In Search of Michelangelo's Tomb for Julius II

Reconstructing *that for which no fixed rule may be given.*

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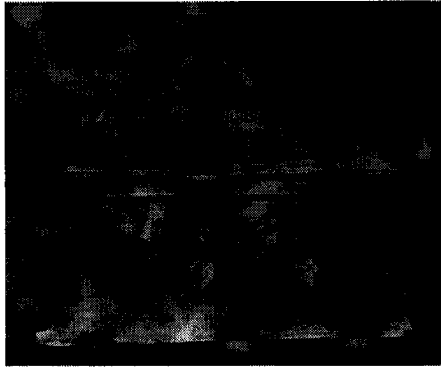
It is imagination that is the decisive function of the scholar.

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900 - 2002)

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Abstract

In early 1505, at twenty-nine years of age, Michelangelo began work on a massive tomb for Pope Julius II. The formal, temporal, and constructional intertwinings of this project are plumbed to create the foundation of this text. Finding its only full manifestation in the narratives of Vasari and Condivi, this tomb was the site of Michelangelo's first engagement with the making of architecture. The execution of this project would go on to intermittently occupy nearly half of Michelangelo's lifetime, making it a pivotal and paradigmatic work in the understanding of his opera. Explored as an embodied architectural treatise, the tomb reveals Michelangelo's dynamic process of creative making. Problematic issues in the prevailing Twentieth Century analyses and reconstructions of the tomb are called into question and alternative approaches to establish a deeper understanding of the project are proposed. Conjectures on the relevance of history, the hegemony and limits of analysis, the physical manifestation of ideas, what it means to "finish" a project, and what constitutes a "work," are projected from the foundations of the tomb onto the making of architecture today.

Abstrait

C'est au début de l'année 1505 que Michel-Ange, alors âgé de vingt-neuf ans, entreprit l'édification du tombeau du pape Jules II. Les entrelacements à la fois formels, temporels et architecturaux sont mis d'aplomb et constituent la fondation de ce travail. Ne trouvant sa seule expression complète que dans les écrits de Vasari et Condivi, ce tombeau fut le site d'une première dévotion entre Michel-Ange et l'architecture en évolution. La réalisation de ce projet se poursuivra par épisodes intermittents tout au long d'une bonne moitié de la vie de Michel-Ange et deviendra l'édifice central et paradigmatique de son oeuvre architecturale. Explorée en tant qu'incarnation d'un traité architectural, le tombeau révèle le processus dynamique de l'art créateur de Michel-Ange. Les points problématiques contemporains les plus courants concernant les analyses et les tentatives de reconstruction du tombeau sont remis en question et de nouvelles approches sont proposées pour une meilleure compréhension de ce projet. Les conjectures concernant la pertinence de l'histoire, l'hégémonie et les limites des analyses, la manifestation physique des idées, le sens profond de la signification du terme "achever", ainsi que ce que représente une "oeuvre" sont projetées des fondations du tombeau sur tout ce qui constitue l'architecture d'aujourd'hui.

Preface

Architecture, the profession, struggles for relevance in our contemporary world. *Architecture*, the enduring form of cultural self-knowledge, is largely an academic pursuit remote from the pressures and exigencies of modern life. Can architects justify *invention* and *innovation* when they are not applied technologies? Can imagination still have value in a world driven by applied science and economic exigency? Why should an architect, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, be concerned with a project that was *not* built, 500 years ago?

If Architecture is to continue (for the few), or aspire (for the many), to simultaneously inform and manifest this culture's *ethos*, it is crucial to understand what Architecture has meant in the past, in order to unfold its latent knowledge in the present.

It is in the history of ideas, and with the artifacts that have shaped or responded to these ideas, that the search for meaningful action begins. An Examination of what past cultures have believed and what they have made is a first step in rediscovering the potential value of Architecture for our own time. Architecture allows us to go beyond the limit of words; to speak the ineffable. Architecture renders the metaphysical; physically. The manifestation of our knowledge in a built, thus perceivable form, allows us to re-act to it, check it for consistency, and reflect upon it. Our imaginative creations embody, "where we are," and can potentially guide us on to "where we want to be." Architecture can be a confirmation of Life, a rest stop, or fuel to drive us onward.[1]

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[1] Ayn Rand, *The Romantic Manifesto*, (New York: Penguin, 1971), p. 170.

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my gratitude to:

I've looked under chairs
I've looked under tables
I've tried to find the key
to fifty million fables

They call me the seeker
I've been searching low and high
I won't get to get what I'm after
till the day I die

Pete Townshend
The Seeker

Michelangelo, *Two Figures after Giotto*
c. 1490 (Hartt).

Introduction: The Search for the Tomb

Surrounded by provocative hints of grandeur and 500 years of speculation, the tomb
for Pope Julius II remains Michelangelo's most enigmatic work. The original project
finds its only manifestation in the written descriptions contained within the biographies
of Michelangelo by Vasari and Condivi.

Even these renderings are not complete. Nearly every aspect of the project is open to
conjecture: events surrounding its inception; where exactly it was to be located; its
precise appearance; why the project was suddenly postponed, and so forth. What is
known, however, provides a foundation on which to build, "what it could have been,"
or "what it could be."

The shadowy outlines of these narratives disclose that in early 1505, Michelangelo

began work on a large tomb project for Pope Julius II.[2] This tomb was to be seen from

all four sides and measured 12 by 18 *braccia:*[3] a mass of Carrara marble that rose in

"gradually diminishing steps" to a sculptural ensemble containing the figures of two

goddesses or angels carrying an ark or bier.[4] In all, the tomb was to contain forty or

more individual sculptures. The interior was to be like a small temple.[5]

It appears that Michelangelo wanted, in the words of Rilke, "to build a mountain above

the Iron Pope, and a race of men therewith to people the mountain."[6] He worked on

this tomb, in its various forms, during the following forty years of his life[7]. His energies

were continually pulled away from the project at the behest of subsequent popes,

amidst allegations of "breech of contract" and "misuse of funds," by Julius's heirs.

Finally ending in what Condivi famously called, "the tragedy of the tomb," the project

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[2]While there is no extant contract for the first project, its inception can be traced to at least early in the year of 1505, when Michelangelo was called to Rome by Julius II. This first phase can be construed to run until a new contract was signed on 6 May, 1513.

[3]The metric equivalent of a *braccia* ranges from William E. Wallace's (*Michelangelo at San Lorenzo:The Genius as Entrepreneur*, New york: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 58.36 centimeters, to Erwin Panofsky's ("The First Two Projects of Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius II," *The Art Bulletin*. vol. 19, no. 4, 1937.), 45.7 centimeters. This author, who is taller than most Renaissance Italians, has a *braccia* of about 51.4 centimeters. Thus the tomb would range from 5.5 meters by 8.25 meters to 7 by 10.5 meters; or from 18 by 27 feet to 23 by 34 ½ feet. None-the-less, the proportion remains 2 : 3.

[4]The descriptions of Giorgio Vasari and Ascanio Condivi differ from one another and will be discussed at length in a following chapter.

[5]For this description see Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, Vol. 1, translared by George Bull, (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 343, and Ascanio Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo*, translated by Alice Sedgewick Wohl, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. 33-4.

[6]Rainer Maria Rilke, "Of One Who Listened to the Stones," from *Stories of God*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), p. 81.

[7]Michelangelo lived between 1475 and 1564. The work on the tomb occurred between 1505 and 1545.

went through five successive contracts, each time decreasing in scale and complexity.[8]

The tomb was initially intended as a freestanding monument, to be located somewhere

within the already shifting fabric of St. Peter's Basilica. Fragments of Michelangelo's

original conception for the tomb were ultimately installed at the church of *San Pietro*

in Vincoli[9] as a wall tomb, some forty years after its initial beginning. The first project,

as described by Vasari and Condivi, the grandest in scale and scheme, forms the

historical basis of this text.[10]

When writing about the Julian tomb many years after its inception, Vasari and Condivi

almost exclusively describe the first project. They both briefly mention the ultimately

reduced installation of the tomb at *San Pietro in Vincoli*, but neither author writes

anything about the intervening years of the tomb, except to say that the scale was to

be reduced. Beyond these sixteenth-century narratives, very little in the way of primary

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[8]The tomb project is generally divided into phases based upon contracts drawn up over the duration of the project and the tomb's subsequent changes in size and form. There is no extant contract from the first phase. In the second and third phases, the tomb while still quite large, is thought to have been attached to a wall along one of its short sides. The ultimate installation of the tomb in *San Pietro in Vincoli* in 1545, takes the form of a more typical wall tomb. Only the first project is considered to have been a free-standing structure.

[9]Located between the Esquiline and the Imperial Forum, this church was consecrated in the 5th century by Sixtus III, but was built atop an older structure. It was the titular church of Julius's uncle, Pope Sixtus IV and at one time that of Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, before becoming Julius's titular church as well.

[10]The evolution of an architectural project from inception to realization may be conceptualized in different ways:

In one way, the initial conception is the highest form or most pure idea. As the project is qualified and quantified by the needs of site, client, budget, and other exigencies of existence in the physical world; the clarity of the conception is corrupted. "For everything must first exist as a pure example of its kind before it is corrupted," Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, Translated by Michael J. B. Allen with John Warden, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), Bk. 1, Ch. III, Vs. 1.

Alternatively, the evolution of a project can be a continual refinement of an idea; starting small and simple, then growing larger and more complex. This debate can be understood as being between; the purest form of the idea as the highest evolution, versus the most complex form of the idea as the highest evolution.

In this text, the tomb as first conceived by Michelangelo (in his mind); before being altered by the exigencies time, site, budget, material, etc., is taken to be the highest form of the idea for the tomb.

documentation regarding the Julian tomb remains in existence. This is astonishing

considering that the tomb occupied much of Michelangelo's life for forty years.[11]

Additional information about the tomb, beyond the content of the narrative

descriptions is assembled through the study of its historical context. The background

and the intentions of the Vasari and Condivi narratives are examined. Events in the

lives of Michelangelo and Pope Julius II around the time of the project are outlined.

Letters and bank book entries that establish dates and quantities confirm the

chronology of events. The site where the tomb was to be located is explored.

Sketches, sculptures, and architectural fragments of arguable attribution to the project

or later versions of it, and the reductive version of the tomb as installed at *San Pietro

in Vincoli* are discussed for what insight they may contribute to delineating the tomb.

Despite the scarcity of documentation, a number of important factors converge to make

the Julian tomb a fertile site for the study of Michelangelo. By this maturation point in

Michelangelo's intellectual life, he had read, listened, and observed his way to a

significantly formed point of view.[12]   This project was an artistic culmination, in

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[11]". . . he often destroyed his work, and I know for a fact that shortly before he died he burned a large number of his own drawings, sketches, and cartoons so that no one should see the labors he endured and the ways he tested his genius, and lest he should appear less than perfect." Vasari, (Bull), p. 418-9.

[12]The sources of Michelangelo's artistic sensibilities are obviously multi-faceted and complex: He spent at least some time with Domenico Ghirlandaio; and Bertoldo di Giovanni, a pupil of Donatello, studying painting and sculpture. During his teen years, he was privy to discussions at the Medici court with some of the most influential thinkers of the time; including Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino. The apocalyptic sermons of Girolamo Savonarola so effected Michelangelo, that even late in life, he claimed he could still recall their sound. See Condivi,(Wohl), p. 105. While Michelangelo's intellectual "point of view" was established, it obviously continued to grow and change, shaped by major events such as the Reformation, the death of his father, his relationship to Vittoria Colonna, over the next sixty years. His "point of view"eventually became nameable, at least to himself, as he contemplated the writing of a treatise later in his life. See Condivi, (Wohl), p. 97-99.

Michelangelo's progression from *disegno*,[13] to painting, to sculpture, to architecture. As a monumental tomb, this project was a literal culmination of Pope Julius's life and accomplishments. More universally, a tomb may be understood as a summation of Life in general.[14] Confronted by death, Mankind's deepest concerns about Life are manifested. Exploring Michelangelo's conception of the tomb for Pope Julius II is a way to glimpse his deepest concerns about Life.

In addition to its consummate "program," this project's further significance comes from the fact that it was here that Michelangelo first engaged in the process of making architecture.[15] The first tomb project, as recorded by Vasari and Condivi, remains Michelangelo's only piece of freestanding architecture. Every other work to his credit, no matter how significant, is an interior, a facade, a renovation, or part of a work executed by others.

The importance of the tomb as an autonomous structure is increased by the application

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[13]The Italian word *disegno* is more than just "design," it is where the intellect meets the hand, it is the translation of an *idea* into an *image*, it is where theory and practice come together. If *nature* is the "mother" of art, then *disegno* is the "father." For a further discussion of this term see also the general preface to Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, in one of its many editions .

[14]Human making has been concerned with the marking, the containing, and the remembering of its dead from the very beginning. "Cities of the dead," necessarily static, took form before the often nomadic, cities of the living. Often the *necropolis*, received more thought and effort than the *acropolis*. In the design of a funerary monument or tomb, there is no choice but to confront the issues of human mortality. When confronted by death, Mankind's deepest concerns about Life are often manifested.

[15]Some scholars have not addressed this structure, which has a program, an interior space, and an elaborate system of ornamentation, as a work of architecture. James Ackerman does not include the work in his book, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961). In his book, *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo*, Wallace states that the facade of *San Lorenzo* was Michelangelo's first work of architecture: "At forty-one years of age (c.1516) Michelangelo became an architect," Wallace, *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo*, p. 11.

of the architectural maxim that treatises and manifestoes are based on architectural "objects" as opposed to architectural "spaces." The Julian tomb may thus be conceptualized as an embodied treatise: a critical "document" for understanding Michelangelo's active process of architectural making. The driving concerns in his making of the tomb: stone, its transmutation into moving human bodies, and the subsequent transmutation of these moving bodies into a robust architecture, may be construed to form the basis of a defacto architectural treatise.

Unlike the written works of Vitruvius and Alberti, Michelangelo's "treatise" is a dynamic dialog, "for which no fixed rule may be given," that can only be exemplified through his works.[16] The tomb may be further understood as a repository of ideas: a "historical ground" available to Michelangelo for transformation into other works. As he transmuted elements of classical architecture into works uniquely his, so too he transformed his own works. Michelangelo's subsequent projects may be read as containing partial glimpses of ideas first conceived in the tomb.

The installation of this embodied treatise, with its transformative amalgam of Christian and Humanist themes, into the fabric of St. Peter's would have been a polemic act. The tomb, if constructed as first conceived, would have caused greater reverberations in the

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[16]Condivi, Wohl, p. 99, "And, to tell the truth, Albrecht (Dürer) discusses only the measurements and varieties of human bodies, for which no fixed rule may be given, and he forms his figures straight up like poles; as to what was more important, the movements and gestures of human beings, he says not a word," and Condivi, Nencioni, p. 57, " E, a dire il vero, Alberto non tratta se non delle misure e varietà dei corpi, di che certa regula dar non si può, formando le figure ritte come pali; quel che più importava, degli atti e gesti umani, non ne dice parola."

making of architecture at the time, than did Bramante's *Tempietto.*

The desire to "see" what this tomb could have been has been aroused in many who have read the seductive narratives of Vasari and Condivi. Over the last several decades, attempts to graphically reconstruct the first tomb project have been initiated by: Erwin Panofsky,[17] Karl August Laux, [18] Charles de Tolnay,[19] Herbert von Einem,[20] Franco Russoli,[21] Martin Weinberger,[22] Frederick Hartt,[23] and Christoph Luitpold Frommel.[24] While these reconstructions offer insight into the appearance of tomb, they fail to reveal the potential richness and the dynamic complexity that would have likely been present in the work by Michelangelo.[25]

Reconstructing an unbuilt work, especially one by Michelangelo, is a daunting and problematic task. In *The Architecture of Michelangelo,* James Ackerman eloquently

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[17]Erwin Panofsky, "The First Two Projects of Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius II,"(*The Art Bulletin.* vol. 19, no. 4, 1937) and revised in his book *Tomb Sculpture,*(New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.,1992).

[18]Karl August Laux, *Michelangelos Juliusmonument,* (Berlin: Verlag Dr. Emil Ebering, 1943).

[19]Charles de Tolnay, *The Tomb of Julius II,* vol. IV, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954).

[20]Herbert von Einem, *Michelangelo: Bildhauer, Maler, Baumeister,* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1973).

[21]Franco Russoli, *Tutta la Scultura di Michelangelo,*(Milan: Rizzoli, 1953).

[22]Martin Weinberger, *Michelangelo the Sculptor,* 2 vols, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.

[23]Frederick Hartt, *The Complete Sculpture of Michelangelo,* (New York: Abrams, 1968).

[24]Cristoph Luitpold Frommel, "St. Peter's: The Early History," and "'Capella Iulia:'Die Grabkapelle Papst Julius' II in Neu-St. Peter," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte,* xl (1977), pp. 26-62, and "Die Peterskirche unter Pabst Julius II.", *Römische Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte,* xvi, (1976), pp. 57-136.

[25]The exception being the painting by L. Poliaghi, published in Laux's, *Michelangelos Juliusmonument.*

sums up the difficulties of speculating on the works of Michelangelo:

> In all his work he(Michelangelo) seems to have carried the generative drive to a point at which it became an obstacle so frustrating that most of his architectural projects were not executed, and no building was completed according to his plans. So contemporary engravers had to record his projects by combining scattered records of different stages in the process of conception with touches of pure fancy. And the problem is the same for the modern historian. We shall never know for certain what Michelangelo's unexecuted projects - wether abandoned or partly completed - were to have been; in fact, the attempt to do so implies at the outset a misunderstanding of his conception of architecture. To visualize any of Michelangelo's designs, we must seek to capture not a determinate solution, but the spirit and goals of a process.[26]

It is with Ackerman's admonition that every attempt at reconstructing a project of Michelangelo's must begin and end.[27]

Efforts to capture the "spirit and goals" of the process which was the Julian tomb, require that its elusive characteristics be approached from many angles. This task necessitates an architectural response. This document strives to comprehend the project both within Michelangelo's opera and within the continuum of architectural making at large. It endeavors to "make sense" of the tomb in concert with Vasari's attempt to do so and in the process reveal some illustrative truths.

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[26]Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, p. 50-2.

[27]It is noteworthy that Ackerman has taken his own advice and has not undertaken a graphic reconstruction of the tomb, as so many others have.

This comprehensive search for the Julian tomb assembles, for the first time in one text, an overview of the tomb's historical foundations, a chronological outline of events surrounding its making, and a side by side comparison of the context and content of the Vasari and Condivi narrative descriptions.[28]   Knowledge gained through this process provides a foundation from which assertions about the project are developed. Speculations on the larger meaning and intention of the tomb are explored. After coming to an understanding of the tomb through dissection, the text works to undermine the hegemony of this approach.

Research into the tomb is given new life through an exploration of Michelangelo's dynamic process of architectural making. The text transitions from the 16th to the 21st Century; from the work to a way of working. Problematic issues in the prevailing Twentieth Century analyses and reconstructions of the tomb are called into question and alternative approaches to establish a deeper understanding of the project are proposed. As a compliment to analysis, additional paths of architectural investigation are explored for what insight they may offer into the tomb.

The knowledge gained through these explorations is utilized to conjecture on the relevance of history, the elements of an architectural education, the nature of research,

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[28]A compilation of the major written and graphic attempts at reconstructing the tomb in its various unexecuted phases, and an analysis of the tomb as assembled in *San Pietro in Vincoli* may be found in the German text by Claudia Echinger-Maurach, *Studien zu Michelangelos Juliusgrabmal*, (Hildescheim: Georg Olm Verlag, 1991). While offering some criticism, this text largely recounts existing scholarship in lieu of additional insight into the tomb.

the hegemony and limits of analysis, the physical manifestation of an idea, the bounds of visual expression, what it means to "finish" a project, what constitutes a "work;" thus the making of architecture.

The first tomb project may be Michelangelo's most important work, because it was never constructed, but ultimately reconstructed so many times. The incompletion of the tomb holds open a space in which to understand much of Michelangelo's work that follows. The tomb project is an enigma with much to tell.

Part One ■ The Historical Search

Introduction to the Historical Search

Architectural making requires a site for its construction. History provides the site for this architectural search. A great quantity of information about Michelangelo and his world exists, but there is little knowledge of his project for the tomb of Pope Julius II. The vast literature surrounding the artist and his work has been sifted in the pursuit of revealing the tomb.

Nearly all that is known of the first project for the Julian tomb comes from the three major biographies of Michelangelo that were published within a span of eighteen years, during the mid 1500's.[1] In 1550, Giorgio Vasari published his first version of *Vite dei piú eccellenti pittore, scultori, e architettore*, which included the story of Michelangelo's life and works.[2] This was followed in 1553, by Ascanio Condivi's *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*. Vasari eventually enlarged and revised his book, and a second edition was published in 1568. This second edition of Vasari's text is the most inclusive or comprehensive of the three accounts, as it builds on the other two stories. The other accounts serve as interesting background to its development, sometimes providing complimentary information. All three editions will be utilized accordingly

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[1] Michelangelo was also characterized, around this time, in a number of smaller works including biographical dialogues written by Francisco de Hollanda(1548), Anton Francesco Doni(1547), Donato Gianotti(1546), and Benedetto Varchi(1549). While perhaps enlightening as to Michelangelo's overall sensibilities, none of these works give any explicit information regarding the tomb project in any of its phases.

[2] Vasari's first edition of 1550, was published in Florence, by the Flemish typographer known as Lorenzo Torrentino. The first edition was immensely popular and sold out of its printing of about 1500 copies.

in the development of this text.[3]

In his ambitious project to record the *Vite dei piu eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori,* Giorgio Vasari employed many of the aims and structures of classical Literature. In the "Preface to Part Two," of his book he wrote that ". . . the best historians have tried to show how men have acted wisely or foolishly, with prudence or with compassion and magnanimity; recognizing that history is the true mirror of life."[4] To those ends Vasari states that he "tried as far as (he) could to imitate the methods of the great historians."[5]

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[3]Unless otherwise noted, the English translations are by this author. The English word derived from the similar Latin root as the Italian word, is used where possible. These translations are primarily "word for word," compared to the "paraphrasing" used in the popular English versions which are also referred to. While a "word for word" translation does not read as smoothly as a "paraphrased" one, it does provide the opportunity to compare each English word to each Italian word.

For Vasari, I have translated from the definitive *La Vita di Michelangelo nella redazioni del 1550 e del 1568,* edited by Paola Barocchi and published by Riccardo Ricciardi, Milan, in 1962. I have examined Vasari's own *Vite dei più eccellenti pittore, scultori, e architettore,* published by Giunti in Florence in 1568. Due to its fragility, value, and thus accessibility, I have used the Barocchi book for translation on a daily basis as it is essentially identical.

In English, I have examined the Vasari text in *Lives of the Artists,* translated by George Bull, first published by Penguin Books, in 1965; *The Lives of the Artists,* translated by Julia Conaway Bondanell and Peter Bondanella, published by Oxford University Press, in 1991; and *Lives of the most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects,* translated by Gaston Du C. de Verre, published by Knopf, in 1996. All of these versions are of the expanded and revised 1568 edition. The 1550 edition (presumedly viewed as less complete) has never been published in full, in English.

For Condivi, I have translated from a relatively new edition of his work, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti,* edited by Giovanni Nencioni and published by Studio Per Edizioni Scelte, Florence, in 1998.

For Condivi, in English, I have referred to *The Life of Michelangelo,* translated by Alice Sedgewick Wohl and edited by Helmut Wohl, published in its second edition by Penn State Press, in 1999. This work substantially paraphrases the original Italian text. Condivi's sentences and paragraphs are often divided by the translator in a way that changes the impact of the original intent. Some obvious English equivalents have been rejected in favor of words "more distant to the original. Much of the content of the endnotes is stated rather peremptorily; without any discussion of alternate scholarly opinions, and without citing the source of the conclusion. It has aided as a translational device for the book as a whole, but not as a critical tool for specific passages.

[4]Vasari,(Bull), p. 83.

[5]Vasari, (Bull), p. 83

One of those whom Vasari sought to imitate was the Roman historian, Livy, who

extolled the value of studying history for the "clear and distinct examples of every kind

of conduct, that we may select for . . . imitation"; or "avoid" for being "dishonorable

in their principles."[6]   The style and content of Vasari's writings were also influenced

by the widely read Cicero, who wrote that history, "illuminates reality, vitalizes

memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us tidings of antiquity."[7]

In the study of history, the difference between what may be useful and what is

superfluous is not always initially apparent. Structural members required to support

an edifice are not always visible, but their underpinning is necessary. Establishing a

broad historical foundation puts as many facts as possible into proximity with other

facts, allowing connections to be made and conclusions to be drawn. Fragments of

information, which at first seem unrelated, may be transmuted into useful knowledge.

In his working drawings, Michelangelo often assembled seemingly remote ruminations

on a single sheet of paper, and transformed these into new sculptural and architectural

forms. Approached imaginatively, history too, is a creative medium through which

fantastic figures may be formed. "Prodigiously unrestrained and free, it (fantasia) can

form, reform, combine, link together and separate; it can blend together the most-

[6]Livy, (Titus Livius, 59 BC - 17 AD). The History of Rome. Translated by B.O.Foster, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919),
Book 1, Prologue.

[7]Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC), De Oratore, II. Translated by H. Rackham, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), p. 36.

distant objects or keep apart the most intimately connected objects."[8]

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[8]Juan Luis Vives quoted by David Summers, in *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 113. For a contemporary discussion of metaphor and image see Paul Ricoeur, "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality,"(in *Man and World*, vol. XII, no. 2, 1976), p. 123-141.
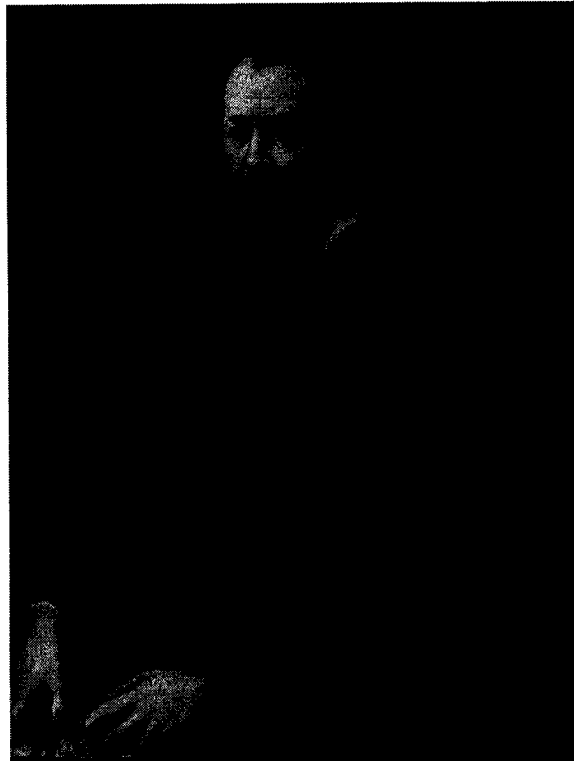
Figure 1 Giorgio Vasari, Self-Portrait (Rubin).

Giorgio Vasari's First Edition of *The Lives of the Artists* (1550)

Originally begun as a pastime, Vasari used his stories about artists to entertain dinner

guests.[9] The scope of the stories was determined by his own experiences: "Where he

traveled, whom he knew, whom he honored, and for whom he worked, determined

his text."[10] As the stories developed, Vasari inserted himself into the work, becoming

where possible, a small character amidst the "most excellent artists."

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[9] In writing his book, Vasari would consult his "ricordi e scriti, fatti intorno a ciò infin da giovanetto per un certo mio passatempo." Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' piuecellenti pittori scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, 6 vols. Edited by R. Bettarini and Paola Barocchi, (Florence: Sansoni, 1966-87).

[10]Patricia Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 34.

Vasari's first edition addresses few sculptures and little architecture: his personal experience up to that time was largely limited to painting. He does address the Julian tomb, though not as extensively as in his second edition. Michelangelo was 75 at the time of the first edition and was the only living artist to be included in the book. Vasari may have assumed that Michelangelo was nearly dead, or soon would be. Up to this time, Vasari had had little, if any, contact with Michelangelo.[11] Thus, all of Vasari's reference material had come from what he had seen and from the stories he had collected from others.[12]

Upon reviewing the book, Michelangelo sent Vasari a sonnet,[13] apparently in gratitude for Vasari's account of his life's story, and later wrote a letter of appreciation.[14] This appreciation appears incongruous with the scholarly findings that claim Michelangelo was greatly distressed at the inaccuracies in Vasari's work. Michelangelo's gestures were perhaps a courteous or diplomatic response, demanded by protocol, even though he was unhappy with his portrayal. He was evidently so troubled that he may have

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[11]In the years following his first edition and Condivi's work; Vasari did have first hand contact with Michelangelo and was able to revise his book accordingly.

[12] Giorgio Vasari was born July 30, 1511. Recognizing that Giorgio Vasari was not born until six years after the Julian tomb project began(at the time of the painting of the Sistine ceiling), illustrates his distal relationship to any first hand knowledge of the circumstances of the tomb's beginnings. Though 36 years Michelangelo's junior, Vasari survived only ten years beyond the death of the artist, dying on June 27, 1574.

[13]Creighton Gilbert, translator. The Complete Poems and Selected Letters of Michelangelo, edited by Robert N. Linscott, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963 [revised 1980]), p. 156. "If you had with your pen or with your color, Given nature an equal in your art, And indeed cut her glory down in part, Handing us back her beauty lovelier, You now, however, with a worthier labor, Have settled down to write, And steal her glory's one remaining part, That you still lacked, by giving life to others. Rivals she had in any century, In making beautiful works, at least would bow; At their appointed ends they must arrive. But you make their extinguished memory, Return blazing, and themselves, and you, In spite of her eternally alive."

[14]E. H. Ramsden, translator, editor, and annotator. The Letters of Michelangelo, 2 vols. (London: Peter Owen Limited, 1963), p. 348.

worked with Ascanio Condivi to correct the errors and omissions of Vasari's work.

Asconio Condivi's *Life of Michelangelo* (1553)

The circumstances surrounding Condivi's apparent apprenticeship with Michelangelo are unknown.[15]   The association was both brief and profound: Condivi arrived in Rome in 1550, studied with Michelangelo,[16] lived in his house, published the *Life of Michelangelo*,[17] and returned to his native *Marche* by the latter part of 1554.

Condivi linked himself to Michelangelo in the "Introduction" to his book by claiming that he had, "not merely the presence (which I could hardly have hoped to enter), but the love, the conversation, and the close companionship of Michelangelo Buonarroti . . ."[18]

Though Condivi's book is less sophisticated in style and narrative than Vasari's, it does contain more specifics about the tomb than did Vasari's first edition. The book was written, according to its introduction, because "someone," had written about Michelangelo, and "said things about him which never were so," and "left out many

[15]Ascanio Condivi was born in 1525, in Ripatransone, a town near the Adriatic coast, about half-way between Ancona and Pescara. His birth was nineteen years after the inception of the tomb; he too was many years removed from first hand information. He returned to relative obscurity in his native Marche, after his brief sojourn in Rome; he remained involved in painting and some local politics, before drowning while fording a stream in 1574.

[16]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 1,"Preface," " . . . and I have followed my studies and the teaching of the master and my idol, as your Holiness encouraged me to do, . . ."

[17]Published as the *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti raccolta per Asconio Condivi da la Ripa Transone*, in Rome, on 16 July, 1553.

[18]Condivi,(Wohl), p. 3. Additionally, Hirst writes that, "There are no grounds for doubting his (Condivi's) claim. But the steps by which he came to form so close a tie with Michelangelo and become the great man's chosen biographer are still obscure and may always remain so," "Introduction," in Condivi, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, edited by Giovanni Nencioni, with essay by Michael Hirst and Caroline Elam, (Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1998), p. II. Hirst goes on to speculate on how Condivi and Michelangelo may have come to know each other.

things which are most noteworthy."[19] The work is generally accepted as a correction

of Vasari's first edition, likely instigated by Michelangelo himself. Its other "particular

agenda," according to Hirst, was to, "exonerate Michelangelo over his delays in

working on the tomb of Julius II and his failure to complete the monument in adequate

fashion." [20]

In the introduction to his book, Condivi admits to his inadequacies as a writer. In the

introductory essay to the recent Italian edition of Condivi's work, Hirst writes that,

". . . once one has held in one's hand Condivi's own surviving letters, the conclusion

is inescapable that he could never have written the text of the book as published."[21]

Hirst, in his essay, and previously, Wilde, in his lectures on Michelangelo, make an

argument for Annibale Caro,[22] as the "ghost writer" of Condivi's book.[23] Hirst, in his

essay, goes on to state that in comparing Caro's other works to Condivi's *Life*; "the

parallels of construction and vocabulary are striking."[24] Caro's "relation" to Condivi

eventually became a literal one: Condivi married Caro's niece, Porzia.

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[19]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 3.

[20] Hirst further writes, "Although intended to make good Vasari's omissions and misunderstandings in his Life of 1550, Condivi's book is also a partial survey, a fact which owes to its very particular agenda: to exonerate Michelangelo over his delays in working on the tomb of Julius II and his failure to complete the monument in adequate fashion," Condivi, (Nencioni), p. x.

[21]Hirst, "Introduction," in Condivi, (Nencioni), p. VI.

[22]Caro was "a leading figure in Farnese circles and one of the most prominent literary men of the age," Hirst, "Introduction," in Condivi, (Nencioni), p. VI.

[23]Johannes Wilde, "Michelangelo, Vasari, and Condivi," in *Michelangelo: Six Lectures*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 1-16.

[24]Hirst, "Introduction," in Condivi, (Nencioni), p. VII.

The figure of Annibale Caro connects all three biographies. In addition to being the probable ghostwriter of Condivi's book, he was a friend to Vasari and a critical reader of Vasari's first edition.[25]   Caro was also apparently well acquainted with Michelangelo. Condivi's book states that, "Recently he (Michelangelo) has become very fond of Annibale Caro, and he tells me that he regrets not having frequented him sooner, as he has found him very much to his liking."[26]   Caro, after coming to know Michelangelo, being disappointed with what Vasari had published, and perhaps acting in the interest of his future "nephew-in-law," may have decided to write his own version of Michelangelo's life.

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[25]Caro tried "to persuade Vasari to write more simply," Hirst, "Introduction," Condivi, (Nencioni), p. VI.

[26]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 103.

Giorgio Vasari's Second Edition of *The Lives of the Artists* (1568)

Using the 1550 edition as the core and benefitting from the work of Condivi, Vasari revised his "Life of Michelangelo," and published it in the second edition of *The Lives*, in 1568. In this edition, sculpture and architecture receive more attention than in the first edition, reflecting Vasari's greater involvement in these arts. Political events, personalities, and dates also figure more prominently in the edition of 1568.[27]

One of Vasari's acquaintances, Vicenzo Borghini, advocated a greater critical evaluation of information in historical writing. Borghini sought to distinguish between "legend" and "history," going so far as to question "exemplary representation" as an expression of the truth. He believed that the function of history was still didactic, but he wanted to let the reader be the judge of truth. Borghini wrote to Vasari that the "lives" of the artists are not important and that Vasari should stick to "the works by their hand," to be diligent, and to see that every detail is in its place. Vasari was not completely converted to this point of view but, "the new book is more detailed and more literally correct" and more strictly historical.[28]

In the revised edition, Vasari inserted himself in proximity to Michelangelo wherever

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[27]This greater concern with politics was likely influenced by Benedetto Varchi's account of the history of Florence, written in 1546-47.

[28]Rubin, *Vasari*, p. 190-2.

possible, beginning with his first trip to Florence in 1525,[29] and even claimed to have apprenticed with Michelangelo. Most scholars find this assertion improbable because Michelangelo did not operate a traditional bottega or studio. Michelangelo did associate with a number of the same assistants over the years, but these workers were essentially "carving technicians," not "apprentices."[30]

The similarities between the content of Condivi's account and Vasari's second edition are readily apparent when reading the texts side by side. Hirst goes as far as declaring that Vasari "mercilessly plundered the earlier account."[31] In his defense, Vasari does occasionally add details not found in Condivi's earlier account. While collecting information for the second edition, Vasari engaged in direct conversation and correspondence with Michelangelo, so it is possible that additional details about the tomb came from Michelangelo himself. Conversely, there is also the possibility that these details were fabricated by Vasari to serve some instructive purpose of his own. Concerning the tomb, Michelangelo would have been recalling events and designs from as many as sixty years earlier. He may have had difficulty remembering exactly what he had planned for the first design, or he may also have consciously changed the story to suit his needs. He would have had the opportunity to tell how he imagined

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[29]Paola Barocchi, "Michelangelo tra le due redazioni delle *Vite* vasariane (1550-1568)," in *Studi vasariani*, (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1984), p. 35-52.

[30]See Wallace, *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo.*

[31]Hirst, "Introduction," in Condivi, (Nencioni), p. XIX.

the tomb to be, or explain why it was not as it should have been.[32]

If Condivi's agenda was simply to correct the errors and omissions of Vasari, and to justify Michelangelo's handling of the "tragedy of the tomb," then Vasari had much grander plans and ambitions. Vasari wanted to raise the status of the artist,[33] educate his potential clientele,[34] and fit his ideals into the larger context of the culture of the time and into the continuum of history.[35] By placing himself in proximity to the artists that he wrote about, he hoped to achieve greatness himself and perhaps secure a few new commissions in the process.

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[32]It may be assumed that Vasari and Condivi (thus Michelangelo, if he is their source) in describing the first project, are doing so because it is the preferred version or the best manifestation of what was intended.

[33]The status of the Renaissance artist had been rising gradually already. The Medici were in part responsible for bringing the artisans out of their workshops and into the court and making them "artists." De Tolnay credits Lorenzo the Magnificent and his "art school" in the Medici gardens with changing both Michelangelo's and Italy's view of art. He says that art took on a "new dignity and freedom," that it was no longer viewed as a "handicraft," but became "a free spiritual action motivated by an inner creative need." Charles de Tolnay, The Youth of Michelangelo, (Princeton: University Press, 1947), p. 17.
  Vasari wrote that early in Michelangelo's career his family didn't approve of him becoming an artist; " As a result he used to be scolded and sometimes beaten by his father and the older members of the family, who most likely considered it unworthy of their ancient house for Michelangelo to give his time to an art that meant nothing to them." Vasari, (Bull), p. 326.
  However, later, "In Rome, an artist like Raphael eventually came to live more like a prince than a painter." Rubin, Vasari, p. 96.

[34]At least part of Vasari's hope for his book was the creation of a knowledgeable clientele to act as patrons of the visual arts. "Vasari wanted his readers to come to understand the differences between styles and to learn how to assess the qualities and defects of works of art." Rubin, Vasari, p. 6. ". . . he made the artists more like gentlemen, he made the amatori (lovers or connoisseurs of art) more like the artist as they read."(Rubin, Vasari, p. 406).

[35]Vasari wanted to demonstrate the value of the arts and the merit of the artists. He employed classical forms of literature including panegyric: he composed his stories of praise and example, too. In these exemplary storie, Vasari was able to present the ideal artist and the ideal artistic "world." Instead of mythological heroes, he created artistic heroes. Instead of through heroic deeds, the artists prove their virtù through the creation of their works. Their lives were meant to inspire the lives of others. Rubin, Vasari, p. 5.

Figure 2 Frontispiece from the Life of Michelangelo, Giorgio Vasari, 1568 (Rubin).

The Divine Michelangelo

The "Life of Michelangelo," was a culmination in Vasari's text.   After tracing the

renaissance of the arts in Italy through his biographies, Vasari confirmed the evidence

of its ascension, by his recording of the life and works of Michelangelo.   Vasari

apparently felt Michelangelo's story was of great consequence: it is three times the

length of any other artist in the book. The description of the unbuilt first project for the

Julian tomb is at least equal to, if not longer than that of any other project mentioned

in the biography.

While Condivi was content in his introductory remarks to link Michelangelo's ancestry to the counts of Conossa, Vasari chose in both of his editions, to explain Michelangelo's birthright as a "divine intervention." In the opening sentences of his *Life of Michelangelo*, Vasari nearly equates the birth of Michelangelo with the birth of Christ.[36]

" . . . the benign ruler of heaven graciously looked down to earth, saw the worthlessness of what was being done, the intense but utterly fruitless studies, and the presumption of men who were farther from true art than night is from day, and resolved to save us from our errors. So he decided to send into the world an artist who would be skilled in each and every craft, whose work alone would teach us how to attain perfection in design (by correct drawing and by use of contour and light and shadows, so as to obtain relief in painting) and how to use right judgement in sculpture and, in architecture, create buildings which would be comfortable and secure, healthy, pleasant to look at, well-proportioned and richly ornamented. Moreover, he determined to give this artist the knowledge of true moral philosophy and the gift of poetic expression, so that everyone might admire and follow him as their perfect exemplar in life, work, and behavior and in every endeavor, and he would be acclaimed as divine."[37]

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[36]The "feel" of this opening sentence is not unlike the biblical quotation of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Only in Vasari, humanity is "saved" from the "hell" of less than perfect art. One could also look at "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us," from John 1:14. Vasari writes that god is sending an artist into the world to teach mean how to attain perfection. As Christ was sent to be an exemplar to humanity, Michelangelo was to be an exemplar to artists.

[37] Vasari, (Bull), p. 323, and in Italian, Vasari,1568, (Barocchi), p. 3-4, " . . . il benignissimo Rettore del cielo volse clemente gli occhi alla terra, e veduta la vana infinità di tante fatiche, gli ardentissimi studii senza alcun frutto e la opinione prosuntuosa degli uomini, assai più lontana dal vero che le tenebre dalla luce, per cavarci di tanti errori si dispose mandare in terra uno spirito che universalmente in ciascheduna arte et in ogni professione fusse abile, operando per sé solo, a mostrare che cosa sia la perfezzione dell'arte del disegno nel lineare, dintornare, ombrare e lumeggiare, per dare relevo alle cose della

To locate Michelangelo astrologically, and to explain the inspiration for his naming, Vasari provided the account of his birth:

"Thus, the boy was born on Sunday, 6 March (1475), about the eighth hour of the night; and without further thought his father decided to call him Michelangelo, being inspired by heaven and convinced that he saw in him something supernatural and beyond human experience."[38]

Certainly by the time of the second edition, Vasari's writing was inspired by a renewed interest in a Neoplatonic point of view.[39] Michelangelo was the paradigm of perfection: both artistically talented and of high moral standing. Not only was Michelangelo's work held up as an example, but Michelangelo himself was an archetype to aspire to: an almost mythical hero whose extraordinary deeds were his works of art. Michelangelo's life and works were the embodied proof of the perfectability of Man,[40] and Vasari's book was evidence of "the diffusion of humanist thought to the wider realms of perception and practice."[41]

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pittura, e con retto giudizio operare nella scultura, e rendere le abitazioni commode e sicure, sane allegre, proporzionate e ricche di varii ornamenti nell'architettura. Volle oltra ciò accompagnarlo della vera filosofia morale, con l'ornamento della dolce poesia, acciò che il mondo lo eleggesse et amirasse per suo singularissimo specchio nella vita, nell'opera, nella sanità dei costumi et in tutte l'azzioni umane, e perché da noi più tosto celeste che terrena cosa si nominasse."

[38]Vasari, (Bull), p.326.

[39]Ficino's treatise on Plato's *Symposium* was finally published in Italian in 1544 and "Vasari's concept of an artist's career was based on a philosophical or philosophizing notion of perfection that was essentially Neoplatonic - placing man at the midpoint of creation," Rubin, Vasari, p. 411.

[40]The notion of perfectability placed man at the midpoint of creation. In his treatise, *On the Dignity of Man*, Pico della Mirandola wrote: "Neither heavenly nor earthly, neither mortal nor immortal have We made thee. Thou, like a judge appointed for being honorable, art the molder and maker of thyself; thou mayest sculpt thyself into whatever shape though dost prefer. Thou canst grow downward into the lower natures which are brutes. Thou canst again grow upward from thy soul's reason into higher natures which are divine," Pico della Mirandola, *On the Dignity of Man*, translated by Charles Glenn Wallis, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), p. 5.

[41]Rubin, *Vasari*, p. 23.

Vasari and his contemporaries sought "correspondences to the essential forms of nature rather than copying the accidents of material reality,"[42] in the same manner that Renaissance painters and sculptors refined and perfected their models into ideal forms. Vasari, repeating the stories of Cicero and Pliny, gave the example of combining the best aspects of several models to achieve true beauty.[43] Likewise, the persona of Michelangelo was perfected and made ideal, by his biographers and perhaps through his own self promotion to them.[44]

The virtue of the Julian tomb is made apparent by its prominence in Michelangelo's story and by the significance of Michelangelo's life in the artistic Cosmos that Vasari constructed in his text. The literary reconstruction of the tomb was necessary to the thesis of Vasari's text. He needed to both "absolve" Michelangelo of his "sins" in regard to the tomb, and ensure that he had enough "miracles" to his credit for artistic "canonization."

Evidence of Michelangelo's sculptural and painting prowess at the time of Vasari's first edition (1550) and Condivi's book (1553) was impressive. Michelangelo could claim the Rome *Pietà*, the marble *David*, the *Sistine* ceiling, and *The Last Judgement*. Built

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[42]Rubin, *Vasari*, p. 239.

[43]". . .only by copying the human form, and by selecting from what was beautiful the most beautiful, could he achieve perfection." Vasari, (Bull), p. 423, and Cicero, *De Inventione*, II, p. 166-9, and Pliny, *Natural History*, translated by H. Rackham, 10 vols, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), bk. 35, p. 308-9.

[44]See for example Paul Barolsky, "The Metamorphosis of Michelangelo," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, no. 68, 1992.

evidence of Michelangelo's architectural genius, on the other hand, was still lacking at this time. After forty years of work on the tomb, only the sculpture of *Moses* clearly demonstrated Michelangelo's true artistic capabilities. The other grand architectural projects to his credit were, at that time, incomplete fragments. The *Medici Chapel*, the *Laurentian Library*, the *Farnese Palace*, the *Campidoglio*, the *Sforza Chapel*, the *Porta Pia*, *Santa Maria degli Angeli*, and *St. Peter's*, were all either unfinished or not yet begun at the time of Vasari's first edition.[45] Many of these same projects were still incomplete at the writing of the second edition. The tomb, presented in its grandest form in the writings of Vasari and Condivi, was a way of giving Michelangelo a finished "built" work to seal his status and make up for the perceived "tragedy of the tomb."

Vasari, in his 1568 edition, wrote that "because this work (the first tomb project) illustrates (Michelangelo's) great (powers) of invention, we shall describe below, the plan that he followed."[46] Even though the first tomb project was never completed as originally conceived, it provided Vasari's readers with an example of Michelangelo's "great powers of invention." Vasari also stated that the *disegno* for the first tomb project was "the ultimate testimony to the *virtù* of Michelangelo."[47]

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[45]For a chronology of projects see for example, James Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, p. 291-335.

[46]"E perché questa opera fu ordinata con grandissima invenzione, qui di sotto narreremo l'ordine che egli pigliò." Vasari, 1568,(Barocchi), p. 28, and Vasari, (Bull), p. 343.

[47]". . . uttimo [sic] testimonio della virtù di Michelagnolo." Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 28.

The Narrative Context

While the details of what actually took place may be enhanced or omitted, there are still essential truths to be found in these biographies. After acknowledging their contexts and developing an awareness of their prejudices,[48] the biographies written by Vasari and Condivi, still have much to tell. If not completely factual, they do convey the hopes, beliefs, aspirations, and values of their time. The stories are a way for Vasari and Condivi to explain the phenomenon of Michelangelo, accommodate him into their world, and use his exemplary life and works to illustrate ethical action.

Nearly 500 years later, research can include how various words were used at the time and explore numerous references to classical literature. Nearly impossible to account for is Michelangelo's potential input into the content of the stories. He may have provided to his biographers: sarcasm, word-play, allegory, metaphor, illustrative truths, and intentional revisions.

In her book, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History*, Rubin summarized the *Lives of the Artists* as follows; "Vasari's portrayal of figures from the past was based largely on instructive possibilities, which abounded, not actual facts, which were limited. Right and wrong

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[48]Further insight into the problematics and prejudices of these biographies may found in the referenced books by Rubin, Barolsky, and in Hayden B. J. MaGinnis's, *Painting in the Age of Giotto: A Historical Reevaluation*, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

were matters of morality. Utility was the measure of Vasari's truth."[49] Echoing Rubin's

assessment, Maginnis, in his book, *Painting in the Age of Giotto*, wrote that Vasari

"sought to reveal the larger truths of history and the truths of art in a manner that

mingled fact with what we would term as historical fiction. To that end he employed

many a literary device, and many a fanciful invention."[50]

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[49]Rubin,, *Vasari*, p. 160. On page 105, Rubin further explains Vasari's artistic judgement as, ". . . based on the style prevalent in Rome in the 1530's and 1540s when he came to artistic maturity. There the reputations of Michelangelo and Raphael reigned supreme. Those artists had achieved the incorporation of classical models into a modern idiom in a way that had a parallel in the elegant Ciceronian styles of the Roman court humanists: a coincidence of figural and textural vocabulary that Vasari exploited when he turned art into history."

[50]Maginnis, *Painting in the Age of Giotto*, p. 7. Maginnis goes on to state that " Some of these are unique, designed to make a particular point; others are elements in a larger scheme, devised to give the *Lives* literary structure."
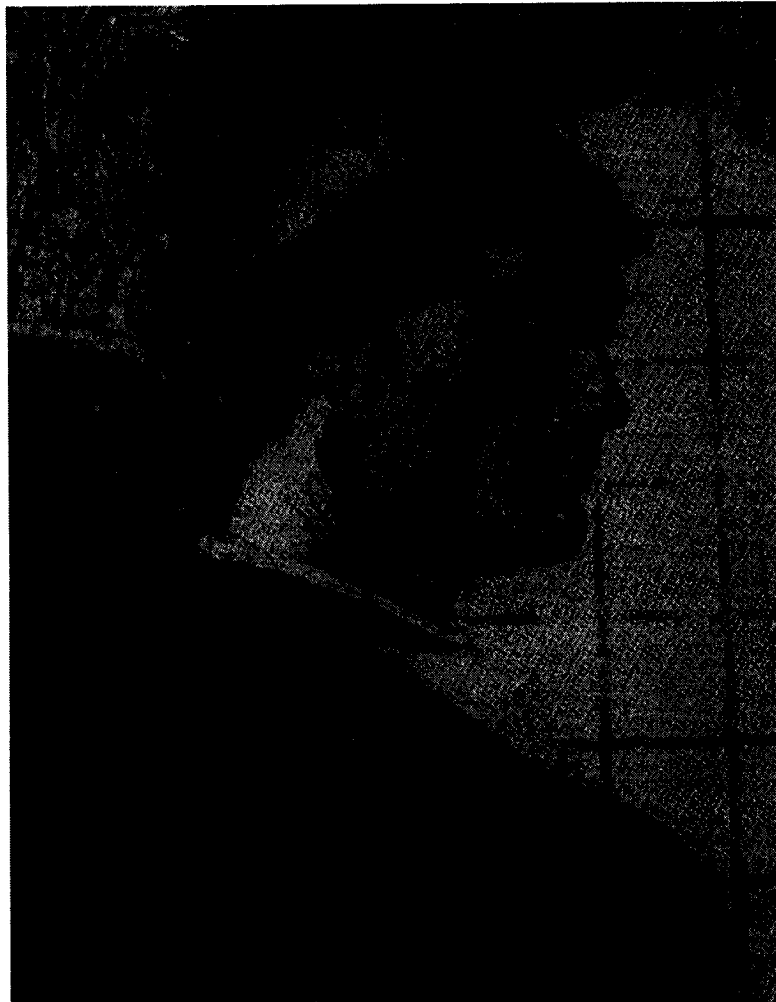
Figure 3 Portrait of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere (Shaw).

Before the Tomb

The parameters of a historical search for the tomb are built from the narratives of Vasari

and Condivi; events from the intertwining lives of Michelangelo and Pope Julius II; and

an outline of dates and numbers collected from letters, contracts, and bank book

entries. While the exact details in the accounts of Vasari and Condivi may be in doubt,

records kept by the Italian banks of the Renaissance allow precise coordinates to be set

out among the illustrative truths of the former. A chronology of what took place, or

what may have taken place, is established as accurately as possible from a synthesis of these distinct sources of knowledge.

The story of the tomb begins with the man who commissioned the work and whom the work was intended to memorialize. Giuliano della Rovere was born near Genoa in 1445 to an "impoverished" father, who was the only brother of Pope Sixtus IV. At age twenty-two Giuliano joined the Franciscan order (1467). Four years later, his uncle Sixtus IV, appointed him a cardinal (1471) and gave him control of a number of church properties both in Italy and in France.[51]

Already an aspiring pope, with ideas about physically reestablishing the presence of the Church, Julius must have noted artistic talent, keeping in mind how he might someday utilize it. One of Cardinal della Rovere's early forays into the role of art patron was the commissioning of Antonio Pollaiuolo to make a bronze sepulcher for his uncle, Sixtus IV, at his death in 1484.[52] Judged by the expediency from which his own tomb project eventually began, Julius must have had previous knowledge of Michelangelo's abilities. Julius's familiarity with Michelangelo's work could have begun as early as 1494. Julius was Bishop of Bologna[53] during Michelangelo's stay in

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[51]One of those churches, San Pietro in Vincoli, would eventually house his tomb. This church had also been the titular church of Julius's uncle, Pope Sixtus IV and previuos to that, the church of Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa.

[52]Julius eventually became a most prodigious client; sponsoring the rebuilding of the Vatican by Bramante, the painting of the papal apartments by Raphael, and of course his tomb and Sistine ceiling from Michelangelo.

[53]Julius was bishop of Bologna between 1483 and 1502.

that city, when he carved an angel and a figure of *St. Petronius*, to complete a large

tomb, that of St. Dominic at the church of *San Domenico*.[54]

Michelangelo traveled to Rome for the first time in June of 1496.[55] In the following

year he executed the marble *Bacchus* for Cardinal Riario, a cousin of Julius.[56] In

addition to the aforementioned works, Julius would have also been aware of

Michelangelo's great talent through the *Rome Pietà*,[57] completed in late 1499 or early

1500, and at that time located in *Santa Petronilla*, a chapel attached to the original

basilica of St. Peter's. The tomb of Sixtus IV was placed in a side choir room, adjacent

to the chapels and situated along the body of the basilica. [58]

Michelangelo returned to Florence from Rome in the spring of 1501. In August of that

year he signed a contract to carve the marble *David*, which was completed by April of

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[54]This tomb was begun by Giovanni Pisano, and also worked on by Niccolò dell'Arca. Vasari, (Bull), p. 333.

[55]Frederick Hartt, *Michelangelo Drawings*, (New York: Abrams, 1970), p.397.

[56]In July of the following year, records show that Michelangelo was waiting for Cardinal Riario to pay him for the completed *Bacchus*. It may be noted that it took about a year to carve and finish this sculpture.

[57]Michelangelo began negotiating with Cardinal Jean Bilhères de Lagraulas of Saint-Denis, to carve a marble *Pietà*, in November of 1497. From November until at least April of 1498, Michelangelo was in Carrara to secure the marble for the *Pietà*. The *Pietà* was probably completed by the end of 1499. Interestingly, St. Denis is the site of many magnificent tombs which nearly approach the complexity and scale of the first Julian tomb project, but most date from about the time of the final installation of the Julian tomb in the mid-1500's. For a complete discussion of this commission and the confusion surrounding it, see Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt's, "Michelangelo's *Pietà* for the Cappella del Re di Francia," in *Michelangelo; Selected Scholarship in English*, edited by William E.. Wallace, (New York: Garland Press, 1995). Originally published in *Il se rendit en Italie: Etudes offertes a Andra Chastel*, (Paris and Rome: Edizioni dell'elefante, 1987).

[58]This chapel, instigated by Sixtus IV, was the last addition to the Old St. Peter's, and it was the last portion to be demolished 1606. On the floor of the chapel were the della Rovere coat of arms, and the ceiling was decorated with oak branches and acorns in green and gold. The bronze sepulcher that Julius commissioned from Antonio Pollaiuolo for his uncle was erected there. This was also where Julius himself was initially buried in 1513. Also buried here were Julius's *nipoti*, Clemente and Galeotto della Rovere, and their mother; Julius's sister Luchina.

1504. In April of 1503 he signed a contract to sculpt the twelve apostles for an installation at the Florentine Duomo. Michelangelo's painting, the *Doni Tondo* is dated to 1503-04, simultaneous with the carving of *David*. The carving of the *Pitti Tondo*, the *Taddei Tondo*, and the *Bruges Madonna* are generally placed between 1504-05, along with the cartoon for the *Battle of Cascina*.[59]

After steadily gaining power and influence, Cardinal Giuliano spent much of the time between 1494 and 1503 in exile in France, as a result of his involvement with intrigues at the papal court. When Pope Alexander VI died in 1503, Giuliano returned to Rome. Following the brief pontificate of Pius III, Giuliano della Rovere negotiated his election to the papacy, notwithstanding his reputation among the cardinals as quick tempered, unpredictable, and stubborn,[60] and proclaimed himself Pope Julius II,[61] on the 31st of October 1503.

Despite the building plans of previous popes (notably Nicholas V) Rome, at the time of Julius' election, was in a state of disrepair. Tax rates had not been adequate to maintain the city and its services, the currency was devalued, there was a shortage of

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[59]E. H. Ramsden, translator. *The Letters of Michelangelo*, "Chronology," (London: Peter Owen, 1963), p. lviii-lxv. and Hartt, *Michelangelo Drawings*, "Biographical Outline," p. 397-402.

[60]Christine Shaw. *Julius II: The Warrior Pope*, (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 123. Shaw further concludes from contemporary sources that Julius was difficult to reason with; he used to yell to let off steam then make apologies; and he read letters out loud, while walking about laughing and slapping people on the shoulders," p. 171-2. On page 266, Shaw cites that "King Ferdinand of Spain described Julius as having a *"mala natura.,"* in a comment made to Jeronimo Vich, 5 December, 1509.

[61]Some scholars propose that Giuliano della Rovere took his papal moniker from Julius Caesar (101-44BC), given the Pope's ambition and desire for the restoration of Rome and the papacy. Shaw, however, down- plays this relation saying that Julius never referred to himself in this manner (see especially p. 207). If one has held the name of "Giuliano," for the first sixty years of life, it would be reasonable to use its derivation as a papal name. There seems to be no tie to Julius I, who was pope from 337-352.

food, and armed gangs of bandits roamed the streets. Julius described the papacy as "poverty-stricken and run-down."[62] His solution was to institute a *renovatio imperii*, a martial law of sorts, to help reestablish the physical presence of the Church in Rome.[63]

Julius began to accumulate money, not only for building projects but to fund his military campaigns.[64] His initial political objective was to recover the territory that the Church had lost to the Venetian Republic.[65]

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[62] Shaw, *Julius II*, p.139.

