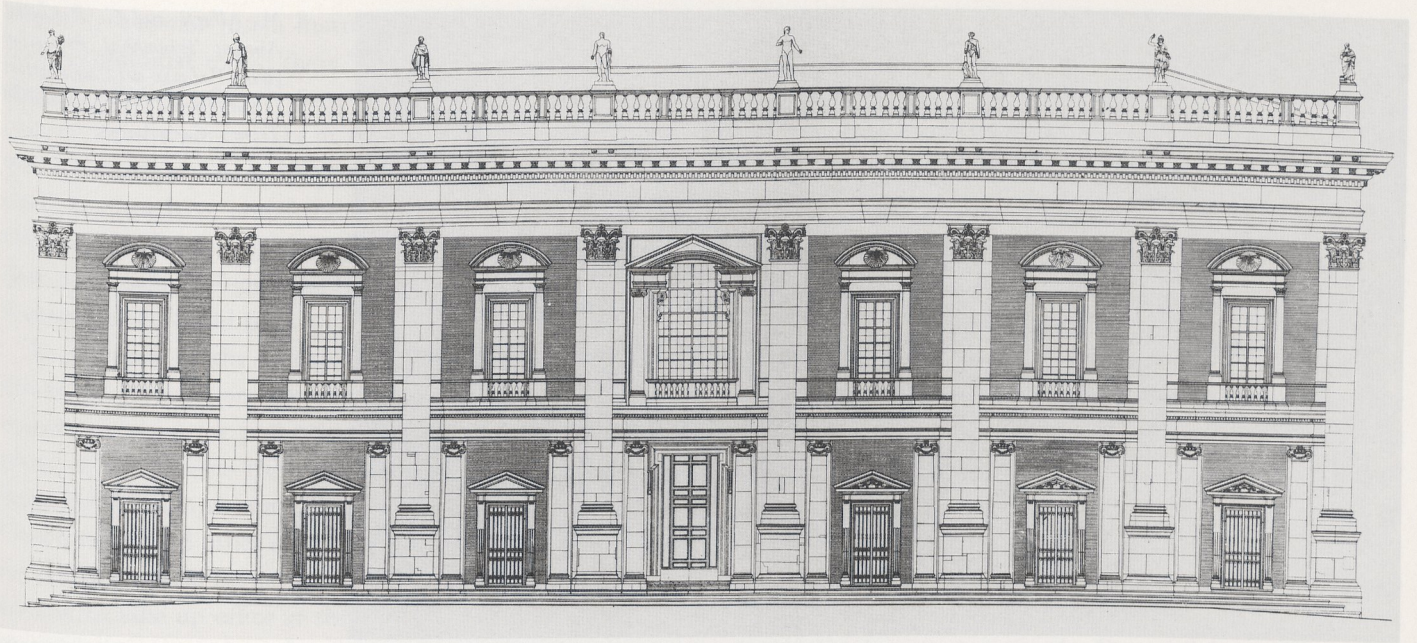
36 Pecchiai, 44–45.

37 Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, 40 vols., London, 1891–1953, XIV, 439.

38 Pecchiai, 44–45.

39 *Ibid.*, 221–24.

40 Bedon, 79; A. M. Graziani, *Vita Sixti Quinti*, quoted by Buddensieg, 227 n. 106.



7. *Conservatori, elevation of facade.* (De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 1965)

The story continues with Clement VIII (1592–1605), who in 1603 required the Roman People to issue more stock, so as to pay for the Palazzo Nuovo, which the Commune considered to be “of the greatest importance, and of the greatest expense.”⁴¹ But when the Pope died two years later, construction ceased. It was Innocent X (1644–1655) who took up work again. The diarist Gigli noted in 1644: “The Pope ordered that a portico be built in the Campidoglio, whose foundations were laid some time ago; but he didn’t contribute a penny towards the cost.”⁴² Later, the Pope ordered an enlargement of the building, whose original use, if any, seems to have been forgotten.⁴³

Why did the popes set such store by the Campidoglio? Those with humanist inclinations surely felt a strong desire to restore the Capitol to its ancient grandeur. In a document, Paul III wrote of improving access to the Capitol, “which used to be the seat of the Roman Empire.”⁴⁴ In two inscriptions, the Pope hints that respect for the Capitol was his motive for moving the Marcus Aurelius thither.⁴⁵ A more general motive, powerful with many popes, was a desire to embellish Rome.⁴⁶ Yet their involvement with

the Capitol went far beyond that with any other secular site. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that they wished to give Rome a worthy civic centre; for unlike other great Italian cities, Rome had entered the Renaissance without one. In this respect, the Capitol’s remarkably detached location, at the edge of the built-up area, was irrelevant to its symbolic value. We return to the theme of the city’s ancient dignity, reincarnated in Michelangelo’s Campidoglio. To rule a city with such a centre: what other monarch could boast as much?⁴⁷

The Roman People surely took pride in its square. In preparation for the Jubilee of 1525, it set aside the sum of 300 ducats for restoration work, “so that foreign visitors might think the square worthy of Rome.”⁴⁸ From the Peo-

41 Gütthlein, 116 n. 137.

42 *Ibid.*, 119.

43 *Ibid.*, 165.

44 *Ibid.*, 172: “in quo olim erat Romani Imperij sedes.” Gütthlein’s emendation “era(n)t” is inappropriate.

45 According to an inscription on the base, the statue was transported “ex humiliori loco in aream Capitolinam:” see n. 28 above. One of the pope’s medals seems to refer to the statue’s erection on the Capitol with the words “Hanc petunt miracula sedem.” See Buddensieg, 188.

46 DELUMEAU, JEAN, *Vie économique et sociale de Rome dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, 2 vols., Paris, 1957–59, I, 248–50; JAMES S. ACKERMAN, “The Planning of Renaissance Rome, 1450–1580,” in *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth*, Binghamton, 1982, 3–17; CHRISTOPH L. FROMMEL, “Papal Policy: The Planning of Rome during the Renaissance,” in: *Art and History: Images and their Meaning*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg, Theodore K. Rabb, Cambridge, 1988, 39–65.

47 Buddensieg, 214–16, surely goes too far in describing the Campidoglio under Paul III as “almost a *platea Paolina*.” None of the statues erected in his reign detracts from the image of the piazza as a communal square: they were revered antiquities, of much the same type as many others in the Commune’s collection. It is a weakness of Buddensieg’s account that he does not consider the architectural iconography of the piazza in greater detail.

48 E. RODOCANACHI, *Les institutions communales de Rome sous la papauté*, 1901, 258, translates a document: “afin que ce monument [the Capitol] parût aux étrangers digne de Rome.”



8. M. Alberti and G. Rocchetti, *Ancient Triumphant Procession* (with Palazzo dei Conservatori in background), fresco, Sala dei Trionfi, Conservatori

ple's point of view, the great drawback of Michelangelo's project was clearly its expense. In the 1560s, its sheer lavishness, and the lack of any obvious need for a completely new palace (the Palazzo Nuovo), surely deterred prudent citizens from having the Commune borrow to finance its execution. On the other hand, Michelangelo had at least one powerful partisan, the Tommaso de' Cavalieri mentioned earlier. In his youth the object of Michelangelo's affections, Cavalieri had remained one of his closest friends, and attended him at his death-bed.⁴⁹ He was also a person of some note in Roman artistic circles.⁵⁰ In 1554 he was elected deputy in charge of building operations at the Campidoglio; indeed, he was capable of architectural design on his own account. From 1560, he repeatedly held respected Communal offices, twice serving as a Conservator. It is quite possible that he had a hand in giving the commission for the Palazzo dei Conservatori – and with it that for the whole square – to Michelangelo in 1560/61; at all events, we may assume that he argued strongly in favour of the project. Surely there were differences of opinion within the Roman People about Michelangelo's project: about which parts to execute, and over how long a period. Clearly the front block and the staircase of the Palazzo dei Conservatori took precedence;⁵¹ but it is noteworthy that only the one essential side of the courtyard was built. We may suspect

that Michelangelo's overall project was intended to serve two masters: the Pope, who wanted a square, and the Roman People, whose chief desire was an improved Palazzo dei Conservatori. In the eyes of many members of the Roman People, his proposal of an extended courtyard must have seemed a Utopian dream – an ideal project, such as many Renaissance architects provided for their clients.

The Roman People appreciated a certain degree of luxury in the *piano nobile* rooms of the Palazzo dei Conservatori. The main rooms all have sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century frescoes, and expensively worked wooden ceilings. A decree of council, of 1575, requires that one room be "decorated with the finest embossed and gilded leather," and another, with tapestries.⁵² Inventories too show that the Conservators lived well.⁵³ Each Conservator resided and dined for a month in the palace, sleeping in a state bed.⁵⁴ Like princes and popes, the Conservators dined to the sound of pipes and trumpets.⁵⁵ A source of 1728 says that they "offer splendid banquets to themselves and to their friends in the Capitoline Palace, both during Carnival... and on days of public audience, which takes place twice a week."⁵⁶ All in all, the Conservators probably lived and worked in conditions equivalent to those of a Cardinal – in most cases, surpassing what they could have afforded at

49 See e.g. Vasari, VII, 248–49; RUDOLF and MARGOT WITTKOWER, *The Divine Michelangelo*, London, 1964, 9.

50 Frommel, 1979, 76–90.

51 Cp. Güthlein, 91–92.

52 Lanciani, II, 71.

53 CARLO PIETRANGELI, "La Sala delle Aquile," *Capitolium*, XLI, 1966, 91–95.

54 *Ibid.*, 92.

55 Pecchiai (as n. 4), 245, 253.

56 Pietrangeli (as n. 53), 93.

home. It was not just a matter of comfort or luxury; like their ceremonial robes, their "official" life reflected on the dignity of their office.⁵⁷ Seen in this light, Michelangelo's project for the palace – or at least the bare minimum that was executed – was in keeping with their aspirations; indeed, it must have raised the Conservators' status. For Michelangelo's facade, deploying the rich vocabulary of up-to-date civic palaces elsewhere, had a splendour that no other Roman palace could match.

In response to the Conservatori's new public face (and doubtless to work on the Cordonata) the piazza became a significant point for processions. From 1565, it was on the route of the *possesso*, the procession escorting a new pope from the Vatican to the Lateran. At the Campidoglio, the Conservators and other officials of the Commune would offer the pope their homage.⁵⁸ From 1580, the new Senator arrived to take up office at the Palazzo del Senatore with a magnificent procession; that of 1585 included 600 horsemen.⁵⁹ By then the square, with only the facade of the Conservatori completed to Michelangelo's designs, had acquired social standing.

Civic Palaces of the Cinquecento: Some Ideals

The Palazzo dei Conservatori is one of four highly significant civic palaces erected, or substantially remodelled, in sixteenth-century Italy. The others are Sansovino's Library in Venice (a courtesy member of the genre),⁶⁰ Palladio's Basilica in Vicenza, and Vasari's Uffizi in Florence. Contemporary accounts illuminate the ideals that inspired this last flowering of one of the great building-types of Italian architecture.

Pius IV, giving audience to the Conservators in 1564, "showed himself most anxious that work on the Campidoglio be continued, and that it become so beautiful as to have few equals."⁶¹ A year later, his collaborator on town-

planning law, Marcantonio Bardi, listed the Pope's achievements, amongst them the remodelling of the Palazzo dei Conservatori, "whose portico has been started, with a wonderful arrangement of columns. Designed by the world-famous Michelangelo Buonarroti, the palace is perhaps worthier and more splendid than any of his other buildings." It was also – if I understand Bardi correctly – the last of his architectural designs to be taken to the stage of models and working drawings.⁶² In 1568, Vasari described Michelangelo's overall project for the piazza as "a very beautiful design, and very rich."⁶³ He emphasized the antique statues and the balusters. For the Palazzo dei Conservatori, he spoke of "its rich and varied facade, with a loggia below full of columns."⁶⁴

For Jacopo Sansovino's Library, commenced in 1537, we have the very full account of Sansovino's son, Francesco (fig. 9).⁶⁵ He starts by saying that a dignified building was needed for the site opposite the Doges' Palace. "The architect, seeing that the site of the Piazza was nobler than could be found in any other city, gave the matter much thought. He designed a building rich in ornament and work of every sort according to the rules of the ancients; he desired that it be composed of the Doric and Ionic orders, and be full of columns, of friezes, and honourable cornices. Amongst its other notable features is the corner towards the Panetteria, designed with much care, and with a degree of artifice which exceeds that of the ancients in dealing with the Doric order." Sansovino then describes an apparently insoluble problem deriving from Vitruvius's rule for turning a

62 MARCUS ANTONIUS BARDUS, *Facultates Magistratus Curatorum Viarum, Aedificorumque Publicorum, et privatorum Alme Urbis*, Rome, 1565, I. The complete passage runs: "Utrunque Palatium Capitolinum resarcitum, ut illud, Illustrium Dominorum Urbis Conservatorum, ex incepta porticu, cum mirabilisque ordinis Columnarum impositione, opus ipsum, ab illo satis per Orbem noto Michaelae Angelo Bonarota, alio suo aedificio, forsan dignius, preclarisque, ita ut magno eius ingenio, et arte, id ipsum inceptum, ac in figura et exemplo ultimum est Vitae suae patratum; Eiusque Viam Capitolinam Nobiliores factam." *Patratum*, "executed," seems to imply that the design had a prior stage, in which it could not yet be said to be *in figura et exemplo*. *Exemplum* is best assumed to be a synonym for Alberti's *exemplar* or *exemplarium*, i.e. a model: HANS-KARL LÜCKE, *Alberti Index*, 4 vols., Munich, 1975, I, 424. In the context, *figura*, which can mean "drawing," presumably refers to a drawing or drawings at a fairly advanced stage of the design, i.e., roughly, "working drawings." This interpretation is supported by the payment in December 1563 to Guidetto Guidetti for making working drawings and templates for the Conservatori: Tolnay, 1932, 251, no. 13.

63 Vasari, VII, 222–23.

64 In the remainder of the sentence, Vasari confuses the facade with the courtyard: see the section "The Interior" below.

65 FRANCESCO SANSOVINO, *Venetia città nobilissima*, ed. with additions by G. MARTINIONI, Venice, 1663 (reprinted 1968), 309–11.

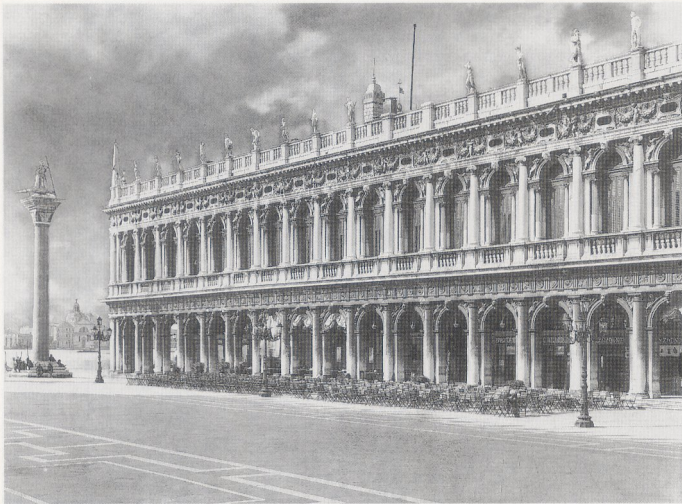
57 Cp. Güthlein, 95–96.

58 FRANCESCO CANCELLIERI, *Storia de' solenni possesi de' Sommi Pontefici*, Rome, 1802, 111, 120, 125; GAETANINA SCANO, "Storia e istituzioni capitoline dal medioevo all'età moderna," *Capitolium*, XXXIX, 1964, 190.

59 *Ibid.*; Güthlein, 109.

60 The Library belongs in this context because of its quasi-official patronage by the Procurators of S. Mark's (on which see Howard, 8–28), and because of its influence on Palladio's Basilica.

61 Archivio Storico Capitolino, Cred. I, 36, c. 177 (26 April 1564): "Inoltre anco si [*the Pope*] mostrò molto desideroso che si dovesse seguir la fabrica di Campidoglio et che si dovesse far bella di maniera, che non avesse molti simili."



9. J. Sansovino, *Library, Venice*



10. A. Palladio, *Basilica, Vicenza* (Zorzi, *Opere pubbliche ...*, 1965)

corner with the Doric order. His father, he says, had the Library built only so far as the corner, and then stopped work. He asked architects elsewhere for advice about the corner; but none could find an answer. When everyone thought Sansovino was baffled, he revealed his solution, which he had already worked out. "Not only the city, but also the architects and connoisseurs, were completely satisfied with it."⁶⁶ In what follows, Francesco makes much of the extraordinarily rich sculptural decoration; nor does he neglect the columns and the balusters. He mentions that the Doric columns are of Istrian stone (somewhat similar to marble); in fact, the whole facade is of that material.

66 Ibid.: "Onde non pur la città, ma gli Architetti & gli intendenti dell'arte, restarono pienamente sodisfatti."

The spaciousness and other aspects of the loggia are praised. He says: "Skilled judges consider the Library the most beautiful building to be seen today [1581] in Italy." Vasari too stresses the building's richness, and finishes with the words: "This work, in the judgement of the experts and those who have seen many parts of the world, is without any equal."⁶⁷ For Palladio also, the Library is "the richest and most ornate building that has perhaps been made since antiquity."⁶⁸

Palladio himself started construction at the Basilica in 1549 (fig. 10). Nine years later, the Council of Vicenza stated in a resolution: "There is no doubt whatsoever that this new palace is not outdone in either architecture or beauty by any other building in Italy."⁶⁹ Palladio himself says: "I do not doubt that this building may be compared with ancient edifices, and set amongst the most beautiful ever made from antiquity to the present, for its size, its ornaments, its material (which is all of very hard real stone) . . ."⁷⁰ For Vasari, the much-praised building was one of Palladio's chief works, with its two storeys of porticoes composed of "very fine columns."⁷¹

Vasari unfortunately does not give a set-piece description of his own Uffizi, which was started in 1560 (figs. 11, 12). We learn,⁷² however, that he chose the Doric order because it was more secure and more solid than the others, and "has always pleased Duke Cosimo." Believing that (in the classical manner) columns should bear straight architraves, not arches, he had to find a way of ensuring that the architraves would not break (for in statical terms, they are very weak). In the end he discovered what he believed was the method used by the ancients, which he describes. The stone used for the building is the local *pietra serena*, but of the particularly prized quality that Michelangelo had employed in his Florentine buildings. There is "a very great deal of stone ornament." From another source, it is evident that Vasari considered the sculptural decoration of the Uffizi important.⁷³

These contemporary accounts illustrate the prevailing notions of an architectural rhetoric suitable for civic palaces. First, all four buildings are sited in locations requiring the utmost attention to decorum; indeed, the more dignified their treatment, the better they will reflect on the city.

67 Vasari, VII, 502–3.

68 Palladio, I, 5.

69 Burns, 27.

70 Palladio, III, 42.

71 Vasari, VII, 527.

72 Ibid., I, 125, 130–1; also VII, 703.

73 Cp. Morrogh, 46.



11. G. Vasari, Uffizi, Florence



12. G. Vasari, Uffizi, loggia (detail), Florence

Second, the elements of classical architecture are employed on a very generous scale. Columns appear in great numbers, often in connection with loggias. It was desirable that the orders should receive full expression in such matters as architraves, friezes, and cornices, and that they should be chosen with some feeling for their symbolism and proper placement. Preferably they should be accompanied by rich ornament of a classical nature: abundant reliefs in the case of the Library, and many statues. The baluster, though essentially a Renaissance, not a classical, motif, is used with the same intention; sometimes called *colonna* or *colonnella*, it had in fact replaced the column for small-scale decorative purposes.⁷⁴ Third, the stone employed should be whatever is most highly regarded in the region for outdoor work.

⁷⁴ Rudolf Wittkower, "The Renaissance Baluster and Palladio," in *Palladio and Palladianism*, New York, 1974, 41–48; Paul Davies, David Hemsoll, "Renaissance Balusters and the Antique," *Architectural History*, XXVI, 1983, 1–23.

Together, the choice of material and the elaborate classical architecture should create an impression of richness. Already in a brief of 1514, Leo X had exemplified magnificence in building with a reference to magistrates' palaces.⁷⁵

Finally, the architects wished to equal, or to surpass, the ancients in matters of design. Vasari's recovery of an ancient technique enabled him to set long stretches of unsupported straight entablature above his columns – a feat in itself, but also giving a purist cast to his colonnade. Michelangelo's long spans in the lower storey of the Conservatori would have borne a similar connotation. In turning the Doric corner, Sansovino devised a solution to a problem which even the ancients had found insoluble. The ingenuity of design that his son so clearly values, is met with again and again in these ambitious, intricate buildings – above all, in the Palazzo dei Conservatori.

Surely the architects were well aware that their civic palaces would bring them fame. Sansovino's publicity stunt⁷⁶ shows, even if his building did not, that he wanted the Library to be talked about. The Basilica gave a great boost to Palladio's career. The background to Vasari's design for the Uffizi suggests that he wished to create a famous building.⁷⁷ When we seek influences on the Palazzo dei Conservatori, we find those other great civic palaces. The intricacy and Utopian quality of Michelangelo's grand design for the palace (fig. 35) suggest a desire to excel; that he too was lured by the prospect of fame in this genre.

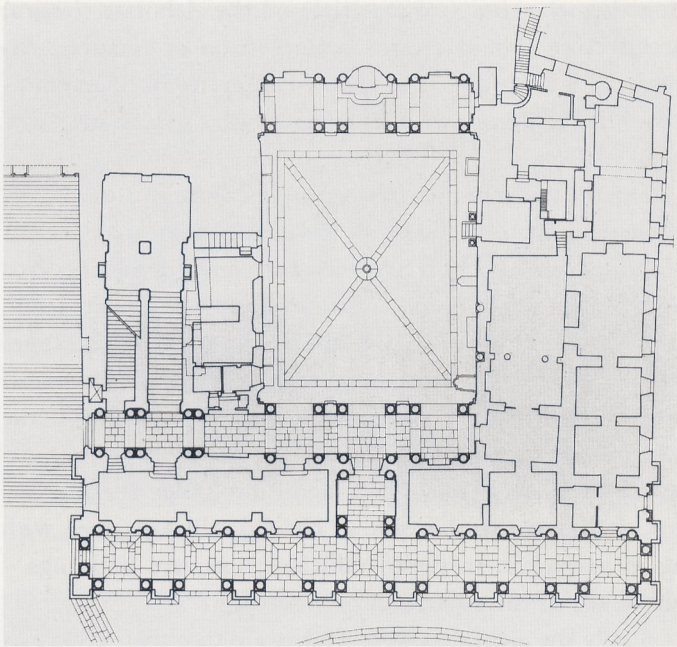
The cities that commissioned the buildings took pride in the achievements of their architects. When Francesco Sansovino says, of his father's solution for the Doric corner, "Not only the city, but also the architects and connoisseurs, were completely satisfied with it," he hints that most Venetians did not understand his father's corner solution at the Library; but that they were still pleased with it. He also

⁷⁵ *Bullarium Diplomatum et Privilegiorum Sanctorum Romanorum Pontificum*, 25 vols., Turin, 1857–82, V, 602–4. The bull is addressed to the Observant Franciscans, who had expressed qualms of conscience at the magnificence forced on them by their benefactors: "nonnulli vestrum adhuc haesitant, cum eis domos amplas et spatiosas, quae in praesentiarum in vestro Ordine et familia ... construuntur et aedificantur, ut potius palatia magistratum reputari posse videantur, quam habitationes pauperum, inhabitare et colere ..."

⁷⁶ This phrase is due to Howard, 19. Followed by Thies, 215–16, she interprets Francesco Sansovino's text as meaning that his father had started building without knowing how he was going to turn the corner. However the text permits an alternative interpretation: that Jacopo had already arrived at his corner solution before the start of construction. It is hard to see how the Library – which gives every appearance of being a highly thought-out building – could have been started in the imprudent manner implied by Howard and Thies.

⁷⁷ Morrogh, 33–47, 63–67.

The Palazzo dei Conservatori: an Overview



13. *Conservatori, plan of ground floor.* (De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 1965)

implies that a building's reputation depended, at least in part, on the approval of architects and connoisseurs. No doubt the average member of the Roman People could judge that Michelangelo's Conservatori would look rich, and would be convenient to use. But if he wanted to be sure that the building would redound to the city's reputation, he would have to ask someone like Tommaso de' Cavalieri. It was for an audience of experts that the architects of our four buildings spent so much effort on niceties of design. The widely-held opinion that Sansovino's Library was the most beautiful building in Italy, if not the world, established a very exigent standard for the other cities and their architects. The issue was perhaps particularly poignant for the Romans, struggling to improve their city, whose fame rested on its antiquities; how unlike the modern splendours of Venice, the other tourist capital of Europe!⁷⁸ The Campidoglio represented a highly visible test case for the renewal of Rome. In Bardi's words we may hear, I suspect, some of the more general arguments in favour of Michelangelo's project: it was not only the creation of the most famous artist in the world, but his last and finest work of architecture.

78 See the interesting discussion by Giovanni Botero, *Delle cause della grandezza delle città* (first published in 1588) in: *Della ragion di stato*, ed. Carlo Morandi, Bologna, 1930, 323, which begins: "E tra tutte le città d'Europa frequentissime sono per lo piacere, che a' riguardanti porgono, Roma e Venezia, quella per le reliquie stupende dell'antica sua grandezza; questa per lo splendore e per la sua presente magnificenza." However, Botero also praised the magnificent buildings of papal Rome: *ibid.*, 372.

Michelangelo imposed an unusual cohesiveness on the various parts of the Conservatori. Through the repeated employment of certain compositional motifs, he aimed to give the palace a quite exceptional sense of inner logic. There is not much room for Giacomo Della Porta, Michelangelo's successor, to have played a major creative role, as current scholarship would want. In a later section, we shall see that even the more mundane aspects of the planning were probably due to Michelangelo. Let us undertake an initial survey of the palace, examining its layout and some of its internal linkages.

In plan, the front block of the Conservatori consists of a loggia off which open what used to be the six small guild-rooms (figs. 13, 36). A centrally-placed vestibule leads to a rectangular courtyard, which has a loggia on its north, or entrance, side, and the eighteenth-century loggia on its south side. The east and west sides survive substantially from an earlier state. The north loggia continues towards the east side of the palace, its last two bays forming what I shall loosely call "the staircase vestibule." From there, the staircase rises to a first landing (figs. 39, 40)⁷⁹, and then doubles back to a second landing on the *piano nobile*. (Later, the staircase was continued upwards.) On the *piano nobile*, the late-sixteenth-century work involved a remodelling of the three rooms in the front of the palace, and the creation of the two narrow rooms on the north of the courtyard (fig. 15). The rooms of the west wing of the courtyard all date from the earlier construction.

The facade has a double system of articulation, the giant Corinthian order⁸⁰ of pilasters, and the smaller Ionic order of columns (figs. 6, 7, 14). Both bear straight entablatures. The whole forms a rigorously organised grid, which is given emphasis by the strips beside the pilasters. At ground level, the arrangement of the piers and columns is of great subtlety: even though the two systems are clearly distinguished, they may be read together, as grouped supports.⁸¹ From the alternative readings, an element of ambivalence results, which is unique among the porticoed facades of the Renaissance. It is important that the facade is normally approached from the Cordonata, that is, from a fairly sharp

79 On the Kupferstichkabinett drawing, see Matthias Winner, *Zeichner sehen die Antike* (exhibition catalogue), Berlin, 1967, no. 12.

80 I take a "giant order" to be one in which two storeys are clearly marked: see Lionello Puppi, "Prospetto di palazzo e ordine gigante nell'esperienza architettonica del '500," *Storia dell'arte*, 38/40, 1980, 267 n. 1. To use the term to describe a major order, is to reduce the novelty of such buildings as the Conservatori.

