



RAPHAEL AS ARCHITECT

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RAPHAEL AS ARCHITECT

The Selwyn Brinton Lecture by

JOHN SHEARMAN, Ph.D.

of the Courtauld Institute of Art, delivered to the

Society on Wednesday 24th January 1968, with Sir

Trenchard Cox, C.B.E., D.Litt., F.S.A., lately

Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and a

Vice-President of the Society, in the Chair

THE CHAIRMAN: It is very appropriate that our lecturer to-day is going to speak about an aspect of the art of Raphael, because the founder of these lectures, Mr. Selwyn Brinton, was in his time a widely reputed authority on Italian art, and wrote nine volumes of the *History of the Renaissance as reflected in Italian painting*. The lecturer is very well known to all authorities and lovers of the Italian School. Many of you will have read Dr. Shearman's recent book on *Mannerism*, others will know his work on Andrea del Sarto. All of us, I think, are looking forward to the publication later this year of his great work on the Raphael Cartoons as part of a series on the Treasures of the Royal Collection.

The following lecture, which was illustrated, was then delivered.

THE LECTURE

The study of Raphael has come to the boil again in the last few years, and his art now presents to us a picture in many ways different from the one we had fifteen years ago. While we now think we know a lot more about him, one must add that we have also acquired new uncertainties. These uncertainties, however, are potentialities as well as frustrating areas of ignorance. The principal potentiality that has concerned us, and in my view quite rightly, has been Raphael's painting in Rome. The principal potentiality that remains, and at this moment is beginning to be subjected to an intensive inquiry, is his architecture.

In this lecture I shall try to set before you two problems: the place of architecture in Raphael's life's work, and his contribution to the development of architectural style. I am not concerned here with a catalogue of his buildings or the influences upon him of other Renaissance architects, nor will I bore you with arguments for attributions; but the two main themes will produce, I hope, two by-products, a sketch of the profiles of his architectural imagination, and an assessment of his stature as an architect. This is a tall order for one hour, and we have to be selective.

It is doubted in respectable quarters that Raphael was an architect at all in the full professional sense. I hold exactly the opposite view, and I had better explain why. The inscription on his tomb in the Pantheon states that 'He enhanced the glory of Popes Julius and Leo with his works in painting and in architecture', and I think this means exactly what it says. But you would not have this balanced impression from reading Vasari's *Vita* which, so marvellous in other respects, has

this major flaw; Vasari was an architect too, but he belonged to a current in Cinquecento architectural style quite separate from the Raphaellesque, and his blindness to Raphael's architectural achievement was in this way subjective; like his other rare misjudgements it has been influential, even in our own century. But Raphael's own contemporaries were not as yet blinded by a Michelangelesque prejudice. There is a letter of 1519 or '20, for instance, by Celio Calcagnini, in which he says that Raphael is 'truly an architect of such accomplishment, that he *invents and executes* things which the most practised minds despair of equalling'; and there are documents, which reveal, for example, that within four months of Bramante's death he had produced a new model for St. Peter's, on the basis of which his responsibility for that project was confirmed—or that he was even occupied by such wholly professional cares as the stability of the Vatican fortifications. Above all there are his drawings. Now drawings by Renaissance architects are subject to the accidents of survival, and the number of Raphael's that survive is small in relation to those by Peruzzi or Antonio da Sangallo; but on the other hand there are considerably more of them than of Bramante's or Giulio Romano's. Their scarcity is therefore of no evidential value. Those that we have, however, are qualitatively of exactly the same significance as the enormously greater number of his studies for paintings; they show him as thoroughly committed in each direction. The equivalent of the rapid sketches at the first moment of invention and intuition in figural composition exists also in the case of architecture; and there is even the precise equivalent in architectural drawing, on a sheet of studies at Oxford for a casino, of the celebrated serial development of figural ideas which he had learnt from Leonardo. From the other end of the creative process we have statements of those ideas as coherent, as articulate, and in their own terms as wholly competent, in the one art as in the other. Furthermore it has been demonstrated that Raphael played a decisive rôle in the development of architectural drawing itself, and in the technique of the study of ancient monuments. His own letters show him absolutely conversant with the problems and criticism of architecture. I think we may proceed to take him seriously, as a professional, without any further inhibitions.

At this point I should like to remind you of two statistics. First, Raphael began to erect buildings to his own design around 1512; he was then 29, and this means that he reached his full commitment to architecture at about the same age as did Bramante, and earlier than did Brunelleschi, Alberti or Michelangelo. Second, his active architectural career produced results which are impressive in quantity alone. Two large palaces were erected to his designs, the ground-plan for a third survives, a fourth was built in collaboration with Giovanni Francesco da Sangallo, and a fifth in collaboration, probably, with Giulio Romano; the huge Chigi Stables at the Farnesina were aesthetically equivalent, in the street façade, to a sixth palace. Two villas were begun, one of them on a colossal scale, and drawings suggest one or two more. His intervention in St. Peter's was far more extensive than is commonly admitted; what he actually erected there is to some extent documented, his project was comprehensive in plan and elevation, and his design for the dome was still known late in the century. He built a church, Sant'Eligio, and the Chigi

mausoleum in S. Maria del Popolo; he produced competition designs for San Giovanni de'Fiorentini in Rome and for the façade of San Lorenzo in Florence. And finally there are tomb-designs and several minor works in the Vatican. All this amounts to a density of activity which would be startling enough in eight years from the life of a man with nothing else to do. Moreover the intellectual productivity is as astonishing as the practical for each one of those works of which we have some knowledge is a landmark in its own genre.

Before we can appreciate this achievement, however, there are two obstacles to be overcome. First, the most familiar attributions are sadly misleading. Palazzo Vidoni-Caffarelli is not by Raphael, but was begun some years after his death; its inclusion in his *oeuvre*, and the particular attention focused upon it, have contributed to the notion that he was a close and academic follower of Bramante. Palazzo Caffarelli is indeed the work of a minor architect of limited imagination. The other familiar building is Sant'Eligio. This was designed and begun by Raphael, but it was not finished according to his plans, and later it was so completely rebuilt that on the exterior there is little that represents his intentions beyond the overall shape, and in the interior no more than the articulation of the lower walls.

Sant'Eligio illustrates one aspect of the second obstacle: in every important case an understanding of Raphael's buildings entails a prior effort of recuperation; they have been left incomplete (like Villa Madama), completed according to another design or rebuilt (like Sant'Eligio), or totally destroyed (like Palazzo Branconio dell' Aquila). This situation partly accounts for the apathy towards Raphael's architecture in modern literature, and that apathy in turn has meant that the laborious but rewarding process of reconstruction, from drawings, engravings, descriptions and documents, has scarcely begun. No one would be so foolish, therefore, as to think that a definitive assessment of Raphael's architecture is within our reach. We are still concerned with preliminaries and approximations.

Now to the first of our two problems: the place of architecture in Raphael's life's work. I am convinced that we cannot separate the various aspects of Raphael's art without misunderstanding each of them; and this means, for example, that we have to take account of his activities in sculpture, theatre, social and artistic administration, and even literature, as well as building and painting. What is fatal is the divisive attitude: 'And, by the way, he was also an architect'. I shall return in a moment to the interlocking of the pictorial and architectural aspects of Raphael's work; first we must look rather carefully at the chronology of his experience in architecture.