[63]Julius' program was said to be a model of clarity and he promoted it with limitless ambition, great political ability, and willpower; prepared to use every means available to establish his plan. Julius was able to establish internal order, hide inefficiency and poverty, and provide buildings to show off the power he was presumed to have. Architecture and urban form - the "decorum" of Rome - had an outstandingly important political function, from Arnaldo Bruschi, *Bramante*, London(1977), p.89.

[64]"Generous and free-spending then (as a cardinal), now he began to be described as avaricious. Debts went unpaid, or were paid in ways other than cash," Christine Shaw, *Julius II*, p.139. Yet, paradoxically, at the same time, he was generous with Michelangelo's payment. By the end of 1504, Julius had saved 100,000 ducats, and by May of 1505 he had reached 200,000. In January of 1506 the pope had reached 400,000 ducats, and was accumulating more every day. All according to Francesco Alidosi, Julius's treasurer. Alidosi had also been one of Julius's most trusted agents during his exile. (1493-1503). Alidosi was made a Cardinal by Julius in December 1505.

[65]Shaw, *Julius II*, p.125

The Tomb Project

The narratives by Vasari and Condivi of the tomb project begin by recounting, in much the same manner, the works Michelangelo accomplished just prior to the tomb, the circumstances of his "call" to Rome, and Julius's gratification over the design of his sepulcher. There are, however, some subtle differences.

In Vasari's first edition of 1550, he wrote that,

> Michelangelo was so famous for making the Pietà, and for the giant of Florence[66] and for the noted cartoon,[67] that when the Pontiff Julius II decided to have a tomb made for himself, he made him come from Florence, to speak with him, and together they established to make a work to the memory of the Pope and as a testament to the virtù of Michelangelo, of such beauty, superbness and invention that it surpassed every ancient imperial tomb.[68]

This account suggests that Julius had decided to have a tomb constructed for himself, and then decided to have Michelangelo come from Florence to make it for him. This account also seems to propose that the conception of the tomb was a collaboration between the artist and patron, as "together they established to make a work . . ."

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[66]The marble *David*.

[67]For the *Battle of Cascina*.

[68]Vasari, 1550,(Barocchi), p. 27-8, "Era talmente la fama di Michele Agnail per la Pietà fata, per il Gigante di Fiorenza e per il Cartone nota, che Giulio II Pontefice deliberò fargli fare la sepoltura e, fattolo venire di Fiorenza, fu a parlamento co esso; e stabilirono insieme di fare una opera per memoria del Papa e per testimonio della virtù di Michele Agnolo, la quale di bellezza, di superbia e d'invenzione passasse ogni antica imperiale sepoltura."

Condivi wrote in his account of 1553:

> After he(Michelangelo) came to Rome, then, many months passed before Julius could decide
>
> in what way to employ him. At last it entered his mind to have him make his tomb.[69]

In this version, Julius had apparently decided that Michelangelo should come to Rome

to do "something," but the Pope was not yet sure what it was.

Vasari's second edition of 1568 begins as follows:

> Michelangelo was so famous for making the Pietà, and for the giant of Florence[70] and for the
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> noted cartoon,[71] that when the death of Pope Alexander VI came in 1503 and created Julius II
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> (That now Michelangelo was about 29) he was called with great favor by Julius II to make his
>
> sepulcher, and for his journey he was paid 100 scudi by the pope's spokesmen. After he was
>
> conducted to Rome, many months passed before he lifted a hand to make something. Finally
>
> he (Julius) decided on a design that had been made for his sepulcher, ultimate testimonial to the
>
> virtù of Michelangelo, of such beauty, superbness and great ornament and richness of statues
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> that it passed every ancient imperial tomb.[72]

It appears by this account that Michelangelo was brought to Rome for the tomb but was

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[69]Condivi, The Life, Wohl, p. 29, and in Italian, La Vita, Nencioni, p. 22, "Venuto dunque a Roma, passaron molti mesi prima che Giulio Secondo si risolvesse in che dovesse servirsene. Ultimamente gli venne in animo di fargli fare la sepoltura sua."

[70]The David.

[71]The drawing for the Battle of Cascina, to be painted in the Palazzo Vecchio.

[72]Vasari, 1568,(Barocchi), p. 27-8, "Era talmente la fama di Michelagnolo per la Pietà fata, per il Gigante di Fiorenza e per il Cartone nota, che essendo venuto l'anno 1503 la morte di Papa Alessandro VI e creato Giulio II (che allora Michelagnolo era di anni ventinove in circa), fu chiamato congran suo favore da Giulio II per fargli la sepoltura sua, e per suo viatico gli fu pagato scudi cento da' suoi oratori. Dove condottosi a Roma, passò molti mesi innanzi che gli facessi mettere mano a casa alcuna. Finalamente si risolvette a un disegno che aveva fatto per tal sepoltura, ottimo testimonio della virtù di Michelagnolo, che di bellezza e di superbia e di grande ornamento e ricchezza di statue passava ogni antica et imperiale sepoltura."

not asked to work on it right away. The second half of this passage reads as if several artists were preparing designs for the tomb and the pope chose the one by Michelangelo. It could also be read that Michelangelo executed several speculative designs, one of them was a tomb, and the pope chose that design to be carried out.

All three accounts state that "many months" went by in Rome, before Michelangelo was employed on the tomb project. The time line suggested by the narratives of Vasari and Condivi are contradicted by specific dates culled from bank records. It is unclear what precipitated Vasari and Condivi to record that many months went by in Rome before Julius decided on a project to give Michelangelo. It is also unknown whether this apparent misinformation was recorded for deliberate reasons, resulted from miscommunication, or from errors in the memory of those involved.

The bank records, researched by Poggi and published by Hirst, [73] show that Michelangelo was summoned to Rome in late February of 1505. One hundred *ducats* from the Pope were deposited into Michelangelo's Florentine account on the 25th of February 1505. "Julius II was both liberal with supplying travel expenses and trusting of Michelangelo in extending him money up-front."[74] Michelangelo also received 60 *ducats* on the 28th of February, as payment for the cartoon for the *Battle of Cascina*. Records show that Michelangelo deposited 60 *ducats* in the Roman bank of the

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[73]Michael Hirst, "Michelangelo in 1505," (*Burlington Magazine,* November, 1991), p. 760-6. Meanwhile, in the pope's political agenda, during February 1505, Gianpaolo Baglioni of Perugia, came to Rome and entered into an agreement pledging loyalty to the pope. (Shaw, *Julius II,* p. 149).

[74]Michael Hirst, "Michelangelo in 1505," p. 763.

Balducci family, on the 27th of March 1505. Thus, his arrival in Rome may be placed between those two dates.

One month following the deposit in Rome, on the 28th of April, he withdrew the same amount, and began his journey to Carrara, by way of Florence, to secure marble for the tomb. According to these apparently accurate dates, Michelangelo met with Pope Julius (possibly for the first time), conceived of a tomb that "surpassed every ancient or imperial tomb ever made,"[75] determined what marble was required to construct it, and set off for the quarry, all in the space of less than two months. It is difficult to accept that this would have been an adequate amount of "design time"; not only to conceive of such a grand monument, but also to determine the quantities and shapes of marble such that quarrying could proceed. The apparent brevity of the tomb's development may be explained by it being only a "conception," at this point. The conception would have been refined as required by each step of its physical realization. Michelangelo would have continued to refine the design during his travels to Florence and Carrara, and would have continued the generative process of architectural making throughout the life of the project.

The narratives of Vasari and Condivi agree with the dates that confirm Michelangelo departed for Carrara soon after a design for the tomb was chosen. He set off with great

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[75]Vasari, (Bull), p.343.

aspirations; believing that he would be able to assemble a vast number of sculptures upon an architectural framework, create a space within, and install the work at the most important church in Christendom.[76]

As the chronology continues, Michelangelo can next be placed in Florence on the 7th of May, where he signed for additional money. While in Florence, during May and June, Michelangelo was probably making models and drawings for the tomb, calculating more specifically what marble would be needed, and securing the necessary help to carry out his plans. On the 30th of June, he deposited 600 *ducats* into his account at *Santa Maria Nuova*. Sometime after this date, Michelangelo journeyed onto Carrara, remaining there until December of 1505.

Two contracts for the shipment of marble for the tomb remain in existence. The first dated November of 1505, pertains to the shipping of 42 *carrate*,[77] to Rome. The second, dated December 12, 1505, is an agreement for the quarrying of 60 *carrate* of marble. Within the second contract, is a provision that Michelangelo was to meet Matteo Cucarello, a *scarpellino*,[78] in Florence, "within a month" of the date of the contract, to supply him with "detailed measurements" for the blocks of marble he had

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[76]For example, see Vasari,1568, (Barocchi), p. 28, "Cosi Michelagnolo si misse al lavoro con grande animo, e per darli principio andò a Carrara a carvare tutti i marmi con dua suoi garzoni, et in Fiorenza da Alamanno Salviati ebbe a quel conto scudi mille; dove consumò in que' monti otto mesi senza altri danari o provisioni,. . ."

[77]One *caratte* equals about 850 kilograms or 1870 pounds. Based on the density of the marble that would equal about .33 cubic meters or about 11 cubic feet.

[78]A stone carver.

agreed to supply.[79] For Michelangelo to supply "detailed measurements" in the intervening month meant that he was refining his design for the tomb during this time.

These two extant contracts for the shipment of marble to the Ripa in Rome, provided for a total of 102 *caratte* of marble to start the tomb.[80] Although this amounts to more than 95 tons of marble, it would only be sufficient to execute about eighteen sculptural figures, each measuring three feet by three feet by seven feet. The completed tomb would require forty or more sculptures of this size, in addition to the necessary marble facings, pilasters, cornices, etc.

If Michelangelo fulfilled the terms of the December 12 contract, he may then be placed in Florence, on his way to Rome by the 12th of January 1506. Another bank deposit on the 24th of January 1506, locates Michelangelo once again in Rome.[81] Michelangelo was absent from Rome during his journey to Florence and Carrara for nine months, from late April 1505, until late January 1506.

In a letter dated 31 January, 1506, to his father, Michelangelo expressed disappointment that due to bad weather, the marble was delayed in reaching him. Some of it had been delivered to Rome, but was submerged on the banks of the Tiber

[79]Cited in Hirst,"Michelangelo in 1505," p. 760.

[80]Hirst, "Michelangelo in 1505," p. 760.

[81]Hirst, "Michelangelo in 1505," p. 760-6.

due to flooding.[82]

Despite the flooding and delays, Michelangelo went to work on the tomb. The narrative accounts tell of Julius's close relation and devotion to Michelangelo during this time. To facilitate the project, a drawbridge was built between the pope's palace and Michelangelo's workshop, so that Julius could visit "conveniently" to discuss the progress of his tomb and "secretly" so that Michelangelo could avoid the envy of others in Julius's court.[83]

Shortly after the work began, however, it ceased for reasons not totally understood. Vasari writes that a quarrel developed between Michelangelo and the pope. Michelangelo was denied an audience with Julius on more than one occasion, and was thus unable to obtain payment for the balance of the marble which by then had been delivered. Michelangelo was angered by the less than courteous treatment at the hands of the pope's grooms. Vasari does note that the pope was otherwise occupied with business related to Bologna, at the time. Later in the episode, Vasari supplies an alternate explanation that the rift developed over Michelangelo's refusal to allow the pope to see how the work on the tomb was progressing.[84] Michelangelo became so

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[82]See Ramsden, The Letters of Michelangelo, no. 6, p. 11-12, also cited in Hirst, "Michelangelo in 1505", p.764.

[83]Vasari, (Bull), p. 343, and Condivi, (Wohl), p. 30., (N.B. A drawbridge between two buildings does not seem tremendously discreet).

[84]For a full account of this episode see Vasari, (Bull), p. 345-7, Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 31-3, and Condivi, (Wohl), p. 34-5, and Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 26.

incensed over the episode that he sold his household goods and left Rome to return to Florence, on the 17th of April. Michelangelo had only been in Rome since around January 24, a mere twelve weeks.

The Postponement

The "great spirit of constructive energy" with which Michelangelo had begun the project was somehow deflated. On the day following his departure from Rome, the 18 of April 1506, the corner stone of the new St. Peter's was laid. Michelangelo's real source of dejection may have come from changes in the design for the new St. Peter's. The shifting fabric of Bramante's plan precluded, at least in the short term, a stable and adequate site for the placement of the Julian tomb.

Initially, Michelangelo and Bramante simultaneously struggled with the design of the tomb and the church, respectively. This struggle would have been the obvious origin of some of their alleged animosity toward one another.[85] Michelangelo, despite being under-qualified at the time to take on the rebuilding of the church, would have been disturbed by the choice of Bramante[86] to design the new St. Peter's.[87] At some point in the struggle between the tomb and the church, Julius found it reasonable to first resolve the design of the church, before proceeding with the tomb.

Condivi's account of the postponement of the tomb places the blame squarely on

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[85]" . . . Bramante was constantly plotting with Raphael of Urbino to remove from the pope's mind the idea of having Michelangelo finish the tomb on his return. . .,"Vasari, Bull, p. 349 and Vasari (1568), Barocchi, p. 35.

[86]Bramante was given the office of *Piombo*, master of the papal seals, a position of honor with a substantial pension, by Julius II, as cited by Rubin, *Vasari*, p. 96.

[87] "The new church was to be a gigantic palatine chapel; the *martyrium* of the first *vicarius Christi*, the imperial mausoleum of the popes and at the same time the first church of Christendom. The Papal palace and new basilica would constitute an earthly Jerusalem symbolizing heavenly Jerusalem.," Arnaldo Bruschi, *Bramante*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p. 92.

Bramante:

> Thus the architect Bramante, who was loved by the pope, made him change his plans by
> quoting what common people say, that it is bad luck for anyone to build his tomb during his
> lifetime, and other stories.[88]

Condivi states that Michelangelo found out about the pope's "change of mind," in regard to the tomb, in mid - April 1506, as a result of his being refused an audience with the pope, and thus payment for additional marble.[89] Vasari's account of this schism between Michelangelo and Julius does not connect the disagreement to the postponement of the tomb. The postponement in Vasari's account does not occur until May 1508, explained then as a result of Julius' commissioning of Michelangelo to paint the *Sistine* ceiling.

Regardless of the exact circumstances, progress on the tomb was at least slowed down between April 1506 and May 1508, due to Michelangelo's absence from Rome. Michelangelo, though pursued by agents of an angered Julius after leaving Rome, made his way back to Florence. There he continued his work on a large cartoon for the *Battle of Cascina*. Some work on the tomb, the roughing-out of architectural elements, could have been executed by Michelangelo's associates in Rome during his absence. There is, however, no record of that. Based on the record of his prodigious carving,

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[88]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 30.

[89]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 34.

Michelangelo, could have continued some work in Florence, as well. In a letter to Guiliano da Sangallo dated May 2, 1506, Michelangelo asked him to speak to the pope on his behalf. Michelangelo stated that it shouldn't matter to the pope where he worked on the tomb as long as it was installed at St. Peter's at the end of five years, as agreed upon. If the pope wished to continue the work, however, he would have to make the necessary money available. Michelangelo further states that because of the facilities availble in Florence, he could do the work better and with greater zeal, and for less money there than in Rome.[90]

Apparently the pope did not wish to have Michelangelo work at a distance, away from his oversight. Following the receipt of a series of threatening papal briefs demanding Michelangelo's return, the artist was finally persuaded to meet with Julius in Bologna, where the pope was conducting another military campaign.[91] Julius had made a formal military entry into the city on the 11th of November 1506.[92] Shortly thereafter, Michelangelo journeyed to Bologna and was reconciled to the pope. This meeting, was however, the beginning of a major distraction from work on the tomb.

It was in Bologna that Julius had Michelangelo execute a large bronze statue of himself.

"... five *braccia* in height, he used the most beautiful artistry in the pose, because of all of this

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[90]Ramsden, *The Letters of Michelangelo*, no. 8, p. 13-15.

[91]Having restored the territory lost to the Venetian Republic, Julius announced a campaign to Bologna, and left Rome on the 26th of August, 1506. The pope's entourage included 3000 horses for the *curiali* alone. They passed through Perugia on the 13th of September. In October of 1506 they journeyed to Imola, through the mountains. "Julius is said to have quoted Virgil to keep up the spirits of his attendants." Shaw, *Julius II*, p. 160.

[92]Shaw, *Julius II*, p. 209.

it had majesty and grandeur, and its garments displayed wealth and magnificence, and its facial expression showed, strength, quickness, and terribleness. This sculpture was placed in a niche above the entrance to San Petronio (in Bologna)."[93]

The description of both the pose and the demeanor of the sculpture call to mind the statue of *Moses* that Michelangelo would later carve for the tomb. (figures 4 and 5) The statue of Julius was giving a benediction with one hand and for the other hand Michelangelo suggested putting a book there. Vasari quotes Julius as saying, "Put a sword there. I know nothing about reading."[94] The possible relation of this sculpture to work on the tomb remains unknown.

Julius remained in Bologna long enough to see a clay model executed for the bronze sculpture; he departed on the 22 of February 1507,[95] and arrived in Rome in time to make a triumphal entrance into the city on Palm Sunday. In Rome, work on St. Peter's had begun in earnest. By April of 1507, it was observed that so many workmen were involved in the project that Julius joked that he could hold a military parade with them.[96]

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[93]Vasari, 1550, (Barocchi), p. 31-33. ". . . , cinque braccia d'altezza, nella quale usò arte bellisima nella attitudine, perché nel tutto aveva maestà e grandezza, e ne' panni mostrava ricchezza e magnificenzia, e nel viso animo, forza, prontezza e terribilità. Questa fu posta in una nicchia sopra la porta di San Petronio."

[94]Vasari, (Bull), p. 349, and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 35, "Mettivi una spada, ché io non so lettere."

[95]Shaw, *Julius II*, p. 210.

[96]From an observation by ambassador Beltrando Costabili, 12 April 1507 as cited by Shaw, *Julius II*, p. 200, note 34.

According to Vasari, Michelangelo remained in Bologna for sixteen months, working

on the bronze *Julius* until it was installed above the entrance to the church of *San*

Petronio.[97] This places Michelangelo in Bologna until February 1508. After attending

to family business in Florence during March and April, Michelangelo finally returned

to Rome.

Figure 4 Sketch of *St. Paul* ?, possibly for the first project for the tomb of Julius II.
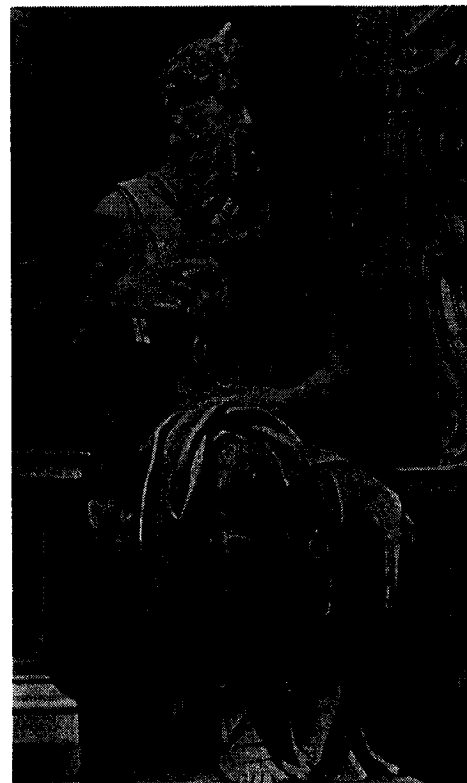
Figure 5 The Bronze *Julius* in Bologna perhaps resembled the sculpture of *Moses* on the Tomb of Julius II at the church of *San Pietro in Vincoli*.

[97]Losing a year and a half to a bronze sculpture, when Michelangelo favored marble, and when he preferred to be executing the tomb was difficult enough, but the whole episode was made even worse by the destruction of the sculpture only three years after it was finished. According to the biographers, it was destroyed by the Bentivogli when they regained power. The bronze was used to make a cannon called "La Giulia, by Duke Alfonso of Ferrara. Only the head of the sculpture was saved. It was kept by the duke in his wardrobe. Vasari, (Bull), p. 349 and Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, translated by Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 438.

The *Sistine* and the Tomb

Vasari addressed the pope's decision to postpone work on the tomb upon Michelangelo's return to Rome. He wrote that while Michelangelo was away:

> ... Bramante was constantly plotting with Raphael of Urbino to remove from the pope's mind the idea of having Michelangelo finish the tomb on his return ... He (Bramante) and Raphael suggested to the Pope that if the tomb were finished it would bring nearer the day of his death, and they said it was bad luck to have one's tomb built while one was still alive.[98]

Since Condivi's account told of the postponement at the time of the rift in April 1506, he reiterates that when Michelangelo finally returned to Rome in April 1508, the pope was "still resolved not to do the tomb."[99]

Vasari's account goes on to explain that Bramante and Raphael were jealous of Michelangelo's sculptural prowess. The rivals suggested to the pope that Michelangelo should paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, as a memorial to Julius's uncle. Vasari and Condivi both relate that having Michelangelo paint the ceiling was actually a plot to make him fall from favor with the pope; either by refusing the commission and angering the pope; or by accepting it and doing a poor job.

Vasari's 1550 account does not mention the pope's loss of interest in the tomb. Rather it merely states that Julius wanted to have Michelangelo paint the *Sistine* ceiling as a

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[98]Vasari, (Bull), p. 349 and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 35.

[99]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 39.

memorial to his uncle. Vasari's first edition also mentions the intrigues of Bramante

and Raphael, but the reference is much more ambiguous:

> "When the Pope returned to Rome and, he was moved by the love that he felt for the memory
>
> of his uncle, at this time the Sistine Chapel was not painted, so he ordered him (Michelangelo)
>
> to paint it. And it was estimated, because of the friendship and relationship that were between
>
> Raphael and Bramante, that they did not want him (Julius) to extend it (the painting of the
>
> ceiling) to Michelangelo. But the Pope commissioned it, and he ordered Giuliano da San Gallo
>
> sent from Bologna for it to be; and he saw that it was, the Pope ordered that the chapel be faced,
>
> and all the faces at this time were redone; and for the price of the whole thing were allotted a
>
> miserable fifteen thousand *ducati*."[100]

Michelangelo was indeed, reluctant to paint the ceiling, but finally gave in to the

pope's insistence. Vasari notes that both; "the Pope resolved to leave the tomb as it

was for the time being," and "that Michelangelo was anxious to finish the tomb."[101]

The contract for painting the *Sistine* ceiling is dated 10 May 1508.

Despite the massive undertaking of the *Sistine* ceiling, evidence suggests that some

work on the tomb continued. In the earliest surviving *ricordi* by Michelangelo's hand,

dated April 1508, he makes a note about bringing in assistants from Florence[100] to help

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[100]Vasari, 1550, (Barocchi), p. 35-6, "Era già ritornato il Papa in Roma e, mosso dall'amore che portrava alla memoria del zio, sendo la volta della cappella di Sisto non dipinta, ordinò che ella si dipignesse. E si stimava, per l'amicizia e parentela che era fra Raffaello e Bramante, ch'ella non si dovesse allogare a Michelangelo. Ma pure per commissione del Papa et ordine di Giulian da San Gallo fu mandato a Bologna per esso; e venuto che e' fu, ordinò il Papa che tal cappella facesse, e tutte le facciate con la volta si rifacessero; e per prezzo d'ogni cosa vi misero il numero di XV mila ducati."

[101]Vasari,(Bull), p. 350 and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 36.

with his *pictura della volta* (the Sistine ceiling). On the same sheet of paper he notes that he would need *duchati quattro ciento ora* and *dipoi cento ducati el mese pel medisimo chonto* to continue with the work on the tomb as had been agreed upon in the first contract.[101] As further demonstrated by the shipment of a block of marble for the statue of the pontiff in June 1508,[102] work continued in at least some form on the tomb during the painting of the ceiling. Another document dated December 4, 1510, states that Michelangelo still had the use of the workshop he established, in 1505, near St. Peter's to work on the tomb.[103]

Vasari claims that Michelangelo carved every day, "because using the hammer kept his body healthy," [104] and Condivi states that "Michelangelo sometimes carves for his own pleasure because he is full of energy and ideas, he produces something every day."[105] From these accounts it appears that sculpting, for Michelangelo, was both recreational and therapeutic, especially compared to the slow, tedious work of frescoing a ceiling from high atop scaffolding. This further suggests that while Michelangelo was painting

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[101]*I Ricordi di Michelangelo*, edited by L. Bardeschi Ciulich and Paola Barocchi, (Florence: Sansoni, 1970), p. 1. Also cited in Hirst, "Michelangelo in 1505," p. 762.

[102]Giulio Carlo Argan, *Michelangelo Architect*, (New York: Abrams, 1993), p. 53 (Argan , however gives no footnote for the source of his statement).

[103]See Hirst, "Michelangelo in 1505," p. 766, Appendix 'B.'

[104]Vasari, (Bull), p. 385, and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 83, "Non poteva lo spirito e la virtù di Michelagnolo restare senza far qualcosa: e poi che non poteva dipignere, si mesi attorno a un pezzo di marmo per cavarvi drento quattro figure tonde maggiori che 'l vivo, facendo in quello Cristo morto, per dilettazione e passar tempo e, come egli diceva, perché l'esercitarsi col mazzuolo lo teneva sano del corpo. (*The Florentine Pietà*)

[105]Condivi,(Wohl), p. 87.

the Sistine ceiling, he was also manifesting his project for the tomb of Julius.[106]

During the four years it took to paint the *Sistine* ceiling (May 1508 to November 1512), Julius seems to have been alternately ill, waging war for the control of Italy, and pursuing diplomatic strategies through the Lateran Council. Despite all this he seems to have found time on a regular basis to check on the progress of the ceiling and to urge Michelangelo to finish.

Following the unveiling of the *Sistine* ceiling on 1 November 1512, Michelangelo again focused his attentions on the tomb. Condivi reported that:

> Julius's greatest concern was keeping this man (Michelangelo) with him; and he desired his service not only in life, but also in death, therefore, when he was going to die he ordered his tomb, that had already begun, to be finished, . . . [107]

In letters to a marble supplier and to his father, dated in October and November of 1512, Michelangelo addresses the delivery of additional marble and securing studio space for work on the tomb. He also states to his father that after he has finished the marbles in Rome, that he would go to Florence and do the ones that are there.[108]

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[106]Ramsden, *The Letters of Michelangelo*, no. 45, p.48, In this letter written to his father while painting the *Sistine* ceiling, Michelangelo declares that "painting is not his profession."

[107]Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 36, "Sì che di nessuna cosa parve che Giulio maggior cura avesse, che di mantenerse questo uomo; né volse solamente servisene in vita, ma poi che fu morto ancora, percioché, venendo a morte, ordinò che gli fusse fatta finir quella sepoltura che già aveva principiata, . . . "

[108]Ramsden, *The Letters of Michelangelo*, nos. 84-87, p. 81-83.

Less than four months later, on February 21, 1513, Julius died.[109] "Even many who

disliked Julius wept because this pope rescued all of us, all of Italy, and all

Christendom from the hands of the barbarians and the French." [110]
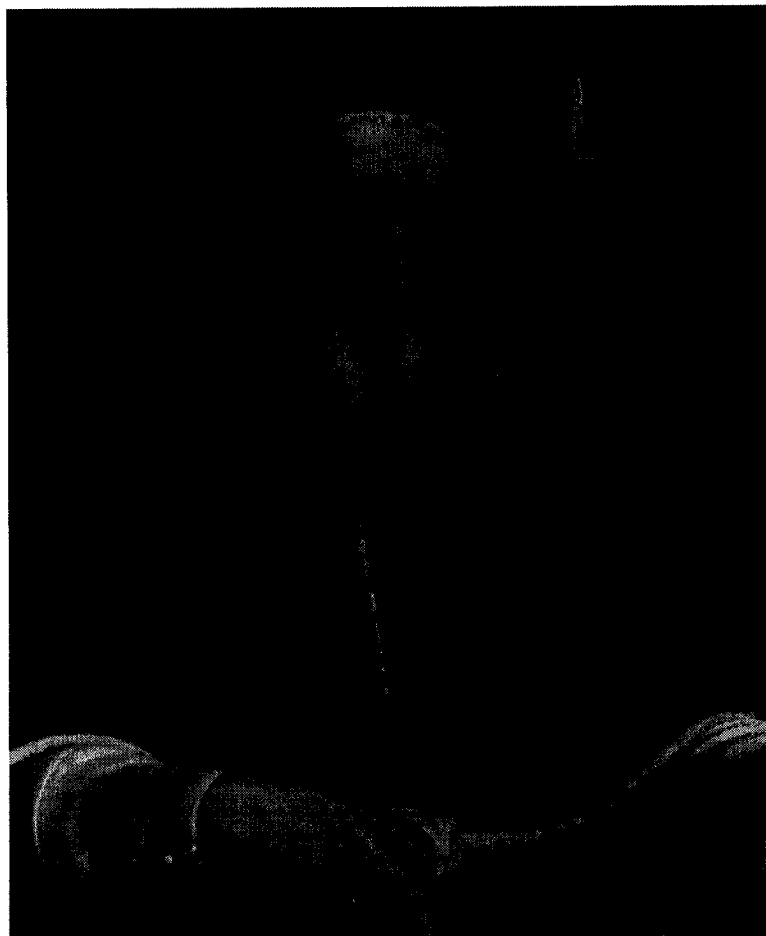
Figure 6 Pope Julius II, Raphael (Shaw).

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[109]Julius was initially buried in the chapel of his uncle, Sixtus IV. Also buried there were Julius's *nipoti*, Clemente and Galeotto della Rovere, and their mother; Julius's sister, Luchina.

[110]Diary of Paride de'Grassi, ambassador, as quoted by Shaw, *Julius II*, p. 313, note 103.

The Conclusion of the Tomb

Less than three months following Julius's death, a new contract was initiated by the pope's heirs that apparently reduced the scope of the tomb project.[111] Condivi records the following:

> They (Cardinal Santi Quattro the Elder and Cardinal Aginense, Julius's nephew) wanted to make a new design, because the first one was too grand. So Michelangelo entered again into the tragedy of the tomb, which succeeded no more happily than the first, rather worse still, causing him infinite embarrassment, regrets and travails, and even worse, by the malice of infamous men, has hardly, after many years, been purged of it. [112]

The contract also called for Michelangelo not to accept any other significant commissions that might impede the progress on the tomb and called for the tomb to be finished within the next seven years,

> ... according to a design, model or figure of the said tomb or at least closely in accordance with such a design or model insofar as the said master Michelangelo is able to contribute to the greater honor and beauty of the said tomb.[113]

The diminishing scale of the tomb, the absence of Julius's driving vision, and the

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[111]No details about the tomb are given in the contract. This contract is taken as the beginning of the "second project" for the tomb of Julius II. This document is still in existence. See Sesto Prete, *The Original Contract with Michelangelo for the Tomb of Pope Julius II, Dated May 6, 1513 A Critical Study, Transcription, and Translation*, (New York: John F. Fleming, 1963).

[112]Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 36, "... dando la cura al cardinal Santiquattro vecchio e al cardinal Aginense suo nipote. I quali però gli fecer fare nuovo disegno, parendo loro il primo impresa troppo grande. Così entrò Michelagnolo un'altra volta nella tragedia della sepoltura, la quale non più felicemente gli successe di quel di prima, anzi molto peggio, arrecandogli infiniti impacci, dispiaceri e travagli, e quel ch'è peggio, per la malizia di certi uomini infamia, della qual appena doppo molti anni s'è purgato."

[113]Sesto Prete, *The Original Contract with Michelangelo for the Tomb of Pope Julius II*, p. 26.

changing fabric of the new St. Peters's, precluded the physical manifestation of Michelangelo's original conception of the tomb.

Shortly after the new contract was signed, Pope Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici) summoned Michelangelo to Florence, to design a facade for the church of *San Lorenzo*, with the promise that he could also continue to work on the scaled back tomb there. Michelangelo once again journeyed to the quarries of Carrara to obtain marble,

> . . . not only for the facade, but also for the tomb, believing, what the pope had promised, that he would be able to continue (on the tomb).[114]

In their writings about the Julian tomb, some 45 to 63 years after its inception and five to 23 years following its ultimate installation, both Vasari and Condivi spend the bulk of their stories describing the tomb as first conceived. As the chronology demonstrates, Michelangelo had very little time devoted exclusively to the design and execution of the first project for the tomb. But again, it is this version of the tomb that is extolled by Vasari and Condivi as exemplary. It remains unclear how far this version of the tomb was developed. In the narratives it is described as virtually existing.

Vasari and Condivi only address the intermediate phases of the tomb by stating that Julius's heirs wanted to make a new design because the first one was too grand.

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[114]Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 37. ". . . non solamente per la facciatta, ma eziamedio per la sepolatura, credendo, come dal papa era stato promesso, poterla seguitare."

Michelangelo's energies were continually pulled away from the tomb in favor of other projects. The invariably changing intermediate phases of the tomb are recorded only through sketchy details in a few contracts, letters, and drawings of debatable attribution. The focus of this text, as derived from the biographies of Vasari and Condivi, addresses the primacy of the first project.

Vasari and Condivi briefly describe the tomb as was finally installed at *San Pietro in Vincoli*. It was only a remnant of what had been conceived of by Michelangelo, some 40 years earlier. Condivi records the following account of its final placement:

> So the agents of His Excellency gave orders to make(the other statues), and the tragedy of the tomb and the tomb itself were finished, now today it can be seen in San Pietro in Vincoli, not, in accordance with the first design, of four facades, but of one and one of the minor ones(facades), not detached all around but leaned up against a wall, because of the impediments described above. It is true that, it is patched up and reworked, but it is still the most worthy in Rome and elsewhere, if for no other reason, than the three statues by the hand of the master; . . .[115]

With a foundational context of the biographers and their subjects now established, the descriptions of the tomb and its potential placement within the fabric of St. Peter's may now be more precisely reconstructed.

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[115]Condivi, (Wohl), p.77, and Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 47, "Così li agenti di Sua Eccellenzia le dettero a fare, e la tragedia della sepotura e la sepoltura ebbero fine, la quale oggi si vede in San Piero ad Vincula, non, secondo il primo disegno, di facciate quattro, ma d' una e delle minori, non istaccata intorno ma appoggiata ad un parete, per gli impedimenti detti di sopra. È vero che, così come ella è rattoppata e rifatta, è però la più degna che in Roma e forse altorve si trovi, se non per altro, al meno per le tre statue che vi sono di mano del maestro; . . ."

Part Two ■ **The Descriptive Search**

Locating the Tomb

The enigma of the tomb begins with the mystery of where exactly this massive structure was to be located. While the conception of the tomb is inextricably linked to the rebuilding of St. Peter's basilica, the debate as to the exact nature of that relationship continues to the present. The narrative accounts seem to suggest that the tomb was not conceived as a site specific structure; but rather as if Michelangelo had designed the tomb autonomously of site, and then sought a place where it could be located. Because the tomb was freestanding and so large, the possibilities for its placement within the fabric of the original basilica were extremely limited.

In Vasari's first edition, he makes no mention of where the tomb was to be located. In his second edition, Vasari states that Julius was so inspired by Michelangelo's design that he decided to rebuild St. Peter's[1] and place his tomb inside.[2] Condivi's accounting of the location, falls after his description of the tomb, where he writes:

> When he (Julius) saw this design [of the tomb], the pope sent Michelangelo to St. Peter's to see where it could be appropriately placed. The form of the church was then, that of a cross, at the head of which Pope Nicholas V had begun to put a new tribune, and it was already above the ground, when he died, to the height of three *braccia*.[3] It seemed to Michelangelo that this was the most appropriate place, and, returned to the pope, and gave his opinion, adding that, if His

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[1]Michelangelo, became the architect for the rebuilding of St. Peter's in 1546, and remained in charge till his death in 1564. At the time these biographies were being written, he was or had been in charge. He or his biographers may have decided to credit the beginning of the project to him as well.

[2]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 28, "Onde cresciuto lo animo a Papa Giulio, fu cagione che si resolvé a mettere mano a rifare di nuovo la chiesa di San Piero di Roma per mettercela drento, come s'è detto altrove."

[3]Three *braccia* equal approximately 1.75 meters or a little less than six feet.

Holiness agreed, it would be necessary to pull up the fabric and cover it (build up the wall and

roof it).[4]

Condivi, too, states that it was Michelangelo's design for the tomb that precipitated the

rebuilding of St. Peter's:

And when he had sent the architect Sangallo and Bramante to see the place, in the process the

pope came to want to make a whole new church. And when many designs were made, that of

Bramante was accepted, as more vague[5] and better understood than the others. So

Michelangelo caused it to be and that part of the fabric that was begun was finished (if this had

not happened, it would still be as it was), and it also caused the pope to come to want to

renovate the rest, with new and more beautiful and more magnificent design.[6]

The rebuilding of St. Peter's was not a new idea; Pope Nicholas V had begun work on

a new apse some fifty years earlier,[7] and that work was continued to some degree by

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[4]In Italian see Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 25, "Visto questo disegno, il papa mandò Michelagnolo in San Pietro a veder dove comodamente si potesse collocare. Era la forma della chiesa allora a modo d'una croce, in capo della quale papa Nicola Quinto aveva cominciato a tirar sù la tribuna di nuova, e già era venuta sopra terra, quando morì, all'altrezza di tre braccia. Parve a Michelangnolo che tal luogo fusse molto proposito, e, tornato al papa, gli spose il suo parere, aggiungendo che, se così paresea Sua Santità, era necessario tirar sù la fabrica e coprirla.."

[5]The phrase "come più vago" if meaning "as more vague" seems inconsistent with "better understood." "Vago" is from the Latin "to wander." Was Bramante plan better because it was "less definite," or because it had spaces that allowed for "more ambulation," or is it a typo?

[6] In Italian see Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 25-6, "E mandando il Sangallo architettore e Bramante a vedere il luogo, in tai maneggi venne voglia al papa di far tutta la chiesa di nuovo. E avendo fatti fare più disegni, quel di Bramante fu accettato, come più vago e meglio inteso delli altri. Così Michelagnolo venne ad esser cagione e che quella parte della fabrica già cominciata si finisse (che, se ciò stato non fusse, forse ancora starebbe come l'era), e che venisse voglia al papa di renovare il resto, con nuovo e più bello e più magno disegno."

[7]Pope Nicholas V, the first pope to remain in Rome full time after the "Great Schism," founded the Vatican library and began the rebuilding of St. Peter's during his papacy (1447-55). He also initiated the building of a larger papal palace at the Vatican. His building program was documented in a contemporary biography written by his friend, Florentine humanist and politician, Gianozzo Manetti. Manetti acted as apostolic secretary beginning in 1451, allowing him close contact with the Papal offices. In Magnuson's interpretation of Manetti's description of the building projects he notes that Manetti was said to be reliable, however he was not an architect and that his use of architectural terminology was "lax." (one may also note that "architectural terminology" tends to be universally "lax," and varies by locale, background, and time period. Magnuson also notes Manetti's rhetorical style tends to toward exaggeration, which must be taken into account in his descriptions. See Torgil Magnuson, *Studies in Roman Quattrocento Architecture*, (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1958), p. 55-63. "The Doctrine of

Pope Paul II.[8]
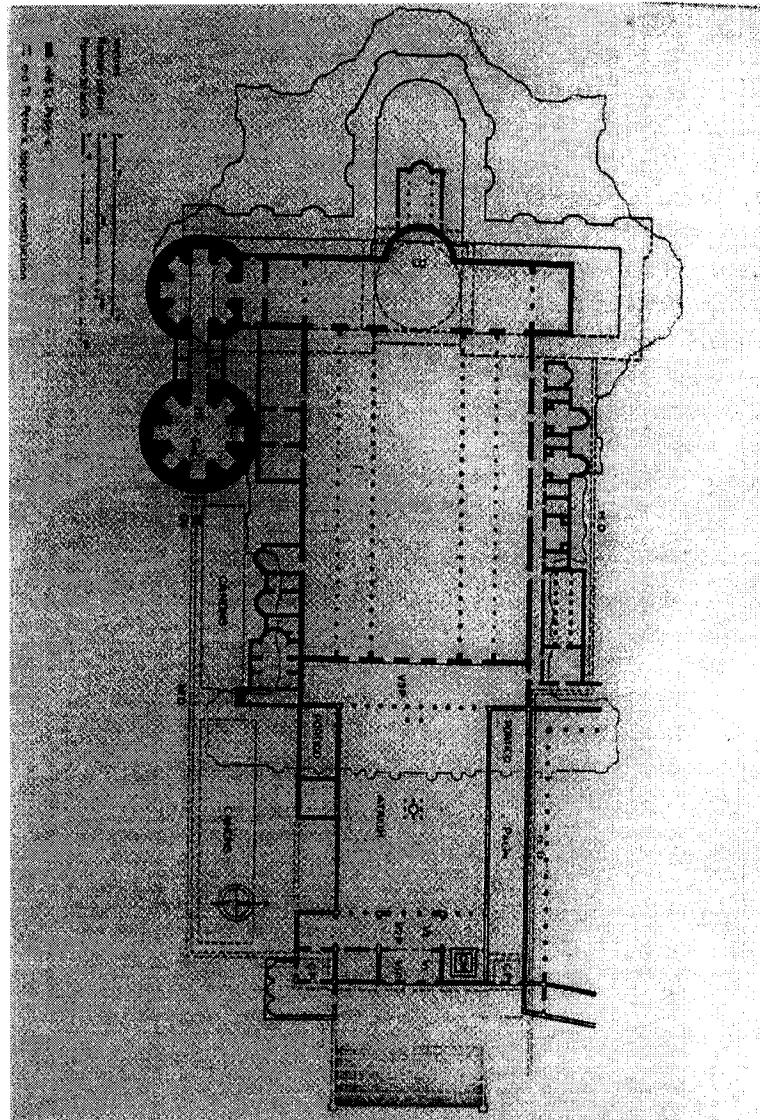
Figure 7 Composite plan by Magnusson of the original basilica of St. Peter's, the choir of Nicholas V, and the modern basilica.

Nicholas V, held that the authority of the Holy Roman Church could only be manifested to the faithful through the grandeur of its buildings," Manfredo Tafuri, *Ricerca del Rinascimento: principi, città, achitectti,* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1992), p. 38, also cited by Frommel in "St. Peter's:The Early History,"in *The Renaissance from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo,* edited by Henry A. Millon and Vittorio Magnago, Lampugnani, (New York: Rizzoli, 1997), p. 399. Here, Manetti goes on to call Nicholas, "the true architect of the church, the new Solomon, who would have surpassed not only the ancient Wonders of the World but also the works of the Old Testament."

[8]Pope Paul II (1464-71), continued the rebuilding during the last two years of his papacy.
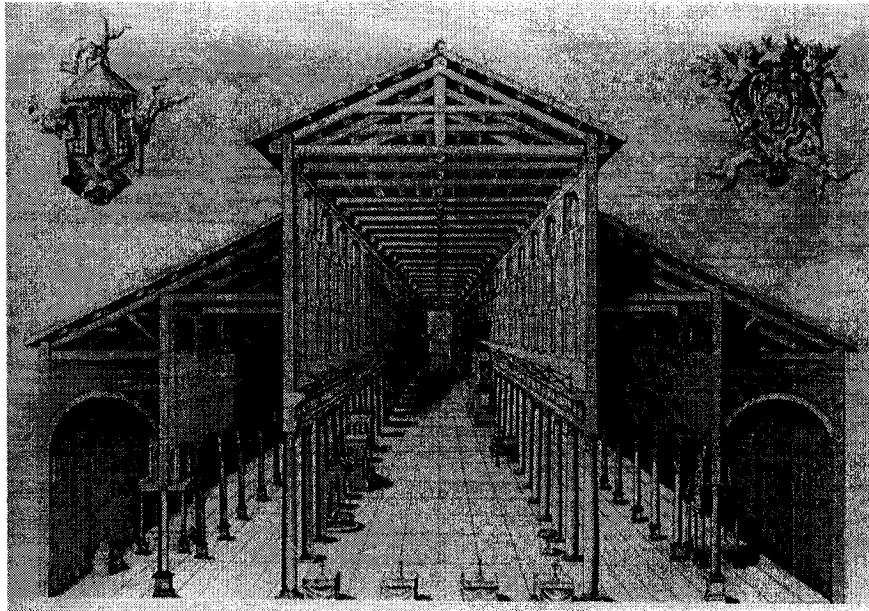
Figure 8 Reconstructed interior view of the original basilica of St. Peter's.

At the time of the first tomb project, both the basilica of St. Peter's and the Vatican[9]

complex were already in a state of flux. If Julius indeed sent Michelangelo, "to St.

Peter's to see where it (the tomb) could be appropriately placed,"[10] Michelangelo

would have found a basilican[11] church that was originally begun by Constantine in

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[9]The present area of the Vatican was outside of the pomerium of ancient Rome. The root word of *vaticanus* may ultimately derive from *vates*, meaning priest or prophet and from *vaticinatio*, meaning it had long been an area where prophesying or soothsaying would have taken place. The low hill and marshy valley that lay on the west bank of the Tiber, may have been tillable farm land. Tacitus mentions the area as having *mala aria*; apparently it remained so, as Michelangelo planned to work on the Julian tomb in Florence, during the summers to avoid the malaria of Rome. Pliny said there were snakes in the area. Caligula (37-41AD) began construction of a circus there, which was completed under Nero (54-68AD). Hadrian (117-138AD) built his mausoleum (Castel Sant'Angelo) in the area east of the circus along the Tiber. Tradition holds that St. Peter was crucified in 64AD, in or near the Circus of Nero, and buried by the "trophy of Gaius," nearby. (Another tradition holds that St. Peter was crucified on the Janiculum, at the site marked by Bramante's *Tempietto*). The spot was also near to the obelisk, set up by Caligula for his circus. The obelisk stood at the south side of the Constantinian basilica till it was moved to the piazza in front of the new St. Peter's under Sixtus V (1585-90).

[10]Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 25, "... in San Pietro a veder dove comodamente si potesse collocare."

[11]The Christian basilican church was modeled after the Roman basilica, which had a tribune, where the emperor and courts of law had sat in judgement, this became the location of the enthroned Bishop and his clerical entourage. In a Roman basilica, the aisles had circumnavigated the nave, screening it off from the apse: in the Christian basilica, the returns of the aisles across the nave were eliminated, sharply focusing perspective on the area near the altar at the end of the nave. See for example Marvin Trachtenberg, *Architecture from Prehistory to Postmodernism*, (New York: Abrams, 1986), p. 160.

324. The nave, flanked by two aisles on either side, terminated in a semicircular apse.

The transept, was about two-thirds the width of the nave and extended about an aisle's

width beyond the main body of the church on either side.[12] The southern arm of the

transept, was connected to what was originally the Roman *Mausoleum of Honorius*,

which in the time of Michelangelo was known as *Saint Petronilla*.[13] This space, in

turn, was connected to another Roman mausoleum, once known as *Saint Andrew*, and

by this time known as Santa Maria della Febbre[14]. The basilica had been constructed

such that the *confessio*[15] of Peter was centered at the back of the transept, just in front

of the apse.[16]

The original basilica suffered many centuries of damage and neglect. By the mid

fourteen hundreds the southern wall of the nave leaned about one and three-quarter

meters out of plumb, pulling the north wall by the attached rafters, south as well.[17] The

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[12]The still extant *San Paolo Fuori le Mura*, gives a sense of what the original St. Peter's would have been like.

[13]The northwest chapel in the current St. Peter's is know as *St. Petronilla's* or *St. Michael's* chapel. The relics of *St. Petronilla*, venerated at St. Peter's since the 8th century now lie below the altar there.

[14]Michelangelo's Rome *Pietà*, was first located in a chapel in *Saint Petronilla* and later moved to a chapel in *Santa Maria della Febbre*. It is to the *Petronilla Chapel* that Michelangelo went to at night to carve his name on the sash of the Madonna when his authorship of the *Pietà*, was questioned. For this story see Vasari, (Bull), p. 336. For a full discussion of the *Petronilla* and *della Febbre* chapels, as stated in Part 1 of this text, see Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt's, "Michelangelo's *Pietà* for the Cappella del Re di Francia." in *Michelangelo; Selected Scholarship in English*, edited by William E.. Wallace, (New York: Garland Press, 1995). Originally published in *Il se rendit en Italie: Etudes offertes a Andra Chastel*, (Paris and Rome: Edizioni dell'elefante, 1987).

[15]"In early medieval churches a subterranean chamber or recess located below or near the alter and sheltering a relic," *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture*, edited by John Fleming, et al, (New York: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 104.

[16]Initially the *confessio* was only partly below floor level. Near the end of the sixth century, Pope Gregory the Great, had raised the chancel floor, covering the crypt, which was now circled by a corridor that followed the form of the apse. A small chapel known as the *Ad caput*, was then constructed below the chancel as well.

[17]Alberti notes in Book One, Chapter Ten of his treatise that the basilica was on the verge of collapse. Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, translated by Rykwert, et al, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1988), p. 26, " . . . I have no doubt that eventually some gentle pressure or slight movement will make it collapse. Indeed it is quite likely that, had it not been

entire basilica was on the verge of collapse.

In addition to being in poor physical condition, the basilica could no longer accommodate the increasingly complex liturgical program of the fifteenth century. By the Middle Ages, St. Peter's was considered the heart of the western world. It became *the* place of pilgrimage for Europeans, and from the thirteenth century it was the site of most papal ceremonies. The growing papal court filled the apse.[18] The Chapter of St. Peter's numbered ninety-two by the end of the fifteenth century.[19] The nearly twelve hundred-year-old structure that Michelangelo would have surveyed had become filled to capacity by the ad hoc placement of numerous tombs, memorials, side altars, and shrines. Though placed haphazardly, most of these were located against walls or columns. Despite this precedent, the size and freestanding orientation of the Julian tomb would have necessitated a more precise location.

The site mentioned for the tomb, by Vasari and Condivi, was the new choir or *tribuna* begun by Nicholas V, [20] located behind the walls of the existing apse. The three *braccia*[21] high walls, as mentioned in Condivi's description, would have formed at the

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restrained by the roof trusses, it would have collapsed of its own accord already, once it had begun to lean."

[18]Originally the altar had not been fixed and could be positioned according to the size of the crowds and the type of Mass. With the raising of the chancel, the altar was located directly above the tomb of Peter, leaving little room behind in the apse for the seating of the numerous clergy who would take part in large celebratory Masses.

[19]Frommel, "St Peter's: The Early History," in *The Renaissance: From Brunelleschi to Michelangelo*, p. 399.

[20]Records show that "considerable sums of money" were paid toward the building of the *tribuna di San Piero*, or new choir. However, the work only proceeded for about two or three years and stopped with Nicholas' death in 1455. Work was again taken up in 1470 and 1471 under Paul II and stopped again in July of 1471 at his death. By this time "the tribune had been built and the foundations of the choir and the western wall of the transept had been laid, and the walls themselves had reached a height more than the three *braccia* which had been stated in Condivi's account. See Magnuson, p. 168-9.

[21]Three *braccia* equal about 1.75 meters or about 5'-9", (the height of a man in the Renaissance).

time, an exterior precinct that measured around 40 by 75 *braccia*. [22] If indeed

Michelangelo was sent to the site in early 1505, to see where the tomb could be

located, he would have found the new choir foundations in place behind the apse of

the existing basilica (figure 9).
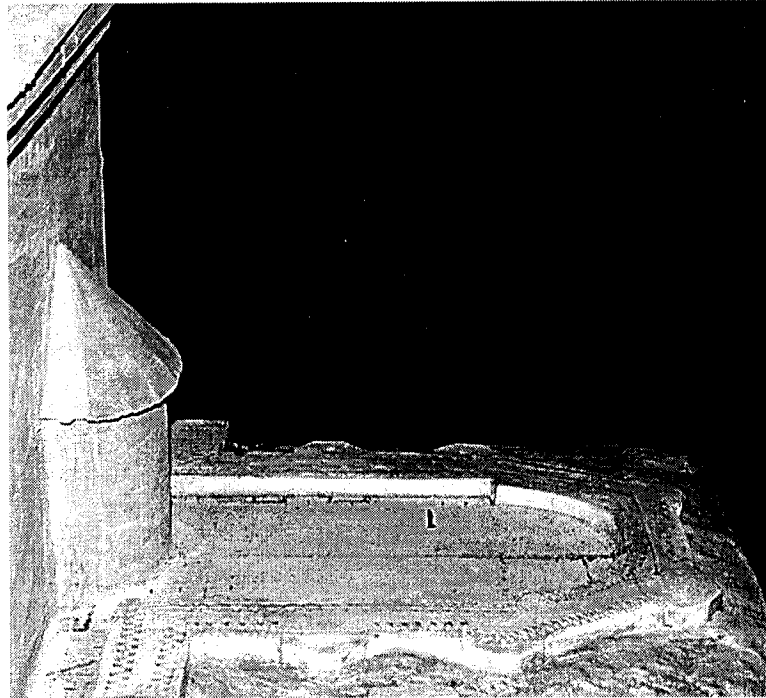
Figure 9 Michelangelo surveying the partially constructed choir of Nicholas V for placement of the tomb (plaster and cardboard model by the author).

The precinct formed between the new foundation walls and the original apse would

have created a separate roofless "chapel" outside of the existing church. [23] This location

[22]40 by 75 *braccia* is equivalent to about 23.3 by 43.75 meters or about 76.4 by 143.5 feeet.

[23]A drawing in the *Uffizi* collection, number "A20", attributed to Francesco da Sangallo, shows an overlay of the original basilica, the foundations of Nicholas V, and a plan for a new church. The approximate relations and dimensions of the buildings can be understood through this drawing. According to drawing "A20," "the new choir of Nicholas V was 200 palmi(80 braccia) long, including the apse, and 110 palmi(44 braccia) wide. The thickness of the wall was 30 palmi(12 braccia)."(Magnuson, p. 173.) The drawings are only approximately to scale, having a margin of error of a little more than a meter. The account books only mention the *tribuna*, but the drawing shows the entire choir and most of the transept walls. This can merely mean the "apse," or it can also imply the raised platform that derived from the Roman basilica that became the throne of the bishop when the form was applied to Christian churches. (See Harris, *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*, p. 548.) While this may be just a question of inexact terminology, it remains unclear how much of the plan was built.

would have been an obvious site for the tomb as it was the only space in or adjacent to the church large enough to have accepted it. In this arrangement, the liturgical processions and participants could have been accommodated, at least to some extent, in front of the apse and the tomb would be behind the apse in its own separate "chapel."
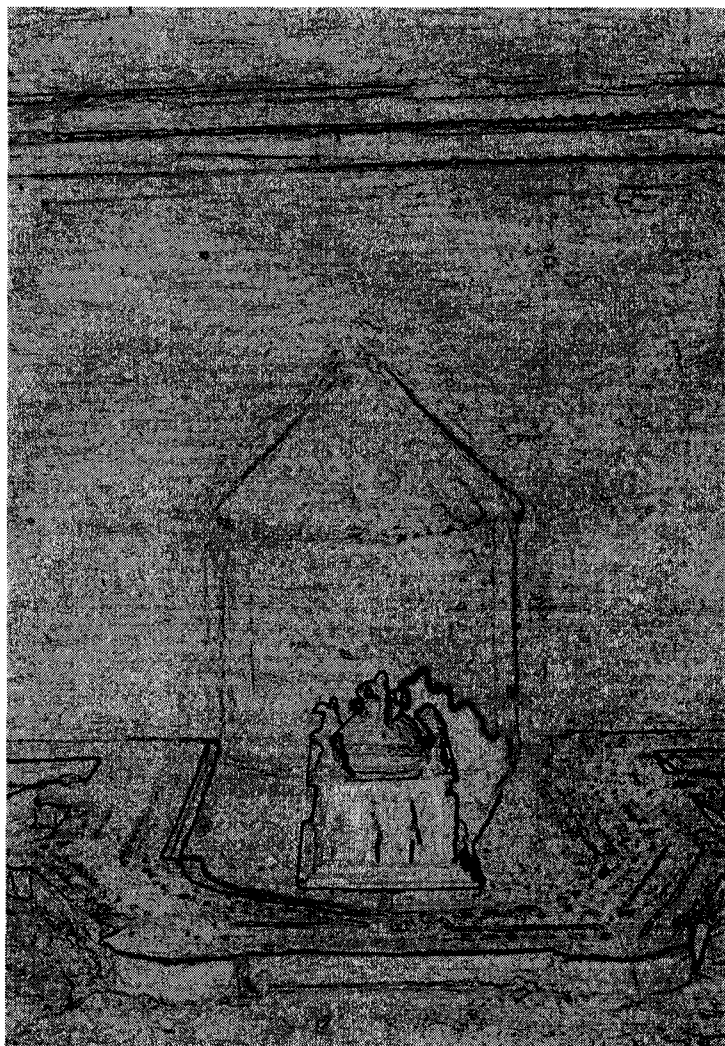
Figure 10 The Julian tomb placed in the partially constructed choir of Nicholas V (Digitally altered photograph of model by author).

According to Manetti's [24] description, if Nicholas V's new choir had been carried to

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[24]Nicholas V's biographer and confidant. See also note 7 above.

completion, the papal throne would have been situated at the far end of the choir and raised above it,[25] so that the Pope might be seen more easily by people standing in the body of the church. The walls of the new choir were to be lined with seats for the clergy. The main altar would have remained at the crossing, as it would not have been moved from above the *confessio* of Peter. The massive Julian tomb, placed in a completed version of the Nicholas V plan, would have obstructed the view (figure 10) of all involved.

Magnuson, in his reading of Manetti's chronicle, states that, "there was only one detail in the whole project which is tempting to describe as having been directly influenced by the Renaissance, and this was the proposed mausoleum for the burial of popes and prelates, who had hitherto reposed in sarcophagi in the basilica."[26] Manetti notes that this mausoleum, for reasons of hygiene, should be located outside the walls of the church. [27] Except for stating that it should be outside the walls of the church, Manetti gives no further information regarding the form or location of this papal mausoleum. If a separate papal mausoleum was still a consideration in 1505, it would have been the obvious location for the Julian tomb, however, no record remains indicating that it was.

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[25]This position in the current St. Peter's is occupied by Bernini's 1666 "symbolic" throne of St. Peter himself.

[26]Magnuson, p.206.

[27]This concern regarding the unhealthy practice of burying the dead within a church was also mentioned in Book VIII, Chapter 1, of Alberti's treatise, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*,(Rykwert), p. 245, " Yet I would not presume to criticize our own custom of having sacred burial grounds within the city, provided the corpses are not brought into the temple, where the elders and magistrates meet to pray in front of the altar, as occasionally this may cause pestilential vapors of decay to defile the purity of the sacrifice."