81 Thies, 120, figs. 62, 63.



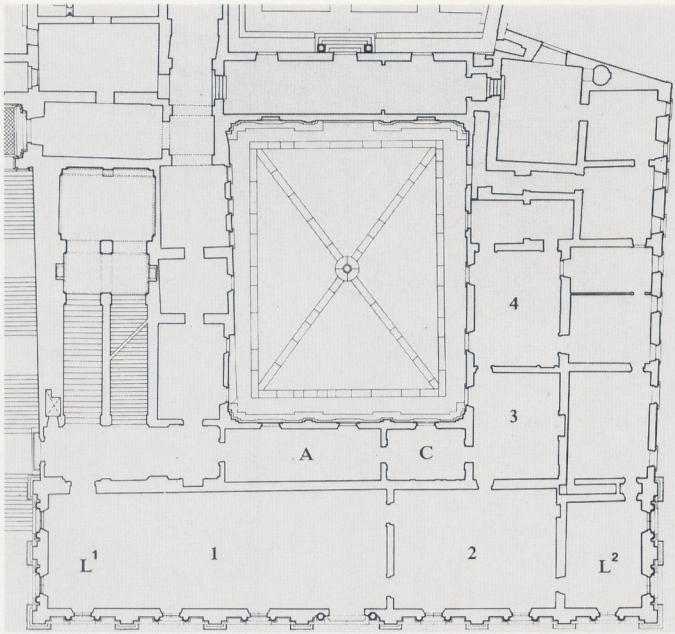
angle.⁸² Its planar treatment, with the projections of the strips and pilasters, renders the raking view crisp and intelligible. The effect would be very different if columns, or half-columns, projected from the facade, as in Sansovino's Library (fig. 9). Instead, Michelangelo places his columns against the flanks of the piers, which they serve at once to soften and to enrich.

In the courtyard, the north face is divided into two quite separate storeys, Ionic and Corinthian (fig. 16). The Ionic storey is strikingly close to that of the facade (fig. 14); only,

the piers are now faced with Ionic pilasters of the same height as the columns. The columns of the courtyard are only slightly shorter than those of the facade, so as to allow for steps (now a ramp) at the main door; but their capitals reach to exactly the same level (fig. 17). In the Corinthian storey, the correspondences are even more remarkable. The courtyard pilasters again reach to the same level as those of the facade; but they are half the height, or very nearly.⁸³ When the Corinthian pilasters are combined with their pedestals, we find that the ratio between courtyard and fa-

82 Ralph Lieberman, "Michelangelo's Design for the Biblioteca Laurenziana," in *Renaissance Essays in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth*, Florence, 1985, 577.

83 The ratio 1:2 may be achieved if the lower of the two plinths of the giant pilasters is excluded from the calculation.



15. Conservatori, plan of piano nobile. 1. Prima Sala, Sala degli Orazi e Curiazi; 2. Seconda Sala, Sala degli Imperatori, Sala dei Capitani; 3. Terza Sala, Sala delle Guerre Puniche; 4. Quarta Sala, Sala degli Arazzi; L¹. Area of former Loggia della Madonna; L². Loggia, Sala dei Trionfi di Mario; A. Archive room; C. Chapel (Cappella Vecchia). (Adapted from De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 1965, and Güthlein, 1985)

cade is exactly 1:2. The courtyard pedestal-zone corresponds not only with the pedestals of the giant order, but also, thematically, with the plinth below the *piano nobile* windows of the facade: in both cases, it provides an apron for the windows. The framing strips of this storey are handled similarly in the two cases. Both facades are crowned by balustrades, which have some kinship in design.

There can be no question that whoever designed the courtyard hoped that a viewer would appreciate its intelligent, subtle variations on the main facade. Indeed, the congruences are such as to cast doubt on the commonly accepted notion that Michelangelo designed the facade, and Giacomo Della Porta the courtyard, after the older master's death.⁸⁴ For it would have been hard to achieve what has been done with the *piano nobile* of the courtyard, if the main facade had already been worked out to its last detail; much easier, if there were still some lee-way in the main facade.

84 But see Hedberg, 70: "The present Conservatori courtyard elevation, as executed on one side, duplicates the facade portico on the first story and the membering of the upper floor of the Farnese court on the second story. Although Michelangelo may well have planned this courtyard elevation, Giacomo della Porta substituted niches and doors of his own design into this framework." So far as I am aware, this is the only modern attempt to connect the courtyard elevation with Michelangelo.



16. Conservatori, courtyard, with north loggia. Gothic arcade at left

In fact, I will argue that the two faces must have been designed together; and that, *in conception, the support system of the courtyard preceded the giant order.*

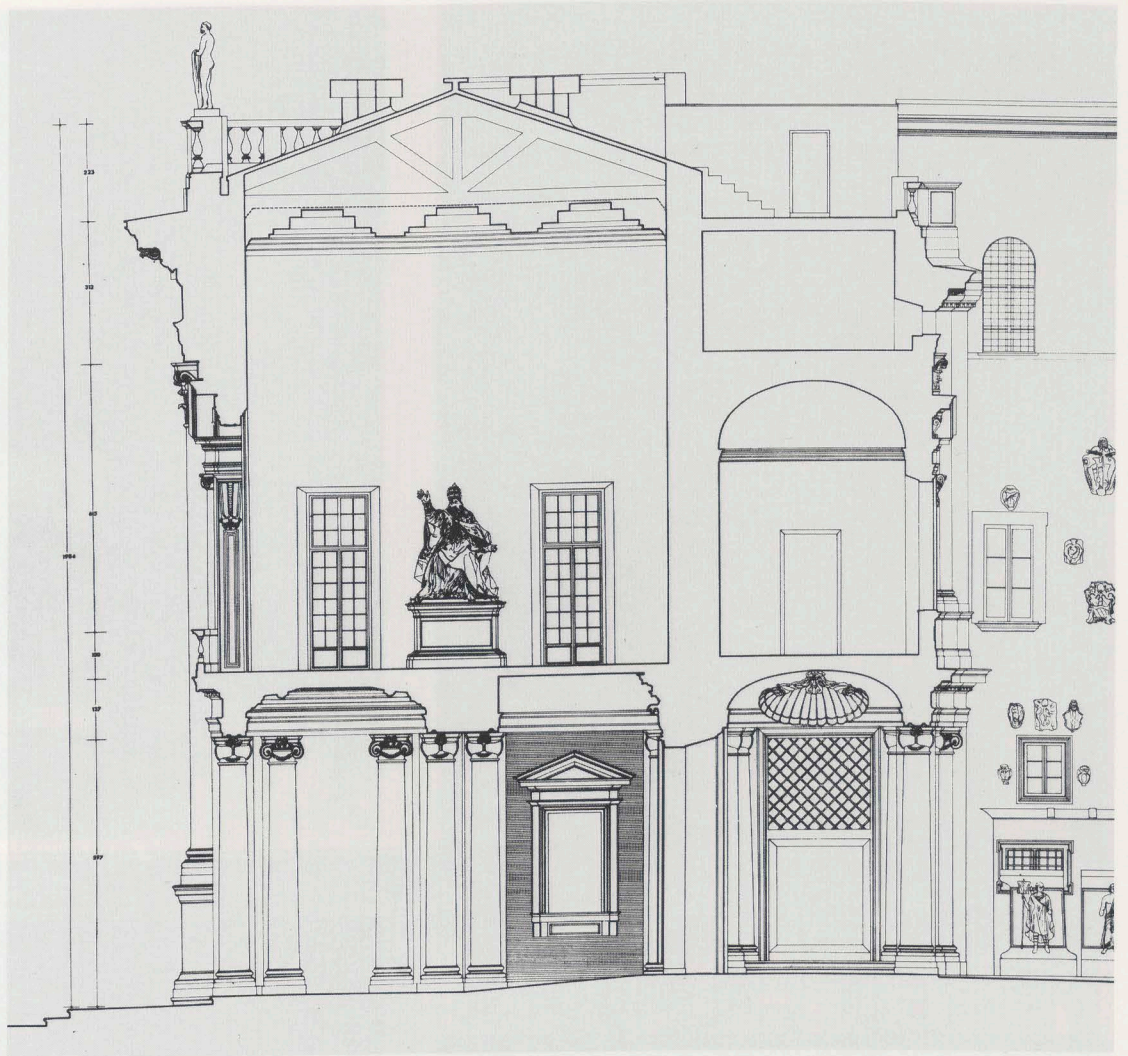
The front loggia is unusual in several respects (figs. 18, 19). It is entirely trabeated. It is spanned, in depth, by broad beams (flat arches) answering to the piers, with architraves (again flat arches) answering to the columns. The architraves rest on further columns set into the rear wall, which are joined by yet further architraves. The result is that each bay constitutes what may be called a *spatial cell*, bounded by four columns and four architraves, roughly square in plan (fig. 13).⁸⁵ This kind of spatial cell is to be found elsewhere in the palace. The cells of the portico are capped by single coffers, containing reliefs of ancient trophies in the centre. The architraves and the central fields of the coffers are mirrored by slabs of white marble in the pavement, producing an alternating, emphatic, rhythm. On the rear wall of the portico, the columns may be read both as half-inset into the wall next to the doors, and as recessed behind the piers. The vestibule takes up the cell system of the portico, a further cell being created on four further columns, so that there are paired columns at its entrance (fig. 20).⁸⁶ The main door occupies the rear wall of the vestibule, its pediment occasioning a shallow segmental vault.

The portico of the courtyard is three bays long (fig. 21). Inside, it is rather similar to the facade portico. Columns and piers line the rear wall, corresponding to the front of the portico. The portico exhibits a variation on the spatial cells of the facade: for although we can isolate similar groups of four columns, it is now covered by a depressed

85 See Thies, 109: his "Cassettoneblock" is my "spatial cell."

86 The vault of the vestibule was decorated in 1569 with stuccoes, which have been lost: Pecchiai, 135–36.

17. *Conservatori*, section through vestibule.
(De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 1965)



barrel vault. Ribs cross the vault, linking the piers. The rear wall contains large niches (fig. 23).

To the right, the portico of the courtyard is terminated by an older wall (fig. 13); to the left, it leads to three further bays, the first groin-vaulted, the second and third forming the staircase vestibule (fig. 23). There are many physical indications that the groin-vaulted bay was to form the termination of a loggia along the east side of the courtyard; it is groin-vaulted, so as to answer to the intersecting axes of the two loggias.⁸⁷ Beyond the groin-vaulted bay, coupled, half-inset columns jut out from the wall, announcing the staircase vestibule. (Since the introduction of a glass door separating the columns, the staircase vestibule is more readily appreciated in the Palazzo Nuovo: figs. 20, 22.) They are repeated after the succeeding bay, thus framing the foot of the staircase. The furthest bay has, at its far end, single half-inset columns. The two bays of the staircase vestibule are trabeated, and carry stuccoed coved vaults. Thus they too form spatial cells. And there are fur-

ther significant repetitions (fig. 13). We find the motif of the coupled columns, which we saw at the entrance to the main vestibule, repeated at the entrance to the staircase vestibule. Finally, the half-inset columns of the staircase vestibule pick up the setting of the columns on the inner walls of the two porticoes.

The repetition of the spatial cells from front portico to staircase vestibule bespeaks the same integrating mentality as the relationship of the courtyard to the main facade. There is a similar notion of repetition in the setting of the columns. Furthermore we note a remarkable interest in the different ways columns, whether singly or in pairs, may be related to walls or piers. No other sixteenth-century building displays anything like this variety. The palace may almost be described as a meditation on the column in relation to its necessary counterpart, the wall or pier.

⁸⁷ De Angelis d'Ossat in De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 109; Gütthlein, 136.



18. *Conservatori, spatial cell in facade loggia*



20. *Conservatori, vestibule*



19. *Conservatori, facade portico*



21. *Conservatori, courtyard, north portico, looking east*

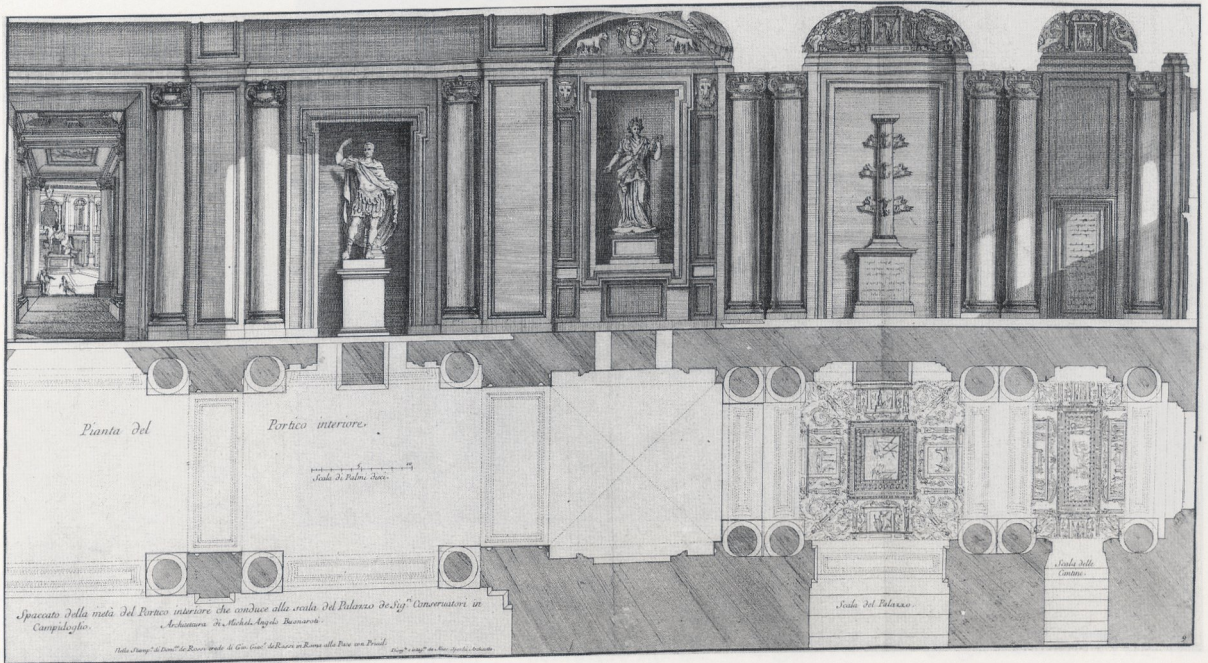


22. C. Rainaldi, Palazzo Nuovo, courtyard loggia with staircase vestibule in rear

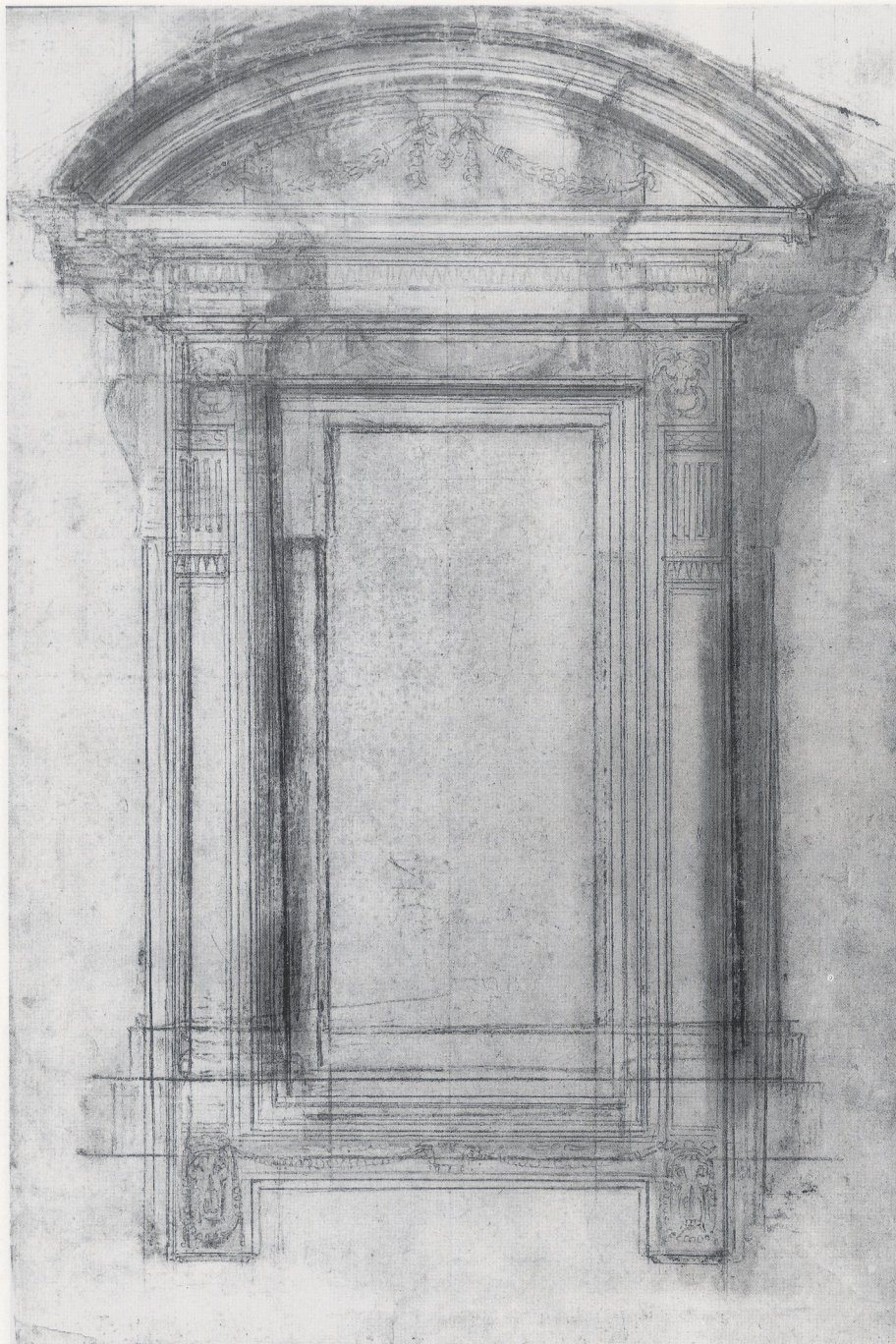


24. C. Rainaldi, Palazzo Nuovo, staircase vestibule. Entrance to staircase is through later glass-and-wooden doors at left

23. Conservatori, courtyard loggia (first and second bays from left), groin-vaulted bay and niche with wolf capitals (in centre), staircase vestibule with Columna rostrata (fourth and fifth bays). (D. de' Rossi, 1702)



25. Michelangelo, design probably for niche on first landing of staircase of Conservatori, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Parker 333 recto



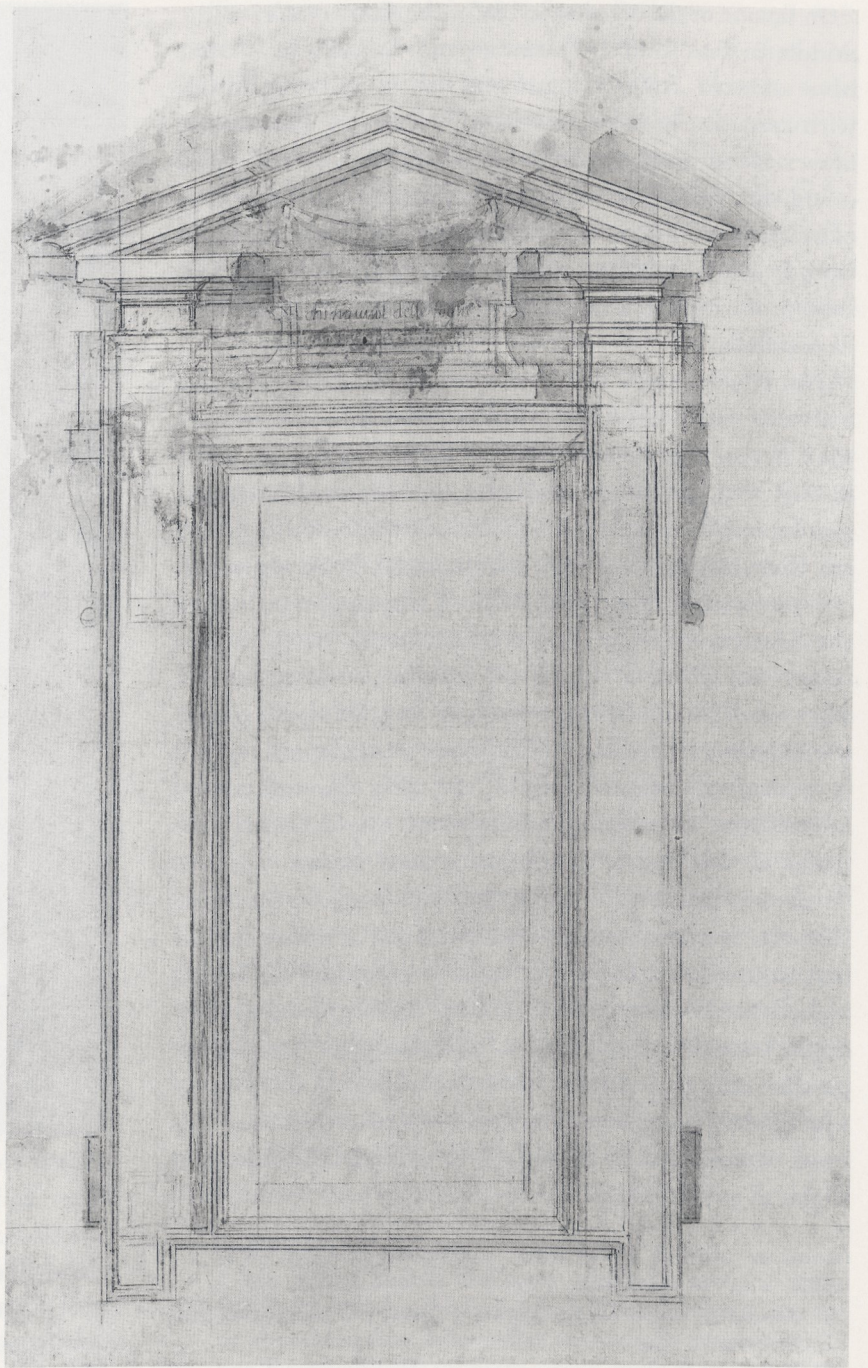
The Dating of Michelangelo's Project

Overwhelmingly, scholarship dates the design of the Conservatori either to 1537/39, or to the middle or later 1540s. We know that Michelangelo was concerned with the setting-up of the Marcus Aurelius in the period 1537/39. Ackerman's brilliant series of inferences about the internal cohesion of Michelangelo's overall project has led him to conclude that it should be dated essentially to that period; though he himself, as we shall see, would date the

detailed design of the Conservatori to the 1540s.⁸⁸ More recently Harmen Thies has devoted a whole book to arguing that not only Michelangelo's overall project, but also the design of the Conservatori, dates from 1537/38. The main support for Thies's approach is a series of geometrical analyses of the plan of the square which, for all their ingenuity, raise serious difficulties. To my mind he is impro-

⁸⁸ Ackerman, 1964, 62–63. See also PAUL KÜNZLE, review of Siebenhüner, in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, LXIV, 349–51.

26. Michelangelo, design for Archive door and probably also for niche on first landing of staircase of Conservatori, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Parker 332 recto



erly selective in his choice of evidence, gives too much weight to unimportant parts of the design, and is ill-advised to ignore the possibility of coincidence.⁸⁹ The pitfalls of his approach are illustrated by his conclusion that Michelangelo chose the exact angle that the Palazzo dei Con-

servatori makes with the Palazzo del Senatore.⁹⁰ This feature can only have been determined by the pre-existing structure. More generally, Thies's geometrical analyses of the piazza's plan are unsuited to the development of detailed conclusions about the elevations.

89 Thies, especially 62–83. This scholar allows an inordinate role to the pedestals bearing the statues of Constantine which appear in the front balustrade of Dupérac's engraving of 1568, and to the angles of the wings of the Senatore. He shows that Michelangelo *may* have employed some complicated geometrical constructions to relate the

pedestal of the equestrian statue to the oval pavement, and the pavement to the whole; but he provides no arguments that would render the constructions a plausible part of Michelangelo's design process.

90 *Ibid.*, 100.

In favour of dating the design of the Conservatori to the middle or late 1540s, Ackerman and De Angelis d'Ossat have adduced stylistic arguments, above all comparisons with certain aspects of S. Peter's.⁹¹ However there are so few executed buildings from Michelangelo's Roman period – and they belong to such different genres – that this type of evidence should, in my view, be handled with great caution. It is not even clear that Michelangelo's work in Rome may profitably be characterised by the notion of stylistic development.

Nonetheless there is evidence that in 1547 Michelangelo had some fairly large enterprise in mind for the Campidoglio. According to Vasari, Aristotele da Sangallo left Rome in that year, "although Michelangelo, who was a friend of his, intended to make use of him for the building which the Romans planned on the Campidoglio."⁹² At that time, the only construction work at the Campidoglio concerned the Senatore stairway; but that can hardly have justified what sounds like a substantial job for Aristotele. If any other work was to be undertaken, it most likely concerned the Conservatori – for which, then, Michelangelo would have made a design. In 1548, the First Conservator described him as working willingly on the "fabriche pubbliche" of the Roman People, as a good citizen who was devoted to the *patria*;⁹³ again, the plural suggests that more than the Senatore staircase was involved. One may suspect that a project for the Conservatori does indeed lie behind Vasari's brief reference, in 1550, to "il disegno del Campidoglio" which was the work of Michelangelo.⁹⁴ It is quite possible that some aspects of the final design – the disposition of the Conservatori staircase perhaps – were foreshadowed in the putative project of 1547. But the evidence is silent on such matters.

91 Ackerman, 1964, 67; De Angelis d'Ossat in De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 105–6.

92 Vasari, VI, 449: "... non ostante che Michelangelo, il quale gli era amico, avesse disegnato servirsene nella fabrica che i Romani disegnavano di fare in Campidoglio."

93 The Conservator's statement constitutes the main evidence for Michelangelo's relationship with the Commune. At a meeting of the *Consiglio pubblico* on 27 July 1548, he proposed that the restoration of the Ponte Santa Maria be overseen by Michelangelo, "homo singularissimo la cui virtù n'è stata commendata da Sua Santità et ne la proposto il quale come si crede per compiacere a sua Beatitudine et per far cosa grata a questo Popolo non mancherà de pigliare questa fatica con l'altre che fa nelle nostre fabriche pubbliche come bono cittadino Romano et affetionato di questa patria..." (Lanciani II, 22).

94 GIORGIO VASARI, *La Vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, 5 vols., Milan and Naples, 1962, I, 124. Thies, 11–12, connects the phrase with the final design; but it could refer to any design for some notable piece of work on the square.