This experience developed from a lively interest in architecture from the beginning, which is so natural in a boy born in Urbino, through an ambition for self-expression in architecture at a still surprisingly early age, to the opportunity in Rome for architectural practice. Let us look again at the drawings, remembering the fragmentary nature of the evidence they provide. In the corner of a sheet of studies for an altarpiece begun in 1500, when he was 17, there is a tiny sketch in which he traces a modification of the cortile of Palazzo Ducale in Urbino.¹ It is far from certain that the source of the modification, in the window-frame, was his own imagination; it could be so, but it could also be the case that he studied a



FIGURE 1. *Raphael, studies for the decoration of an entablature, c. 1503; Oxford, Ashmolean Museum (reproduced by courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum)*

project or model for the cortile, for Umbrian paintings around 1480 seem to bear witness to the existence of a variant of the cortile similar to Raphael's. In either case the drawing demonstrates an interest in the building more attentive and inquisitive than the casual record of a single-minded painter; and it seems improbable to me that the sketch was made with any pictorial intention.

A few years later, about 1503-4, he made a series of studies, now at Oxford (Figure 1), in which he seems to have in mind the creation of a real object, partly sculptural and partly architectural.² The largest studies are for the ornamentation of an entablature, and it is very puzzling, since we have no knowledge of Raphael's presence in Rome until about four years later, that the one in the centre has a point



FIGURE 2. *Raphael, architectural studies, and a study for the Madonna del Cardellino, c. 1506; Oxford, Ashmolean Museum (reproduced by courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum)*

of departure very similar to Filippino's altar-frame of the Carafa Chapel in S. Maria sopra Minerva. From such a starting-point Raphael proceeds by varying the motifs very freely, and ends up, lower right, with a central putto holding an escutcheon and standing between volutes on the ends of which sit further putti holding swags. Perhaps Raphael was designing an altar-frame too, but if we read these studies, as I think we should, with those of flying putti supporting a disc, and of a console, an altar-frame is unlikely. It may have been a fireplace—for at Urbino especially such combinations are possible—but in the topmost study he thought of a cross and orb as decoration, which implies some ecclesiastical object. Was it then a tomb? It is not inherently improbable that at the age of twenty Raphael designed

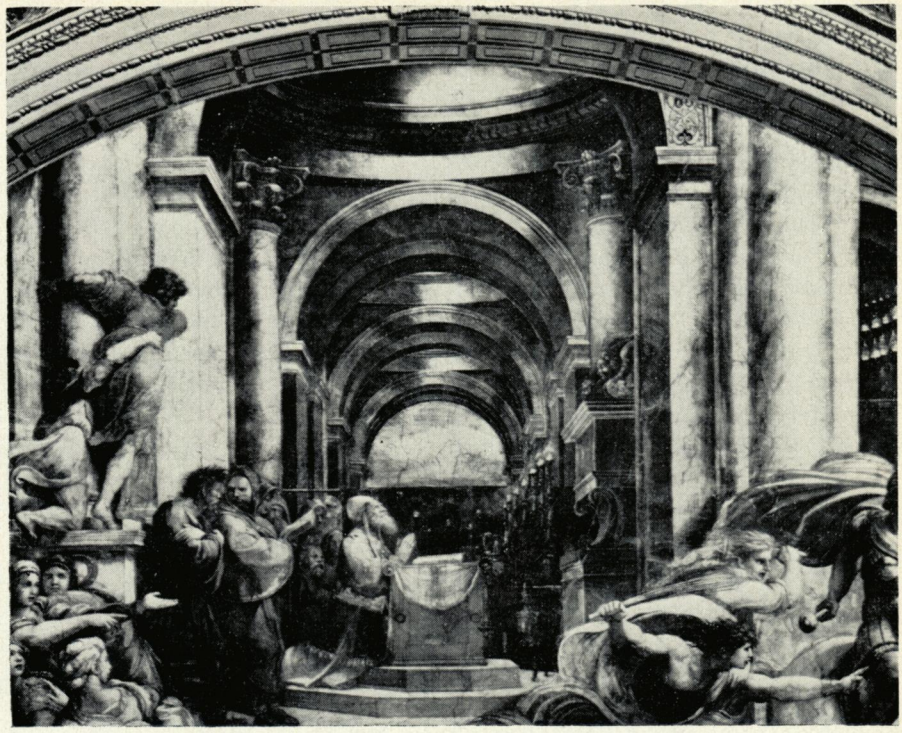


FIGURE 3. *Raphael, Expulsion of Heliodorus, detail of the Temple; Vatican Palace, Stanza d'Eliodoro*

a tomb, but in the absence of separate evidence that he did so, and of a tomb which looks like this, we should be cautious; there are other possibilities. At all events this drawing introduces us to fields of invention which we expect him to explore in Rome, but which we do not normally consider for this early stage, before he has even reached Florence.

A few years later again, about 1506, he made two drawings which imply rather more: that he envisaged the design of monumental architecture on his own account. Both of these drawings appear on the backs of studies for the *Madonna del Cardellino*. The more interesting is on a sheet which cannot be lifted from its mount, so it can only be seen against the light (Figure 2) and is therefore confused by the *Madonna* drawing itself.³ We can, nevertheless, disentangle three separate experiments with an idea derived from the church of San Bernardino at Urbino: the corner-column in relation to a square space with apsidal or nave extensions. These experiments are revealing from three points of view. First, the columns are so greatly increased in size compared with those in San Bernardino, and frame the apses so closely, that the areas of flat wall are suppressed in favour of rounded forms and openings; these plans would produce an effect, quite different from Francesco di Giorgio's, of exceptional plasticity. Second, it is clear from the lower

drawing that he intends a dome over the square space; and the ring of this dome is contingent with the columns, so as to exclude the transition through arches as at San Bernardino, or any form of pendentive. In all probability he anticipates the astonishing invention he painted five or six years later in the *Expulsion of Heliodorus* (Figure 3), where the rings of the domes of his Temple rest directly upon massive corner columns, and are thereby carried over the corners of the square spaces while at the same time providing the order with an entablature: a drastic but logical simplification which was also proposed for St. Peter's, but was not to my knowledge used in any building for almost two hundred years.⁴ Third, the drawing provokes the question whether Raphael has already received a commission for a church or chapel. The possibility is not to be excluded, but on available evidence seems unlikely; however, since these studies are so similar in character to later ones for which it is certain there was some precise practical object, the least that can be deduced from them is that already about 1506 he aspired quite consciously to that capacity 'to invent and execute' of which Calcagnini speaks thirteen years later.