Julius's uncle, Sixtus IV (1471-84), whether for reasons of hygiene or not, built his

burial chapel along an outside the wall of the original basilica. [28] (figure 11) Frommel

finds the reasoning for the placement as symbolic and programmatic, over hygienic,

stating that Sixtus, "united the Chapter choir with his own funerary chapel, dedicated

to the Immaculate Conception and attached to the outer aisle, thereby resolving one of the more serious functional defects (of the original basilica) in a totally egocentric way: the intercession of the Mother of God, the prayers of the members of the chapter house, and the chanting of the chorus formed during his papacy were supposed to accompany his soul to the life hereafter." [29]
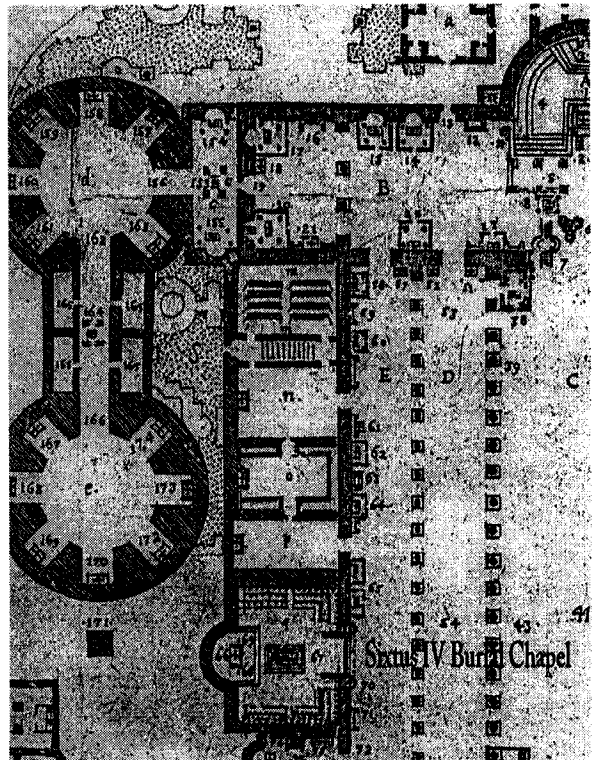
Figure 11 Detail of original basilica of St. Peter's showing relation of the Pope Sixtus IV Burial Chapel .

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[28]This chapel, instigated by Sixtus IV, was the last addition to the Old St. Peter's, and it was the last portion to be demolished 1606. On the floor of the chapel were the della Rovere coat of arms, and the ceiling was decorated with oak branches and acorns in green and gold. The bronze sepulcher that Julius commissioned from Antonio Pollaiuolo for his uncle was erected there. This was also where Julius himself was initially buried in 1513. Also buried here were Julius's nipoti, Clemente and Galeotto della Rovere, and their mother; Julius's sister Luchina. The tomb of Sixtus was eventually relocated to the sacristy / treasury area of the New St. Peter's. (This is a repeat of note 59 in Part 1placed for the reader's convenience).

[29]Frommel, "St. Peter's: The Early History," p. 400.

The New St. Peter's

When the construction of the "new" St. Peter's was planned under Julius II,[30] "the

foundations of Nicholas V and Paul II were still standing to the west of the

Constantinian apse and transept."[31] These foundations were substantial enough to

necessitate Bramante taking them into account when he was planning the new church.

For reasons of economy, he adjusted his plans to accommodate these structures, and

a provisional choir was built over the existing foundations.

The design of the new church remained in flux for many years while resolutions to the

complexities of site, program, and symbolism were sought.[32] Michelangelo, when he

was not away in Carrara, would have been frustrated in his attempts to locate the large

freestanding tomb into this constantly changing matrix. The design of the tomb was

dependant on a space large enough for it to occupy and at times the design of St.

Peter's was dependant on including a space large enough for the tomb to occupy.

Metternich, in his examination of the design process at St. Peter's, dates the Bramante

plan, known as *Uffizi:A1*, to August of 1505. (Michelangelo would have been in

Carrara). Metternich then postulates that the freestanding 1505 project for the Julian

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[30]Julius would later admit in a papal bull of February 1507, which offered the sale of indulgences for the financing his rebuilding project, that he had wanted to rebuild St. Peter's since he had first become a cardinal. Frommel notes in "St. Peter's: The Early History," p. 400-1, that there is an episode in the papacy of Sixtus IV, recorded by Egidio da Viterbo, where, "a divine voice had convinced Sixtus that the new temple would be built by one of his nephews, and that was why Sixtus had raised three of his nephews to the purple. Giuliano and his nephew Raffaele Riario believed fervently in this mysterious prophesy and each tried to get himself elected pope."

[31]Magnuson, p. 170.

[32]See Cristoph Luitpold Frommel. "Il San Pietro di Nicolò V," in Giafranco Spagnesi, *L'Architettura della Basilica di San Pietro: Storia e Construzione*, Roma: Buonsignori Editore, 1997, and "St. Peter's: The Early History."

tomb, would have been placed in the southwest chapel of the quincunx configuration inscribed by that plan. Julius eventually rejected this plan by Bramante because its overall alignment dislocated the tomb of Peter from the center of the primary dome. In order to restore the centricity of Peter's tomb, the next plan by Bramante subsequently reduced the chapel to a size too small for Michelangelo's twelve by eighteen *braccia* tomb.

This information was used by Frommel to conclude that the tomb must now be placed in the main choir arm. He states that, "Julius must have also planned right from the beginning to move the funeral chapel of his uncle Sixtus IV into the new choir arm, where he would place his own mausoleum."[33] This seems to be a problematic assessment as just prior to this statement Frommel himself recalls the fact that Julius was an "expert on the institutions, ceremonials and multiple functions of the Church."[34] Indeed, given Julius' expertise, it seems unlikely that he would propose to "fill-in" the much needed ceremonial space for the papal entourage with a huge mausoleum.

The evidence garnered by Frommel, makes for a methodical and seemingly logical case for the tomb to be located in the main choir space of the new St. Peter's. It is impossible, however, to resolve the fact that locating the tomb in this space would defeat one of the *raisons d'être* of the rebuilding project: to provide more space for papal ceremonies and their attendant entourage.

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[33]Frommel, "St. Peter's: The Early History," p.401.

[34]Frommel, "St. Peter's: The Early History," p.401.

Instead of imposing the tomb on the choir space and negatively impacting the liturgical ceremonies, a reduction in the scale of the tomb could have been possible (and desirable) to keep it in the more obvious location of the side chapel. As the plan of St. Peter's continued to evolve, the side chapels eventually grew in size again and today could accommodate the full size original tomb.

Julius, in his will, left 30,000 ducats for the building of his tomb, his chapel (dedicated to the Virgin), and for the endowment of a choir of twelve singers, the Capella Giulia, that he founded only a month before his death.[35] Where he wished it to be located, he did not say.

The most accurate conclusion to be drawn about the placement of the tomb within the fluctuating fabric of St. Peter's, is that indeed both designs were in flux, and at times locked in a dynamic symbiosis; one influencing the other and then the other influencing the one. A complex web of possibilities resulted. So complex, in fact, that Julius must have decided to postpone the tomb project until the plan for the new St. Peter's could be resolved. The postponement of the tomb during his lifetime eventually resulted in its complete displacement from St. Peter's. The remnant of the tomb was finally installed at *San Pietro in Vincoli*, in 1545.

Forty years after the struggle over the placement of the tomb, Michelangelo was put in charge of the architectural fabric of the new St. Peter's. As architect of the basilica he

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[35]Frommel, "Capella Iulia," p. 34, as cited by Shaw, *Julius II*, p. 201.

rejected the proposed placement of another tomb in the choir arm.

> In 1549 there took place the death of Paul III, whereupon after the election of Pope Julius III,
>
> Cardinal Farnese commissioned a great tomb(with 8 statues) to be made for Pope Paul by Fra
>
> Guglielmo(della Porta), who arranged to erect it in St. Peter's under the first arch of the new
>
> church, beneath the tribune. This meant, however, that it would obstruct the floor of the
>
> church, and the position chosen was in fact quite wrong. So Michelangelo gave the sensible
>
> advice that it could not and should not stand there.[36]

A smaller scaled version of that tomb was eventually placed on a side wall of the apse. The focal point of the apse now holds Bernini's "virtual" throne of St. Peter. The placement of a single pope's tomb at such a prominent location would have made no sense, symbolically, for the Church at large. Justification for placement there would only be possible if the tomb signified something beyond a memorial to Pope Julius II.

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[36]Vasari, (Bull), p. 391and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 87, "Successe l'anno 1549 la morte di Papa Paulo terzo; dove, dopo la creazione di Papa Giulio terzo, il Cardinale Farnese ordinò fare una gran sepoltura a Papa Paulo suo < ... > per le mani di fra' Guglielmo; il quale avendo ordinato di metterla in San Pietro sotto il primo arco della nuova chiesa sotto la tribuna, che impediva il piano di quella chiesa e non era in verità il luogo suo, e perché Michelagnolo consigliò giudiziosamente che là non poteva né doveva stare, . . ."

The Ordering of the Tomb

Mindful of the prejudices and contexts of the Vasari and Condivi narratives, this section recounts, examines, and compares the authors' descriptions in order to build a complete literary construction of the first tomb project.

The descriptions of the tomb owe much of their organization to the style of classical oration. The accounts are essentially periegetic "walk arounds" of the tomb; beginning with what an observer would see first, they mention proportion and number, structure and ornament, and plan and layout. Eventually the stories return to individual sculptures and describe them in greater detail.[37]

Vasari's first edition gives rather minimal information; the tomb was free-standing and could be seen from all four sides; it had cornices and architectural ornament; there were nude "victories," and roughly carved "prisoners;" and it contained a highly wrought statue of "Moses."[38] Because the Moses had been installed at San Pietro in Vincoli, in 1545, Vasari could more readily describe it in great detail.

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[37]Vasari apparently saw a model of the tomb, or one was described to him. In his 1550 edition he wrote that, "for this thing he made a model full of figures and adorned with beautiful things." No other record or remainder of a model is still in existence.

[38]In Italian, Vasari, 1550, (Barocchi), p. 28-30, "E perché tale opera da ogni banda si potesse vedere, la cominciò isolata: e della opera del quadro, delle cornici e simili, cioè dell'achitecttura degli ornamenti, la quarta parte con sollecitudine finita, cominciò in questo mezzo alcune vittorie ignude che hanno sotto prigioni et infinite provincie legate ad alcuni termini di marmi, i quali vi andavano per reggimento; e ne abbozzò una parte figurando i prigioni in varie attiudini a quelli legati, dei quali ancora sono a Roma in casa sua per finiti quattro Prigioni. E similmente finì un Moisè di cinque braccia, di marmo, alla quale statua non sarà mai cosa moderna alcuna che possa arrivare di bellezza, e de le antiche ancora si può dire il medesimo; avvenga che egli, con gravissima attitudine sedendo, posa un braccio in su le tavole che egli tiene con una mano, e con l'altra si tiene la barba, la quale nel marmo svellata e lunga<è> condotta di sorte che i capegli, dove ha tanta difficultà la scultura, son condotti sottilissimamente, piumosi, morbidi e sfilati, d'una maniera che pare impossibile che il ferro sia diventato penello; et inoltre alla bellezza della faccia, che ha certo aria di vero, santo e terribilissimo principe, pare che mentre lo guardi abbia voglia di chiederli il velo per coprirgli la faccia, tanto splendida e tanto lucida appare altrui."

Condivi's description provides more detail than Vasari's first edition; it gives the dimensions of 12 by 18 *braccia*,[39] it speaks of niches and cubic bases for the "prisoners;" it begins to explain what some of the sculptures signify; and speaks of an interior, that was like a *"tempietto."*[40]

Finally, Vasari's second edition, building from Condivi, and adding additional details from Michelangelo or from the author's own invention, gives the most thorough description of the tomb:

> "To demonstrate its grandeur, the tomb was to be isolated so as to be seen from all four sides, that measured on one side, 12 *braccia* and for the other two, 18 *braccia*, so that the proportion was that of a square and a half."[41]

This tomb was unusual because it was to be free-standing. Up to this time, autonomous mausolea had been reserved for saints or royalty. The precedent for a papal sepulcher prior to this, was for either a wall or floor tomb. The grand Baroque tombs erected in St. Peter's more than one hundred an fifty years later also remain attached to a wall. Following the conception of the Julian tomb a number of freestanding sepulchers

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[39]The metric equivalent of a *braccia* ranges from Wallace's (*Michelangelo at San Lorenzo*), 58.36 centimeters, to Panofsky's ("The First Two Projects of Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius II"), 45.7 centimeters. This author, who is taller than most Renaissance Italians, has a *braccia* of about 51.4 centimeters. Thus the tomb would range from 5.5 meters by 8.25 meters to 7 by 10.5 meters; or from 18 by 27 feet to 23 by 34 ½ feet. None-the-less, the proportion remains 2 : 3. (This is a copy of note 3 from the Introduction, repeated here for the convenience of the reader).

[40]Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 25, "Per una delle teste, cioè da quella che era dalla banda di sopra, s'entrava dentro alla sepoltura in una stanzetta, a guisa d'un tempietto, in mezzo delle quale era un cassone di marmo, dove si doveva sepellire il corpo del papa; ogni cosa lavorata con maraviglioso artificio."

[41]Vasari, 1568,(Barocchi), p. 28, "E perché ella dovesse mostrare maggior grandezza, volse che ella fusse isolata da porterla vedere da tutt'a 4 le facce, che in ciascuna era per un verso braccia 12 e per l'altre due, braccia 18, tanto che la proporzione era 1quadro e mezzo."

memorializing royalty appear in the mid-1500's at the Abbey church of St. Denis[42]

(figure 12).
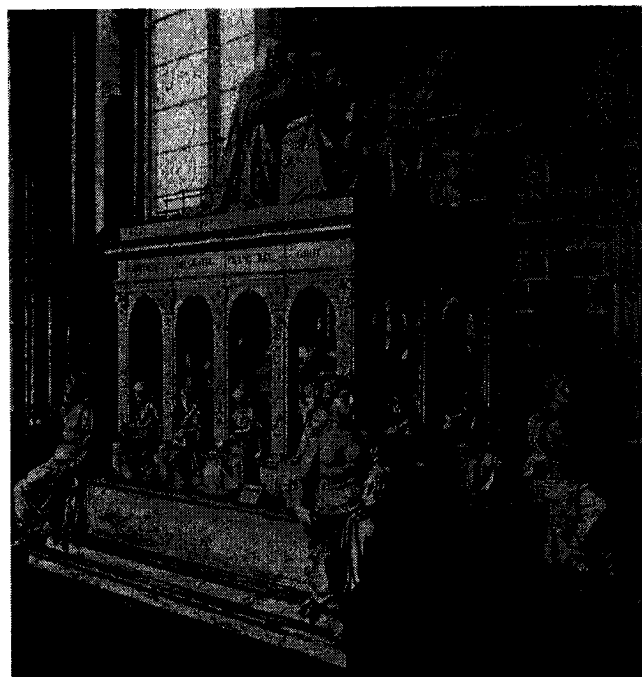
Figure 12 Tomb of Louis XII and Anne de Bretagne by Antonio and Giovanni Giusti (1513-31) at St. Denis (Panofsky).

The proportion of the tomb: two to three, was also unusual given the Renaissance preference for squares and circles. Even the preferred rectangle was based on a different proportion; that of the Golden Section (1:1.618). The tomb's proportion doesn't appear to have come from that of the sarcophagus, which would have typically been closer to a two to five relationship. The proportion of the new choir arm of Nicholas V, not counting the apse, was close to the proportion of the tomb, but not exact. The proportion could have come from the now unknown space the tomb was meant to occupy.

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[42]In the latter half of the 16th century, royal tombs at the abbey church of St. Denis grew quite complex in their number of sculptures and architectural components. These tombs, like Michelangelo's project, depicted both the dead body and the living soul of the deceased. They also had in common sculptures of "celestial beings" and the embodied "virtues," but their numbers did not match that of Julius's tomb. The scale of the tomb and the number of sculptures proposed by Michelangelo, still far exceeded that of any of the royal sepulchers at St. Denis. A full discussion of these tomb's possible relation to or influence by the Julian tomb is beyond the scope of this current research.

The narrative descriptions make no mention as to the height of the tomb. The proportion would likely have been based on either the length and width projected upwards.

Vasari's description continues:

"It had an arrangement of niches all around the outside, these were divided from one another by termini[43] clothed from the middle, that supported the first cornice with their heads, to each of these termine were bound a nude prisoner, with a strange and bizarre attitude, that were posed with their feet on a projection of the base (of the tomb)."[44]
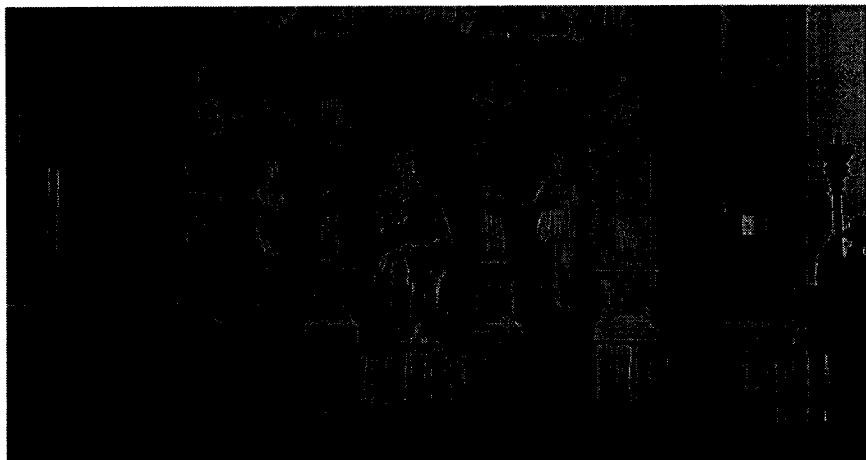
Figure 13 Lower portion of the Julian tomb as installed at *San Pietro in Vincoli* (Argan).

The use of *termini* on tombs was common in classical Rome and not unusual in the Renaissance as well. Aspects of this description can be seen in the remnant of the

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[43]"A decorative figure in which a head, or a head and a bust, or the human figure to the waist and including the arms, is incorporated with (as if it were springing out of) a pillar which serves as its pedestal,"Cyril M. Harris, *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*, (New York: Dover, 1977), p. 528.

[44] Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 28-9, "Aveva un ordine di nicchie di fuori attorno attorno, le quali erano tramezzate da termini vestiti dal mezzo in su, che con le testa tenevano la prima cornice, a ciascuno termine con strano e bizarra attitudine ha legato un prigione ignudo, il qua posava coi piedi in un risalto d'un basamento,"

tomb as installed in *San Pietro in Vincoli* (figure 13). Vasari writes that, "one of the shorter sides was erected there."[45]

This is not completely accurate, but the *termine*, the cornice they support, and the projecting bases are present in the wall tomb at *Vincoli*. Instead of "prisoners" with their feet on the bases, however, there are merely "voluted consoles" on the bases. These curious consoles also appear at the *Laurentian Library,* but oriented there top for bottom. Given the *Vincoli* tomb's cobbled assembly, it is as if a few spare consoles from the library were brought in to hold a place for the *prigioni,* who were unable to make an appearance. (figures 14 and 15)
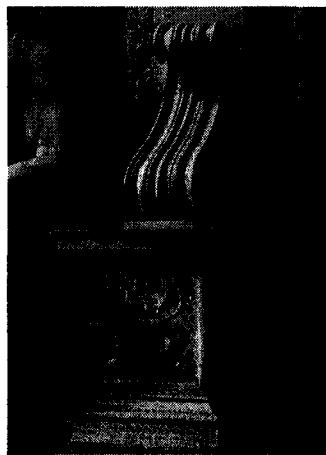
Figure 14 Volute at *Vincoli* tomb (Argan).
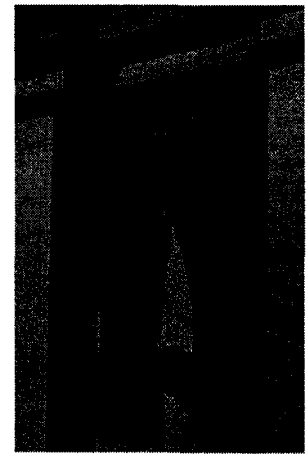
Figure 15 Volute at *Laurentian Library* (Argan).

Although the base of the *Vincoli* tomb parallels the descriptions of Vasari and Condivi up to this point, this first level is very "un-Michelangelo" in its florid decorations;

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[45]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 31, ". . . la quale delle quattro parti se ne murò poi in San Pietro in Vincola una delle minori."

especially compared to the more familiar austerity of the next level. This may be accounted for by the potential time lapse between the two sections. There is no other architectural work from this early time period, by Michelangelo, with which to compare. His painting and sculpture of that time period was already "pared-down" to the essentials. Many years later, Michelangelo advised Pope Julius III (1550-5) on the design of a funerary chapel at *San Pietro in Montorio*. Here, Michelangelo said that carved foliage was not necessary, even on the architectural parts, because "where there were marble figures nothing else was needed."[46] It may be that the decorations of the first level resulted from assistants who were helping with the tomb. In contrast, the second level of the *Vincoli* tomb exhibits an inventive and dynamic architecture more like that of the *Laurentian Library* vestibule. The architecture of the second level is stronger, but the sculptures, all executed by Michelangelo's assistants, are weaker.

Vasari's description continues with the claim that:

> these prisoners were all of the provinces that were subjugated by this pontiff, and made obedient to the apostolic church.[47]

This symbolism would not have been possible in the conceptualization of the first project of 1505, because Julius had not yet "subjugated" any provinces, and the

---

[46]Vasari, (Bull), p. 391-2. This chapel was to include tombs for the pope's uncle and grandfather. Designs and models were made by Vasari, and Vasari proposed that Simone Mosca should do the carvings, and that Raffaello da Montelupo should do the statues.

[47]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, "Questi prigioni erano tutte le provincie soggiogate da questo pontifice, e fatte obbedienti alla chiesa apostolica;..."

restoration of the Papal States did not occur until 1509 and beyond.[48] Vasari,

however, was writing over sixty years after the fact and the subtleties of these dates

were not as powerful as the potential imagery. Condivi's description did not make the

same claims regarding the "subjugated provinces." He did describe, along with

Vasari:

> . . . other statues bound like prisoners, representing the liberal arts, such as Painting, Sculpture,
>
> and Architecture, everyone with its distinguishing features, so that it could be easily known for
>
> what it was, denoting thereby that all the virtues together with Pope Julius were prisoners of
>
> death,[49] because they would never find another to favor and nourish them, as much as he.[50]

Vasari's passage reads nearly the same:

> . . . and other diverse statues, yet bound, there were all the virtues and ingenious(liberal) arts,
>
> that showed they were subject to death, no less than was the pontiff, who so honorably made
>
> every effort to use them.[51]

---

[48]Julius was able to reclaim Perugia and Bologna in the Autumn of 1508. In March of 1509 Julius joined forces with Louis XII, Emperor Maxmillian I, and Ferdinand II of Spain who had formed the league of Cambrai to defeat Venice. They did so in May of 1509, thus restoring the Papal States. Julius' next campaign which lasted from September 1510 to May 1511 was an unsuccessful attempt to drive the French from Italy. He later succeeded in 1512 with the help of revolts in northern Italy against French occupation and with the help of Swiss troops sent to his aid. Ultimately however, the Spanish would assume the role vacated by the French.

[49]"The free-standing bronze monument (of Sixtus IV) by Antonio del Pollaiuolo, has a life-size, recumbent figure of the pope, laying on a platform surrounded by representations of the virtues and the liberal arts. This tomb also has as a theme, "the lamentation of the Arts abandoned by their protector," as described by Vasari and Condivi for the Julian tomb. Beautiful as the monument is, it seems inappropriate for a pope whose field of study was theology to be surrounded by females figures in classical draperies. 'Theology' is represented by the goddess Diana, reclining, nearly nude, and looking into a sunburst surrounding the Trinity. It is not known what part, if any, the cardinal (Julius II) had in deciding on the design of the monument, but he must have at least approved of it. His arms appear on it, together with those of the pope, and the inscription records his responsibility for the commission." Christine Shaw, *Julius II*, p.192.

[50]Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 24 -5, ". . . erano altre statue legate come prigioni, le quali rappresentavano l'arti liberali, similimente Pittura, Scultura e Architettura, ogniuna colle sue note, sì che facilmente potesse esser conosciuta per quel che era, denotando per queste insieme con papa Giulio esser prigioni della morte tutte le virtù, come quelle che non fusser mai per trovare da chi cotanto fussero favorite e nutrite, quanto da lui."

[51]Vasari, (Bull), p.344, and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, ". . . ed altre statue diverse, pur legate, erano tutte le virtú ed arti ingegnose, che mostravano esser sottoposte alla morte, non meno che fusse quel ponefice, che si onaratamente le adoperava."

From a comparison like that of the two passages above, one can appreciate how much

Vasari "borrowed" from Condivi for his second edition.

Figure 17 A sketch for possibly *St. Paul.*
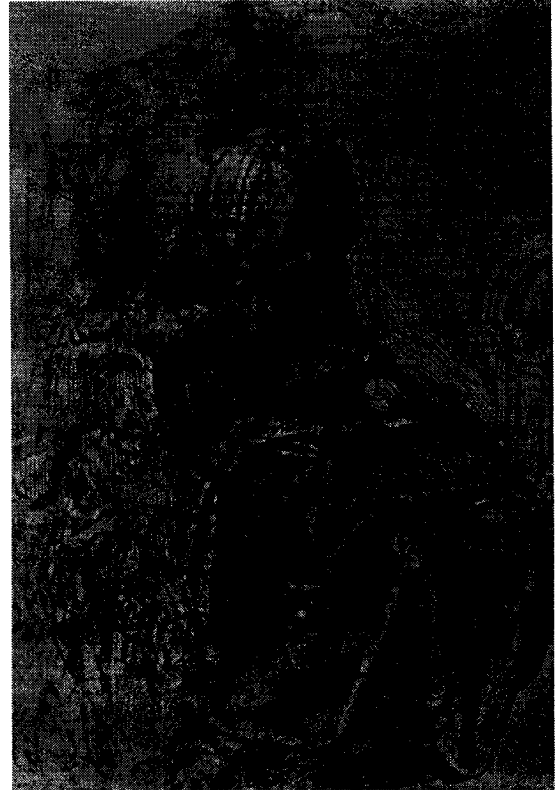
Figure 18 A sketch for possibly the *Active Life.*

Vasari and Condivi both proceed up to the next level of the tomb where:

> At the corners of the first cornice were to go four grand figures, the active life and the
>
> contemplative, and St. Paul and Moses.[52]

In Condivi's description he says there are four large statues but curiously, given his

alleged access to Michelangelo, only mentions the "Moses," by name.

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[52]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, *"Su' canti della prima cornice andava quattro figure grandi, la vita attiva e la contemplative, e S. Paolo e Moisè."*

The "Active Life" and the "Contemplative Life" were common themes of the time.[53]

The choice of "Moses" and "St. Paul," however, is a more esoteric pairing. This

grouping raises the question of where an image of St. Peter might be, given that the

tomb is to be erected in the basilica which bears his name. The "Pope" is understood

as the "Bishop of Rome" and is considered to be the successor to Peter. These attributes

of Julius may have already been understood well enough. It may be concluded that

Peter was accounted for, by the dedication of the basilica to him and through the burial

of his bodily remains in the crypt. The introduction of "Paul" sets up a complex

dichotomy with "Peter." Peter was "chosen" by Jesus and may be understood as

representing the "Church" as a formal institution, as he was the "rock" upon which the

"Church" was built.[54] Paul, on the other hand, experienced a vision and was

transformed. He is identified with the "mystical" or "spiritual" church.[55]

When speculating on the presence of *Moses* and *St. Paul*, one may observe that Moses

was a "law-giver," vis-a-vis the "Ten Commandments," in the Old Testament; and that

Paul was a "law-giver" through his "letters" in the New Testament.[56] Moses was a

leader to the Jews, and Paul was an evangelist to the gentiles. Perhaps Paul's letters

of admonishment to the churches of Asia Minor, recalled for Michelangelo, the "fiery"

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[53]Some time much later, these sculptures as installed at *San Pietro in Vincoli*, would also become known as "Leah" and "Rachel," (the daughters of Laban and the wives of Jacob).

[54]Matthew 16:18, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not over come it."

[55]Michelangelo sought out a personal journey to spirituality more than an institutional one.

[56]Paul considers himself a very different kind of "law-giver;" preferring the "Spirit" over the"Law;" see for example, 2 Corinthians, 3:6-18.

preacher from his own experience, Girolamo Savonarola (1452 - 1498).

Paul also wrote extensively about transformation: God becoming a man; and men, at death, becoming more like God.[57] These ideas, based in both Christian and Neo-platonic beliefs, would have resonated with Michelangelo's sensibilities. Perhaps too, the placement of Paul on Julius's tomb was a way for Michelangelo to reproach the Church and Julius, for their excesses.[58] For reasons unknown, the image of Paul never materialized on the tomb as ultimately installed at *Vincoli*. Speculative reasoning ranges from the sculpture never being executed; to the objection of its possible symbolic connotations by those concerned with the institution of the church.
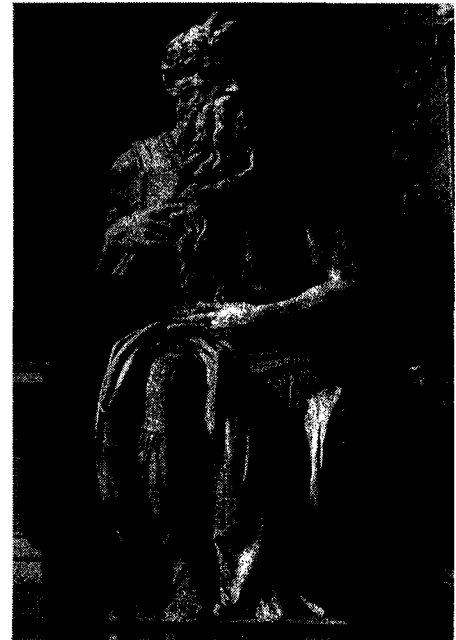
Figure 19 *Moses* as installed at *San Pietro in Vincoli* (Argan).

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[57]For example, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form..." Colossians, 2:9; and "The Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." Philippians.3:20-21.

[58]This is discussed further in the "Excursus," at the end of this text.

The *Moses*, on the other hand, *was* installed at *Vincoli* in 1545 (figure 19). After completing an overall description of the tomb, Vasari returns to the *Moses*, in detail, in both of his accounts. Condivi also describes the *Moses* in detail, many pages later when he tells of the installation of the tomb at *Vincoli*. Condivi quotes the cardinal of Mantua, who said that the sculpture of *"Moses* alone was sufficient to do honor to the tomb of Pope Julius."[59] Vasari described the statue of *Moses* as being:

> ... of five *braccia*, of marble, which no modern statue could possibly rival in beauty, and of ancient statues one could say the same, and he, seated with a grave attitude, rests an arm on his tablets that he holds in one hand, and with the other he holds his beard, the marble of which is flowing and long, in the way that hair does, which is very difficult in sculpture, the hair flows delicately, feathery, soft and drawn out, in a manner that seems impossible, the chisel becomes a brush and besides the beauty of the face, that has a certain air of truth, holy and terrible prince, it seems that while you look (at that face) you (also) desire to ask for a veil to cover the face, so splendid and so bright it appears to others. And he has so well drawn in the marble the divinity that God had put into that most holy of face, also there is the overdone(highly articulated) cloth and beautifully finished around the limbs, and the muscular arms and the hands with their bones and nerves that are so beautiful and brought to perfection, and nearby the legs and the knee and the feet that are well appointed with footwear, and his whole work is finished so well, that Moses more than ever today can call himself a friend of God, before that of anyone else He put together and prepared his body for the resurrection, through the hands of Michelangelo. And may the Hebrews continue to go there, every Saturday, a crowd of males and females, to visit and adore the statue: since the thing that they are adoring is not human, but divine.[60]

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[59]Condivi,(Wohl), p. 77.

[60] Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 30-31, "... di cinque braccia, di marmo, alla quale statua non sarà mai cosa moderna alcuna che possa arrivare di bellezza, e delle antiche ancora si poù dire il medesimo; avvenga ché egli, con gravissima attitudine sedendo, posa un braccio in sulle tavole che egli tiene con una mano, e con l'altra si tiene la barba, la quale nel marmo, svellata e lunga, è condotta di sorte, che i capelli, dove ha tanta difficultá la scultura, son condotti sottilissimamente

Moses borders on the miraculous for Vasari: Michelangelo's "chisel" became a "brush,"

and with the help of God, he "resurrected" Moses's body into something that is no

longer "human," but "divine."[61] Michelangelo, with the help of God, transmuted

matter into a more pure form.

After specifying the four large sculptures on the corners of the tomb, that sit above the

first cornice, the descriptions continue upward around the tomb. Vasari writes:

> The work ascended above the cornice in diminishing steps with a frieze of stories of bronze, and
> with other figures and putti and ornament all around.[62]

Vasari's first edition does not describe the upper portions of the tomb and Condivi's

description merely says that the tomb, ". . . ascending, ended in a level, . . ."[63] Thus,

there is no other information about Vasari's *gradi diminuendo*. None of the graphic

reconstructions attempted in the past seventy years have addressed the aspect of

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piumosi, morbidi e sfilati una maniera, che pare impossibile che il ferre sia diventato pennello; ed in oltre, alla bellezza della faccia, che ha certo aria di vero santo e terribilissimo principe, pare che mentre lo guardi, abbia voglia di chiedergli il velo per coprirgli la faccia, tanto splendida e tanto lucida appare altrui,ed ha sí bene ritratto nel marmo la divinitá, che Dio aveva messo nel santissimo volta quello, oltre che vi sono i panni straforati e finiti con bellisimo girar di lembi e le braccia di muscoli e le mani di ossature e nervi sono a tanta bellezza e perfezione condotte, e le gambe appresso e le ginocchia e i piedi sotto di sí fatti calzari accomodati, ed è finito talmente ogni lavoro suo, che Moisè può piú oggi che mai chiamarsi amico di Dio, poiché tanto innanzi agli altri ha voluto metere insieme e preparargli il corpo per la sua resurrezione per la mani di Michelagnolo; e seguitino gli Ebrei di andare, come fanno ogni sabato, a schiera e maschi e femmine, come gli storni, a visitarlo ed adorarlo, che non cosa umana, ma divina adoreranno."

[61]Vasari wrote that Michelangelo also performed a miracle in regards to the statue of David: he restored a "flawed" piece of marble that was left for "dead," to "life." Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 21, "E certo fu miracolo quello di Michelagnolo, far risuscitare uno che era morto."

[62]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, "Ascendeva l'opera sopra la cornice in gradi diminuendo con un fregio di storie di bronzo, e con altre figure e putti ed ornamenti a torno; . . ."

[63]Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 25, ". . . ascendendo, l'opera si finiva in un piano, . . ."

"diminishing steps" in any significant way. [64]
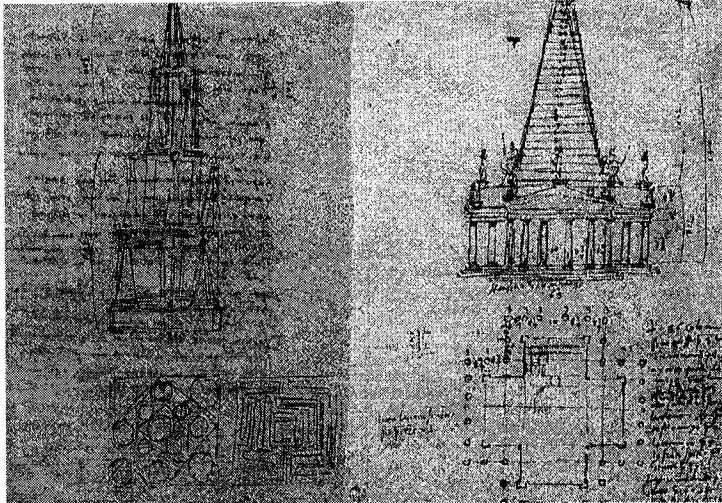
Figure 20 Sketches by Giuliano da Sangallo of the mausoleum at Halicarnasus (*Uffizi* A1037).
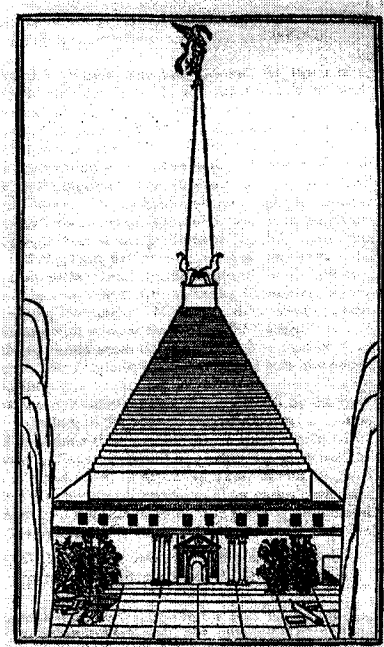

Fig. 3. The Ruined City

**Figure 21** Image of the "Ruined City" from *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili.*

The notion of these steps was exploited to a much higher degree, at the time, in a sketch by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (Uffizi A1037) of the "archetypal" mausoleum at Halicarnassus[65] (figure 20) It was known to the Renaissance through the description by Pliny.[66] Images of a mausoleum with "gradually diminishing steps" are also contained within the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, as "The Ruined City;" interpreted

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[64]The greatest number of steps occur in Frommel's 1977 reconstruction, which only amount to four; in his revised reconstruction in 1994 he reduced the steps to a couple of platforms. His reconstruction in "St. Peter's: The Early History," is reproduced in Part 4 of this text.

[65] Built for, and named after, King Mausolus, (circa 353BC), it was one of the "Ancient Wonders of the World."

[66]Pliny, *Natural History*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), BookXX XVI, Chapter iv.

in a number of ways by Raphael;[67] and even transformed into the catafalque for

Michelangelo's funeral.(figure 21) In another "take" on the origins of the form of the

Julian tomb, Frazer speculates on the "stepped" aspect of the tomb design as coming

from Roman coins of imperial consecrations, depicting funeral pyres of the emperors.[68]

This form too, is more exaggerated in height than any of the twentieth century

reconstructions.
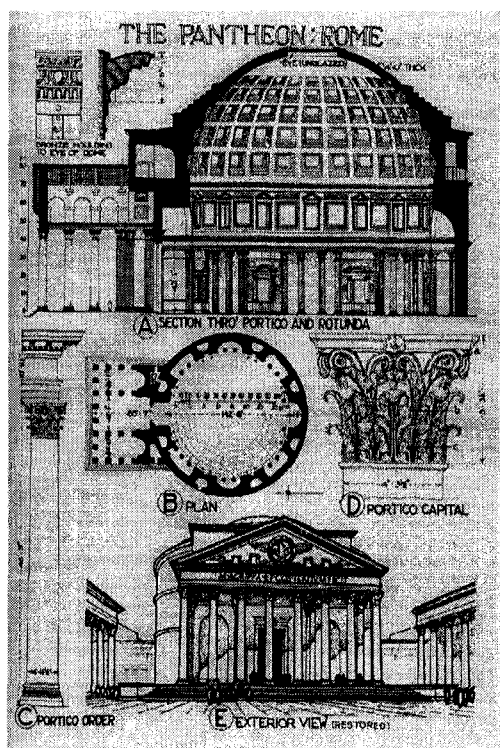
Figure 22 *The Pantheon* with "gradually
diminishing steps ascending the dome
(Fletcher).
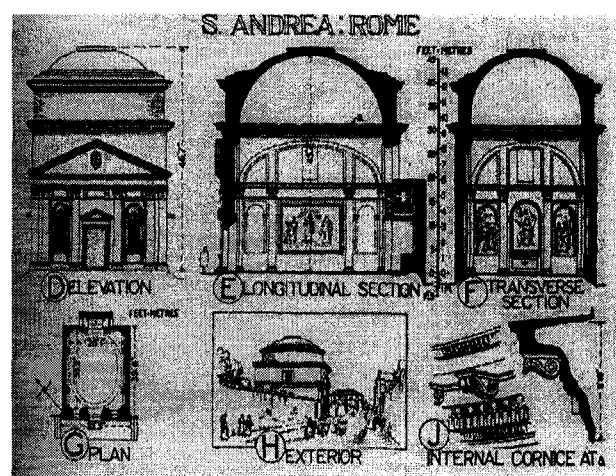
Figure 23 *San Andrea* by Vignola with "gradually
diminishing steps" ascending the dome (Fletcher).

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[67]See for example the tomb of Francesco Gonzaga (Louvre drawing, 1420v), the Chigi tomb, and background images in Raphael's cartoons for the Sistine tapestries.

[68]Alfred Frazer, "A Numismatic Source for Michelangelo's First Design for the Tomb of Julius II," *The Art Bulletin*, vol.57, no.1, 1975, p.53-57.

A more radical but none the less convincing possibility for "gradually diminishing steps" lies in the "stepped rings" surrounding the base of many Roman built domes, most notably that of the *Pantheon*.[69] (figure 22) They also appear on Vignola's oval dome of 1550, at *San Andrea* on the *via Flaminia* (figure 23), in a drawing of the dome for Michelangelo's *San Giovanni Fiorentino*, and in the drawing of Raphael's version of the dome for the new St. Peter's.

Vasari, in the previous descriptive phrase, also refers to "a frieze of stories of bronze," and Condivi refers to "the stories in bas-relief made of bronze,"[70] on the tomb. The use of bronze seems to be an anomaly, given Michelangelo's predilection for the carving of marble.[71] Michelangelo did not consider the casting of a figure in bronze, true "sculpture;" and would have used it only as a method of last resort. He is said to have rejected the practice of coloring marble that some sculptors used to hide imperfections in their work. Vasari records that Michelangelo did make a bronze *David*, which is no longer in existence (or Vasari was in error and it never did exist). As noted in the history of the tomb, Vasari and Condivi record that Julius had Michelangelo execute a bronze sculpture of him in Bologna. Here, the choice of bronze over marble was

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[69]Robert Mark, *Light, Wind, and Structure: The Mystery of the Master Builders*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990), p. 52.

[70]Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 25, ". . . le storie di mezzo rilievo fatte di bronzo, . . ."

[71]For an opposing point of view, see Paul Joannides, "Michelangelo *bronzista*: Reflections on his Mettle," *Apollo*, June, 1997, p. 11-20; and "Two bronze statuettes and their relation to Michelangelo*,"*The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 124, no. 946, January 1982, p. 3-8.

likely for expediency of fabrication (though it still required sixteen months to produce

the statue). The other possibility is that the prescription for bronze was handed down

from the pope as some derisive form of punishment given the context of the

commission.

Figure 24 Bronze Medallion
from the *Sistine* ceiling.
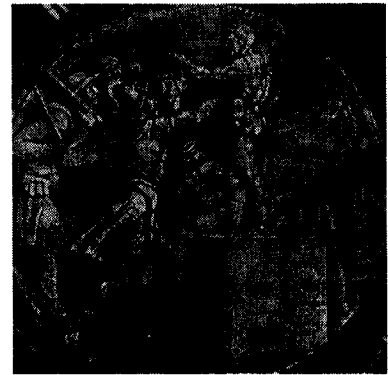
Figure 25 Bronze Medallion
from the *Sistine* ceiling.

Bronze does find its way onto the *Sistine* ceiling in the form of painted bronze

medallions. (figures 24 and 25) In his essay, "Maccabean Histories in the Sistine

Ceiling," Wind speculates that the medallions may be traced back to the tomb project.

In addition to being bronze they also depict the religious warfare of Judas Maccabeus;

justifying Julius's own military crusades with their imagery.[72] Bronze was also

apparently proposed for some sculptural reliefs in Michelangelo's next architectural

project: the facade at *San Lorenzo*, but neither they nor the facade were carried out.

The introduction of bronze would have violated the simple austerity preferred by

[72]Wind, "Maccabean Histories in the Sistine Ceiling," in *Italian Renaissance Studies A Tribute to Cecelia M. Ady*, edited by E.F. Jacob, (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), p. 312-27.

Michelangelo, as demonstrated only a few years later in the *Medici Chapel*; and in the vestibule of the *Laurentian Library*; with their palettes of *pietra serena, pietra santa,* and plaster. A speculative explanation for the use of bronze, could be Michelangelo's realization that he could not carve as many figures as were needed, out of stone in a reasonable amount of time. Perhaps the most palatable explanation would be that Condivi and Vasari both misunderstood the placement of the bronze relief slated for the tomb. It would be more understandable for Michelangelo to have used bronze for the door(s) of the tomb which could have contained sculptural reliefs. Ultimately, no bronze appears on the tomb, as installed at *San Pietro in Vincoli*.

Vasari's description continues beyond the bronze friezes and diminishing steps:

> . . . and above for the end(top) were two figures, one that of Heaven, that happily held on her shoulders a *bara* together with *Cibele*, goddess of the earth, and appeared that she ached, that she remained on the earth deprived of all *virtù* by the death of this man, and *Cielo* appeared that was smiling(laughing) that his soul was passing to celestial glory.[73]

Once again, as with the *Active Life* and *Contemplative Life*; and *Moses* and *St. Paul*, Michelangelo "sets up" opposing themes in his sculptural ensembles. This time the goddess of the earth, *Cybele*; and the goddess of heaven, *Cielo*; make up the "debate." Condivi's description of this part of the tomb is similar but instead of *Cybele* and *Cielo*

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[73]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, ". . ., e sopra era per fine due figure, che una era il Cielo, che ridendo sosteneva in sulle spalle una bara insieme con Cibele Dea della terra, e pareva che si dolesse, che ella rimanesse al mondo priva d'ogni virtú per la morte di questo uomo: ed il Cielo pareva che ridesse, che l'anima sue era passata alla gloria celeste."

holding a *bara*; he says that there were "two angels that were supporting an *arca*."[74]

By abstracting the "goddesses of earth and heaven," into "celestial beings," the substitution of "angels" in their places as Condivi does, may be of little consequence. Hartt has observed, however, that Michelangelo almost never portrayed the human figure with any "unnatural appendages," such as wings. The only time he did, was for the angel on the *Tomb of St. Domenic*.[75] This puts in doubt the figures as winged "angels." In Vasari's second account, either by acquiring more information or because of his renewed interest in Neoplatonism, gave the names *Cybele* and *Cielo*, to the "celestial beings," in his first account.[76]

These passages also differ in what exactly the figures were supporting: Vasari uses the word *"bara,"* while Condivi says *"arca."* Vasari's word has been translated as "bier," by Bull; and as "coffin," by Bondanella. These words can mean the same thing; or *bara* or "bier" could be taken as meaning a "litter;" as in a ceremonial "couch" on which a "living" pope would be conveyed. Wohl, in her translation, has used "sarcophagus" for Condivi's *"arca."* From both sources, a "box" or "container" may be derived and extrapolated into a "coffin" or "sarcophagus." Condivi's *"arca"* could also be translated into a more poetic "ark," as in Ark of the Covenant, or the repository and conveyor of something that is sacred. The "ark" as in the story of Noah, preserved and conveyed

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[74]". . . erano due agnoli che sostenevano un'arca;" Condivi, Nencioni, p25.

[75]Frederick Hartt, *The Complete Sculpture of Michelangelo*, p. 65.

[76]For a longer discussion of the possible identities and attributes of these figures see, Edith Balas, "A Hypothesis on Michelangelo's 1505 Project of the Tomb of Julius II," *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 104, 1984, p. 109-12.

the "seeds" of a new genesis. In this reading the *arca* may contain the genesis of a new life or a new papacy.[77]

A possible clarification is found in the next sentence of both descriptions. Vasari writes:

> The tomb was laid out so that one could enter and exit by the ends of the rectangular work through the middle niches, and inside, it had the configuration of a temple, in an oval form, in the middle of which was the caisson where the dead body of that pontiff was to be placed;[78]

And Condivi writes:

> By one of the ends, that which was at the band above, one entered into a small stanza in the tomb, in the manner of a *tempietto*, in the middle of which there was a caisson of marble, where the body of the pope was to be buried, all of the work was done with marvelous artifice.[79]

Stating that the "body" of the pope was to be buried in a coffin inside the tomb would make it unnecessary for there to be a coffin on the exterior of the tomb; thereby

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[77]This conception is elaborated upon in "The Metaphorical Tomb," later in this text.

[78]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, "Era accomodato, che s'entrava et usciva per le teste della quadratura dell'opera nel mezzo delle nicchie, e drento era, caminando a uso di tempio, in forma ovale, nel quale aveva nel mezzo la cassa, dove aveva a porsi il corpo morto di quel papa;. . ."

[79]Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 25, "Per una delle teste, cioè da quella che era dalla banda di sopra, s'entrava dentro alla sepoltura in una stanzetta, a guisa d'un tempietto, in mezzo delle quale era un cassone di marmo, dove si doveva sepellire il corpo del papa; ogni cosa lavorata con maraviglioso artificio."

making a "litter," perhaps with an effigy of the pope, the more logical conclusion to the top of the tomb. This arrangement could be taken as another "sculptural debate" posed by Michelangelo: the pope's bodily remains are inside the tomb close to earth, while the struggle between "heaven" and "earth," over the pope's soul is fought on the crest of the tomb."[80]
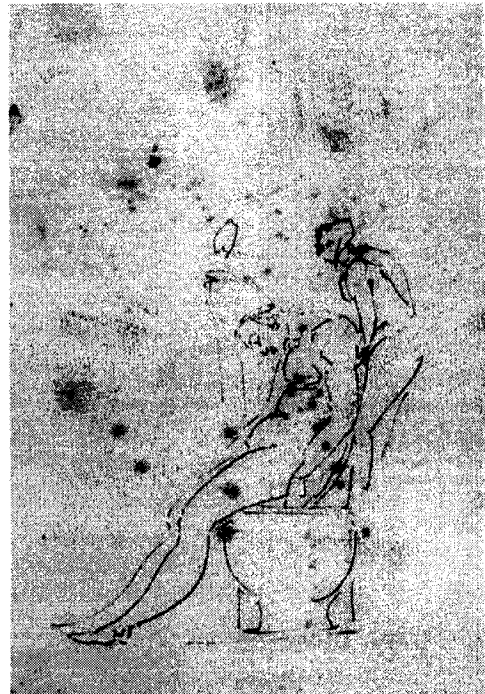
Figure 26 A sketch possibly of an effigy of Pope Julius II.

In these passages, one may again observe how closely much of Vasari's writing follows that of Condivi. These passages describing the interior of the tomb will be examined in greater detail in the next section of this text.

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[80]Michelangelo in his last will and testament, left his "soul to God and his body to the earth." Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 116.

Vasari concludes his description of the exterior of the tomb by writing:

> . . . and finally forty marble statues in all, went on this work, without(counting) the other
> stories(of bronze?), *putti* and ornaments, and all the carved cornices and other members of
> architectural works.[81]

Condivi's summary is nearly the same:

> Briefly, in the whole work there were more than forty statues, without the stories in bas-relief
> made of bronze, all (appropriate) to the intention of the work and where one was able to see the
> many works (deeds) of the pontiff.[82]

In counting the number of individual works, Vasari claims "forty" statues, while Condivi claims "over forty," on the tomb. Vasari also notes that only four statues were completed in Michelangelo's lifetime, but that another eight were blocked out,[83] for a total of twelve at least begun. The contemporary accounting of statues related to the tomb would claim perhaps five "finished or nearly finished": *Moses, The Active Life,* and *The Contemplative Life,* and the two *Louvre* Slaves; and five "unfinished": the four *Accademia Slaves,* by some counts *St. Matthew,* and the *Victory,* in the *Palazzo Vecchio;* for a total of ten. To further complicate the count, one page later, Vasari explains that Michelangelo finished two *prigioni* in Rome, which can be traced to be

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[81]Vasar, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, ". . .e finalmente vi andava in tutta quest'opera quaranta statue di marmo, senza l'altre storie, putti ed ornamenti, e tutte intagliate le cornice e gli altri membri dell'opera d'architettura."

[82]Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 25, "Brevemente, in tutta l'opera andavano sopra quaranta statue, senza le storie di mezzo rilievo fatte di bronzo, tutte a proposito di tal caso e dove si potevan vedere i fatti di tanto pontefice."

[83]". . . quattro statue finite, ed otto abbozzatte, . . ." Vasari (1568), Barocchi, p. 28-9.

the *Louvre Slaves*. Then Vasari writes that, also in Rome, Michelangelo blocked out eight statues and in Florence another five, along with the *Victory* and the *Moses*. From that information, up to seventeen sculptures, in varying levels of finish, can be counted. Even though Vasari was writing after the tomb had been installed at *San Pietro in Vincoli*, he gave no indication as to when each of the statues had been executed. Because of the lack of firm evidence, contemporary scholars place the sculptures variously along the forty year process of the tomb. Of the sculptures mentioned in the biographies, only the *Moses*, *The Active Life*, and *The Contemplative Life* were installed at the *Vincoli* tomb. The tomb as completed also contains four other sculptures; the *Sibyl*, the *Prophet*, the *Madonna*, and the effigy of Julius, all executed by Michelangelo's assistants.

An effigy of Julius, though not directly referred to, may have been part of the *bara* or *arca* at the top of the tomb. The *Sibyl* and the *Prophet* may not have been significant enough to describe individually. The sculpture of a "Madonna and Child," however, is too significant a piece not to be mentioned at all in the descriptions. Apparently it did not appear on the tomb as first conceived. A "Madonna and Child" sculpture does appear in a central niche in sketches attributed to the middle phases of the project. (figure 27) Vasari and Condivi, however, make no mention of any intermediate phases of the tomb design. They only write of the grand tomb, as originally conceived; and of the tragically reduced wall tomb installed at *Vincoli*. Given the prevalence of "Madonnas" in Michelangelo's opera: the *Rome Pietà* (originally for a tomb), the

Bruges Madonna, and the *Medici Madonna* (part of the tombs in the *Medici Chapel*);

and the prominence of the iconography of Mary in the lives of Julius, and of his uncle

Sixtus V, her absence from the first tomb project is especially noteworthy.
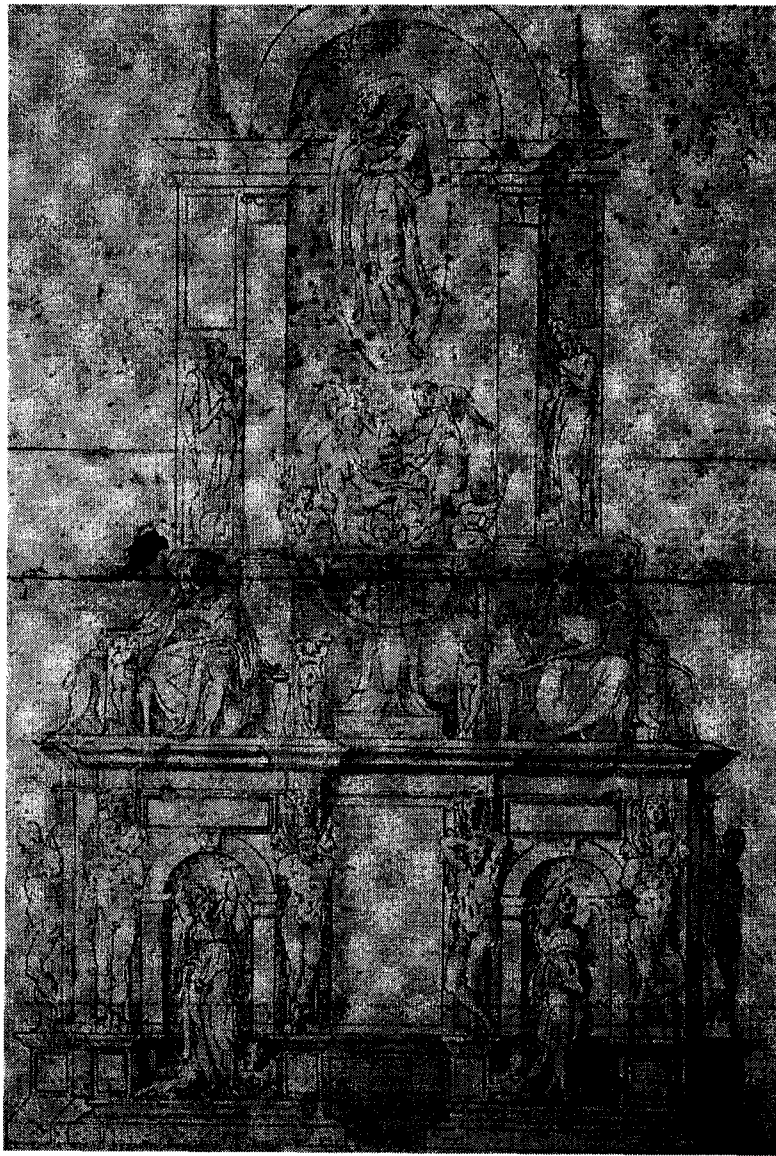
Figure 27 Copy of a drawing possibly by Michelangelo for the revised 1513 tomb project.

The Interior of the Tomb

The exterior of the tomb, as described in the narratives, is quite impressive in scale and ornamentation. The account portrays the qualities of a large-scale tomb or grandiose reliquary. Once the descriptions proceed to the interior, however, the structure takes on a different character. While the accounts are brief, they are none the less intriguing in their provocative allusions to an architectural space. At once, the tomb becomes more a "mausoleum" or perhaps even a "small temple," as Condivi writes:

> By one of the ends, that which was at the band above, one entered into a small stanza in the sepulcher, in the manner of a *tempietto*,[84] in the middle of which there was a caisson of marble, where the body of the pope was to be buried, all of the work was done with marvelous artifice.[85]

In Vasari's first edition, he describes nothing of the interior of the tomb, but in his second description he closely follows what Condivi had written fifteen years earlier:

> It (the tomb) was arranged (*accomodato*), so that one could enter and exit by the heads (*teste*)[86] of the rectangular work through the middle of the niches, and inside it was, constructed like a temple (*tempio*), in an oval form, in the middle of which was the caisson, where the dead body of that pontiff was to be placed; . . .[87]

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[84]It is unclear if *tempietto* at the time have any connotations of the contemporaneous one by Bramante.

[85]Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 25, "Per una delle teste, cioè da quella che era dalla banda di sopra, s'entrava dentro alla sepoltura in una stanzetta, a guisa d'un tempietto, in mezzo delle quale era un cassone di marmo, dove si doveva sepellire il corpo del papa; ogni cosa lavorata con maraviglioso artificio."

[86]Panofsky suggests that the plural, *teste* is a typographic error and conforms his reconstruction according to the word being the singular, *testa*. Panofsky, "The First Two Projects Of Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius II," p. 561.

[87]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, "Era accomodato, che s'entrava et usciva per le teste della quadratura dell'opera nel mezzo delle nicchie, e drento era, caminando a uso di tempio, in forma ovale, nel quale aveva nel mezzo la cassa, dove aveva a porsi il corpo morto di quel papa;. . ."