27. *Conservatori*, niche on first landing of staircase

With hindsight, certain events assume new relevance for the development of the final design. For reasons that will become clear, it is tempting to suggest that the visits of Vasari and more especially of Ammannati in 1560 may have stimulated Michelangelo to think afresh about ways of remodelling the palace. From April 1561, work was being carried out on the piazza and the Cordonata,⁹⁵ perhaps indicating a new interest in the square as a whole. A recently discovered document seems to require that by November 1561 the two rooms above the courtyard loggia had been designed in something like their present form.⁹⁶ But in the current state of research, none of this may be considered certain. Only in 1563 does a sequence of events lead up clearly to the new building. At the Pope's urging, on 26 February 3000 scudi was set aside for building work on the palace.⁹⁷ The next month, as we have mentioned, "His Holiness arranged about the work which has to be done in

95 Ackerman, 1964, 54; Tolnay, 1932, 250.

96 See the succeeding section.

97 Frommel, 1979, 83. The year should read 1563, not 1561.



28. *Conservatori, door to Archive room*

the Palazzo dei Conservatori, and said what was his opinion and desire." Construction work actually started on 8 June, when after some preparatory demolitions the foundations of the first pier, at the west end of the facade, were laid.⁹⁸

The lack of firm written documentation prior to 1563 makes study of the drawings crucial for the dating of Michelangelo's project for the palace. Both in this and, as we shall find, in other aspects, they have received far less attention than they deserve. Hedberg has acknowledged that one of them points to a date late in Michelangelo's career; in fact, the cumulative evidence of the drawings far outweighs any arguments for an early dating.⁹⁹

98 Pecchiai, 123.

99 Siebenhüner, 81–82, dated Michelangelo's design for the Conservatori to 1561/63; Hedberg, 71, to the late 1550s; Renato Bonelli, in *Michelangelo architetto*, 428–29, to 1560. Only Hedberg has used any

Two drawings at the Ashmolean, Parker 332 and 333, provide perhaps the most significant evidence (figs. 26, 25).¹⁰⁰ Both rectos are in Michelangelo's old-age style, worked and reworked, with a great range of pentimenti.¹⁰¹ Both show aedicules that are linked, not only by their technique, but by their scale and many motifs.¹⁰² Among significant motifs, one may mention the outer brackets, displayed side on; the double frames consisting of outer pendant strips and an inner moulded "architrave;" the bizarre projection of the central part of the pediment. Parker 333 is always taken to be preparatory to the windows of the Palazzo Farnese, which Michelangelo designed between 1546 and 1549.¹⁰³ I see the drawing, not so much as leading towards the Farnese windows, as making use of ideas that had already been developed there.¹⁰⁴ Also, a faintly drawn standing figure in the opening suggests that the aedicule frames, not a window, but a niche for statuary.

The related drawing, Parker 332, as De Angelis d'Ossat has pointed out, supplied the designs both for the niches on the first landing of the Conservatori staircase and for the door to the Archive room on the *piano nobile* landing of the palace (figs. 26, 27, 28).¹⁰⁵ Michelangelo thus seems to have used a single drawing to work out two separate designs. (In rather the same way, he developed the elevations of the two doors of the Laurentian Library on two sides of the same sheet, taking advantage of the paper's translucency).¹⁰⁶ Most likely Parker 333 too should be connected with the niche design used on the staircase, with which it shares the motifs mentioned above. We shall have occasion to return to these identifications below.

On the verso of Parker 332, the main plan shows a rare type of building (fig. 29). A row of rooms, isolated from one another, runs up the sheet. On the right, the facade is

of the drawings in support of a late dating. Contardi, in GIULIO CARLO ARGAN, BRUNO CONTARDI, *Michelangelo architetto*, Milan, 1990, 262–63, helpfully sets out some of the pros and cons of Bonelli's position, but concludes that Michelangelo probably did design the overall project, in very general lines, in the late 1530s. Most recently Ackerman (as in note 3 above), 413, has stated: "I cannot imagine that he would have been willing to return in 1563 to a design of a quarter century before without altering it (the drawings associable with the side palaces seem to be of the sixties)."

100 Tolnay, 1975–80, nos. 605, 589.

101 On this style, see MICHAEL HIRST, *Michelangelo and his Drawings*, New Haven and London, 1988, 89–90.

102 Hedberg, 63–65.

103 Frommel, 1981, 160–61, 166.

104 In the course of drawing, Michelangelo develops a greater complexity than is seen in the Farnese windows, for instance in the projections above the opening, or the outer uprights of the surround.

105 In De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 106–9.

106 JOHANNES WILDE, *Italian Drawings in the British Museum: Michelangelo and his Studio*, London, 1953, no. 37; Tolnay, 1975–80, no. 554. I hope to return to the drawing in a future discussion of the Library.

shown with its inset coupled columns, while on the left a door from each room leads to a inner series of rooms. It is highly unusual to find a row of small, independently-accessed, rooms behind a richly columned facade; normally a row for instance of *botteghe* would not be thought to merit such a treatment. In Michelangelo's work, only the Conservatori comes at all close, as Tolnay has noticed.¹⁰⁷ It is indeed perhaps only in a major civic building that small, *bottega*-like, rooms are likely to be set behind a facade with columns (compare Palladio's Basilica). We must suppose that the loggia would have been closed up, allowing for small ante-rooms in front of the guild-rooms. Outside, the coupled columns recall the treatment of the Laurentian Vestibule. Their scale suggests that they would have embraced only one storey; so they would not have formed a giant order. This is all very different from the Conservatori that we see today.

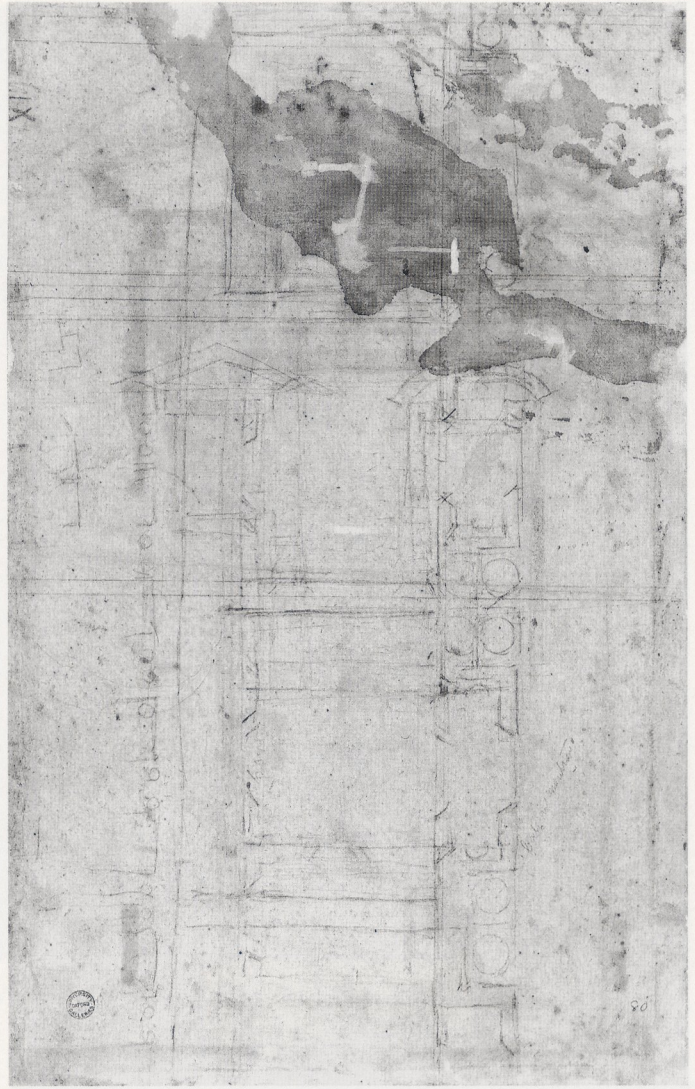
When should the two sheets be dated? The studies on the verso of Parker 333, for the attic of the drum of Saint Peter's, belong somewhere in the period between 1546 and November 1561 (fig. 30).¹⁰⁸ The sketches of apses with columns reappear on a drawing that seems to come out of Michelangelo's work for San Giovanni dei Fiorentini (Casa Buonarroti 109A).¹⁰⁹ Though much about Michelangelo's late church drawings is unclear, the connection would suggest a tentative *terminus post quem* for our drawing of October 1559.¹¹⁰ And the connection with the drum of Saint Peter's provides a firm *terminus post* of 1546. If by this date Michelangelo had not decided on the final design of the Conservatori facade (Parker 332 verso: fig. 29), still less could he have done so by 1538, as Thies and others have argued. (Recently discovered documents, cited below, now suggest that Parker 332 verso should be dated to about 1561/62.)

107 CHARLES DE TOLNAY, "Unknown Sketches by Michelangelo," *The Burlington Magazine*, XCVIII, 1956, 379–80. According to Thies, 21–22, the plan shows a palace facade at *piano nobile* level, which he compares with the rooms on one side of the courtyard of the Palazzo Farnese. This interpretation fails to explain the following features: (a) that such small rooms open off what is clearly a major facade; (b) that they are not interconnected, as would be normal in such a file of rooms; (c) the presence of what seem to be small "porches," next to the facade. If the outer openings represent windows, as Thies would want, it is hard to see a need for such areas. It seems preferable to take a hint from the context, and relate the areas to the door-block between the Laurentian Vestibule and the Reading Room; the openings would then represent doors. In either case the lighting of the rooms behind the porches would be a problem.

108 The *terminus ante quem* for the design of the attic of the drum is November 1561: see Millon, Smyth, 98, for work done on the wooden model of the drum and dome.

109 Tolnay, 1975–80, no. 625.

110 Hedberg, 71–72, has reached a similar conclusion.



29. Michelangelo, plan for Conservatori and other sketches, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Parker 332 verso

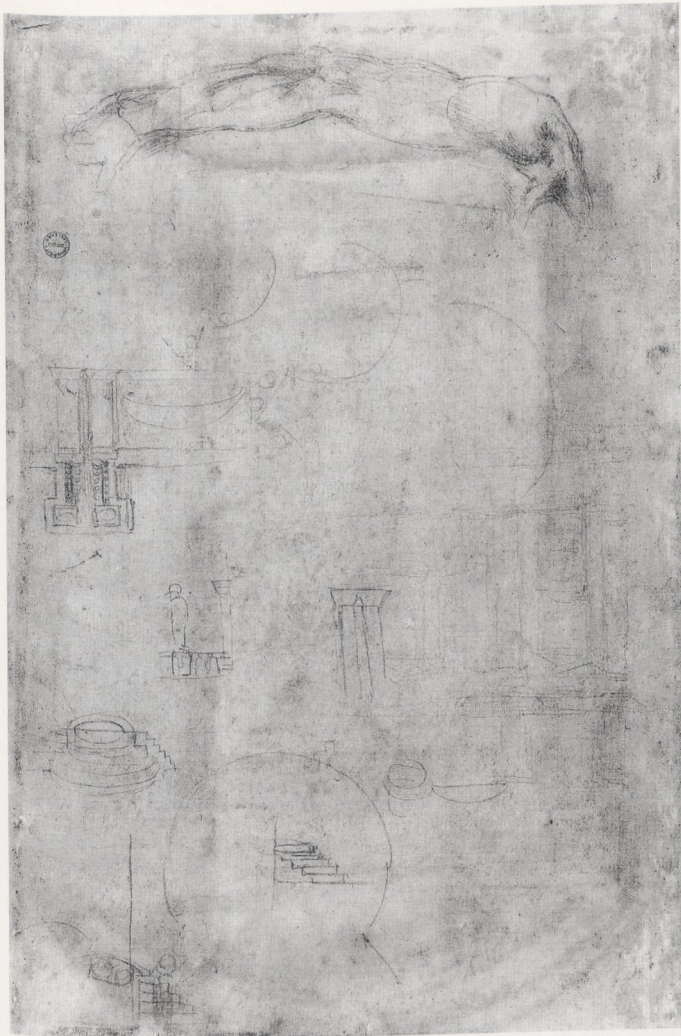
Two further drawings for the palace are on the same sheets as sketches for the Porta Pia, and are therefore most likely of about the same date, 1561. One is at Windsor, Wilde 433 (fig. 31).¹¹¹ It contains figure drawings in a late style, and ruled lines indicating part of the shaft of a column. A previously unnoticed scale enables one to identify the column with those of the facade windows of the Conservatori.¹¹² The verso contains drawings for the Porta Pia.

The second drawing, Casa Buonarroti 97A verso, has been correctly identified with the aedicule in the vestibule of the Conservatori (figs. 32, 17).¹¹³ The drawings on the

111 Tolnay, 1975–80, no. 271.

112 The scale is marked, with dots in black chalk, along the vertical axis of the column: 230 mm. = 5 units, i.e. 46 mm. = 1 *palm*, or approximately 1:5.

113 Tolnay, 1975–80, no. 616 verso. The identification is due to De Angelis d'Ossat in De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 106.



30. Michelangelo, sketches for attic of drum of S. Peter's, for an apsed church and other subjects, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Parker 333 verso

recto, almost certainly for the Porta Pia,¹¹⁴ are always accepted as Michelangelo's. In the verso, however, scholars have seen merely the hand of an assistant. Yet the combina-

114 The connection of the recto with the Porta Pia has been doubted by Ackerman, 1964, 134, and KLAUS SCHWAGER, "Die Porta Pia in Rom," *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, III. Folge, XXIV, 1973, 46, 84 n. 85 (with further literature). But ELISABETH B. MACDOUGALL, "Michelangelo and the Porta Pia," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XIX, 1960, 104, had already pointed out that one of the sketches is for the block above the pilasters: we see guttae and a tall smooth "triglyph," as appear in the present gate, and what seems to be a rectangular panel at the level of the triglyph, which may be paralleled in Casa Buonarroti 102A. To say that the complete sketch for a gate, also on the recto, must be for a smaller structure than the Porta Pia is not convincing without further argument. *Pace* MacDougall, the sketch does, in my view, share significant motifs with other designs for the gate. It is always possible that, as some scholars wish, Michelangelo made designs for a garden gate which was, in most essential characteristics, very close to his designs for the Porta Pia. But before we can assume the existence of such a project, it is desirable that these very complex drawings receive a full analysis.

tion of black chalk and wash is highly typical of Michelangelo (Ammannati too used it sometimes); in this period most other draughtsmen would have used pen and ink instead of the chalk. Even the character of the lines, heavily ruled, not very neat, should persuade one that they are the work of Michelangelo. (But of course – though scholars have not realized it – the argument about the dating is largely independent of the attribution.)

The evidence directly relevant to the palace – both graphic and written – provides no basis for dating any determinate aspect of the final design much earlier than 1561. (The proposed new dating of Parker 332 verso raises the possibility that the facade was still not finalised in 1562: fig. 29.) If the Pope did not put pressure on the Commune to build the project before February 1563, that may suggest that only then did it achieve a realisable form.

Michelangelo's Share in the Palace's Design: the Evidence of his Drawings

As we have seen, the foundations for the first pier of the palace's portico were laid in June 1563. For a time, Michelangelo had Guidetto Guidetti as his assistant, who made the working drawings.¹¹⁵ However Michelangelo died in February 1564, followed by Guidetti in November.¹¹⁶ At that point Giacomo Della Porta, a protégé of Tommaso de' Cavalieri, took over as executant architect. It was he who supervised the remainder of construction on the palace.

Scholars have adopted a rigorous, even hypercritical, approach in distinguishing between the respective shares of Michelangelo and Della Porta. This is in part a response to an article by Sedlmayr, who portrayed Della Porta as anxious to replace Michelangelo's conception of the Campidoglio with his own.¹¹⁷ Primacy in establishing Michelangelo's general intentions for the palace is given to the engravings of the plan (1567) and perspective views (1568 and 1569), whose legends state that they reproduce his design (figs. 3, 4). For matters of detail, Ackerman enunciates the principle: "Only those elements of the Campidoglio that had been begun by 1564–1565 followed Michelangelo's design. After this, Della Porta and his successors felt free to improvise whatever new construction was to be started."¹¹⁸

115 See note 62 above.

116 Pecchiai, 24.

117 HANS SEDLMAYR, "Das Kapitäl des Della Porta," in *Epochen und Werke*, Vienna and Munich, II, 1960, 45–57.

118 Ackerman, II, 57.

Michelangelo would then have designed a complete bay of the facade and front loggia, with the exception of the upper cornice, which a document shows to be the work of Della Porta.¹¹⁹ In addition to this cornice, Della Porta is documented as designing both the central window on the *piano nobile* and the main door in 1568.¹²⁰ Güthlein has recently shown that he was also responsible for the idea of doubling the bays at the short ends of the facade.¹²¹

Current opinion assigns to Della Porta all those parts of the palace that do not appear in the engraved plan of 1567 (figs. 3, 13): the vestibule (which differs from that shown in the plan), the courtyard, the staircase, and the disposition of the rooms on the *piano nobile* (fig. 15).¹²² Yet a translation of the engraving's inscription reads merely: "The plan of the Area Capitolina and of the adjacent porticoes, stairs, tribunals, according to the architecture of Michelangelo Buonarroti; at Rome, 1567." Focussing as it does on the piazza, the inscription says nothing about the existence or non-existence of a project by Michelangelo for the whole palace. Only De Angelis d'Ossat and Hedberg have proposed that he may indeed have been responsible for some parts of the interior. But their brief suggestions have made no impact on subsequent scholarship.

We should ask first about Della Porta's relationship to Michelangelo. His model for the main cornice probably replaced a design by Michelangelo, and may therefore be seen as a counter-proposal.¹²³ Yet the cornice is entirely in keeping with the classifying tone of the facade, and must have won the approval of Cavalieri,¹²⁴ Michelangelo's friend and the promoter of Della Porta's career. The main *piano nobile* window too may be thought of as establishing



31. Michelangelo, study for a Pietà, and elevation of column for *piano nobile* window of Conservatori, Windsor Castle, Royal Library, Wilde 433. Copyright 1992. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

a strong central axis for the facade,¹²⁵ and therefore as an improvement (fig. 6). Both it and the main door are designed in a strenuous Michelangelesque style that is unusual for Della Porta. We should probably assume that he was doing his best to harmonize his contributions with Michelangelo's style. Overseen no doubt by Cavalieri, he will have understood his job as that of following Michelangelo's designs, while using his judgement in doing so.¹²⁶ Like many buildings, the Conservatori should be seen as the product of a collaboration between earlier and later architects.

Michelangelo's drawings provide significant evidence for his involvement with the interior of the palace. Parker 332 lies behind both the staircase niche and the Archive door (figs. 26, 27, 28). Let us take the Archive door first. The inscription on the door states the purpose of the Archive: "SCRIPTVRARVM PVBLICARVM CVSTODIA." On the drawing, there is also an inscription in the pediment, now barely

126 For Tolnay, 1932, 241, followed substantially by Thies, Giacomo Della Porta was "der pietätvolle Testamentvollstrecker von Michelangelos architektonischen Ideen." This view, though in the main correct, does not allow sufficient scope for Della Porta's own professional involvement.

119 See note 123 below.

120 Tolnay, 1932, 252, nos. 35, 36.

121 Güthlein, 140–50.

122 Thies, 25–26, provides the clearest statement of this view. See also Siebenhüner, 98.

123 Della Porta's model for the cornice has been misunderstood in at least two respects. The key document reads: "Et più deve havere [Giacomo Della Porta] per il designo del cornicione in forma propria nel salone del S.r Senatore fattone modeni et altre sue fatiche per la fabrica sino a dì ultimo di dicembre 1565." (Tolnay, 1932, 251, no. 29). (a) In Ackerman's view, Della Porta made the design, because Michelangelo had not provided his own before he died: Ackerman, 1964, 66. But the phrase "in forma propria" must mean that the design was Della Porta's own, in distinction to that of someone else, i.e. Michelangelo. (b) Other scholars, following Tolnay, have proposed that Della Porta's design was not for the facade of the Conservatori, but for the *Salone* of the Senatore: Tolnay, 1932, 240. This view ignores the circumstance that a model for the cornice of the Conservatori would fit in very well with the progress of construction on that palace, but not with work on the Senatore, which was in abeyance. See also Ackerman, 1964, 56–57.

124 Cp. Frommel, 1979, 125 n. 135.

125 Thies, 162.

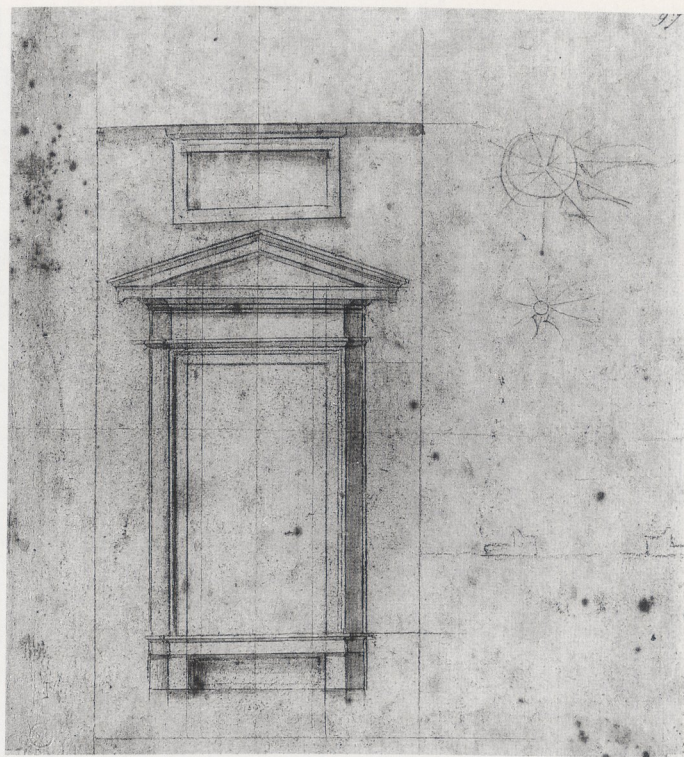
legible: “Chi non vuol delle foglie, non ci venga di maggio;” or “If you don’t want leaves, don’t come here in May.”¹²⁷ Applied to a door, the inscription implies, with a pun, that leaves are kept in the room inside; only, they are not leaves of trees (*foglie*), but leaves of books (*fogli*). Furthermore the Archive door is close, not only in design, but also thematically, to the door that leads to the Laurentian Reading Room. We have then two excellent reasons for supposing that Michelangelo designed the door specifically for its present purpose. Now the door design, which was surely intended for a specific site, implies that the location of the Archive room had been determined before he died. Since there is no reason to suppose that the room was ever to be located other than in its present position – in the area of new construction – we have *prima facie* evidence for his planning of this part of the palace.

A similar argument applies to the staircase niche, but with less force, because the niche is less site-specific (fig. 27). We could imagine that Michelangelo designed it for some other position, and that Della Porta made use of the design for the staircase landing.¹²⁸ But once again, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to assume that Michelangelo probably intended it for its present location; which would in turn suggest that he had given thought to the planning of the staircase.

We may go further with Casa Buonarroti 97A verso, for the aedicule in the vestibule (fig. 32). The rectangular field in which the aedicule is set is still to be found in the vestibule today, with the same proportions as in the drawing (fig. 17), which was done to a scale of 1:25. Of course, Michelangelo could not have drawn the field without knowing where it was to go; in other words, the drawing presupposes a decision about the articulation at the edges. There would evidently be a plinth at the bottom, and an architrave at the top, as there are in the present building. Given the close similarities with the executed design, it seems almost certain that the articulation at the sides would be the same too: there would be strips, in front of which would stand coupled columns on one side, and a single column on the other. In all probability, then, Michelangelo was responsible for the present articulation of the vestibule. (Again, this conclusion would follow even if the current attribution of the drawing, to the school of Michelangelo, were retained: we should still be obliged to assume that he was responsible for such important decisions as the placement of columns.)

¹²⁷ See also JAMES M. SASLOW, *The Poetry of Michelangelo: an Annotated Translation*, New Haven and London, 1991, 469.

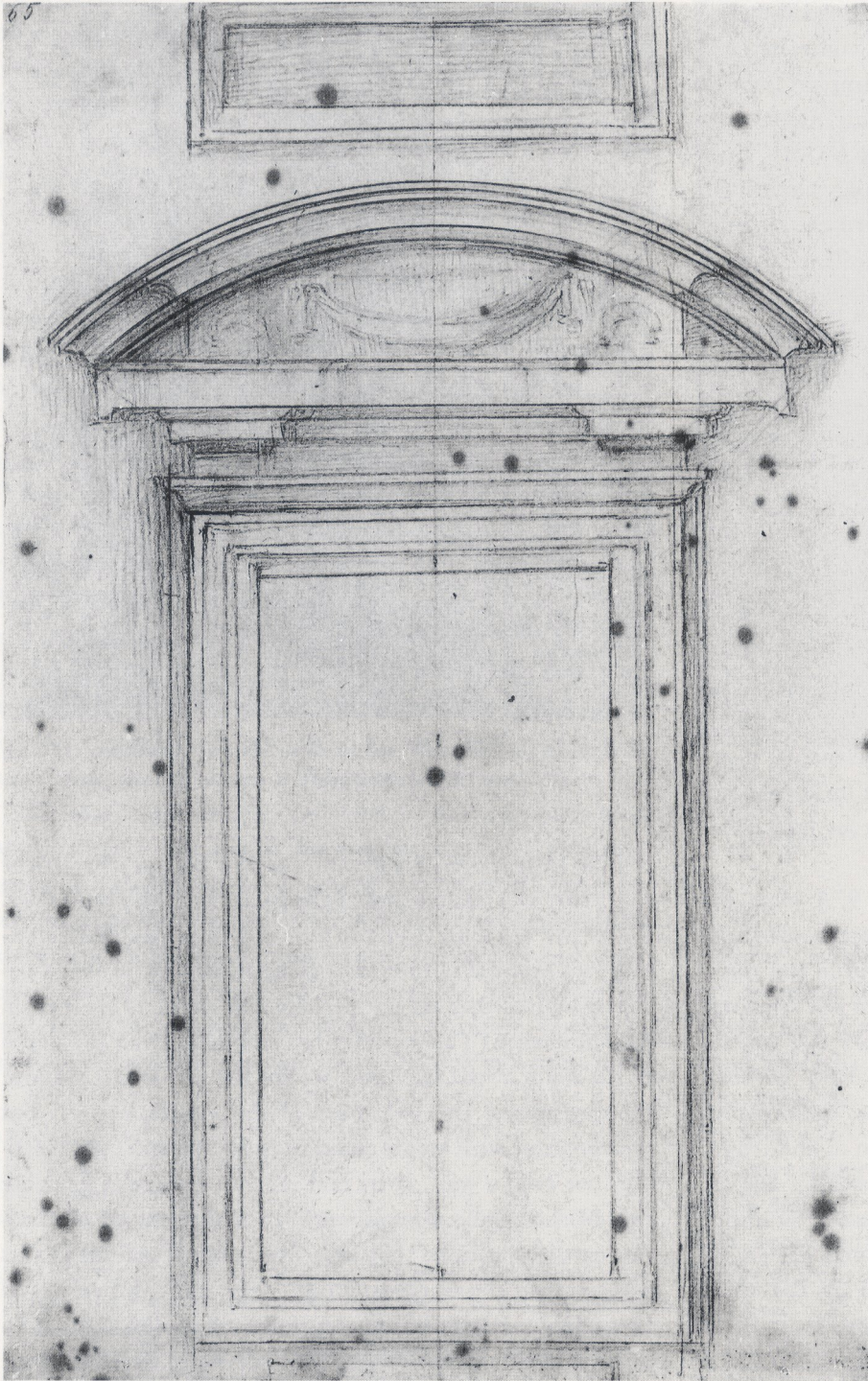
¹²⁸ As Hedberg, 69–70, supposes.



32. Michelangelo, design for aedicule in vestibule of Conservatori, Florence, Casa Buonarroti 97A verso (detail)

It is instructive to superimpose the plan shown in the engraving of 1567 on that of the palace as it was built (figs. 3, 34. My drawing does not aim at a high degree of accuracy; its purpose is to enable comparisons to be made between sources that are not entirely consistent in their main measurements.) The engraver has correctly given the depth of the room at the west end; all the others are too shallow. More seriously, the treatment of the vestibule is all but meaningless, with single columns at its entrance, and nothing, not even a wall, at its end. Yet we have seen evidence that Michelangelo was responsible for the present articulation of the vestibule, that is for the coupled columns at its entrance and the single columns at the end – which would presumably encompass some scheme for an end wall and a door. In these circumstances, it is not warranted to assume that, just because the engraving does not show the rest of the palace behind, Michelangelo had no project for it. Indeed, we have noted that the engraving’s legend says nothing about the existence or nonexistence of a project by Michelangelo for the palace as a whole. Doubtless the engraver’s intention was, as he stated, to reproduce Michelangelo’s project for the piazza, which included the guild-rooms; the rest of the palace would then be irrelevant (and, if included, would have spoilt the symmetry of the sheet).