These drawings, and a few more like them, represent Raphael's self-preparation for a career in architecture, and they are the proper setting against which we should view the Temple in the *Sposalizio*, painted in 1504. This is so much more than a painted building. In character and meaning it is distinct from the conventional background structures of contemporary painting, for unlike them its visual and structural aspects have been elucidated in the manner of real architecture to the point where, conceptually, it was ready for erection. Had it been erected it would have found a place in every anthology of High Renaissance buildings, alongside Bramante's Tempietto in Rome, begun about four years earlier. Bramante's and Raphael's circular temples, however, were designed independently, and such similarities as there are arose from the partial reliance of each architect on the same models of the late Quattrocento.⁵ This point may be expressed another way: the sources of Raphael's design too were in recent architectural practice, not in painting, and its proper context is the architectural tradition. It was conceived as viable, free-standing architecture, not in this single projection; for example, the pilasters of the drum are raised above the peripheral arcade so that they shall not be masked in a closer view, while the graceful volutes make a visual and structural transition between the two forms, articulating the lower surfaces of the drum and buttressing the centrifugal thrust of the dome. The proportions of the building are surprisingly sophisticated.

Perhaps the ambition to be an architect was nearly as precocious as that to be a painter. In any case it seems to have arisen several years before the opportunity; it was neither the response to opportunity nor stimulated by working alongside Bramante in Rome. The chronology of the practical opportunities need not detain us for long, but its evolving sequence is worth noticing. The first actual building done by Raphael came in his first year in Rome, 1508-9; it was the remodelling of an earlier building, and we shall return to it in a moment. The first independently invented buildings were the little church of Sant'Eligio, probably conceived in 1511, and the Chigi funerary chapel begun in 1512 or '13. The vast Chigi Stables were begun in 1514, and probably led in the next year to the commission for the

first palace, that of Giacomo da Brescia, the Pope's physician, in the Borgo Leonino. He succeeded Bramante as the director of the rebuilding of St. Peter's in April 1514, and his new model was accepted in August of the same year. Villa Madama was begun in 1517, and Raphael died in 1520.

These works must not be undervalued because they are painter's architecture; we would not be tempted to think in any way except positively of Michelangelo's buildings because they are a sculptor's. In any case few of the major Renaissance architects began their careers in that activity; not Brunelleschi, for example, nor Alberti, nor Giuliano da Sangallo, nor Bramante himself. It is more rewarding, I believe, to reverse the proposition, and to consider Raphael as a peculiar painter, in that he had always had, as we have seen, an interest in architectural practice which matured through ambition into participation. Raphael's earliest paintings have an outstandingly tectonic quality; they are controlled, constructed, one might even say built, like architecture, whether in two dimensions as in the National Gallery's *Crucifixion* of 1502-3 or in three dimensions as in the Vatican *Coronation* about a year later. This is one reason why, in the *Sposalizio*, there is no conflict of character between the Temple and the total composition, rooted in separate architectural and pictorial traditions; and such a figure-group is so clear to us spatially because it has been thought out in plan, elevation, and stereometric projection. In these paintings, moreover, the parts are related to one another geometrically. In this case, for instance, the picture-field is an exact square and a semi-circle; the semi-circle, if completed, would pass through the symbolically focal point, that is the hands exchanging the ring. The proportional relationship between the diameters of dome and colonnade is repeated in that between colonnade and semi-circle of the frame. These and other elements of design contribute most significantly to the sense of harmony and order in such a picture and instantly distinguish it from the otherwise closely-related paintings of Perugino; the nature of this harmony and order is more essentially architectural than pictorial.

Tectonic design still controls the earliest of Raphael's monumental paintings in Rome, such as the *Disputa* of 1509 or the *Madonna di Foligno* of about 1511; in these the units are still composed in axial structures. But a moment later, in the *Sistine Madonna* of about 1513, this tectonic system dissolves, and we can watch the process of dissolution in the frescoes, painted between 1511 and 1514, in the second room of the Vatican suite, the Stanza d'Eliodoro. I doubt that it is accidental that between these events came the first consummations of Raphael's architectural ambition in Sant'Eligio and the Chigi Chapel. It seems a paradox that when he became an architect in the full sense of the word his paintings became more truly painterly. But I suspect it is not a paradox—rather, that while his ambition to build had been frustrated it had been channelled, perhaps sub-consciously, through painting, and when opportunity finally arose it acted as a release for Raphael the pure painter. In other words, the sequence of his architectural career is interlocked with, and influential upon, the evolution of his style as a painter.

The interlock of the two abilities may be expressed in several other ways. I have chosen two which will be economical with our time. At Windsor there is a

celebrated preliminary study for the *Disputa*. Beautiful as it may be, it is really very odd as a study for a painting. It is a project, a plan, for a fresco—but to be precise it is a half-plan; it is like an architect's half-plan (or sometimes half-elevation, half-section), such as Bramante's parchment plan for St. Peter's. It may seem natural to us, in retrospect, that he should economize in the invention of a substantially symmetrical fresco by working on only one side of the axis; but is it wholly natural in a painter unless he is accustomed to architectural techniques of design? The process is not normal, so far as I can see, among Renaissance painters. There is, however, a slightly earlier design by Raphael for an altarpiece which is essentially similar.

Raphael's career in Rome is rich in projects which belong neither to the one art nor to the other exclusively. The Chigi Chapel is principally, perhaps, an architectural work, but its pictorial content is indivisible in form and meaning. Conversely, the Stanze are principally, perhaps, pictorial works, but even if we wanted to appreciate them in that way alone we should fail if we ignored their architectural content (by which I mean something in the entire organization of the rooms' decoration rather than in the backgrounds of individual frescoes). This may seem an exceptionally obvious point, but it is worth making it more precisely.

When Raphael first saw the Stanze on his arrival in Rome each of the three rooms was structurally similar to the Stanza dell'Incendio as it is now; all the vaults sprang from broad Quattrocento consoles just above window-level, and their four triangular concave surfaces met on the diagonal axes at angles which became progressively sharper away from the key-stones and towards the consoles. Before Raphael continued the painting, begun by Sodoma, of the ceiling of the Stanza della Segnatura, that is to say late in 1508, a transition between the triangular surfaces of this vault was effected by the rounding off of these angles, thus producing a unified and continuous surface; the corner-consoles were removed and the vault was continued downwards to be terminated by a small capital of classical profile, thus producing a junction between vault and wall that approximates to a full half-circle, not a segment. The extension of the vault could not have occurred later than Raphael's design for the ceiling, for the latter presupposes this modification as much as the unification of the surfaces. There seem to me to be two good reasons for thinking that Raphael had a hand in the remodelling. One is that if it had been done independently by one of the Vatican mason-architects we should expect the same changes in the other two rooms of the suite, the ceilings of which were decorated at the same time by other artists. This was not the case; the vault of the Stanza d'Eliodoro was not extended downwards until Raphael substantially repainted it in 1514, and that of the Stanza dell'Incendio was never changed at all. The second reason why the remodelling in the Segnatura should be Raphael's is that it is such a necessary and integral part of the idea that controlled his paintings, not only on the vault but also on the walls. But I think it does not follow that this idea was exclusively his; among the many conceivable complications is some form of collaboration with Bramante.⁶

If this reasoning is correct, however, it might still be said that the remodelling of the room does not amount to architecture; but I would argue that it does, for

remodelling and painting together transformed the architectural character of the room. If we can, in our imagination, subtract his contribution, we have a building which was previously much more obviously irregular, ill-constructed, and oppressive; he converted it into a majestic monumental space. He also transformed its style, by changing the apparent nature of the structure itself. The type of groin-vault erected here in the Quattrocento rests its weight not upon the corner-consols but laterally upon the walls themselves. Raphael makes it seem—by his mighty painted arches and his new pseudo-pendentives—as if the vault is supported upon corner piers, which he also supplies in paint. For a painter of the High Renaissance some such modification was necessary, for in this period the artist, when painting away by some kind of illusion of space the wall which is the real supporting form, would provide some other visual conviction that the vault above was stable. But in this case the arches and the new pendentives together, it seems, create a new structural system in the room, one of a far higher order aesthetically and rationally adjusted to the function of containing paintings.

