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A NEW ATTRIBUTION TO VIGNOLA: A DORIC PORTAL OF 1547 IN
THE PALAZZO COMUNALE IN BOLOGNA

In the first courtyard of Bologna's Palazzo Comunale stands an impressive Renaissance portal decoration built of sandstone that has been variously attributed to Sebastiano Serlio and to Galeazzo Alessi. Despite long interest in these architects, however, the attributions have never been critically tested, and so remain unresolved. The aim of this note will be to settle the authorship question which, in the absence of conclusive written documentation, must be done by looking into the historical context of the work and by giving it an attentive philological reading. The results urge ascribing the design to yet a third and better known architect, Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola. Once securely given to him, the portal in Bologna will deserve attention as one of Vignola's earliest known artistic productions, casting new light on the origins of his architectural thought¹.

I

The door decoration rises against the shadowy west wall of the court, beneath a wide vaulted Quattrocento arcade² (Fig. 1). Measuring more than three meters wide and over seven high, the portal boasts of two finely articulated registers: an architectural framework of two free-standing monolithic columns backed by pilasters carrying a Doric entablature, and a symmetrical pair of rampant lions holding banners and a large strapwork escutcheon bearing the arms of the Comune. The registers are carefully coordinated: the architecture embellishes the door and acts as a

monumental pedestal for the free-standing lions, which step off from over the columns and flank a field equal in width to the aperture below. The formal unity of the design leaves little doubt that the portal was planned of a piece and by one artist.

The door's commission and date are known from a crumbling but still legible inscription located between the cornice and the coat-of-arms: TRIBVNORVM PLEBIS / M.D. XLVII / TERTIO QVADRIMESTRI. This refers to the Tribune della Plebe, also called the Gonfalonieri del Popolo, a judicial body composed of sixteen men elected to four-month terms of office. The door gave access to a low corridor, now closed, leading to their official chambers³. To either side are two small rooms, undoubtedly once prison cells⁴, lighted by the barred windows flanking the door⁵. The inscription assures us that the decoration was completed in 1547 during the third term of the Tribune, which is to say between 8 September 1547 and 6 January 1548. However it seems the work was begun slightly earlier. In the acts of the Bolognese Senate there is recorded a payment requisition for construction in these quarters which is dated 6 August

1 A portion of this paper was first presented in an informal *Kolloquium* held in the Bibliotheca Hertziana in April 1974. I am particularly grateful for criticism and suggestions received on that occasion. Special thanks I owe to Dr. Christof Thoenes for numerous insights, and to Prof. Wolfgang Lotz for much information and encouragement.

2 A comprehensive history of this important palace has yet to be written. For the *primo cortile* see F. CAVAZZA, Il palazzo del Comune in Bologna, in: *ArchStorArte* 3 (1890) 107–118, and F. MALAGUZZI VALERI, *L'architettura a Bologna nel Rinascimento*, Rocca S. Casciano 1899, 42–44, and Tavola III.

3 The low vaults in the rooms immediately behind this wall resulted from the insertion under Julius II of the great Bramantesque *cordonata* which rises diagonally at the level of the portal's upper register. See G.N.P. ALIDOSI, *Istruzione delle cose notabili della città di Bologna*, Bologna 1621, 117f. An idea of the layout of these rooms can be had from a plan of the palace prepared by the city's Ufficio Tecnico, published in the exhibition catalogue *Bologna, Centro Storico*, Bologna 1968, 246.

4 In the room to the left is a plaque, undoubtedly once on the exterior, on which is inscribed: DOM / QVOD CARCERIBVS INSE-
VIEBAT / DIVO IVSTO / MM. DD. TRIB. VLT. QVADR. / DICARVNT.
AC ORNAN. / CVRARVNT. / ANN. MDLXXXIII / IVS SVVM CVIO.
TRIBVNTO.

5 The two window frames carry identical inscriptions reading CANCEL. DD. TRIB. P. QVADRIM. ANNI MDCII., and their installation in 1602 must have coincided with extensive interior redecoration because on the architrave of the Doric portal we find incised AVRO ET PICTA ORNATA P°. QVADRIM. MDCII.

1547⁶. It is almost certain, therefore, that the project was initiated by the Tribune della Plebe during the second term.

Local tradition maintains that the door was designed by Serlio⁷, an attribution precluded by the work's date. At this moment Serlio was in France, where he had resided since 1541 and would remain until his death in 1554/5⁸. No evidence has come to light which might suggest that he revisited Italy or that he was employed by his native Bologna during this period. It is known that the architect worked for the Tribune della Plebe, however this can only have been considerably earlier in his career⁹. Stylistically no convincing parallels are found in his famous *Libro Sesto*, on doors, and Serlian decoration rarely, if ever, features free-standing columns or large-scale sculpture of this kind.

Guido Zucchini proposed the second attribution, to Alessi¹⁰; however it too must be discarded and on similar grounds. In 1547 Alessi was practicing in Perugia¹¹. In addition, in the early 1550's, when Alessi produced a door decoration for the same courtyard in Bologna, we find a profoundly different solution to the same problem (Fig. 2). Alessi's portal is conceived as a system of Sangallesque components set within the wall, not projecting as a semi-autonomous structure in front of it. From Antonio da San-

gallo the Younger, who was the most important influence on the formation of Alessi, comes the singular idea of running together lintel and inclined jambs in a molding whose profile recalls that of an Ionic entablature. The work is arresting by virtue of an imaginative combining of single large elements, while the portal of 1547 impresses us as a more carefully thought-out structure in which more delicately rendered details are rigorously controlled by the logic of classical rules¹².

II

One need not look far in the city to discover a more suitable candidate for the commission. Among the architects in Bologna at this time, none was more prominent, prestigious and enterprising than Vignola. From September 1543 onward he had been employed by the city's magistrates as architect and engineer of the civic Basilica of S. Petronio, a position he abandoned only toward the end of 1549¹³. In August 1547, when the refurbishment of the quarters of the Tribune seems to have been planned, the most powerful member of that body was Count Filippo Pepoli, President and perpetual administrator of the Fabbrica of S. Petronio¹⁴. Pepoli had signed on Vignola at the Basilica and it is reasonable to suppose that he could have been responsible for calling him in for the Palazzo Comunale job. Moreover, in September 1547 Vignola petitioned for and immediately obtained a commission from the Bolognese Senate to rebuild a bridge across the river Samoggia between Bologna and Modena¹⁵, an initiative that strongly suggests the architect was striving to secure building opportunities at just the moment in which the Tribune della Plebe decided to embellish the entrance to their chambers. In such a situation, it is hardly conceivable that the Tribune would have sought another architect, or that Vignola would have let slip by this kind of public commission.