These scant details of an interior space give just enough information to excite the imagination as to what Michelangelo may have had in mind. Both authors describe the interior space as a "temple" or "small temple." *Tempio* and *tempietto* are chosen over *cappella* or "chapel" (which would have had connotations for containing a group of singers). The *Medici Chapel* at *San Lorenzo* is termed *sagrestia*, assumedly because that was the function of the symmetrically flanking "old sacristy" by Brunelleschi.

The descriptions suggest that one, would, "enter" and "exit" this tomb, like a mausoleum or even a small devotional temple or chapel: a space that functioned similarly to a confessio of a saint, where one could have venerated Julius's relics, along with the other saints at the basilica. Imagining the tomb as a (Roman) *tempio*, it could be "read" as the temple of Julius(II) deified, the home of the "god" and his cult. The tomb could then provide a tangible locus for the veneration of a great persona; physical evidence and reassurance to the living that life does not end in oblivion; a concrete manifestation of an afterlife of sorts; and a way of communicating with the dead.

If the tomb were like a chapel on the inside, a pew or kneeling rail might be present. Tradition could allow access for pilgrims to pray at a small altar or entrance to the space could be limited to clergy. If pilgrims were denied physical access to the interior, visual access could have been permitted through a bronze gate or grill. All access could be excluded vis-a-vis bronze doors, imparting a certain mystery as to what took place inside: the restless pacing of Julius's soul.
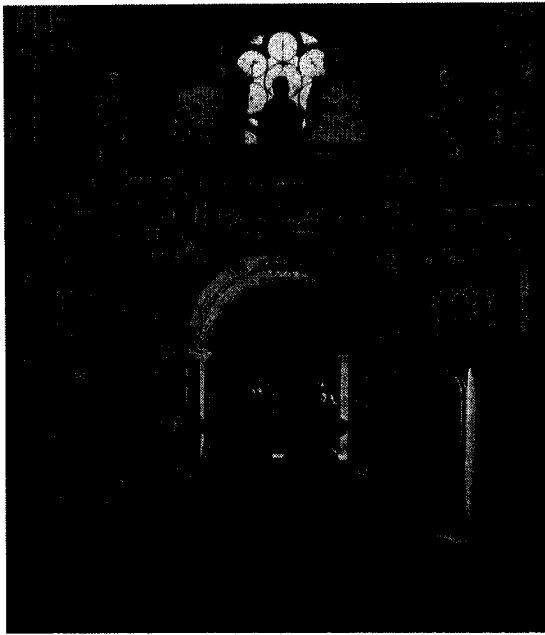
Figure 28 Tomb of Francis I, St. Denis, Philibert de l'Orme and Pierre Bontemps, with "visible interior" (Panofsky).
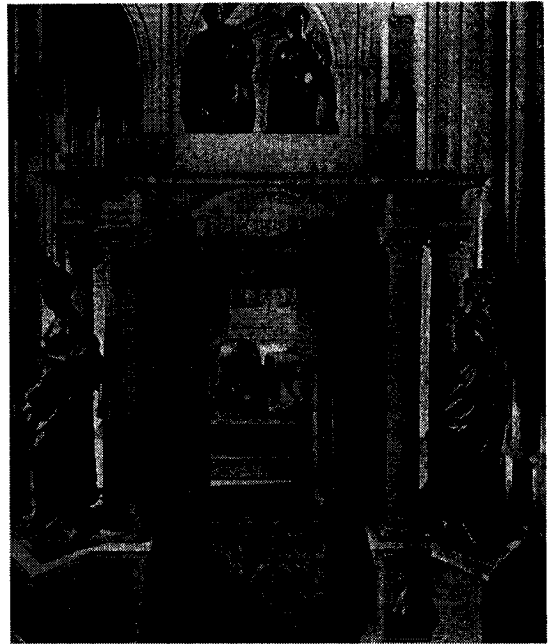
Figure 29 Tomb of Henry II and Catherine de Médicis, St. Denis, Francesco Primaticcio and German Pilon, with "visible interior" (Panofsky)

Tombs at the abbey church of St. Denis, from around the same time period, present an alternative to the interior / exterior arrangement of the Julian tomb (figures 28 and 29). Their open columnar construction offered an enclosed but visible space where the effigies of the deceased could be viewed without entering a discreet interior space as may have been the case with the Julian tomb.

While the exterior ornament of the tomb is described in substantial detail, there is no mention of how the interior of the tomb would have been adorned. The possibility of "entering" the tomb, suggests that at least some sculptural or perhaps frescoed program of ornament would exist inside as well.

Figure 30 *Domus Aurea*, a possible tomb-like interior
(Trachtenberg).

If the small, temple-like space of the tomb could be entered, it would need to be
lighted in some manner. The possibilities for that would include small windows, a
"lantern" or oculus at the top, or some other form of perforations to the dome. If it
were to be lit by candles or lamps, it would have required at least some kind of
opening for ventilation.(figure 30).

Speculation on the nature of the interior of the tomb is inextricably linked to the
ultimate form of that space. Many interior forms could exist within the *poche* of the
twelve by eighteen *braccia* rectangle[88] of the tomb. Some forms are more probable

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[88]No dimension is given for the height of the tomb. The dimension of the width or length of the tomb; twelve or
eighteen *braccia*, projected upwards would be reasonable based on precedents contemporary with the tomb.

than others. One of the least likely forms would have been an oval plan and dome, yet this is the form that Vasari recorded in his description.

Forma Ovale

Vasari's curious description of an oval interior for the tomb is written simply and without fanfare: "... e drento era, caminando a uso di tempio, in forma ovale, ..."[89] The "oval form" only appears in Vasari's expanded and revised *Le Vite of* 1568. He does not mention it in his 1550 edition, nor is it mentioned in Condivi's work, from which Vasari "borrowed" many of his revisions. The form could have originated from a conversation Vasari had with Michelangelo, from a model or drawing Vasari could have seen, or it could have sprung entirely from Vasari's mind, for some as yet undetermined motive.

The descriptive phrase has been translated in various ways: "... the interior curved in the form of an oval after the manner of a temple, ..." by de Vere;[90] "... while the inside had the configuration of a temple in an oval form, ..." by Bondanella;[91] and "... the interior was in the shape of an oval, curving like a temple," by Bull;[92] and "... and inside was, running (that is: architecturally treated) like a temple, (a little chamber) of oval form ..." by Panofsky. [Parenthetic comments are by Panofsky.][93] Panofsky apparently translates *caminando,* as "running (that is: architecturally treated)."

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[89]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29.

[90]Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects,* translated by Gaston de Vere, Everyman's Library series, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996, p. 660.

[91]Vasari, (Bondanella), 1991, p. 433.

[92]Vasari, (Bull), p. 344.

[93]Panofsky, "The first two Projects of Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius II," p. 562-3.

Perhaps Panofsky derived his "running" from *camminare*, meaning: "to walk." Bull

and de Vere, on the other hand, seem to derive "curving" and "curved" from the same

caminando. They must be reading *caminando* as relating to *camino* or *caminetto*

signifying a "fireplace" or "chimney," but which can also mean "vaulted" or "curving

upwards." *Camino* can also mean a "forge," hence the interior of the tomb could be

"forged" or "formed" like a temple.

Vasari returns to the subject of the tomb, later in Michelangelo's biography, when

writing about its ultimate installation at *San Pietro in Vincoli*. In that passage Vasari

repeats a description of an oval interior:

> In the center, in the original plan, there was to have been one of the doors leading into the little
>
> oval temple containing the quadrangular sarcophagus; instead, there was a rectangular niche,
>
> containing a marble dado which supported the gigantic and wonderfully beautiful statue of
>
> *Moses*, of which enough has already been said.[94]

This time he uses slightly different wording, calling the interior a *"tempietto ovato,"*

compared to the previous, *"caminando a uso di tempio, in forma ovale,"*but this

difference is insignificant.

Panofsky, in his article on the first two projects for the Julian tomb,[95] notes that the

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[94]Vasari, (Bull), p. 377, and in Italian, Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 73, "Nel mezzo è l'altra nicchia, ma quadra, che questa doveva essere nel primo disegno una delle porti che entravano nel tempietto ovato della sepoltura quadrata; questa essendo diventata nicchia, vi è posto in sur undado di marmo la grandissima e bellissima statua di Moisè, della quale abastanza si è ragionato."

[95]Panofsky, "The first two Projects of Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius II," p. 563.

discrepancies that exist between Vasari's two biographies and Condivi's are not very serious. He goes on to say, "That the burial chamber was oval in shape is an obvious inference from the proportions of the ground floor plan (12 x 18 cubits)[96] and may be taken for granted."[97] It is unclear whether he is proposing that Vasari took this for granted and made the assumption or that he, Panofsky, is taking it for granted. Either way, given the general absence of the oval form in architecture up to the point of the Julian tomb (1505), in particular the lack of oval forms in Michelangelo's architecture[98], and the difficulty involved in building an oval dome, it does not seem at all "obvious" to infer an oval interior from a rectangular form.[99]

Ackerman, writing in regard to the paving pattern at the Campidoglio, states that the oval was almost unknown in the history of architecture up to this time (c.1538-1550).[100] "Michelangelo had proposed it (the oval) in projects for the interior of the

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[96]Panofsky uses the term "cubit" in place of *braccia* for the physiognomically derived measurement taken from the tip of the middle finger to elbow. The *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th edition, (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1994), p. 281, defines a cubit as usually equaling about eighteen inches or 45.7 centimeters. As previously stated in note 3 in the Introduction and in note 39 in this section, Wallace, in *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo*, defines the braccia as 58.36 centimeters. This author, who is taller than most Renaissance Italians, has a *braccia* of about 51.4 centimeters. Thus the tomb would range from 5.5 meters by 8.25 meters to 7 by 10.5 meters; or from 18 by 27 feet to 23 by 34 ½ feet. None-the-less, the proportion remains 2 : 3.

[97]Panofsky, "The first two Projects of Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius II," p. 563.

[98]The exceptions being the paving form of the Campidoglio and the stair for the Laurentian Library vestibule which come much later, c.1538-50 and c. 1559 respectively. A less explicit oval may be seen in the background form s from which God appears in the Sistine ceiling .

[99]The twelve by eighteen *braccia* rectangle of the tomb could have accommodated a fairly wide ellipse of forty degrees. From a relational comparison this would correspond to both the proportions of the oval in du Perac's engraving of the Campidoglio and to the plan of San Andrea al Quirinali by Bernini some 150 years later. A wider ellipse would make sense architecturally because it forms a better proportioned room than does a narrow ellipse.

[100]The oval mound at the *Campidoglio* has been related to a Roman shield, one of the few oval precedents (and convex like the mound at the Campidoglio) ubiquitous in antiquity and found on the coat of arms of the Commune of Rome. An oval shield also forms the basis for most papal coat of arms, as well. This symbolism could have been subsumed by Julius under his program for the restoration of the papacy and its linkage to a classical Roman grandeur.

tomb of Julius II, and it appears in church and villa sketches by Baldassare Peruzzi

(1481-1536); but humanistic distaste for 'irregular' figures discouraged its use."[101] In

his writings on the Campidoglio, Ackerman does go on to say that, ". . . the oval

combined in one form the principles of centrality and axiality; it was this dual character

that later made it so popular in church design." While Ackerman stated that there was

a "humanistic distaste " for the oval, it did eventually prove "useful," both functionally

and symbolically for manifesting a new view of the Cosmos.

In support of an oval interior, the argument could be made that Michelangelo, given

his "powers of invention," had already moved toward some "Mannerist" or "Baroque"

sensibility. In his next built interior, however, the *Medici Chapel* (begun 1520) at *San

Lorenzo*, the plan is a square and surmounted by a circular dome.[102] At the *Laurentian

Library* (begun 1523), the entry vestibule is again square and this time receives a flat

ceiling.[103] The stair treads in the entry vestibule were conceived by Michelangelo as

a set of "oval boxes," but they were not drawn and built in that form until about

1559.[104] Earlier sketches in the evolution of the library design show the stairs as more

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[101]Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, p. 152-3.

[102]Given Brunelleschi's precedent in the opposite transept, it may not have been acceptable to deviate that far in his own plan.

[103]Beyond any artistic sensibilities, spatial constraints and the avoidance of the competing domes of the sacristies and church may have prevented oval or circular shapes in these instances. Neither of these projects were completed under the direct supervision of Michelangelo, but were slowly pieced together over the next forty years or so with only a little direction from the artist.

[104]The stair was redesigned by Michelangelo in December 1558 and January 1559, after he had a dream about it. In a letter to Vasari, dated September 28, 1555, Michelangelo writes that, "A certain staircase comes to my mind like a dream . . . it is as if you took a number of oval boxes, each about a span deep but not of the same length or width, and placed the largest down on the paving further from or nearer to the wall with the door, depending on the gradient wanted for the stairs. Then it is as if you placed another box on top of the first, smaller than the first and leaving all around enough space for the foot to

typically rectilinear. (figures 31 and 32).

Figure 31 Early sketch for *Laurentian Library* stairs.
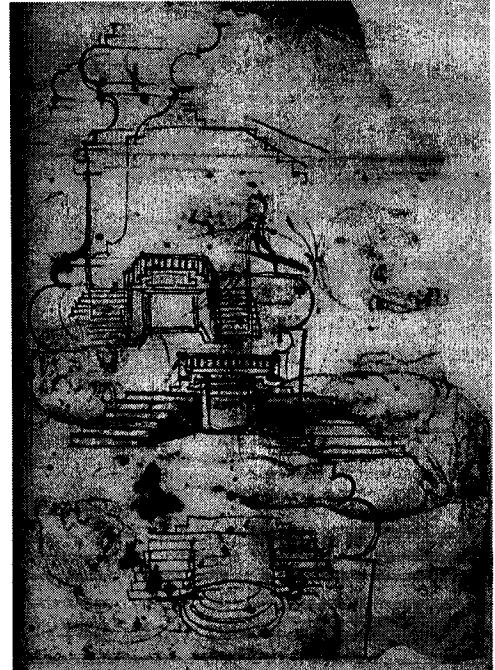
Figure 32 Later sketch of *Laurentian Library* stairs.

A more abstract form of an oval appears in the Sistine ceiling, forming the background around the figure of God in the scenes depicting the creation of the sun and the moon, the separation of darkness from Light, and in the creation of Adam. In these scenes, God is coming forth from oval forms outlined with drapery and intermingled with other

Figure 33 Ovals in the *Sistine* ceiling.

ascend; and so on, diminishing and drawing back the steps towards the door, always with enough space to climb; the last step should be the same size as the opening of the door. . . " A model of the stairs was built and shipped to Florence and they were finally executed under the direction of Vasari by Ammanati. See Vasari, (Bull), p. 400, and Ramsden, *The Letters of Michelangelo*, p. 157-8, no. 406.

celestial figures. (figure 33).

An explanation of the oval form from a cosmological source would not come for many years later. Nicholas Copernicus published, *On the Revolution of the Heavenly Spheres,* in 1543, locating the sun, not the earth, at the center of the solar system. However, it was not until Johannes Kepler's book of 1609, *Astronomia Nova,* based on the calculations of Tycho Brahe, that the planets were shown to move in *elliptical* orbits. Even then, the privileged position of the circle as the classical symbol of perfection was not immediately called into question. Kepler, writing in the late 16th century still held that, "we judge that the circle is the most perfect of figures; heaven of bodies."[105] Baroque poetics do not engage the oval until the 1630's when Borromini and Bernini, employ it as one of the regulating lineaments of their architecture.

The first oval dome realized during the Renaissance and Baroque period was constructed by Vignola, at the church of *San Andrea* on the *via Flaminia* in 1550.[106] (figure 34) This is a worthwhile example of how an oval dome might be constructed at a time period close to that of the tomb. Notable too, is the fact that the structure of

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[105]Johannes Kepler, *Gesammelte Werke,* vol. 3, p. 61., W. Von Dyck, M. Caspar, et al (eds.), (Munich: Beck, 1938), as cited by Fernand Hallyn, *The Poetic Structure of the Universe,* (New York: Zone Books, 1993), p. 205.

[106] If Michelangelo conceptualized the plan of the Campidoglio as an oval, it could have been as early as 1538, when the project began. There are no surviving drawings, by Michelangelo's hand, of an oval, in relation to the *Campidoglio.* The piazza was not finally paved with its oval pattern until 1940. Michelangelo may be somehow connected to or may have distantly influenced Vignola's church and the nearby *Villa Giulia* by Vignola and Ammanati, both of whom looked to Michelangelo for inspiration.

this oval dome is fully exposed. This raises the issue that after the difficulty, both physically and conceptually, of constructing an oval dome, it would be curious to then obscure its finesse beneath orthogonal panels and large sculptures.[107] An oval dome would be magnificent left in its own unadorned form.
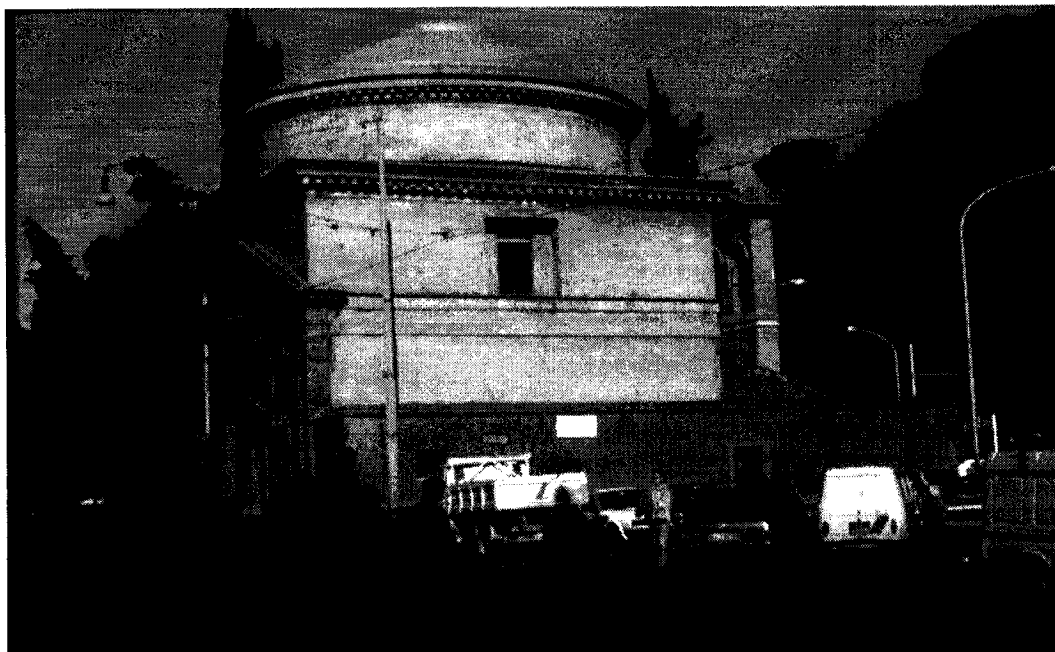
Figure 34 *San Andrea* on the *via Flaminia*, Vignola c. 1550 (Photo by author).

Technically, the geometry for constructing an oval was available from the rediscovered Greek works on conics. Dürer's *Unterweysung der Messung* of 1525-8, showed how to construct an ellipse by taking sections through a cone. A review of mathematical and philosophical works from Pacioli, Pico, and Ficino, however, reveals no interest in the oval.

In contrast to the oval, it is still the circle that forms the regulating basis of the plan, even in Michelangelo's later works. A plan for St. Peter's, from some time after 1547,

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[107]This idea was discovered through the author's construction of a model of the tomb with an oval dome.

shows a circular *baldichino* with an altar, placed at the center of the church. The plan

of the *Sforza Chapel* at *Santa Maria Maggiore* (c. 1560) though transmuted was still

based on the circle. Dating from about the same time, the church of *San Giovanni*

Fiorentino, was also circular in plan though surrounding its chapels appear to be oval.
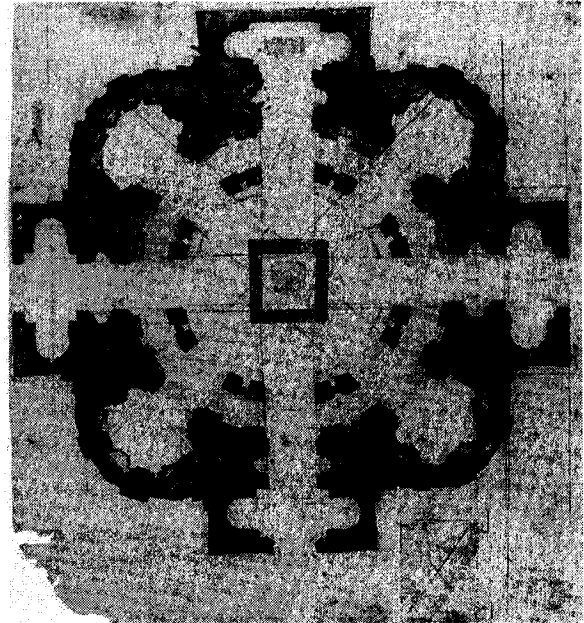
(figure 35).

Figure 35 Plan of *San Giovanni Fiorentino.*

If Michelangelo did indeed plan an oval interior for the first project for the tomb of

Julius II, he did not return to the oval[108] in any explicit manner till perhaps the paving

pattern of the Campidoglio. In "The Life of Michelangelo," Vasari only mentions the

oval in reference to the interior of the tomb for Julius II[109] and in regards to the base

designed by Michelangelo for the statue of Marcus Aurelius in the Campidoglio.[110] In

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[108]A more remote connection between Michelangelo and the oval form can be found in his youth. Between the ages of six and fourteen, Michelangelo lived in Florence on the via dei Bentaccordi (possibly at #7). This street takes its curve from the residual form of a Roman amphitheater, an oval, that once occupied that area of Florence and whose foundations supported Michelangelo's house.

[109]Vasari, (Bull), p. 344 and p. 377.

[110]Vasari, (Bull), p. 389.

writing about the Campidoglio, Vasari describes the statue of Marcus Aurelius as being placed on a *basa in forma ovale*.[111] Adding to the intrigue, Michelangelo's most famous *forma ovale*, the paving pattern at the Campidoglio, receives no mention in any of the biographies.[112]

If the oval form is improbable given historical precedent, artistic taste of the time, and the rest of Michelangelo's opera; then the overall rectangular form of the tomb is difficult to justify, as well, in lieu of the Renaissance prerogative for "pure" circles and squares. Cassirer writes that "Italian Renaissance scholars from Nicholas of Cusa to Leon Battista Alberti considered the circle and the square the most perfect of geometrical forms and believed these should be the bases for harmonious artistic creations.[113] There was a growing interest in the centrally-planned church during the Renaissance. Giuliano da Sangallo, Michelangelo's friend and mentor, realized one of the first centrally planned churches, *Santa Maria delle Carceri* in Prato. Michelangelo's late plans for St. Peter's basilica also remained circular in conception.

Since the tomb was to be freestanding, Michelangelo should have been able to choose a square ground plan, in lieu of a rectangular one, if he had so desired. The "two to three-ratio" of the plan does not appear to be based on that of a sarcophagus or the corpse within, which would be longer and more narrow.

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[111]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 86.

[112]There are no extant drawings by Michelangelo's hand of an oval in relation to his design for the Campidoglio, either. The only ovals are depicted in the engravings by Etienne Duperac. The engravings of Duperac and their relation to what is known of many of Michelangelo's works in Rome are a worthy research project in themselves.

[113]Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 50-51.

Another alternative is that the proportion of the tomb is derived from the space it was meant to occupy: that is, have a proportional relation to its site, like Bramante's *tempietto,* in Serlio's reconstruction, or like Alberti's sepulcher in the *Rucellai Chapel.* The new choir begun by Nicholas V, at St. Peter's, however only approximates the proportion of the tomb. The first project was conceptualized before the new St. Peter's was planned, ruling out a preconceived proportional relation with any of the spaces there.

Thus, proceeding from the "obvious inference," suggested by Panofsky, it would be more reasonable to infer that the interior of the Julian tomb was a rectangle with a flat trabeated ceiling. Weinberger makes this assumption in his reconstruction based on the difficulties in constructing an oval dome.[114] His hybrid rectangular interior with rounded ends, however, has no basis in the descriptive accounts of Vasari and Condivi, or in any other architectural example.

The lack of historical precedent and the Renaissance / Classical disdain of non-square or non-circular space[115] make the oval form improbable. In search of support of an oval form, one may speculate that Vasari was trying to make Michelangelo seem even greater by employing an oval, more than half of a century before any other architect. This too, would be unlikely, as the oval was still not widely used or appreciated even by the time of the second edition of *The Lives,* in 1568. Perhaps Vasari misunderstood

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[114]Martin Weinberger, *Michelangelo the Sculptor,* 2 vols, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967). An image of his reconstruction is reproduced in Part 4 of this text.

[115]Ackerman, *The Architecture of* Michelangelo, p. 152.

a comment by Michelangelo. Given the imprecision of architectural nomenclature in the Renaissance, *forma ovale* could have simply meant that the tomb was "rounded" inside. A rectangular or even a square interior surmounted by a round dome would have been much simpler to construct and justify.

Ultimately, it will never be known, whether the *forma ovale* was a misunderstood description by Vasari, an example of some "instructive truth" Vasari hoped to manifest, a further act by Vasari of Michelangelo's "beatification," a "flight of fancy" by Michelangelo, or some form of heartfelt intercessional symbolism on his part. There is more cause to doubt the *forma ovale* than to support it. Though its use seems improbable, the oval is a very provocative form. Given the character of Michelangelo's inventive processes the oval remains an intriguing possibility. As Aristotle wrote in his *Poetics*, "A likely impossibility is always preferable to an unconvincing possibility."[116]

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[116]Aristotle, *Poetics*, (London: Methuen and Co, 1908-52), Chapter 24.

The Metaphorical Tomb

Based on available information, the Julian tomb has been located historically and physically; it has been examined and dissected; and its parts have been described and evaluated. The question of why this tomb was proposed has not yet been broached. The building of an exquisite monumental sepulcher within the precincts of a twelve-hundred year-old basilica that was on the verge of collapse would have been a curious gesture. Even trying to locate the immense tomb into the constantly changing plan of a new St. Peter's would have been a difficult prospect. This polemic act must have had other connotations.
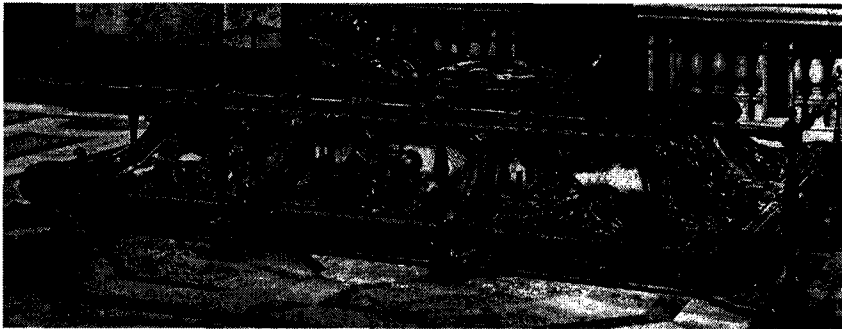
Figure 36 Tomb for Sixtus IV, Antonio del Pollaiiuolo (Panofsky).
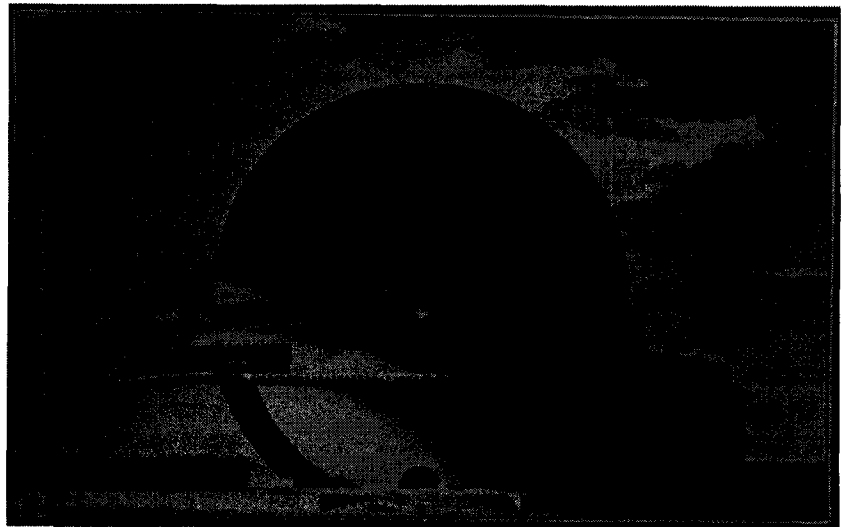
Figure 37 Cenotaph for Sir Issac Newton, Etienne-Louis Boulée (Collins).

After evaluating what may have been physically possible in the Julian tomb project, the answer could be rendered moot by the consideration of the work as a theoretical project. The tomb, as reconstructed in the works of Vasari and Condivi, could be an example, not necessarily of the physical reality of the tomb, but of a "truth that illustrates." The tomb would have been difficult if not impossible to achieve physically, given the constraints of Michelangelo's life-span, Julius's funding, and the changing fabric of St. Peter's. The visionary tomb of the literary descriptions has more in common with Boullée's *Cenotaph for Newton*, than it does with Pollaiuolo's tomb for Sixtus IV. (figures 36 and 37).

Even if physically realized, the Julian tomb would not have been just a place to bury the body of the pope. Constructing the tomb could have been a way of re-founding the basilica, in the short term, before completely rebuilding it. The monument, in its wider implications, could have been designed to help reestablish the Holy Catholic Church.

"Being a devout Christian, Michelangelo loved reading the Holy Scriptures, . . ."[117] The scenes Michelangelo portrayed on the *Sistine* ceiling (begun little more than three years after the conception of the tomb), seem to have been at least partially inspired

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[117]Vasari, Bull, p. 423, and Vasari (1568), Barocchi, p. 121.

by the woodcuts in his *Bible*.[118]

While there are no obvious woodcuts linked to the configuration of the tomb, literary images in the *Bible* must have influenced its form. Two of the most fundamental architectural images in the *Bible* are perhaps Solomon's Temple[119] and the "Ark of the Covenant."[120] Explicit details regarding the dimensions, materials, and construction are given for each.[121]

When he was about to build the tabernacle, Moses was warned; "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown to you on the mountain." The temple sanctuary was said to be "a copy and shadow of what is in heaven." Understood from this perspective, the tomb could be seen as a sort of "tabernacle" or "ark," that functioned as a "Holy of Holies," while the rest of the temple was built around it. It could have been seen as the virtual foundation for the New Jerusalem of Rome. Planted in holy soil, the tomb is the seed of the divine, from which a new Church sprouts, from which a new capitol of the Christian world is grown.

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[118]See Edgar Wind, "Maccabean Histories in the Sistine Ceiling," and Rab Hatfield, "Trust in God: The Sources of Michelangelo's Frescos on the Sistine Ceiling," *Occasional Papers Published by Syracuse University*, Florence, Italy, no.1, 1991. Hatfield says that Michelangelo was perhaps the first major artist to be able to "read" the Old Testament, owing to its translation into Italian.
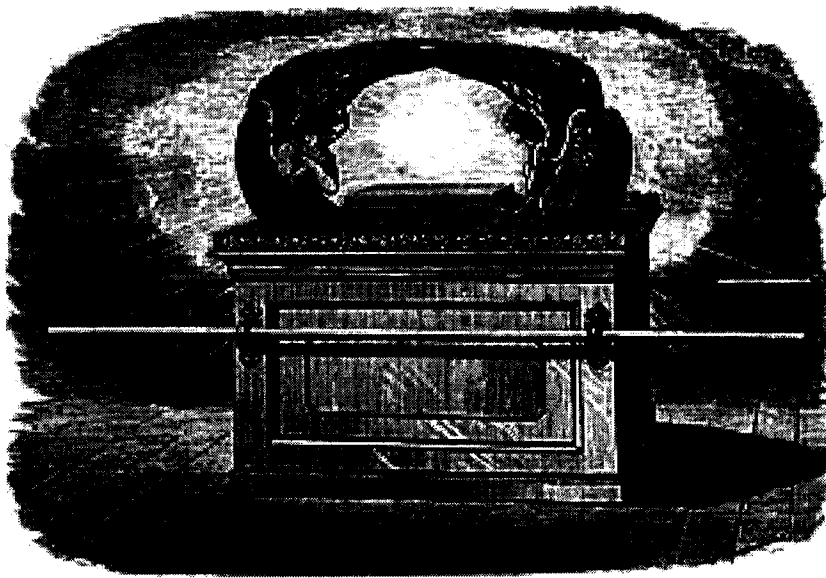
[119]See *The Bible*, "1 Kings, 6: 1-38."

[120]See *The Bible*, "Exodus, 25: 10-22."

[121] In the *New Testament*, the Heavenly Jerusalem in the book of *Revelations*, is described in considerable detail but its relevance to the Julian tomb is more remote.
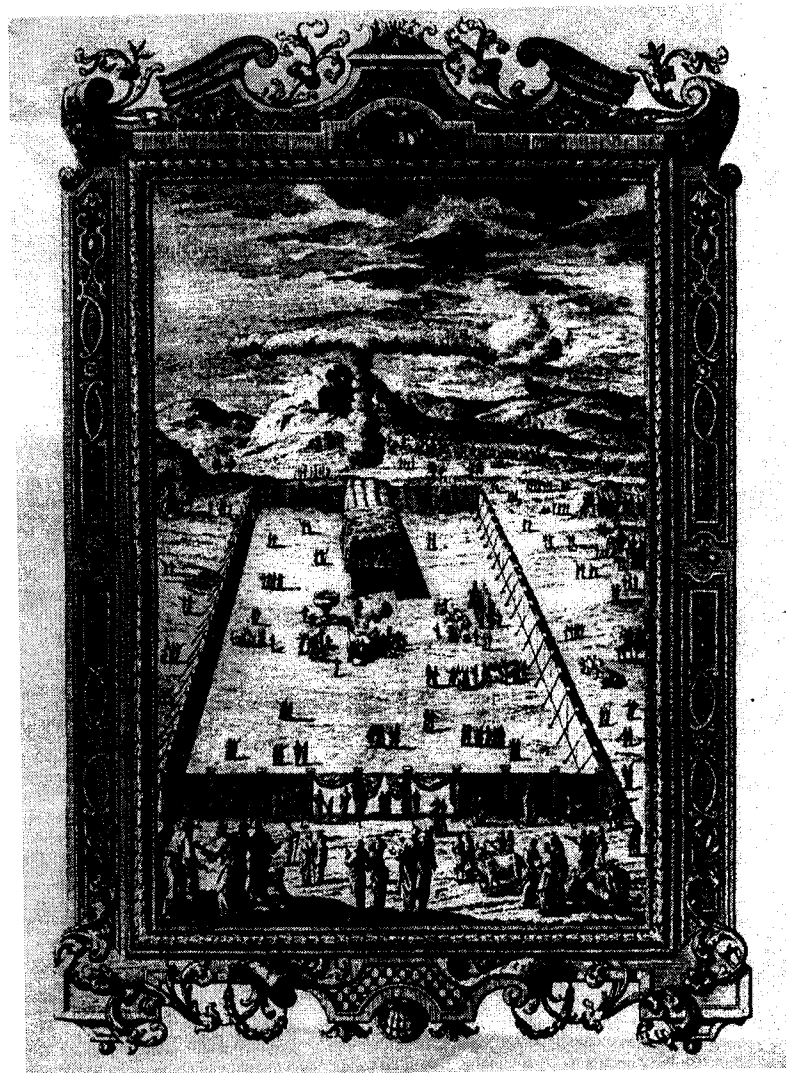
Figure 38 A reconstruction of the Desert Temple Encampment with "Holy of Holies" Tent (author unknown).

Figure 39 A reconstruction of the *Ark of the Covenant* (author unknown).

The tomb could have served as a model of the Cosmos, a bridge between God and Man, giving an external reality to the divine. Michelangelo was known to have been inspired by the work of Dante, who built a whole world within the *Divine Comedy*. The tomb was Michelangelo's first chance to construct his vision of the Cosmos, with its hierarchy and its judgements. The tomb would then function as a means to understand the Cosmos and one's place in it.

The form of the tomb as a structure within a structure is analogous to the "Ark of the Covenant," within the "Holy of Holies" and the "Holy of Holies" within the temple. Condivi, in his description, referred to an element in the upper part of the tomb as an "ark." Like the "Ark of the Covenant," it too had angels attending it: ". . .erano due agnoli che sostenevano un'arca;"[122]

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[122]Condivi, (Nencioni), p25. Again, for a description of the ark, see *The Bible*, "Exodus 25: 10-22."

In describing the upper portion of the tomb, Vasari wrote the phrase, "Ascendeva l'opera sopra la cornice in gradi diminuendo."[123] These steps could imply a sort of Jacob's ladder or portal that leads to heaven.[124] As Jacob and the angel struggled in the biblical account, [125] so too, do the figures of Cielo and Cibele wrestle, but in this case it was over Julius's soul.

If, as previously discussed, the interior of the tomb was in the form of an oval it would have great implications for meaning in the structure. The oval paving pattern and its convex form at the Campidoglio have been connected by Ackerman, de Tolnay, and others with medieval and classical notions of the Capitoline Hill as the Umbilicus or Caput Mundi. The forma ovale, within the Julian tomb could be understood as another umbilicus, the new center of the Christian world. As such, the Julian tomb could at first seem redundant in the proximity of Saint Peter's reliquary. The saint's original tomb in the old basilica was not, however, a monumental structure. Michelangelo's new tomb could be abstracted to commemorate not just Julius, but all the Popes: past, present, and future. This grand new monumental tomb could signify the power of the current pope, be an act of re-founding the basilica and the Church, and re-signify the site of Peter's tomb: that "rock" upon which the Church was originally "built."[126]

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[123]Vasari, (Bull), p. 344.

[124]The Bible, "Genesis 28."

[125]The Bible, "Genesis 32."

[126]The Bible, "Matthew 16:18."

Figure 40 The oval at the *Campidoglio,*
"optically corrected" into a circle (Schiavo).

The oval, too, may be understood as a distorted circle, an anamorphosis. The oval is a foreshortened circle when viewed from the long side. When viewed from the short side, the oval is optically corrected into a circle (figure 40). The circle is a perfect idea, but the oval is its physical reality.[127] An ellipse is a circle trying to obtain perfection as far as possible. An ellipse is the "squaring of the circle," so to speak, so that it may appear physically. Julius was an ellipse that could only approximate the circular perfection of the first pope, Peter. "A mixture of curve and straight line, the ellipse signifies the submission of the creature to material necessity and its inability to attain

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[127]See for example Hallyn, *The Poetic Structure of the Universe,* p. 208-9.

total perfection."[128]

The oval is a fecund womb: a place of rebirth for the continual regeneration and renewal of the Pope as a virtual Peter: the individual, who at any given time, fills the "shoes of the fisherman." The body is placed in the tomb / womb as the seed of this cyclical transmutation. The Pope is dead, long live the Pope.

As with any potent architectural construction, the readings of the tomb are never "pure and simple." They are a deep overlay of multivalent meanings, not an easily read language of one-to-one correspondences. Endeavoring to understand some of what the artist may have been attempting to convey, however, can be a productive exercise. An educated viewer of a work in Michelangelo's time would have understood a vast amount of symbolic form. Not everything in a work, however, "stands" for something. Not everything has an imbued meaning. A poetic work may begin with an intentional program of meaning, but then it has the ability to fill any gaps in that program through the integrity of its own internal structure. A truly poetic work has an ethos which guides its own construction.[129]

The end of this section marks the end / the limit of traditional scholarship on the Julian

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[128]Hallyn, *The Poetic Structure of the Universe*, p. 213.

[129]Gadamer speaks to the issue of an internal order in art in regards to "play" and "festival" in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

tomb. In order to gain further understanding of the tomb, it is necessary to move beyond these bounds; beyond the attributable or associative meanings of what a work portrays, to the inherent meanings derived from the way in which the work was made. The first step in that transmutation of method is to examine the concerns and processes of Michelangelo's own poetic architectural making.

Part Three ■ **The Search for Michelangelo's Architectural Treatise**

An Implied Treatise

Michelangelo lived at the cusp of a paradigmatic shift in world view. The proliferation of printed matter was allowing a more rapid and inexpensive dissemination of information.[1] Mathematics, while still having great symbolic connotations, had also become a technology by which to: record the lending of money, navigate the seas, and create the illusion of receding space. The measured perspective promulgated by Brunelleschi and Alberti contained a finitude and a closure that proved insufficient to contain Michelangelo's poetic vision.[2] This clarity and perfection did not allow for the shadowy imprecision that is sometimes required to tell the human story.

An examination of Michelangelo's process of making is a way to gain a deeper understanding of the Julian tomb project. In turn, the tomb serves as a foundation from which to examine Michelangelo's concerns and the processes derived from those concerns for the carving of stone; its transmutation, through an ethically guided imagination, into a re-presentation of human body; its further transmutation into the making of architecture; and in some cases the transformation of that architecture into still other works. The tomb illustrates the transformative progression of Michelangelo's process of making.

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[1] Johannes Gutenberg used movable type successfully for the first time in a printing press in 1454.

[2] "Perspective barred religious art wholly from any access to a magical experience...," Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, p. 13. For a more contemporary discussion of the implications of perspective see for example, Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997).

Vasari reiterated in his introduction to Michelangelo's life story, what Vitruvius's treatise had stated regarding the education of an Architect: that one needs the knowledge of both theory and of manual skill.[3] Michelangelo, according to Vasari, had the "knowledge of true moral philosophy and the gift of poetic expression."[4] In his introduction to Alberti's life, Vasari wrote that "when theory and practice coincide then nothing could be more fruitful."[5]

Michelangelo seems to have continually searched for a way to portray his unique Sense of Life through his works. It appears that he was constantly adjusting and readjusting his work in the face of knowledge revealed by that work. At times he was unable to bring closure or even move forward in his work because these revelations were made manifest more quickly than he could adjust for in his work. His ideas spanned the boundaries of drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, and poetry. His work moved beyond the duality of figuration and abstraction. He was able to understand spirituality, bodily, and embodiment, spiritually.

Through an analysis of Michelangelo's approach to the making of the Julian tomb, a dynamic architectural treatise may be inferred. This treatise, while providing no "fixed rules," offers insight into the process by which Michelangelo's poetic making occurred.

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[3]Vitruvius, *The Ten Books of Architecture*, translated by Morris Hickey Morgan, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), p. 5.

[4]Vasari, (Bull), p. 323.

[5]Vasari, (Bull), p. 208.

An understanding of Michelangelo's concerns and way of working is an integral part of the process of assembling the potential Julian tomb.

The practice of architecture requires a complex framework of normative concerns. Today, many are caught between the loss of religion and the failure to find some other defining set of ethical and moral standards by which to govern their actions, not only in architecture but in Western Civilization as a whole. Architects need an ethical basis to temper their imagination, and to allow for an ethical practice.

Poetic making was Michelangelo's way of trying to understand his relation to God and to the Cosmos. St. Paul wrote that, "God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made."[6] As God became incarnate in Christ, the loftiest of divine principles became tangible "flesh," in Michelangelo's artistic works. By the time Michelangelo began the tomb, he had read, discussed, traveled, observed, and recorded (in drawings and notes), the foundational ethos of his poetic making.

Architects must read. Reading furnishes the architect with ideas, and teaches him how to build; Michelangelo's favored poet Dante, created an entire Cosmos in the *Divine*

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[6]St. Paul, "Letter to the Romans, 1:20.

Comedy.[7] The knowledge gained from Literature provides architects with a strategic

structural understanding that engineering calculations alone cannot.[8] Michelangelo

needed this knowledge to create the complex cosmic order of the Julian tomb. In

addition to Dante, Michelangelo had been inspired by the *Bible*,[9] the sermons of

Savonarola,[10] the popular Greek and Roman texts of the time, and the normative

discussions of these at the Medici court; creating in his mind a palimpsest, from which

he could draw a basis for ethical action.

Architects must travel. Travel allows the architect to experience other cultures, their

normative concerns, and their built artifacts. Michelangelo had traveled to Bologna,

Venice, Carrara, and Rome by the time he began work on the tomb. In addition to

formal scholarly learning, Michelangelo also acquired from day to day living, "the

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[7]Much could be learned by examining the structure and imagery of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in relation to the tomb. The levels of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, compared to the hierarchy of the tomb would be a useful place to begin. An analysis of the many personas encountered in Dante's work and those who appear on the tomb may be useful as well. A full explication of the *Divine Comedy*, in relation to the tomb, however, is beyond the scope of this text.

[8]"Artists who are fond of reading invariably derive the greatest benefit from their studies, especially sculptors or painters or architects. Book learning encourages craftsmen to be inventive in their work; and certainly, whatever their natural gifts, their judgement will be faulty unless it is backed by sound learning and theory." Giorgio Vasari, "The Life of Leon Battista Alberti," Bull, p. 208.

[9]Michelangelo owned one of the first Bibles available in Italian, allowing him to be one of the first major artists to read and interpret biblical events for himsef. See Wind, "Maccabean Histories in the Sistine Ceiling," and Hatfield, "Trust in God: The Sources of Michelangelo's Fresco's on the Sistine Ceiling." It is especially noteworthy that artists often contradicted or preceded the exegetical trends of the religious authorities. The first Bible printed in Italian was by Vindelinus de Spira with illustrations by the "Master of the Putti," produced in 1471.

[10]Savonarola was the prophetic preacher and prior of the Dominican monastery at San Marco. It was the sound of his voice, that Michelangelo claims he could remember, in his old age. Michelangelo trained as a sculptor in the Medici gardens adjacent to San Marco. Savonarola preached in Florence between 1482 and 1484; and from 1490 to 1498. Beginning in the Lenten season of 1491, Savonarola's preaching took place at the Duomo. San Marco had become too small to accommodate the crowds which numbered 15,000. On 9 November, 1494 Savonarola took over the government from the Medici. Michelangelo had fled to Venice. Michelangelo lived in Florence from at least 1481 to 1494 and from 1495 to 1496. He spent his absences in Venice, Bologna and Rome. Michelangelo was in Carrara in March, 1498 to obtain marble for the Rome *Pietà*. Savonarola was hung and burned in front of the Palazzo Vecchio in 1498.

understanding that philosophers obtain from books and speculation."[11]

Architects must understand the materials with which they work. At Carrara, if not before, Michelangelo learned to attend to the material of his making. Here he experienced the literal weight and sheer "givenness" of his material of choice. He learned how to select the marble that best suited his needs.

Architects must have a knowledge and understanding of the human body. ". . . the limbs of architecture are derived from the limbs of man. No-one who has not been or is not a good master of the human figure, particulary of anatomy, can comprehend this."[12] It is also from these *carcer terrani*, that human beings experience and gain understanding of the world. The words of Marsilio Ficino about Life[13] and the lessons with cadavers at *Santo Spirito*, endowed Michelangelo with knowledge of and reverence for the profound given-ness of the human body. He detailed the minutia of its moving form into beings like *Moses*, and at other times, when it suited his aims, he made only the broad stroked suggestions of the *prigioni*.

Architects must draw. Drawing, even when it records classical precedent, is

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[11]Vasari, (Bull), p. 382.

[12]Ramsden, *The Letters of Michelangelo*, no. 358, vol. II, p. 129.

[13]Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life: A Critical Edition and Translation*. Translated by Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

transformative. Drawing takes the given world, makes it new, and makes it one's own. Michelangelo took ideas, classical precedent, the human body, and through drawing and carving transformed them into things of his own.

Architects must physically build, at least occasionally, to remain healthy both physically and architecturally. For example, manipulating the weight of a brick in the hand promotes a unique understanding of a wall containing thousands of bricks. A kinesthetic understanding of architecture is achieved through the physical act of building. The architect is transformed by sweat and dirt, and the *pneuma*tic work of physical labor. Carving stone, more than drawing or painting, is a physical activity, where the hands work in a symbiotic relationship with the mind, to create three dimensionally. Because sculpting is a three-dimensional form of poetic making, it more closely resembles the act of construction and approximates architecture.[14] Vasari and Condivi note that Michelangelo carved every day to stay healthy.

With the foundations of this "treatise" in place, Michelangelo did not hesitate in making the jump-of-scale to the Julian tomb. In *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, Ackerman writes, "It is difficult to appreciate the Renaissance view that sculptors and painters were uniquely qualified as architects by their understanding of universal formal problems. The view was vindicated by the fact that it was the artist who made

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[14]Michelangelo's sculptural making is a subtractive process, whereas construction / architecture is usually an additive process. The conception of a sculpture, however, is an act of construction in three dimensions.

major technological advances - the technician merely interpreted traditional

practices."[15]

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[15]Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, p. 35. While Michelangelo conceptually understood what he was doing, his lack of experience in what was required to carry out the project may have played a part in the tomb never being fully realized. In the project for the facade of *San Lorenzo*, ten years later, he collaborated with Sangallo, at least initially, to get the project. Sangallo may have been instrumental in securing Michelangelo's commission for the tomb and may have served as an advisor for architectural matters. See also Adrian Stokes, "Michelangelo," In *The Critical Writings of Adrian Stokes*. edited by L. Gowing, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978).

Ethos and Imagination

Ethos and Imagination are obviously complex terms whose profound implications are buried in the specificity of an age. This brief explication attempts to pull the words forward into the twenty-first century while recognizing their deeper implication for Michelangelo's world.[16]

In its most universal meaning, an Ethos is an applied philosophy that provides a structure from which to make choices and determine actions; it brokers Mankind's relation to the Cosmos. Art is the construction of a "model" of an ethos. Art is not didactic but demonstrative. A particular ethos can be implemented or applied through its imaginative transformation. In a reciprocal relation, this imaginative transformation is guided or limited by the particular ethos.

Cicero characterized ethics as "the fashioning of another world, as it were, within the bounds and precincts of the one we have."[17] Other writers, nearer in time to Vasari, concerned themselves with ethics as well. Barbaro, in his translation of Vitruvius's, *I dieci libri d'architectura*, stated that "all human making amounts to constructive ethics."[18] Alberti in his *Profugiorum ab aerumna*, suggests that "the activity of

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[16]See for example, David Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, for a full explication of the imbedded connotations of the words surrounding Michelangelo's creative making.

[17]Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC), *De Natura deorum*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1908-52), Book II, Chapter ix, p.269.

[18]Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, *I dieci libri dell'architettura*. Translation and commentary by Daniele Barbaro, 1567. Essay by Manfredo Tafuri and notes by Manuela Morresi. (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1987).

architecture bridges the gap between the active and contemplative lives, and the architect himself may be raised to the status of moral exemplar."[19]

For Renaissance Man, imagination was both inspired and guided by the Divine. Thus it was always "ethical." Michelangelo's inventive works were guided by this Divine inspiration. This *Inventio* or this Divinely inspired imaginative "improvisation" on classical themes, had been a common practice and had been long justified in the art of rhetoric. "Finding topics to be elaborated in a manner consonant with the subject," was a model that Vasari followed in his own works.[20] Artistic work, too, had grown under the influence of Lorenzo the Magnificent and his "art school" in the Medici gardens.[21] There was a growing Humanist influence in the making of creative works; giving them a "new dignity and freedom," and moving them beyond the status of "handicraft," toward their stature in Classical times. Their autonomy, however, was overstated by de Tolnay, when he wrote that the arts at the time of Michelangelo became "a free spiritual action motivated by an inner creative need."[22]

Still, Vasari at times seems to make Michelangelo into a modern "creative genius" in

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[19]Alberti's work is also known as *Della Tranquillità dell'animo*. This summation of the work is quoted from Christine Smith, *Architecture in the Culture of Early Humanism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.18.

[20]Rubin, *Vasari*, p. 55.

[21]Caroline Elam, "Lorenzo de'Medici's Sculpture Garden," *Mitteilungen des Kunst Historisheshen Institute in Florenz*, no. 36 (1992): 139 - 177.

[22]Charles de Tolnay, *The Youth of Michelangelo*, (Princeton: University Press, 1947), p. 17.

with statements like, "Michelangelo produced a design of incomparable richness, variety, and originality, for in everything he did he was in no need of architectural rules, either ancient or modern, being an artist with the power to invent varied and original things as beautiful as those of the past."[23] This seemingly modern assessment can be qualified by noting that "the power to invent" is actually the word *ingegno*, which means, "to give life to." It was understood that the power of the artist to give life to works, emanated from God.[24] Readers of Vasari's time understood that this "power to invent" was accountable to and limited by God.

When Michelangelo was "graced" with the life giving power of *ingegno* it required immediate manifestation in order to preserve its vitality. Michelangelo worked quickly, in a *furia*, to capture the essence of this life.[25] In this *furia* the imagination receives its "vision" from God. This "vision" was only limited by Man's ability to endure this Divine "light." Imagination enables Mankind to "see" and to "articulate" aspects of the Divine, in the physical world.

In addition to his personal understanding of Christianity, Michelangelo's ethos was

[23]Vasari, (Bull), p. 397, and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 93, ". . .che non si può vedere, per disegno di facciata, né il più vario, nè il più ornato, nè il più nuovo di maniera e di ordine, avenga, come s'è visto in tutte le cose sue, che e' non s'è mai voluto obligare a legge o antica o moderna di cose d'architettura, come quegli che ha auto l'ingegno atto a trovare sempre cose nuove e varie e non punto men belle."

[24]Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, p. 56-59.

[25]Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, p. 60-9. One could also profitably look to Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, for another understanding of the "internal workings" of an engagement with the making of art.

grounded in the medieval traditions of stone-cutting and in the further intellectual legacy of the Medici household. His poetic making began with natural and classical precedent, the human body, and stone. Michelangelo transmuted these elements through drawing and carving and pushed them to new formal limits.

As Aristotle implied, "poetic" interpretation is more important than recording the world as it already exists. The world as it exists, is already perceivable. An interpretation or transformation of what is known requires abstraction: the creation of something which may "stand" for a set of things; a universal truth. Michelangelo was able to justify his "invention" and "innovation" because they were both Divinely inspired and they further articulated the Divine in the world. His transformations illustrated new "truths," and remained true to what guided them.

By retaining some memory of the past, acknowledging his present world, and by leaving an "opening" for future speculation, his transformative works remained prudent to his aims. Michelangelo's invention, while sometimes appearing abstruse, always retained enough familiarity to engage observers of his time, and enough openness to remain engaging to the present.

Transmutable History

The tomb of Julius II was presented by Vasari and Condivi as an exemplary project. It was the "ultimate testimonial to the *virtù* of Michelangelo,"[26] and it "illustrated his great powers of invention."[27] The design "surpassed every ancient or imperial tomb."[28] This tomb was an archetype for the readers of Vasari and Condivi, but there is no single source, physical or ideological, for what inspired Michelangelo to propose such a grand tomb. It is also unknown what part, if any, Pope Julius played in the grand scale and complexity of the proposal. Condivi did write that Julius would converse with Michelangelo at his workshop, "about the tomb and other matters no differently than he would have done with his own brother." Julius instigated a number of other very large scale projects during his papacy, in his pursuit of the restoration of the Church. [29]

While the uniqueness of the tomb cannot be reduced to a typology, it can be abstracted into: a structure, freestanding within another structure. Since Michelangelo's creation did not begin *ex nihilo*, but through the transformation of what he had drawn and experienced, examining some possible precedents is useful in the search for an understanding of the tomb. Michelangelo often looked to forms and

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[26] Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 28, "ottimo [sic] testimonio della virtù di Michelagnolo."

[27] Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 28, "questa opera fu ordinata con grandissima invenzione."

[28] Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 28, "passava ogni antica et imperiale sepoltura."

[29] Condivi, (Wohl), p. 30, and Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 23.

details of the classical architecture of his environment in his search for meaning.

The archetypal mausoleum, named for King Mausolus, was built at Halicarnassus in about 353 BC. It was known to the Renaissance through the description by Pliny,[30] which inspired sketches by artists such as Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (Uffizi A1037). An image similar to this mausoleum is also portrayed in illustrations for various editions of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphli*, interpreted in a number of ways by Raphael,[31] and ultimately bears resemblance to the catafalque for Michelangelo's funeral. These mausoleums too, "rise in gradually diminishing steps."[32]

An examination of Roman tombs reveals a great diversity in configuration and size, varying over time and by the personality or whim of the deceased and their family.[33] These tombs ranged from small columbarium niches to large mausoleums that contained many sarcophagi.

Roman sarcophagi were typically carved with reliefs to describe the life, and hopes for an after life, of those who reposed inside. Several sarcophagi, now in the Vatican, with reliefs of paired doors, and columns interspersed with figures, are often cited as a

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[30]Pliny, *Natural History*, Book XXXVI, Chapter iv.

[31]See for example the tomb of Francesco Gonzaga (Louvre drawing, 1420v), the Chigi tomb, and background images in his cartoons for the Sistine tapestries. (This is a repeat of note 67, Part 2.)

[32]Vasari, (Bull), p.344.

[33]See Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, Book 8, Chapters 2-4.

potential source of inspiration for the Julian tomb. Scholars have also pointed to a drawing by Sangallo, of a Triumphal arch, at Orange, as possibly influencing Michelangelo's design. The formal dialog in these works, between sculptural bodies and architectural members, would have held great possibilities for the articulation of the Julian tomb.

Some Roman Imperial tombs greatly exceeded the scale of the Julian tomb, such as Hadrian's cylindrical construction (now *Castel San Angelo*) and the Mausoleum of Augustus, whose mounded form has its roots in Etruscan tumulus tombs. These tombs do recall the general "mounding up" of the Julian tomb. In his article on a possible source for the tomb's form, Frazer speculates on the "stepped" design as coming from Roman coins of imperial consecrations, which depict imperial funeral pyres.[34]

Closer in proximity and time to the Julian tomb, were the mausoleums adjoining the original basilica of St. Peter's, known in Christian times as *Saint Petronilla* and *Santa Maria della Febbre*. These were a pair of round mausoleums that contained altars and tombs. It was here that Michelangelo's first *Pietà* was installed as part of
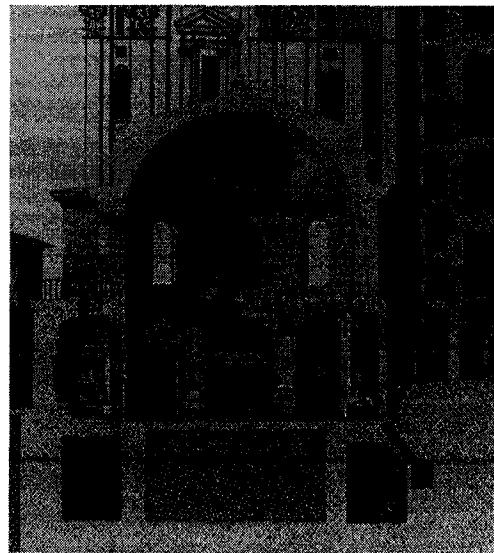
Figure 41 Section through *Santa Maria della Febbre* (Spagnesi).