Now let us return to the other example I mentioned, the Chigi Chapel in S. Maria del Popolo which was the mausoleum of Agostino Chigi and his brother. We think of this primarily as a monument in the history of architecture, but every conceivable medium is present: painting and mosaic, figurative and decorative sculpture, in white marble, grey and coloured marble, stucco, granite, bronze and gold. The symbolism of the chapel, Resurrection and Immortality, unites these media as intimately as does their purely aesthetic disposition. The lower register takes the form of overlapping triumphal arches, expressing the Triumph over Death, and the dome, like most other domes in Christian buildings, is in its form a symbol of Heaven, particularized by its mosaic decoration as the eternal home of the Soul. Raphael's intention, I believe, was that the God the Father in the centre should be seen receiving the Virgin of the Assumption represented in the altarpiece, but the dome was also the goal of the Resurrection theme stated below in the architecture, the sculpture, and the pyramid-tombs, symbols of eternal life.

There are precedents, like the Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal in San Miniato in Florence, for the employment of so many media. But there are three innovations here of great historical significance. The first of these is the deployment of the subject-matter so widely between media, but with such unity of effect and close association in and across space. Second, in earlier composite works that are comparable, responsibility and invention were divided among specialists; here on the contrary the whole scale of artistic expression is played by one man, and Raphael created a new artistic situation, in the relation of the artist to his material, which was to become characteristic of Baroque Art. And third, the effect in no earlier comparable work approached the richness of this one. It has several aspects; the enormous wealth of his patron is one of them, the emulation of the original splendour of the Pantheon is another; but he also expressed here, as he explicitly stated in a famous letter, the conviction that earlier Renaissance architecture, and specifically that included Bramante's, had not attained the perfection of the antique in the opulence of its materials. Since we think of chromatic richness in particular as being typical of Baroque Art, it is a striking fact that

when Bernini came to complete the chapel he *simplified* Raphael's orchestration in this respect.

The individual parts of the Chigi Chapel were conceived just as imaginatively as the totality. When we isolate the parts we lose some of their meaning, but we can then see that each of them has an important place in the history of its own genre. In the mosaics of the dome, for example, Raphael transformed the problem of illusionistic dome-decoration and provided a solution which, perfected by Correggio, became the basis of a new tradition. The pyramid-tomb is a new form in Renaissance funerary art—so new, in fact, that there are still those who treat the Chigi tombs as additions by Bernini. However, we need to be more precise to understand the principal architectural innovation: these pyramids, designed to carry medallion-portraits of the deceased, are not strictly the tombs, but correspond to the conventional effigy over the sarcophagus in the central arches of wall-tombs. We can compare this situation with a slightly earlier wall-tomb in the same church by Andrea Sansovino, and then we see that the real tombs of the Chigi Chapel are the triumphal arches, enclosing in this case too the sculptured figures in the lateral niches. In other words, the tomb is not set *in* architecture, but is identified with the structure itself. Precedents for this idea, as in the Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal again, never provide such total identification; the Chigi Chapel in this respect, and others, prefigures Michelangelo's Medici mausoleum in San Lorenzo, conceived about eight years later.

The style of this architecture is in many ways Bramantesque, but it is a development of the most decorated extreme of Bramante's range. The corinthian order is probably the most beautifully executed and elaborately correct of its period, but it has one unusual feature, for the frieze is plain coloured marble and decoration is concentrated at capital level. The swags between capitals could be seen on Roman triumphal arches and they reappeared timidly in earlier Renaissance tombs; obviously Raphael had good reason to use them again here. There is some uncertainty as to whether they had already been intended by Bramante in his design for the Santa Casa at Loreto; I think they probably had been, but perhaps not quite in the form in which they were executed. At all events, the swag-and-capital sequence in the Chigi Chapel, with the motifs not isolated but united and balanced in plastic emphasis, established the form familiar to us in the architecture of Palladio. Then again he expressed his personal conception of the perfection of antique style in the elaborate and weighty forms of the entrance arch: an opulence of form to match the material splendour within (Figure 4).

But the Chigi Chapel is not a Neo-classical building. Raphael's relationship to the antique and to Bramante is very complex. Bramante is usually regarded as the exponent of classicism and rule characteristic of the High Renaissance; I think this is an oversimplification, not only because it is a misjudgement of Bramante, who breaks as many Vitruvian rules as he obeys, but also because classicism and rule do not adequately characterize architectural practice of the High Renaissance. Alongside Bramante there were architects who used classical forms in a consistent spirit of licence, and Bramante himself would occasionally take such liberties too. And this situation is perfectly intelligible, for no Renaissance artist could look at