6 Bologna, Archivio di Stato, Arch. del Reggimento (Senato), Libri Partitorum 21, fol. 134 recto (6 August 1547): "*Expensa p. ornamento Residentie Tribunalium plebis. Item. In supplementum cum fabricae, tum ornamentis Residentiae palatinae noviter aedificatae Magistratus Tribunalium plebis Mandarunt p. fab. alb. xxvi nigra q. dissolui et numerari de pecunijs extraordinarijs camerae libras centum quadriginta octo. bon.s contrarijs omnibus abrogatis* - - - £ 148."

7 A. BOLOGNINI AMORINI, *Elogio di Sebastiano Serlio*, Bologna 1823, 3; *ibid.*, *Vite dei Pittori e Artefici Bolognesi I*, Bologna 1841, 116; A. MAGGIORE, *Intorno alla Vita e l'Opere di Sebastiano Serlio Architetto Bolognese*, Ancona 1824, 35, 73. The attribution is thereafter repeated in most guidebooks; see note 10 below.

8 W. B. DINSMOOR, *The Literary Remains of Sebastiano Serlio*, in: *ArtBull* 24 (1942), 55, 76.

9 In his Seventh Book, Serlio discusses vaulting techniques with the help of three examples drawn from his own experience. The first of these involved working in *alcune camere pe'l confalonieri* in Bologna and the second and third were in Pesaro and in Paris (S. SERLIO, *Tutte l'opere d'Architettura et Prospettiva*, Venice 1619, Libro settimo, Cap. 41, 98). If, as would seem, these examples are given in chronological order, then Serlio's work in the Palazzo Comunale in Bologna must pre-date his visit to Pesaro of around 1511-14. See also A. FORATTI, *Sebastiano Serlio e il Barocco*, in: *Atti e Memorie della R. Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Padova*, 45 (1929), 133f.

10 G. ZUCCHINI, *Bologna*, Bergamo 1914, 120, following a suggestion in C. GURLITT, *Geschichte des Barockstiles in Italien*, Stuttgart 1887, 107. Zucchini never entirely excluded the possibility of Serlio's authorship, so that his name accompanies Alessi's in C. RICCI-G. ZUCCHINI, *Guida di Bologna*, Bologna 1930-50, 5 as well as in the most recent editions of *Guida d'Italia del Touring Club Italiano, Emilia e Romagna*.

11 G. ALGERI, Alessi in Umbria, in: *Galeazzo Alessi e l'Architettura del Cinquecento*, Genoa 1975, 193ff.

12 A fuller discussion of the work will be found in my *Le opere di G. Alessi nel Palazzo Comunale di Bologna*, in: *Galeazzo Alessi e l'architettura del Cinquecento*, Genoa 1975, 229-237.

13 A. SORBELLI, Giacomo Barozzi e la Fabbrica di S. Petronio, in: *Memorie e studi intorno a Jacopo Barozzi*, Vignola 1908, 259ff.; M. WALCHER CASOTTI, *Il Vignola*, Trieste 1960, I, 57ff.

14 G. N. P. ALIDOSI, *Li Confalonieri del Popolo di Bologna o Tribune della Plebe detti i Collegi, Dall' Anno MDXII per tutto l'Anno MDLXXX*, Bologna 1616, 27.

15 A. SORBELLI, Un'opera sconosciuta del Vignola - Il Ponte sul Samoggia, in: *Memorie e Studi intorno a Jacopo Barozzi*, Vignola 1908, 295ff.

1. Bologna,
Palazzo
Comunale.
Doric
Portal
of 1547





2. Bologna, Palazzo Comunale. Doric Portal of 1553/55

However the best argument for Vignola's authorship resides in the form of the portal itself. The lower half of the decoration closely resembles a door design published in the *Regola delli cinque ordini*¹⁶ (Figs. 3, 4). This engraving, which certainly post-dates the *editio princeps* of 1562, portrays a Doric portal which Vignola designed around 1558 for Cardinal Alexander Farnese for the Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome¹⁷. Never executed, the design was added to the *Regola* as an autograph example of creative practice according to Vignola's neo-Vitruvian architectural principles. The presence of such an illustration in a book on the five orders was undoubtedly intended to refer to Vitruvius' im-

16 *Regola delli Cinque Ordini d' Architettura* di M. IACOMO BAROZZIO DA VIGNOLA (Rome 1562). Fig. 4 was taken from the facsimile edition published in 1974 under the auspices of the Cassa di Risparmio di Vignola with an introductory note by Ch. Thoenes.

17 M. WALCHER CASOTTI, *Il Vignola*, Trieste 1960, I, 161.

portant chapter on the Doric portal (Book IV, Chapter VI), and the design itself recalls the appropriate wood-cut illustrations commonly used in early editions of *De architectura*¹⁸ (Fig. 5). For this reason we must be prepared to look upon the Bologna portal as a demonstration of theoretical precepts.

Comparing the Bolognese work with Vignola's Cancelleria portal, the similarities of plan seem most significant (Figs. 3, 6). At Bologna the free-standing columns are backed by pilasters which lead into concave planes, and these curved surfaces move forward around the columns to end in the door jambs. The scheme reflects a desire to integrate normally distinct architectural parts: wall, pilaster and jamb are brought together to surround the column as a unit. Turning to the illustration in the *Regola*, we find the same essential features, but more densely and carefully organized; the door jambs are now set closer to the columns, and the curved planes run along the edges of the column bases, cutting the pilasters in half. From the plan it would appear that the Bologna door represents an earlier stage in the development of a design which reached its final form in the *Regola* engraving. Vignola has long been recognized as the inventor of this singular scheme and his façades consistently feature similarly novel columnar entrances¹⁹.