Although, in Ackerman’s view, Michelangelo “left no decisive sketches for parts of the elevation which he did not



33. Michelangelo, design for aedicule in vestibule of Conservatori, Florence, Casa Buonarroti 65A

execute,"¹²⁹ all the elevation drawings we have considered so far are for parts of the building undertaken only after his death. We have drawings for the *piano nobile* windows, for the aedicule in the vestibule, for the Archive door, and probably for the staircase niche. That Michelangelo took

129 Ackerman, 1964, 66; Bonelli in *Michelangelo architetto*, 436, is even more doubtful about Michelangelo's involvement in the detail of the palace.

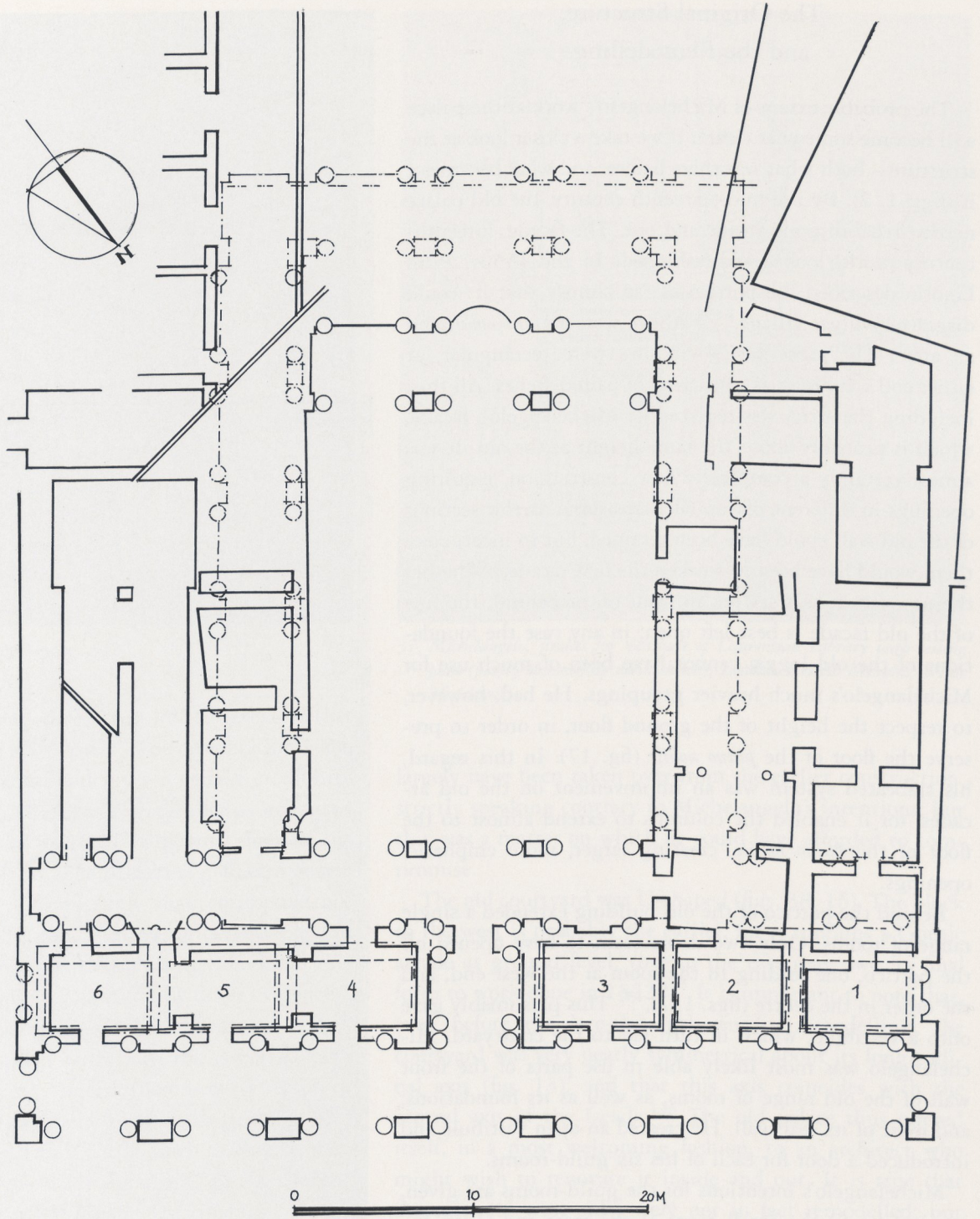
great pains over the design of detail is attested, not only by the detail itself, but also by the existence of a second carefully-drawn scheme for the aedicule of the vestibule (fig. 33). This scheme is shown on Casa Buonarroti 65A. It is done in a somewhat hesitant style, which is related to that of the artist's late figure drawings. The main reason for associating it with Casa Buonarroti 97A verso (fig. 32) is the tablet (which does not appear in the present vesti-

34. Conservatori, schematic plans of ground floor.

Black ink: present state (De Angelis d'Ossat, *Pietrangeli*, 1965, *tav. VI*).

-----: guild-rooms from engraved plan (fig. 3).

- · - · - · - : guild-rooms and unexecuted (or subsequently altered) construction required by *Albertina*, *Rom 29* (fig. 35); broken line at south end of courtyard indicates length according to inscription



bule); but the motifs of the pediment are also close to those of the Ashmolean drawings (figs. 25, 26). One may assign the drawing a plausible scale, 1:12.5, which is exactly twice that of the other drawing for the aedicule.

One of the main themes of this paper is that Michelangelo resolved far more at the Conservatori than he is given credit for. If at Saint Peter's, his greatest church commission, he took pains to make his design absolutely clear, so

that it could not be altered after his death,¹³⁰ it will hardly be surprising that at the Campidoglio, his greatest secular commission, he attempted to determine most aspects of the design in the few years remaining to him. The palace is permeated with one man's thought.

130 HENRY A. MILLON, CRAIG H. SMYTH, "Pirro Ligorio, Michelangelo, and St. Peter's," in *Pirro Ligorio: Artist and Antiquarian*, Milan, 1988, 228-29.

The Original Structure, and the Remodelling

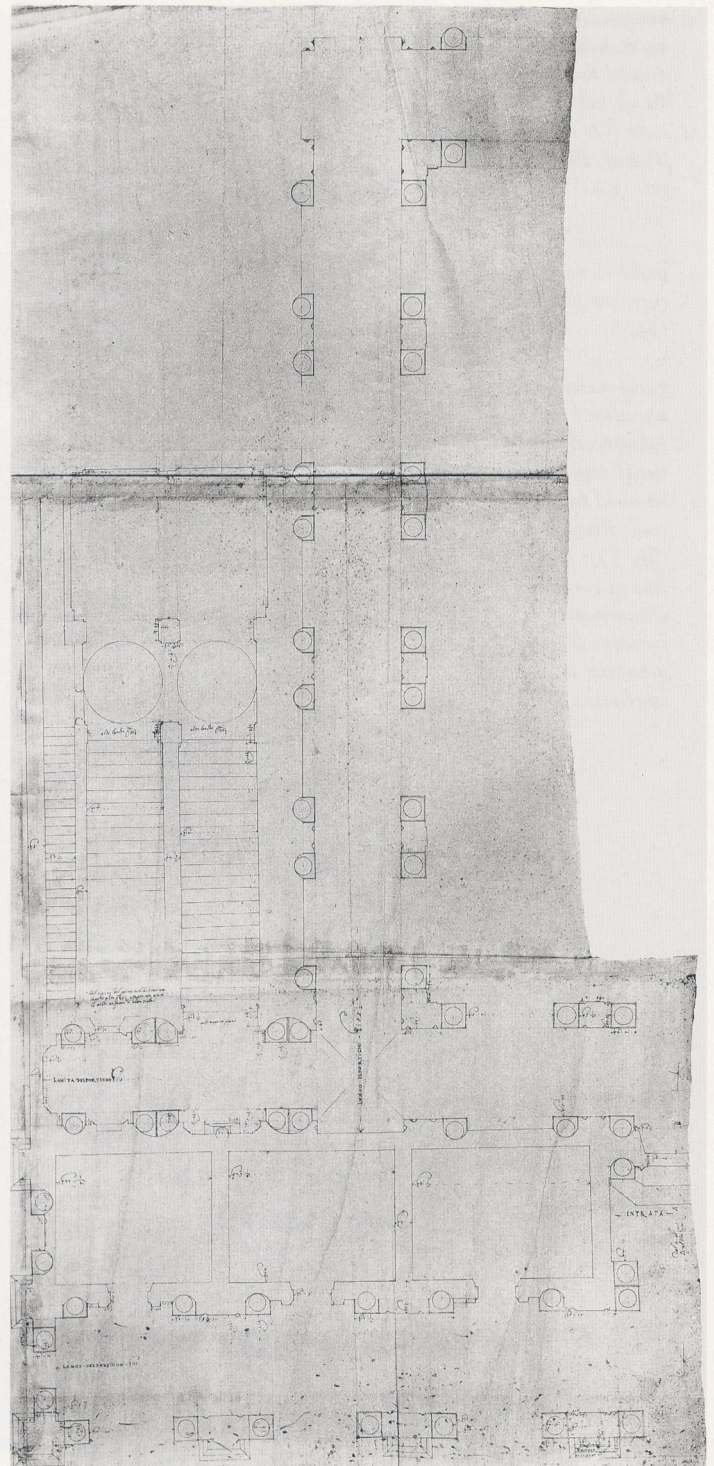
The probable extent of Michelangelo's work at the palace will become somewhat clearer if we take a closer look at the structure – both what was there before, and what became of it (figs. 1, 2). By the mid-sixteenth century, the old palace needed rehabilitation inside and out. The facade, fifteenth-century work, looked old-fashioned. In the 1550s, Pirro Ligorio described the portico as “so clumsy that it would disgrace a vulgar village.”¹³¹ Above were a *piano nobile* and an attic. The *piano nobile* windows were rectangular; at either end were loggias consisting of paired arches. All this, including the attic, was replaced by Michelangelo's facade, which is probably about the same height as the old. It was almost certainly a completely new construction, requiring openings in different places. (Perhaps some narrow sections of the old wall could have been retained; but to incorporate them would have been to weaken the new facade.) Whether the new facade was set on, in front of, or behind, the line of the old facade is best left open; in any case the foundations of the old loggia cannot have been of much use for Michelangelo's much heavier groupings. He had, however, to respect the height of the ground floor, in order to preserve the floor of the *piano nobile* (fig. 17). In this regard, his trabeated system was an improvement on the old arcades, for it enabled the columns to extend almost to the floor of the *piano nobile*, creating larger, more emphatic, openings.

Behind the portico of the old building extended a single range of rooms. Only two doors seem to have opened off the portico, one leading to the room at the west end, and the other in the centre (figs. 1, 2).¹³² This presumably gave onto a vestibule, which in turn led to the courtyard. Michelangelo was most likely able to use parts of the front wall of the old range of rooms, as well as its foundations; and most of its rear wall. He created an open vestibule and introduced a door for each of his six guild-rooms.

Michelangelo's intentions for the guild-rooms are given, in plan, by (i) the small room at the west end (1 on fig. 34); (ii) the party walls on the engraved plan of 1567 (fig. 3); (iii) the Albertina plan, to be discussed in detail below (fig. 35). Room 1 requires special consideration, because (a) it is of old construction, taken over into the new building

131 The portico was “goffo tanto che e' vergognaria ogni plebea villa:” Buddensieg, 218 n. 15.

132 Ebert-Schifferer, Abb. 17, has provided a reconstruction of the ground-floor plan before 1563, which contradicts the visual documentation in showing six doors leading from the portico, as well as an open vestibule.



35. Studio of G. Della Porta, master plan for Conservatori, 1565- c. 1570, Vienna, Albertina, Rom 29

during Michelangelo's life-time or very shortly after his death;¹³³ (b) the retention of the old construction permitted the retention of the room above it, the present Sala dei Trionfi (fig. 15); (c) its dimensions correspond with those of the engraved plan (fig. 3). The room thus makes sense

133 The east wall of the room behind it contains a fresco, perhaps of the school of Antoniazio Romano: Martini (as n. 9), 209; Ebert-Schifferer, 99–100, Abb. 8. The wall dividing this room from Room 1



36. *Conservatori, guild-room 2* (see fig. 34)

within the building as a whole – and indeed indicates that Michelangelo took the *piano nobile* into consideration when planning the ground floor; and gives a certain credibility to the engraved plan. This plan's credibility is enhanced by the correspondence of its party walls with those of the Albertina plan (figs. 34, 35. The Albertina plan is of course silent about Room 1.) Conversely, that correspondence tends to argue for the accuracy of the Albertina plan in reflecting Michelangelo's intentions. We shall find that this view of the plan is strongly supported by other evidence.

It will be clear from my drawing that Rooms 2 and 3, as built, closely correspond with both the engraved plan and the Albertina drawing; indeed, there is every reason to suppose that they were designed by Michelangelo (fig. 36). They have coved vaults with flat ribs, such as may be seen in a sketch by Michelangelo for the ceiling of the Laurentian Vestibule, here identified for the first time (fig. 37).¹³⁴ Rooms 4, 5, and 6 have subsequently been joined together, so as to form a lobby. Room 4 appears to be work of the late sixteenth-century, though it does not correspond to Michelangelo's plan (compare fig. 34). Rooms 5 and 6 must

must predate the fresco, and hence the late sixteenth-century remodelling of the palace. Moreover since the wall bearing the fresco appears to be of one construction with the east wall of Room 1 (my fig. 13), this last wall too is presumably early. However the vault of Room 1 is of the same type as those of Rooms 2 and 3, and must therefore be due to Michelangelo.

¹³⁴ Tolnay, 1975–80, no. 528.



37. *Michelangelo, studies for Vestibule of Laurentian Library with ceiling plan* (partly obscured by main sketch), London, British Museum, Wilde 36 (detail)

largely have been taken over from the earlier construction, strictly speaking contrary to Michelangelo's intentions; but this was a matter on which he could have afforded to compromise.

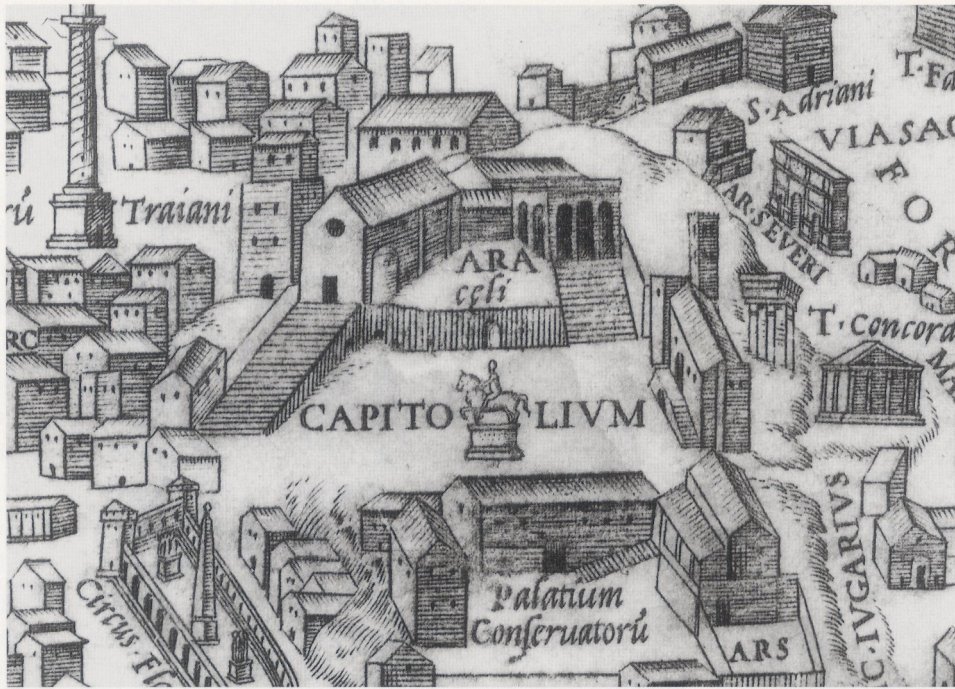
The old courtyard was U-shaped (figs. 38, 16). The block to the west is probably the earlier, for it contains a Gothic arcade at ground level; that to the east may owe its final form to work done in 1522.¹³⁵ It is important to note that, even before the late-sixteenth-century remodelling, the courtyard was very nearly symmetrical about its longitudinal axis (fig. 13); and that this axis coincides with the central axis of the facade.¹³⁶ The old palace thus offered itself, in a most welcoming fashion, to an architect who might wish to renovate it inside and out. It is true that the east and west sides were not in fact remodelled; but the Albertina drawing, together with the construction, shows that a project existed for doing so.

On the north face of the courtyard, an open-air stairway rose in one flight to the *piano nobile*, which was entered through a loggia (not shown on fig. 38).¹³⁷ Its openness

¹³⁵ Lanciani, I, 206.

¹³⁶ The east wall was 70 cm. closer to the axis than the west. In the late-sixteenth-century remodelling, it was cut back to allow for the pilasters of the new corner pier of the courtyard. See De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, tav. VII.

¹³⁷ Pietrangeli in De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 8.



38. P. Ligorio, map of Rome, detail of Campidoglio, 1552. Foto Biblioteca Vaticana

and steepness must have rendered it incommodious. In the sixteenth century, such stairways were a thing of the past; at the Conservatori, it would have seemed quite inappropriate in the context of a smart new facade. We might guess that the provision of a dignified covered access to the important meeting rooms of the *piano nobile* would have been one of the Conservators' first requirements of an architect.

The present staircase is housed in the already-existing east block of the courtyard, leaving the west block, with its decorated rooms, untouched (figs. 13, 39). It is in two flights – allowing the visitor some relief from the ascent at the landing – and has a very much gentler gradient than the old stairway (it is perhaps half as steep). With risers 14.4 cm high, and treads 45 cm deep, the new stairs compare favourably with those of many other Roman palaces.¹³⁸ The first landing contains the two niches that follow Michelangelo's designs (figs. 27, 40). Off it opened a small courtyard to provide light, an idea taken from Sangallo's great staircase of the Palazzo Farnese.¹³⁹ The later heightening of the palace has unfortunately required that this courtyard be roofed over. At both landings the staircase is linked to the main courtyard by the use of Ionic pilasters of about the same height as those of the ground floor. The small courtyard is articulated on all sides with a major Corinthian order, achieving a grander effect than at the Palazzo Farnese. It was crowned by a parapet, which seems to

have borne statues – a variation on the theme of the balustrade with statues on the facade. We shall consider the attribution of the staircase at the end of this section.

The new staircase cannot really be considered in isolation from the courtyard, for they were to have a wall in common, and make sense only as part of a larger design (fig. 34). The north portico of the courtyard, which was built where the old stairway had been, was evidently given priority over the other porticoes because it provided covered access to the new staircase. Above it, two rooms were built, to which we shall return.

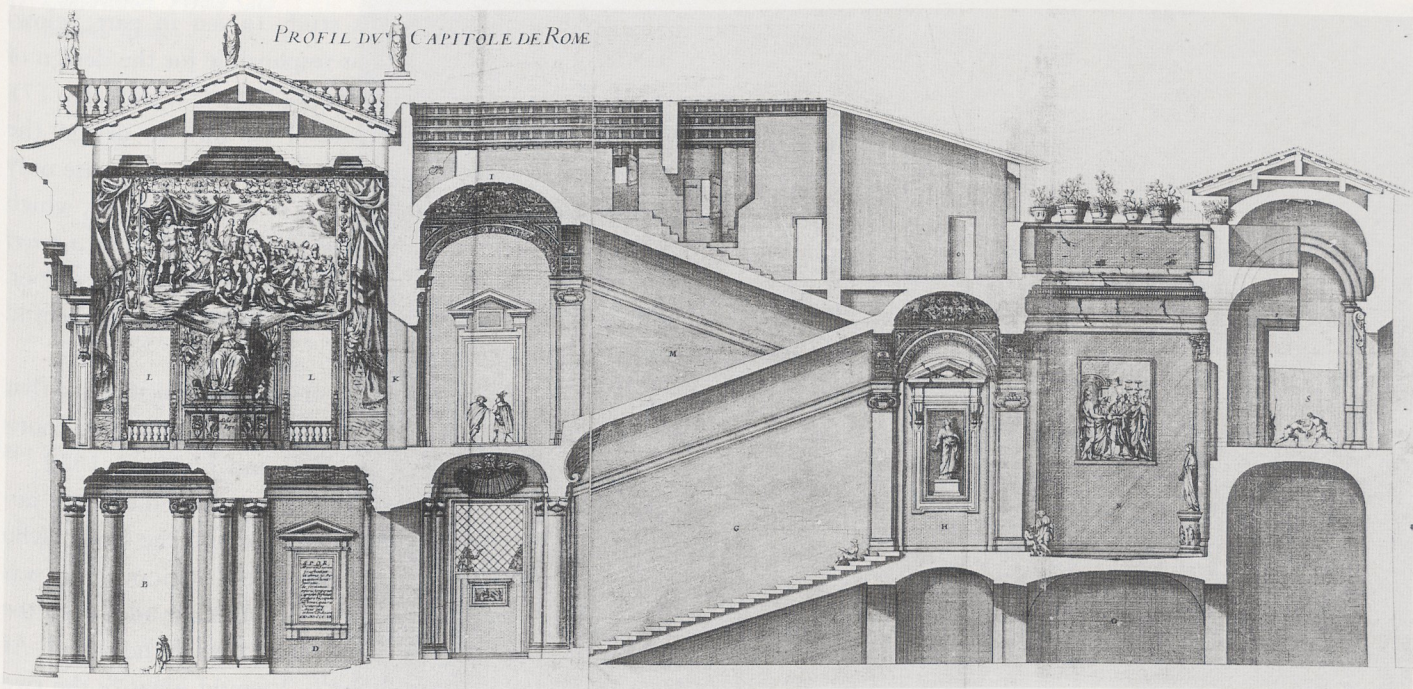
The front range of the *piano nobile* had terminated at either end in the loggias whose *bifore* we have noticed on the facade (figs. 1, 2). That at the east (the Loggia della Madonna), which no longer exists, may have been accessed from the loggia at the top of the old stairway. That at the west has been replaced by the front wall of the Sala dei Trionfi (fig. 15). The two main rooms of the front, the Prima Sala and the Seconda Sala,¹⁴⁰ must have had very much lower ceilings than they do today, since (within a building of roughly the same height as the present) they allowed space for an attic above.

The changes made in the *piano nobile* point to Michelangelo as their originator. We have noted that the building of the facade required a completely new wall. In such a situation, a prudent architect would consider the disposition of the rooms behind. For if any change was desirable,

138 Cp. Frommel, 1973, 63.

139 *Le Palais Farnèse*, 168, for illustrations.

140 For the names, see Güthlein, 97.



39. *Conservatori*, section through vestibule and staircase. (Burette, 1649)

now was the time to make it, so that the new party walls might be keyed in with the new front wall. The most significant changes concern the *Prima Sala*, the later *Sala degli Orazi e Curiazi* (fig. 41). On its west side, the party wall may well be new construction, for it rests on the wall between Room 3 and the vestibule (figs. 15, 34) – which in turn is very likely new construction. This would imply that the party wall was shifted from its position in the old building.¹⁴¹

A second change to the *Prima Sala*, this time certain, had important consequences for the circulation of the palace. The party wall between the eastern loggia and the *Prima Sala* was removed, thereby enlarging the *Prima Sala*.¹⁴² This affected the disposition of the staircase, whose upper flight is aligned with the window at the east end of Michelangelo's facade (fig. 15). In between is the door that gives access to the *Prima Sala*. The arrangement enables a person climbing the stairs to see the entrance to the main room of the palace immediately in front of him, and thus obeys a general requirement of palace planning, that the stairs should bring one close to the main room.¹⁴³ Not only in their design, but also in their alignment, the stairs present a striking parallel with those of the *Palazzo Farnese*.¹⁴⁴

141 According to Pietrangeli in De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 119, and Ebert-Schifferer, 126 and Abb. 26, the party wall remained in its original position. Yet no evidence has been adduced for this view.

142 As note 137 above.

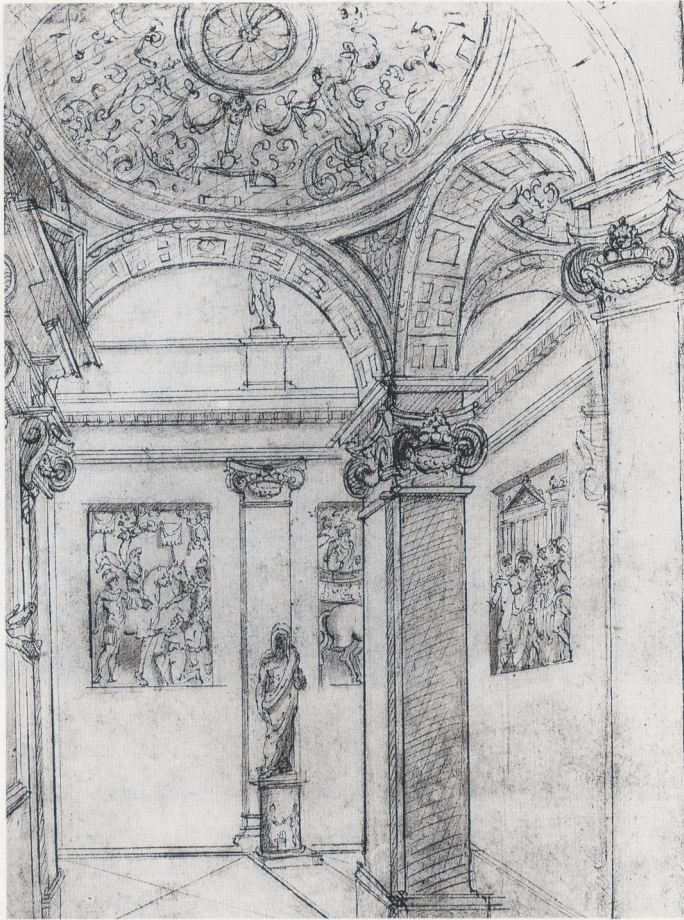
143 Güthlein, 135; cp. Frommel, 1973, I, 61–62.

144 *Le Palais Farnèse*, plans on 403, 405.

Clearly the arrangement would not have been possible had the old eastern loggia remained in position.

Then there is the question of ceiling heights (fig. 17). If it was desirable to key in the party walls with the new facade wall, it was also desirable that the inner face of the new facade wall make allowance for the beams of the future ceilings; it should, then, contain gaps for the beams set at the appropriate height. Furthermore, the disposition of Michelangelo's facade would have rendered the old attic windowless, and hence of little use (figs. 1, 2, 4). A responsible architect would consider what should be done with the space of the old attic; and most clients would want some benefit in return for the lost floor area. In the event, the ceiling heights of the two main rooms were raised into the area of the old attic, making the rooms more magnificent, and lavish wooden ceilings were fitted.¹⁴⁵ On general grounds, it is likely that Michelangelo had given thought to the overall proportions of the two rooms. Indeed, the high ceilings are what we should expect, given his approach to the commission elsewhere in the palace. With the *Sala dei Trionfi* the case is slightly different. We have seen that Michelangelo's decision to retain Room 1 on the ground floor implied that he intended to retain the party walls of the room above (figs. 34, 15). For the sake of proportion, any architect would have decided that the rather small

145 The ceiling of the *Seconda Sala* is a replacement of the original, taken from *Palazzo Mattei Paganica*: CARLO PIETRANGELI, "La Sala dei Capitani," *Capitolium*, XXXVII, 1962, 643, 647.