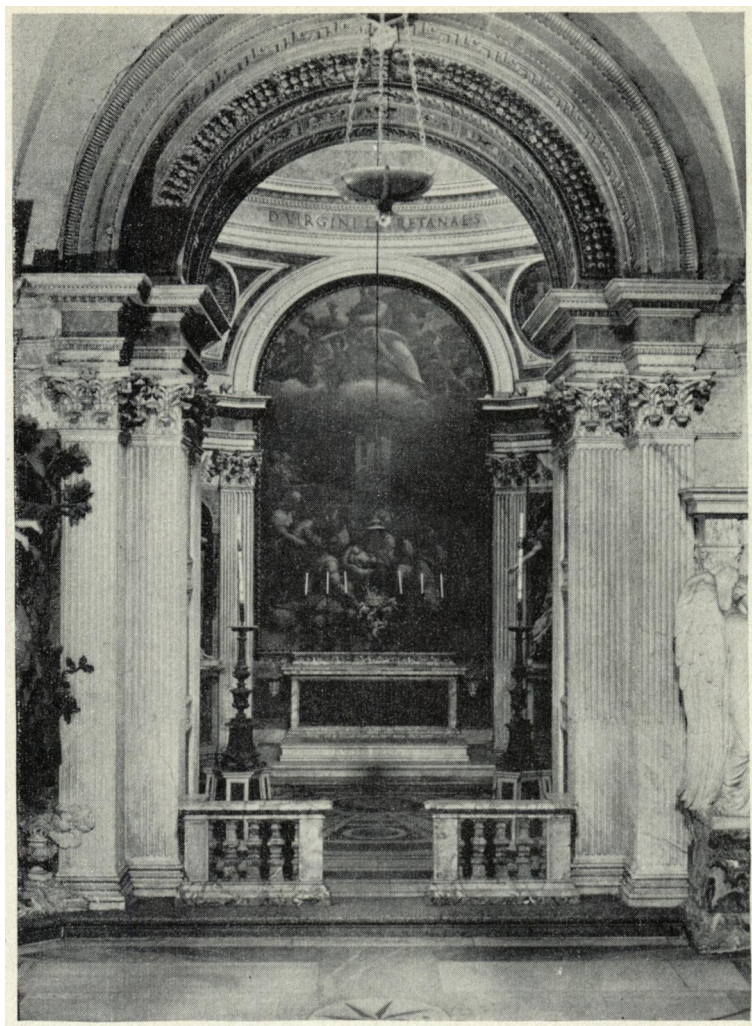


FIGURE 4. *Entrance to Chigi Chapel; S. Maria del Popolo, Rome*

Roman architecture without noticing its licence; their sketch-books show them fascinated by the variety of vocabulary and syntax, to use the familiar metaphors, in antiquity. Nevertheless, it was Bramante's achievement that he was the first to arrive at a complete mastery of the grammar of antique architecture, even if he did not always use it. In this respect Raphael was his closest follower, but it was then Raphael's achievement that he was the first who, through this mastery, came to a full understanding of the operation of licence in antiquity. The licence of earlier Renaissance architects was not based upon a close study of this factor in the antique such as he made; and it is the inspiration from Roman licence that distinguishes Raphael's idiomatic style from Michelangelo's, which is grounded on



FIGURE 5. *Detail of loggia, Villa Madama, Rome*

an equal knowledge of the rules but deviates in a manner which is more often *sui generis*.

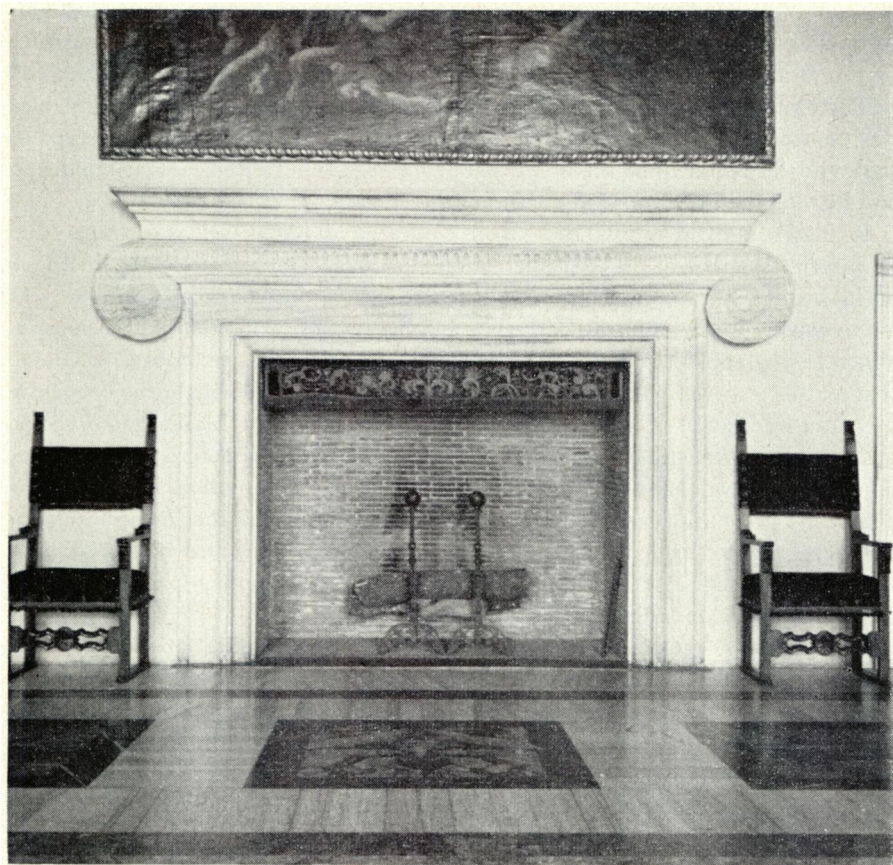
Raphael's buildings offer numerous examples of this point. Let us look first at the doric order of Villa Lante on the Gianicolo; the exterior of the ground floor of this building was, in my view, erected to Raphael's design from about 1518, while the upper parts were designed and built by Giulio Romano in 1523-4. One cannot doubt that the architect who designed this doric order was fully conversant with the rules, yet he contracts the entablature by omitting the frieze; the result is that the *guttae*, which should hang below triglyphs in a frieze, hang alone on the architrave. This contraction was not wilful; Raphael surely knew the doric order, where the frieze was omitted, of the so-called Crypta Balbi, one of the most intensely studied of Roman ruins. Raphael in fact clarifies the irregularity of the Roman example, and his contracted doric order was then the model used by Giulio Romano, Antonio da Sangallo, Peruzzi, Sanmicheli, Palladio, and even Longhena. Another instance of licence inspired by antiquity occurs in the ionic

order of Villa Madama. It was quite orthodox to introduce the bulbous cushion-form at frieze level, but unorthodox to introduce it again in the base (Figure 5); he found it there, however, in an arch in Rome which no longer exists, the Arco de'Portogalli. The main doorway which Raphael designed for the Chigi Stables was unorthodox in another way, for its order of full doric columns was recessed in the wall; this seems to be the first case of such recession in Renaissance buildings, and he took the idea from a Roman tomb.

Raphael's study of antique style, then, embraced idioms as well as grammar, and both were the basis of his own idiomatic inventions, some of which we shall look at in a moment. We must notice first that his approach to the antique was ambiguous as well as informed, which is another way of saying that it was creative. When he was appointed architect of St. Peter's he wrote, in a letter to Castiglione, that on this task Vitruvius shed a great deal of light, but not enough. Subsequently he had a translation of Vitruvius made in his own house by Marco Fabio Calvo, and the manuscript still exists; it is supplemented by marginal notes and corrections in Raphael's own hand, the greater part of them still unpublished. Raphael's comments prove, incidentally, that he could read Latin and that the translation, therefore, was not made for his own use; they suggest, rather, that he had in mind an Italian edition. At the end of his life he initiated another project, for the topographical reconstruction of ancient Rome.

Yet, while he looked at the antique archaeologically, with one part of his personality, as an artist he saw it not objectively in the archaeological manner but subjectively. This ambiguity is typified by his study of the Pantheon. One of his first architectural drawings in Rome was an internal view of the Pantheon which looks, at first sight, perfectly straightforward. But it contains interesting deviations. He may have omitted one of the *exedrae* and a tabernacle simply because he ran out of paper, but it can not be by any such accident or lack of attention that he changed the orders; the huge tabernacles are converted from corinthian to doric, and the pilasters of the second register from corinthian to ionic. The only explanation that I can offer is that he felt they looked better that way. A few years later he was back in the Pantheon studying its details with an intensity and, by the way, a technique that are exactly proto-Palladian. At the same moment the Pantheon tabernacles came again to his mind, but in his own subjective doric translation, when he designed the *portone* of Villa Lante and the loggia for a Medici villa.