[34]Alfred Frazer, "A Numismatic Source for Michelangelo's First Design for the Tomb of Julius II," p.53-57.

the tomb for Cardinal Jean de Bilhères Lagrulas. (figure 41).

A potentially influential monument was built in Florence, several years before Michelangelo was born. At *St. Pancrazio*, Alberti executed the *Cappella Rucellai;* a highly articulated chapel set precisely within a larger structure. This small structure within a structure, was based on the church of the Holy Sepulcher.[35] There is no record of Michelangelo having commented on or having drawn the structure, though he surely must have known of it. (figures 42 and 43).
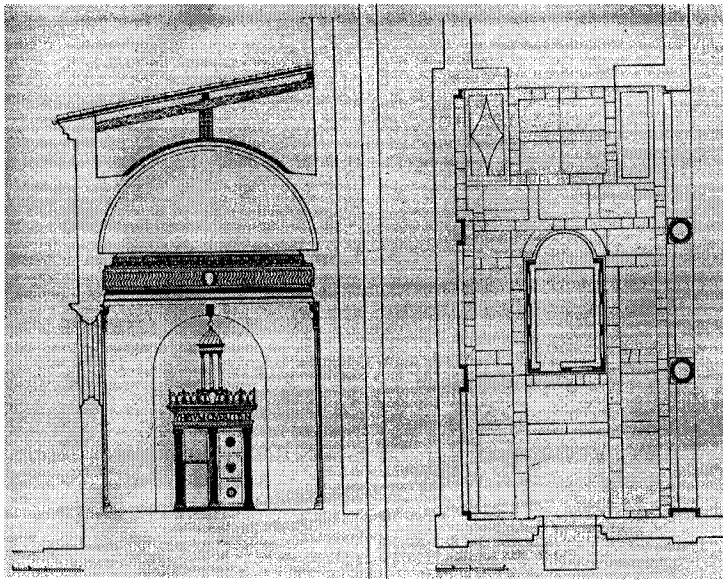
Figure 42 Drawings of the *Cappella Rucellai* (Borsi).
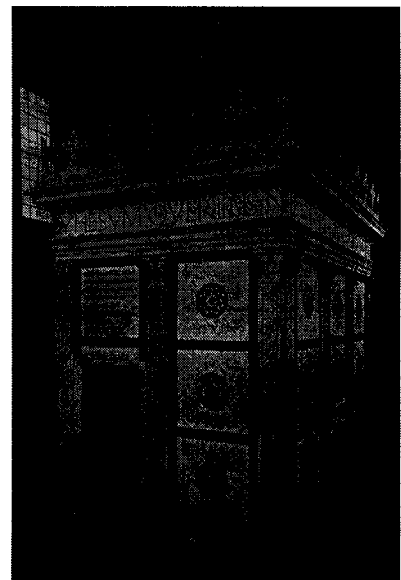
Figure 43 Photograph of the *Cappella* Rucellai (Millon).

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[35]Borsi speculates that Alberti's inspiration for the Rucellai Chapel may have come in part from the church of S. Stefano in Bologna (where Alberti had been a student). This was a sixth century church rebuilt in the twelfth century with an ambulatory and a small central shrine supported by columns, known as the tomb of S. Petronio, or S. Sepolcro. Franco Borsi, *Alberti,* (Milan: Electra, 1980), p.83.
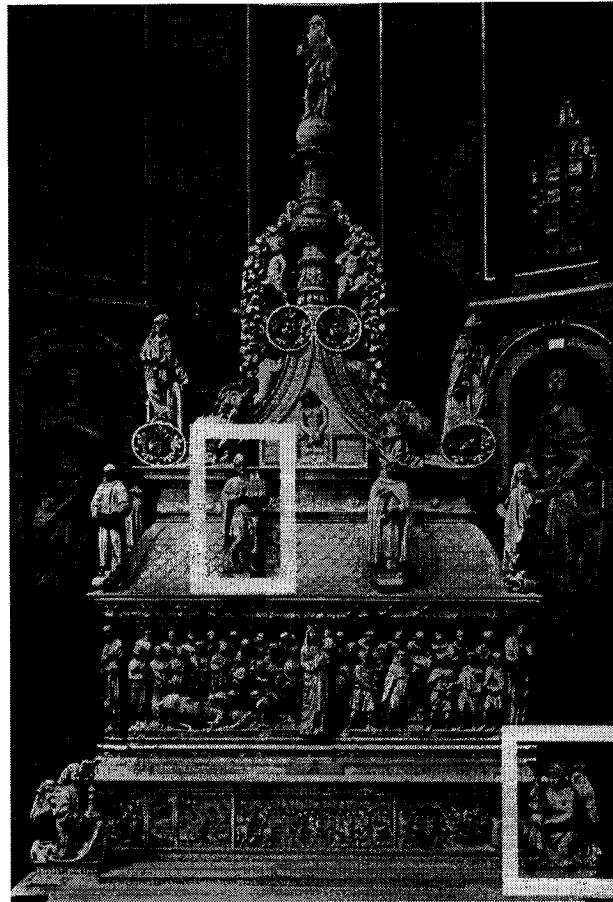
Figure 44 *Arca da San Domenico* (Hartt).

Perhaps the most obvious physical model for Michelangelo would have been the *Arca*

da San Domenico or "Tomb of Saint Domenico,"[36] in the church of *San Domenico*, in

Bologna. (figure 44) This was the site of Michelangelo's sculptural work during his

sojourn to Bologna in 1494-95.[37] Michelangelo carved three of the sculptures placed

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[36]The St. Dominic tomb was begun by Giovanni Pisano (1265-1314) and was continued by Niccolò dell'Arca who died in 1494, prior to the completion of the tomb.

[37]Michelangelo lived in the in the home of Giovanfrancesco Aldovrandi, at whose challenge he executed the sculptures.

on this towering sarcophagus: *St. Petronius, St. Proculus,* and a candle-bearing *Angel.* This project would have given him first hand experience with a large, freestanding tomb: a structure within a structure, just ten years prior to his work on the Julian tomb.[38]

Figure 45 The *Tempietto,* Bramante (Fletcher).

Closer yet, in time and proximity, to the Julian tomb, was Bramante's *Tempietto,* executed to mark the site of St. Peter's crucifixion on the Janiculum. (figure 45) It was constructed in the cloister of *San Pietro in Montorio,* in about 1502. This small chapel's exterior ring of steps have a diameter of about thirty-six feet: the same length as the long side of the Julian tomb. The enclosed chapel within the ring of columns has a proportion of about 1:2 in width to height. Unlike the rectangular plan and possible

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[38]This tomb is carved with "fish-scale-like- shingles," that also appear on the coverings of the tombs at the *Medici Chapel.*

oval interior[39] of the Julian tomb of three years later, the *Tempietto* is based on the circle and square. The *Tempietto* acts as an *axis mundi,* exactly centered on the posthole of Peter's cross. This axis can be followed from spire to hole, which may be seen under glass, in the floor of the lower chapel. This structure within a structure, is a sort of giant reliquary within a courtyard. In his *Five Books of Architecture,* Serlio,[40] records a drawing of the *Tempietto,* integrated into a more precise architectural setting, as was also planned for the *Rucellai Chapel.* Michelangelo's inspiration for the tomb, in part, may have come from a desire to exceed this work by Bramante. The Julian tomb was Michelangelo's more exuberant form of the *Tempietto.*

The vague familiarity witnessed in Michelangelo's architecture arises from the residue of historical precedent that remains after his transformations. The animation and robustness manifested in his architecture has a different origin. These qualities grow from his in-depth concerns, studies, and portrayals of the human body in motion.

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[39]See the discussion of the Oval in Part 2.

[40]Sebastiano Serlio, *The Five Books of Architecture,* (New York: Dover, 1982), Book 3, Chapter 4, Folio 18.

Body

For Michelangelo, the body was not something to be abstracted into mathematical generalizations or symbolic microcosms of the universe.

> To be sure, several writers, ancient and modern, have written with great diligence of the representation of the human body; but what they have written has proved to be useless, because they have all wanted to proceed by means of measure, determined by quantity, in composing their rules. This measure is never completely to be found in the human body, because the body is mobile from its beginning to its end; that is to say, it has in itself no fixed proportions.[41]

Michelangelo's knowledge that God took on a human body in order to save Mankind, figured prominently in his poetic making. He understood that:

> . . . the body is both the stigma of the fall and yet the vehicle of its own transcendence. It is this aporia which must be maintained, preserved; it is the contradiction between the aspirations of the spirit and the necessities of corporeal existence which must somehow be represented.[42]

Michelangelo came to understand the attributes and movements of the human body and transformed them into sculpture. It was at the tomb of Julius II that Michelangelo first transformed his sculptural body of work into a robust architecture.

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[41]Vincenzo Danti, *Il Primo Libro del Trattato delle Perfette Proporzioni di Tutte le Cosa che Imitare e Ritrarre si Possano con l'Arte del Disegno,* (Florence, 1567) as quoted by Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art,* p. 326.

[42]Françoise Jaouën, "Body into text," *Corps Mystique, Corps Sacré: Textural Transfigurations of the Body from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century,* Yale French Studies, vol. 86, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p.1-2.
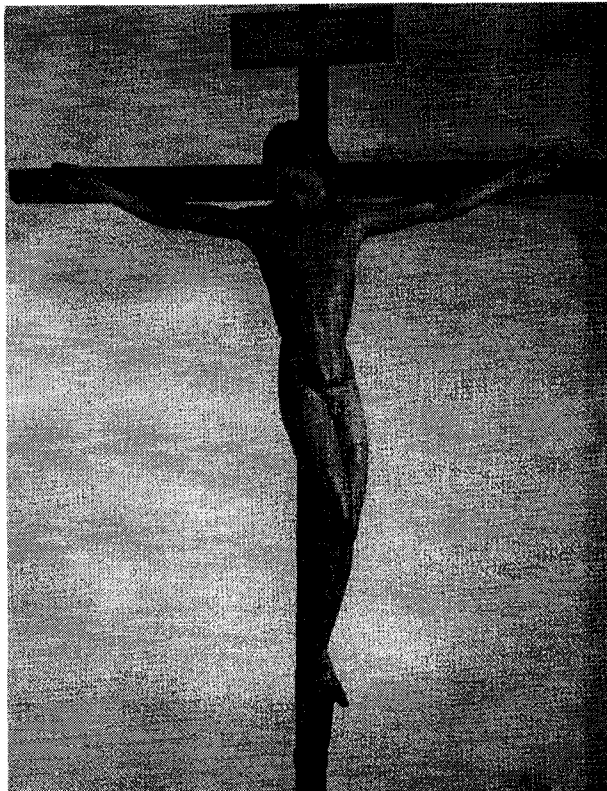
Figure 46 Wooden Crucifix for *Santo Spirito* (Wohl).

A little more than ten years before beginning the tomb, Michelangelo carved a wooden

crucifix for the Prior of *Santo Spirito*[43] in exchange for the use of a room and a cadaver

for the study of dissection.[44] Michelangelo must have been greatly influenced by the

concerns of Ficino at the Medici court. In his *Three Books on Life*, Ficino wrote on the

care of the body. In his *Platonic Theology*, he wrote about the movement of the body

as the outward expression of the soul. The influence of Ficino, combined with the

lessons at *Santo Spirito* must have helped Michelangelo achieve a new level of

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[43]Maestro Nicholaio di Giovanni di Lao Bichiellini.

[44]Vasari, (Bull). p. 332-333.

expertise in the portrayal of human anatomy.[45] Though the crucifix was not very remarkable anatomically or sculpturally,[46] within just a few years, Michelangelo was at work on the most anatomically sophisticated marble sculpture of his career, the Rome *Pietà* (1498-9). Shortly after that he also produced the highly refined Florentine *David* (1501-04).[47] In the space of a very few years Michelangelo had learned the secret of transforming marble into "flesh."

> And in order to achieve perfection he made endless anatomical studies, dissecting corpses in order to discover the principles of their construction and the concatenation of the bones, muscles, nerves, and veins, and all the various movements and postures of the human body.[48]

Michelangelo acquired an in-depth knowledge of the human body: he had an intimate understanding of its anatomy, an admiration for its form and grace, and a deep reverence for it as the vessel and expression of the human soul. The body was where his works began: it was the foundation of his form. Michelangelo's great knowledge of anatomy and keen memory, allowed the artist to understand a multitude of discrete anatomical forms and recall them later to reassemble a human form, for use in his works.

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[45]For an understanding of Michelangelo's knowledge of anatomy, see James Elkins, "Michelangelo and the Human Form: His Knowledge and Use of Anatomy," *Art History*, vol.7, no. 2, June 1984, p. 176-86.

[46]The carving and the study of anatomy occurred between Lorenzo's death in April 1492 and, Michelangelo's travel to Venice and Bologna in October 1494.

[47]Vasari writes of the marble *David*, that "Michelangelo certainly performed a miracle in restoring to life a block of marble left for dead," Vasari, (Bondanella), p. 427, and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 21, "E certo fu miracolo quello di Michelagnolo, far risuscitare uno che era morto."

[48]Vasari, (Bull), p. 418.

It is impossible to resist bodily empathy with Michelangelo's sculpture and architecture. His idea that force makes form, may be traced to his observations of muscles acting through skin. His architecture is abstracted sculpture; members flex and bulge, stressing the captured movements of a human body.

Michelangelo's appreciation of the human body transcended theoretical and symbolic concerns. His idea of the body was not one of an abstract association; as being a microcosm of the universe, but as a moving, breathing organism; an outward expression of a divine soul. The human body, for Michelangelo, was not a symbol but an expression of the animating soul that pervades the Cosmos. His sculptural bodies are re-presented in such a manner that they are seen in a new way. This bodily awareness gave life to his works. In his article on "Michelangelo and the Human Form," Elkins writes, "Michelangelo would not have studied anatomy and done dissection, and spoken of its importance, if it had not had other than a symbolic or philosophic significance to him. It must have figured in his work in a clear manner."[49] Vasari wrote that Michelangelo:

". . . loved human beauty for its use in art; only by copying the human form, and by selecting from what was beautiful, the most beautiful, could he achieve perfection."[50]

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[49]Elkins, "Michelangelo and the Human Form," *Art History*, vol.7, no.2, June 1984, p. 181.

[50]Vasari, (Bull), p. 423.
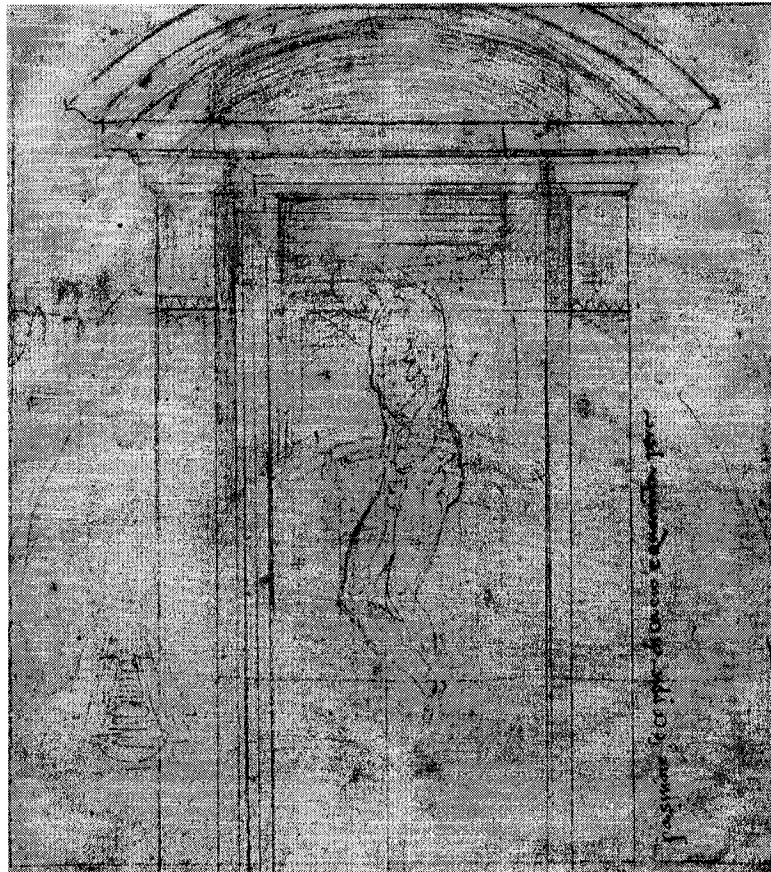
Figure 47 Window frame and figure.

This portrayal of the human body in motion, was transformed into the elements of his architecture. Michelangelo wrote, in an oft quoted letter, "that surely, the architectural members derive from human members. Whoever has not been or is not a good master of the figure and most of all, of anatomy, cannot understand anything of it."[51]

Michelangelo expressed concern, however, over attempts to measure and quantify the

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[51]"The Letter to an Unknown Prelate," number 358, in E. H. Ramsden, *The Letters of Michelangelo Translated from the Original Tuscan.*

body. He found Albrecht Dürer's treatise on human proportion:

> . . . very weak, seeing in his mind how much more beautiful and useful in the study of this subject his own conception would have been. And to tell the truth, Albrecht discusses only the measurements and varieties of human bodies, for which no fixed rule can be given, and he forms his figures straight upright like poles; as to what was more important, the movements and gestures of human beings, he says not a word.[52]

Michelangelo placed supreme emphasis on movement and gesture:[53] how human beings interact bodily with this world. Michelangelo did not accept the nascent "scientific" attempts to quantify aspects of the Cosmos. He instead favored the study of the traits and gestures of the world: those qualities intrinsic to its phenomena, in and of themselves. Michelangelo's works had a greater stake in the tactile qualities of touch and bodily transcription. His perfect proportions, were not achieved through abstract mathematics, but by measurement with the eyes.[54]

Michelangelo, at some point, discussed his own "ingenious theory of anatomy," with Condivi, who unfortunately failed to make a record of it.[55] Condivi did state the

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[52]Condivi, (Wohl), p.99, and in Italian, Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 57, " . . . quando legge Alberto Duro, gli par cosa molto debole, vedendo coll'animo suo quanto questo suo concetto fusse per esser più bello e più utile in tal facultà. E, dire il vero, Alberto non tratta se non delle misure e varietà dei corpi, di che certa regula dar non si può, formando le figure ritte come pali; quel che più importava, degli atti gesti umani, non ne dice parola." Dürer's, *Vier Bücher von Menschlicher Proportion*, was published in Nuremberg in 1528 and a Latin version was published in 1532.

[53]See for example, Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art, especially "Movement I & II."*

[54]See for example, Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art, "Giudizio dell'occhio,"* p. 368 - 79.

[55]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 99.

obvious: that Michelangelo's "theory of art" revolved around anatomy.[56] At nearly the same time as his relation with Condivi, Michelangelo considered a collaboration with his physician, Realdo Columbo, to illustrate a treatise on anatomy.

These events occurred late in Michelangelo's life, so they offer little insight into the fact that Michelangelo seems to have realized early in his career that a mastery of the human body, both in the understanding of its movement through the space of life and of its underlying anatomy, were essential for the making of art (architecture). Michelangelo understood that the moving body mediates architectural experience. His architecture:

> ... has its foundation in the way human beings exist in the world, embodied and mortal, under the sky and on the earth; it is bound up with the experiences of rising and falling, of getting up and lying down, of height and of depth.[57]

Both sculpture and architecture have intrinsic qualities which arouse a bodily identification; they exude tactile qualities which beg the observer to touch and feel them.[58] This identification and desire are perhaps greater than average in much of Michelangelo's work. The phenomenon of touch is an irreducible and not fully explainable aspect of bodily existence. Human beings experience a bodily empathy

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[56]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 175.

[57]Karsten Harries, The Ethical Function of Architecture, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), p. 125.

[58] Unfortunately the exigencies of the modern museum make this impractical.

with architecture and sculpture as they stand before such works. Confrontations with sculptural entities allow human beings to make a profound sense of their bodily selves. Because humans are physically embodied, they must move around sculpture and through architecture to understand it.

Michelangelo found the body to be nature's perfect artifice, and he discovered in the Julian tomb, that his architecture could embody the full givenness of this moving, breathing, living body. The human body was to be re-presented on the Julian tomb forty times;

> ... in its most beautifully proportioned and perfect forms and in the greatest variety of attitudes, and thereby to express the wide range of the soul's emotions and joys.[59]

Beyond the attributable or associative meanings portrayed in the gestures and movements of these, are the inherent meanings derived from the way in which the works were made. It is here that one must examine Michelangelo's profound relation to stone and to the further processes of his making.

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[59]Vasari, (Bull), p. 379. Vasari is actually speaking of the Last Judgement in this passage.
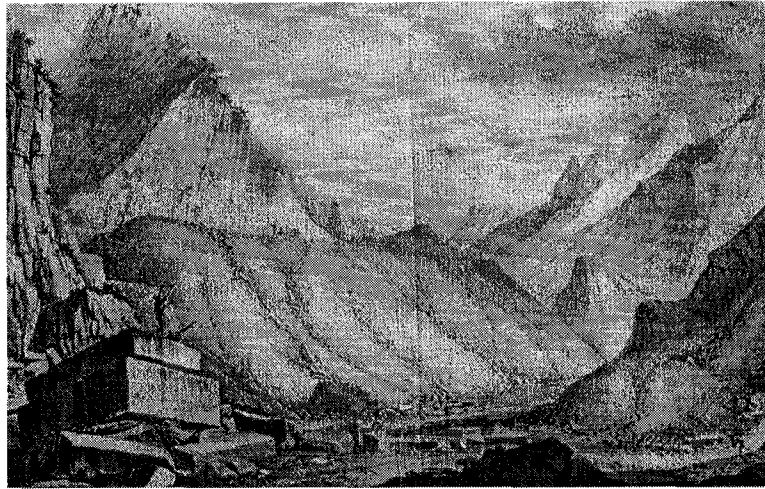
Figure 48 *The Quarry at Polvaccio*, Saverio Salvioni (Marani).

Stone

Michelangelo's symbiotic relationship with stone was mythical in proportion.[60] His connection to stone (according to him and his biographers), began at birth. Michelangelo was born amidst a stone-filled landscape, high in the Apennine mountains.[61] Many years later while working on St. Peter's he began a sonnet:

From the high mountains and from a great ruin

Hidden and circumscribed by a great rock,

I descended to discover myself in this pit,

Against my will in such a stoneyard.

When with the Sun I was born, and by whom the heavens destine . . .[62]

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[60]Michelangelo may have helped promote this himself. See Paul Barolsky, *Michelangelo's Nose: A Myth and It's Maker*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990).

[61]At Caprese, about sixty kilometers southeast of Florence, where his father acted as a city commissioner for the Florentine state.

[62]Translation by Frederick Hartt, *Michelangelo, The Complete Sculpture*, p. 14. For the Italian see James M. Saslow, *The Poetry of Michelangelo: an Annotated Translation*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 464. (In addition to leaving many sculptures "unfinished," Michelangelo also left many poems unfinished as well).

A few weeks after Michelangelo's birth, his family returned to their ancestral neighborhood in the Santa Croce Quarter of Florence. But Michelangelo was put with a wet nurse, the wife of a stonecutter, in the hills of Settignano, where the Buonarroti's owned a farm. Vasari writes that:

> That part of the country(around Settignano) is very rich in stone, especially quarries of greystone which are continuously worked by stone-cutters and sculptors, mostly local people; . . .[63]

Michelangelo also spent the summers of his youth in the "favorable air" of the family's Settignano farm, among his stonecutter relatives, where he was likely shaped by the discussions of working with stone. His later "sudden" facility and life long occupation with the carving of stone began here. Wallace, in his book on Michelangelo's work at *San Lorenzo*, writes that, "Michelangelo grew up with stonemasons and never lost contact with their world; indeed, he depended upon his Florentine compatriots to a large extent . . . He never lost interest in *praxis*, the practical aspects of his craft with which, like Leonardo da Vinci, he was forever experimenting and generally considered an expert."[64]

Vasari famously quotes Michelangelo as saying, "Giorgio, if my brains are any good at all it's because I was born in the pure air of your Arezzo countryside, just as with my

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[63]Vasari, (Bull), p. 326.

[64] Wallace, *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo*, p. 2.

mother's milk I sucked in the hammer and chisels I use for my statues."[65] Michelangelo promoted himself primarily as a sculptor, even during his painting of the *Sistine* ceiling.[66] He nearly always signed his letters, "Michelangelo, sculptor." His methods and viewpoints surrounding the carving of stone are inextricably bound to his process of making and to the ethos of his whole life. Through the carving of stone he was able to express his thoughts about freeing the soul from its earthly material prison; its *carcer terreno*.

Carving is a very bodily activity; the chisel, Michelangelo said, kept him healthy; Vasari wrote on several occasions of Michelangelo's "need" to carve stone.

> The spirit and genius of Michelangelo could not remain idle; and so since he was unable to paint, he set to work on a piece of marble, intending to carve four figures in the round and larger than life-size (including a dead Christ) to amuse and occupy himself and also, as he used to say himself, because using the hammer kept his body healthy.[67]

Condivi also wrote of Michelangelo's desire to carve:

> Now he has in hand a work in marble which he is doing for his own pleasure; being a man who is full of ideas and energy, he naturally produces something every day.[68]

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[65]Vasari, (Bull), p. 326.

[66]Ramsden, *The Letters of Michelangelo*, p. 35 - 76.

[67]Vasari, (Bull), p. 385, and in Italian, Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 83; "Non poteva lo spirito e la virtù di Michelagnolo restare senza far qualcosa: e poi che non poteva dipignere, si mesi attorno a un pezzo di marmo per cavarvi drento quattro figure tonde maggiori che 'l vivo, facendo in quello Cristo morto, per dilettazione e passar tempo e, come egli diceva, perché l'esercitarsi col mazzuolo lo teneva sano del corpo. (This passage refers to *The Florentine Pietà*)

[68]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 87.

For his sculptures, Michelangelo sought the purest, most ideal marble. When the material did not meet his expectations, he would destroy his work. Vasari notes that:

> Michelangelo used to work every day, for recreation, on the block of stone with four figures that we have already mentioned; and at this time he broke it into pieces. . . . because it was hard and full of emery and the chisel often struck sparks from it, . . .[69]

But none-the-less, he needed to carve so,

> . . . it was now necessary for him to find another block of marble, so that he could continue using his chisel every day, . . .[70]

Michelangelo's first act of construction, after producing a design for the Julian tomb, was to spend six months in the quarries of Carrara, securing the necessary marble.[71] He apparently felt compelled to select the stone for his project firsthand, not only to make sure that it was just right, but to be a part of the process from the beginning. This was not something most of his contemporaries would have done, but the selection and carving of stone were inseparable from Michelangelo's conception of the making of a sculpture. This also held true for the tomb, his first work of architecture.

Both Vasari and Condivi celebrate in their writings, the vast quantity of marble that was

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[69]Vasari, (Bull), p. 404.

[70]Vasari, (Bull), p. 405.

[71]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p.28, "Cosí Michelagnolo si mise al lavoro con grande animo, e per dargli principio andò a Carrara a cavare tutti i marmi con due suoi garzoni, . . . dove consumò in que monti otto mesi. . ."

shipped to Rome for the tomb. Condivi wrote that, "So great was the quantity of the blocks of marble that, when they were spread out in the piazza, they made other people marvel and rejoiced the pope . . ."[72]

Michelangelo's passion for stone meant that he was willing to spend a great amount of time to secure the marble he wanted. The stone he sought seemed be the most physically difficult to obtain. It was high in the mountains (closer to God?) and difficult to remove. In Michelangelo's time, merely bringing a six or an eight-ton block of marble[73] down from the Carrara mountains, and sixty miles back to Florence, or more than 200 miles to Rome, must have been a feat rivaling that of Prometheus.

There is no explicit record of how Michelangelo felt about his trips to Carrara and Pietra Santa, other than a few lines in his letters complaining of difficulties.[74] As previously noted, there are a few contracts in existence, but they reveal only how much stone was ordered and when it was shipped. He must have felt a great connection to the quarry, appreciating the raw beauty of the material and of the place. The quarry connected "the work" back to the Earth. He would have held it in profound reverence as the birthplace of both "the work," and of himself:

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[72]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 30.

[73]Carrara Bianco, the pure white statuary quality marble, weighs approximately 2690 kilograms per cubic meter or 170 pounds per cubic foot. The quarried "blank" for the average prigioni would probably have weighed close to 5400 kilograms or 12,000 pounds.

[74] Vasari, (Bull), p. 363. There were problems in regards to obtaining marble for the facade of San Lorenzo: Carrara was out of Tuscany and the Pope wanted to use marble from Pietra Santa in the Commune of Seravezza which was in Tuscany.

Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; . . .[75]

Going to the mountains was part of Michelangelo's ritual of making. It was both a sensual bodily experience and a rite of passage to endure. The mountains were perhaps the origin of the *terribiltà*[76] in Michelangelo's sculpture.[77] The process of quarrying: rectilinear cuts and the whiteness of the marble spilling from the background of the natural landscape, would have led Michelangelo to invent new forms. This experience contained the seed of a giant scaled *prigioni*; a form being freed from the ground of the formless. It calls to mind Vasari's and Condivi's parable of Michelangelo's aspiration to make a giant carving while at Carrara.[78]

This pit of stone would have been an immense spectacle of abundance and reserve: a display of limitless possibilities waiting to take form. It was at the quarries of *Carrara* that Michelangelo found his *prima materia*, which he transmuted into the moving bodies of his sculpture and into the larger body of his architecture through the alchemy of an ethically guided imagination. Human hands are guided by divine wisdom: matter

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[75]*The Bible*, "Isaiah 51:1."

[76]A "terrible-ness" in both size and grandeur. See David Summers, "Terribilità," in *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, p. 234-41.

[77]Hans-Georg Gadamer footnotes on page 30 of *Relevance of the Beautiful* a notation from Hegel's journal, "We remember, for example, how the Alps were still described in travel diaries of the eighteenth century as terrifying mountains whose ugly and fearful wildness was experienced as a denial of beauty, humility, and the familiar security of human existence."

[78]The story is recorded in Vasari, (Bull), p.343, and in Condivi, (Wohl), p.29.

is transmuted, enabling both the maker and the observer of what was made, to recognize a oneness with God. Drawing was both the primary tool of these transformations and a record of what was revealed in the process.
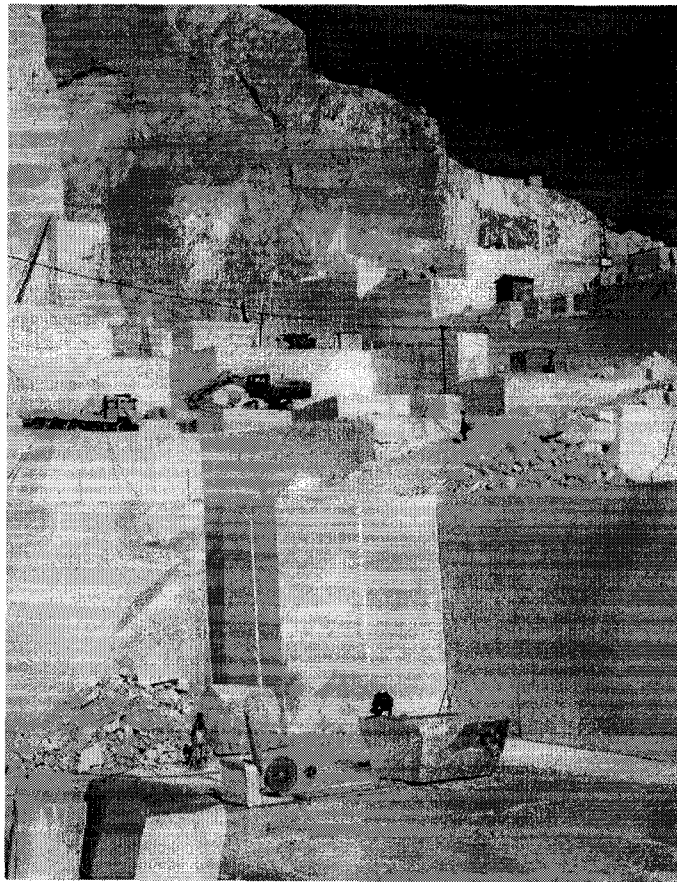
Figure 49 Contemporary Image of a quarry at Carrara (Italian Trade Commission).

Figure 50

Drawing

Drawing, for Michelangelo, was a tool of recombination, transformation, and creation. Drawing was not a neutral method of recording, but part of a process that began with the observation of classical form and the human body and resulted in sculpture, architecture, or both.

The biographies by Vasari and Condivi claim that Michelangelo was "scolded and

beaten" by his father for spending too much time drawing.[79] Despite this negative

reinforcement, drawing became Michelangelo's primary tool of creation through its

transformative powers.
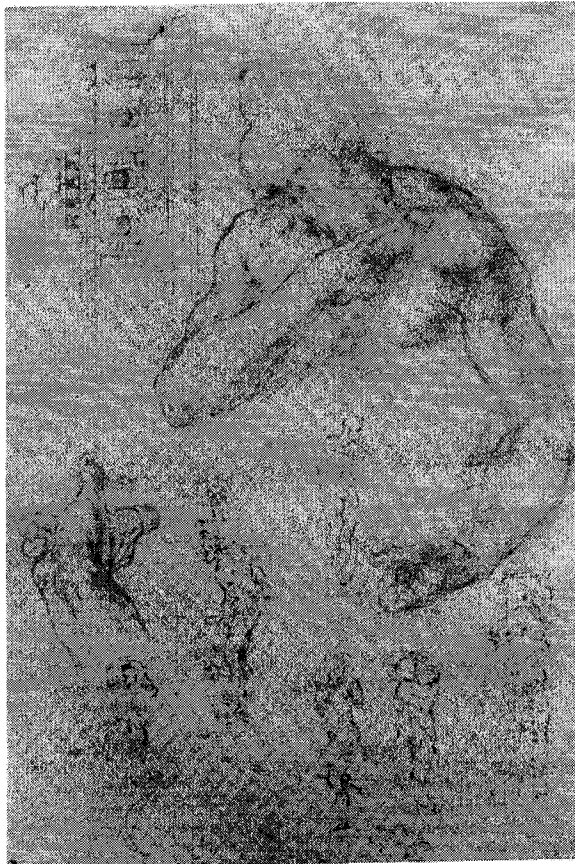
Figure 51

Often, there was no division between Michelangelo's architectural drawings and his

cartoons for paintings and sculptures. Both were composed of parts: fragments of

bodies and construction details, combined in dynamic interactions and connections,

and intermingled on the same sheet. These drawings could alternately give form to a

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[79]Vasari,(Bull), p. 326.

work of architecture, a painting, or a sculpture. These collages maintained the dynamism of a quick sketch. They provided a "sense of" the project at hand, not a direct correspondence. This collage of drawings on a single page put seemingly disparate images in proximity to one another: revealing new possibilities in the process. The varying scale of images on a individual sheet created a depth and foreshortening in their relation to one another: transforming classical norms in their new juxtaposition. Michelangelo discovered new formal possibilities in this overlay of drawings.[80] A new reality arose from the ground of another. "Prodigiously unrestrained and free, it (fantasia) can form, reform, combine, link together and separate; it can blend together the most-distant objects or keep apart the most intimately connected objects."[81] Drawing was the tool of this transformation and Michelangelo's sculptures were often the result.

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[80]According to Vasari, Leonardo da Vinci had suggested that one look at clouds or cracks in a wall to find inspiration for new forms. Vasari, (Bull), p. 264.

[81]Juan Luis Vives quoted by David Summers, in Michelangelo and the Language of Art, p. 113. In regards to the subject in a contemporary source, see Paul Ricoeur, "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality," in Man and World, vol. XII, no. 2, (1976), p. 123-41, regarding metaphor and image.

Sculpture

Michelangelo's bodily compositions in drawing, painting, and sculpture had a greater degree of complexity than any of his contemporaries. They were both believable in their execution and unbelievable in their impossibly complex and contorted forms. He was able to unify his notions of *figura serpentina* and *contraposto* into a dynamic whole. To make difficult compositions in his art appear to be achieved effortlessly was of the highest *virtù*. Movement was the evidence of a divine soul within the human body. Michelangelo's figures are never completely at rest; even when seated or laying down, action seems imminent.

Michelangelo usually made many models or *bozetti* of different scales for one stone sculpture: these many scales and fragments, as in his drawings, enabled him to keep this dynamism in the ultimate work.[82]

Michelangelo brought order to the chaos of a stone slab in the same manner in which he understood dissection of the body. That is, order is inherent, but it must be revealed by a "separating out." Sculpture as "separation," has a formal legacy that derives from Donatello's ideas of *rilievo schiacciato*.[83] Michelangelo apprenticed with Bertoldo di Giovanni, Donatello's pupil, during his tenure at the "school" of the Medici

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[82]". . .only by copying the human form, and by selecting from what was beautiful the most beautiful, could he achieve perfection." Vasari, (Bull), p. 423. See also Cicero, *De Inventione*, II, p. 166-9; Pliny, *Natural History*, book 35, p. 308-9, and David Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, Chap.12 "Scattered Beauty."

[83]Essentially a "flat relief."

sculpture garden. The formal manifestation of "creation as separation," has an ideological basis in the translations of Plato by Ficino. The incising and revealing of layers, can be interpreted as the formal basis of Michelangelo's sculpture and architecture.

Analogous to the cult statues of the Greek temples which were chained down, Michelangelo' s *prigioni* were more alive because of their restraints. In his work he could perform the magic that brought divine life to his sculpture.[84] (figure 52)

Michelangelo's works did not rely on measured perspective, but on a more dynamic foreshortening, to achieve depth. Foreshortening and a juxtaposition of scale created a more immediate form of artistic expression; as opposed to the more studied and

Figure 52 *Awakening Slave* or *prigioni* (Argan).

[84]Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 104.

calculative relation formed by a reliance on perspective. Rather than proceeding into the foreground from some distance, Michelangelo's figures seem to be suddenly thrust out upon the viewer as if appearing out of some other existence. Michelangelo's sculptures give a very real presence to form; they un-conceal what is.

A unique understanding of Michelangelo's later sculptural work may be gained through a very specific "reading" of Heidegger's, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." In these sculptures, stone is spared or set free in its own presencing. It is made more stone by its transformation and adjacency to human figure. The human figure is set free to its own new nature through its transformation from stone and by its proximity to its former nature. Michelangelo's work becomes a "bridge," allowing both Man and Nature to be seen anew. The sculpture, "*gathers* to itself in *its own* way earth and sky, divinities and mortals."[85]

Glimpses of the divine are reflected in earthly beauty and the dignity of mankind is revealed in these incisions to appearance. If the superficial is carefully carved away, guided by divine knowledge, eventually God is revealed.

Michelangelo's work can be understood as a revelation, where the "truth" of the work is revealed from its background of stone. As the observer's vision studies the work,

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[85]This paragraph is the rewriting of Heidegger's example of a "bridge." See Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" from *Poetry, Language, Thought* , (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 145-161.

form may seem to oscillate between background and foreground, between concealment and revelation.

The orthographic relief of Michelangelo's architecture and sculpture is a very bodily, face-to-face confrontation. Embodied elements of order emerge from a ground of rough stone. There is an inherent problem in (bas) relief sculpture: determining when it is finished. As the work recedes into the depth, it is physically limited by its ultimate thickness of the stone.[86] It may be necessary to withhold finishing so as to not penetrate the boundary of reality that is the slab of stone. The depth of the work is achieved through "foreshortening,"not perspective. These ideas, learned through the process of sculpture and first manifested there, would for the first time, be transformed into architecture at the Julian tomb.
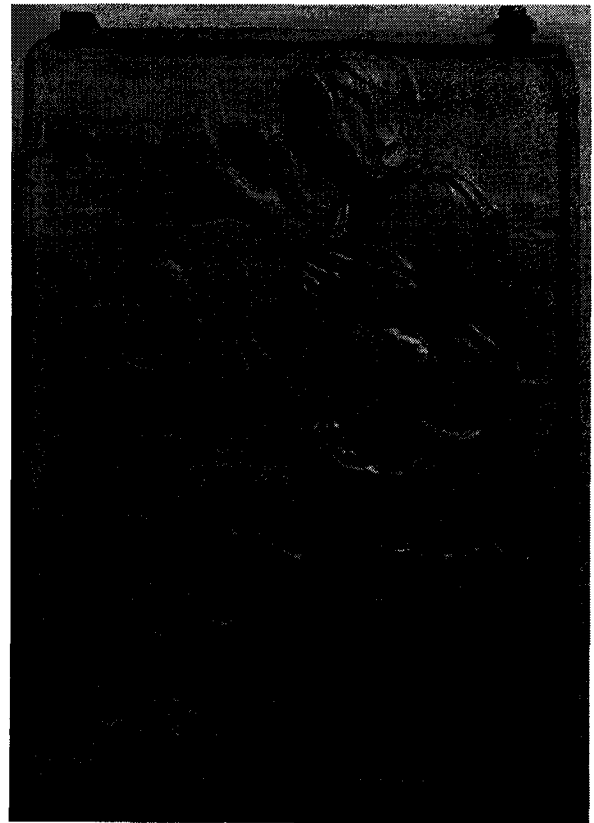
Figure 53 *Madonna of the Stairs* (Hartt).

[86]The thickness of the stone slab of the *Madonna of the Stairs*, is only about one inch.

Architecture

Michelangelo's sculpture was made through a process of transformation: a mass of marble became flesh; an idea was manifested concretely. Michelangelo's architecture began as a transformation of his sculptural works. His sculptural process began with a solid mass, both conceptually and literally. This mass was carved into, revealing layers of space and form.[87]

Michelangelo's sculptural experience, while enhancing his architectural vision with a robustness and bodily cognizance, also presented a challenge.[88] Sculpture meant "carving" to Michelangelo, but architecture, by a matter of physical necessity, usually required an additive means of construction.[89] The modeling, molding, and "building up," that Michelangelo rejected in the making of sculpture,[90] was necessary to architecture. Michelangelo confronted for the first time, in the Julian tomb, this conceptual and physical dilemma. Individual architectural elements could be sculpted, but the whole required an additive assembly. His struggle to conceive of a work in this manner adds to the difficulties he would have encountered in the process of executing the tomb.

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[87]Alternatively, Bramante's mature architecture is conceptually "additive." Bramante makes up his forms as if molded from concrete. Conceptually, the masonry is no longer "laid up," but essentially extruded: wall, order, structure, decoration, a single composite entity, only articulated by surface texture. This approach gave Bramante a great deal of freedom in his designs. If he were making sculpture, it would have been the adding of clay to make a form. See Bruschi, *Bramante*, p.168.

[88]One may compare the architecture of Bramante , who trained primarily as a painter; Alberti, who received mostly intellectual training; Brunelleschi, who originally apprenticed as a goldsmith, engraved silver, made clocks, and studied sculpture with Donatello, before finally becoming a master mason / architect.

[89]There are major architectural works which have been carved: many Egyptian tombs and temples (i.e. the temple at *Abu Simbel) and* much of the city at Petra, Jordan, for example.

[90]See Hartt, *Michelangelo: The Complete Sculpture,* especially p. 13-19; Benedetto Varchi, *Due Lezzioni;* and Giorgio Vasari, "Introduction" to *The Lives.*
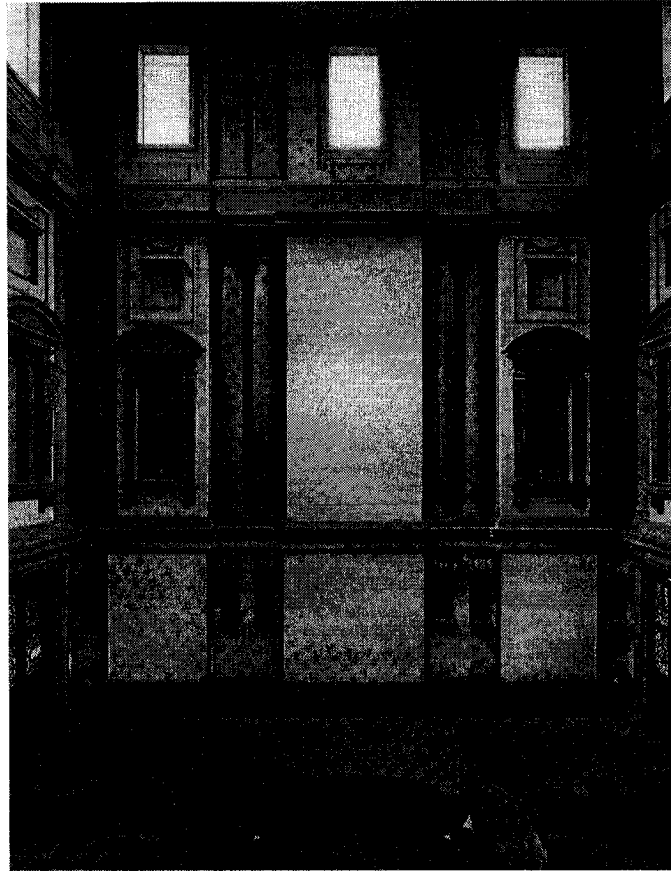
Figure 54 *Laurentian Library* vestibule (Argan).

In this conceptual transition from sculpture to architecture, Michelangelo must have

wished that it were possible to carve the entire tomb from a single mass of stone. He

related a story to his biographers of a desire to carve a mountain in Carrara into a

colossal sculptural figure. Condivi writes the story as follows:

> One day while there, he was looking at the landscape, and he was seized with a wish to carve,
>
> out of a mountain overlooking the sea, a colossus which would be visible from afar to seafarers.
>
> He was attracted largely by the suitability of the rock, which could be carved conveniently, and

by the wish to emulate the ancients[91], who when they chanced to be in a place, perhaps for the same reasons as Michelangelo, either to escape idleness or for whatever purpose, left behind them some sketched, imperfect traces which give very good proof of their skill. And he would certainly have done it if he had had enough time or the project for which he had come had permitted. One day I heard him speak of this with great regret.[92]

The story, too, may be an allegory addressing his overestimation of scale in conceiving of the Julian tomb.

Michelangelo was not the "engineer" that Brunelleschi or Leonardo had been. His "mechanical" aptitude was fully applied to making difficult sculptural tasks look easy. He was not interested in theoretical mathematics, but instead favored the qualities of a work which could be "judged with the eyes."[93]

Vasari writes that Michelangelo drew the scaffolding and trestles and various implements and materials used in the workshop of his teacher Domenico

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[91]See Condivi,(Wohl), footnote no.42:, "Dinocrates, a Greek architect of the fourth century BC, is said to have wanted to fashion Mount Athos in human form, with a city in one hand and in the other a vessel from which the waters of the mountain flowed into the sea." Michelangelo could have been aware of this story as it introduces the second book of Vitruvius' *Ten Books*. Alexander(the Great) rejects the idea because while it is a nice composition the plan does not allow for fields to feed the city. Thus Dinocrates' idea was not "practical." Alberti references the story in book six of his treatise. See also David Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, p.126-8, on a discussion and permutations of the story. Summers wonders if the story is an allegory of the tomb project that "went over" Condivi's head. Additionally of note, the early St. Petronius statue(1494) holds the city of Bologna in his hands.

[92]Condivi, (Wohl), p.29-30, and Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 23, ". . .dove un giorno, quei luoghi vegendo, d'un monte che sopra la marina riguardava gli venne voglia di fare colosso che da lungi aparisse a' naviganti, invitato massimamente dalla comodità del masso, donde cavare acconciamente si poteva, e dalla emulazione delli antichi, i quali forse per il medisimo effetto che Michelagnolo, capitati in quel loco, o perfuggir l'ozio, o per qualsivoglia altro fini, v'hanno lasciate alcune memorie imperfette e abbozzate, che danno asai bon saggio dell'artifizio loro. E certo l'arrebbe fatto, se 'l tempo bastato gli fusse, o l'impresa per la quale era venuto l' avesse concesso. Del che un giorno lo senti' molto dolere."

[93]*Giudizio dell'occhio*, see for example Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, p. 368-379.

Ghirlandaio.[94] Condivi records that:

> Michelangelo insisted on knowing everything which in any way pertained to that profession(architecture), such as how to make running knots, scaffolding or platforms, and that sort of thing, in which he became as proficient perhaps as those who have no other profession.[95]

Both Vasari and Condivi tell the story of Michelangelo besting Bramante in a design for a scaffold from which to paint the Sistine ceiling.[96] Knowledge and experience of these "processes" and "means" of construction likely inspired Michelangelo's dynamic architectural members.
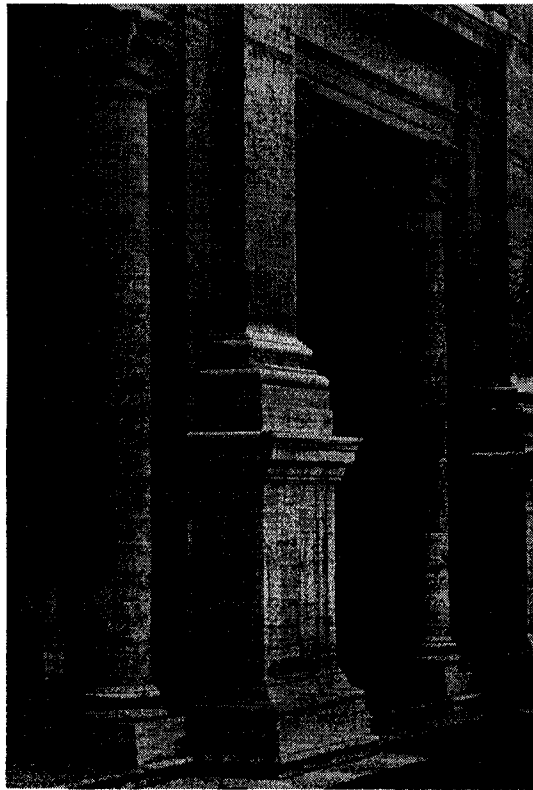
Figure 55 Architectural members at the *Campidoglio* (Argan).

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[94]Vasari, (Milanesi), 7:140. As cited by Wallace, *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo,* p. 2.

[95]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 99. In Italian see, Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 58.

[96]Vasari, (Bull), p. 350, and Condivi, (Wohl), p. 99-100.

As Michelangelo assembled sculptural figures from the best parts of many drawings and models, he would likewise recall architectural forms and details, and through his "powers of invention" reassemble them into new works.

Michelangelo enjoyed so profound and retentive a memory that he could accurately recall the works of others after he had seen them and use them for his own purposes so skillfully that scarcely anyone ever remarked it. Nor has he ever repeated himself in his own work, because he remembered everything he did.[97]

... he used to make his figures the sum of nine, ten, and even twelve 'heads;' in putting them together he strove only to achieve a certain overall harmony of grace, which nature does not present; and he said that one should have compasses in one's eyes, not in one's hands, because the hands execute but it is the eye which judges. He also used this method in architecture.[98]

Michelangelo's thwarted attempt to execute the entirety of the first Julian tomb likely convinced him of the need for assistance on large projects. He called for assistance with the *Sistine* ceiling, but may have ultimately rejected it in struggling with the delegation of the work. Ten years after the initial project for the tomb, he began the work at *San Lorenzo*. In regards to the production of the church facade, the *Medici Chapel,* and the *Laurentian Library,* Wallace has documented a work force composed of Michelangelo's extended family and friends from around Florence with whom he

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[97]Vasari, (Bull), p. 425.

[98]Vasari, (Bull), p. 419.

established a rapport.[99] "And it was with stone carvers, primarily boyhood acquaintances from Settignano, that Michelangelo worked for nearly twenty years at San Lorenzo."[100] Had he assembled such a force for the tomb from the beginning, its execution may have been possible. Though because of his process of making, Michelangelo may have been unable to fully convey his intentions to his assistants. His full intentions could only be known by engaging in the process of making. Only then would the necessary "answers" be revealed. Michelangelo's process of making and subsequent transformations in the face of that making, not only continued through projects, but also across their boundaries. He transformed what he learned at the Julian tomb into aspects of his projects that followed.

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[99] Wallace, *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo.*

[100] Wallace, *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo,* p. 2.
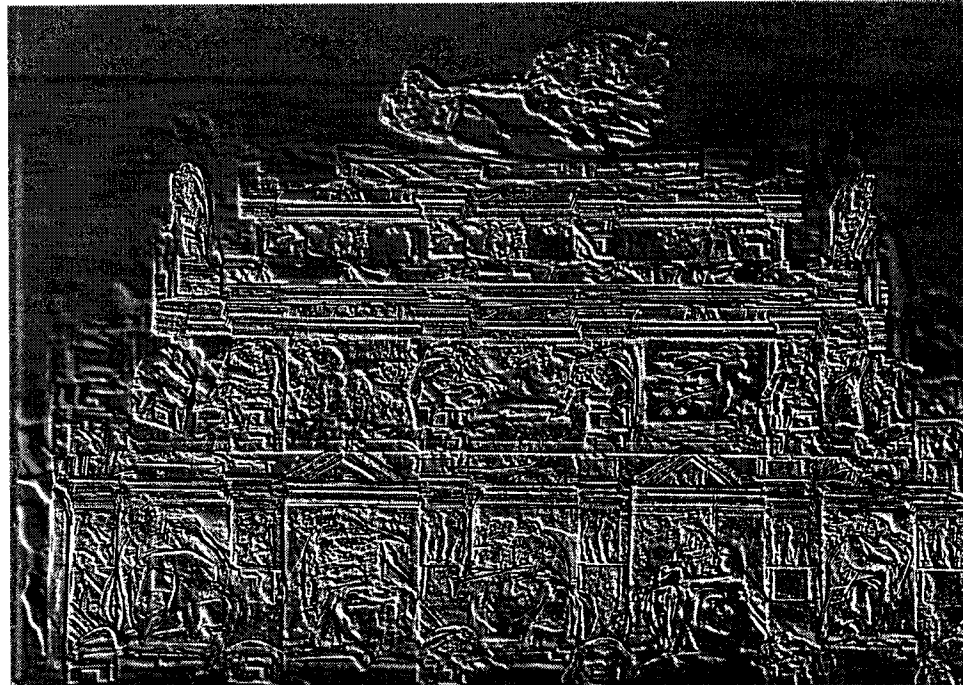
Figure 57 The *Sistine* ceiling transformed into *The Tomb for Julius II* (Digitally altered photograph of model by the author).

Michelangelo's Transformations of the Tomb

The diminished project for the tomb, with an undetermined site, continued with intermittent intensity during the concurrent projects at *San Lorenzo*; the facade (1515 - 20), the *Medici Chapel*(1519 - 34), the *Laurentian Library*(1523 - 59), and the reliquary balcony inside the church (1531-2).[101] The conceptual boundaries among all of these designs, and even some of their executed parts, overlapped.[102]

Michelangelo's original conception for the tomb, found the "light of day" in these

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[101]During this time, he also made designs at this time for completing the *Duomo's ballatoio* (1516-20) and for the infill of the *Palazzo Medici* windows (c.1517).

[102]See Edith Balas, "Michelangelo's Florentine 'Slaves' and the San Lorenzo Facade," *The Art Bulletin*, Volume 65, 1983. While usually ascribed to the tomb projects, this article instead makes a case for the *Slaves* as being part of the *San Lorenzo* facade project.

successive projects. The formal and ideological concerns that arose in the first project;

the juxtaposition of the human form and an architectural framework, continued in the

Sistine ceiling, the facade for *San Lorenzo,* and to some extent at the *Medici Chapel.*

More importantly, there was continuity in Michelangelo's process of creative making,

resulting in similarly engendered works.

After examining the chronology of events surrounding the first phase of the tomb, it is

clear that Michelangelo had little time to execute the project. He had, however, spent

more than eight years designing and thinking about it; working on it when he could;

amidst his procurement of marble, his execution of a bronze *Julius,* and his painting

of the *Sistine Chapel.* Vasari notes both that; "the Pope resolved to leave the tomb as

it was for the time being," and "that Michelangelo was anxious to finish the tomb,"[103]

in the space of two sentences.

The grand design of which Vasari and Condivi wrote, found manifestation in other

forms. It was an archetypal work for Vasari's and Condivi's readers, and it was a model

and a repository of ideas for Michelangelo himself. Michelangelo reconstructed the

tomb, "as tomb," at least three more times before it was installed at *San Pietro in*

Vincoli. He also reconstructed fragments of his sensibilities and concerns, first

manifested in the tomb, in other projects throughout his life. Just as Michelangelo

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[103]Vasari, (Bull), p. 350 and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 36.

"restored to life" a marble block "left for dead" in the *David*, he also continually "resurrected" the ideas and concerns of the *disegno* for the tomb.[104]
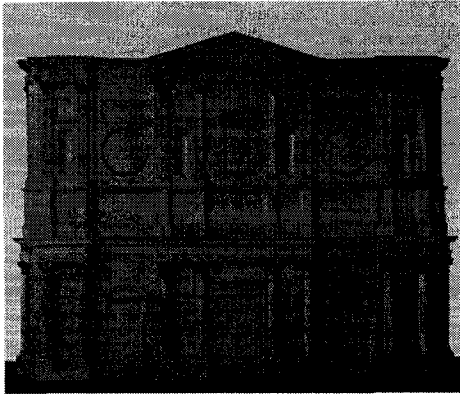
Figure 58 Wooden model for the facade of *San Lorenzo*.
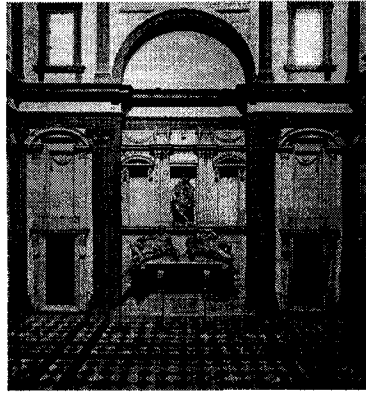
Figure 59 *Medici Chapel* (Argan).
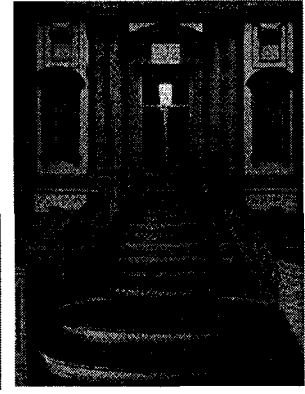
Figure 60 *Laurentian Library* (Argan).

It was at the tomb that Michelangelo first became concerned with the dynamic relationship between sculptural figures and architectural frame. This juxtaposition was the impetus that led him to transform his sculptural bodies, into a very physical architecture. The overlay of bodies on an architectural frame became the primary formal basis of the *Sistine* ceiling. These bodies and frames continued their transformation through the projects for the facade of *San Lorenzo*, and the *Medici Chapel*.[105] By the time of the *Laurentian Library*, the sculpture and architecture had melded into one. Michelangelo's architecture had taken on such an anthropomorphic

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[104] This is similar to the oft repeated theme in the *Bible*, "The stone you builders rejected has become the capstone," found in Psalms 118:22, Zeccharia 4:7, Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11, and 1 Peter 2:7.