40. Anonymous, *Conservatori, first landing of staircase, before 1595*, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstbibliothek Hdz. 2466. Staircase niche is at left

room required a relatively low ceiling – which in 1568 it received.¹⁴⁶ It is possible that Della Porta determined the ceiling heights of the three front rooms of the palace; but, in the current state of knowledge, Michelangelo appears as the stronger candidate.

Two rooms, the Archive room and the chapel, were fitted in above the new loggia of the courtyard (fig. 15). It may be significant that the Archive room was more accessible to the public, being close to the head of the stairs. The room did not permit access to the chapel, for the door between them was opened only in 1870. The small chapel was readily reached from the meeting rooms at the heart of the palace, and presumably served the needs of the officials and their servants.¹⁴⁷

There are excellent reasons to attribute the general design of the Archive room and the chapel to Michelangelo.

146 Pecchiai, 151. On the room, see also CARLO PIETRANGELI, "La Sala dei Trionfi," *Capitolium*, XXXVII, 1962, 463–70.

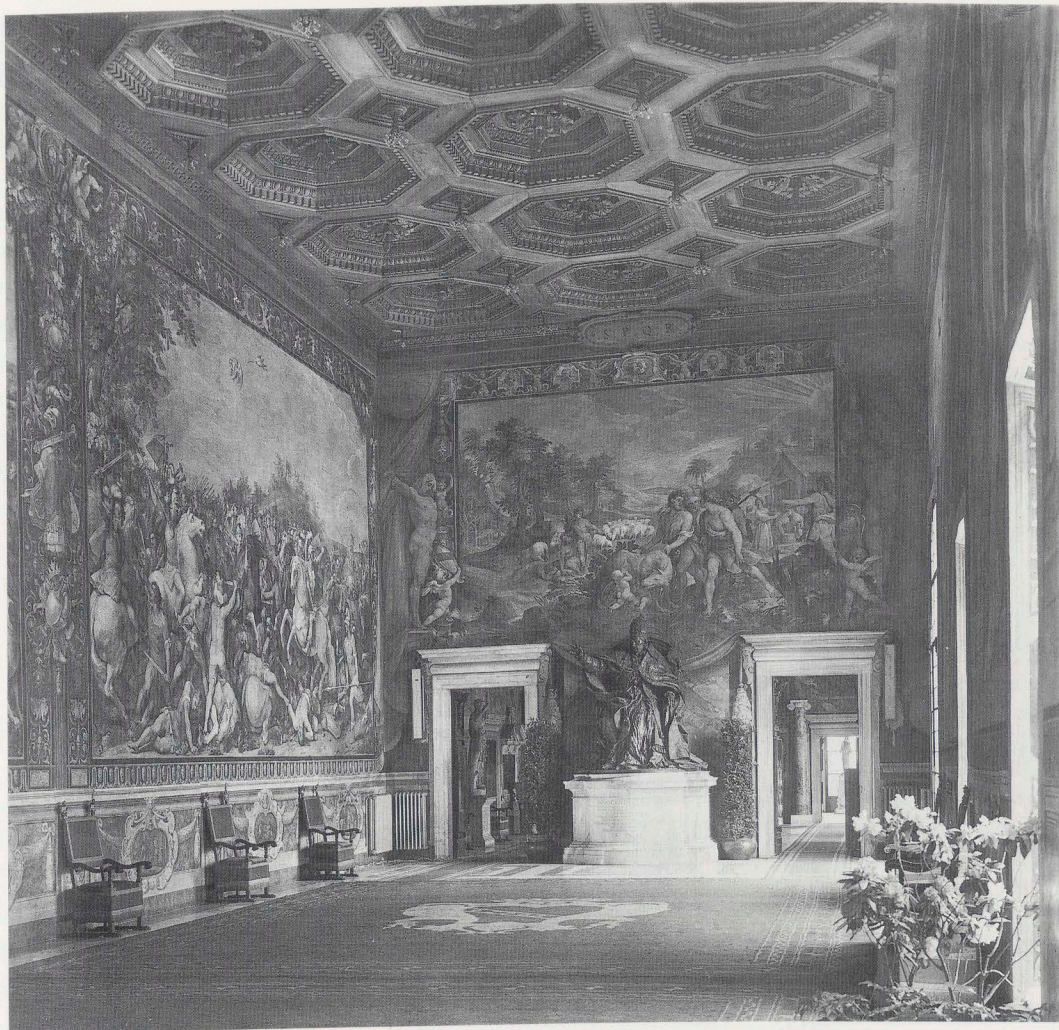
147 CARLO PIETRANGELI, "'Cappella vecchia' e 'cappella nuova' nel Palazzo dei Conservatori," *Capitolium*, XXXV, n. 2, febbraio 1960, 11–18.

First, the arguments of this study (given in part below) allow of no doubt that he was responsible for the design of the courtyard portico and of the wall above it (figs. 16, 17). It would then have been natural for him to design the rooms behind the wall. Second, the rooms make sense only as part of the general remodelling of the *piano nobile*, which we have seen reason to attribute to Michelangelo on *a priori* grounds. Third, we have his design for the Archive door, implying again that he was responsible for the room behind (figs. 26, 28).

(After writing this paper, I found two documents that appear to support my case: the records of Communal council meetings of 29 November 1561 and 17 March 1562.¹⁴⁸ The first discussion, concerning the establishment of a notarial archive, was intended to pre-empt the Pope, who wished to set up such an archive in the Vatican.¹⁴⁹ It was decided to ask his permission to establish the archive in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, in the room next to the chapel. At the current stage of my research, I would identify the two rooms mentioned with those above the courtyard loggia, which as yet existed only in project. The council had to move fast, if it was to dissuade the Pope from carrying out

148 I discovered the documents at the end of a visit to Rome in 1992, and had no time to pursue the lines of research they suggested, even within the file that formed the subject of my *sondaggi*. I discuss them here only because of their apparent significance for the history of Michelangelo's project, which I hope to be able to evaluate more fully on a later occasion.

149 In the *Consiglio Pubblico* of 29 November 1561 the First Conservator stated: "Inoltre si tratta di fare un archivio il quale quando si facessi in Palazzo (*scil.* del Vaticano) sarria di gran pregiudizio de' Notarij Romani et delli correttori et del Tribunale di questo loco. Però le SS. VV. si degnaranno di risolvere il meglio et più honorevole di questo Popolo." Concerning the proposal, "Ex S.C. viva voce etc. decretum fuit quod ijdem Illustrissimi Domini ac Prior cum predictis nobilebus alloquantur Sanctissimum Dominum Nostrum super re proposita, videlicet ne fiat alibi quam in Capitolio, et enixe supplicent, ut sibi placeat quod fiat in curia capitolij iuxta cappellam, alias desuper proposita ac per Deputatos firmanda." (*Archivio Storico Capitolino*, Cred. I, 21, c. 138 verso). So far as I am aware, there had previously been neither a chapel nor an Archive room in the palace. The wording of the document certainly suggests that this room was to be a new feature. (Note the different tenses of *proposita* and *firmanda*: the matter was current, and the proposal was presumably a recent one.) According to Pietrangeli (see above, note 147), 11, although the palace had a chaplain, it contained no permanent chapel until the second half of the sixteenth century. On the other hand, the use of the word *cappellam, tout court*, may seem to imply that such a chapel already existed. We should then have to imagine that the Archive was established in an adjacent room, for which Michelangelo presumably drew the door; and that not long afterwards, the group was moved to the area of new construction. This rather elaborate theory receives no support from external evidence. It seems preferable to associate the document with the other evidence favouring Michelangelo's involvement with the *piano nobile*. In that case, we should understand *cappellam faciendam*, not *factam* – which does not seem unreasonable in the minutes of a meeting.

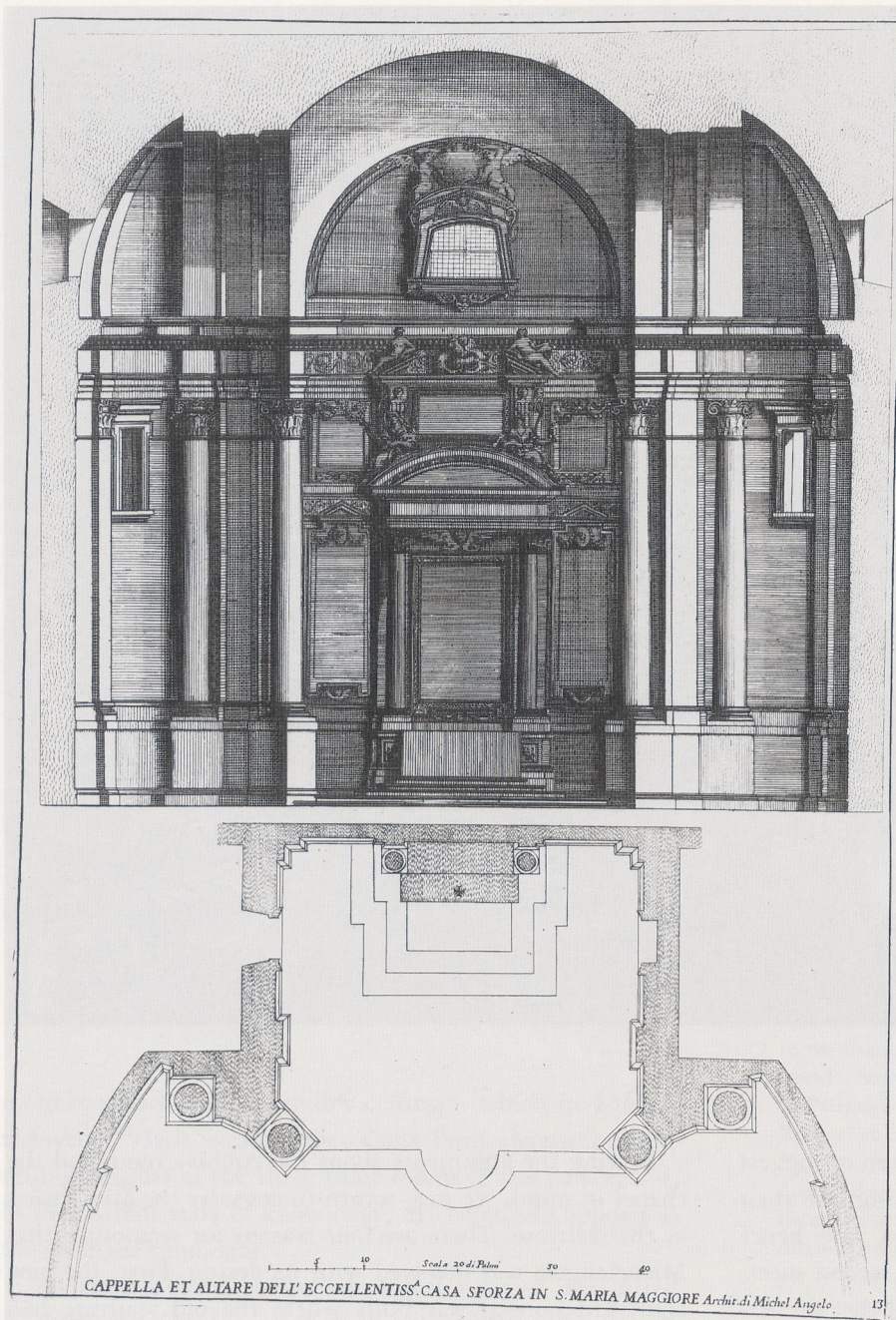


his threat. The first document may thus be taken to suggest that the two rooms were designed in something like their present form during Michelangelo's lifetime, and hence that he bore responsibility for them. At the second meeting, it was proposed [and presumably agreed] that the Archive should contain documents of public significance, a point that is explicit in the door's inscription [fig. 28].¹⁵⁰ Michelangelo's drawing for the Archive door now has a historical context – and a *terminus post quem* of about November 1561 [fig. 26]. In default of other evidence, Parker 332 verso should now be dated to 1561/62 [fig. 29].)

150 On 17 March 1562, the First Conservator proposed in the *Consiglio Segreto*, "Che nel archivio si pongano tutte le cose publiche cioè libri, scritte, che contengono crediti, debiti, etc. del Popolo Romano." Concerning the proposal, "Ex S.C. viva voce, etc. ad ordinandum Archivium in Palatio Illustrissimorum Dominorum Conservatorum et faciendum in illud ferre scripturas ad publicum spectantes cogendo etiam invitos, electi ac deputati fuere magnifici Domini Antonius Lopez, et Lucas Petus Iuris Utriusque Doctores." (Ibid., cc. 159 verso-160).

Bearing the arguments about the Archive room and the chapel in mind, we may return to consider the attribution of the staircase. There are four reasons for supposing that Michelangelo was involved with its design. First, the new courtyard portico was built where the old staircase had been. Whoever designed the portico must also have decided where the new stairway should go. We have noted that the portico must be due to Michelangelo. Second, if he planned the Archive room and the chapel, he must have planned means of access to them, i.e. a staircase and a landing on the *piano nobile* (fig. 15). A similar argument applies to the need for means of access to the Prima Sala, whose planning we have tentatively attributed to Michelangelo. Third, the Conservatori would probably have wanted a covered staircase anyway. Fourth, the staircase niche, which goes back to Michelangelo's design, implies that he had given thought to planning the staircase (figs. 26, 28). We have noted too that by far the best position for a new staircase was in the east wing of the palace. It is contrary to common

42. Michelangelo, Sforza Chapel, plan and cross-section, S. Maria Maggiore, Rome. (G.G. de' Rossi, *Disegni di vari altari*, 1713)



sense to suppose that Michelangelo did not plan to put the staircase there.

In its general lines, the design of the staircase cannot have been difficult. Its siting in the east block, which allowed in any case only a narrow range of possibilities, lent itself to a version of the scheme of the Palazzo Farnese. There, the lower of the two flights parallel to the courtyard is the further away from the courtyard; here it is the nearer.¹⁵¹ This was determined by the need to align the

upper flight with the door to the Prima Sala, which should in turn be aligned with a facade window. The second major determinant on the alignment of the staircase was the pre-existing north-south wall inside the east wing of the palace; this provided the west wall of the lower flight (fig. 34). Other aspects of the staircase were determined by the requirements of symmetry – for instance, that the flights should be of equal breadth.

Clearly, any competent architect could have designed the staircase in its main lines, just as he could have designed the layout of the *piano nobile*. The chief argument for giving the staircase, in all essential characteristics, to Michelan-

151 The very first flight of the Farnese staircase (i.e. that on axis with the loggia) has been reduced to a mere two steps at the Conservatori.

gelo, is simply that the staircase forms an inextricable part of a palace which seems to have been designed as a whole by one man, namely Michelangelo. Once again, there is no evidence to show that Della Porta played any but a limited role in its design.¹⁵²

We are now in a position to consider the staircase vestibule (cp. fig. 24). The wall between the staircase and the east loggia of the courtyard was thickened considerably, so as to give the east loggia the same depth as the north loggia (fig. 34). At the entrance to the staircase vestibule, this thick wall was masked by the paired columns set into it (cp. fig. 23). They were repeated on the far side of the flight of stairs, and single columns were placed at the end of the remaining space. The paired, half-inset columns are an unusual feature, which again may be more readily paralleled in Michelangelo's work than in Della Porta's.

Michelangelo's Grand Design

The drawing at the Albertina, Rom 29, though a crucial document for the planning of the palace, has received surprisingly little notice (fig. 35).¹⁵³ In several of the main areas it corresponds exactly with what was built (fig. 34): in the front portico, the vestibule, and the north loggia of the courtyard.¹⁵⁴ There are insignificant differences in the staircase vestibule. The staircase corresponds in plan to that executed, but was to have a higher vault, occasioned very likely by the insertion of a full entablature rather than the present architrave.¹⁵⁵ We have made use of the drawing's

data for the guild-rooms. However, the main difference is that it shows, although incompletely, a project for a portico running round all four sides of the courtyard. In this respect it ties in with the evidence of the north portico, whose corner piers are clearly intended to continue the construction along the east and west sides of the courtyard (fig. 16); and we have noted that the groin-vaulted bay between the north portico and the staircase vestibule points to the same conclusion (fig. 21; cp. fig. 22). In my own drawing, I have completed the Albertina drawing to the west on the assumption that the plan was to be symmetrical with what is shown to the east, but have omitted the staircase; for two grand staircases hardly seem necessary in a palace of this size. The heavily-columned passage to the west has its counterpart in the Palazzo Nuovo, even though there it does not lead to a stairway.¹⁵⁶

A further problem concerns the length of the courtyard. According to an annotation, it was to be slightly shorter than a straightforward repetition of the bays of the north portico would lead one to expect.¹⁵⁷ In my drawing, the length according to the annotation is indicated with a broken line. It suggests that, although part of the site to the south (Palazzo Caffarelli) might be obtained for an extension of the courtyard, the area ideally required was not available. This, then, is further evidence for the architect's attention to constraints of a practical nature.

The drawing seems to be a copy of a master plan, which may be dated between 1565 and about 1570. Important for the dating is the half-column shown opposite the foot of the stairs. This represents the *Columna rostrata*, a reconstruction of a famous ancient column decorated with ships' beaks (fig. 23). The remains of the original column were discovered in 1565; between 1570 and 1572, a pedestal was erected in the staircase vestibule, on which a reconstruction of the column was to rest. The intention to set up such a reconstruction could date from any point after the discovery of the original.¹⁵⁸ An indication of the master

152 But he was presumably responsible for the lowering of the staircase vault: see note 155.

153 The main account is that of De Angelis d'Ossat in De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 110–11.

154 However it does not show any niches, whether in the vestibule, courtyard, or first landing of the staircase; nor the steps at the entrances to the guild-rooms and to the staircase vestibule.

155 Annotations indicate that the clear height of the arches at the landings was to be $36 \frac{1}{3}$ *palmi*, i.e. 8.10 m. But their clear height, as built, is only 6.86 m.: De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, section opposite tav. XV. The difference (1.24 m.) is almost identical to that between the height of the architrave employed on the stairs (0.28 m.) and the height of the full Ionic entablature on the exterior (1.48 m.: DOMENICO DE' ROSSI, *Studio di architettura civile*, 3 vols., Rome, 1702–21, I, tav. 4). Given the numerous correspondences between interior and exterior, it seems very likely that the full entablature was to be repeated in the staircase. I do not know of other sixteenth-century Roman staircases with a full entablature; but it may well be significant that the staircase of Sansovino's Library contains this feature. The higher arches leading onto the staircase courtyard would require that its major Corinthian order be correspondingly higher.

156 See the plan in De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, tav. XVIII. However Specchi's project for "completing" the palace involved the building of a second staircase: Liebenwein, Abb. 21.

157 The annotation, referring to the inner length of the portico, reads: "LUNGO EL PORTICHO palmi 188 1/2." My calculations, which are based on the individual measurements given for the north portico in the drawing, indicate that the total length should be 196.77 *palmi*; in other words, the length according to the annotation is 1.84 m. shorter than the north portico would lead one to expect.

158 On the column, see MANFRED E. FISCHER, "Columna Rostrata C. Duilij: Überlieferung und Bedeutungswandel einer antiken Ehrensäule," *Storia dell'arte*, IV, 1969, 369–87. According to Fischer, 374, the Albertina drawing must date from after 1574, when the reconstruction was set up; but he does not provide evidence for this view. For the preparatory work of 1570/72, see Pecchiai, 139.

plan's *terminus ante quem* is the fact that from about 1570, it was no longer being followed for the height of the staircase vault.¹⁵⁹

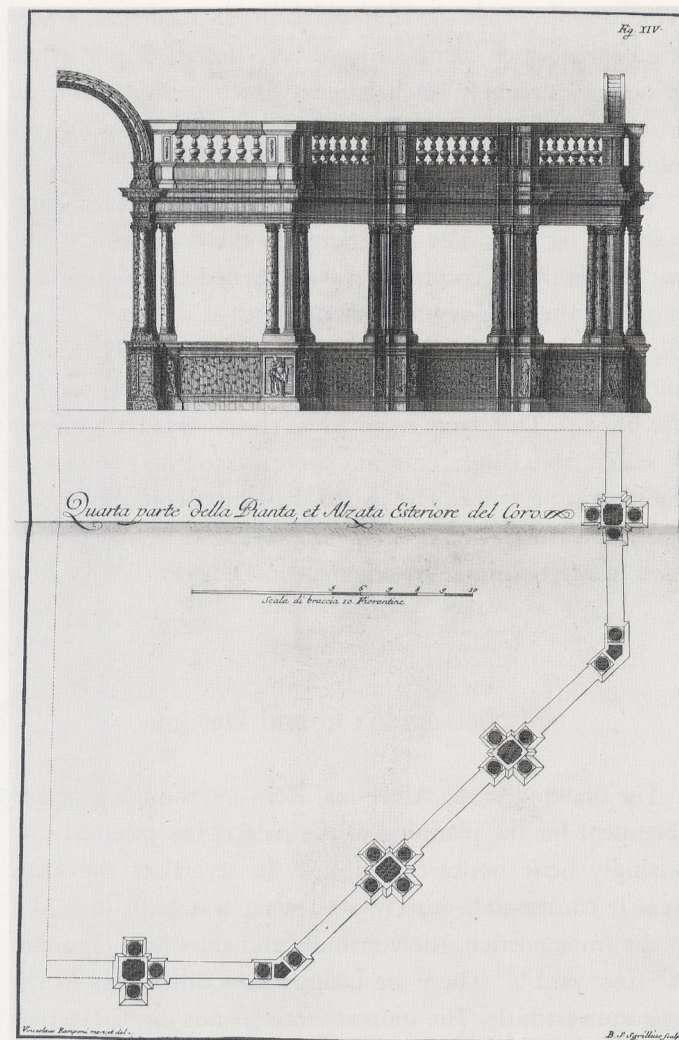
De Angelis d'Ossat, who published the drawing, connected it with the studio of Giacomo Della Porta. Strictly speaking, he is surely correct. But are the main ideas Della Porta's? Did he really add a courtyard that manages to harmonise so completely with Michelangelo's front range (figs. 16, 6)? I shall be arguing that the plan of the present palace, especially if completed with reference to the Albertina drawing, is so unified that it must be the work of one man, who can only be Michelangelo. On this interpretation, the drawing represents, in all essentials, Michelangelo's master plan, and incorporates a few minor changes by Della Porta.

We have seen that the principal elements of the composition were laid down in the front portico: the Ionic columns, which throughout the palace are of almost the same height (fig. 17); the spatial cells, or groups of four columns, normally supporting four architraves (fig. 13); the piers, faced with pilasters. What is so impressive is the way these elements serve to integrate the whole palace. Already in the front portico, the cells link the facade directly with the rear wall of the portico, creating a unity that had not previously been attempted (figs. 18, 19).¹⁶⁰ The vestibule consists of a further cell (fig. 20), taking us almost to the next group of cells, those which (in the Albertina drawing) march around the courtyard (fig. 35). The last two cells are those of the staircase vestibule (fig. 23), from which the Ionic order moves up the staircase (fig. 39). All the cells are fairly close to a square in plan. One function of the coupled columns at the entrance to the vestibule is to produce such a bay (fig. 20); something similar occurs in the staircase vestibule, though there further factors are at work (cp. figs. 22, 24). Finally, on either side of the main axis of the palace, from the facade to the end of the courtyard, there are no less than eight columns aligned, with only a necessary but perhaps unfortunate door-frame intervening (fig. 34). In general, the connections between the facade and the courtyard are quite exceptionally close; it is hard to believe that they were not conceived together.

But, it will be said, suppose Della Porta was deliberately aping Michelangelo's front loggia? The full answer to this question will become clear only gradually. For the moment, I wish to make five points of a compositional or stylistic nature, which will tend to confirm that the design of the palace as a whole should be given to Michelangelo.

159 See note 155. The carving required for the staircase was carried out between May and August 1571: Tolnay, 1932, 252, no. 41. By then the basic structure must already have been standing.

160 Thies, 109–11.



43. B. Bandinelli, choir, plan and elevation, Cathedral, Florence. (Ruggeri, 1755)

(1) Once we give the vestibule to Michelangelo, we have established that he was interested in the progression of spatial cells (fig. 13). Their continuation in the courtyard seems to be very much in keeping with this interest, and unlike what we know of Della Porta's architecture elsewhere.¹⁶¹

(2) Michelangelo's Sforza Chapel contains, towards the side apses, piers flanked by columns of equal height (fig. 42). It is true that the faces of the piers are not fronted by pilasters; nevertheless, the combination brings us close to the articulation of the courtyard portico of the Conservatori. The chapel, like the Conservatori, was probably designed in the last years of Michelangelo's life.¹⁶²

161 Cp. VITALIANO TIBERIA, *Giacomo Della Porta: un architetto tra manierismo e barocco*, Rome, 1974. For Della Porta's early work, see KLAUS SCHWAGER, "Giacomo della Porta's Herkunft und Anfänge in Rom – Tatsachen, Indizien, Mutmassungen," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, XV, 1975, 109–40.

162 Ackerman, 1964, 126.

(3) That Michelangelo was interested in coupled columns, such as appear in the palace, is well attested in his late church drawings and in Parker 332 verso (fig. 29). I know of nothing similar in Della Porta's architecture.

(4) More impressive perhaps is the skill with which full columns are set here into walls, whether the rear wall of the porticoes, or those of the staircase vestibule. Michelangelo's interest in the subject goes back to an extraordinary series of designs for the Magnifici tomb of 1524, and to the Laurentian Vestibule of 1525.¹⁶³

(5) At the Palazzo Farnese, Michelangelo introduced a depressed vault into the gallery of the front block of the *piano nobile*.¹⁶⁴ De Angelis d'Ossat has compared this vault with the (slightly different) vault of the courtyard portico of the Conservatori (fig. 21).¹⁶⁵ In both cases the vault is depressed in order to fit in behind the exterior entablature and the plinth of the order above (fig. 17). The similarity should perhaps be considered generic, for its prototype was readily available in the Colosseum; in fact, Sansovino too had made use of this solution in the Library.¹⁶⁶ It is striking, however, that in the courtyard portico of the Conservatori, as in the Palazzo Farnese, ribs carry the main articulation across the vault.

The overall picture is of tight, highly elaborate composition on a large scale, which goes far beyond anything that Michelangelo had achieved in his previous career. Nor is it easy to find parallels in contemporary Rome.

Certain similarities lead us to Florence and the Veneto. Let us take the small Ionic order as the key to the palace, and examine possible sources for the column-and-pier system. Palladio's Basilica, started in 1549, has the first ground-floor porticoes in Italy whose piers are flanked by columns (fig. 10).¹⁶⁷ For both the Basilica and the Conservatori, the oblique approach is important (fig. 6): in each case, the columns serve to soften the flanks of the piers, and to enrich the view of the whole.

Meanwhile, a closer parallel for the courtyard of the Conservatori, where columns and piers are of the same height, is to be found in Bandinelli's choir of Florence Cathedral,



44. J. Sansovino, Library, corner bay of portico, Venice. Temporary framework obscures the lunette at the end of the barrel vault

designed in 1547 and now largely destroyed (figs. 16, 43).¹⁶⁸ And in both cases their columns bear straight architraves, not arches. Tolnay, who noticed the (related) similarities between the facade of the Conservatori and the choir, was so struck by them that he attributed the choir's design to Michelangelo.¹⁶⁹

A parallel for Michelangelo's spatial cells, as they appear in the front portico, is to be found in the cells introduced by Sansovino into the corner bays of the portico of the Library in Venice, designed 1536–1537 (figs. 18, 44). Sansovino's bays are square, and they are bounded by columns which, although not full like Michelangelo's, project by more than half. Moreover they bear architraves and coffered vaults of a single large unit. Thies, who pointed to those parallels, believed that Sansovino must have learnt of Mi-

¹⁶³ See ANDREW MORROGH, "The Magnifici Tomb: a Key Project in Michelangelo's Architectural Career," *Art Bulletin*, LXXIV, 1992, 567–98.

¹⁶⁴ Frommel, 1981, 163–64; *Le Palais Farnèse*, 174–75, for illustrations.