Without acknowledging that this subjectivity accompanies his antique licence it would be hard to understand the freedom of his most original stylistic inventions. We could take three adaptations of the classical volute as examples of this freedom. He uses them, as we have seen, in the Temple of the *Sposalizio*; these volutes, unlike monumental applications in earlier Renaissance architecture, are forms purified of virtually all associations with the classical language of architecture and abstracted, as it were, towards structural and aesthetic functions alone. The second example is in a large fireplace in Villa Madama, made of grey-veined marble: a beautiful invention carved from a beautiful material (Figure 6). In this case the volute certainly has associations with an ionic capital, but there is a refined sense of

FIGURE 6. *Fireplace, Villa Madama, Rome*

irony in its monstrously unorthodox context and its seemingly elastic extension. An ionic volute would rarely, if ever, be fluted like this one, and it is worth remembering the fluted scrolls in the youthful drawing he made for the decoration of an entablature; but in the fireplace the straight section of the volute also serves as the frieze in the sandwich of the entablature, and since occasional cases of antique fluted friezes do exist, the ambiguity is clearly intentional. The third example comes from the Leonine balcony across the Cortile del Papagallo in the Vatican, which has brackets of prodigious dimensions and amusing design; in this case two volute-forms are brought together, one of them again distantly reminiscent of an ionic capital but this time extended in depth.

The last two examples, it must be admitted, come from that area of potentialities in the present state of Raphael studies and not from that of certainties. The Villa Madama fireplace could be one of those early works by his pupil Giulio Romano most directly inspired by the master; I do not think that it is, but in either case its significance for our present purposes is the same. We can find, in any case, the

same freedom of invention and principle of elasticity in an example which could scarcely be attributed to anyone but Raphael: the windows and doors of the Vatican Loggia. These were in place when the Loggia was decorated under Raphael's direction in 1518; they were necessitated by and part of the remodelling of rooms behind, between the Loggia and the Stanze, which he also directed in 1517. They are made of the same grey-veined marble as the Villa Madama fireplace, here relieved with gold on the salient profiles; their simplified, linear style is just as singular, their scale just as exceptionally large. The austere beauty of their style marks a new extreme in the variety of Raphael's repertoire. Their massiveness marks a change of style in another sense, prophetic of Cinquecento development; so large are they that their mouldings dwarf those of the enclosing order of Bramante's Loggia itself, only recently completed by Raphael. Along the bottom of the window-tabernacles he re-employs the swelling cushion-moulding used in the base of the ionic order at Villa Madama, but in this case without, apparently, even an unorthodox antique precedent. Where it was necessary to place a door beneath these tabernacles the solutions to the problem are remarkable. In one case it leads to the suppression of the window-frame, the retention of its pediment, and the insertion between of a plain rectangular block—an architectural abstraction of a kind we more naturally associate with Michelangelo. In other cases the window-frame remains but seems to be endowed with a strange malleability, as if the door, cutting through its base, pushed its frame upwards and to either side. This peculiar attitude to classical forms may be expressed in another way: the two elements of door and tabernacle are locked one into the other. By different means Michelangelo achieved the same result a little later in the Medici Chapel; and the way in which Michelangelo makes the inner frames of his tabernacles wander into corners and then bends them back upon themselves is not dissimilar to the liberty that Raphael has already taken. It is perhaps symptomatic of a situation that we have long admired Michelangelo's departures from 'the common usage, or Vitruvius', as Vasari put it, but we, like Vasari, have neglected Raphael's equivalent innovations.

We have considered some of Raphael's unorthodox forms; the Loggia windows introduce a new subject: the unorthodox relation of forms to each other. So let us look again at the pyramids of the Chigi Chapel. This shape, a tall pyramid standing on feet at each corner and to be completed by a bronze cap and ball, is familiar to us in several art-forms down to Neo-classical table-ornaments; Poussin seems to have accepted its classical authenticity. But as far as I have been able to discover, and I would welcome a correction, it did not in fact exist in antiquity, but was a hybrid invented by Raphael, combining two Roman forms which for him would have had funerary associations, the pure pyramid set on the ground and the obelisk. In addition he allows the pseudo-pyramid to pierce or pass over another architectural form, the entablature of the corinthian order which spans the enclosing arch. A second example: the internal order of the Villa Madama loggia, which is intriguingly ambiguous. In earlier Renaissance architecture in Rome, for example in the loggia of the Farnesina, we frequently find that the pilaster has no capital, but that a pseudo-capital is provided by a projection of the entablature;

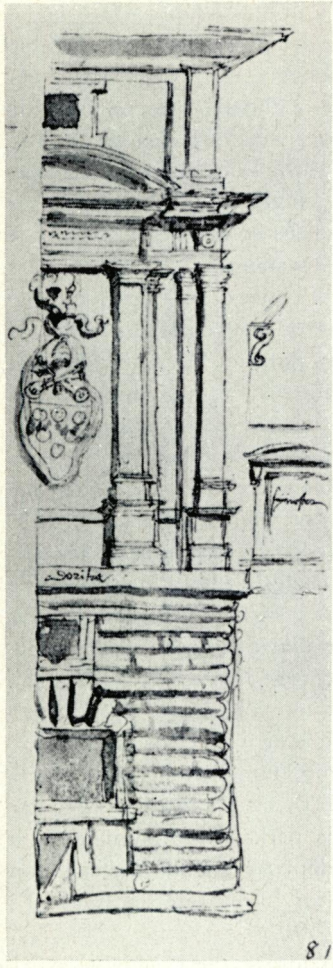


FIGURE 7. *Palazzo Bresciano-Costa, now destroyed; drawing by Heemskerck, Kupferstich-kabinett, Berlin*

this elision has precise precedents in antique buildings and in this form it reappears in Bramante's. In the Villa Madama loggia, however, there is a new complexity, for whereas the continuity of bands of decoration encourages the reading of the pseudo-capitals, as before, as projections of the entablature, the fact that the fascia of the cornice is unbroken encourages us to read them as separate and superimposed forms. This solution was used elsewhere by Raphael and much imitated by Giulio Romano and Antonio da Sangallo. A third example: the doric order of Palazzo Bresciano-Costa (Figure 7) which is derived from Bramante's Belvedere; in each case only the foremost of the cluster of pilasters has a proper base. Raphael, however, complicates their relationship further by differentiating the layers again in the frieze—one has triglyphs, the other paterae—thereby encouraging the reading of two distinct, layered, orders; but Raphael is not intent on rationalizing the distinction that Bramante made at the base, for his orders finally share the same unbroken cornice.