[105] The chapel is difficult to judge as it too was left unfinished by Michelangelo. Its scattered fragments were assembled by his associates at a much later date.

robustness that the application of sculpture on the architecture would have been redundant.[106]

Michelangelo always insisted that he was a sculptor, but his painting at the *Sistine ceiling* illustrates the complexity of his ideas more fully than his sculptures. A sculptural ensemble of the scale and complexity of the ceiling, would have taken Michelangelo more than a lifetime to bring to fruition. The ceiling can be viewed as a cartoon, or as a reconstruction of the ultimate potential of the Julian tomb, given enough time and enough marble.

The formal and iconographic concerns with which Michelangelo struggled did not go away easily, even in the face of new projects. Michelangelo's ideas in painting, sculpture, and architecture were not discrete, but unified in their goal to illuminate his view of the Cosmos. These projects were not discrete either, all progressing at about the same time. The works overlapped, even for Michelangelo, as the drawings and sculptures blur together for historians of today. The debate continues as to which drawings, which marble, and which sculptures belong to which project,[107] as Michelangelo was quarrying and sculpting for the Julian tomb and for works at *San Lorenzo*, simultaneously. Even he, at times, was probably not sure which pieces went

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[106]At *The Last Judgement* (1534-41) , the architecture "disappears" and only the figures are remain.

[107]See Edith Balas, "Michelangelo's Florentine *Slaves* and the S. Lorenzo Facade"; the reply by Howard Hibbard, "Michelangelo's *Slaves*," *The Art Bulletin*, vol.66, no.4, 1984; a further elucidation by Michael Hirst,"A Note on Michelangelo and the S. Lorenzo Facade,"*The Art Bulletin*, vol.68, no.2, 1986.

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with which work. It was something to be "judged by the eyes," as the work progressed. His concern was with clearly revealing the "truths" that had been granted to him by God, not with the completion of a defined "work."
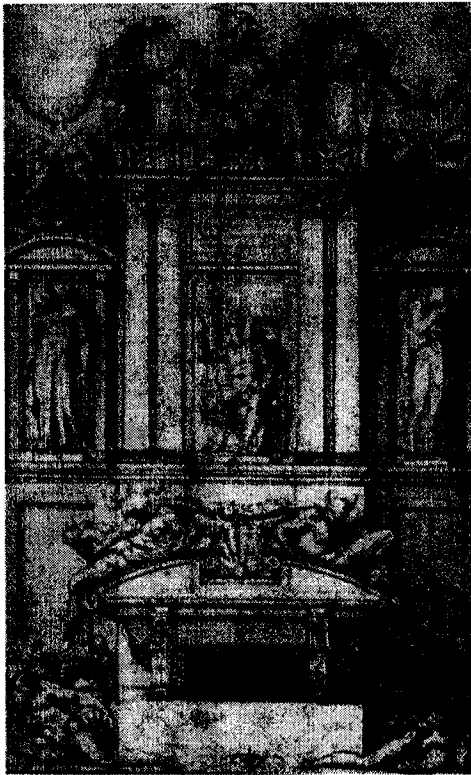
Figure 61 Drawing for the *Medici Chapel* after Michelangelo. (The Louvre, 838r).
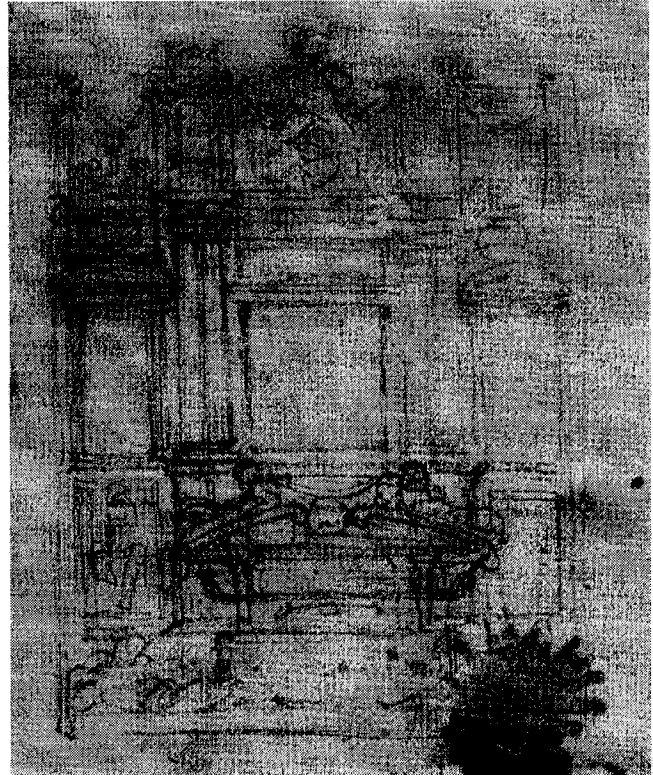
Figure 62 Drawing for the *Medici Chapel*. (British Museum, w 27r).

The first tomb project, if allowed to proceed unimpeded, would still have continued to transform in the manner with which all of Michelangelo's projects transformed over time. The *Sistine* ceiling began with a program to paint the apostles, and the apostles may have been left, ideologically, from his previous contract to carve them for the Florentine *Duomo*. Michelangelo's ultimate "plan" for the *Medici Chapel* is unknown because its fragments were scattered about the floor, when he left for Rome for the last

time. (figures 61 and 62) The form of the *Laurentian Library* stairs changed radically from their beginning in 1523, until finally installed in 1559. (figures 31 and 32) The form of the tomb would have necessarily transformed over the years it would have taken to complete; its architecture becoming more like that of the *Medici Chapel* or the *Laurentian Library*, or even like the upper portion of the tomb as installed at *Vincoli*: where ". . . he departed in a significant way from the measures, orders, and rules men usually employ, . . ."[108]

Figure 63 *Jeremiah.*
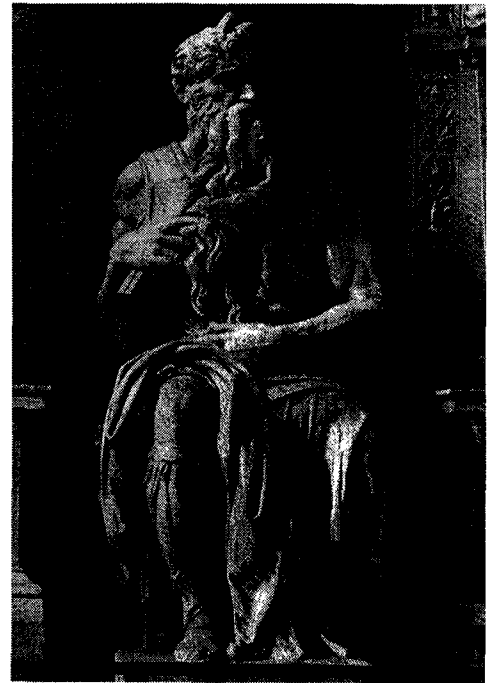
Figure 64 *Moses.*

There are formal similarities between the Julian tomb and the *Sistine* ceiling. The compositions of *Moses* and the sketch that is potentially *St. Paul*; are much the same

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[108]Vasari, (Bondanella), p. 454.

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as the prophets and sibyls of the ceiling. There are *termine*, supporting a cornice with figures above who are also in the pose of *Moses* and *St. Paul*. There is a frieze of stories, and a "building up" to the top or center. Figures of a "prophet" and a "sibyl" appear ultimately on the tomb as installed at *San Pietro in Vincoli*, as well.
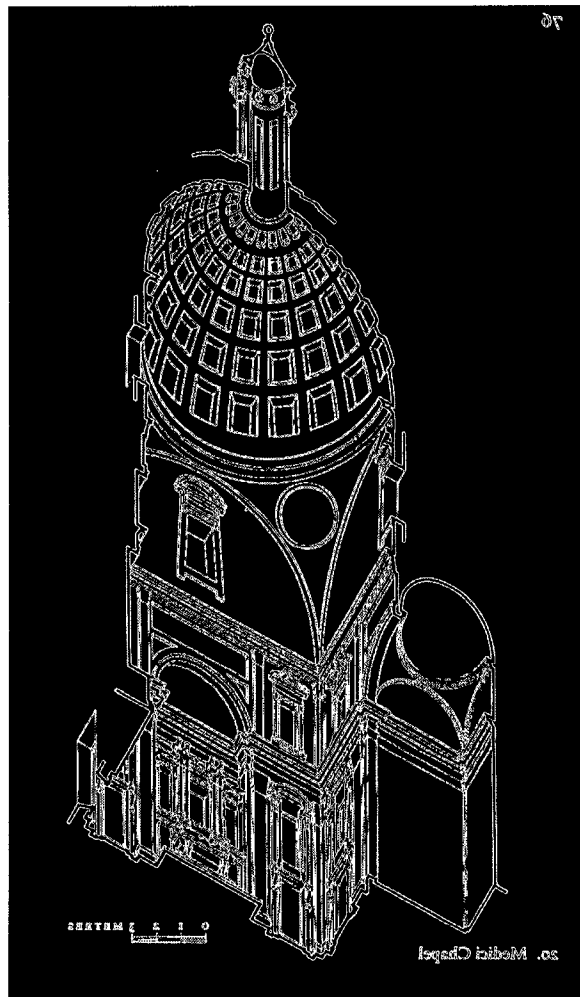
Figure 65 Axonometric drawing of the *Medici Chapel* (Ackerman). (Digitally altered by this author).

Glimpses of the Julian tomb can be seen in Michelangelo's other projects. The facade at *San Lorenzo*, with its architectural frame and sculptures, has a similar formal arrangement. The *Medici Chapel* if turned inside out, would make for a monumental

freestanding tomb within a large church. The sculptural ensemble at the top of the tomb might be like *The Last Judgement*, by the time it was finished. The *Campidoglio*'s mounded oval gives a possibility for the interior of the tomb.

Knowledge, according to Plato, cannot be codified into a set of rules or formulas (a pre-scription). Thus Plato wrote dialogues, where answers are discerned through the give and take of discussion. Normative solutions are arrived at through poetically structured drama. Michelangelo never wrote the artistic treatise he contemplated, because he believed that "no fixed rule may be given,"[109] for what determined the making of his works. Like many of his sculptural and architectural works, his treatise too, would be necessarily *non-finito* to adequately express his process of poetic making. His "treatise" may be glimpsed in the works he executed: in the form most appropriate to the content. Contained in his work is the required "give and take" of dialog. Only here is his special knowledge adequately expressed.

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[109]Condivi,(Wohl), p.99, and Condivi, (Nencioni), p. 57.

Necessarily *Non-finito*

..., but he did not lift the veils of stone entirely from their faces, as though he feared their deep sadness might lay a numbness on his hands. So he fled to another stone. But each time he abandoned the task; he gave a brow its full serenity, a shoulder its perfect curve, and if he made a woman he did not lay the ultimate smile about her lips, lest her beauty might be betrayed.[110]

Michelangelo's *Rome Pietà*, c. 1498-1500 (Hartt).
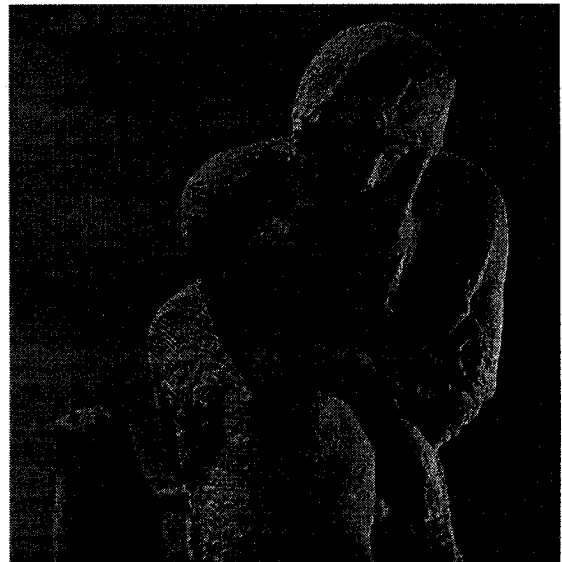
Michelangelo's *Rondanini Pietà*, c. 1552-64 (Hartt).

Relatively early in his career, Michelangelo achieved the Renaissance ideal of Classical purity and perfection in his sculptures of the *Pietà* and *David*. At some point, however, during his despair over not "finishing" the Julian tomb, he must have become aware of another possibility; an even greater form of "perfection." Michelangelo must have

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[110]Rilke, "Of One Who Listened to the Stones," p. 81.

reached a point in his work where his ethos would not allow him to fully render his vision; or rather the manifestation of his vision required that a work not be fully rendered. The emphasis of the work was fully acknowledged as process, not as a possible outcome.

A present day consideration of the Julian tomb as an incomplete or *non-finito* work, reveals a space for speculative discussion as to what might have been. The unfinished and unaccountable aspects of the work, while perhaps causing distress for the Renaissance observer, make the work all the more intriguing to the modern architect.

The unfinished aspect of a work provides an "entry" for the modern observer. The work's *open-ness* can be completed by the individual observer according to their unique specifications.[111] The work can be personalized. There is a fine line, however, between providing just enough information to be intriguing but not so much as to close down the possibilities that reverberate within the mind of the observer. "This is the open space creative language gives us and which we fill out by following what the writer evokes. And similarly in the visual arts."[112]

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[111]See for example, Umberto Eco, *The Open Work.* Translated by Anna Cancogni. (Cambrdige: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[112]Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful,* p. 27. In writing about this phenomenon, Gadamer uses as an example the description of the stair which" Smerdjakov" falls down, in *The Brothers Karamazov,* and says, "I know exactly what this staircase looks like. All this is clear to me in the most concrete way and yet I also know that no one else "sees" the staircase the way I do. But anyone who is receptive to this masterly narrative will "see" the staircase in a most specific way and be convinced that he sees it as it really is.

Some historians record that more than half of Michelangelo's sculptures remain unfinished.[113] His architecture too is mostly manifested in scattered fragments. As stated in the introduction of this text, Ackerman wrote that Michelangelo,

> seems to have carried the generative drive to a point at which it became an obstacle so frustrating that most of his architectural projects were not executed, and no building was completed according to his plans. [114]

Michelangelo would have viewed his life's work as a continuous process of revealing the Divine, not as the discreet works named by modern observers. In the sense that all of his works are one continuous work, the question of which ones are "finished" is not applicable.[115] Some parts of this continuum of work did, however, receive a greater "finish" than others. Whether he merely never returned to these parts, or whether he intentionally left some them in a less rendered state will never be known.

When a work lacks an explicit finality and closure, it can be simply "unfinished," or the work can be made with an awareness of a "holding-back" or a "sparing."[116] Instead of drawing conclusions, an "unfinished" or *non-finito* work only offers glimpses or makes suggestions. These suggestions reverberate in the mind, like the multivalent

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[113]Schulz, " Michelangelo's Unfinished Works," p. 367.

[114]Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, p. 50-2.

[115]See for example Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1992), for a discussion of the modern conception of a "work" as it relates to musical compositions.

[116]For example, in Literature, the highly descriptive worlds of Victor Hugo compared with the veiled scenes of Jorge Luis Borges.

words of a poem or the fragmented melody of a jazz improvisation. An observer's imagination can perhaps more easily engage a less rendered work, "fitting" it to the specificity of "site" and purpose. Michelangelo's less-than finished work is perhaps more pathos-filled because the observer can more literally recognize himself in the work.

It remains unclear how the concept of what is now judged as a *non-finito* work would have been received during Michelangelo's life. Four of the *prigioni* were eventually placed at the "in-between world" of the *Boboli* grottoes, where they remained until the early twentieth century. Vicenzo Danti did however, write of the "dialectical value of disorder," in his *Il Primo Libro del Trattato delle Perfette Proporzioni di Tutte le Cosa che Imitare e Ritrarre si Possano con l'Arte del Disegnoi*, of 1567.[117] Serlio, in his *Five Books of Architecture*, proposed a "Satyric" stage set, which seems to exhibit an understanding of an "unfinished" edge condition: a space between city and countryside, and between man and beast. [118]

An appreciation of "unfinished" works dates to at least the time of Gaius Plinius Secundas (A.D. 23-79). In his *Natural History*, he wrote of an admiration for paintings that were left unfinished, because in them can be seen traces of "preliminary drawings

[117]Vicenzo Danti. *Il Primo Libro del Trattato delle Perfette Proporzioni di Tutte le Cosa che Imitare e Ritrarre si Possano con l'Arte del Disegno.* (Florence, 1567).

[118]Sebastiano Serlio. *The Five Books of Architecture,* (an unabridged Reprint of the English Edition of 1611), (New York: Dover, 1982).

left visible and the artists' actual thoughts."[119] In Renaissance thought, the inspiration for a work needed to be captured by drawing quickly, in a *furia*, in order to retain the "life" of the idea. Produced quickly, "preliminary drawings" are closer to the inspiration of the idea. The more thought-out, finished work, while exhibiting greater refinement, often conceals some of the vital essence of the artist's conception.

Vasari addresses the unfinished state of works in a number of ways. He "emphasizes productivity over creative procedures," claims Rubin, in her study of *The Lives*. "This was because finished works were the testimony to an artist's powers of invention and execution." Rubin goes on to say that "Deviations caused by unfortunate events or defective characters required justification and usually became warnings or counter-examples."[120] The Julian tomb is notable then as the greatest "deviation" in all of *The Lives*. Instead of being presented as a warning or counter-example because of its unfinished state, it was presented as an ideal. Most of the responsibility for its incompletion was placed, not on Michelangelo, but on Julius, his heirs, Bramante, Raphael, and subsequent popes.

In addition to placing the blame elsewhere, Vasari also gives explanations for any remaining responsibility Michelangelo may have had in the matter. During difficult work on the Florentine *Pietà*, Michelangelo apparently became frustrated and

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[119]Pliny, *Natural History*, Book XXXV, Chapter XL, Stanza 145, p. 367.

[120]Rubin, *Vasari*, p. 50.

attempted to destroy the sculpture. Vasari wrote that the cause of this act was either because the marble was inferior or because Michelangelo was never content with any work that he did.

> That this is the case can be proved by the fact that there are few finished statues to be seen of all that he made in the prime of his manhood . . .[121]

Vasari goes on to quote Michelangelo as saying,

> if he had to be satisfied with his work before sending it out, he would have sent out very little or none at all. This was because he had so developed his art and judgement that when on revealing one of his figures he saw the slightest error he would abandon it and run to start working on another block, trusting that it would not happen again. He would often say that this is why he had finished so few statues or pictures.[122]

Beyond problematic marble and a dissatisfaction with the outcome of his work, the quality of *non-finito* may also have originated in the particular sculptural process. In carving *relievo schiacciatto* or "flat relief," the amount of depth that may be revealed in a work is physically limited by the thickness of the stone.[123] Fully rendering a work might not be possible without penetrating the background from which the work is being revealed.

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[121]Vasari, (Bull), p. 404, and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p.99, " . . . che e' sia il vero, delle sue statue se ne vede poche finite nella sua virilità . . . "

[122]Vasari, (Bull), p. 404, and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p.99, ". . .come quello che usava dire che, se s'avessi avuto a contentare di quel che faceva, n'arrebe mandate poche, ansi nessuna fuora, vendendosi che egli era ito tanto con l'arte e col giudizio innanzi, che, come gli aveva scoperto una figura e conosciutovi un minimo che d'errore, la lasciava stare e correva a manimettere un altro marmo, pensando non avere a venire a quel medisimo; et egli spesso diceva essere questa la cagione che egli diceva d'aver fatto sì poche statue e pitture."

[123]The thickness of the stone slab into which the *Madonna of the Stairs* is carved, is only about two and one-half centimeters or one inch.

Vasari further writes that Michelangelo's "imagination was so powerful and perfect that he often discarded work in which his hands found it impossible to express his tremendous and awesome ideas . . ."[124]

In that light, physical "making," can be understood as a compromise of the ideal. In attempting to reveal a "perfect" idea, one must make it manifest in a physical form. When the idea has been "corrupted" by its appearance, it becomes judged visually as well as ideologically, and the idea becomes limited by the material of its reality. The perfection goes as the explication comes. It may be conceded that this is true of all artistic expression, and even of all concepts. The "perfect" conception cannot stand the light of day, the heat of reality, or living, breathing, flesh and blood. This "immaculate conception" can only stand in the darkness of the psyche and in the coolness of abstraction.

An idea as conceived in the mind, is perfect; it has limitless possibilities of reverberation with other ideas: it is a universal. As the idea is manifested physically, and begins to conform to the exigencies of the world, it becomes less perfect. The concept may remain perfect, but the physical manifestation, because it is of the world, is less than perfect. If, however, the idea is never manifested physically, then it cannot

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[124]Vasari, (Bull), p. 418-19 and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 117, "Ha avuto l'immaginativa tale e sì perfetta, che le cose propostosi nella idea sono state tali che con le mani, per non potere esprimere sì grandi e terribili concetti, . . . "

be shared with others, it cannot interact in the world, and it cannot *be* in the world.[125]

The Julian tomb, in its initial conception, can be understood as the highest form or most pure idea.[126] As the project was qualified and quantified by the needs of site, client, budget, and other exigencies of existing in the physical world; the clarity of the conception was corrupted.[127] "For everything must first exist as a pure example of its kind before it is corrupted," wrote Ficino, in his *Platonic Theology*.[128]

Michelangelo's partially rendered works exhibit the quality about which Pliny wrote: they seem to reveal Michelangelo's "actual thoughts," or at least the pensive traces of his chisel strokes. They reveal the process, over the (finished) work. These works contain the residue of that from which they were formed, a record of the process by which they came to be, and seeds of suggestions as to how they might be completed. These works remains alive through the self-revelation of their own history.

During the process of being made, a creative work is "alive." While "alive" the work has the potential of further transformation and refinement. In creation there is conflict and struggle; concepts have yet to be resolved. The conflict of a work's "life" is only

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[125]The notion of "eidetic reduction" is greatly expanded upon in Edmund Husserl's, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, translated by W.R.Boyce Gibson, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1931).

[126]Alternatively, the evolution of a project can be a continually refinement of an idea; starting small and simple, then growing larger and more complex. This debate can be understood as being between; the purest form of the idea as the highest evolution, versus the most complex form of the idea as the highest evolution.

[127]This understanding of the "ideal" version of the tomb is also noted in footnote no. 10 of the introduction.

[128]Marsilio Ficino, *The Platonic Theology*, Translated by Michael J. B. Allen with John Warden, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), Bk. 1, Ch. III, Vs. 1.

reconciled in the work's "death." Creative makers do not "finish" a work, rather they "abandon" a work: transformation and revelation being unending cyclical processes in poetic work.

The process of creating a world, or even a sculpture, is never complete. Order always has the possibility of other potential order. Creative making is based on productive knowledge, and that knowledge is *non-finito*. Poetic making springs from the *a priori* understanding of making, as a re-enactment of Creation. The process of making, the act of building: *is* the architecture.

When a work has been abandoned by its creator; that is the artist no longer makes changes to the work, the work begins anew. The work is released into the world. It is then acted upon by other forces. It weathers through time: both socially and physically.[129]

In Michelangelo's "life-giving process" of sculpture, "finishing" could signify "death." Michelangelo could forestall the inevitable "death" of a project through not "finishing" a work. As a corollary, when the soul had been perfected, it could leave its earthly prison (*carcero terano*) and ascend to heaven. This freedom, however, meant that the process of living was finished. In Michelangelo's case, he would be free of the task of

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[129]For more on this, see for example,Moshen Mostafavi and David Leatherbarrow. *On Weathering: The Life of Buildings In Time.* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993).

bringing marble to "life," but his task was "dead." He perhaps savored the process of "bringing life" so much, that he could not bear to let his work "die."

Michelangelo's poetic making was open to the input of the knowledge that was revealed in the process of creating the work. His process of poetic making was too dynamic and too complex to record in a written treatise. The continuous feedback of revealed knowledge often prevented him from being able to complete a work. In the "incompletion" of his works, however, he must have recognized the revelation of his own process of making. A raising of the process to a conscious and apparent level perhaps best conveys his ethos. The condition of *becoming*; the transformation of imperfect matter to perfect being, illustrates the position of Mankind; struggling in the world between its corporeal body and its divine spirit.

The transubstantiation of stone (Michelangelo's *prima materia*), into the human body is a necessarily *non-finito* process. The alchemy of the ethical imagination further transforms the body into the larger body of architecture. The creative work of Human hands enables both the maker and the observer of what was made, to recognize a oneness with God.

A space for interaction, is held-open in Michelangelo's *non-finito* works. By giving only a glimpse of a possible reality and only suggesting a form, the individual observer is allowed to complete the work for himself and a most powerful art is produced.

Aspects of a *non-finito* condition surface in many times and places for a variety of reasons.[130] Nearer to the present day, Le Corbusier in his book, *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, called for "some great Solon to impose the law of white lead"; a white-washing away of all the dark and cloudy ambiguities in architectural form.[131] Le Corbusier managed to approach this purity in his villas of the nineteen-twenties and thirties. He too, however, discovered something lacking in his early works, and the complexities and uncertainties of Life once again reasserted themselves. [132]

The digital purity and perfection in which the modern world is often expressed and explained, cannot hold the richness and ambiguity present in the human condition.

[130]This phenomenon is discussed across a broad horizon of literature which, as mentioned, extends from Pliny to the present. See for example Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*. Translated by M.D. Hottinger, (New York: Dover Publications, 1964), Umberto Eco. *The Open Work*. Translated by Anna Cancogni, (Cambrdige: Harvard University Press, 1989), Henry Moore, "The Hidden Struggle," *Henry Moore on Sculpture*. (London: Macdonald, 1966), and David Rosand, "Old-Age Style," *Art Journal*, vol. 46, no. 2, 1987, p 91-93. Some examples in architecture may include: the rock-cut facades of *Petra*, the *Palazzo Quirinale*, the *Casino dello Zuccheri*, the *Villa Doria-Pamphili*, the *Pavillon Suisse*, the *Casa del Girasole*, etc. All contain rough / un-carved / unfinished / fragments / unknown areas, within the bounds of the work: an understanding of one reality juxtaposed to another.

[131]Le Corbusier made this statement on the heels of the excesses of Art Nouveau and the Beaux Arts.

[132]For a more complete meditation on the "reassertion of the body" in the works of Le Corbusier see Arata Isosaki, "Eros, or the Sea," *Couvent Sainte-Marie de La Tourette, Global Architecture*, no. 11, (Tokyo: A.D.A. EDITA, 1971).

Part Four ■ **The Poetic Search**

Twentieth Century Reconstructions of the Tomb

Many have responded to the siren call of the unfinished work. "Nature abhors a vacuum," wrote Spinoza,[1] and apparently so do many who study the never completed first project for the tomb of Pope Julius II. Despite the difficulties involved in trying to piece together Michelangelo's project, no less than eight graphic reconstructions, derived from historical searches of the Julian tomb, have been undertaken in the last seventy years. Several scholars have devoted considerable time to the project and have revised their findings over the years. Any work of art is unfinished, wrote Eco, in the sense that the observer/respondent reinvents it in psychological collaboration with the author himself.[2] In a more literally unfinished work, like the Julian tomb, there is an even greater desire to enter into a collaboration with the artist: a yearning to fill the apparent void.

As previously discussed, contemporary knowledge of the appearance of the first tomb project is almost entirely dependent upon the written descriptions by Vasari and Condivi. The graphic reconstructions of the 1505 project vary according to each scholar's personal reading of the narrative descriptions. Differences may also be accounted for by the varying influence and validity given to drawings possibly attributable to the project, interpretive measurements of sculptures ascribed to the

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[1]Benedictus de Spinoza, *Ethics*, edited and translated by G.H. R. Parkinson, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), Part I, "Proposition 15".

[2]Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, translated by Anna Cancogni, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 4.

tomb, readings of where the tomb was to be placed, and so forth. The following images of these reconstructions outline the scholarly searches for the tomb conducted during the past several decades.
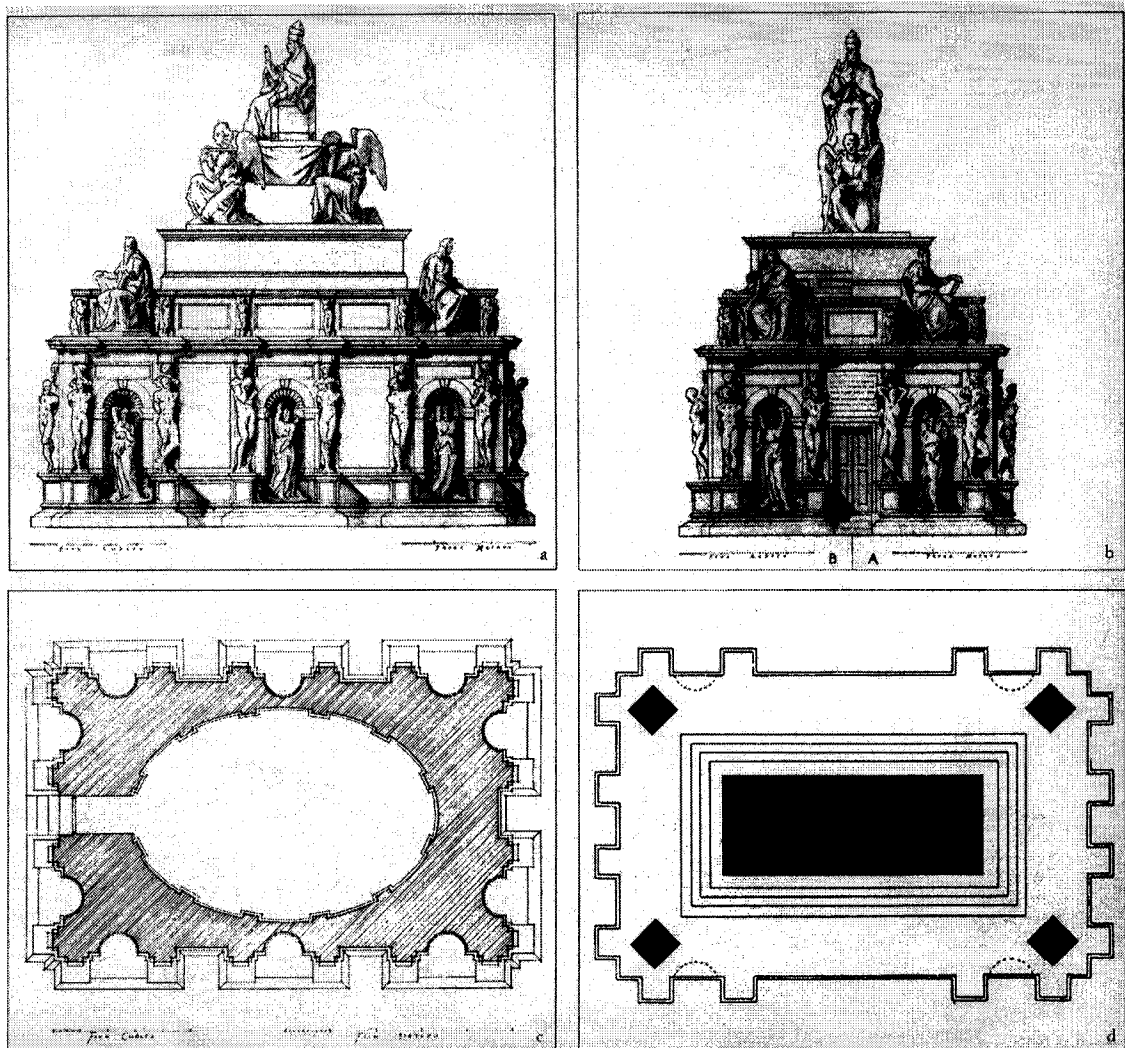
Figure 66

The gauntlet of reconstructing the tomb was first taken up in the past century by

Panofsky, who in 1937 wrote a lengthy article on the tomb accompanied by a plans

and elevations.[3] He revised his findings and published them in his 1964 book, *Tomb*

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[3]Panofsky,"The First Two Projects of Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius II."

Sculpture.[4] Panofsky's reconstruction remains one of the most articulated and convincing renderings of the tomb. Substantial wall thickness is illustrated at the corners of the tomb to accommodate the loads of the four large sculptures. As previously discussed, he assumes a spelling error by Vasari and shows a door at only one end of the tomb. Also as discussed in Part Two of this text, he understands *bara*, as a litter on which a "living" effigy of the pope would ride. Questions of the structural possibilities of this reconstruction will be discussed in the next section.

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[4]Erwin Panofsky. *Tomb Sculpture*, (New York: Abrams, 1964).

Laux [Pogliaghi] (1943)[5]

Figure 67

The most intriguing aspect of Laux's book on the tomb is the inclusion of an earlier

painting by Ludovico Pogliaghi (1857-1950). This painting reserves some of the

mystery of the tomb through its shadowy portrayal of the structure. In the painting the

tomb has been finished and is installed in a completed St. Peter's, with both Pope

Julius and Michelangelo looking on. The tomb is also of an immense scale, based on

the proportions of the figures, with the first cornice being nearly twenty feet off the

ground. The rendering is a very convincing impossibilty.

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[5]Karl August Laux, *Michelangelos Juliusmonument*, (Berlin: Verlag Dr. Emil Ebering, 1943).

de Tolnay (1951, 1954, 1970)[6]
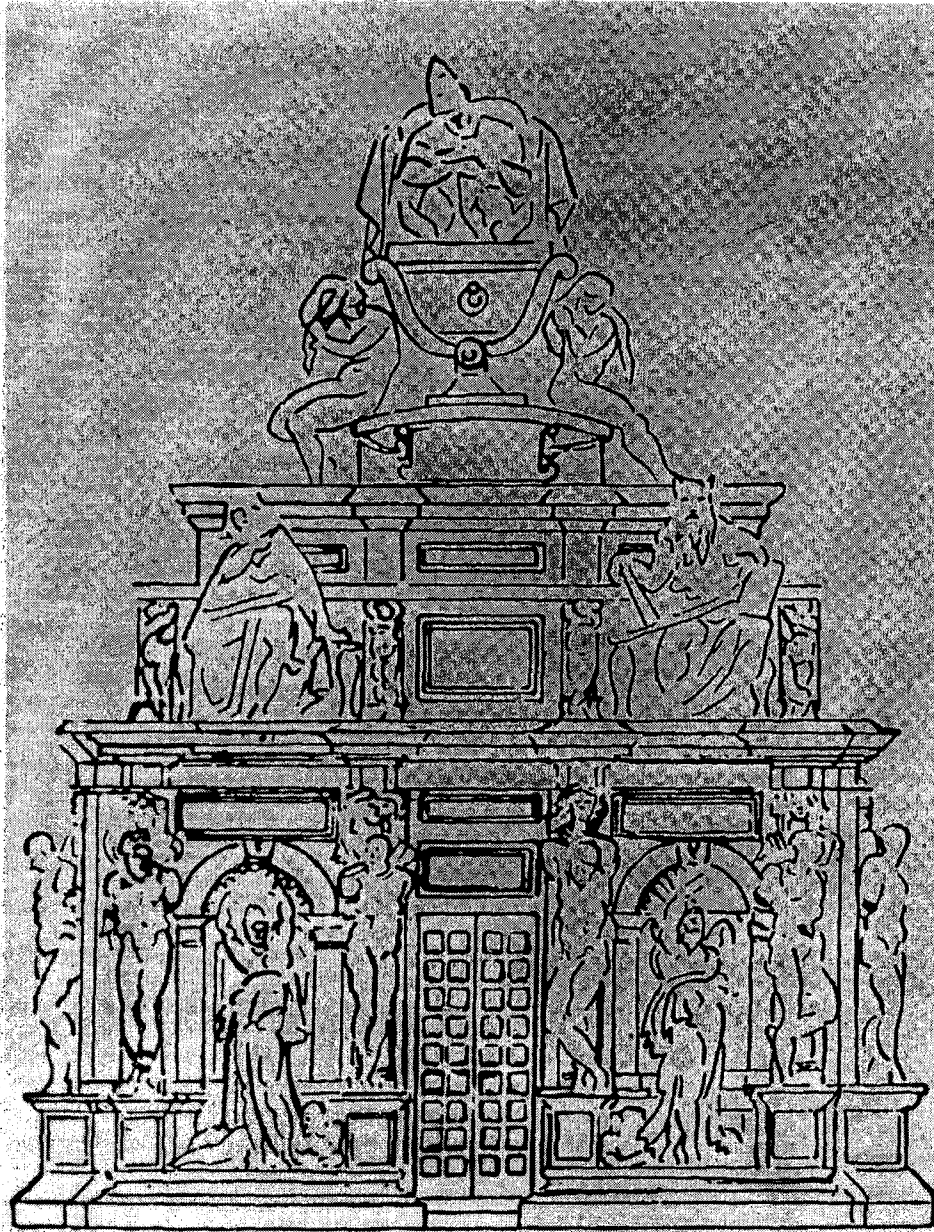
Figure 68

De Tolnay devoted an entire volume of his five volume opus on Michelangelo to the

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[6]Charles de Tolnay, *The Tomb of Julius II*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954).

Julian tomb. For the first project he provides only an elevation. His rendering is more sketchy than that of Panofsky. His tomb is lower to the ground with fewer steps. His upper most portion of the tomb has an effigy of the pope on a coffin or *arca*, attended by goddesses[7] as opposed to Panofsky's angels. He chooses to illustrate a multi-panel door compared to Panofsky's four-panel door. While de Tolnay revised his writings slightly in his subsequent texts, his illustrations remained the same.

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[7]Vasari uses the term "Dea," see Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, ". . ., e sopra era per fine due figure, che una era il Cielo, che ridendo sosteneva in sulle spalle una bara insieme con Cibele **Dea** della terra, e pareva che si dolesse, che ella rimanesse al mondo priva d'ogni virtú per la morte di questo uomo: ed il Cielo pareva che ridesse, che l'anima sue era passata alla gloria celeste."

von Einem (1951, 1959, 1973)[8]
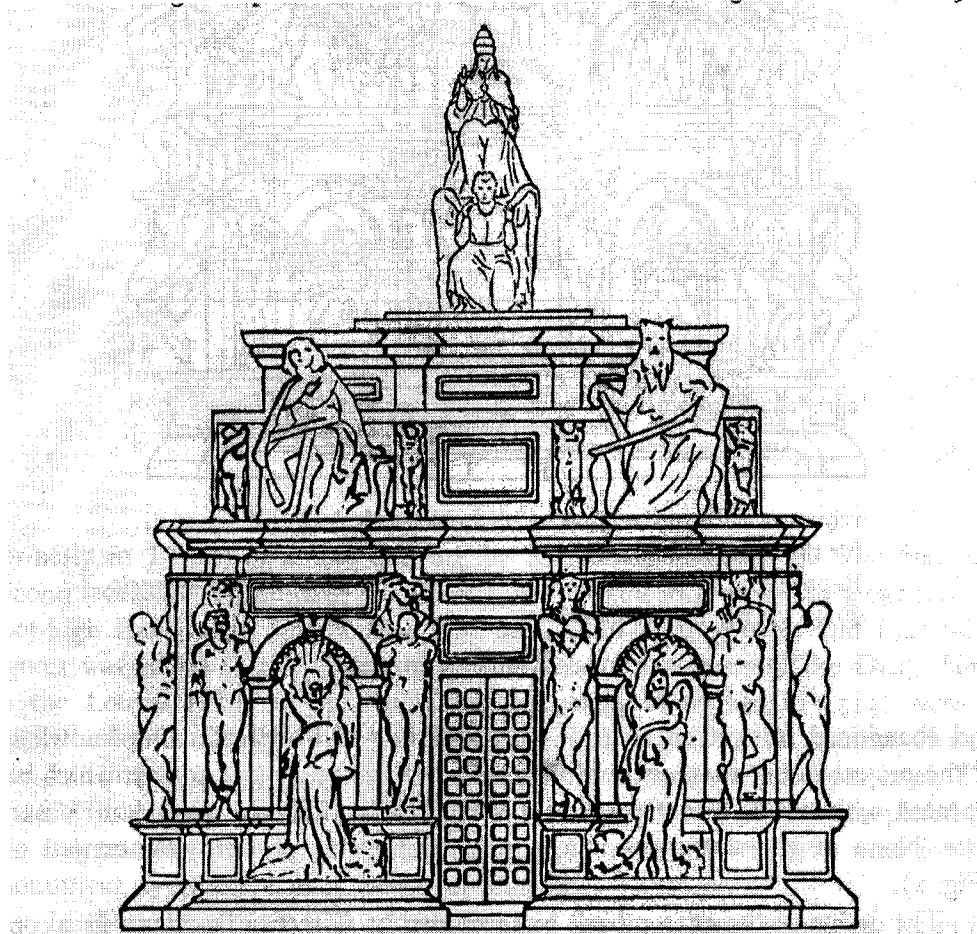
Figure 69

Von Einem's reconstruction is identical to de Tolnay's with the exception of being rendered in harder lines and replacing the effigy of the pope on a coffin attended by goddesses with Panofsky's image of the pope on a litter carried by angels. Von Einem too, accepts the same multi-panel door as de Tolnay.

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[8]Herbert von Einem, *Michelangelo: Bildhauer, Maler, Baumeister*, (Berlin: Gber. Mann, 1973).

Russoli (1953)[9]
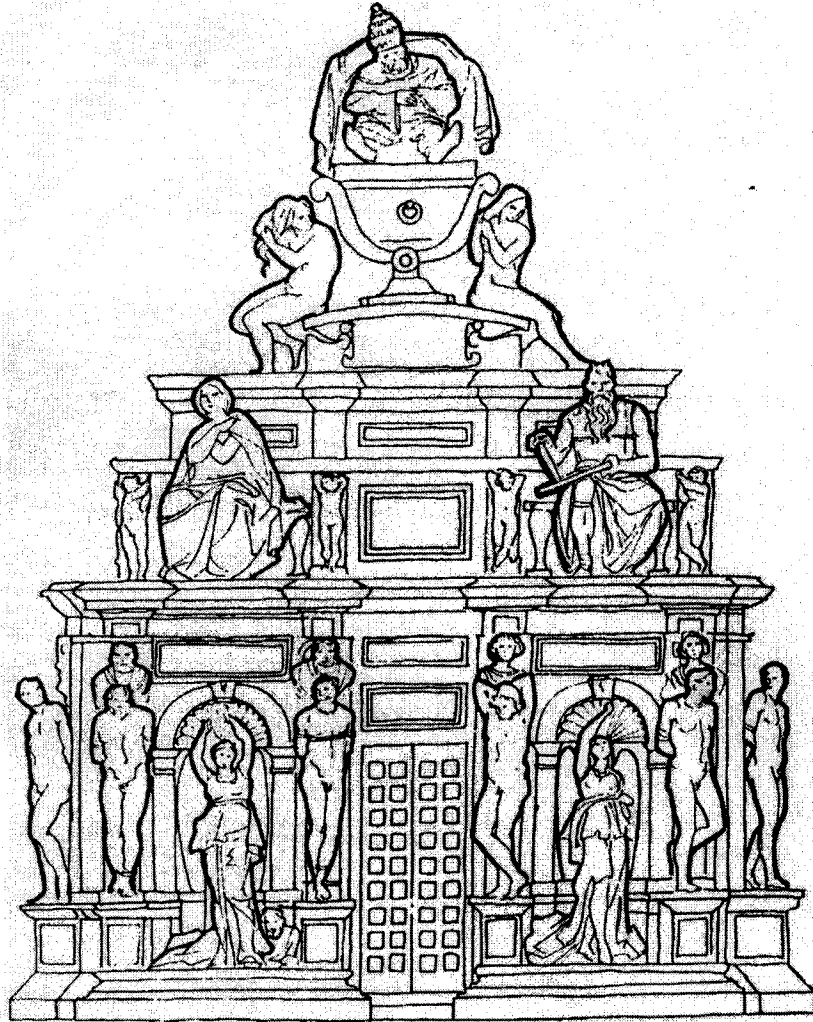
Figure 70

Russoli's version of the tomb is almost identical to that of de Tolnay and von Einem.

Russoli employs the more crisp lines of von Einem, but otherwise returns to the

illustration by de Tolnay with an effigy of the pope on a coffin attended by goddesses.

De Tolnay, von Einem, and Russoli only provide the single end elevational renderings.

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[9]Franco Russoli, *Tutta la Scultura di Michelangelo*, (Milan: Rizzoli, 1953).

Weinberger (1967)[10]
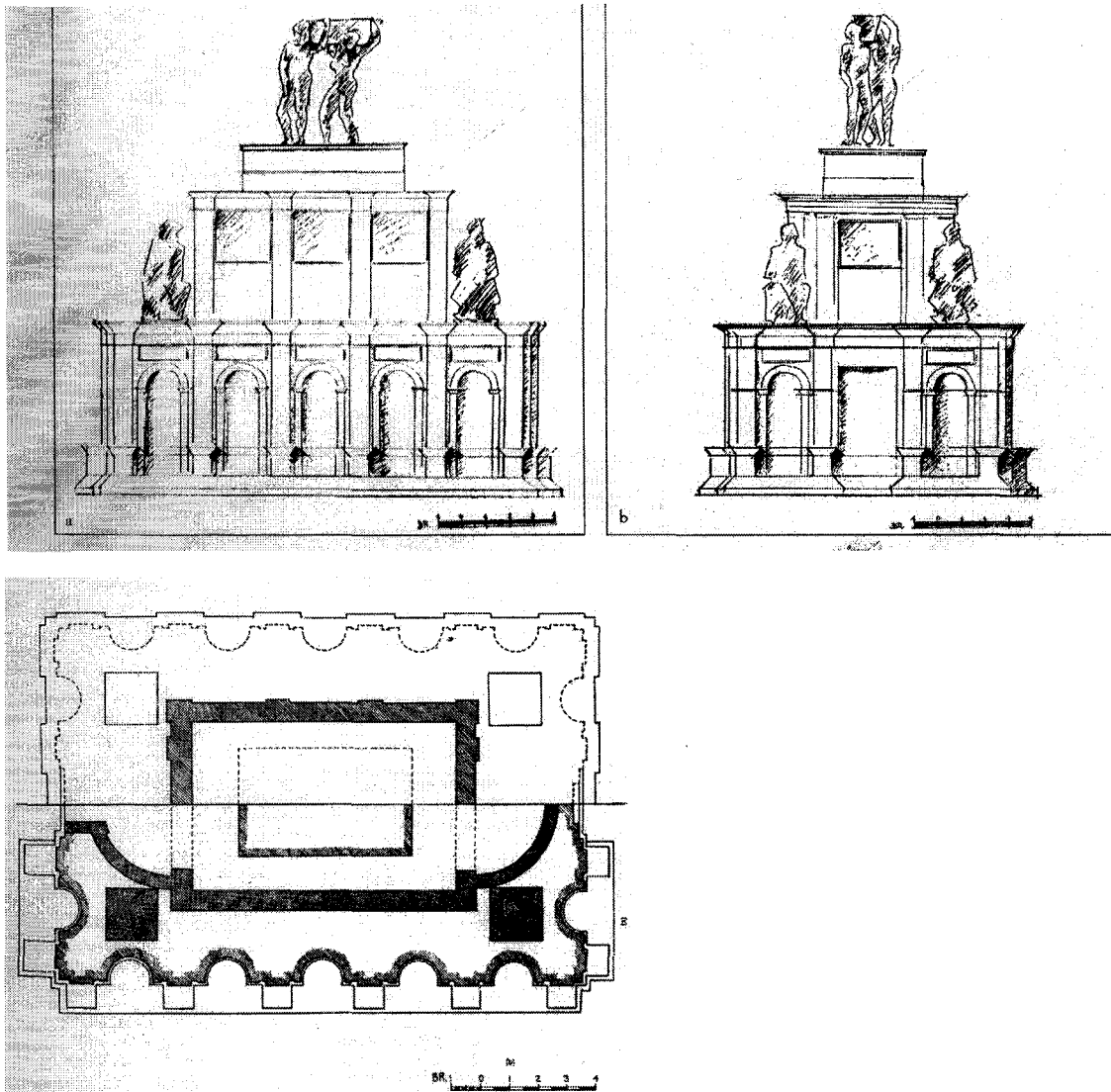
Figure 71

As discussed in Part Two of this text, in the section on the interior of the tomb,

Weinberger's text calls for a flat ceiling to his hybrid interior, because of the difficulty

of constructing an oval dome. The plan shows a rectangular interior with semicircular

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[10]Martin Weinberger, *Michelangelo the Sculptor*, 2 volumes, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967).

apses at the ends. His elevational renderings are very sketchy. Only the four large sculptures at the upper corners of the tomb are drawn in. At the top of his tomb, two figures, appearing neither as goddesses nor as angels, shoulder a small crude coffin with no effigy of the pope. He also does not illustrate a door in his elevations.

Hartt (1969)[11]
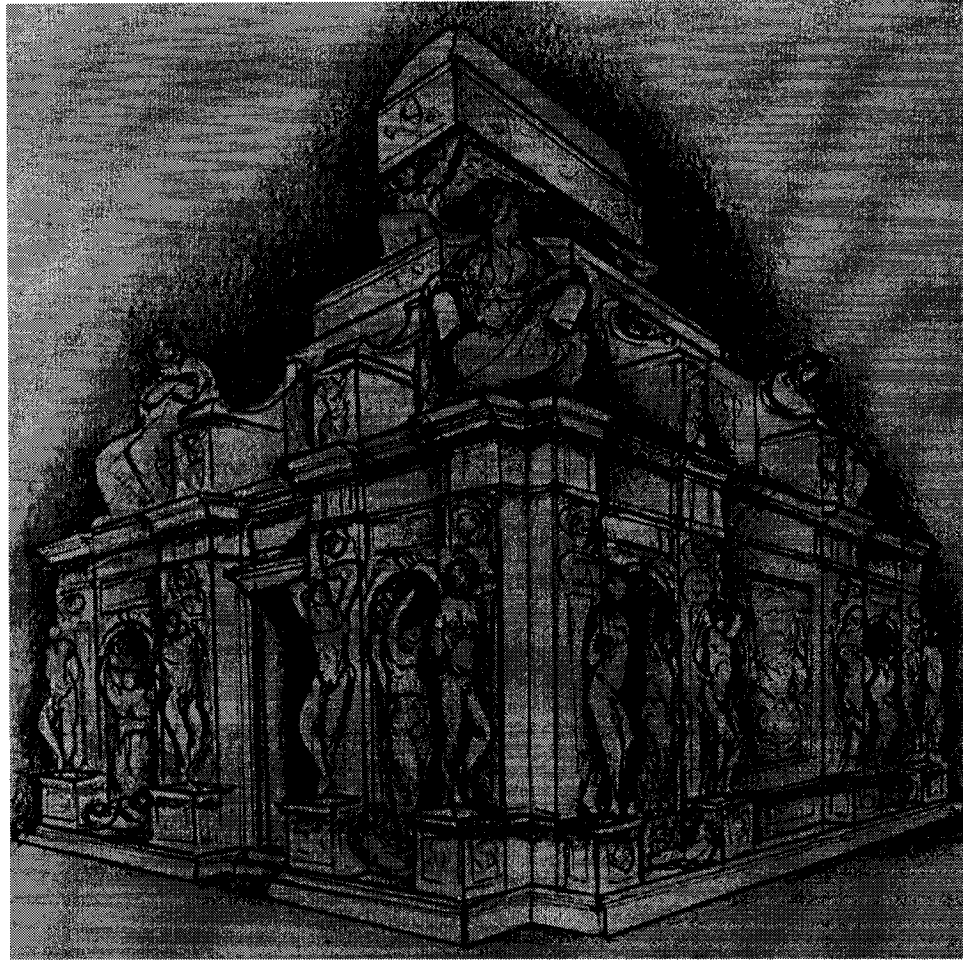
Figure 72

Hartt provides only a single sketched corner view perspective. His visualization

appears more convincing than the previous four attempts. Like the Poliaghi painting,

it preserves some "openness" in its withholding of a complete picture. At the top of

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[11]Frederick Hartt, *The Complete Sculpture of Michelangelo*, (New York: Abrams, 1968).

his rendering two angels seem to be almost crushed as they bear an enormous coffin on their heads and wings. A convincing doorway into the tomb is present in this illustration as well the suggestion of a panel of reliefs along one of the long sides. The addition of figures at the feet of the "virtues" begins to depict the complexity the tomb would likely have contained.

Frommel (1977, 1994)[12]
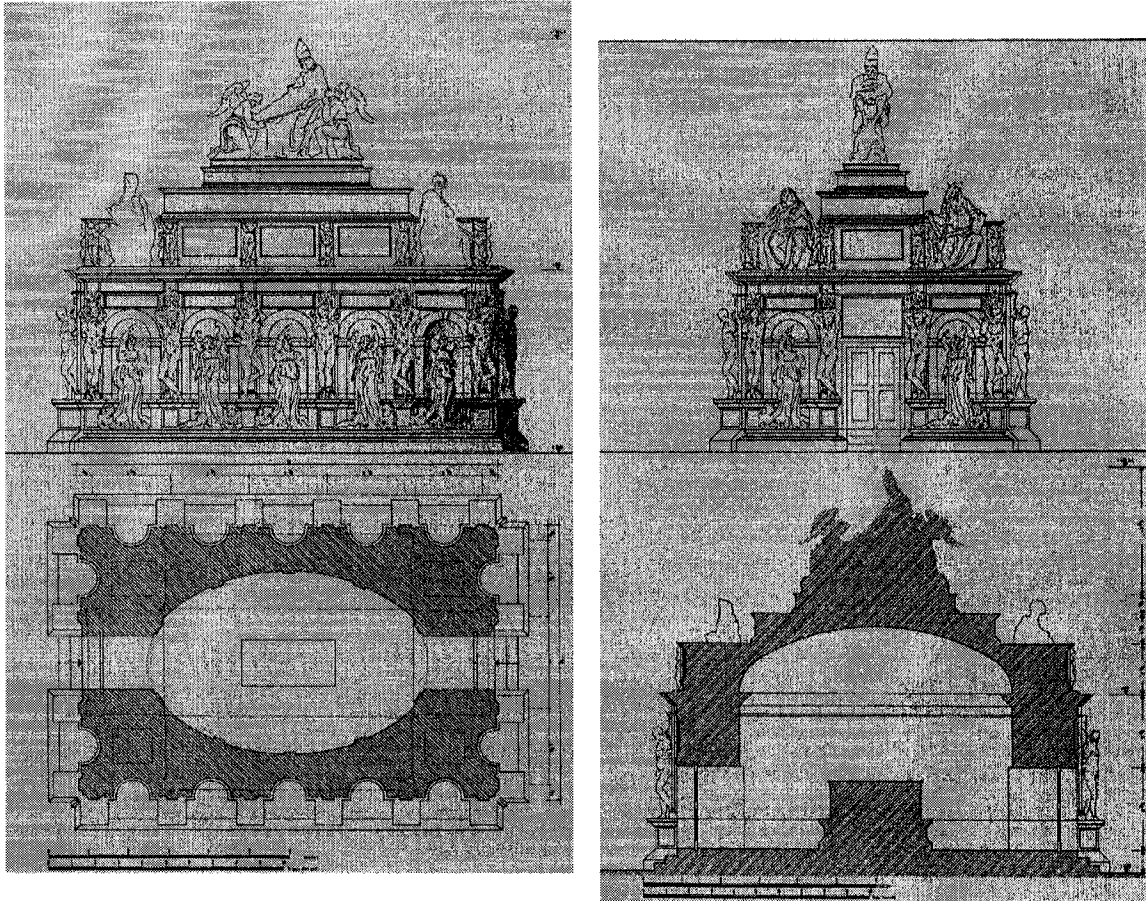
Figure 73

Frommel's version of the Julian tomb, first published in 1977 and refined in 1994, is the most highly evolved and rationally complete reconstruction. It takes advantage of the latest research and learns from what has come before it. Frommel not only illustrates a plan and elevations, but supplies a sectional drawing as well. His plan is

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[12]Cristoph Luitpold Frommel, "St. Peter's: The Early History," and "'Capella Iulia:'Die Grabkapelle Papst Julius' II in Neu-St. Peter," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, xl (1977), pp. 26-62, and "Die Peterskirche unter Pabst Julius II.", *Römische Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, xvi, (1976), pp. 57-136.

similar to that of Panofsky, though Frommel accepts that there is an entrance at both short ends of the tomb. Frommel too, returns to the four-panel door of Panofsky. A highly rendered sculptural ensemble completes the top of the tomb. In this version the effigy of the pope is conveyed siting up, though what he is siting on is unclear. The effigy is none the less rigid from feet to buttocks, and at an incline from one angel to the other. Frommel too, shows the hint of reclining sculptural figures along the base of the tomb that contribute to the complexity of the rendering. Frommel has chosen, as most before him, to leave the possible relief panels blank. The structural implications of his reconstruction will also be discussed in the next section.

The Problem of Reconstruction

The attempts at historical reconstructions of the Julian tomb are very similar in their outcome. They have perhaps become increasingly more accurate over the years as new documents come to light. Making an ever more historically accurate tomb, however, is a little like trying to make an ever more rational poem.

While admiring and benefitting from the insightful scholarship of those who have undertaken graphic reconstructions of the tomb, and understanding their desire to see pictorially what this grand tomb would have been like, their works are, none-the-less, disappointing (as this author's or anyone else's similar attempt would be). There are perhaps no buildings, or images of buildings, that are as interesting when they are complete as they are when they are being constructed or de-constructed.

These reconstructions do make visible what was only previously a fleeting glimpse in the mind. However, they also close down the possibilities and eliminate the ambiguities that give life to the tomb. Analogous to a favorite book made into a movie, images of the tomb supplant the complex images generated in the mind with prescribed views.

The problem of graphic reconstruction is also a problem in art and architecture in general: the moment an idea is "corrupted" by image, much of the universal resonance is lost. The tomb is no longer "ideal." But unless the ideas about the tomb are

somehow manifested they cannot be shared with others.[13]

The reconstructions are problematic too, in that they are all done by looking backwards: Michelangelo would have continued to look forward. His imaginative innovation would have continued as the project unfolded. The tomb of 1505, would have in reality been the 1505 to 1545 project, even without the changes and interruptions that plagued it. The design would not have been frozen in 1505 and built instantly. It would have taken Michelangelo 40 years to personally execute the (more than) forty sculptures ascribed to the tomb by his biographers. Like all of his projects the tomb would have transformed over time. Trying to pin down a static image of the tomb is an exercise in taxidermy. To capture the qualities of the tomb, one must instead, turn to zoology in order to understand the living, breathing animal the tomb had the potential of becoming.

Vasari and Condivi did not write so that modern historians could reconstruct and debate the form of the tomb. They wrote for readers of their own time: to demonstrate truths, to express ideals, and possibly to secure Michelangelo's prominence in their own culture. Unlike the many valiant attempts at reconstruction, the possibilities of the tomb in the written descriptions do not disappoint. The narratives give suggestions about the tomb's appearance: each reader completes these to their own satisfaction.