In elevation the 1547 door and the Cancelleria design possess many important features in common, beginning with the column bases (Fig. 7). In type, the Bologna bases match that prescribed for the Doric order by Vignola in his book of 1562 (Fig. 8). What distinguishes it from the Tuscan base is the presence of an additional convex molding between the column's foot and the torus. This element, a small torus (*tondino* or *bastoncino*), denotes Vignola's unique formulation of the Doric base: it is not described by Vitruvius, is not discussed by Alberti, and it is not to be found in the tracts and commentaries of Serlio, Philandrier, Barbaro, Goujon, Boullant, Palladio or Scamozzi. In both theory and practice, Renaissance builders always used the Attic base (two tori separated by a scotia) for Doric columns²⁰. The portal in Bologna is the earliest example I know

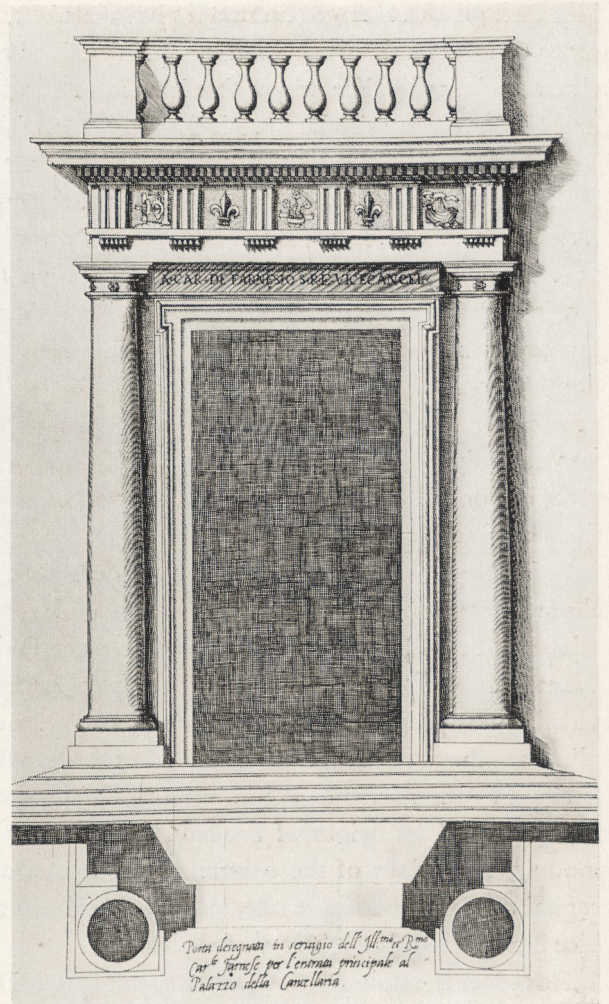
18 Fig. 5 comes from J. MARTIN-J. GOUJON, *Architecture*, Paris 1547, 62, and is intended as a typical example. The same scheme, rendered in equally summary terms, is found in the editions of Vitruvius printed at Florence in 1513 and 1522, as well as at Venice in 1535.

19 For the most outstanding parallel in Vignola's later work, on the façade of S. Maria dell'Orto, Rome, see G. GIOVANNONI, *Saggi sulla Architettura del Rinascimento*, Rome 1931, 200ff. and his Fig. 21. The architect used half-columns at the Palazzo Bocchi, Bologna, three-quarter columns at the Villa Giulia, the Gesù (project) and S. Anna dei Palafrenieri, Rome.

20 Vignola's aversion to current usage is evident in his discussion of the Attic base in the *Regola*, Tavola XXX: "Alli nostri tempi



3. Doric Portal of 1547: Detail of lower register



4. Vignola, Palazzo della Cancelleria Portal.
Engraving from "Regola delli cinque ordini"

of in which the motif was realized in a columnar context²¹. Later on Vignola used it in the spiral staircase at Caprarola and on the façade of S. Anna dei Palafrenieri. With the publication of the *Regola*, of course, his invention was taken

è in uso metterla in opera sotto il Corintio, Composito, Ionico, & Dorico indifferentemente, la qual però più si confa al Composito che ad alcuno altro, & anco si può tollerare nel Ionico non si servendo della sua propria. Sotto ad altri ordini poi io la riputerei sconvenevole affatto ...". Clearly he considered this base least appropriate for the Doric order.

21 In the absence of ancient columnar prototypes, we may hypothesize that Vignola derived the double torus motif from Roman pilaster bases such as that found beneath the monumental corner decoration of the Mausoleum of Hadrian (see C. HUELSEN, *Il libro di Giuliano da Sangallo*, Leipzig 1910, fol. 37 verso). Raphael used a similar molding on the exterior of the south ambulatory of St. Peter's and it is still to be seen in piers and pilasters of Roman palace courtyards of the early Cinquecento such as the Alberini-Cicciaporci and Vidoni-Caffarelli.

up by other architects, and thereafter appears throughout Italy and Europe²². Given the exceptional originality of this feature in 1547, no other architect except Vignola seems eligible for the portal of the Tribune della Plebe.

Equally Vignolesque is the carefully executed entablature (Fig. 9). Here the individual molding profiles and proportions correspond to those in the Cancelleria design, which in turn is faithful to the ideal Doric scheme published in the *Regola*²³ (Fig. 10). The antique model is the first order of the Theatre of Marcellus, which Vignola found to be

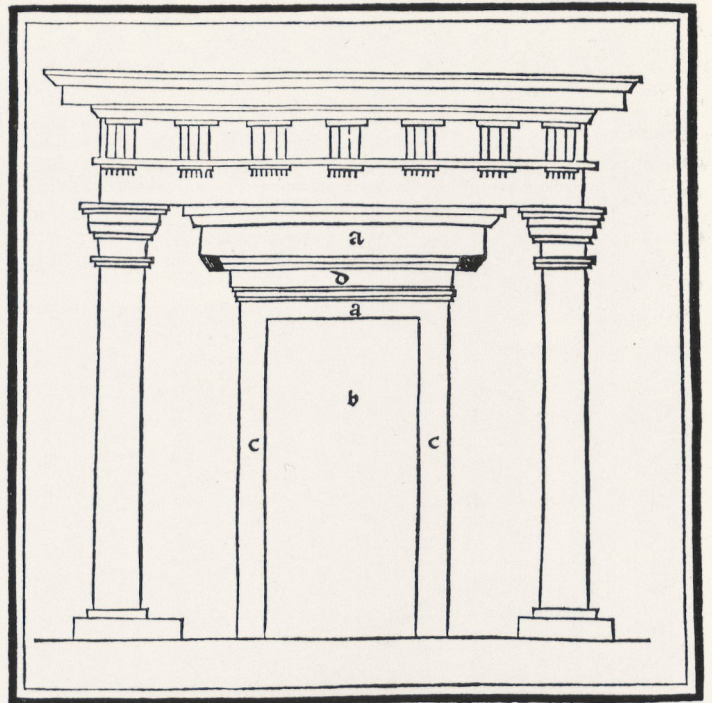
22 Vignola's base – often simply called "Roman Doric" – received its most prominent and influential realization in Bernini's colonnades for the piazza of St. Peter's. Significant earlier appearances include the reconstructed Rostra column of the Capitoline Hill and the monumental column of the Hotel de Soissons, Paris.