So far we have concentrated on Raphael's forms and their relationships. But his capacity for invention in these respects is complemented by an exceptional ability, indeed facility, in the organizational aspects of building, and in this sense too he makes considerable innovations. To enlarge in this direction our view of Raphael's capacity we cannot do better than to consider the first of the enlarged plans for Villa Madama; the date is 1517, and a drawing in the Uffizi is a precise record of Raphael's intentions.⁷

No Renaissance architect had visualized a more complex and varied sequence of internal spaces, and this truly Roman variety becomes so extreme in the Eastern wing (at the bottom in this plan) that it would appear impossible to reconcile with exterior symmetry of elevation. To the left of the long apsidally-ended central loggia is a large rectangular *salone* with a dome, to the right three smaller rooms occupy the same area. The fenestration of the domed *salone* is by a large central arched window divided in three by piers, and two similar flanking windows. On the right, however, an interior wall meets the centre of the equivalent arch. He gets round this difficulty by thickening the wall to enclose on the exterior a niche which will correspond to the central part of the

triple window on the left, the remaining openings falling into place naturally, it seems, in two separate rooms (the façade of the executed fragment is in principle organized in the same way). The full extent of the agility of his mind can be seen when we notice that by the same solution the windows are all satisfactorily disposed on the interior of each room, the fenestration is also perfectly related to the interior alignment of doors to make enfilades on both axes, and the proportions of the three rooms on the right are the same (3:2) as those of the *salone* on the left. Another subtlety in this plan lies in the contrast it implies between the elevations of the exterior and of the cortile; the former was to be articulated by flat pilasters and would have had large areas of wall-surface, while in the cortile the articulation is by full- and half-columns which frame so tightly the windows and niches that the wall is eliminated by openings and plastic forms. This contrast remained in the executed building, where the cortile itself is round and the exceptionally heavy window-tabernacles are clamped tightly between columns, and it survives in Giulio's derivative of Villa Madama—Palazzo del Te at Mantua. The Uffizi plan includes a theatre, a nymphaeum and other hydraulic extravagancies, and a triple colonnaded *androne* which is the prototype of those in Palazzo Farnese, Palazzo del Te, and Sanmicheli's Palazzo Canossa. All these features and many more are related with marvellous facility to a site which sloped awkwardly in two directions; the fascination of the Villa Madama projects is endless and Raphael's organizational powers are invincible. But the historically significant conjunction of complexity and facility had a specific meaning for Raphael; in his letter to Leo X he said not only that ancient architects were superior to the moderns in the splendour of their materials, but also that by will-power alone they overcame every difficulty.

I should like to pull this lecture together, in conclusion, by showing you the most revolutionary of his palace designs, Palazzo Branconio dell'Aquila (Figure 8). It was destroyed to make way for Bernini's colonnade round the Piazza of St. Peter's; destroyed also, but for different reasons, was Bramante's Palazzo Caprini close by, which Raphael himself had occupied since 1517 (Figure 9). It is inevitable that we compare them. Bramante used an orthodox order of coupled doric columns on the *piano nobile*, Raphael united ground-floor and mezzanine by an unorthodox doric order without a frieze, like that of Villa Lante. The rhythm of Raphael's lower order was perfectly regular, but on the *piano nobile* it was irregular; the order of the tabernacles, with alternating triangular and segmental pediments, established apparently structural accents which by side-stepping those of the ground-floor replaced conformity of rhythm by syncopation. The tabernacles were not window-frames, for the *piano nobile* windows were separately framed within them and were of the same height as niches, placed between the tabernacles and directly over the columns of the main order. The increase of scale upward, between windows of mezzanine and *piano nobile*, was continued in those of the third level; but because there were no tabernacles there the windows seemed more widely separated, and the space which opened for a framed niche and sculpture in the *piano nobile* opened further here to receive framed paintings. Thus there was in the disposition and choice of elements on this façade a far greater complexity than on Bramante's,

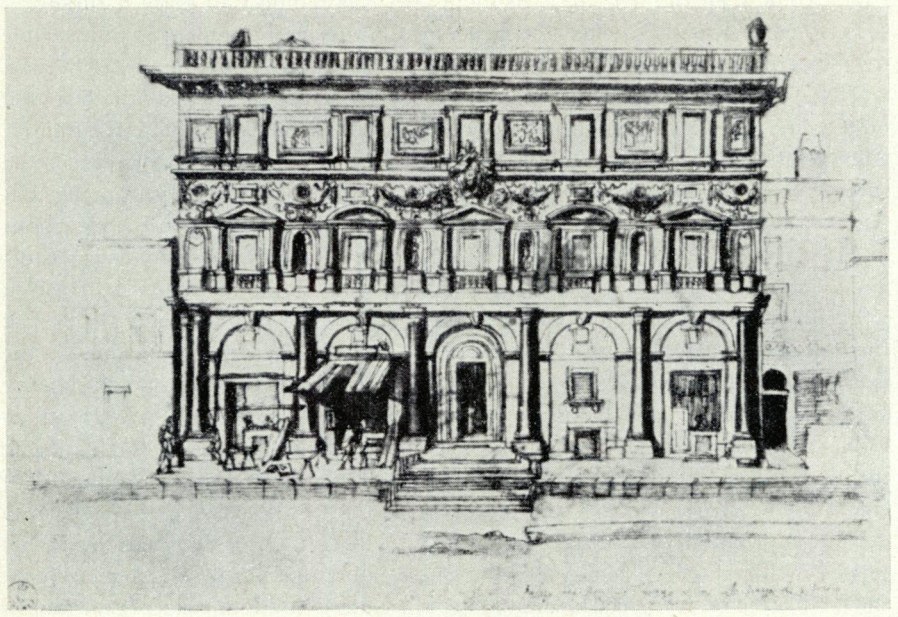


FIGURE 8. *Palazzo Branconio dell'Aquila, now destroyed; drawing by Dosio (?), Uffizi, Florence*