¹⁶⁵ De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 109.

¹⁶⁶ See the section in Tafuri, 53.

¹⁶⁷ However mention should be made of the loggia of the *casa padronale* of La Spinosa, outside Mantua. On this see Paul Davies and David Hemsoll in *Giulio Romano*, 522–23, and MANFREDO TAFURI, "Giulio Romano e Jacopo Sansovino," in *Giulio Romano, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi su "Giulio Romano e l'espansione europea del Rinascimento," Mantova ... 1989, Mantua(?)*, 1991, 92.

¹⁶⁸ DETLEF HEIKAMP, "Baccio Bandinelli nel Duomo di Firenze," *Paragone*, XV, 175, 1964, 32–42.

¹⁶⁹ CHARLES DE TOLNAY, "La cancellata del Coro dei Canonici di S. Maria del Fiore a Firenze nella versione concepita da Michelangelo: un'ipotesi," *Antichità viva*, XIX, 1980, no. 2, 32–36.

chelangelo's treatment before he could solve his own problems with the interior corner of the portico. (The problems derived from his solution for the Doric corner of the exterior.)¹⁷⁰ The main objection to this theory is that, since Michelangelo's spatial cells function very differently from Sansovino's, knowledge of them would not have been much help. Sansovino could, however, have found in Poggio a Caiano the basis for his solution; which he would then have elaborated with columns and architraves.¹⁷¹ In my view, Sansovino's spatial cells predate Michelangelo's.

A more general point of interest concerns the desire to integrate the exterior and the interior of a building through the use of similar elements and motifs, at similar heights. Its origins are probably in church design. Already at Sant' Andrea in Mantua, Alberti, basing the nave elevation on that of the facade, had produced results of great consequence. The issue was also much on the minds of the architects who took part in the planning of Saint Peter's. In palace architecture, the facade may be linked formally with the courtyard, usually by means of an order, or quasi-order, in each. Projects by Raphael for the Villa Madama and by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger for a royal palace display an interest in the theme.¹⁷² But in general the facades of Roman palaces did not lend themselves to such a treatment. It was in Mantua and the Veneto that architects took up the challenge. The Palazzo del Te contains several interesting ideas on the subject; the notion of direct correspondence may help to explain the entirely rusticated courtyard, which had not been previously attempted. Giulio's example propagated the notion of direct correspondence in the Veneto. It appears in the Palazzo Thiene, Vicenza, for which he most likely provided the first designs;¹⁷³ and at the Palazzo Canossa, at Verona, whose facade has recently been attributed to him.¹⁷⁴

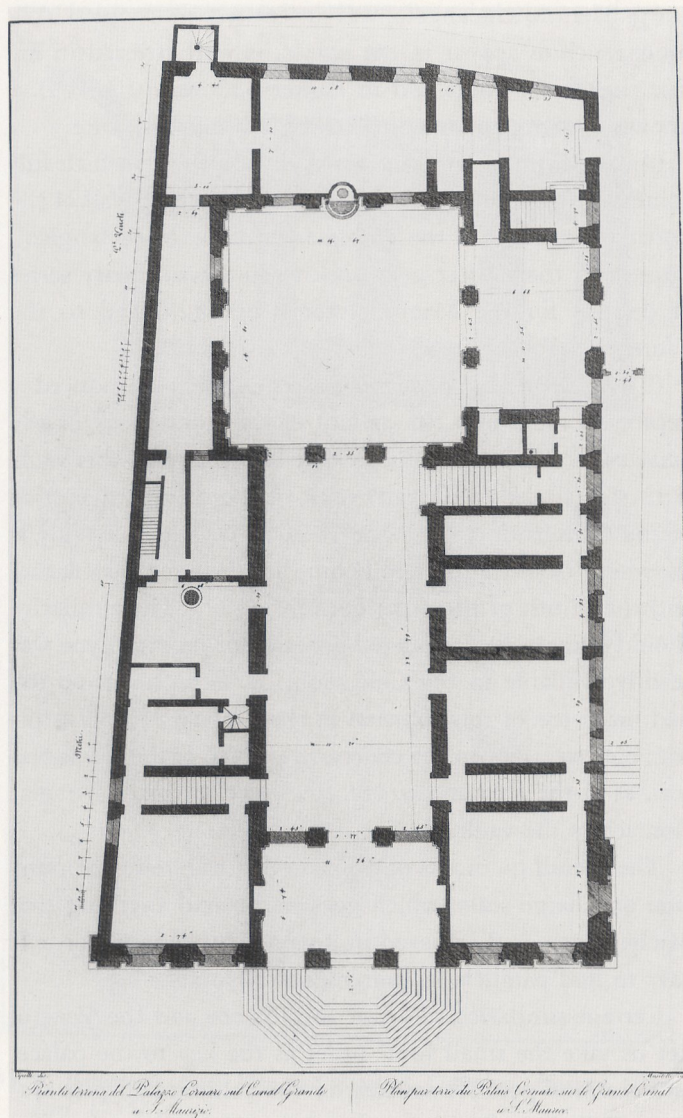
170 Thies, 203–16. See note 76 above.

171 At Poggio, the corner bays of the ground-floor portico are narrowed by means of projecting piers, whose function is the same as that of the attached columns at the Library: for a plan, see SILVESTRO BARDAZZI, EUGENIO CASTELLANI, *La villa medicea di Poggio a Caiano*, 2 vols., Prato, 1981, I, 87. Sansovino's system differs from Giuliano da Sangallo's in its use of the columns and the straight architrave above. The columns correspond with those of the exterior, the architrave with that employed both on the exterior and on the interior of the portico. The proportions of the opening will have ruled out the use of an arch which might be directly applied to the vault of the loggia: compare the section through a corner bay in Samonà *et al.*, 163 (figure at top).

172 Frommel, 1973, I, 55; cp. also on Antonio da Sangallo's executed palaces, 149, 151, 157–58.

173 Howard Burns in *Giulio Romano*, 502–4.

174 *Ibid.*, 510. See further, for Palladio's work, SABINE KÜHBACHER, "Il principio della corrispondenza nell'architettura del Serlio e del Palladio," in *Andrea Palladio: nuovi contributi*, 1990, 166–81.



45. J. Sansovino, Palazzo Corner, plan of ground floor, Venice. (Cicognara, Diedo, Selva, 1857)

A paradigmatic example of this notion of direct correspondence is Sansovino's Palazzo Corner (fig. 45),¹⁷⁵ which owes much to the Palazzo del Te. The entrance from the Grand Canal is through a triple rusticated arcade. The theme is repeated at the end of the entrance loggia, and around all four sides of the courtyard. It is striking that along with the repetitions of motif goes a spatial continuity too. Similar interests appear in Sanmicheli's Palazzo Bevilacqua, and, in various forms, in the work of Palladio (e.g. the Casa Cogollo). In the Veneto, the effects are both like, and unlike, those of the Conservatori (figs. 45, 13). On

175 On the palace, see Howard, 132–46; MANFREDO TAFURI, *Ricerca del Rinascimento: principi, città, architetti*, Turin, 1992, 328–38. A point related to mine is the "theme of transparency," which Tafuri (as n. 167), 77–87, discusses with reference to Giulio's and Sansovino's work.

the one hand, the bays are often repeated in triplets, while Michelangelo repeats only one bay through from the facade to the courtyard; on the other hand, the repeated bays form merely a series of two-dimensional structures rather than grouping into three-dimensional spatial units.

Bartolommeo Ammannati, Source and Conduit of Ideas

Did Michelangelo know of such buildings as the Basilica in Vicenza and the Library in Venice? I will argue that he learnt of recent architecture in Florence and the Veneto from Bartolommeo Ammannati, and that he absorbed some of Ammannati's own interests. Michelangelo had long had links with him, and called him "l'angelo Bartolommeo."¹⁷⁶ In 1559 Ammannati had been given the job of constructing the staircase of the Laurentian Library in accordance with Michelangelo's model.

Ammannati had been trained as a sculptor by Bandinelli, and had later worked with Sansovino on the sculptural decoration of the Library. He probably knew Palladio, and seems even to have had access to his drawings.¹⁷⁷ He worked in the Veneto from 1543 to 1548, and in Rome from 1548 to 1555. From 1555 he was based in Florence, employed both as an architect and as a sculptor. There are indications that in 1558 or 1559 he revisited the Veneto, with significant results for his architecture – most clearly, in some of his many plans at the Uffizi.¹⁷⁸ These combine

the practical and the ideal in a fruitful, if sometimes contradictory, fashion: often related to specific sites, they were also to serve for a treatise on architecture. The treatise, which was not published, would have displayed an unusual interest in building types, especially in those that concerned the needs of government and institutions in a contemporary city.¹⁷⁹ Altogether, Ammannati's designs attest to great intellectual vitality. His imaginative plans lie behind not only the Pitti, his major work, but also the Uffizi – for which Vasari won the commission in 1559 (fig. 11) – and, as I will argue, the Conservatori.

Ammannati spent most of November and December 1560 in Rome.¹⁸⁰ His letter to Michelangelo of April 1561 implies that Ammannati had visited him, and that they had discussed his wife's poetry, a volume of which he had promised to send.¹⁸¹ If they discussed that, surely they also discussed Ammannati's own architectural projects – and, as we shall see, some of his drawings, many of which were ambitious treatments of important sites. The timing is suggestive. For we soon find indications – in the drawings of about 1561 and in the recently discovered document of November 1561 – of a new design for the Conservatori. The palace has so much in common with Ammannati's drawings, as to suggest that the shared features are due, less to Michelangelo's tenacious memory,¹⁸² than to his looking at the drawings already with an interest in remodelling the palace.

The most interesting comparisons are with one of Ammannati's plans for a Medici palace at Pisa, and with one for the Pitti. Both should be dated before June 1560, and hence prior to Ammannati's visit to Rome (see the Appendix). Like the plan on Parker 332 verso, the design for Pisa has coupled columns set into the facade and openings between each pair (figs. 29, 46). The extreme rarity of this type of facade – none was ever built – suggests an unusual convergence of interests between Michelangelo and Am-

sovino had integrated (so far as he could) with the church architecture: cp. BRUCE BOUCHER, *The Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*, 2 vols., New Haven and London, 1991, II, 339–40. The late version of the elevation (i.e. at the right), with its major order and clerestory, again comes close to S. Salvatore. Butters (see preceding note), 267, relates this sheet – if I am not mistaken – to Giulio Romano's work at the Cathedral of Mantua and S. Benedetto Po.

179 Fossi, 30.

180 CHARLES DAVIS, "Four Documents for the Villa Giulia," *Römische Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, XVII, 1978, 222 n. 7.

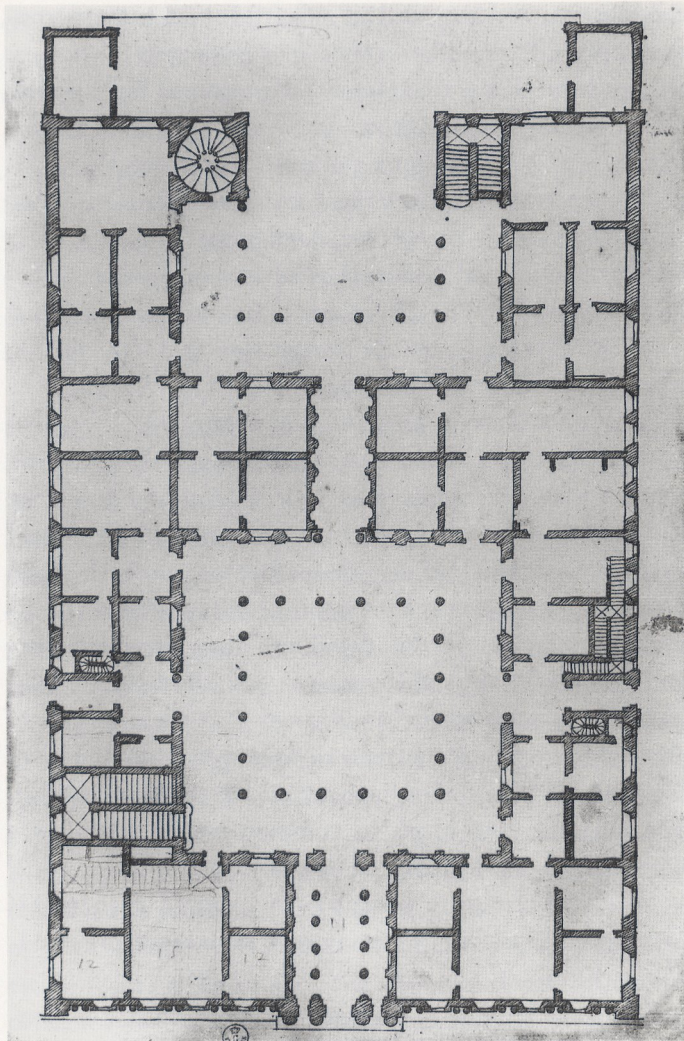
181 *Il Carteggio di Michelangelo* (as n. 176), V, 250: "Magnifico signor mio osservandissimo, come io fui arrivato in Firenze... Non ho mandato prima e' libro delle rime di mia moglie, come promessi a Vostra Signoria, perché aspetavo che ella ne facessi certi spirituali, come ella à fatti; i quali pensavo avessino a essere più grati a Vostra Signoria che gli altri, e così gli ò messi nell'ultimo de' libro..."

182 On this, see Vasari, VII, 277–78.

176 *Il carteggio di Michelangelo*, ed. PAOLA BAROCCHI and RENZO RISTORI, 5 vols., Florence, 1965–83, IV, 366.

177 They could have become acquainted while Ammannati was working in Vicenza in the mid-1540s: PETER CLELAND KINNEY, *The Early Sculpture of Bartolomeo Ammannati*, New York University dissertation, 1974, 109–10, 173–92. An important addition to the literature on Ammannati appeared when the present study was already at an advanced stage: SUZANNE B. BUTTERS, "Ammannati et la villa Médicis," in *La Villa Médicis*, ed. Académie de France à Rome, 5 vols, Rome, 1989–, II, 257–316. The article examines the ideas that Ammannati owed to his stays in the Veneto during the 1530s and '40s.

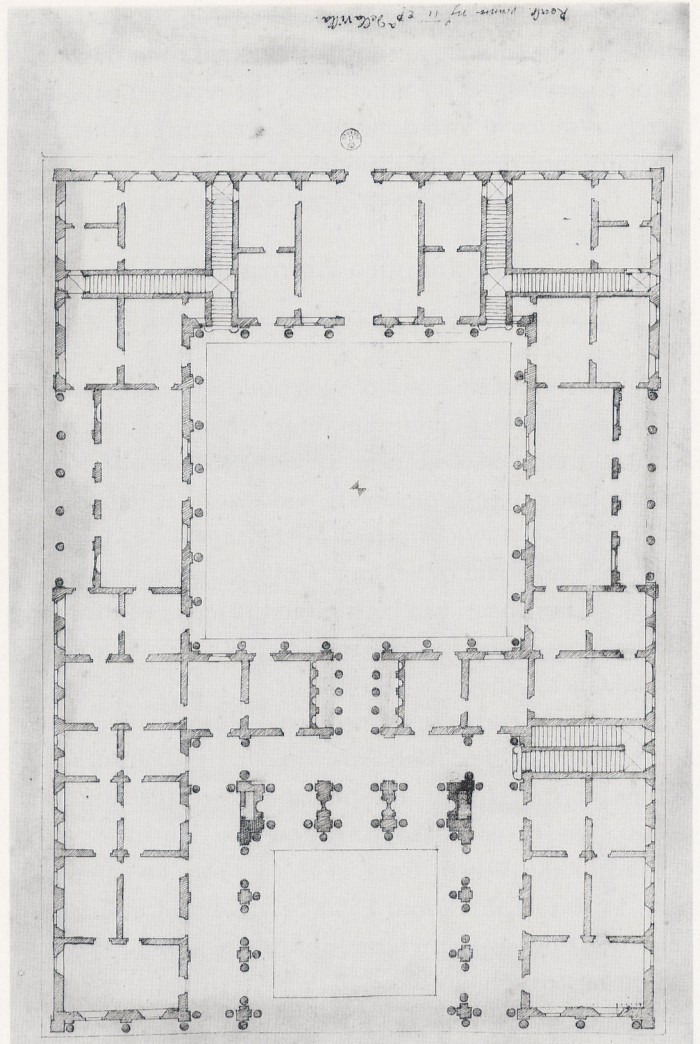
178 Morrogh, especially 35, 38, 40, 45, 55–56, 63–66. One of my arguments then was that the measurements on Uffizi 3383A were partly in Venetian feet: Fossi, 47, fig. I now wish to leave that issue open, but still regard the design as constituting *prima facie* evidence for the contention that Ammannati visited Venice in the late 1550s. The columns of the crossing arches doubtless derive from Genga's S. Giovanni Battista at Pesaro; the columns of the nave seem to follow suit. These columns apart, the nave and aisles are very close in plan to S. Salvatore, Venice: JOHN MCANDREW, *Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance*, Cambridge MA, and London, 1980, fig. 29.26. The tripartite articulation of the side chapels in the broad bays seems to show an appreciation, on an ideal plane, of the compositional role played by the Venier tomb of c. 1557–58, which San-



46. B. Ammannati, plan for Medici palace at Pisa, Florence, Uffizi 3411A

mannati.¹⁸³ It is quite possible that they developed their ideas separately, each looking back to the Laurentian Vestibule. However a second resemblance, this time between Ammannati's plan and the final design of the Conservatori, may suggest that such an explanation is not enough. On the cross axis of the first courtyard, pairs of columns flank the openings to a species of vestibule.¹⁸⁴ A similar pair of columns flanks the entrance to the *androne* of the intermedi-

183 I have proposed a date of 1561/62 for Parker 332. (See the section above, "The Dating of Michelangelo's Project.") A further example of coupled inset columns in Ammannati's work prior to June 1560 is the tempietto in Uffizi 4522A, a plan in an ideal vein for the Pitti; Morrogh, 54–57. On Michelangelo's side, there is a possibility that Casa Buonarroti 43A shows a project for such a facade, which has been connected with the proposal to site the Laurentian Library on Piazza San Lorenzo (FRANK SALMON, "The Site of Michelangelo's Laurentian Library," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XLIX, 1990, 425–26). One would like to see some explanation for the apparent variability of the elevation's height: the design drawn in chalk seems to be much higher than that drawn in pen.

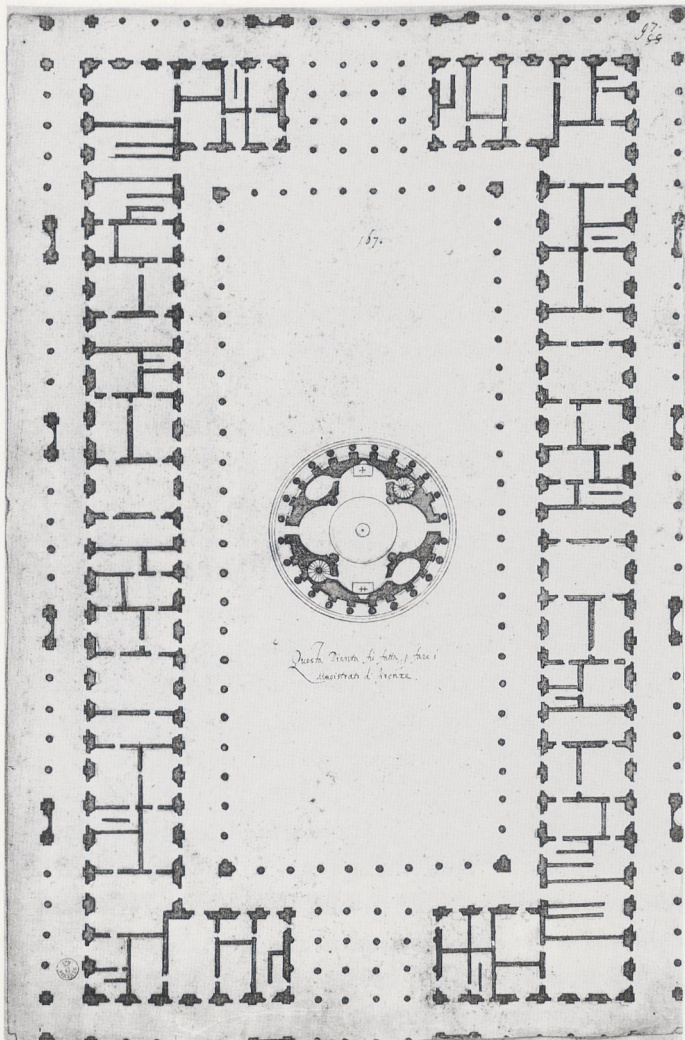


47. B. Ammannati, plan for Palazzo Pitti, Florence, Uffizi 3422A. (Reproduced with Ammannati's inscription upside down, at top)

ate block. Here however the columns are embedded into the wall, which continues in the form of a thin sliver behind them. The sliver has the air of a makeshift device permitting a logical articulation for the *androne*. The same arrangement appears at the entrance to the second courtyard. Since in each case the columns correspond with those of the courtyard, they may be read as defining a bay that is roughly square in plan, extending from the front face of the loggia into the wall behind. Though the details are different, this reading is close to that of the spatial cells of the Conservatori.

The structure shown in Ammannati's drawing Uffizi 3422A represents an ingenious adaptation of the plan for

184 Uffizi 3446A shows Ammannati's first approach to this theme (see the Appendix). He derived it from Serlio's reconstruction of the Temple of Jupiter Serapis, which he himself copied (4381A, Fossi, 196–98, reproduced; STEFANO BORSI, "La fortuna del 'Frontespizio di Nerone' nel Rinascimento," in *Roma, centro ideale della cultura dell'Antico nei secoli XV e XVI*, ed. Silvia Danesi Squarzina, Milan, 1989, 391).



48. G. Vasari the Younger after B. Ammannati, plan for Uffizi, Florence, Uffizi 4881A

Pisa to the remodelling of the Pitti (fig. 47). It treats the Pitti as something between a palace and a villa, for which the most convenient analogy is probably the later Palazzo Barberini in Rome.¹⁸⁵ We should imagine that the block to the right of the square courtyard would tie up – approximately – with the original block of the palace. Entrance would be through the U-shaped courtyard, facing north (and requiring a new road from the direction of Via Guicciardini). The building would be enclosed mostly, perhaps entirely, in its own grounds. The forecourt, far more elaborate than at the Palazzo Barberini, would be suitable for a civic palace. Ammannati described another of his plans for the Pitti as containing the “*residencia publica*,” i.e. the official seat of a magistrate or magistrates; quite likely it

¹⁸⁵ For the Renaissance, see now the useful survey of the *palazzo suburbano* by CHRISTOPH LUITPOLD FROMMEL, “La villa Médicis et la typologie de la villa italienne à la Renaissance,” in *La Villa Médicis*, ed. Académie de France à Rome, 5 vols, Rome, 1989-, II, 317–40.

combined suites for magistrates on the ground floor with ducal uses on the upper floors, as in a very significant design for the Uffizi, whose original must be due to him (fig. 48).¹⁸⁶ Certainly the ground floor seen in 3422A was not designed primarily for the needs of magistrates, though they could no doubt have been accommodated in parts of it. Presumably the palace was to serve for the representation of Duke Cosimo as head of the state, rather like the Palazzo Vecchio and, to some extent, the Uffizi.

The drawing is important for two general reasons:

(1) Because it illustrates advanced ideas for palace composition, ideas whose roots are to be found mostly in the Veneto, Florence, and Ammannati’s own work, and to a much smaller extent in Rome. As such, they could have excited Michelangelo by their novelty. In addition, the plan’s civic dimension would have been of especial relevance to the Conservatori.

(2) Because, in providing precedents for so many different features of the Conservatori, it tends to show that those features derive from a single conception of the palace, and thus were probably formed in the mind of one man – who can only be Michelangelo.

We should address the elevation of Ammannati’s forecourt first. It is likely that the columns would bear straight architraves, not arches. If arches had been contemplated, the effect – as the spans are only c. 2.9 metres – would have been fussy, particularly since something would be needed at arch level above the columns projecting into the forecourt. It seems best to assume that Bandinelli’s choir gave Ammannati, along with the column clusters, also the straight architraves above (fig. 43). The architraves would be carried across the ends of the loggias in the wings; and would hence presumably be repeated in the two bays contained in the re-entrant angles of the loggias. The remainder of the loggias would almost certainly be barrel-vaulted. The whole may be compared either to the Uffizi, for the combination of exterior architraves and interior barrel-vault, or

¹⁸⁶ The plan for the Pitti is 3415A, with the inscription “*pianta 6 colla residentia publica*.” For the identification, see Morrogh, 51–53. The inscription is the main reason for associating the suites with magistrates’ offices; it may be noted that the planning is unusually homogeneous for Ammannati’s palace designs, perhaps indicating well-defined, similar functions for each suite. The grand staircase of 3415A seems to require that the *piano nobile* be ducal in function, as in the Uffizi and, I have argued, 4881A. On this drawing, see *ibid.*, 63–67. I would now add that the “theme of transparency,” whose main antecedents are in the Veneto, very strongly suggests that Ammannati was the author of the original design. Other striking examples of this are: Uffizi 3409A etc., 3424A, 3442A (first stage), and 3447A (all reproduced in Fossi; see also note 175 above).

to Sansovino's Library, for the barrel-vault combined with trabeated corner bays (fig. 44). It may be that the columnar vestibule of Ammannati's plan should be imagined as barrel-vaulted; if so, the central opening at the end of the forecourt would probably be arcuated.

It will be evident that in some ways Ammannati's design is muddled and prolix. Perhaps Michelangelo first got involved with it while trying to reduce it to order. Its significant features are as follows:

(1) The columnar clusters of the forecourt form a link between Bandinelli's choir and the Conservatori courtyard, where they appear in reduced form (figs. 47, 43, 16). In both cases, the columns bear straight entablatures.

(2) 3422A anticipates the spatial cells of the Conservatori in two areas: in the deep bays at the end of the forecourt, and in the corner bays of the loggia (figs. 47, 18). The siting of the latter, if nothing else, would readily have recalled the corner bays of Sansovino's Library (fig. 44). Ammannati did not employ Sansovino's engaged columns, which would have worked well in the context of the corner bays; instead, thinking always of full columns, he brought on himself insoluble problems of symmetry.¹⁸⁷ He experimented with the use of just four columns, one being set into the corner of the pier of the loggia (in 3422A, in the right pier); but since this produced an asymmetry in the loggia he exchanged it for the five-column system, which now renders the corners of the bay asymmetrical. Perhaps Ammannati's problem appealed to Michelangelo's sense of ingenuity. At all events, the spatial cell of the Conservatori is based, like Ammannati's and unlike Sansovino's, on full columns. The plan for Pisa even points the way to Michelangelo's integration of the columns with the wall (fig. 46).

(3) A highly unusual feature of the Conservatori is the repetition, not just of a two-dimensional bay (i.e. of a unit of area between two columns), but of a three-dimensional spatial cell bounded by four columns (fig. 13). In 3422A the three-dimensional units – those at the end of the forecourt, and in the corners of the loggia – suggest some notion of repetition as a compositional device (fig. 47). But they are not sufficiently integrated, either with each other,

or as recurring units of a larger plan, to make it clear that Ammannati saw them as a unifying feature of his plan. Probably it was Michelangelo who discerned the unit's potential as the leitmotif for a palace.

(4) The front entrances of the side loggias in the forecourt are enriched by columns that project into the loggias. The probable source is Palladio's use of columns at the Basilica (fig. 10), which in the corner bays have the effect of enriching the vista from within the portico. Vasari employs a similar device at the north end of the Uffizi.¹⁸⁸ When Michelangelo uses the motif at the ends of the front loggia of the Conservatori (fig. 13), its justification is that the columnar bays of the facade are thereby continued around the corner piers. That is exactly its logic in the Ammannati design. Yet it is extraneous to the higher logic of Michelangelo's portico, which is based on the spatial cells.