23 *Regola*, Tavola XIII; Vignola also provided a second and more ornate Doric model in his Tavola XIV.

“fra tutti gli altri da ogni huomo il piu lodato²⁴”. Cinquecento architectural writers do indeed praise this entablature almost universally, but none offers it unconditionally as an exemplum for practice because it fails to accord fully with Vitruvian canon. The most conspicuously aberrant feature is the row of dentils between the frieze and the cornice²⁵. Dentils are canonic only for the Ionic, Corinthian and Composite orders. It is possible to discover them in a number of Doric buildings constructed during the sixteenth century, but never so carefully following the model for the Bologna door²⁶. Local Emilian masters of the 1540’s lack this kind of finesse. The entablature clearly points to a designer who was not only fully acquainted with a specific Roman prototype, but one who cared enough to reproduce it with startling accuracy.

Before leaving the lower register a word must be said about proportions. Vignola’s *Regola* provides modular schemes for each of the five orders; the Cancelleria door adheres to his Doric system, by which the elevation is divided into twenty modules from the bottom of the column plinths to the top of the cornice²⁷. The length of one module is equal to the radius of the column shaft just above the lower cavet. The height of the base is equivalent to one module, the height of the column fourteen modules, the capital one, the architrave one, and the frieze and the cornice have one-and-one-half modules each.

How does the Bologna door relate to this system? Despite some surface loss due to wear and atmospheric corrosion of the soft locally-quarried *macigno*, it is possible to obtain reasonably accurate measurements. The column radius is close to 20.5 cm, an odd interval in that it does not correspond to a normal subdivision of the Bolognese *piede*²⁸, but one that is equal to one-thirteenth of the column length,



5. Vitruvian Portal from J. Martin – J. Goujon, “Architecture”

which is precisely seven *pie*di (267 cm). The column, then, is actually one module shorter than it ought to be according to Vignola’s system. This accounts for the somewhat stunted impression made by the door when it is compared to the Cancelleria design, an impression which is in part countered by the relatively taller, non-modular shaping of the door opening (133.5 cm by 290 cm). Measurements taken from other parts of the work, meanwhile, indicate that a second module, one close to 21.5 cm, was operative; the bases, capitals and the architrave (to the bottom of the band) are uniformly 21.5 cm high, while the triglyphs and door posts are the same in width, the frieze and cornice add up to 64.5 cm, and the metopes are about 32.2 cm broad. The employment of these two modular systems does not entirely result in disjointedness, however, because the total height of the architecture comes to 408.2 cm, which is just under two centimeters from a perfect 20 modules by the column radius, or a little below 19 modules by the 21.5 cm interval. We can only speculate about why the architect had recourse to two different systems. One explanation may be that older columns were re-used. In any event, it is clear that the architect adjusted the two modular systems with extraordinary skill.

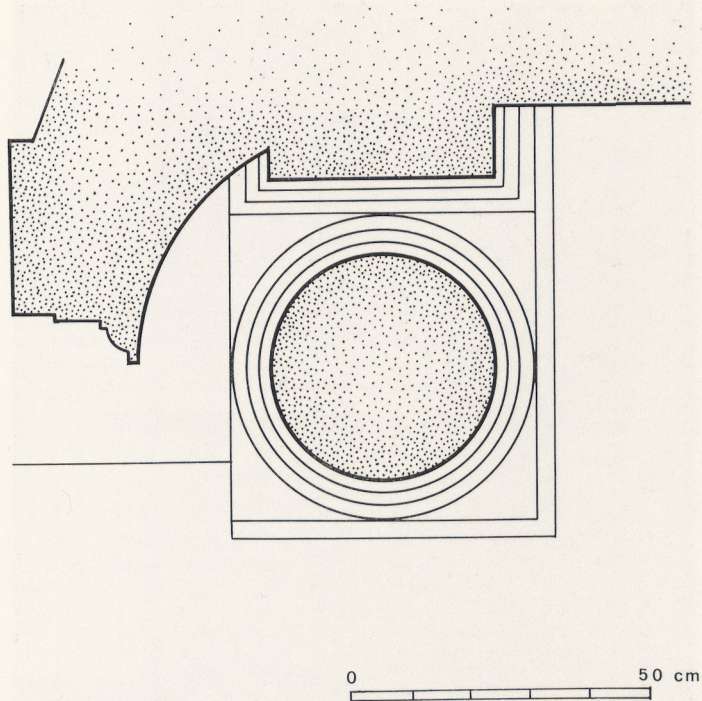
24 *Regola*, Tavola III.

25 Vitruvius warns specifically against the application of dentils to the Doric order: “Item si doricis epistylliis in coronis denticuli sculpentur aut in pulvinatis columnis et ionicis epistylliis [capitulis] exprimentur triglyphi, translatis ex alia ratione proprietatibus in aliud genus operis offendetur aspectus aliis ante ordinis consuetudinibus institutis” (*De architectura*, Loeb Classical Library, London 1962, I, 28).

26 In speaking of the Theatre of Marcellus, Gamucci remarks that “e stata imitata in molte opere, fra i quali imitatori e stato Michelangelo Buonarroti et Antonio da san Gallo ... nel cortile del soperbo, et bellissimo palazzo delli Illustrissimi et Reverendissimi Farnese ...” (B. GAMUCCI, *Libri 4 dell’ Antichita di Roma*, Venice 1565, 68). The Doric entablature of the Palazzo Farnese departs from the Theatre’s in the presence of a fascia in the architrave. Perhaps the most faithful contemporary rendition of the scheme was in Jacopo Sansovino’s Libreria di San Marco.

27 *Regola*, Tavola VIII.