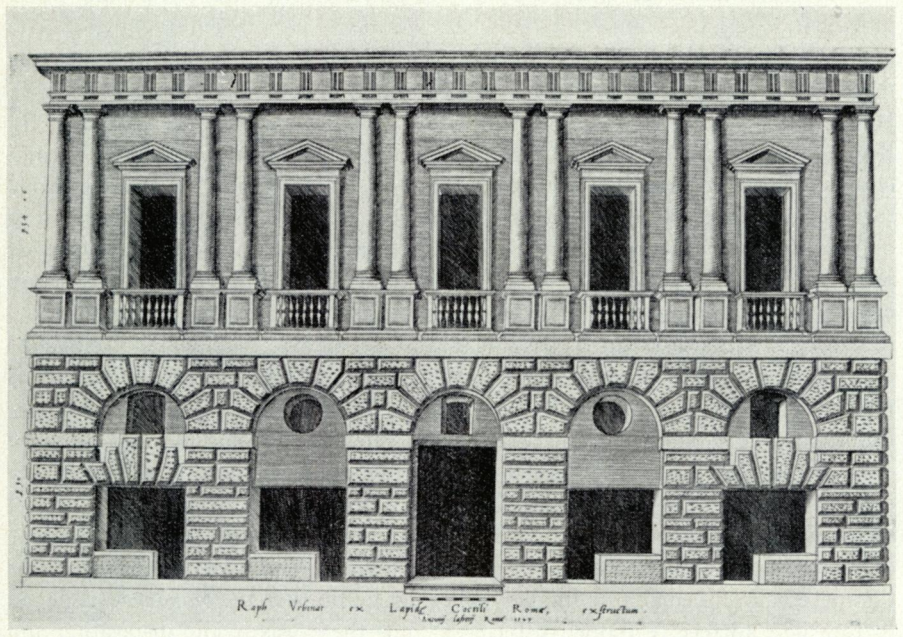


FIGURE 9. *Palazzo Caprini, now destroyed; engraving by Lafreri*

and a flexibility of rhythm vertically and horizontally which replaced Bramante's consistency. There was, however, another change in compositional technique. As the structural elements were diminished in emphasis towards the top the decorative ones proliferated, from sculpture in the niches through a rich pattern of stucco-work festoons and medallions, to paintings. This *fluent* change of character, so different from Bramante's clear division, operated laterally as well, for the flanking niches were shallower than the rest and a climax of decorative emphasis was reached in the enormous central coat of arms. There is a dynamic element of design here comparable to that of his later paintings. This was probably the first façade in which the coat-of-arms became a principal compositional feature, and probably also the first in which the block was crowned by a balustrade, dissolving its mass against the sky; it seems likely that urns were intended right along this skyline. There is evidence that the window-balconies projected beyond the bases of the tabernacles, whereas Bramante's balconies were flush with the column-bases. The main door was carved from coloured marble and Giovanni da Udine's *stucchi* were painted; the framed paintings were probably grisaille, and the statues were probably antique. The total effect, then, must have been a most animated pattern of advance and recession, of variety of motif, and not least of colour.

The significance of Palazzo Branconio dell'Aquila extended beyond its façade. As yet we do not know much more than the plan of the ground-floor, but this is sufficient to show the exceptionally large area occupied by the staircase and the characteristically dense plasticity of the forms in the cortile.

The façade, however, offers one last point for our consideration; I should like to suggest a wider context for its analysis which might help to explain the extraordinary variety of style between this palace, the rather severe Palazzo Bresciano-Costa, and Bramante's Palazzo Caprini (Figures 7-9). Their physical relationship was quite close. A drawing by Heemskerck shows how Palazzo dell'Aquila was situated where the Borgo opened out into Piazza San Pietro; Palazzo Caprini was a little further down the Borgo away from the Piazza, and Palazzo Bresciano-Costa was opposite it. Palazzo Bresciano-Costa was built on a triangular site, and it had a narrow corner façade of separate and striking design, calculated to be seen from the direction of the Piazza; the blank space between the pilasters was originally filled by the arms of Pope Leo, even larger than those on Palazzo dell'Aquila.

The building of these palaces in the Borgo was part of a scheme for the total reconstruction of the street initiated by Alexander VI; they were, then, in the minds of Leo and Raphael, parts of a larger unit of city planning. Now city planning was an immature art-form, and it seems that Raphael adopted the expedient familiar in the initiation of most other new art-forms in the Renaissance—that of borrowing ideas from one already established. The one that occurred naturally to Raphael, and to one or two earlier architects faced with the same problem, was the theatre—naturally because he engaged in theatrical design himself, and naturally too because he had already represented this area of Rome in the manner of a stage-set in the *Fire in the Borgo*; in that fresco the viewpoint is about the same as in the drawing by Heemskerck. But the corner façade of Palazzo Bresciano suggests that the *teatro* of the real Borgo was to be seen in the

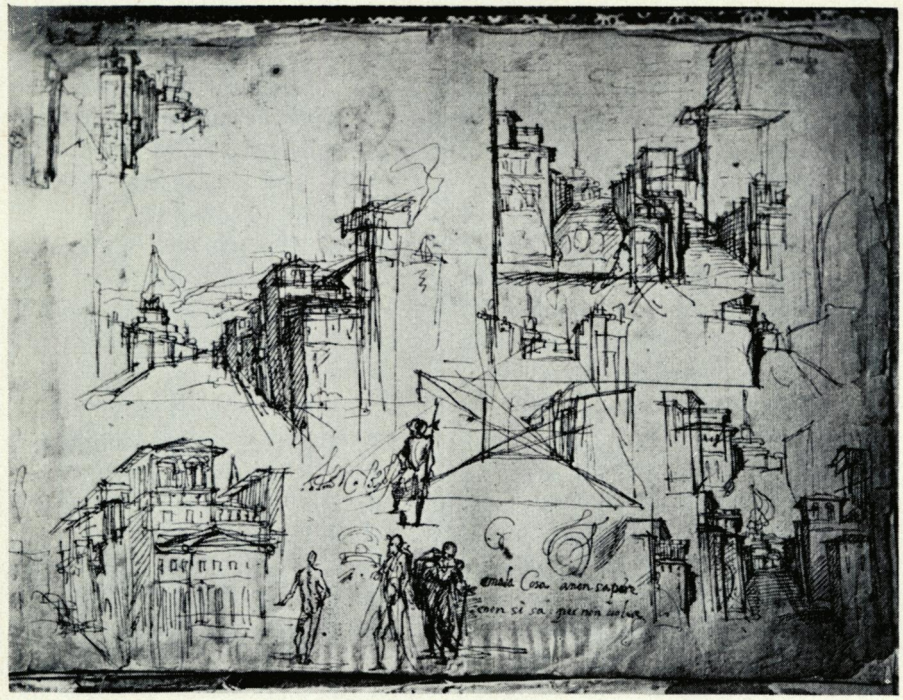


FIGURE 10. Peruzzi, studies for a stage-set, with views of the Borgo towards Castel Sant'Angelo; Biblioteca Comunale, Siena

opposite direction, from the Pope's vantage-point in the Benediction Loggia. And that this was not only within the realms of possibility but was also probably generally understood is shown by a drawing by Peruzzi for the *prospettiva* of a stage with precisely that view (Figure 10). One of the most obvious features of the genre of Renaissance stage-sets was the contrived variety between the buildings, and I think that Raphael and Pope Leo must have hoped that a similar variety could be extended throughout the Borgo.

Raphael, who died young in 1520, surely anticipated a long career as architect ahead of him, and Leo, who also died young the next year, must have looked forward to an exceptionally long pontificate. Leo was an unlucky Pope; Raphael was, in so many ways, the unluckiest of the great Renaissance architects. But if his plans were so often frustrated and his architecture so infrequently survives, we can still recover enough from the wreckage of history to judge their quality and orientation. We do not ignore the implications of the *Transfiguration*, his last great work in painting. By overlooking the equivalent implications of Raphael's architecture we have, I believe, made it unnecessarily hard for ourselves to understand the great change in style after the death of Bramante.

REFERENCES

1. Lille, Musée Wicar; Fischel, 6.
2. Ashmolean, 503v.
3. Ashmolean, 517v.
4. In Filippo Juvara's *Superga*, Turin.
5. See E. Rosenthal, 'The antecedents of Bramante's Tempietto', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XXIII, 1964, p. 65; to his suggestions should be added the project of c. 1480 for a circular Montefeltro mausoleum in the second courtyard of Palazzo Ducale at Urbino—the model was still known late in the sixteenth century, but we have no trace of it now and no means of knowing how closely Raphael may have followed it.
6. The windows of the Stanze were all either modified or opened, but less certainly at Raphael's instigation, in the same period; see D. Redig de Campos, *Raffaello nelle Stanze*, Milan, 1965, p. 18.
7. Uffizi, 273A.

The meeting concluded with the usual expression of thanks.