(5) The staircase vestibule of the Conservatori is unusual for Rome or Florence in being articulated with columns (fig. 23; cp. fig. 24). Yet something similar occurs in 3422A, in the square corner bay of the loggia next to the staircase (fig. 47). In a design for a ducal palace on the site of the Uffizi (and thus not later than 1559), Ammannati decorated what is unmistakably a staircase vestibule with four columns.¹⁸⁹ Here, he appears to have combined two ideas that were available to him in Venice: (i) the pairs of columns set at the entrances to the staircase of the Scuola di San Rocco (designed by Scarpagnino, 1545) and in the staircase vestibule of the Library;¹⁹⁰ (ii) the more extensive use of columns in the upper landing of the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista (Codussi, 1498)¹⁹¹ and in the first landing of Sansovino's Library (fig. 49). Michelangelo developed the notion of the columnar staircase vestibule so as to carry his leading motifs from the courtyard loggia across the full breadth of the building.

(6) As we have seen, the great architects of the Veneto were interested in devices that would link the facade of a palace to its courtyard. In 3422A, Ammannati does the same, though with his own characteristic means (fig. 47). An even more striking example of the type of unity he desires may be seen in Uffizi 4881A, a copy of a plan for the Uffizi (fig. 48).¹⁹² In these plans, the unity is achieved in two ways that appear also in the Conservatori: (a) by using columns of similar diameter, and hence presumably

187 There are preparatory sketches on Uffizi 3442A verso: Fossi, 226–27, fig. It should be pointed out that Ammannati did not start with the idea of imitating the Library in the corner bay. It was only in the course of drawing that he articulated the bay with columns, and gradually excluded any other columns from the interior of the loggias. By the end, it seems likely that the example of the Library had played a role in clarifying Ammannati's conception of the corner bay. He would surely have thought of the Library as he visualized the ceiling of the corner bays, and how these bays would relate to the rest of the loggias.

188 Cp. Thies, 202.

189 Uffizi 3408A: Morrogh, 33–36.

190 For the Scuola di San Rocco, see RALPH LIEBERMAN, *Renaissance Architecture in Venice 1450–1540*, London, 1982, plate 88. For the Library, see Tafuri, 52 (plan), 98 (illustration).

191 Lieberman (as previous note), plates 84, 85.

192 See note 186 above.



49. J. Sansovino, Library, first landing of staircase, Venice

height, throughout; (b) by lining the main axis with columns (fig. 34).¹⁹³ In 4881A, Ammannati further achieves unity between exterior and interior by lining them with related porticoes, a remarkable feature which reappears at the Conservatori. The transitions between inside and outside could hardly be smoother. In 3422A, again anxious to achieve smooth transitions, Ammannati left no room even for a main door; we must imagine that an outer enclosure would have controlled access. At the Conservatori, Michelangelo could have given his transitions the smoothness of Ammannati's – had he not needed a main door.

(7) Finally, the Conservatori displays a prolific use of columns as a dignifying note for a public building, an idea unforgettably expressed in the architecture of Piazza San Marco, Venice. Let us compare some figures for the number of full columns employed at ground level:

Palladio, Basilica (fig. 10)	92
Palladio, Basilica, ideal version in <i>Quattro libri</i>	112
(After) Ammannati, 4881A, for Uffizi (fig. 48)	196
Ammannati, 3422A, for Pitti (fig. 47)	94
Michelangelo, Conservatori, based on Albertina, Rom 29 (fig. 34)	120

¹⁹³ For further examples in Ammannati's drawings, see Fossi, reproductions on 47, 53, 61, 109, 115 (first courtyard), 166.

The argument so far has been that Ammannati's scheme, 3422A, provided Michelangelo with some of his main ideas for the Conservatori. But what if the relationship were the other way round? Suppose Ammannati, who is well known for belonging to the circle of Michelangelo, was here simply reworking the Conservatori, in a plan that (despite my arguments) should really be dated later? In my opinion, Ammannati was probably too skilful an architect to produce the rather messy scheme of 3422A if he knew the final design of the Conservatori; he would probably have given a more uniform treatment to the forecourt loggia. He does, on the other hand, make the perfect vehicle by which ideas from Palladio, Sansovino and Bandinelli could reach Michelangelo; it is simply more elegant to regard the connections in this light than in any other. In fact, contemporary Rome provided no obvious models for the sort of major civic building, with a portico below, that Michelangelo eventually created: with the exception of the Uffizi, the most interesting sixteenth-century examples are in north Italy.

In this connection, the balustrade with statues deserves mention (fig. 6). It had not been used previously in Rome, though it does appear in a few drawings as a crowning feature.¹⁹⁴ Like the use of many columns, it suggests some sort of emulation of the Library and the Basilica (figs. 9, 10). These two features – aided by the smaller columns of the *piano nobile* windows – give the palace a rather festive air that is uncommon in Michelangelo's architecture, but seems more at home in the Veneto.

In a famous passage, Vasari discussed Michelangelo's architectural novelties in the Medici Chapel and the Laurentian Library: differing from common usage, from Vitruvius, and from antiquity, they displayed a licence that has put artists in his debt.¹⁹⁵ Our notion of Michelangelo's architecture certainly owes much to Vasari's characterisation. Yet his architecture has another, less-discussed side, which is best represented by his work at the Capitol. Here his love of novelty finds inspiration in the ideas of contemporaries, men whose respect for the classical tradition is evident. He exercises his ingenuity, not on more or less licentious variations of detail, but on achieving a tightness of composition that is revealed only after long study. Indeed, the

¹⁹⁴ GUSTAVO GIOVANNONI, *Antonio da Sangallo il giovane*, 2 vols., Rome, 1959, II, figs. 21, 344 (Uffizi 1097A, 994A); Domenico da Varignana in the Mellon Codex, fol. 69 verso, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. A sketch on Parker 333 verso (fig. 30) shows that Michelangelo was considering the motif, most likely for the attic of the drum of Saint Peter's. For a similar position on the interior, he planned a balustrade without statues: Millon, Smyth, 104–11. See also Millon, Smyth (as n. 130), 220.

¹⁹⁵ Vasari, VII, 193.

palace has an internal consistency and an intellectual breadth that had not been seen previously in Roman palace design. In these respects, too, the Conservatori surpasses those secular buildings of Florence, Mantua, and the Veneto, with whose ideals it has so much in common.

The Facade

I have argued that Michelangelo took the use of the smaller order from Ammannati, and that this order knits the palace together. The major change from Ammannati's scheme comes in the giant order. In what follows, I shall try to show how this extraordinary feature may be understood as the solution to a problem posed by taking an Ammannatian attitude towards composition.

The problem stems from a desire to relate the compositional systems of the facade and the courtyard. The length of the facade and the breadth of the courtyard were both fixed by the dimensions of the original building. The architect will have decided that the new north and south porticoes of the courtyard – which were to fit between the already-existing wings to east and west¹⁹⁶ – should be divided into three bays, so as to allow for avoid in the centre (figs. 16, 13). It followed that each bay, from axis to axis, should be 6.6 m. long. However this measurement was too short to suit the facade, into whose length it goes 7.8 times; obviously, the ideal figure was 7, or as near as would make little difference.¹⁹⁷ Some variation would clearly be needed, if a compositional system were to suit both facade and courtyard. Michelangelo found in the Ammannatian column-and-pier system an adaptable vehicle, through which he ingeniously provided facade and courtyard with bays of similar character. He must have started with the courtyard, determining the positions of the columns and the piers, and the length of the spans. Then he repeated the columns and the spans in the facade. The piers too he carried over, but in a broader form, so as to achieve the interaxial measurement that the facade required.

196 See note 136: the east wall would have to be cut back slightly to make it symmetrical with the west.

197 These calculations require some notion of the length of the original facade, as well as the length of the present one. I propose to take the latter as 53.20 m. at pilaster level (De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, tav. VIII. Note that the total length given on tav. VI for the ground floor, 53.26 m., tallies neither with the sum of the measurements for the individual bays nor with the *piano nobile* measurement; this plan at least should be checked against the building.) The original facade, with allowance made for the obliquely angled outer walls, was perhaps 1.50 m. shorter. Clearly Michelangelo will



50. Domenico da Varignana after Raphael, elevation for facade of S. Peter's, New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1978. 44, f. 71 v. (Mellon Sketchbook)

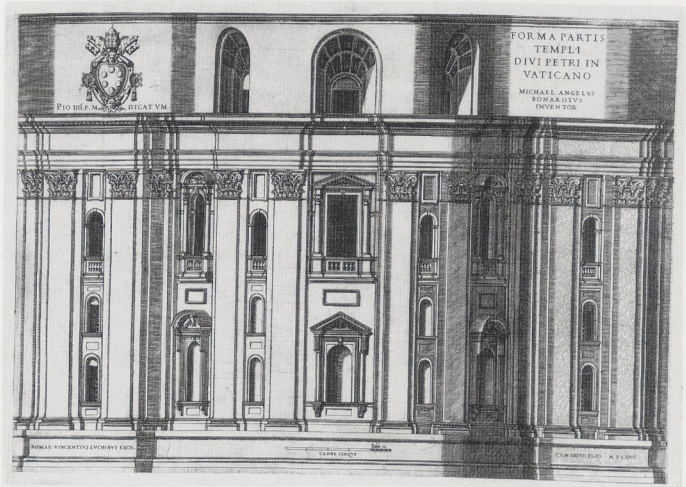
Now the question was how the broad piers of the facade were to be treated, so as to give the pilasters applied to them due prominence. Michelangelo followed the not surprising course of broadening the pilasters; and that, given the classical rules of proportion, obliged him to heighten them. How was he to relate the order of columns to the greater order of pilasters? This had been a problem faced by the architects of Saint Peter's, especially in designs for

have wished (a) to achieve a right angle at the ends of the facade, and, more significantly for us, (b) to build out the articulation, so that it could be continued around the corners. It is convenient for our calculations that the building-out of the articulation at either end of the palace is equivalent to about half the breadth of a pilaster (*ibid.*, tav. VIII.). Hence we shall not go far wrong in deriving an interaxial measurement (7 openings each with 2 columns and 2 half-piers) from the unarticulated facade.

the facade. Michelangelo evidently followed a late design by Raphael for the church (fig. 50).¹⁹⁸ There, the small columns bore a straight entablature, which I believe Michelangelo wanted anyway; the pilasters, embracing the upper storey, were set on pedestals; lastly, thin strips, flanking the pilasters (and corresponding to the mouldings of the pedestals), framed the central two-storeyed zone of the facade, and were continued across the top beneath the entablature. Michelangelo, following the scheme of the Conservatori courtyard, interspersed the pilasters regularly with the columns, and flanked them with strips (figs. 7, 14). He also lowered the pedestals, which, as we have seen, are related to those of the upper order of the courtyard. In so doing, he gave them proportions that are well adapted to the columns beside them. He had, of course, already employed the giant order on the exterior of Saint Peter's (fig. 51), and there had long been an interest in the motif.¹⁹⁹ What was to prove so significant at the Campidoglio was its application, at regular intervals, to a palace – and to one whose site, function, and architect gave it great prominence in Rome. No doubt Michelangelo had tried out other ideas too for the facade – such as the Laurentiana type of scheme on Parker 332 verso (fig. 29) – but stopped after realizing that, in the giant order, he had created a vehicle of great force, which he then proceeded to refine.

198 Frommel, 1973, I, 111; ARNALDO BRUSCHI, "Michelangelo in Campidoglio e l' 'invenzione' dell'ordine gigante", *Storia architettura*, IV, 1979, 24 n. 1. On Raphael's design, see Frommel in *Raffaello architetto*, ed. CHRISTOPH LUITPOLD FROMMEL, STEFANO RAY, MANFREDO TAFURI, Milan, 1984, 270–73.

199 There are precedents for the giant order even in the fifteenth century. Filarete's Cà del Duca, Venice, was probably to have giant columns at the corners: McAndrew (as note 178 above), 14, fig. 2.4; cp. the pilasters of Filarete's drawing, *ibid.*, fig. 2.3. The pilasters of the campanile of S. Spirito, Rome, embrace two levels of *bifore*: PIERO TOMEI, *L'architettura a Roma nel Quattrocento*, Rome, 1942, fig. 99. The Palazzo dei Drappieri, Bologna, built 1486–96, may almost be said to have a regularly spaced giant order on the ground floor – except that the upper windows are at the level of the blind arcading. On this palace see UMBERTO BESEGGI, *Palazzi di Bologna*, Bologna, 1957, 147–50, and NAOMI MILLER, *Renaissance Bologna*, New York, 1989, 106–7. Bramante's giant order for the exterior of S. Peter's undoubtedly increased interest in the motif. Frommel, 1973, I, 110–11, has pointed to precedents for Michelangelo's giant order in Raphael's project for his house on the Via Giulia, and in a design by Peruzzi for a palace facade. Serlio too was interested in the theme: JAMES S. ACKERMAN, review of Siebenhüner, *Art Bulletin*, XXXVIII, 1956, 54. The ground floor of Sanmicheli's Palazzo Grimani in Venice, though not treated with a giant order, is a remarkable anticipation of the Palazzo dei Conservatori: the minor order is fully developed, with an entablature, above which there are strips at the sides. On this palace, designed 1556–57, see LIONELLO PUPPI, *Michele Sanmicheli architetto: opera completa*, Rome, 1986, 171. Palladio's use of the giant order is discussed by HUBERTUS GÜNTHER, "Palladio e gli ordini di colonne," in *Andrea Palladio: nuovi contributi* (as note 174), 195.



51. V. Luchino after Michelangelo, *S. Peter's, elevation of exterior of south transept*, 1564

Let me return briefly to the possibility that Michelangelo designed only the facade, and that Della Porta then adapted the courtyard portico so as to take up the facade's central opening (fig. 13). It would have been a very remarkable piece of luck if Michelangelo had hit upon just the right facade system, and just the right openings, so as to produce, when taken into the courtyard, the perfectly formed bays that we see there (fig. 16). This is but one of several reasons for supposing that Michelangelo designed the courtyard portico. It was easy to get right at an early stage of the design; well-nigh impossible, later on.

The use of the giant order has, wrongly, been related to the structure of the palace. According to Ackerman, whose interpretation seems to be generally accepted, the structure is that of a skeletal frame, consisting of vertical piers and horizontal beams.²⁰⁰ The principle would essentially be that of the skyscraper. That cannot be so. A stone beam easily breaks, even under its own weight. Palladio was careful to advise that for any long span wood, not stone, should be used.²⁰¹ The only way Michelangelo's facade can stand up is according to the time-honoured principle of relieving arches, here all hidden. It must above all be a system of relieving arches that takes the weight off the stone lintels.

Even so, Michelangelo's spans in the facade and in the courtyard are remarkable; by the standards of the sixteenth century, they are something of a technological achievement, as the following table shows:

200 Ackerman, 1964, 67, and 1986, 155–56; De Angelis d'Ossat, *Pietrangeli*, 112 (diagram); Thies, 47, 154.

201 Palladio, I, 16.

Some Stones Architraves in Renaissance Italy

Date of design	Architect	Building	Span* in m.
1461?	Unknown	Cap. Pazzi, S. Croce, Florence portico	c. 1.60
1498	T. Malvito	Succorpo, Duomo, Naples	c. 2.70
c. 1514	A. da Sangallo	Vestibule, Pal. Farnese, Rome breadth of aisles	2.13
1532	B. Peruzzi	Pal. Massimo, Rome depth of front portico	3.27
1536/37	J. Sansovino	Library, Venice corner bays of portico	3.27
1536	J. Sansovino	Zecca, Venice breadth of entrance passage	3.45
c. 1561	Michelangelo	Pal. dei Conservatori, Rome depth of front portico	3.86

Architraves Bearing at Least one Walled Storey

1474/85	G. da Sangallo	Villa, Poggio a Caiano pedimented portico, outer intercolumniations	c. 2.10
1491	G. da Sangallo	S. M. Maddalena dei Pazzi, Florence atrium	1.66
1532	B. Peruzzi	Pal. Massimo, Rome front portico, outer intercolumniations	c. 1.20
1550	A. Palladio	Pal. Chiericati, Vicenza front portico, outer intercolumniations	c. 2.23
1559	A. Triacchini?	Pal. Vizzani, Bologna front portico	c. 2.14
1559	G. Vasari	Uffizi, Florence, front portico	c. 3.10
c. 1561	Michelangelo	Pal. dei Conservatori, Rome front of facade portico	3.30
		front of courtyard portico	3.40

* Taken at foot of wall or column bases.

The stone architrave had long been a source of fascination to Renaissance architects. As they grew more experienced in its use, they lengthened the span; by the 1530s, there even seems to have been some agreement about the maximum span, at least when the architrave was not to bear much weight. On facades, the use of long architraves was normally restricted by the need to support at least one walled storey above. In this respect, the Uffizi represents a major advance, of great significance for the building's antique credentials (fig. 12). Believing that he had rediscovered the method of the ancients, Vasari constructed flat relieving arches *inside* the entablature, and thus took the load off the architrave.²⁰²

How did Michelangelo achieve his even greater spans (fig. 18)? Unless a drastic restoration of the building is undertaken, the answer will never be certain; but it does seem likely that Michelangelo used Vasari's method. Almost certainly he had heard about the Uffizi from Vasari himself in April 1560. Then temporarily in Rome, Vasari wrote that he was visiting Michelangelo every day.²⁰³ At Duke Cosimo's request, he asked Michelangelo's opinion about certain projects for Florence: his own and Ammannati's projects for Palazzo Vecchio, and Ammannati's designs for the bridge of S. Trinita. The two friends rode to look at the problems Michelangelo was facing at S. Peter's. Surely Vasari, never unduly modest, found an opportunity to expatiate on the Uffizi – his chance of a lifetime – including its ingenious entablature. And surely Michelangelo, who was acting as a consultant for some of the Duke's projects on this occasion, would have asked what else was in hand. One may speculate whether hearing about the Uffizi did not kindle Michelangelo's interest in achieving something similar at the Campidoglio.

There is a strong sense, in the facade of the Conservatori, that Michelangelo is on his best behaviour – more so than in any other of his mature buildings.²⁰⁴ Yet at the same time certain details are included that serve as personal signatures of the architect.

The heights of two key features are related to each other by what is very nearly a simple ratio: the Ionic shaft is almost exactly half the height of the Corinthian (fig. 7). This is in keeping with the care taken over the relationships in height between the main facade and that of the courtyard. In the courtyard we now find that the total height, i.e. to the top of the balustrade, is twice that of the upper storey (including its continuous pedestal: figs. 16, 17). Nothing is left to chance.

With the Library and the Basilica in mind (figs. 9, 10), it may be worth asking why the two storeys of the Conservatori are not characterised by the Doric order below and the Ionic above; even the Uffizi, which has no order on the *piano nobile*, has a Doric ground floor (fig. 11). Michelange-

202 NELLO BEMPORAD, "Il complesso degli Uffizi di Firenze," *Quaderni dell'Istituto di Storia dell'Architettura*, XXIII, fasc. 133–38, 1976, figs. 16, 17 (analytical drawings). Compare the setting of the bricks behind the frieze of Poggio a Caiano, which load the architrave evenly at all points: Bardazzi, Castellani (as note 171 above), I, fig. 160. The windows in the mezzanine of the Uffizi reduce the weight of the loggia vault where it would be most perilous, in the centre of the spans.

203 GIORGIO VASARI, *Der literarische Nachlass*, ed. Karl Frey, 3 vols., Munich and Burg bei Magdeburg, 1923–40, I, 558–61.

204 Cp. Frommel, 1979, 82, who stresses the closeness of Michelangelo's facades at the Campidoglio to Bramante, Raphael, and Peruzzi.

lo's system is to set Ionic below and Corinthian above, a point made very clearly in the courtyard (figs. 14, 16). For its rationale we must look to the facade, bearing in mind Raphael's project for S. Peter's (fig. 50). Raphael's approach had been straightforward: the Corinthian giant order corresponds with the major order of the interior, while the Doric and Ionic storeys follow the convention for superposed orders. According to the same convention, the Doric order is somewhat higher than the Ionic. The progression of the orders, as regards their height, is thus: Ionic, Doric, Corinthian. At the Conservatori, Michelangelo decided that use of a giant order implied a hierarchy of heights (fig. 7). His giant order is once again Corinthian. However the immediately subordinate order is now Ionic, and the smallest order Doric. The Doric occurs in two hierarchically related forms: in the *piano nobile* windows, where the order is given fairly full expression, with half-columns, capitals and entablature; and in the doors of the loggia, which are shorter, and whose order consists of tapering pilasters and contracted detail. The orders are thus directly related to the hierarchy of heights. Michelangelo's approach represents a development, not just on Raphael's design for S. Peter's, but indeed on his own treatment of the flanks of that church (lower niches in a sort of Doric, upper aedicules Ionic, giant order Corinthian: fig. 51). At the Conservatori, Michelangelo's choice of orders derives from the sense of logic that is everywhere so powerful in the building.

In the *piano nobile* windows (figs. 6, 7), the spacing of the columns follows directly from that of the Ionic columns at the *end* of the loggia,²⁰⁵ a consonance which the attentive visitor would note on his way up to the square. The windows themselves are perhaps more orthodox than any Michelangelo had designed since 1520. Like many sixteenth-century windows, they are ultimately based on the aedicules of the Pantheon. In their setting against a broad area of brick wall, they recall the *piano nobile* windows of the facade of the Palazzo Farnese; significantly, Michelangelo enriches the type with a balustrade, as had Raphael (Palazzo dell'Aquila, Palazzo Pandolfini). The recession of the entablature above the opening not only establishes the plane of the wall, but greatly enhances the role of the Doric columns in the facade as a whole. Michelangelo had used a version of this window for the upper aedicules of the exterior of Saint Peter's; characteristically, the strange bat-like creature that appears in the pediment there, has been replaced by a more normal motif, a shell, which stands out with great clarity. It is significant that the fairly orthodox *piano nobile*



52. *Conservatori, facade, Ionic capital*

windows are given greater prominence than the more personal doors to the guild-rooms, which are obscured by the shadow of the loggia (fig. 18). But the doors are more than just bizarre: deriving from the tabernacles of the Laurentian Vestibule,²⁰⁶ they reflect Michelangelo's intense thought about the Doric order in his Library. There and in the Conservatori, they seem to represent a sort of sub-Doric, suitable for use on a relatively small scale in a Doric context.

The Ionic order is broader in the shaft than is usual, having the proportions of the Doric (fig. 18). The columns thus have a sturdiness suitable at once to the weight which they must bear, and to the great piers against which they are set. We are reminded that one reason for Vasari's use of the Doric for the ground-floor loggia of the Uffizi was precisely its sturdiness (though there his columns are surprisingly slender: fig. 12). Bramante too adapted the proportions of his columns to their position in the building.²⁰⁷ Michelangelo would in any case probably have justified his design by reference to "the judgment of the eye."²⁰⁸

206 De Angelis d'Ossat in De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 105, rightly connects them with Michelangelo's door to the Reliquary Balcony of San Lorenzo; which is, in most respects, identical to the tabernacles of the Vestibule.

207 Frommel, 1973, I, 32.

208 Cp. DAVID SUMMERS, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, Princeton, 1981, 368–79.

205 De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, tav. XIII (elevation).

The Ionic capitals illustrate Michelangelo's relation to the past rather well (fig. 52). The bells of the volutes hang down, in a way prefigured by the antique-inspired capitals of Santa Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi in Florence, designed by Giuliano da Sangallo (fig. 53).²⁰⁹ Very much as in Giuliano's capital, Michelangelo's volutes spring almost entirely from the echinus. However the volutes seem now to be formed of some pliable substance, and are twisted out on the diagonals, in the way we associate with a Composite capital; but there was again antique precedent for this, in the capitals of the Temple of Saturn in the Roman Forum. The type was sometimes employed in the fifteenth century, and had achieved a certain diffusion in the sixteenth, owing to Bramante's use of it in the second order of the Belvedere.²¹⁰ The abacus of Michelangelo's capital also derives from this type. The masks are one of his signatures.²¹¹ He had used the capitals before, on the upper aedicules of the exterior of Saint Peter's. At the Conservatori they appear to greater effect, their deeply carved volutes and capacious sagging bells offering far richer views from the raking angle of approach than a normal Ionic volute would. In these capitals, Michelangelo seems to acknowledge a debt to the antique, to other Renaissance architects, and to his own past, while choosing a form suitable to the site. His attitude is certainly personal; but it is not indecorous.

The pilaster order is fairly close to the classicising recommendations of Vignola, published in 1562.²¹² It is true that the emphatic cornice was designed by Della Porta in

209 On these capitals, see ANNA MARIA AMONACI, "Lo ionico di Giuliano da Sangallo," in *L'architettura di Lorenzo il Magnifico* (exhibition catalogue), Milan, 1992, 149–51.

210 CHRISTIANE DENKER NESSELRATH, *Die Säulenordnungen bei Bramante*, Worms, 1990, 62–64; PIER NICOLA PAGLIARA, "Vitruvio da testo a canone," in *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, ed. Salvatore Settis, 3 vols., Turin, 1984–86, III, 40, 43–44. Giulio Romano used similar capitals in the courtyard of Palazzo Stati: Frommel, 1973, III, Abb. 142a; and again (presumably) in the *piano nobile* windows of Palazzo Thiene, Vicenza: *Giulio Romano*, illustration on 503. Palladio twice used this type of capital, and Scamozzi very frequently.

211 GIUSEPPE ZANDER, "Un singolare capitello premichelangiolesco riferibile al pontificato di Sisto IV (1471–1484)," *Palladio*, n.s. I, n. 2, 1988, 137–42, discusses a capital that is very close to Michelangelo's, but contains a cherub's head with wings in place of the mask. While recognising that the type becomes frequent in Giacomo Della Porta and his followers (especially, one may add, in the area of Carlo Maderno), Zander argues that the capital derives from the tomb of Paul II, mostly because its measurements tally with his reconstruction of the tomb. Unfortunately he makes no allowance for the possibility of a coincidence. One specifically Michelangelesque feature of the Conservatori capital is the swag of laurel, a motif which Michelangelo invented for the Medici Chapel, and re-used in the Laurentian Vestibule, at S. Peter's, Palazzo Farnese, and the Porta Pia: *Michelangiolo architetto*, figs. 160, 165, 266, 625–26, 704, 811. Since Zander's capital shares this feature, in all likelihood it post-dates Michelangelo's work.



53. G. da Sangallo, *S. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi*, capital of atrium, Florence

1565; but it is unlikely, as we have seen, that he would seriously distort Michelangelo's intentions. We should note that the Ionic entablature, which was certainly designed by Michelangelo, falls well within the classical parameters.

Overall the facade is closer to the antique, and is more concerned with a traditional approach to decorum, than is any other building that Michelangelo had designed since 1520. It may be that, if we knew more about his model for San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, we should find a precedent for this attitude there. But I would argue that the examples of Sansovino's Library, the Basilica, and the Uffizi were critical in bringing to his attention the appropriate language for a major public building on the most revered and prestigious site of ancient Rome.

The Interior

It is exceptional for a courtyard to be so lavishly articulated as that of the Conservatori (fig. 16). Normally one would expect either columns or piers to be employed; certainly not both. Even the Palazzo Farnese does not boast more than piers with attached half-columns. In formal terms, the richness of the Conservatori courtyard stems from its employment of motifs intended for a facade – that of Ammannati's drawing, Uffizi 3422A (fig. 47) – and, more generally, from Michelangelo's desire that it should be closely related to the facade of the palace (fig. 6).

212 Compare de' Rossi (as in note 155), I, tavv. 5–7, with PIETRO CATANEO, GIACOMO BAROZZI DA VIGNOLA, *Trattati*, Milan, 1985, tav. XXI after 526.