28 The Bolognese *pie*de corresponds to 38 cm, and is subdivided into twelve *oncie*.



6. Doric Portal of 1547: Plan



7. Doric Portal of 1547: Column base

The Cancelleria portal is crowned by a balcony, the doorway of the Tribune by a large heraldic tableau (Fig. 11). In both cases it is the supportive role of the lower register which allows the architecture to be developed into a full-fledged columnar structure. But while Vignola's engraving offers an optimally functional scheme for potentially vast application, the door in Bologna is tailored to a unique occasion and purpose. The rampant lion holding the communal banner – a traditional Bolognese emblematic device adopted by the Tribune²⁹ – is a motif little suited for repetition outside the city. Perhaps it was this iconographical singularity which induced the architect to develop the upper register with such special finesse. More elegant contrasts could hardly be devised between the architecture and sculpture, structure and pure ornament. United by these complementary differences, and by the formal connections we noted at the outset, the portal can only have been fashioned by one who commanded not only architecture, but sculpture as well. And this fact returns us once more to Vignola.

29 G. CENCETTI, Lo stemma di Bologna, in: *Il Comune di Bologna*, 24, 5 (1937), 18–22.

Trained as a painter, Vignola began his career within the figural and decorative arts, first with commissions for in-tarsia designs in Bologna and later with banner-painting and furniture production in the Vatican³⁰. Before he came to S. Petronio his major accomplishment had been the making of twelve full-scale bronze copies of antique marble statues for Francis I under the direction of Primaticcio. This work, which required aesthetic as well as technical expertise, consumed the better part of the years 1541–43 and took him to France. Its importance sufficed to force a postponement of his S. Petronio appointment and we know that he was still not completely finished with it as late as 1545³¹. Despite the almost total absence of sculpture in his later buildings, we must allow that Vignola was fully capable of carrying out projects with sculptural decoration. A confirmation of this may be found in 1550, when he was hired by the Farnese to direct the making of the tomb of Paul III³².

30 M. WALCHER CASOTTI, *Il Vignola*, Trieste 1960, I, 5–24.

31 S. PRESSOUYRE, Les fontes de Primaticcio à Fontainebleau, in: *BullMon* 127 (1969), 223–239.

32 L. CADIER, Le Tombeau du Pape Paul III Farnèse de Guglielmo della Porta, in: *MelArchHist* 9 (1889), 87ff. Vignola was also

The *conchetto* of the sculptural tableau as a whole speaks for an architect with more than local experience. It has no immediate precursors in Bolognese decoration and, indeed, it is difficult to find suitable models for it in Italy. Yet the conception does find a source in Vignola's Gallic sojourn. At Fontainebleau Primaticcio and Rosso had developed the idea of ranging large stucco figures about pictorial fields and heraldic devices located over high architectonic wainscots. The Bolognese lions – whose scale and realism tend to alienate them from strictly heraldic imagery – easily relate to the figures in the Gallery of Francis I, which Vignola must have known intimately³³. The connection may be illustrated by an exactly contemporary derivative of the Gallery scheme in a drawing made by Niccolò Bellin da Modena for Henry VIII in England³⁴ (Fig. 12). Probably destined for the decoration of a gallery at the Castle of Nonsuch, Niccolò's project features as its centerpiece a large rampant lion supporting the Royal Arms. Both the lion and the elaborate, large cartouche-escutcheon bear close comparison with their counterparts in Bologna. Given the Emilian origins, artistic training and exposure to Fontainebleau which both Niccolò and Vignola enjoyed, it is not surprising that the two artists should have evolved independently such remarkably similar designs.

III

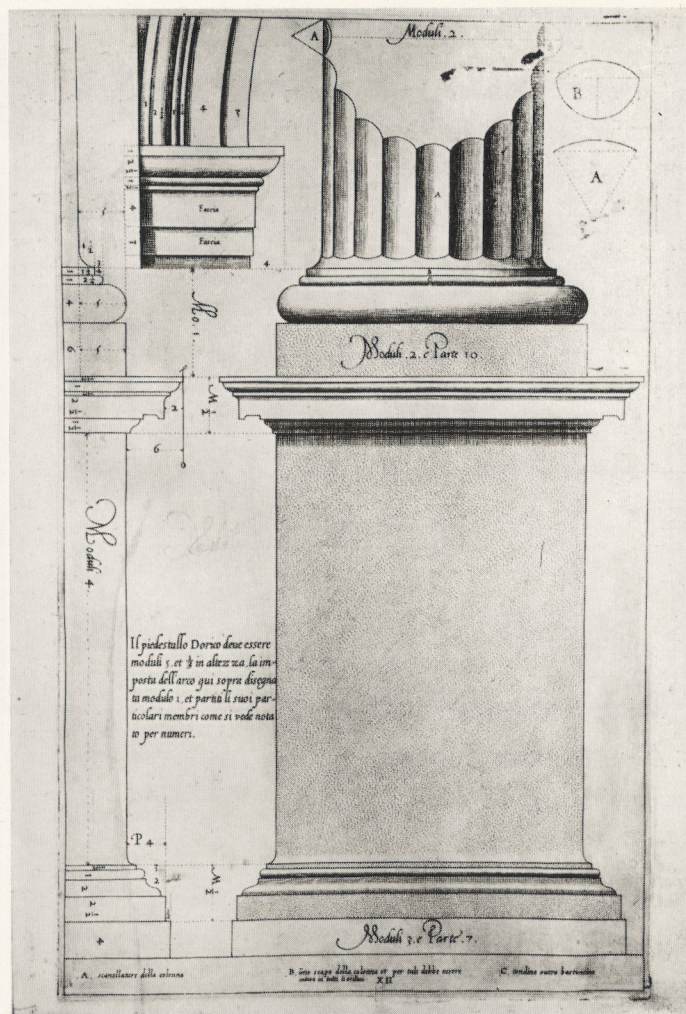
The portal in Bologna helps to document an important phase in Vignola's career. Amongst his very earliest pieces of architecture, it enlarges the small heterogeneous corpus of Bolognese projects from the 1540's which includes the Palazzo Bocchi, engineering feats such as the Ponte Samoggia and the Canale Naviglio, as well as the High Altar ciborium and two façade designs done in the Gothic style for S. Petronio. These works gave Vignola broad practical experience and contacts with patrons important for his professional success in Rome during the following decade³⁵.

employed from time to time as an estimator of sculpture, as, for example, in 1551 at the Vatican (?) for works in stucco (P. GIORDANI, *Vignola a Roma*, in: *Memorie e studi intorno a Jacopo Barozzi*, Vignola 1908, 135) and at Perugia concerning the papal statue of Julius III on 21 June 1555 (A. Rossi, *Documenti intorno alla statua di Giulio III gettata da Vincenzo Danti perugino*, in: *Giornale di erudizione artistica*, 1 [1872], 20).

33 M. WALCHER CASOTTI, *Il Vignola*, Trieste 1960, I, 25 ff.

34 See the Louvre exhibition catalogue *L'École de Fontainebleau*, Paris 1972, 27f.

35 It may be helpful to recall here that in 1545 Vignola took it upon himself to present his S. Petronio façade projects to Paul III and Alessandro Farnese (see L. PASTOR, *Geschichte der Päpste*, V, 1909,

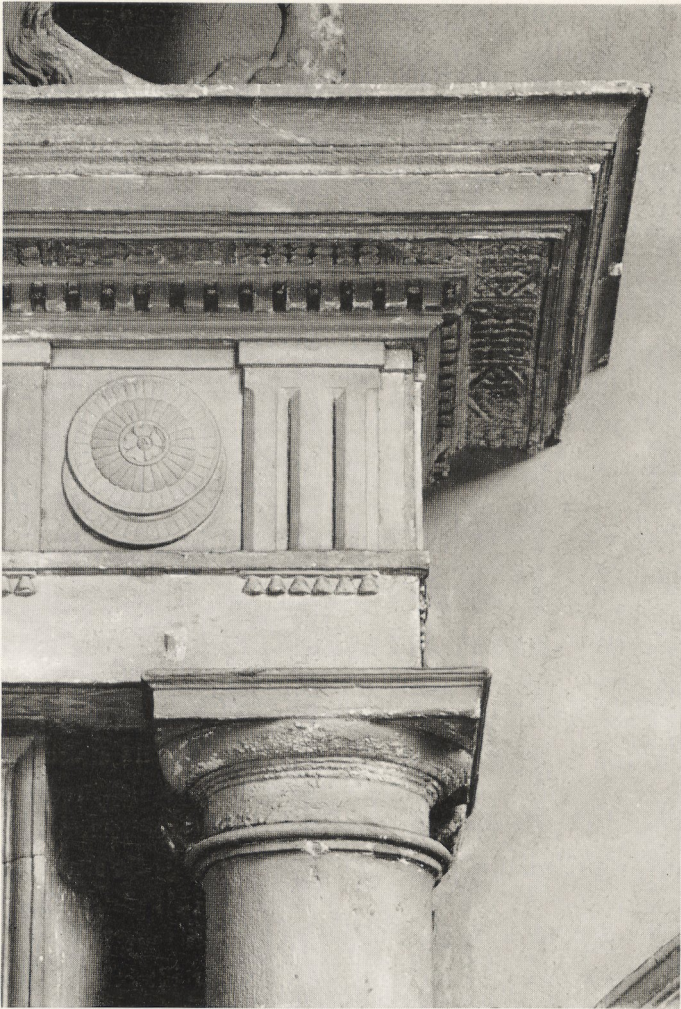


8. Vignola, Doric Pedestal and Base. Engraving from "Regola dell'cinque ordini"

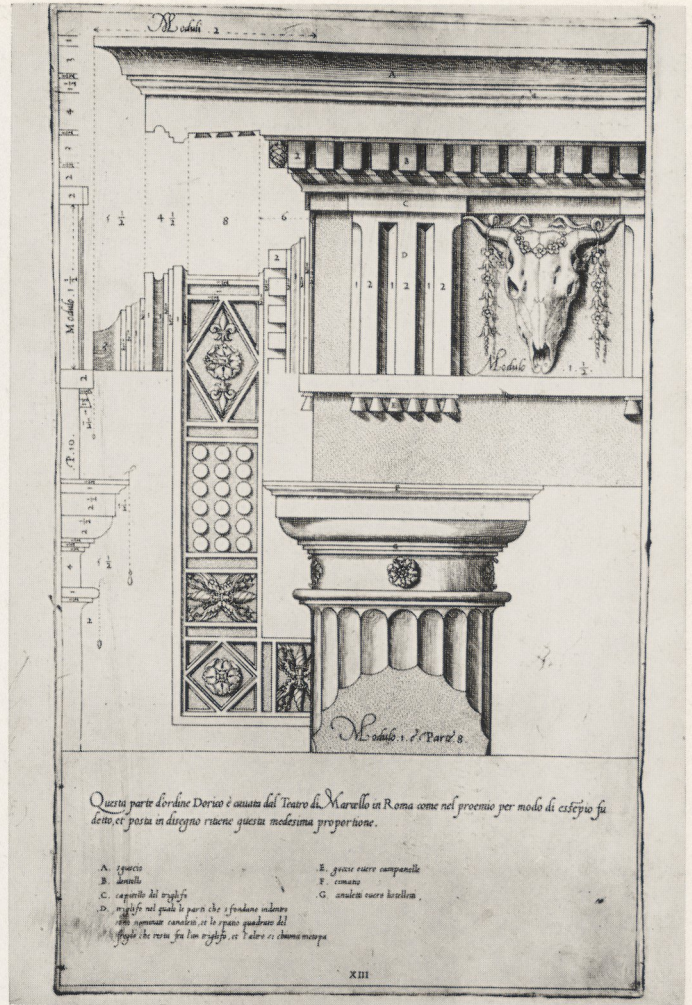
More specifically revealing is what the portal tells us about the evolution of Vignola's style. The imposing sculptural decoration testifies to the impact made by Fontainebleau upon the architect, an impact first noted by Lotz with regard to the Palazzo Bocchi façade³⁶. Equally notable, however, is the absence of open references to either Serlio or Giulio Romano, the two artists usually cited as having exercised the greatest influence upon Vignola during this period. The sculpture, with a certain characteristic inele-

858f.); between 13 July 1548 and his election as Pope Julius III, Giovanni Maria del Monte was Legate of Bologna; and Giovanni Angelo de' Medici, the future Pius IV, must have encountered Vignola when as Governor of Bologna he approved the Samoggia bridge project.

36 W. LORZ, *Architecture in the Later 16th Century*, in: *College Art Journal* 17 (1957/58), 132. See also J.K. SCHMIDT, *Zu Vignolas Palazzo Bocchi in Bologna*, in: *FlorMitt* 13 (1967), 83 ff.