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[13]See "Necessarily *Non-finito*" in " Part Three" above for a further discussion of this issue.

There is a different Julian tomb for each person who reads the account. It is difficult, if not impossible, to render the tomb clearly and not reduce its elusive / allusive potential described by Vasari and Condivi. The tomb of the narrative is a dreamlike vision that cannot exist in a light that is too bright.

"... any attempt to name the gods and God ... is a violation of the unknown essence of divinity, putting the namer in danger of obscuring divinity with some golden calf."[14]
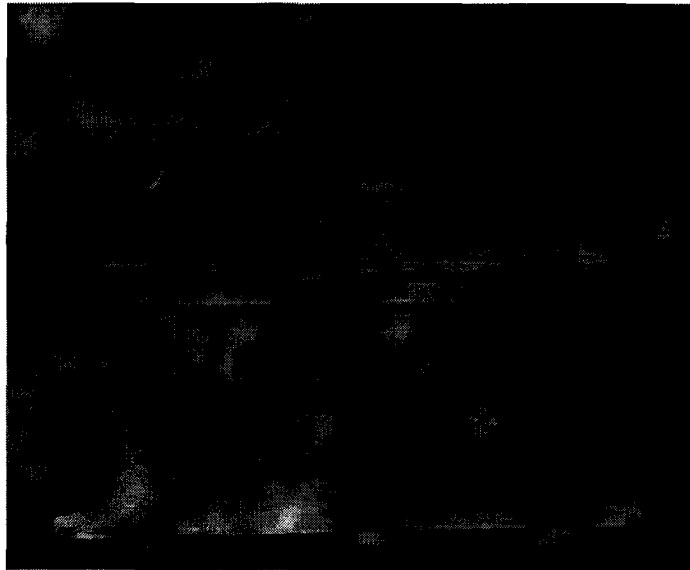
Figure 74 Digitally altered photograph of plaster model by the author.

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[14]Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture*, p. 161.

Structural Possibilities

In addition to the problem of capturing a dynamic project in graphic illustrations, the tomb reconstructions may also be challenged on a more pragmatic concern. It is unlikely that the tombs, as illustrated, were structurally possible in 1505.

Through supplying a sectional drawing, Frommel's reconstruction is subject to the greatest structural scrutiny. Panofsky, by illustrating the largest sculptural ensemble on top of the tomb of any reconstruction opens his reconstruction to more intense structural criticism as well. A calculation of the marble required for the uppermost sculptural ensemble, as portrayed in their reconstructions, may prove that they would have been impossible to build. Panofsky's ensemble includes two "celestial beings" supporting Julius on a processional chair. If this were carved from a single mass, as his reconstruction seems to illustrate, the necessary marble would measure an incredible six and one-half by sixteen by sixteen feet, and could weigh as much as 140 tons. Frommel's reconstruction of the top ensemble, carved from a single block, would require one that weighed "only" about 50 tons.

These massive sculptures would have been extremely difficult to maneuver and to gently place on top of the tomb. If it were possible to overcome their massive size and weight, by assembling the sculptures in pieces on top of the tomb, the total "surcharge" of their weight would still need to be figured into structuring the dome. It is unlikely that a load-bearing masonry dome could be constructed, within the building section

suggested by Panofsky and Frommel, that would adequately support the massive sculptures rendered in their drawings.

While these structures cannot be totally ruled-out in the absence of a complete engineering analysis,[15] one may in the method of Michelangelo, "judge with the eye," and by comparison to other structures of the time. For example, the domes of the *Tempietto* and the *Medici Chapel*, are structured more substantially than the reconstructions of the tomb and they are not called upon to support massive sculptural ensembles. The structural investigations of the *Pantheon*, and other ancient structures by Robert Mark, in his book *Light, Wind, and Structure*, may be employed to give some insight into the tomb structure, as well. Mark notes that the span of the Pantheon is within one meter of that of the Florentine Duomo, and to that of the new St. Peter's, suggesting that the *Pantheon's* dome likely served as a model for determining the limits of masonry construction.[16]

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[15]Determining exactly what might have been possible in the construction of a free-standing tomb with an elliptical dome, is a difficult process because of the many variables. A complete analysis of the project would require substituting different possible answers for the variables and running calculations many different ways.

The first step of an investigation would be to construct an analytical wire-frame computer model of the tomb. Approximate material strengths could be inserted into the equations. Based on the density of the material, the total load on the elliptical dome could be calculated. As a result, stresses due to these loads, in addition to the surcharge of the sculptures placed on top of the dome could be found. These could then be compared to the allowable tensile stresses of the Carrara marble that was potentially used in the project. A conclusion could then be drawn.

A number of possible structural scenarios would have to be worked through. This would include a number of possible wall sections ranging from solid marble, to composites of brick masonry, and concrete construction. The dome could be single or double shelled. The sculpture placed on top of the tomb could begin at the size outlined by Frommel. If indeed it were ruled-out as impossible, it could then be gradually scaled back until it was of a size that was possible. A complete engineering analysis of this type, which utilized highly complex computer models, would be very time consuming. Thus, such an analysis is beyond the scope of this present text.

[16]Mark, *Light, Wind, and Structure*, p. 52.

The Question of Physical Making

Is a graphic or physical manifestation of an architectural work necessary for dialog? In order to share concerns and to interact, human beings require a tangible foundation on which to base normative discussions. If one may discuss a work of literature, however, and find common ground without "seeing" the details of a complete cosmos, is the same possible in a work of architecture?

By *not* producing a graphic or physical representation, one is perhaps leaving out information that would allow a poetic "vision" to be fully comprehended. But, when a complete representation *is* provided and it *does* allow a "vision" to be fully comprehended, it creates the possibility that a particular vision is rejected, and is not shared by the observer / respondent to which it has been presented. Literature uses the abstraction of words as its mechanism of description. One may appreciate and discuss the abstracted images of a book without knowing whether the other parties see everything in exactly the same way. The multivalent meanings of form in two or three-dimensional poetic constructions, function in a similar way. The more reductive the image, the greater the chance that it will be understood. But the more reductive the image, the less knowledge it potentially conveys.

Words must be used to communicate an idea clearly, yet in the instant that they are spoken, possibilities begin to close down. Clarity communicates but it also impairs potential. That is the dilemma of projecting a graphic reconstruction. That is,

however, a predicament of architectural expression in general.[17]

Words can be limiting in response to creative works. A more adequate response to a work of art is another work of art: a poetic work demands a poetic reaction (the knowledge cannot be rendered technical). Poetic making allows many issues to be addressed simultaneously without the burden of sequential order or the prejudices of written language. The artifact has the power to disclose the marvelous and hold ambiguities.[18]

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[17]See for example Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, (London: Metheun, 1982), for a more in depth treatment of these ideas.

[18]Gadamer, *Relevance of the Beautiful*, p. 27.

Poetic Research

Some 150 years after Vasari held up his *piu eccellenti* examples of ethical action, another Italian, Giambattista Vico, in his *Scienza Nuova* of 1725, gave further validation to the study of what a culture makes. He wrote of the "incontestable truth" of humanity's artifacts as a "light which cannot lead us astray" in lifting the "dark night which shrouds from our eyes the most remote antiquity."[19]

Poetic making, "allows us to go on to think much which cannot be said."[20] Creative making, for architects, is research. Michelangelo transformed the given nature and precedents of his world into meaningful poetic works. He gained knowledge about his Cosmos in this process. To gain further understanding of his work on the Julian tomb, it is necessary to enter into this creative process as well. This tomb is now a "historical given" that must be transmuted to be understood. Through the tangible speculation of drawing, painting, sculpting, and modeling, the tomb lives on and evolves. Through the creative deliberation process, new possibilities are discovered. The hand, tempered by historical knowledge and guided by an ethically based imagination, takes the lead in this nonobjective process. The process, not the result, becomes the answer to the question.

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[19]Giambattista Vico, *Scienza Nuova*, edited by Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 73.

[20]Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, p. 21.

Creating artifacts in response to the questions of the tomb is a way of entering into the spirit of the adventure that is Michelangelo's poetic process. While this engagement does not naively disclose what he did or what he would have done, it does help explain how he did it and what he might have done as a result of this open ended process.

Art creates a new reality that complements and makes sense of the natural one. It completes or fulfills nature's possibilities. This mimesis of Nature is never an exact copy, but always a transmutation. Making based in purposiveness is insufficient. An *apriori* understanding of making that has its origins in the "process of making," is necessary to create.

Created artifacts then serve as an aid to the conjectural process of historical investigation. Michelangelo's own process was a transformation of classical models. Michelangelo's drawings transformed historical models, the body, and stone. This (re)search became an architecture that was uniquely his. Poetic making is an often neglected form of the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. The process does not yield objective answers, but it does reveal through excavation, reflection, meditation, and rumination, some possibilities and some speculative fabrications.

The physical construction of a possible reality is another mode of research. These physical constructs are a fully perceptible reality. They take up space, they exist in the world, and effectively invite normative dialog as to still other possibilities. They pollinate the world with new realities. By rendering concepts physical, they are then

able to be experienced and mediated by the body, like sculpture or architecture. As Ficino wrote in his *Platonic Theology*, "the mind gives order through the making of forms."[21]

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[21]Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, Book 1, Chapter iv.

Making with the Hands

This inquiry turns now to seek answers that can only be found through creative research. This search, guided by history and by theory, asks questions and makes discoveries beyond the bounds of traditional scholarship. Amidst a poetic *furia*, a space is opened for (divine?) inspiration to inscrutably act; potential is recognized and made visible. These new revelations guide the work on, still further. Beyond Nature and Human purposiveness lie, depending on one's ethos, God, chance, and / or the intuitive flow of the intellect and the imagination. Knowledge is revealed within the process.

Poetic making with the hands, allows a reconnection with the physical world: an analogue understanding of "touch" that is rapidly being lost in this increasingly digitized world. At a literal level, we often no longer directly "manipulate" materials or things; we "operate" machines or devices which in turn manipulate the materials or things for us.[22]

Mankind attempts to understand the incomprehensible through what it makes and is thus able to manipulate: manipulate, as meaning, "able to be handled," that is, "touched and felt with the hand." Thus, what was incomprehensible, is able to be "grasped," both figuratively and literally. A model is comprehensible because it has been made.

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[22]For example: instead of writing or drawing with a pencil on a piece of paper, we operate a keyboard and mouse which record our intentions in the form of electrical impulses; to wars, instead of being fought "hand-to-hand," may be fought with video camera equipped, laser-guided bombs.

After searching for the tomb through the available facts, in words, making with the hands begins. Creative research begins at the limit of words. Architecture begins at the limit of words.

"Man thinks because he has a hand."[23]

Figure 75 Detail of the *Florentine Pietà*,

showing the hand of Joseph of Arimathea / Nicodemus / Michelangelo (Hartt).

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[23]Anaxagoras, 2, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives, teachings, and sayings of famous philosophers*, translated by R.D.Hicks, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

Glimpses, Transformations, and Transmutations of the Tomb
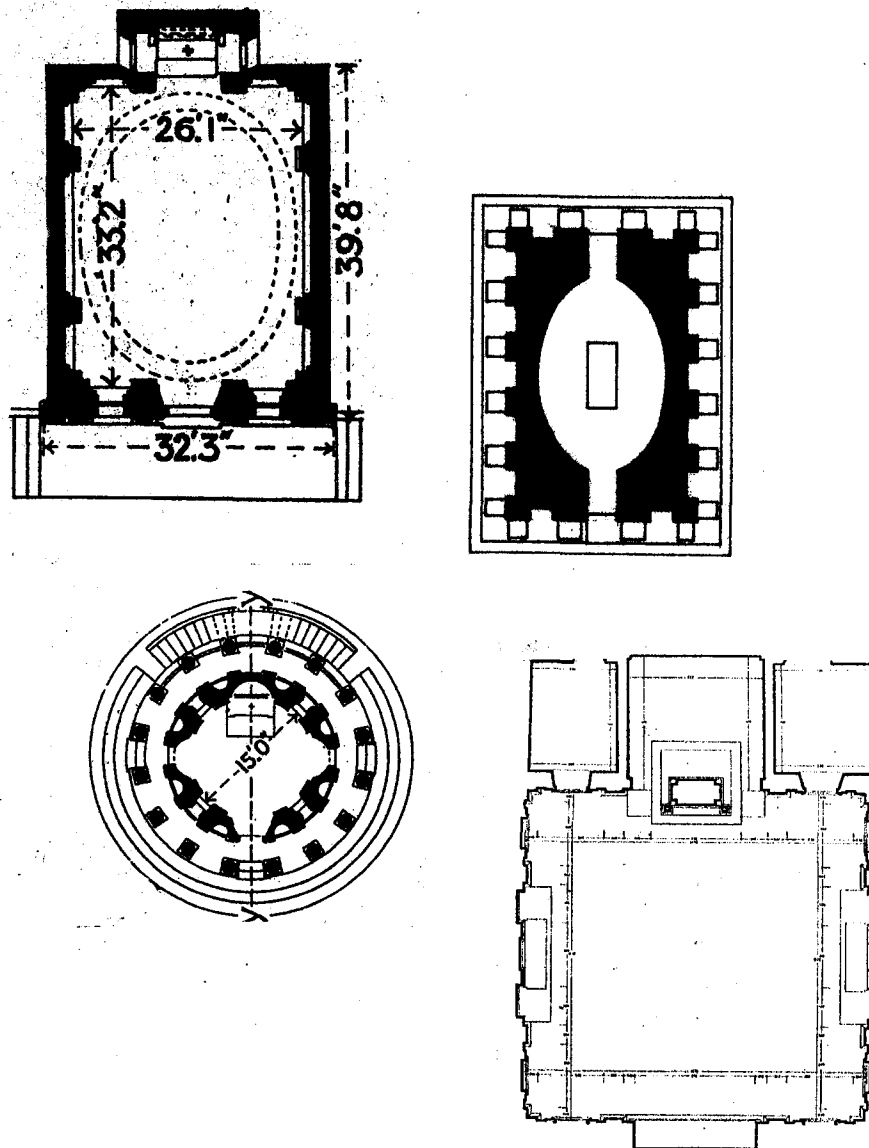
Figure 76 (clockwise from top right) Plans of the *Tomb for Julius II, Medici Chapel, Tempietto,* and *San Andrea* by Vignola, all shown at the same scale.
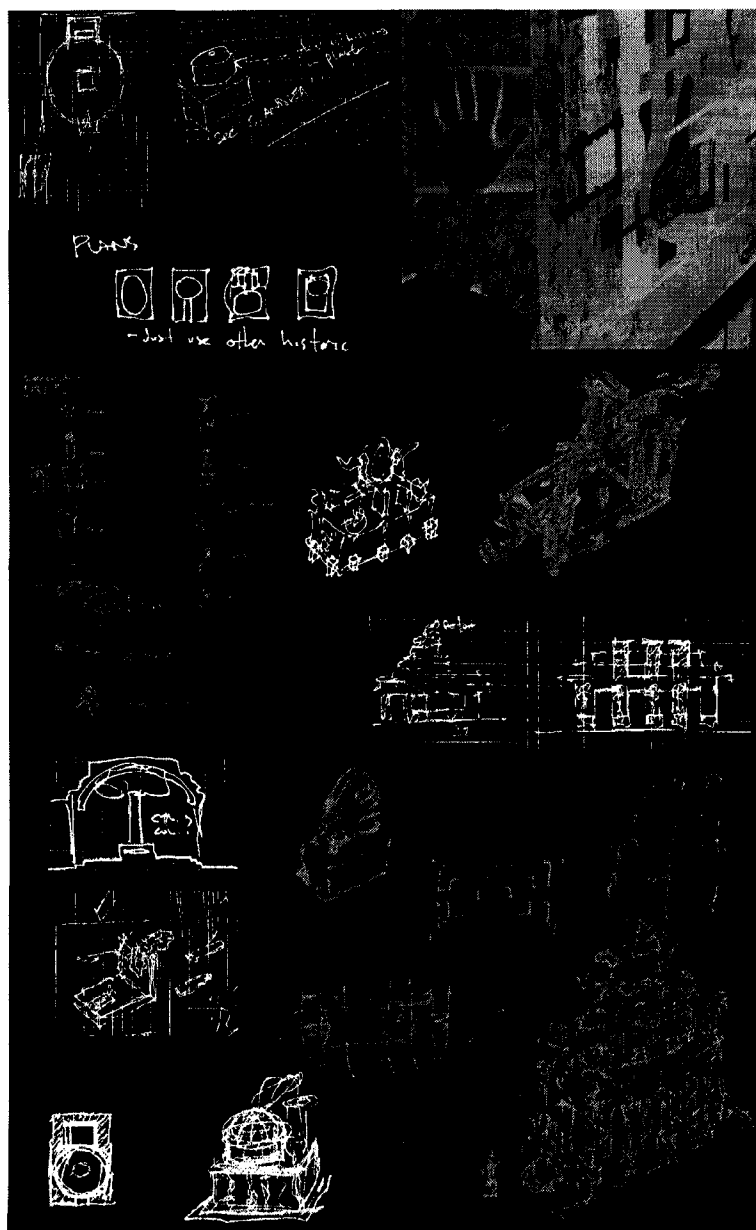
Figure 78 Referential and analytical tomb sketches by the author.
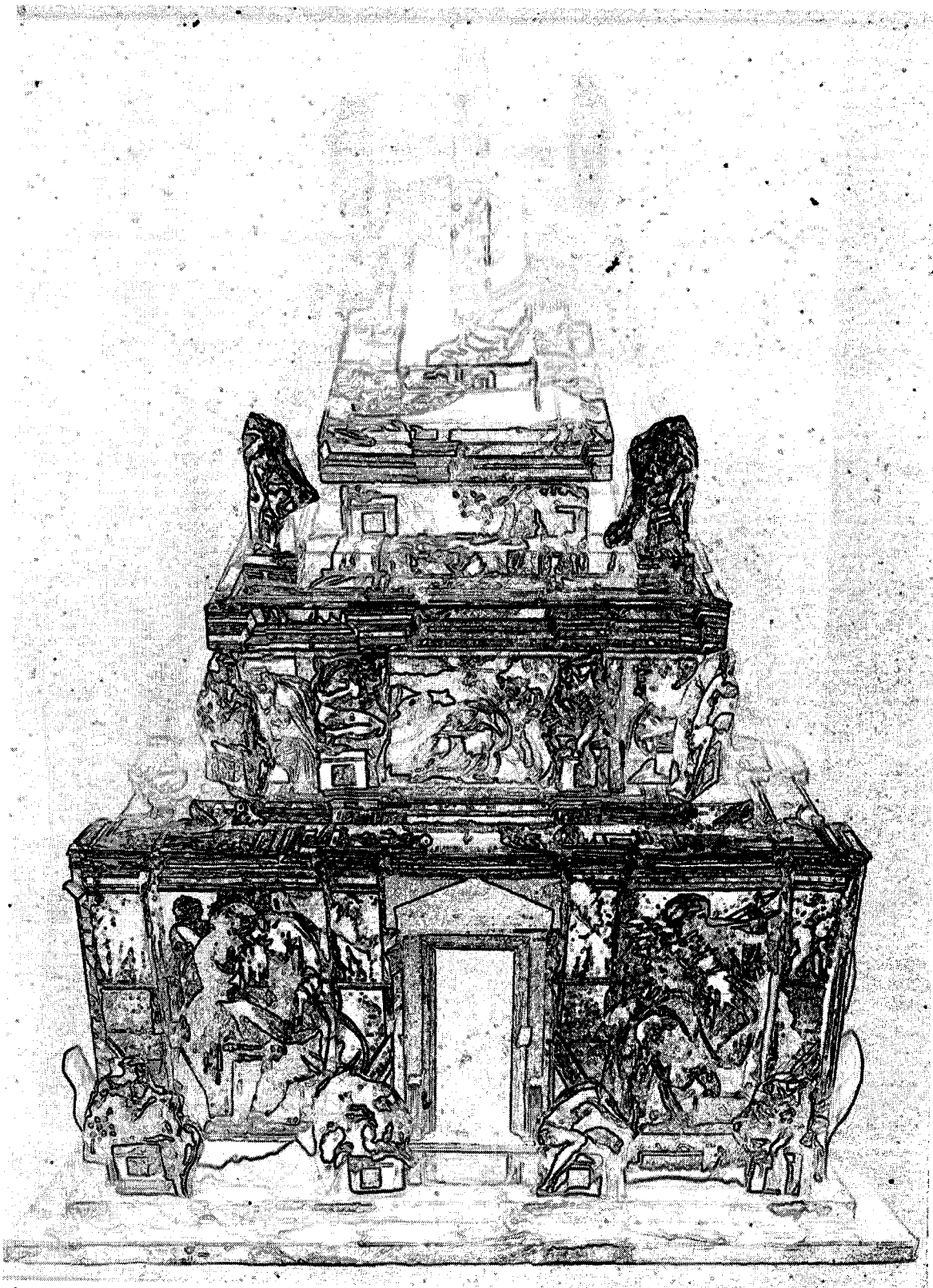
Figure 79 The *Sistine* ceiling transformed into the *Tomb for Julius II*.
(Digitally altered photograph of a model by the author).
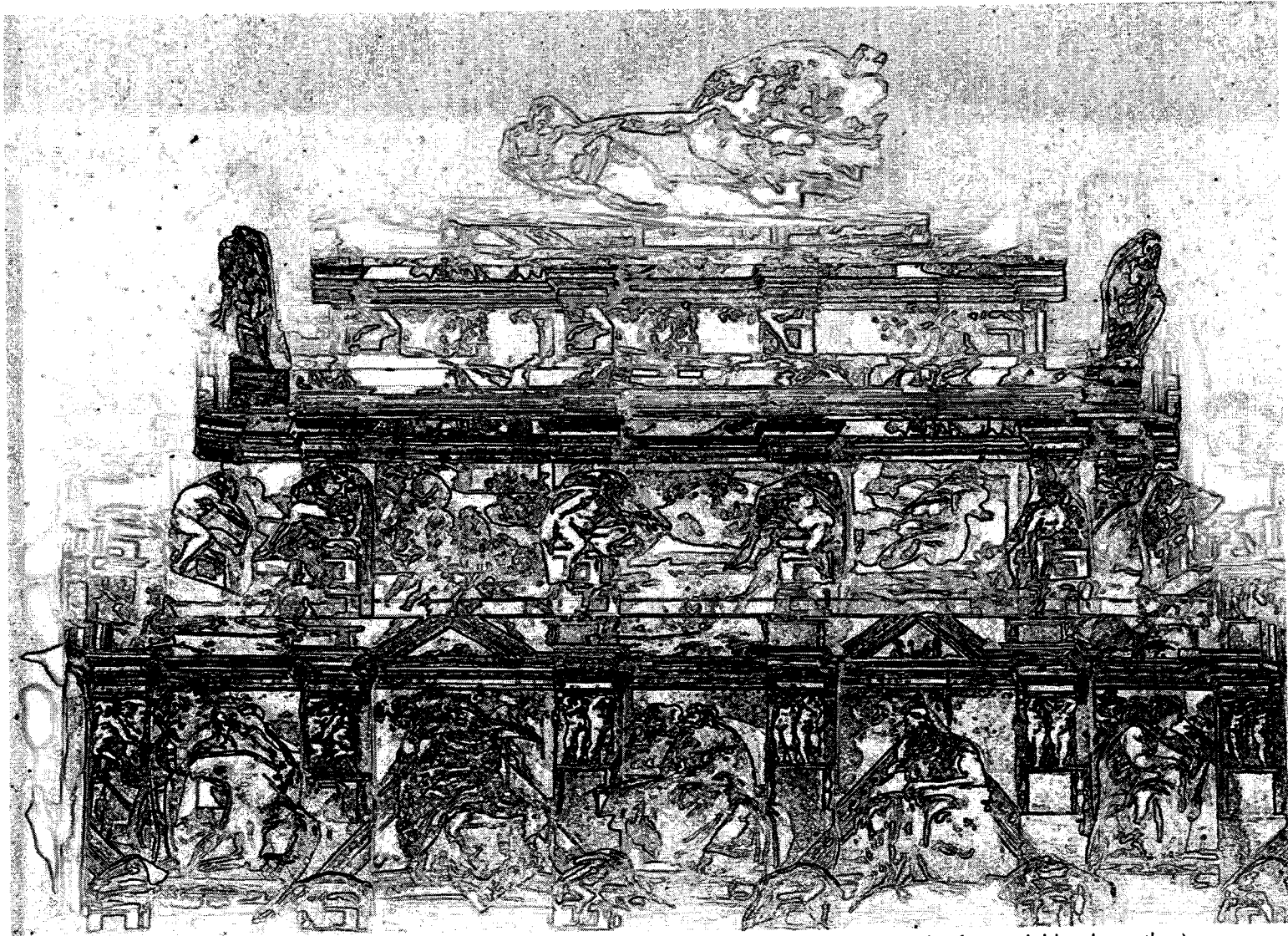
Figure 80 The *Sistine Ceiling* transmuted into the *Tomb for Julius II*. (Digitally altered photograph of a model by the author).
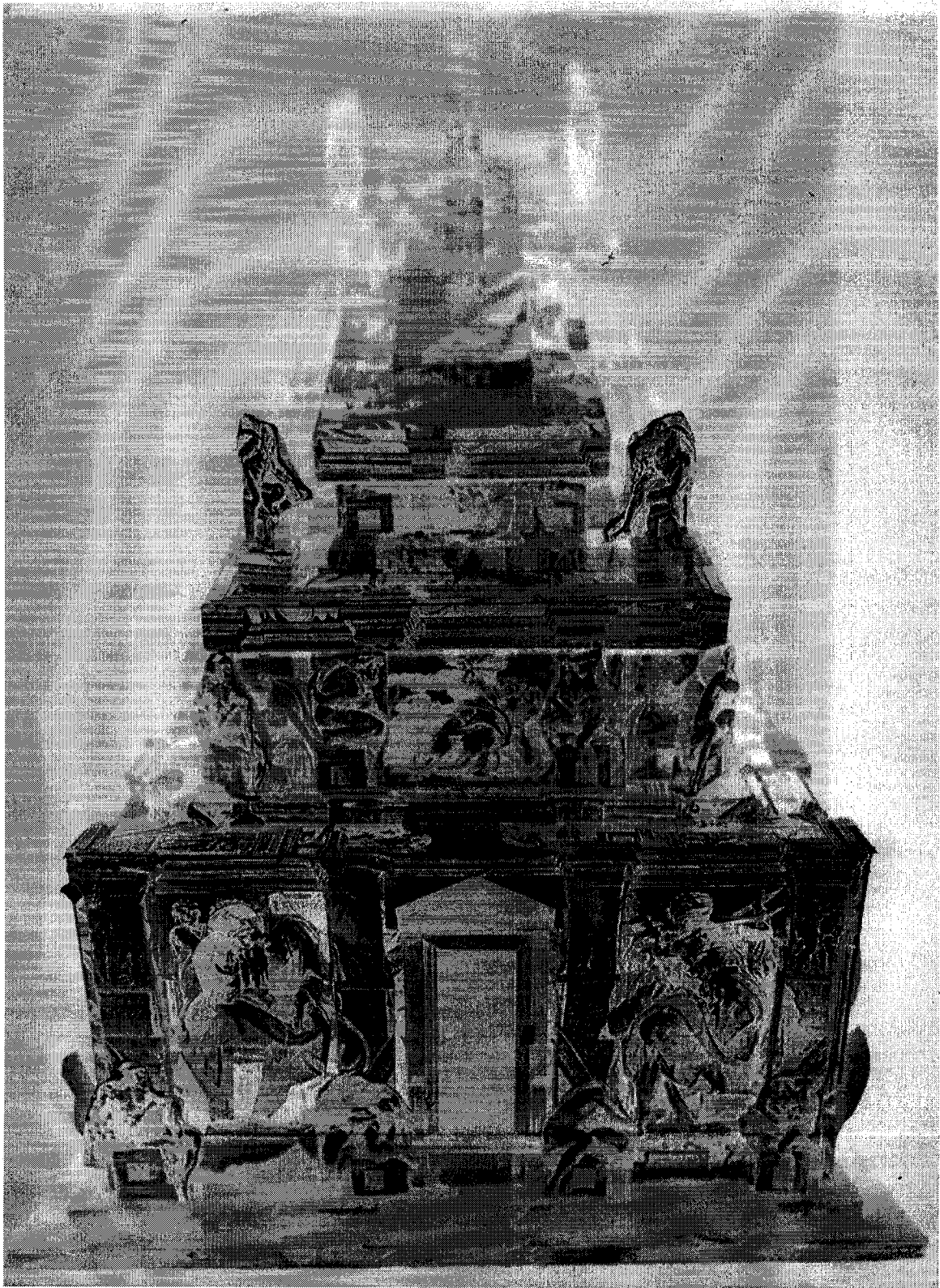
Figure 81 The *Sistine Ceiling* transmuted into the *Tomb for Julius II*.
(Digitally altered photograph of a model by the author).
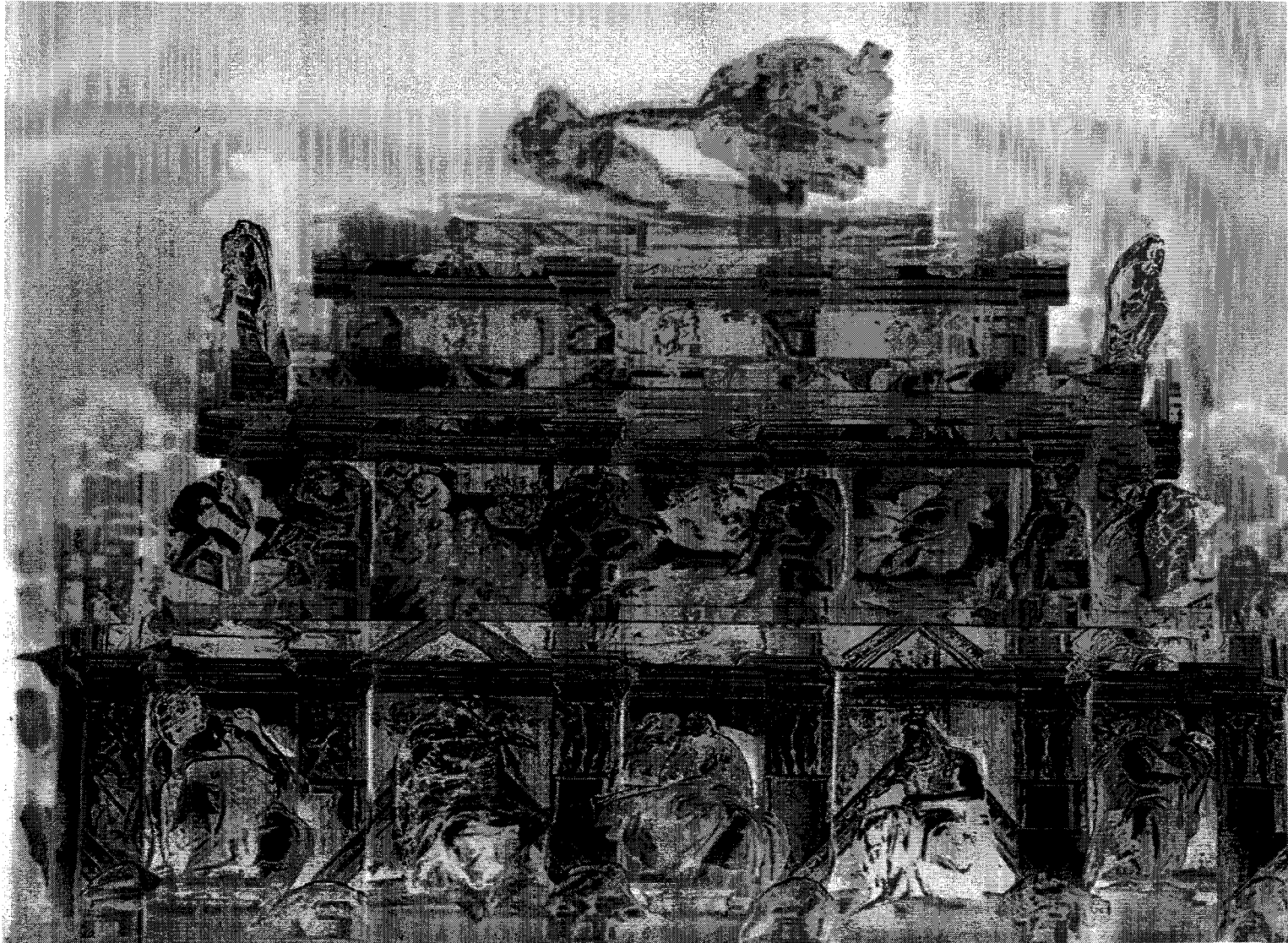
Figure 82 The *Sistine Ceiling* transmuted into the *Tomb for Julius II*. (Digitally altered photograph of a model by the author).

Figure 83 The *Tomb of Julius II* under the night sky in the unfinished choir of Pope Nicholas V.
(Digitally altered photograph of a model by the author).
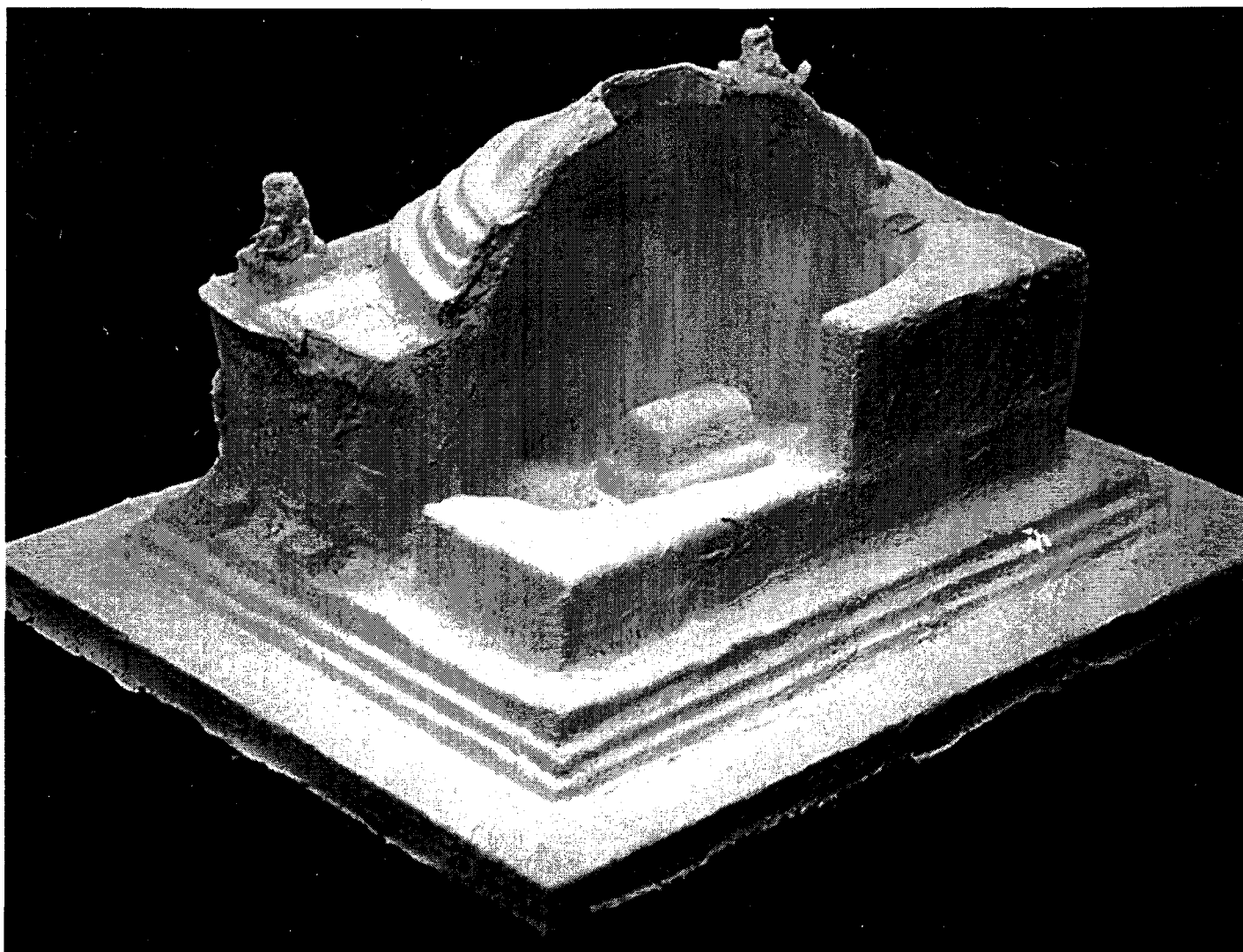
Figure 84 Cut-a-way model of the *Tomb for Julius II*, showing sarcophagus inside, exposed oval dome with stepped rings and oculus. (Photograph of model by the author).

Figure 85 Cut-a-way model of the *Tomb for Julius II*, (opposite side) with exposed oval dome, stepped rings and *non-finito* architectural elements. Raising the question: would the architecture of the tomb have been partially rendered as the *prigioni?* (Photograph of model by the author).
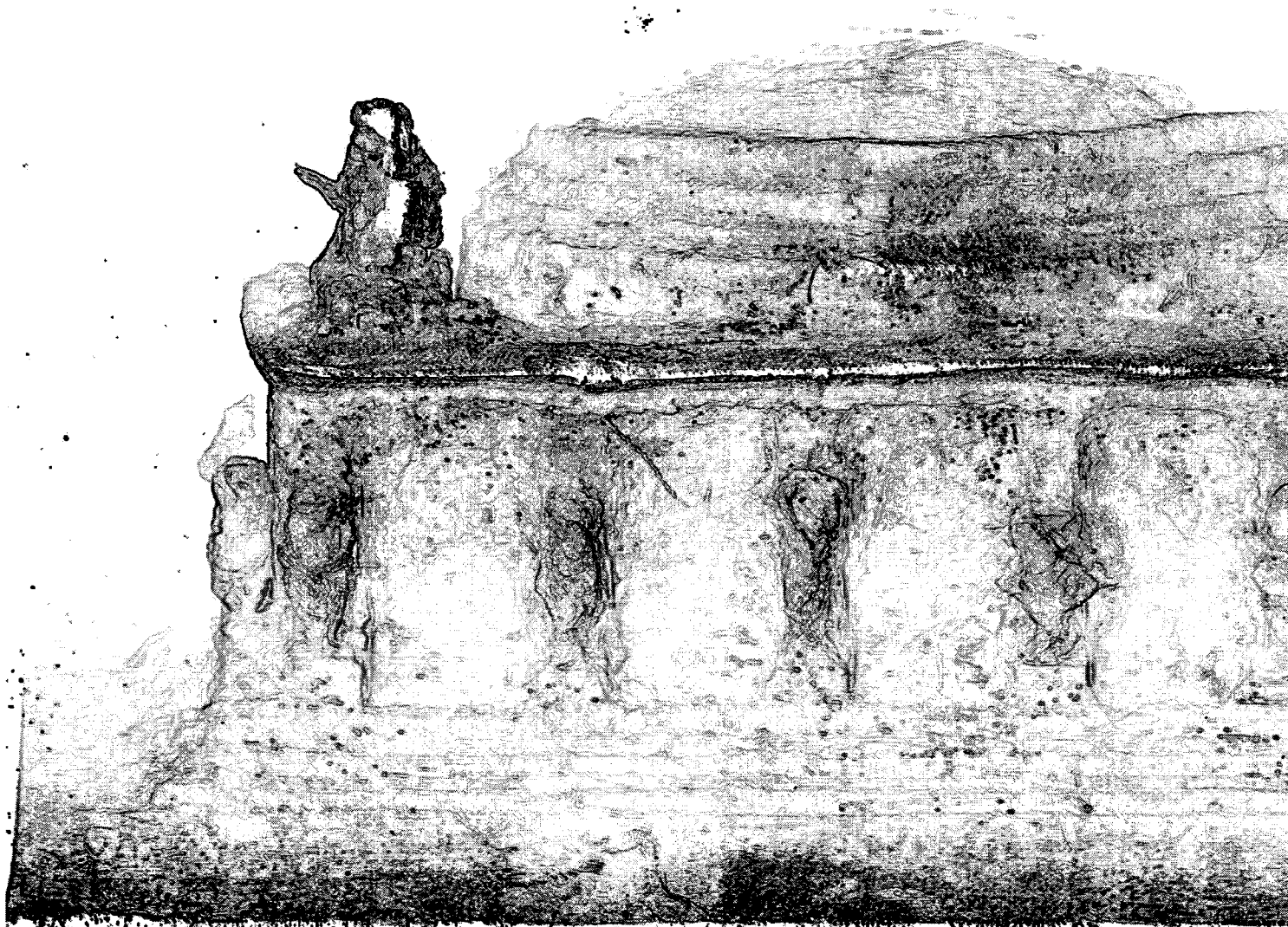
Figure 86 Study for the *Tomb for Julius II* with partially rendered (*non-finito*) architectural elements. (Digitally altered photograph of a model by the author).
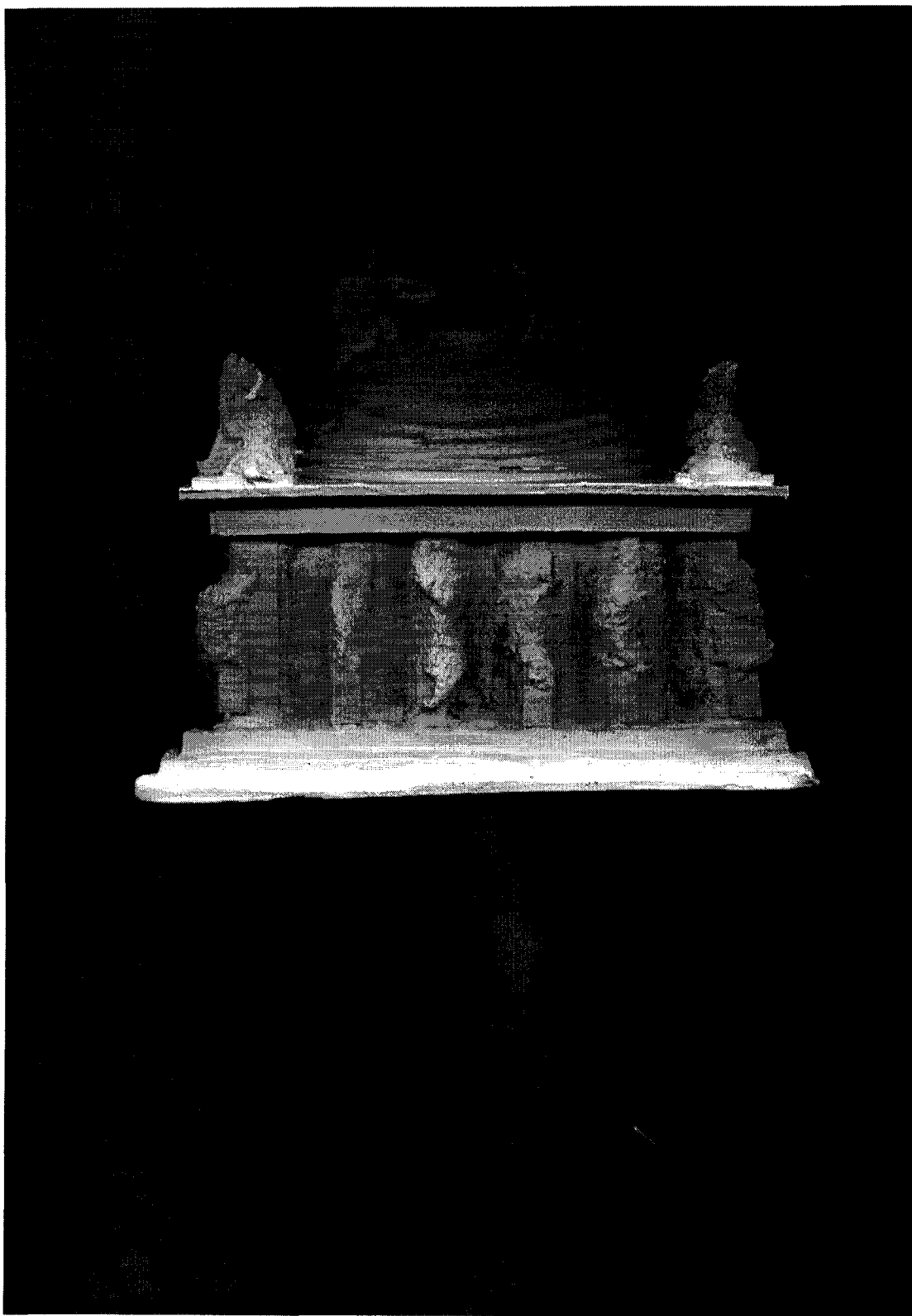
Figure 87 Study for the *Tomb of Julius II*, with exposed oval dome, stepped rings, and oculus. (Direct scan of plaster model by the author).
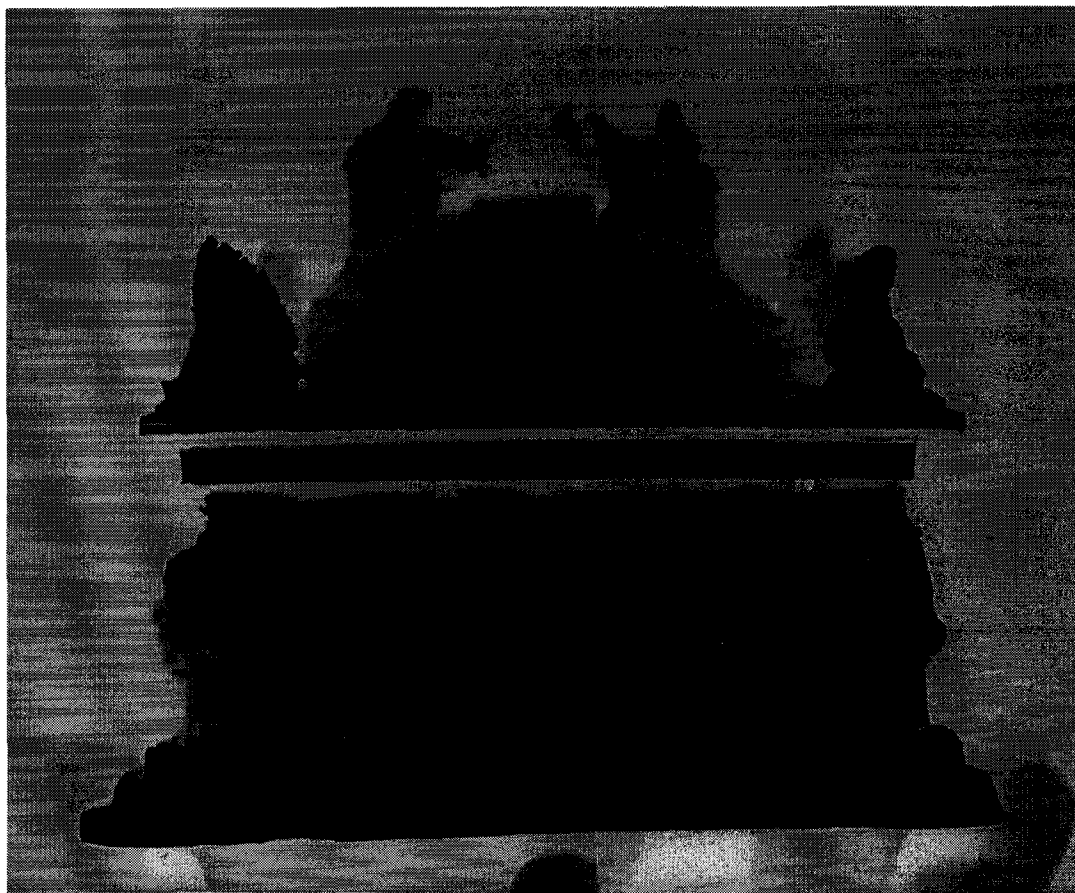
Figure 88 Study for the *Tomb of Julius II*.
(Digitally altered photograph of a model by the author).
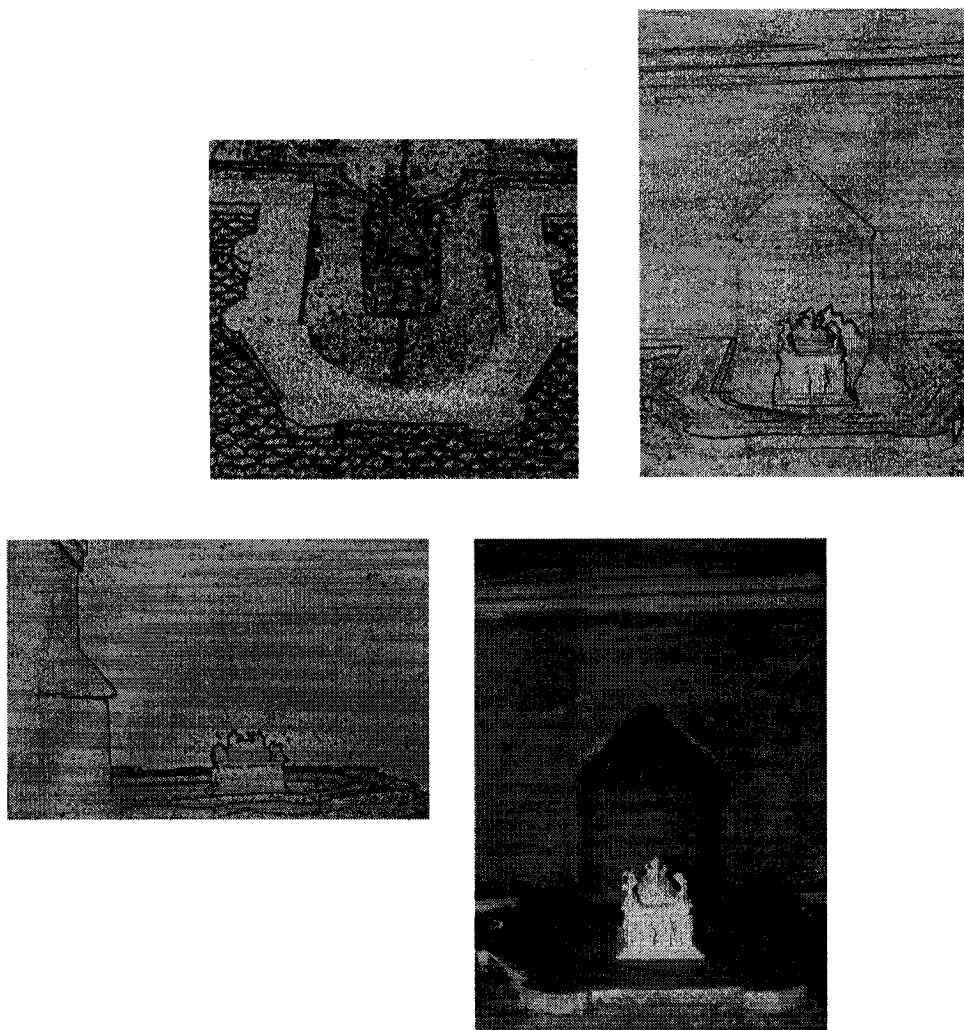
Figures 89 Studies for the placement of the *Tomb for Julius II*
in the unfinished choir of Pope Nicholas V.
(Digitally altered photographs of models by the author).
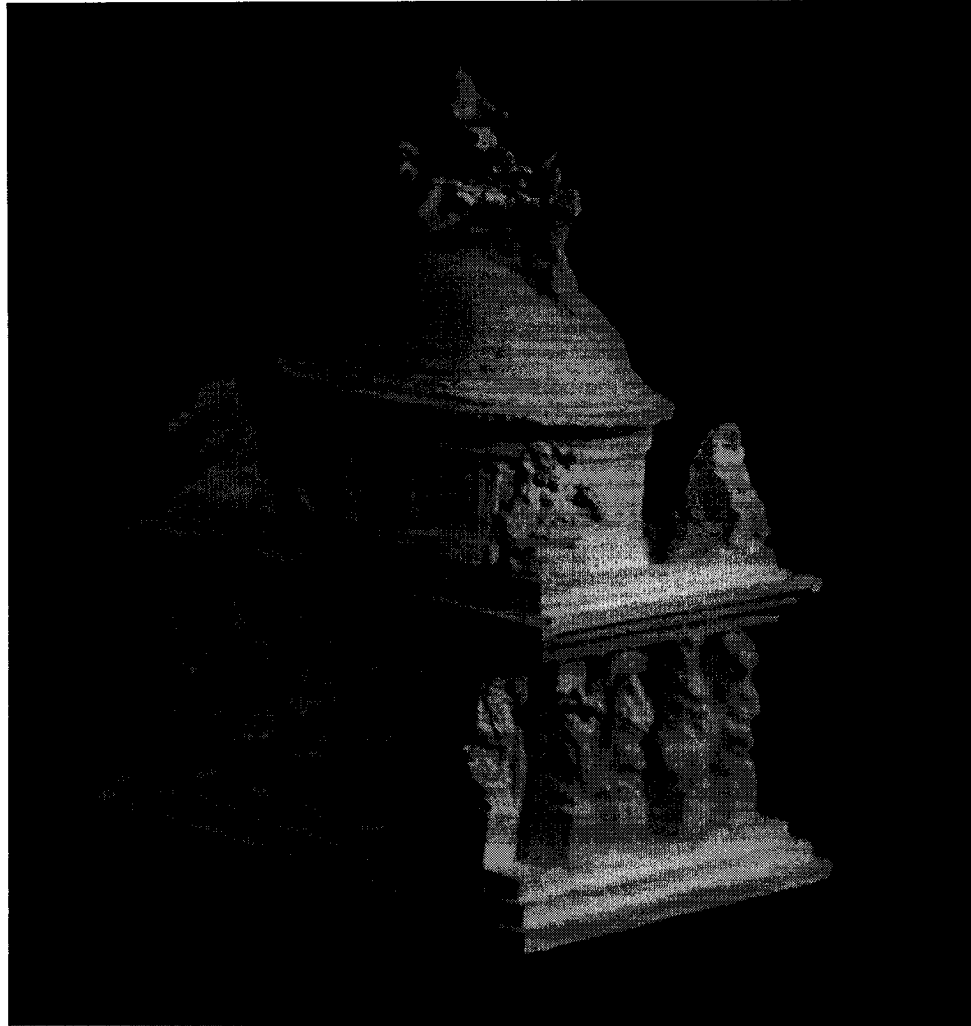
Figure 90 Study for the *Tomb of Julius II*, with exposed oval dome raised on a drum. (Photograph of a model by the author).
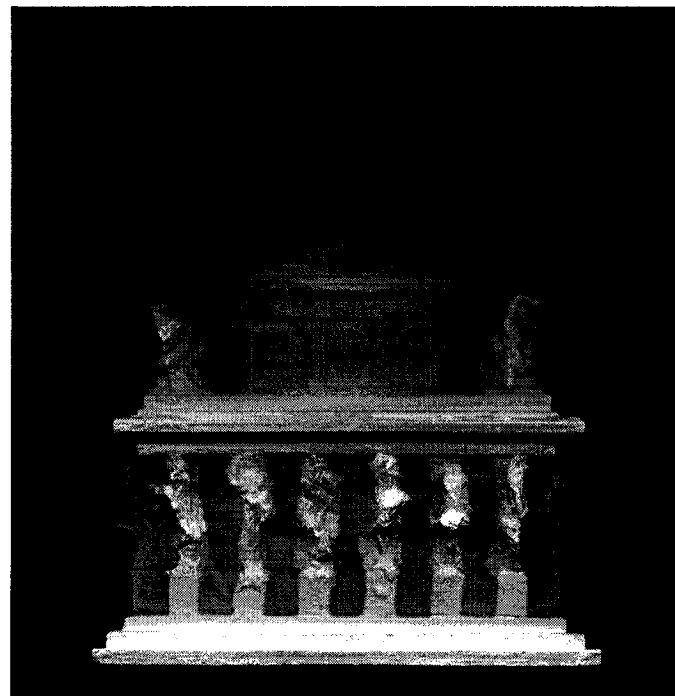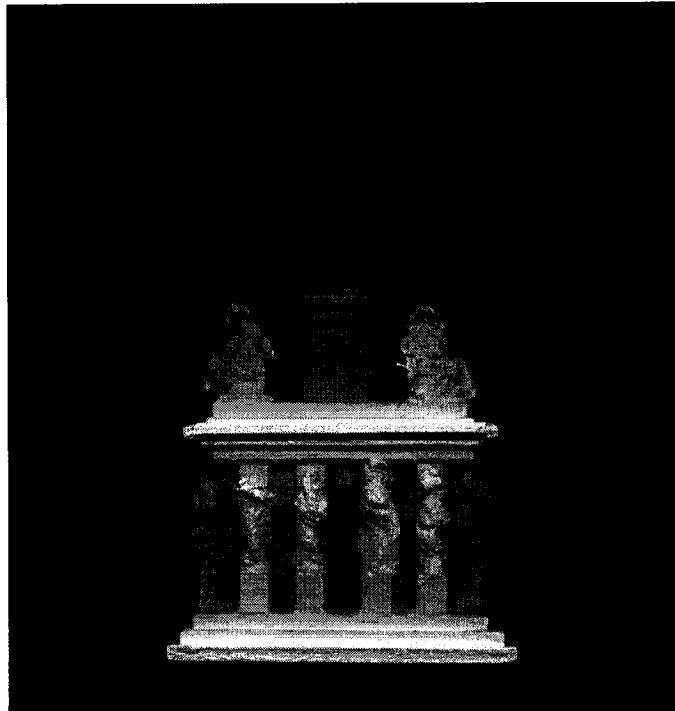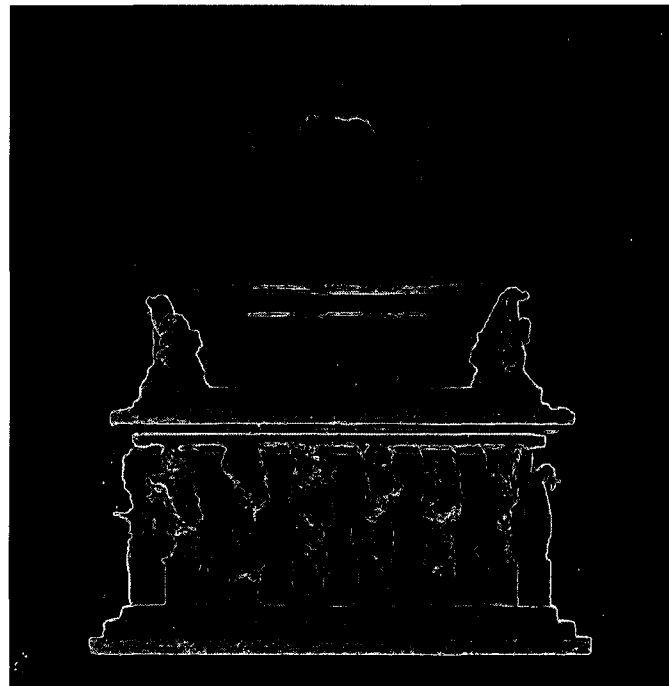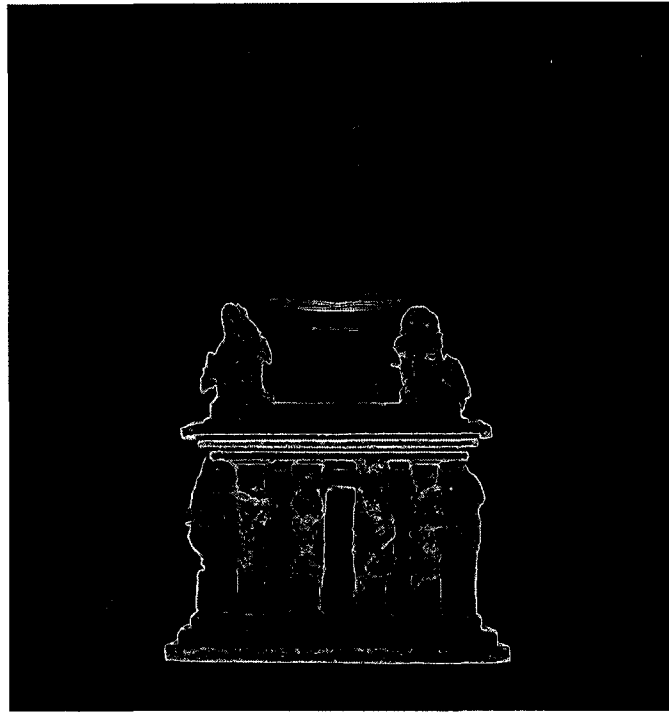
Figures 91 Study for the *Tomb for Julius II*, with exposed oval dome raised on a drum.
(Photograph of a model by the author).
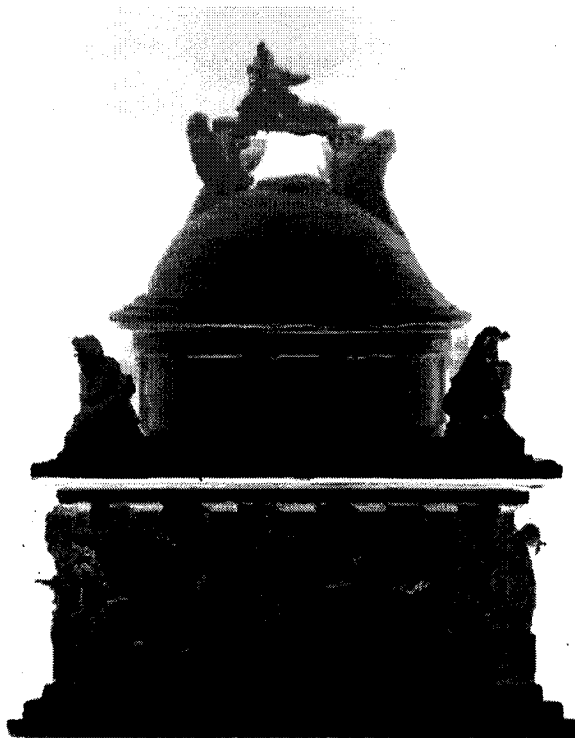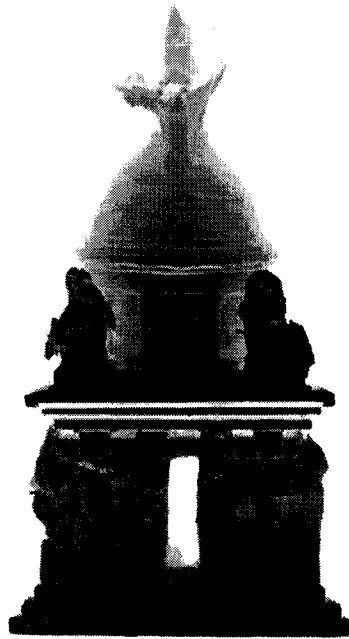
Figures 92 Study for the *Tomb for Julius II*, with exposed oval dome raised on a drum.
(Photograph of a model by the author).
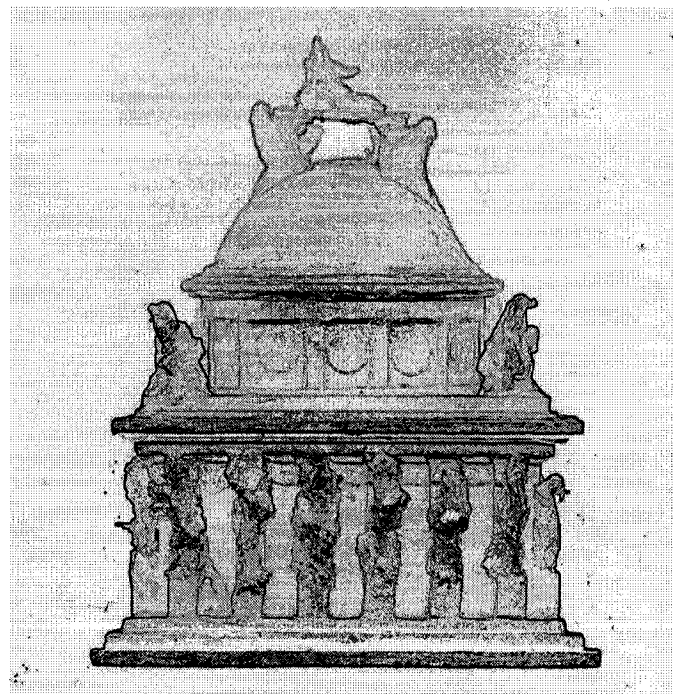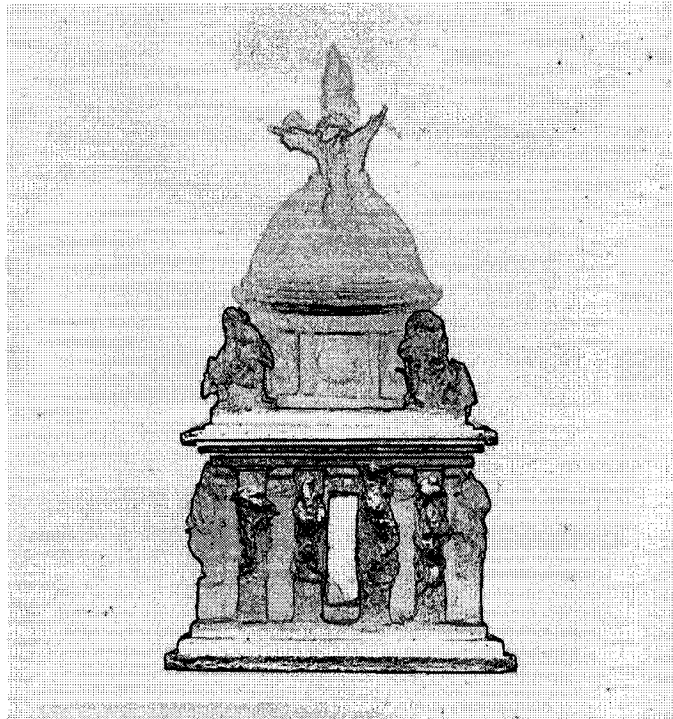
Figures 93 Study for the *Tomb for Julius II*, with exposed oval dome raised on a drum. (Photograph of a model by the author).