Yet the courtyard has a very different character from the facade. Throughout, its proportions are broader. In the absence of the giant order, the lower entablature and the plinth above it are continuous, apart from slight projections, and thus play a much stronger horizontal role. At the same time, the grouped supports lead unambiguously to the lower entablature. The contrast between vertical members and horizontal members is straightforwardly expressed, and gains emphasis from the play of the very broad openings against the massive groups of supports. The long spans of the architrave achieve a poignancy that no other sixteenth-century example can match.

In his account of the palace, Vasari makes a curious mistake: Michelangelo, he says, designed it with “una ricca e varia facciata con una loggia da piè piena di colonne e nicchie, dove vanno molte statue antiche, ed attorno sono vari ornamenti di porte e finestre, che già n'è posto una parte.”²¹³ There is no room for niches in the front loggia; yet there are niches in the loggia on the north side of the courtyard. One of the niches has, as capital, the head of the bronze Etruscan wolf (seen from above!) which was preserved in the palace and served as a good antique symbol of the Commune (figs. 23, 54). The boldness of the idea, and other features of the niche, are far easier to parallel in Michelangelo's work than in Della Porta's.²¹⁴ I would argue that these are probably some of the niches to which Vasari refers. Presumably, then, had the loggias been built on the three other sides of the courtyard, according to the Albertina project, they too would have been lined with niches (even though they are not shown in the Albertina drawing: fig. 35).

Vasari's words suggest that the purpose of the niches was to contain antique statues from the collection of the Commune. And, as Hedberg has noted, that seems likely.²¹⁵ For the courtyard already served to display part of the collection to the public, a role which was considered important.²¹⁶ Ideally, then, a project for the courtyard would take the display of statues into account. In 1584 a statue of Diana was placed in the niche with the wolf capitals.²¹⁷ When Clement XI built his portico at the south



54. *Conservatori, niche in groin-vaulted bay next to staircase vestibule, wolf capital*

end of the courtyard in 1719–20, it was for the display of some statues which he had donated to the Commune. At the same time he made plans for loggias on the east and west sides of the courtyard, “whose design is to be uniform with that of Michelangelo,” i.e. with the north portico. Against the walls of the porticoes he intended to set further statues. But the Pope's plans came to nothing, for he died in 1721.²¹⁸

The statue collection of the Commune mattered in the Renaissance, since it was seen as a visible reminder of the Roman People's great past.²¹⁹ Some of the statues could

216 In 1515, the three reliefs deriving from the Arch of Marcus Aurelius were transported “in hunc publicum locum,” as an inscription attests: A. MICHAELIS, “Storia della collezione capitolina di antichità fino all'inaugurazione del museo (1734),” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts*, VI, 1891, 24–25. In 1548, a decree of the *Consiglio Pubblico* having required that the Fasti should be placed “in luoco che da tutti si possan vedere et leggere,” the courtyard was chosen: Bedon, 76.

217 Pecchiai, 144–45.

218 Liebenwein, 75–82.

219 On the Commune's statues, see Siebenhüner, especially 37–63; Budensieg; Ebert-Schifferer, 108–22.

213 Vasari, VII, 222.

214 De Angelis d'Ossat in De Angelis d'Ossat, Pietrangeli, 109, connects Vasari's phrase with the courtyard, and continues: “E le due incorniciature possono indurre a qualche positiva considerazione, specie per le protomi di lupa, tipiche interpretazioni dall'antico . . .” For the wolf capitals with a swag below, one may compare the lion's heads, also with a swag below, in the upper windows of the Farnese courtyard. The use of panelled pilasters in combination with quasi-capitals is also typical of Michelangelo.

215 Hedberg, 70.

also stand as edifying examples of virtue. And the enlargement of the collection in the sixteenth century would have reflected on the magnificence of the Commune, as it would for a private collector.²²⁰ Outside, in the piazza, Michelangelo had been concerned with the display of three key pieces of the Commune's collection, the *Marcus Aurelius* and the *River Gods* (fig. 4); now, in the courtyard, he hoped to display many of the other pieces. It was appropriate that in antiquity porticoes had been used for this purpose.²²¹ Had the courtyard been completed as I have proposed, it would have provided a setting of unrivalled dignity for a major display of antique sculpture (figs. 16, 35). Like the facade, it would have stressed the links of the site, and indeed the Commune, with antiquity.

Michelangelo's modifications to the palace show two main concerns: to make it convenient, and to make it magnificent. He achieved the first above all with his new staircase, which is covered, well lit, and of easy gradient (figs. 13, 39). The north portico of the courtyard provided covered access to it; and on the *piano nobile* it led directly to the Prima Sala. For all this, as we have seen, Michelangelo followed the example of the most highly regarded Roman palace of the Renaissance, the Palazzo Farnese.

But it was the possibilities for magnificence that especially captured his imagination. An extraordinary number of columns were to be used, not just outside, where they were sanctioned by his models, but also inside, where there was less precedent. Their use, particularly in the rear wall of the courtyard portico, and in the staircase vestibule, can only be described as extravagant. His intention was that the route to the staircase in effect be lined with columns. Nowhere is this more effective than in the staircase vestibule (fig. 23; cp. figs. 22, 24): the half-inset columns press forward from the walls, affecting the visitor's perception of the tightly confined space through which he must move. The stuccoes in the vaults of the staircase vestibule and the two landings (fig. 40), which here perhaps appear for the first time in a Roman staircase,²²² again emphasize the magnificence of the palace; one wonders if the idea does not come from Sansovino's richly decorated stairs in the Library and the Doges' Palace, Venice (fig. 49).²²³ And Michelangelo seems to have been responsible for the grand

proportions of the two large meeting halls at the front of the *piano nobile* (fig. 41).

With hindsight, it appears that Michelangelo's grand design probably provided more magnificence than the Roman People wished to pay for. We have noted that the extended courtyard of the Albertina drawing was still mooted in 1576 (fig. 35); yet nothing known about the functioning of the palace suggests that it would have answered a practical purpose. Again, there was an excellent reason for not remodelling guild-rooms 4, 5, and 6 according to Michelangelo's project: perfectly good walls existed in roughly the right positions already. It even seems that the Albertina drawing would have required a substantial thinning – and so perhaps demolition – of the long south wall of the Prima Sala. The answer is probably that Michelangelo, knowing that his grand design would be followed only in ideal conditions, took care that the more important work should still be realisable with some compromises to the design. Even so, the very existence of the grand design indicates a desire to create a masterpiece that would be perfect in every detail. This attitude may in turn suggest why many members of the Roman People were opposed to Michelangelo's project.

The Square

For a piazza three of whose four sides are different, the Campidoglio creates a remarkably unified effect (fig. 4). That is partly due to its strong axial organisation, and partly to the employment of repeated motifs. The regularly-spaced giant order unites the three palaces; according to Dupérac's engravings, the windows of the Senatore were to reproduce those of the Conservatori. The three palaces are crowned with balustrades supporting statues; on the entrance side, too, there is a balustrade with statues. So tight is the unity, that one perhaps does not think to ask for which of the buildings these motifs might have been invented. Yet our examination has traced the giant order to a problem faced at the Conservatori (and some other scholars, for other reasons, would agree)²²⁴. The idea of crowning a balustrade with statues was also probably developed

220 Ebert-Schifferer, 120–22. For the growth in the collection, see Lanciani, II, 77–94.

221 Liebenwein, 100.

222 Frommel, 1973, I, 64, cites the stuccoed staircase landings of the Conservatori and Palazzo Mattei di Giove as examples of a new tendency towards rich decoration. I do not know of any earlier instances in Rome.

223 The staircases were done in collaboration with Alessandro Vittoria. The stucco decoration of the Scala d'Oro in the Doges' Palace was applied during 1558–59; the contract (with Vittoria) for the decoration of the staircase of the Library is dated February 1559: Boucher (as note 178 above), I, 153–54; II, figs. 421, 432.

224 Ackerman, 1986, 159; and, implicitly, Thies, especially 97.



55. G. Vasari, *Uffizi, plan of ground floor, Florence.* (Bemporad, 1976)

for that palace, since it appears in the Library and the Basilica, cognate structures of the Conservatori. Whether Michelangelo was initially commissioned to produce a project for the palace or for the piazza, we cannot say; but it does seem as if the design of certain key aspects of the piazza was first elaborated for the Conservatori. What is more, the close connection between the facade and the courtyard of the palace suggests that if we neglect the courtyard, we cannot hope to understand Michelangelo's piazza. Indeed we see in each the same lavishness, the same demand for tightness of design.

The strong axial organisation of the piazza produces what Ackerman has called a "crescendo of forms," ending in the Palazzo del Senatore.²²⁵ It is perhaps natural to con-

sider this palace the main building in formal terms; Gthlein and Frommel have even argued that Michelangelo's design implies the political superiority of the Senator, as the pope's representative, over the Roman People.²²⁶ But it is hard to see how else Michelangelo could have dealt with the great bulk of the palace, so prominently sited. It provided the obvious main axis for the square.

Our view would stress the significance of the Palazzo dei Conservatori. The palace is more than a facade designed to flank a piazza; it houses the civic government of Rome (and its facade would make no sense if it did not). Inside, it contains fine meeting-rooms and what should have been a magnificent courtyard. The Doges' Palace provides a convenient parallel. Its siting is similar, in relation to a visitor

225 Ackerman, 1986, 141.

226 Gthlein, 94-95; Frommel (as in n. 46), 62-64.

arriving at the Piazzetta from the Grand Canal. It too has both a porticoed exterior and a porticoed courtyard. And it too is a government building, serving *inter alia* for council meetings. Though its facade may count as magnificent piazza architecture, knowledge of the interior of the building and of its functions is needed if we are to appreciate its full role in the Piazzetta. One wonders if Michelangelo did not indeed have the Doges' Palace in mind, as he must have had Sansovino's Library opposite. At the Conservatori, even before the remodelling, the courtyard served somewhat as an extension of the piazza and front loggia, each displaying antique statues which fortified the Commune's sense of its own identity.²²⁷ If we now reconstruct Michelangelo's combined project for palace and piazza, we find that it seems to depend on precisely that *concetto*. The public architecture of the courtyard echoes the public architecture of the piazza, because they may be thought to serve the same functions: the display of statues and, more generally, the representation of the Commune. Without such a justification, the courtyard, for all its formal interest, hardly makes sense as part of a serious design.

The piazza owes much of its effect to the way the facades are treated. Porticoed buildings on squares were, of course, no novelty; what was remarkable at the Campidoglio was that the ground-floor porticoes should consist of trabeated, not arched, openings (fig. 6). Prior to the Campidoglio, Palladio's Palazzo Chiericati in Vicenza and the Uffizi are the only significant examples of this type of piazza architecture (fig. 11). With Michelangelo's rectilinear elevations goes a severely planar treatment of their surfaces, in sharp contrast to the Library and the Basilica (figs. 9, 10). We have noted that the columns of the loggias are set where they cannot disturb the reading of the piers and pilasters; only the half-columns of the *piano nobile* windows provide a slight, but effective, plastic accent. The sense of restrained richness that results is characteristic of the Campidoglio.

The giant order receives both richness and prominence from its flanking strips. Its scale is such as to dominate the piazza, in a manner that no previous Renaissance facade had achieved. In projecting the tight organisation of the facades across the square, it controls the visitor's awareness to a remarkable degree. No wonder it was taken up in the *places royales* and in Fascist architecture.

If the piazza has a regimented quality, that is also due to its character as a government square. With its strict symmetry and repeated motifs, it appears to have been designed as a piece, in response to a set goal. Crucial to this

effect is the Palazzo Nuovo, whose role becomes clearer when it is compared with the Loggia of the Servites in Piazza Santissima Annunziata, Florence. That loggia seems to have been built simply for the sake of formal symmetry, to balance the earlier Loggia degli Innocenti opposite. The Loggia degli Innocenti had been erected as part of a hospital; the later loggia merely screens a row of houses built for rent.²²⁸ The Palazzo Nuovo does not seem to have been conceived in such simple terms. Certainly, it was meant to provide a formal balance to the Conservatori; but it was surely also intended to fulfil similar administrative or executive functions. Though the practical value of the rooms on the *piano nobile* was probably slight, they needed only a notional purpose connected with the Commune to be suitable to the theme of the piazza. At the Campidoglio, there was to be not only symmetry of design, but also symmetry of use, lending the whole a remarkable consistency as a seat of government.

The governmental quality of the square is stressed by the close-set row of pedimented doorways, which forms such a striking feature of the loggias of the two palaces (fig. 19). In the Library and the Basilica, *botteghe* occupy this position. In the old Palazzo dei Conservatori, some or all of the rooms behind the front loggia served as offices of guilds;²²⁹ but, as we have noted, only one of them seems to have opened onto the loggia. Michelangelo's dignified doorways made it very clear that the rooms behind did not serve for commercial use, as would *botteghe*. Moreover, by repeating the arrangement in the Palazzo Nuovo, he in effect surrounded the square with guild-chambers at ground level (fig. 3). In so doing, he not only systematized the offices of at least some of the guilds, but gave them a formal role in the organisation of the square which they had not had before.

The role given to the guilds, and the governmental quality of the square as a whole, are strongly reminiscent of the Uffizi (figs. 11, 55). The ground floor of Vasari's building was designed to house the offices of thirteen guilds and magistracies, which open onto loggias that give onto the long narrow square. The reason officially stated for thus grouping these offices together was that it was more convenient for members of the public to conduct their business all in one place, than to have to go to several.²³⁰ Giorgio Vasari the Younger, in a variation on his uncle's building,

228 Lotz, 81–82, 86. See also CAROLINE ELAM, "Lorenzo de' Medici and the Urban Development of Renaissance Florence," *Art History*, I, 1978, 43–66.

229 Rodocanachi, 169.

230 Lessmann, 20–27.

227 Cp. Ebert-Schifferer, 114–22.

even proposed that for this reason all the tribunals of a city should be grouped around its main square.²³¹ However above the arch at the end of the Uffizi, the building's ideals are stated rather differently: a statue of Duke Cosimo de' Medici surmounts reclining figures of Equity and Rigour.²³² In other words, the Duke ensures a just administration for his subjects. Michelangelo's proposed grouping of some of the guilds of Rome around the main civic square could be justified in terms of convenience and of just administration – in this case, overseen by the Commune. The idea presumably goes back to the Uffizi.²³³

Though the Uffizi served both the needs of the guilds and those of the Duke (in the *piano nobile* and upper storey),²³⁴ its dominant iconography is that of a civic building, and a civic square.²³⁵ The implication is that the square is entirely devoted to administrative functions. There is in addition a striking symmetry of design, encompassing three sides of the piazza. Rather as at the Palazzo Nuovo, it may even have been necessary to build some rooms which had little practical function, in order to achieve regularity.²³⁶ The Uffizi was thus the first square to combine some of the key features through which Michelangelo characterised the Campidoglio as a seat of government.

The Uffizi was intended to evoke an ancient forum – specifically, the Forum of Augustus.²³⁷ Like the Campidoglio, it consists of a square with porticoes around, off which open rooms; so it meets certain minimum requirements. But probably the most important signifier was that the

columns bear a straight entablature, not arches. The Campidoglio shares these features. With the equestrian statue in the centre, the square even bears a similarity to the Forum of Trajan, as Buddensieg has pointed out; although, in my view, to say that it was intended as a re-creation of that particular forum goes beyond what the evidence will bear.²³⁸ But it remains highly probable that Michelangelo found the forum-like aspects of the Uffizi valuable in conceiving his “reconstruction” of the ancient Area Capitolina.

Behind Michelangelo's overall project for the Campidoglio lies a search for an architectural language appropriate to a major civic palace and a major civic square. Though he is nowadays often treated implicitly as an isolated genius, too exalted to be interested in the ideas of his contemporaries, we have found that he studied them keenly. From other major civic buildings he acquired the vocabulary of magnificence – the use of many columns, balusters and statues – and a remarkable emphasis on intricate, ingenious design. He gave the interior of the palace a convenience based on the finest private palace in Rome. For the conception of a square devoted to the duties of government, he looked to the Uffizi. In many ways he surpassed his models – for instance in his conception of a palace whose interior is tightly related to its exterior, or in his use of the giant order. In the square as a whole, the theme of civic government is developed with an amplitude that has no equal. And the whole is imbued with a respect for antiquity that does not derive just from his models, but is also a response to the Roman People in its seat on the Capitol.

231 Morrogh, 67–68.

232 Lessmann, 215–20. ROGER J. CRUM, “‘Cosmos, the World of Cosimo:’ The Iconography of the Uffizi Facade,” *Art Bulletin*, LXXI, 1989, 237–53, explores the iconography. Crum's restriction of the term “facade” to the end block of the Uffizi is methodologically very dubious.

233 It is possible that Michelangelo proposed a rather similar treatment of the Piazza della Signoria during the 1540s: see Morrogh, 21. But the available evidence strongly suggests that the theme of the square lined with government offices was first elaborated in detail for the Uffizi. Given the other connections between the Uffizi and the Campidoglio, it is more than likely that in this instance too Michelangelo looked to Vasari's building. It should be pointed out that Lessmann, 150–54, has examined the parallels between the Uffizi and

the Campidoglio. However, since she dates Michelangelo's overall project for the Campidoglio earlier than the Uffizi, she sees the influences as coming rather from the Campidoglio. See also Thies, 201–3.

234 Lessmann, 20–23; Morrogh, 43.

235 *Ibid.*, 45–47.

236 The rooms next to the *piano nobile* facades may fall into this category: cp. *ibid.*, 43.

237 *Ibid.*, 46; Crum (as n. 232).

238 Buddensieg, 214. The Campidoglio's resemblance to Trajan's Forum, as shown in a drawing by Ligorio after a coin, is generic. Buddensieg's proposal becomes less attractive if Michelangelo's overall project is thought to postdate the erection of the *Marcus Aurelius* by more than twenty years.

Note. It is essential to study Ammannati's drawings in good photographs or in the original. The reproductions in Fossi are of poor quality.

The Plans for the Medici Palace at Pisa

Ammannati's plans for an enlarged Medici palace at Pisa have received very little study (but see most recently Morrogh, 34, 47–48; and CORINNA VASIC VATOVEC, "La residenza dei Medici a Pisa nel Cinquecento," in *L'architettura a Roma e in Italia (1580–1621)*, 2 vols., 1989, II, 17–26). The group consists of the following drawings at the Uffizi: 3409A, 3410A, 3411A, 3444A, 3446A, a study on 3442A verso, and just possibly 3412A (for 3411A, see my fig. 46; all are reproduced in Fossi, 1970). To these may be added two drawings by the amateur Giovan Vittorio Soderini, who seems to have had some connection with Ammannati: the unpublished 2671A, and the plan on the left of 2672A verso (MARIA TERESA LAZZARINI and RICCARDO LORENZI, in *Livorno e Pisa: due città e un territorio nella politica dei Medici*. Pisa, 1980 [exh. cat.], A. XVI.12a; for the attribution see Morrogh, 69, 71–72). All the plans were intended for the site next to San Matteo. Most measure between 60.50 and 62.50 m. across. The sketch on 3442A verso, representing what I take to be half the facade, seems to indicate that the palace could be 64.20 m. (110 braccia) in breadth. It is just conceivable, then, that the plan of 3412A, which is so closely related to the plans for Pisa but has a breadth of 67.60 m., may also be for that palace; at all events I no longer see good reason to associate it with the site of the Uffizi.

Deprived of this support, the dating of the group must depend partly on Bandinelli's letter of May 1558, indicating that the Duchess intended to enlarge the Medici Palace at Pisa (quoted by Vasic Vatovec, as above) and partly on connections with 3422A, for the Pitti, which must have been drawn before June 1560. 3442A verso shows, along with the sketch for Pisa, a preparatory sketch for 3422A, suggesting that the two were drawn about the same time.

Of especial interest is the sub-group comprising 3411A, 3412A, and 3446A. 3446A was evidently the first of these plans, for it shows several features at an early stage of their development. The wall bounding the first courtyard on the right was initially drawn as two continuous parallel lines in black chalk. Later the central portion was erased, and two columns inserted; but neither at left nor at right did Ammannati give a final form to what remained of the wall. 3411A (fig. 46) and 3412A show two more fully worked-out approaches to the matter. In its initial stage, 3446A was drawn without the U-shaped courtyard at the end. Later the sheet was trimmed along the rear wall of the palace, and a new piece of paper attached, on which the two end wings were drawn. However since the disposition of what had become the intermediate block allowed no easy access to the end courtyard, Ammannati outlined (in stylus) an *androne* connecting the two courtyards. This, and some other features drawn in stylus,

were taken over into 3411A, which corrects obvious weaknesses of the earlier drawing; so it was probably drawn very shortly afterwards. In 3411A, Ammannati created a third loggia in the end courtyard, and (at a late point in the design) added the two small rooms beyond this courtyard. 3412A represents an offshoot of 3411A.

3422A was derived either from 3411A or, less likely, from 3412A (figs. 47, 46). The three plans show the same grouping of courtyards and the same disposition of the rooms in the projecting wings. However in 3422A Ammannati has completely altered the circulation patterns of the palace. Certain features demonstrate that the end courtyard has become a forecourt. Always concerned to establish a hierarchy of entrances for a building, Ammannati has dignified the U-shaped courtyard and the adjacent *androne* with a very rich employment of columns. It is only from the end of the *androne* that the two staircases opening off the square courtyard appear symmetrical, as Ammannati would have wanted; for that is the arrangement in his model, Palazzo Strozzi, and again in his own 3420A (Fossi, 143, fig.). The staircase starting from the U-shaped courtyard is the main one: access to it is under cover, while that to the other two staircases is not; it has the double landing typical of a major staircase; the steps at its foot are more elaborate than for the other staircases. The siting of this staircase again implies that the main entrance to the palace was to be through the adjacent courtyard. We seem to see a trace of this mode of access in the forecourt and entrance loggia of 3412A.

The Plans for the Pitti Palace

For the purposes of the present article, it is important to establish a *terminus ante quem* for Uffizi 3422A (fig. 47). If it was drawn for the Pitti, as I suggested in 1985, then it would date before June 1560, when excavations started for Ammannati's enlargement to the palace; for by that date the main lines of the final plan had surely been decided upon (Morrogh, 47–51; MAZZINO FOSSI, *Bartolommeo Ammannati architetto*, Cava dei Tirreni, n.d., 48). I now believe it possible to make a much stronger case for the drawing's connection with the Pitti, and thus for dating it prior to June 1560. 3415A and 4522A, which I have related to the Pitti (Morrogh, 51–56), provide some basis for discussing 3422A; but more valuable will be 3419A and 3445A recto and verso (Fossi, 146–47, 148–49, 228–29).

3445A recto is for the second floor of a very large palace (c. 86×96 m. in area). Within an overall symmetry, it contains striking asymmetries, suggesting that the practical side of the project was important. The many annotations confirm the impression that the plan was intended for a specific great household, with rooms for eighteen "gentiluomini", a dormitory and a possible school-room for pages, and both an oratory and a chapel. Among Ammannati's known projects, only his three sets of proposals for Duke Cosimo de' Medici – the palace in Pisa, a palace on the site

of the Uffizi, and the enlargement of the Pitti – come at all close to the scope of this design. The emphasis on outward-facing loggias would tend to suggest the Pitti. (See the reconstruction of FIORELLA BOTTAI, “Bartolommeo Ammannati: una reggia per il granducato di Toscana,” *Antichità viva*, XVIII, 1979, nos. 5–6, 32–47, fig. 24. Not shown are two small loggias in the south wall of the palace.) We should note that the disposition of the grand staircase implies that the main entrance would be situated below the large saloon. This arrangement and certain other features reappear in 3419A, evidently for the same palace (which now measures 76.5×93.4 m. in area); the design is presumably for the *piano nobile*. 3445A verso shows a sketch for a ground-floor loggia, whose plan is close to two of the loggias in 3419A. This time the large-scale employment of rusticated columns strongly suggests the Pitti. On the coat of arms above the door rests a shallow oval, representing probably the ducal coronet of Cosimo de’ Medici. Against the balustrade, a further shield contains a small circle, seemingly distinct from the balusters: if this reading is correct, the circle would represent one of the balls of the Medici arms.

The inscription on 3422A characterizes the plan as suitable both for a royal palace and for a villa (“Reale. Pianta n.o 11 e prima della villa”). The plan’s overall measurements (70.4×102 m., according to the more realistic of the two scales marked on the sheet) show that it could not have served for the site at Pisa, but might have done so for that of the Uffizi. However the plan’s villa-like properties render it peculiarly suitable for the Pitti. The approach is through a forecourt and loggia, as at the Farnesina. The main staircase is reached directly from the entrance loggia, implying some sort of outer enclosure to control access. The *androne*, which is entirely lined by columns, and can thus contain no door, points to the same conclusion. For these aspects, Palazzo Barberini in Rome provides adequate parallels (cp. also Uffizi 3424A, by Ammannati, which shows the enclosing wall: Fossi, 167, fig.).

More specific connections with the Pitti are the size of the courtyard, and the broad saloons opening onto it. The courtyard of the present palace measures, in the clear, c. 38.70×50 m.; those of 3422A, 3419A, and 3445A respectively 36.10, 35.90, and 37.60 m. square (cp. FERDINANDO RUGGIERI, *Studio di architettura civile*, 4 vols., Florence, 1722–28, III, pl. 4). 3422A’s derivation from 3411A or 3412A suggests that, wishing to create a larger courtyard for the Pitti than he had for the palace at Pisa, Ammannati suppressed the loggias and set the columns directly against the walls (which he moved further apart). It would seem that the resulting open space established the exceptional breadth of the Pitti courtyard.

A peculiarity of the Quattrocento block of the Pitti was that the vestibule took the form of a large *salone*-like room, 10.40 m. deep and 22.50 m. across. This feature appears in no less than four of the plans which there are independent grounds for connecting with the Pitti, though always somewhat larger in size. In 3415A, the room is in the centre of the facade, but measures 13.10×21.80 m. In 3445A, the corresponding room, again in the centre of the facade, measures 15.80×25.70 m. The related room in 3419A is 25.10 m. in breadth. However it has been divided with a partition, and extended forward beyond the line of the facade; for us, the relevant measurement is the depth of the room next to it, 15.80 m. In 3422A, there are corresponding rooms on the cross axis of the square courtyard. Originally, that on the right was drawn without the partition, and with a wall instead of the exterior line of columns. It measured 13.10×23.50 m., falling easily within the parameters of the *salone*-like rooms of the other drawings. In its later version, with the partition and loggia, it evidently served as the basis for 3419A (as, probably, did its measurements according to the second, less realistic scale: 14.30×25.70 m.). 3422A is thus integral to the series of the drawings for the Pitti.

The forecourt would presumably face north, towards the centre of the city. For access, it would require a new road from the direction of Via Guicciardini, whose relationship to the putative outer enclosure is not clear. The portico on the right side of the plan would tie up, more or less, with the front wall of the vestibule of the original palace.

One last problem is that 3422A, like 3415A, 3419A and 3445A, would have required the substantial demolition of the original block of the Pitti, including even its splendidly rusticated facade. However it is typical of Ammannati’s plans that they should serve at once as proposals for actual buildings, and as ideal types for inclusion in the architectural treatise he planned to publish. Often they appear extravagant and impractical when one takes the constraints of a particular project into account. In this Ammannati was rather like Palladio, who could make superb but highly problematic proposals for the Rialto bridge (Burns, 125–26; DONATELLA CALABI, PAOLO MORACHIELLO, *Rialto: le fabbriche e il Ponte*, Turin, 1987, 222–32, figs. 79–80). Even so, his plans for the Pitti had great practical value, for they provided him with ideas that he took up or developed in the final design: the courtyard’s scale, its rustication (3445A verso), its integration with the hill behind (4522A), the openness of the building to the exterior at the upper levels (3445A, 3419A), the main staircase (3415A, then 3445A and 3419A).

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