9. Doric Portal of 1547: Detail of entablature



10. Vignola, Doric Entablature. Engraving from "Regola delli cinque ordini"

gance, echoes ideas of Primaticcio, while in the architecture Vignola is already plainly speaking his own language. Anticipating one of his famous exempla by over a decade, the door reminds us of an aspect all too frequently overlooked in discussions of Vignola's development: the continuity of his classicism³⁷.

According to Vasari and Egnatio Danti, Vignola's first serious architectural activity was promoted by a neo-Vitruvian academy in Rome during the late 1530's³⁸. The academy entrusted the artist with measuring antique monuments to be illustrated in a critical edition of *De architectura*. This

37 See, for example, M. WALCHER CASOTTI, *Il Vignola*, Trieste 1960, I, 133 and M. TAFURI, J. Barozzi da Vignola e la crisi del Manierismo a Roma, in: *BollPalladio* 9 (1967), 385ff.

38 VasMil VII, 105f.; E. Danti, Vita di M. Iacomo Barozzi da Vignola, in: J. BAROZZI DA VIGNOLA, *Le due regole della prospettiva pratica*, Rome 1583.

archaeological and academic experience was formative: notwithstanding the interlude of Fontainebleau, it left its mark on his entire oeuvre. While the *Regola delli cinque ordini* of 1562 embodies its most explicit and lasting expression, the architect's abiding devotion to Vitruvius was no less intense during the 1540's in Bologna.

Within the Fabbrica of S. Petronio the architect demonstrated his theoretical interests in writings and designs. As early as 17 December 1543 he was called upon to pen a critique *sopra gli errori fatti da diversi huomini in diversi tempi nella fabrica e facciata di S.to Petronio* in which certain ornaments are condemned for being neither antique nor "modern", and façade rustication is branded inappropriate because the order was neither Tuscan nor Doric³⁹. An even

39 G. ZUCCHINI, Documenti inediti per la storia del S. Petronio di Bologna, in: *Miscellanea di storia dell'arte in onore di I.B. Supino*, Florence 1933, 206-208.



11. Doric Portal of 1547: Detail from upper register

greater reliance upon canon is evident in Vignola's project of 1544, where, as Richard Bernheimer observed, "alone among all those who tried their hand at a 'Gothic' façade, Vignola dispensed with none of the Vitruvian formulas, insisting upon every stylobate, frieze and architrave that the canon demanded, and piling them threefold upon the triple elevation of the façade"⁴⁰. Vignola's well-known letter to the Fabbricieri defending his design against the attacks of Jacopo Ranuzzi is replete with references to the correct usage of classical members and to proportions⁴¹.

40 R. BERNHEIMER, Gothic Survival and Revival in Bologna, in: *Art Bull* 36 (1954), 278.

41 The letter, dated 1 February 1547, exists in two sixteenth century copies in Bologna, one in the Archivio di S. Petronio, Miscellanea, Busta II, B, 24, and the other in the Biblioteca Comunale

In support of his argument Vignola illustrated the letter with a pair of unpublished sketches to demonstrate the difference between a canonic Doric order and the *ordine moderno* he deemed appropriate for the Gothic façade⁴² (Fig. 13). Although completely his own invention, Vignola's "Gothic Doric" entablature for S. Petronio has its architrave, frieze and cornice carefully proportioned to accord with the canonic Doric scheme⁴³. The compromise effected involves the profiling of parts, not their proportioning, and Vitruvius is taken as the ultimate authority.

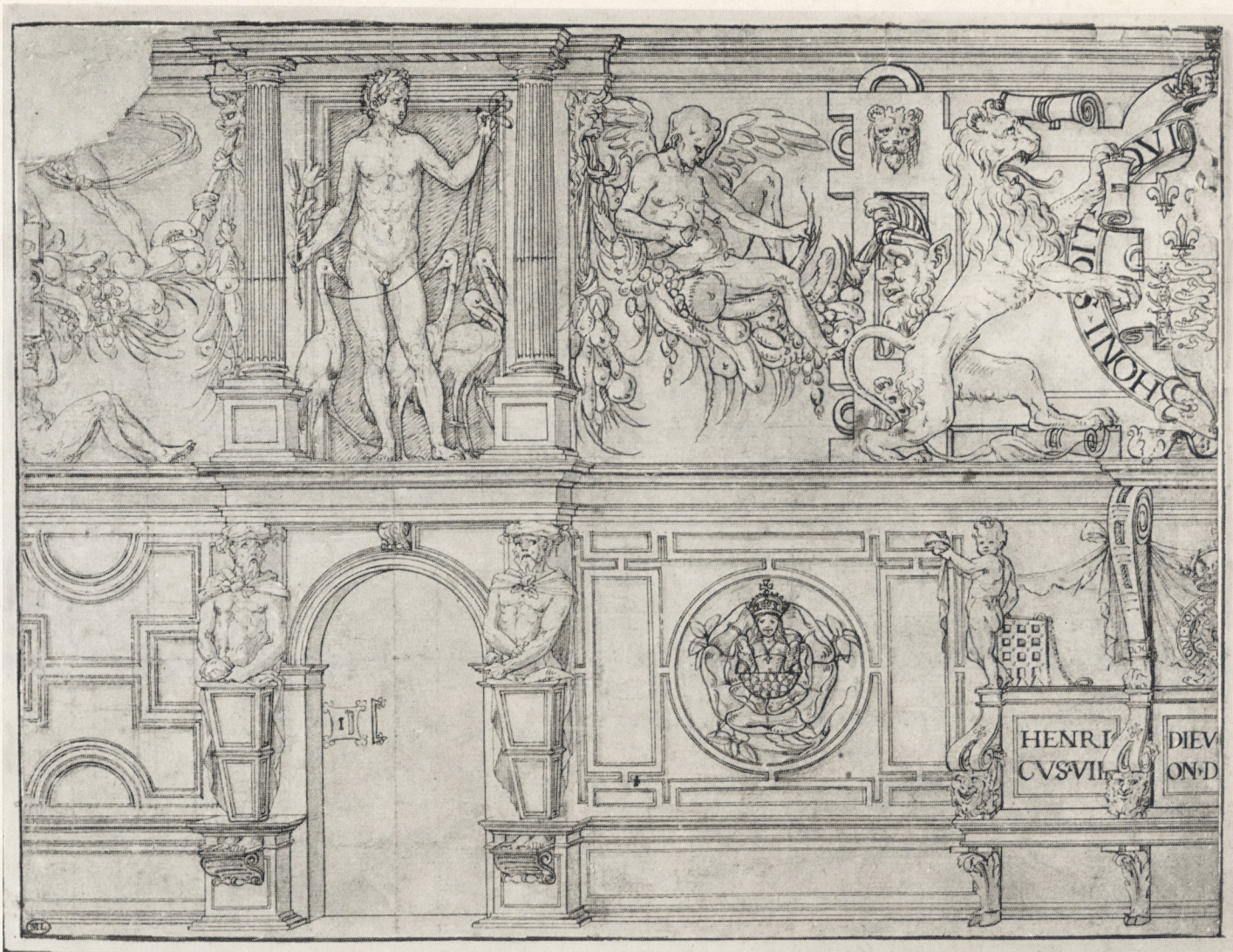
The same approach manifests itself in the architecture of the portal to the chambers of the Tribune della Plebe. Here Vignola does not exploit the text of Vitruvius simply as a body of immutable formulae, but as a frame of reference. His manipulation of the Doric base, selection of a specific antique model for the entablature and attention to the module attest to a methodical experimentation with classical norms. And because his inventions are not extrinsic to Vitruvius, they cannot be considered truly capricious or done *alla grottesca*.

The most original aspect of the Bologna and Cancelleria portal designs lies in the *concetto* of the whole, which involves the fusion of wall, aperture and columnar architecture in a single, rationally disposed unit. With the Doric structure anchored to the wall by the pilasters and entablature, the door opening has been detached from its mural context, moved forward, and made a part of the architecture. Thus one actually enters the enclosed space before reaching its bounding wall. The free-standing columns perform a dou-

dell'Archiginnasio, Bibl. Gozzadini, MS 2 (Miscellanea Petroniana), fasc. 11. The latter carries the signature of Vignola and, judging from the clearer character of the script, seems to have been the letter presented to the Fabbricieri. The copy in the S. Petronio archive was published (with errors and omissions) in G. GAYE, *Carteggio inedito d'artisti dei secoli XIV-XVI*, Florence 1839, II, 358-363, and in A. SORBELLI, Giacomo Barozzi e la Fabbrica di S. Petronio, in: *Memorie e studi intorno a Jacopo Barozzi*, Vignola 1908, 285-289.

42 The drawing appears in both copies of the letter mentioned in the preceding note and is used in defense of the sixth point raised by Ranuzzi. The accompanying text reads: "Sesto egli dice ch'io pongo Architrave fregio, et cornice doriche sopra li capitelli moderni, di questo ne lascero far'juditio alle S.V. se egli ha cognitione de ordine dorico, ouer, moderno. et acio che quelle possano meglio conoscere et giudicare io ho designato qui sotto l'ordine dorico segnato A. et l'ordine, moderno segnato B. che è rapportato da quella che è, sul disegno ch'egli dice esser dorico, et dice esser contra ogni ragion de Architettura masime di vitruvio." This transcription and the drawings in Fig. 13 are taken from the copy of the letter in the Archiginnasio. For the façade drawings see G. ZUCCHINI, *Disegni antichi e moderni per la facciata di S. Petronio di Bologna*, Bologna 1933, Tavole XII, XIII.

43 Here Vignola uses not his own but the standard version of the Doric entablature.



12. Niccolò da Modena. Project for a gallery decoration. Paris, Louvre

ble function as representative motifs in the decoration, and as structural supports for the projecting entablature. The agent which mediates and bonds these separate elements is the unique curving door jamb. The resulting solution calls to mind the syntactical experiments of only one other contemporary architect, Michelangelo, who had already begun to explore the concept of the recessed column in a number of variations at Florence. The famous encased columns of the Laurentian Library vestibule represent propositions too radical to have interested Vignola, but the S. Lorenzo façade model, and especially the Doric portal of Sant'Apollonia, provide conceptual antecedents which Vignola could have studied⁴⁴. Behind the designs of both

men, of course, lay precedents in Late Antique art; recessed columns are featured on columnar sarcophagi and could be seen in ruined tombs along the Appian Way⁴⁵.

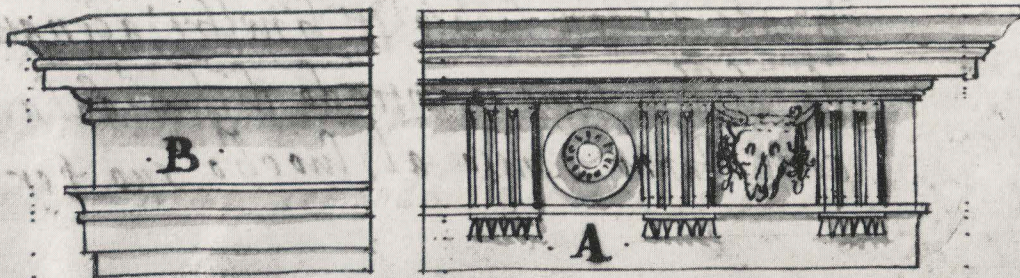
Yet to search for a single all-inclusive *Vorbild* in Roman art or in Michelangelo's would be going too far. Vignola's talent lay in his ability to fashion new designs synthetically. The Bologna door decoration shows him doing just that, in full command of canonic theory at a relatively early date, and it gives us an unexpected glimpse into the genesis of what would become, via countless editions of the *Regola*, one of the most enduring images in the literature of western architecture.

Sant'Apollonia by Michelangelo, in: *FlorMitt* 19 (1975), 261 - 276.

⁴⁵ One such example: the so-called Tomb of Q. Veranius. See G. TOMASSETTI, *La campagna romana*, Rome 1910, II, 110f. and Fig. 29.

⁴⁴ For the restitution of the Sant'Apollonia door to the oeuvre of Michelangelo see C. DAVIS, Cosimo Bartoli and the Portal of

Possano meglio conoscere et Judicare io ho designato
qui sotto l'ordine dorico segnato A. et l'ordine
moderno segnato B. che è rapportato da quella che
è sul disegno ch' egli dice esser dorico, et dice
esser contra ogni ragion de' Architettura maxime di
Vitruvio



13. Vignola, Illustrations in letter of 1 February 1547. Bologna, Archiginnasio