Figures 94 Study for the *Tomb for Julius II*, with exposed oval dome raised on a drum. (Photograph of a model by the author).
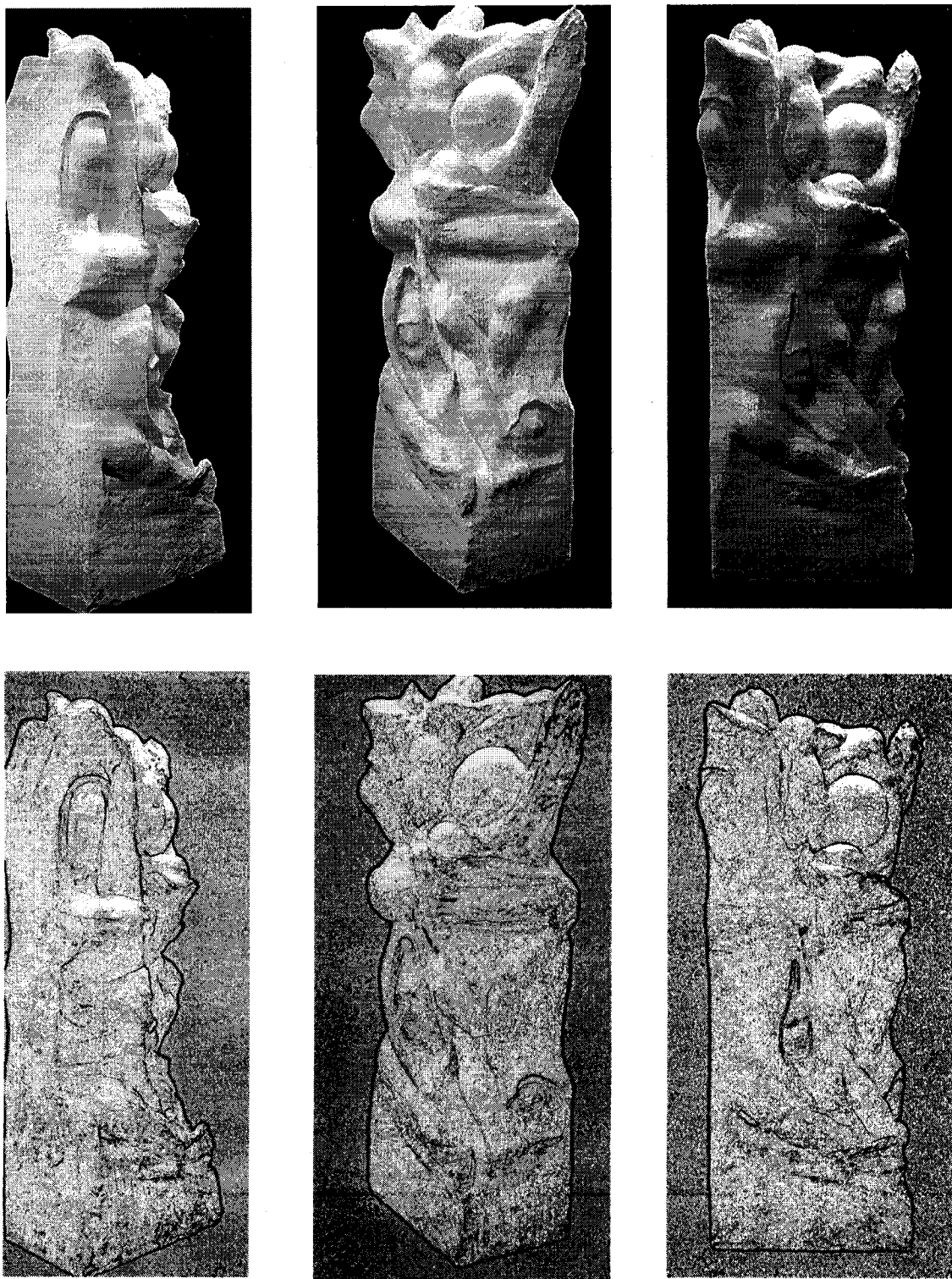
Figures 95 Studies for a *prigioni* from the time of the *Last Judgement* (c. 1534-41) (Photographs and digitally altered photographs of a sculpture by the author).
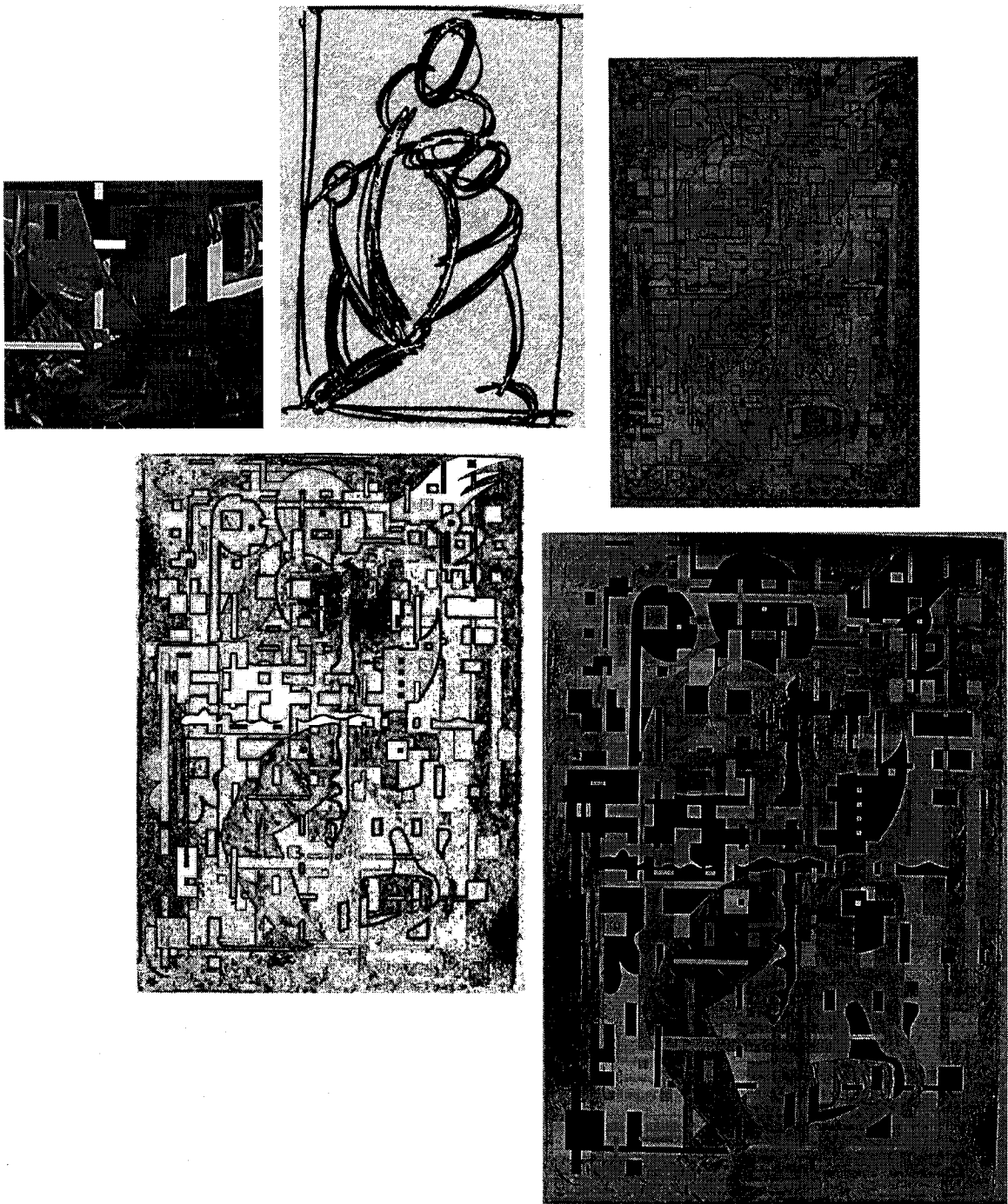
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Figures 96 Studies for a *prigioni* from the time of the *Last Judgement* (c. 1534-41)
(Photographs of a sculpture by the author).

Figure 97 Study for a *prigioni* from the time of the
Last Judgement (c. 1534-41)
(Sculpture by the author. Plaster, wire mesh, and
wood. 26.6cm x 43.2cm x 113cm).

Figures 98 Study for and transformations of painting by the author.

Œuvres Complietà
Altarpiece for the interior of the *Tomb for Julius II*.
(Painting by the author, acrylic on canvas, 122cm x 183cm, 2002).

Visualizing the Tomb
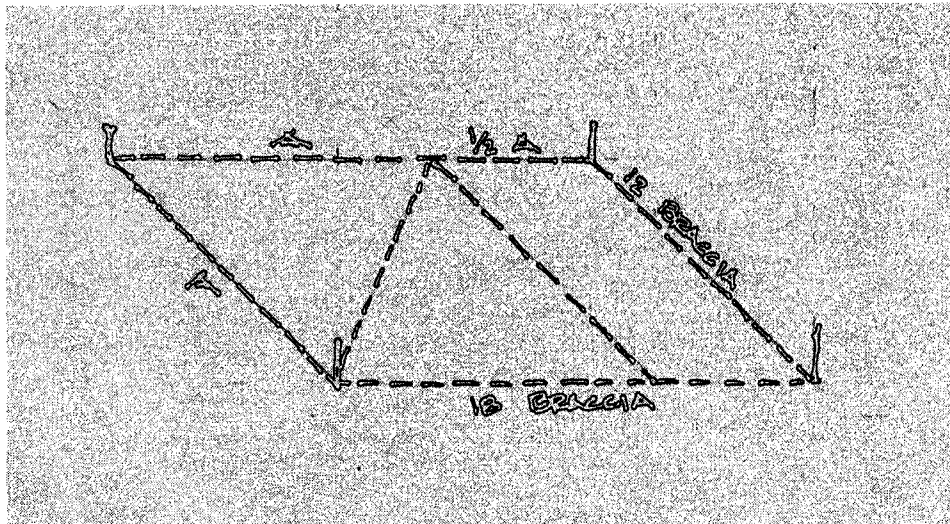
# through Vasari's Description and Michelangelo's Works[1]

Diagram of layout of the tomb by the author.

To demonstrate its grandeur, the tomb was to be isolated so as to be seen from all four sides, that measured on one side, 12 *braccia* and for the other two, 18 *braccia*, so that the proportion was that of a square and a half.[2]

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[1]With the addition of a few images by others.

[2]Vasari, 1568,(Barocchi), p. 28, "E perché ella dovesse mostrare maggior grandezza, volse che ella fusse isolata da porterla vedere da tutt'a 4 le facce, che in ciascuna era per un verso braccia 12 e per l'altre due, braccia 18, tanto che la proporzione era 1quadro e mezzo."
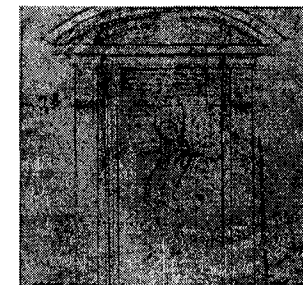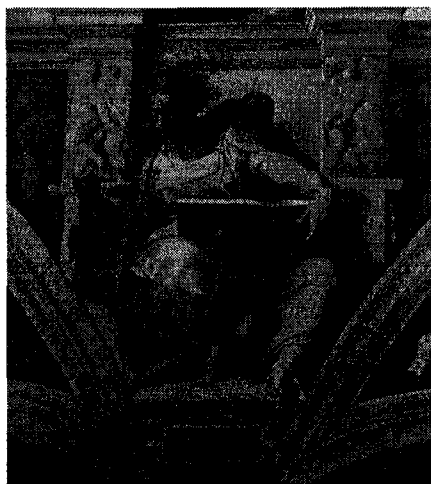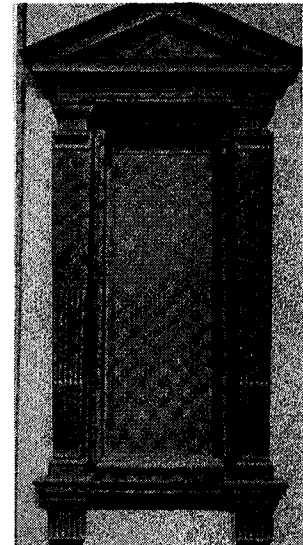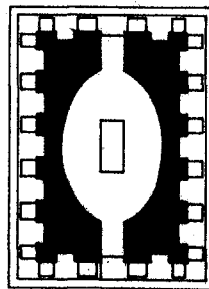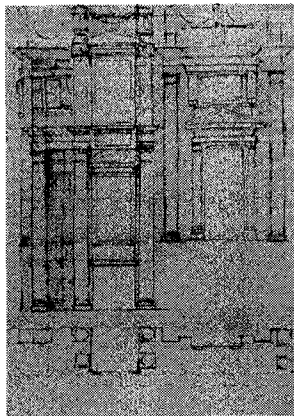
It had an arrangement of niches all around the outside, these were divided from one another by

termini[3] clothed from the middle, that supported the first cornice with their heads, . . .[4]

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[3]"A decorative figure in which a head, or a head and a bust, or the human figure to the waist and including the arms, is incorporated with (as if it were springing out of) a pillar which serves as its pedestal,"Cyril M. Harris, *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*, (New York: Dover, 1977), p. 528.

[4]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 28-9, "Aveva un ordine di nicchie di fuori attorno attorno, le quali erano tramezzate da termini vestiti dal mezzo in su, che con le testa tenevano la prima cornice, . . ."
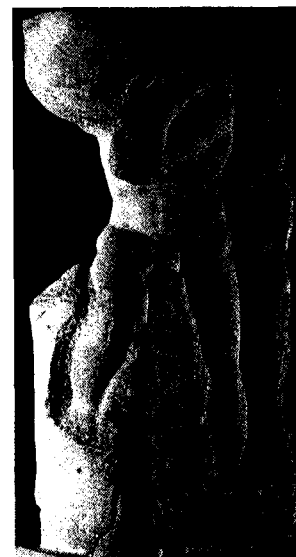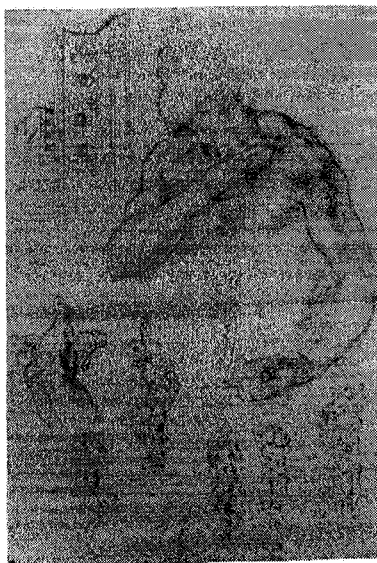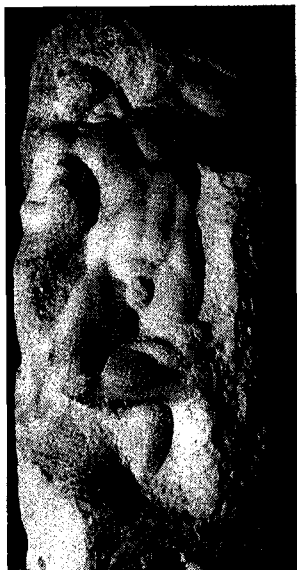
... to each of these *termine* were bound a nude prisoner, with a strange and bizarre attitude, that were posed with their feet on a projection of the base (of the tomb)."[5] these prisoners were all of the provinces that were subjugated by this pontiff, and made obedient to the apostolic church.

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[5] Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 28-9," . . . a ciascuno termine con strano e bizarra attitudine ha legato un prigione ignudo, il qua posava coi piedi in un risalto d'un basamento. Questi prigioni erano tutte le provincie soggiogate da questo pontifice, e fatte obbedienti alla chiesa apostolica;. . ."
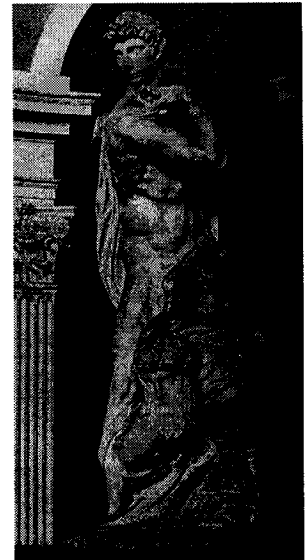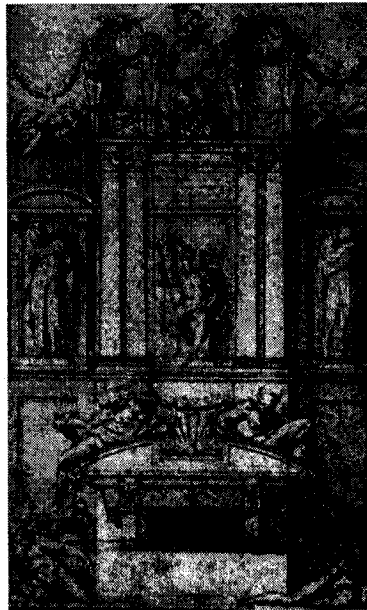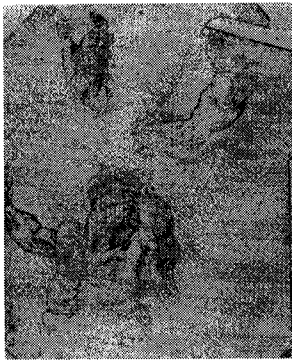
. . . and other diverse statues, yet bound, there were all the virtues and ingenious (liberal) arts, that showed they were subject to death, no less than was the pontiff, who so honorably made every effort to use them.[6]

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[6]Vasari, (Bull), p.344, and Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, ". . . ed altre statue diverse, pur legate, erano tutte le virtú ed arti ingegnose, che mostravano esser sottoposte alla morte, non meno che fusse quel ponefice, che si onaratamente le adoperava."
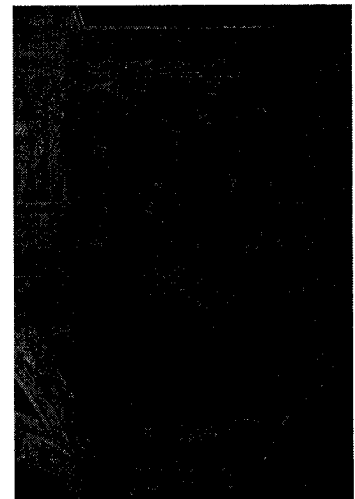
At the corners of the first cornice were to go four grand figures, the active life and the contemplative, and St. Paul and Moses.[7]

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[7]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, *"Su' canti della prima cornice andava quattro figure grandi, la vita attiva e la contemplative, e S. Paolo e Moisè."*
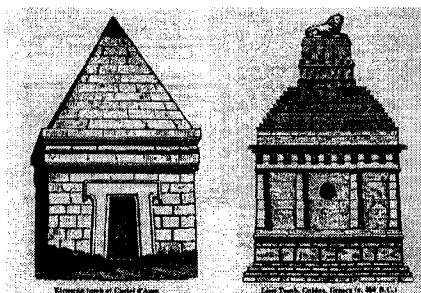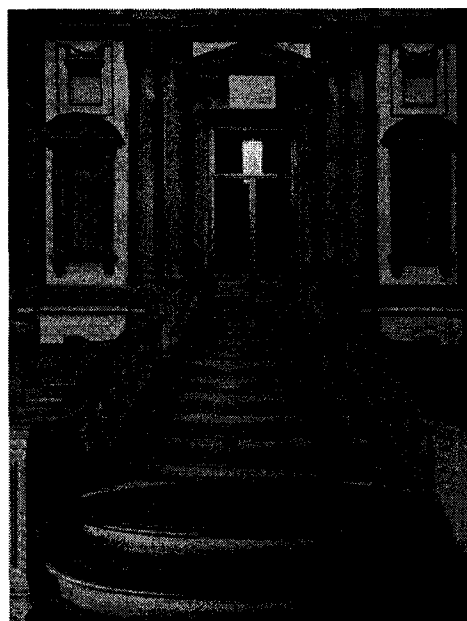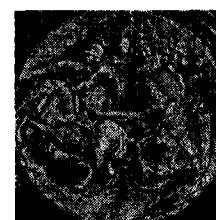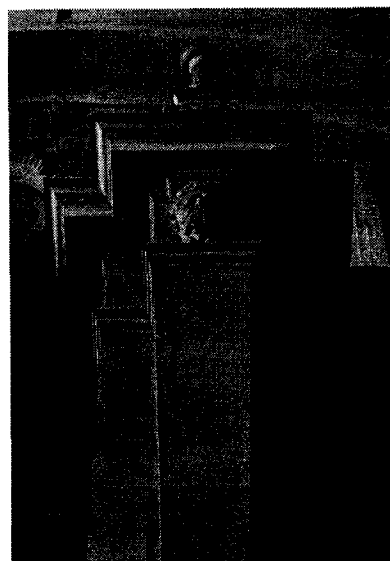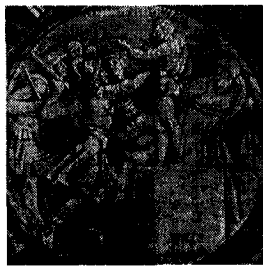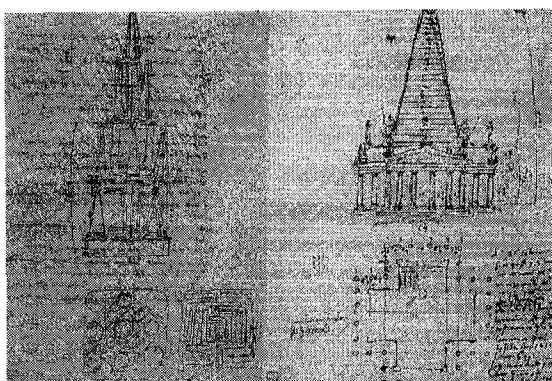
The work ascended above the cornice in diminishing steps with a frieze of stories of bronze, and

with other figures and putti and ornament all around.[8]

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[8]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, "Ascendeva l'opera sopra la cornice in gradi diminuendo con un fregio di storie di bronzo, e con altre figure e putti ed ornamenti a torno; . . ."
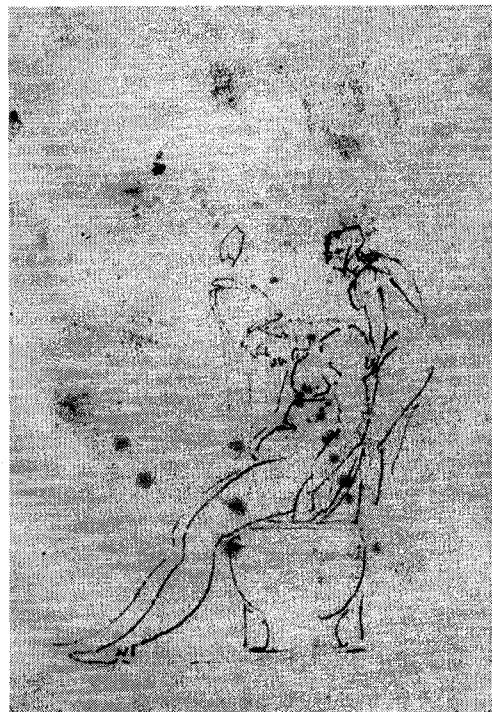
. . . and above for the end (top) were two figures, one that of Heaven, that happily held on her

shoulders a *bara* together with *Cibele*, goddess of the earth, and appeared that she ached, that she

remained on the earth deprived of all *virtù* by the death of this man, and *Cielo* appeared that was

smiling(laughing) that his soul was passing to celestial glory.[9]

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[9]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, ". . ., e sopra era per fine due figure, che una era il Cielo, che ridendo sosteneva in sulle spalle una bara insieme con Cibele Dea della terra, e pareva che si dolesse, che ella rimanesse al mondo priva d'ogni virtú per la morte di questo uomo: ed il Cielo pareva che ridesse, che l'anima sue era passata alla gloria celeste."
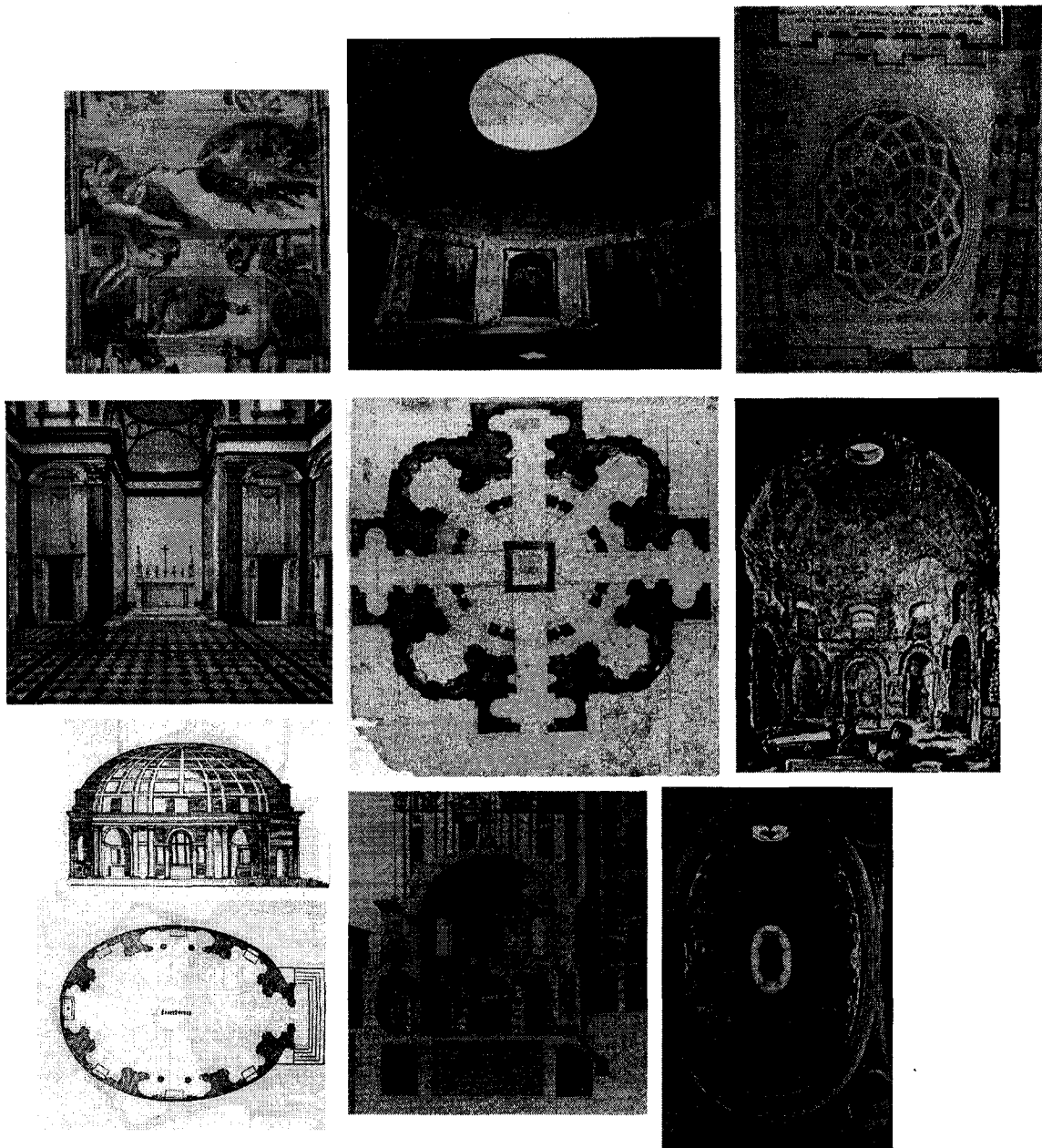
(the tomb) was arranged (*accomodato*), so that one could enter and exit by the heads (*teste*) of the

rectangular work through the middle of the niches, and inside it was, constructed like a temple

(*tempio*), in an oval form, in the middle of which was the caisson, where the dead body of that

pontiff was to be placed; . . .[10]

[10]Vasari, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, "Era accomodato, che s'entrava et usciva per le teste della quadratura dell'opera nel mezzo delle nicchie, e drento era, caminando a uso di tempio, in forma ovale, nel quale aveva nel mezzo la cassa, dove aveva a porsi il corpo morto di quel papa;. . ."
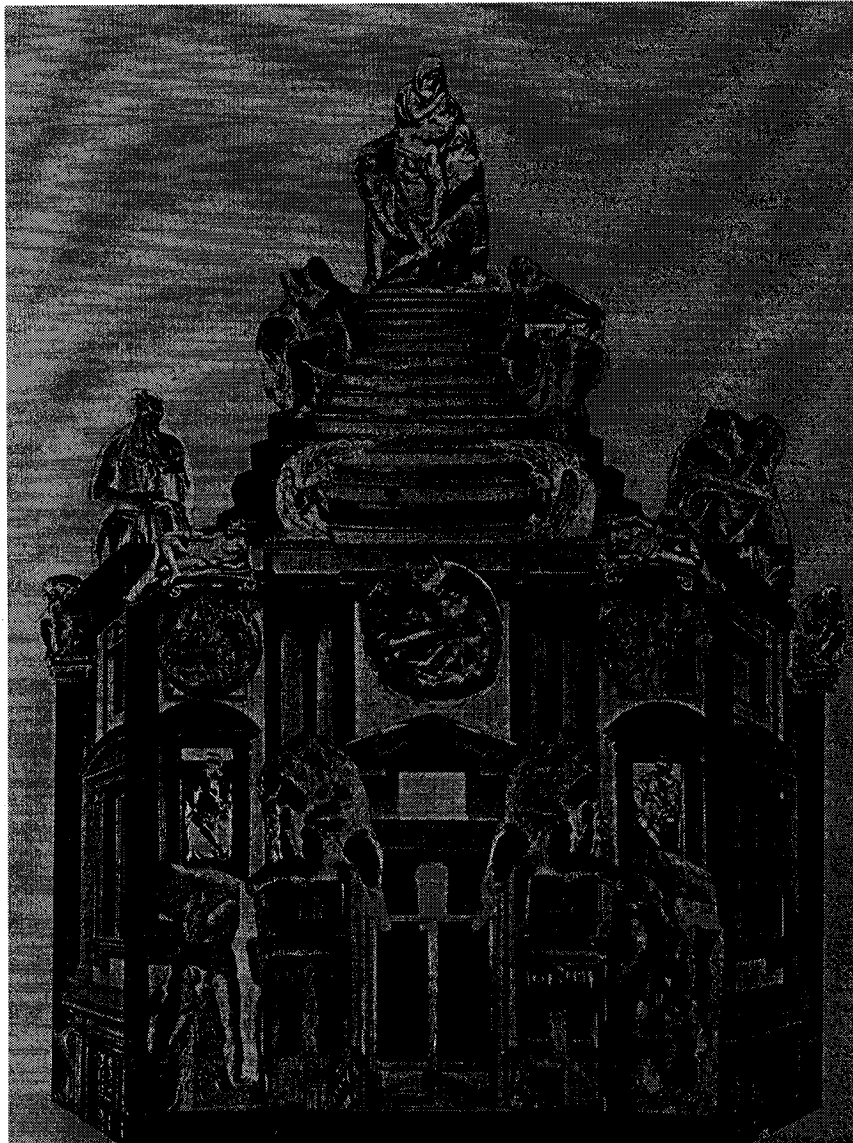
Figure 100 Digitally altered collage by author.

. . . and finally forty marble statues in all, went on this work, without (counting) the other stories (of

bronze?), *putti* and ornaments, and all the carved cornices and other members of architectural

works.[11]

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[11]Vasar, 1568, (Barocchi), p. 29, ". . .e finalmente vi andava in tutta quest'opera quaranta statue di marmo, senza l'altre storie, putti ed ornamenti, e tutte intagliate le cornice e gli altri membri dell'opera d'architettura."

Epilogue

To gain understanding, it is necessary at times, to be quiet and listen. Sweeping judgements and polemical stands are often over simplifications. Careful observation allows the "truth" to be slowly revealed. A set of stands may be ultimately more accurate than taking a (single) stand. In his final essay, Le Corbusier observed that,

> The quest for truth is not easy. For truth is not to be found at the extremes. Truth flows between two banks, a tiny rivulet or a mighty torrent ... and different every day ...

As in the carving of a relief, this search has revealed an area here, and an area there; locating a few episodes and intervals to provide a fleeting glimpse of this man, his world, and his work; allowing them to be held up as a mirror, into which the modern world's reflection might be checked.

From a modern perspective, every creative project may be read as a manifestation of one's "self." Every portrait may be understood as a self-portrait, and every architectural project may be read as a "house" for the architect. From this perspective, the tomb for Julius II was in essence, Michelangelo's tomb. It was the summation of his ethos embodied in stone. The creation of the tomb enabled him to both confront, and through its incompletion, to forestall his own mortality.

Many different Julian tombs have been discovered throughout this search: the provocative but scant descriptions provided by Vasari and Condivi; the fleeting glimpses of the tomb found in Michelangelo's subsequent works; the most correct academic reconstructions based on all the available information; the perfect completion of the tomb in each individuals imagination; and the poetic inquiries of this text. Both the difficulty of reconstructing what the first tomb project was "really like" and the futility of cogitating on which reconstruction is the most "correct" have been discussed.

Regardless of what fixed conclusions may be achieved, knowledge has been gained in the process. And it is the process, the act of making, that is the ultimate discovery. Reiterating the admonition of Ackerman, it is after all "the spirit and goals of a process," that "we must seek to capture," in order "to visualize any of Michelangelo's designs."

Architecture is a way of thinking, a process of the imagination that seeks to embody an ethos for Life. This search for the tomb is a revelation of the process of making architecture. The revelation of the process, as witnessed in the *non-finito* works, provides the only possible "medium for the representation of what essentially lies beyond the limits of representation."[1]

If the Julian tomb had been finished according to the aspirations of the first project, scholars would have much less to debate and explicate. While perhaps an intermittent agony to Michelangelo for forty years, the tomb also provided a fountainhead of inspiration for his many other projects.

If Julius had pursued the construction of his tomb with the same ruthless drive with which he pursued the restoration of the Papal States; an enormous, exquisitely finished monument would perhaps be standing in, or in the vicinity of, St. Peter's Basilica. This project would have required Michelangelo to execute (more than) forty sculptures to the level of the *Moses* (or at least to the level of the *prigioni*).

The time required for Michelangelo to have executed these works by himself would have likely precluded the *Sistine* ceiling, the *Medici Chapel*, the *Laurentian Library*, and *The Last Judgement*. The Julian tomb would also now be a static work; which

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[1] Jaouën, "Body into Text," p.1-2.

would no longer need to be reconstructed by each new generation of art historians. As a "tragedy," and as one of Michelangelo's greatest "oeuvre in-completes," it has continued to fire the imagination of architectural speculators for five centuries.

Michelangelo's *disegno* for the tomb, in its ideal form as recorded in the stories of Vasari and Condivi, was a re-presentation of a firmament amidst the chaos that was Rome and the Papal states in 1505. The tomb was an expression of what Michelangelo hoped that Julius and the papacy could aspire to, not what Julius ultimately was. The Julian tomb, as erected in *San Pietro in Vincoli* was the fulfilment of a contractual agreement. The "real" Julian tomb occupies the space between the writings of Vasari and Condivi, and their readers' imaginations. Here lies the visionary architecture that connects the Pope with Peter, the Church, and the Cosmic order of the time.

The tomb to which Vasari and Condivi allude could probably never have been physically realized. There would have been neither enough time nor enough money. There are too many gaps in its description and there is no place where it could have stood. Rather than a physical construct, the tomb is more probable as another of Vasari's "illustrative truths": a miracle necessary to "canonize" Michelangelo as the paragone of the *stòria* that he began with Giotto. As poetic fiction (a la Aristotle) the tomb has been all the more powerful during these past 500 years because of what it might have been. As a theoretical construct it belongs with Piranesi's prisons and Newton's cenotaph.

If the tomb of the narratives represented the literal intentions of Michelangelo, then it was certainly more than just a place to bury Julius II. It was a polemic act within the fabric of the Vatican. Michelangelo was proposing a re-founding of Christendom at the crumbling basilica within the once great city. It was Michelangelo's chance to arrange his hierarchical vision of the Cosmos. This tomb, this "ark" was a first step, it contained the genetic code necessary to propagate the Church and the new capitol of the Christian world. It was a plea for cosmic orientation amidts the chaos that was Rome. If indeed it was "like a temple in oval form," it may have been the thwarted attempt that would someday be the re-centering space of Rome that became the *Campidoglio*: only exchanging Julius for Marcus Aurelius.
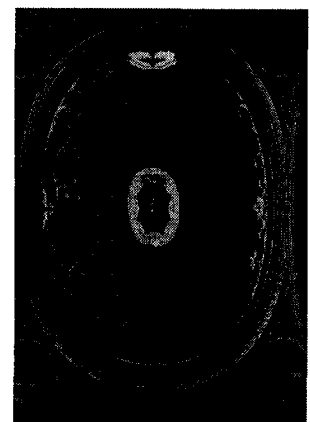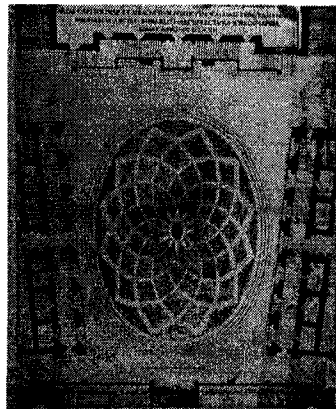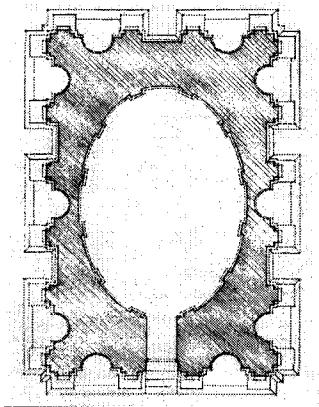
This text, like the tomb which it concerns, is necessarily *non-finito*. The richness and complexity of life is lost when the tomb is sealed too tightly. Closing the work to speculation negates its "life" and its fecundity as an "open" work, during these past 500 years . The descriptions by Vasari and Condivi give Michelangelo's project "eternal life." The Julian tomb represents the continual search of each new generation. The transmutation of history is a process, a continual renewal. Architecture is a process of ethos and imagination. The ethical concerns of Vasari and Condivi, guided the creation of new truths in their reconstructions of the tomb. These new truths, in turn, directed the imagination of their readers on to still other potential truths.

In the modern world, imagination has been largely treated as a frivolous faculty, only valued as far as it can be turned into a technology for the production of novelty. It is viewed largely as an unsubstantiable whim in the face of proven "scientific" inquiry or economically driven exigency. There is generally no shared ethos to guide imagination, and imagination is no longer seen as being able to inform a shared ethos.

"When information systems (applied science or methodologies) take the place of knowledge as a guide of *praxis*, the self-referential values of the system (efficiency and economy) invariably dominate production."[2] In other words, instead of "imagining" our way to how we want life to be, we are driven by the exigencies and the self-

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[2]Alberto Pérez-Gómez. "Architecture as Embodied Knowledge," *Journal of Architectural Education*, vol. 40, no. 2, (1987): 57-58. See also, Jürgen Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society*, Chapter Six: "Technology and Science as 'Ideology'."

perpetuating nature of the value system in which we are caught-up. As a result of this value system, our faith has been placed in the continual progress toward a technological salvation. The vast technological knowledge of contemporary western civilization has provided it with amazing instruments, but perhaps no more true knowledge into the complex workings of the world than was had by the ancient Greeks.

This un-imaginative and calculated world view in architecture, has meant that works are often finished and sealed against any possible growth, refinement, or integration; and thus, an active participation in "Life." The process of true making, if it takes place at all, usually ends long before construction has begun. Often, the only "poetics" involved in a work of architecture are the "poetics" of economy and efficiency. There is no "higher" shared meaning imbued in much of what we make, there are only the "empty signals" of ever increasing technological production.

The Human Mind can do easily what is impossible for the most powerful mainframe computer. The Human Mind can weave dynamic webs of information, while making semantic field swings; connecting things which at first glance are far apart, but which can be brought together through an imaginative recombination.

Human imagination, despite our best efforts to negate it, still has the ability to hold, mold and (re)combine the ambiguities, subtleties, and profound concerns of human

existence which cannot be quantified and reduced to a series of I's and O's. By using

the power of our imaginations, guided and   tempered by our most profound

metaphysical concerns, we *can* have a basis for ethical making in the world.

> The task involved in bringing together the petrified remnants of yesterday and the life of today
>
> provides a vivid illustration of what tradition has always meant: not just the careful preservation
>
> of monuments, but the constant interaction between our aims in the present and the past to
>
> which we still belong.[3]

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[3]Gadamer, *Relevance of the Beautiful*, p. 49.

Excursus: A Different Kind of Monument
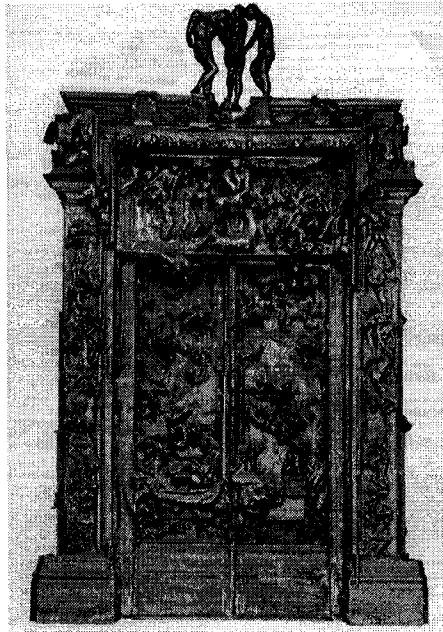
Rodin, *The Gates of Hell* (Hamilton)

A Different Kind of Monument

For a cardinal to lead a military expedition was common place, for a pope to lead one was unheard of. Julius's martial behavior was one of the aspects of his pontificate that most upset his critics.

Guicciardini wrote that Julius favored increasing the dominions of the Apostolic See, with the arms and blood of Christians, instead of laboring for the salvation of souls with the good example of their own lives, and correcting and caring for those fallen by the wayside.[1] Ironically he took his first priestly orders as a Franciscan. Giucciardini summed up Julius by stating that he was, "certainly worthy of great glory, if he had been a secular prince."[2]

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[1]Francesco Guicciardini, *Storia d'Itàlia*, book XI, chapter VIII, as cited by Shaw, *Julius II,*, p.314, note 108.

[2]Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, book XI, chapter VIII, as cited by Shaw, *Julius II*, p. 315, note 113.

Niccolo Machiavelli, in writing *The Prince*, some years later, in 1522, supported whatever "the means" if they justified "the ends."[3] Julius never seems to have doubted that the use of force to strengthen the Church and secure the independence of the Papal States was justified. At the same time, he seemed to have been sincere in his faith and conscientious in his attendance at mass.[4]

While Julius was reestablishing the presence of the Church, both physically and politically, there were those who felt he had lost sight of being the "Vicar of Christ" in the model of the "Prince of Peace." Desiderius Erasmus, the Dutch humanist theologian, wrote in his, *The Praise of Folly:*

> The Popes are sufficiently generous with . . . interdictions, excommunications, re-excommunications, anathematizations, pictured damnations, and the terrible bolt of the papal bull, which by a flicker hurls the souls of men to the depths of hell. Our Christian fathers and vicars of Christ wield the bolt against no one with more zeal than against those who are moved by the devil to nibble at and diminish the patrimony of Peter. He said, "We have forsaken all, and followed Thee"; yet they give the name patrimony to lands, towns, tributes, taxes, and riches. They fight for these things with fire and sword, inflamed by Christian zeal, and not without shedding Christian blood. They look on themselves as true apostles, defending the bride of Christ, and scattering what they are pleased to call enemies. As if the church had more deadly enemies than impious popes who by their silence cause Christ to be forgotten, who use his laws to make money, who adulterate His word with forced interpretation, and who crucify Him with their corrupt life![5]

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[3]Niccolò Machiavelli. *The Prince*, Translated and edited by Angelo M Codevilla, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

[4]Shaw, *Julius II*, p. 314.

[5]Desiderius Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*, as cited by J. Kelley Sowards, "Introduction," *The "Julius Exclusus" of Erasmus*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), p.17.

As Michelangelo was designing Julius's tomb, a work that would surpass "every ancient or imperial tomb ever made,"[6] Erasmus was devising a very different memorial to the pope. Julius, for Erasmus, was the moral equivalent of the Anti-Christ. The *Julius Exclusus* was about the contrast between Julius, the then "contemporary 'Vicar of Christ' and the scriptural image of Christ himself; and a contrast between the imperfect reality of the present church and the glowing ideal of primitive Christianity."[7] Through the word "*exclusus,*" Erasmus meant by his title that Julius was to be excluded from Heaven. Erasmus asserted the necessity for the pope, as well as for everyone, to imitate Christ. The worst of all of Julius's sins, for Erasmus, and the main point of his attack, was the pope's waging of war.[8] Erasmus wrote that, "War is so monstrous a thing that it befits beasts and not men."[9] Erasmus had traveled to Italy in 1506 to study at the great centers of learning there. Because of Julius's military campaigns, Erasmus found the universities at Bologna and Padua often closed, and the presses of Aldus Manutius in Venice, shut down. Julius became the embodiment of war and evil for Erasmus.[10]

Michelangelo may not have been aware of Julius's unbridled ambition to restore the power to the papacy at all costs, when he began the tomb project in 1505. However, by the end of Julius's papacy he could not have failed to appreciate his patron's

[6]Vasari, (Bull), p.343.

[7]Sowards, The "Julius Exclusis" of Erasmus, p. 31

[8]Sowards, The "Julius Exclusus" of Erasmus. p. 32.

[9]Desiderius Erasmus, The Praise of Folly, as cited by Felix Gilbert in The Pope, His Banker, and Venice. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 111.

[10]Gilbert, The Pope, His Banker, and Venice, p. 111-112.

ruthlessness. Michelangelo in his sonnet number ten, dated to 1512, because of its reference to "his work being finished in Rome"(*The Sistine Chapel*) takes a similar tack to Erasmus on the corruption in Rome:

Here they make helmets and swords from chalices,

and the blood of Christ is sold by the cart load,

the cross and thorns become lance and shield,

yet Christ's patience pours down.

But He should no longer come to this land,

his blood would rise to the stars,

since in Rome his flesh is being sold,

and here all the roads to goodness are blocked.

If I wanted to shed my treasure,

since for me the work here has parted,

the caped man[11] could do as Medusa did in Mauro;

but in high heaven poverty is welcome,

how can we reach our state of great restoration,

if another sign redeems the other life?[12]

Savonarola, whose sermons Michelangelo could recall much later in his life[13], was

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[11]Meaning himself.

[12]This author's translation from the Italian, "Qua si fa elmi di cal ci e spade, e 'l sangue di Cristo si vend' a giumelle, e croce e spine son lance e rotelle, e pur da Cristo pazïenzia cade. Ma non ci arrivi più 'n queste contrade, ché n' andre' 'l sangue suo 'nsin alle stelle, poscia c'a Roma gli vendon la pelle, e ècci d'ogni ben chiuso le strade. S'i' ebbi ma' voglia a perder tesauro, per ciò che qua opra da me è partita, può quel nel manto che medusa in Mauro; ma se alto in cielo è povertà gradita, qual fia di nostro stato il gran restauro, s'un altro segno ammorza l'altro vita?" From Saslow, *The Poetry of Michelangelo.*

[13]Condivi, (Wohl), p. 105.

burned and hung, with the support of the Guelphs, in 1498, largely because of his criticism of the licentiousness of the papacy. Seven years later, Michelangelo was not only working for the "glory of the papacy," but for the corruption which he chastised in his sonnet number ten. As God's will was manifested in the authority of the pope, refusing to make the tomb was not a possibility in Michelangelo's world. The question of an un-holy patron was not an issue, as Michelangelo's intentions in the tomb were both inspired by and for the glory of God.
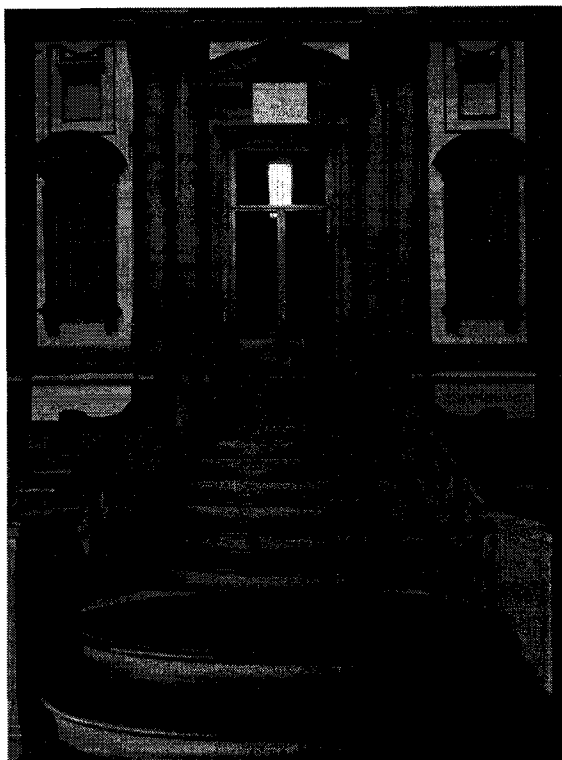
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[1]In addition to listing cited works, this Bibliography also records the intellectual routes traveled in search of Michelangelo's Julian tomb.

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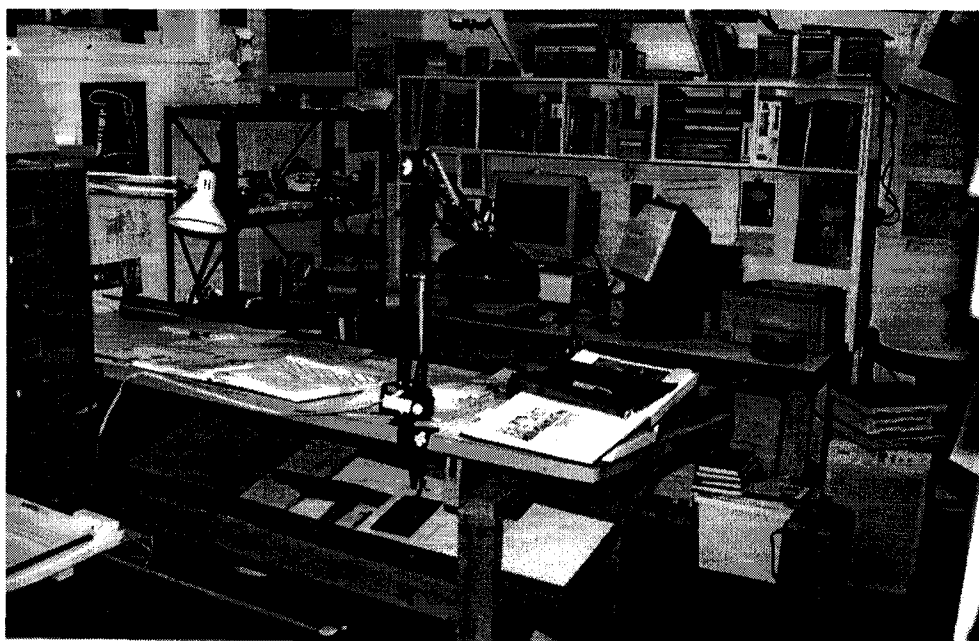
Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak.