The Laurentian Library and Michelangelo's Architectural Method

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THE LAURENTIAN LIBRARY
AND MICHELANGELO'S ARCHITECTURAL METHOD[*]

David Hemsoll

… thus all architects owe him an infinite and permanent obligation, because he broke the ties and chains that had kept them previously to a common road. (Vasari, *Life of Michelangelo*, 1550)

There is, I believe, a central problem which has become entrenched in discussions of Michelangelo's architecture. It pervades most modern writings, from Wittkower's pioneering study of the Laurentian Library (1934) to Ackerman's fundamental monograph (1961) and other more recent offerings.[1] The difficulty lies in the way Michelangelo's architecture tends to be described and evaluated, which is largely in just its own terms, and according to its own supposed qualities, strengths and merits. This has resulted in his schemes being presented as if curiously unaffected by the wider architectural world, and set apart from the predilections and practices of his times; thus, they are treated very differently from the works of his Renaissance contemporaries and predecessors. His schemes—perhaps above all the Laurentian Library—are characterised, for example, as personal solutions to external demands and constraints; as final manifestations of internalised creative processes; as perceived vehicles of expressive or emotive forces upon the viewer; as 'mannerist'; or as just plain 'odd.' They are hardly viewed at all in relation to the broader context of Renaissance architecture or its traditions, or in relation to any underlying rationale or methodology. Certainly, aspects of Michelangelo's architectural theory—deduced from his writings and those of his contemporaries—have been discussed; but these findings scarcely seem to clarify his approach, since his theory is hardly ever shown to have any specific bearing upon his architecture.[2]

At the heart of the problem, I submit, is a tradition of resistance in the literature to the idea of Michelangelo using architectural prototypes to design his buildings. This is the idea I shall be pursuing here in order to clarify his architectural approach. Some prototypes have, none the less, been noted by previous writers, although only in passing. My initial objective is simply to discern which of these are relevant to the current enquiry; however, I shall then add to them by proposing further models

which Michelangelo appears to have employed. I shall suggest that, in fact, he made deliberate and extensive use of design models—just as he did in his painting and sculpture—and that he often intended these models to be recognised in order to add a powerful associative dimension to his finished schemes. Thus, his practice with regard to models was comparable to that of many other Renaissance architects, whose works are so much better illuminated once their prototypes are identified. To deny this practice or to neglect its implications, I contend, results in an incomplete account of Michelangelo's design methods and a limited understanding of his architecture. Conversely, to acknowledge his use of models makes it possible not only to compare the prototypes with the finished schemes, to see how they were transformed, but also to compare this transformative design process with the creative methods followed by other architects. By considering Michelangelo's practice in relation to contemporary ideas on imitation, and by linking his methods to certain theories from his circle about architecture and art in general, we can, I believe, begin to assess his intentions. It is from this perspective that, I hope, we shall gain a clearer understanding of the real significance of the approach finally manifested in the Laurentian Library.

The works of Michelangelo which I shall be considering here are the three major schemes from his Florentine period, all connected with the church complex of S. Lorenzo: namely his unrealised façade project (1516–17), the New Sacristy (designed from 1519) and, in particular, the Laurentian Library (designed from 1524). Looking at these particular works is important for three main reasons. Firstly, they include two schemes—the Sacristy and the Library—which by any assessment are most unusual for their time, and therefore demand some explanation. Secondly, the three schemes together cover that discrete and crucial phase in Michelangelo's career when his mature approach to architecture was being formulated—a process which was to find its final fruition in the Laurentian Library project. Thirdly, they belong to a period singled out for its innovatory significance by Vasari in his *Life* of Michelangelo of 1550.[3] The passage concerned has proved to be enormously influential on subsequent commentators. It occurs where Vasari, having previously described the work on the S. Lorenzo façade, moves on to the New Sacristy, where he notes the 'composite ornament' and the 'novelty' of the detailing, and declares

3. G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architetti*, ed. G. Milancsi, 9 vols, Florence 1878–85, VII, pp. 193–94; ed. P. Barocchi, *La vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, 5 vols, Milan and Naples 1962, I, pp. 58–59 (with III, pp. 790–887 for commentary): 'E perché egli la volse fare ad imitazione della Sagrestia vecchia che Filippo Brunelleschi aveva fatto, ma con un altro ordine di ornamenti, vi fece dentro un ornamento composito, nel più vario e più nuovo modo che per tempo alcuno gli antichi e i moderni maestri abbino potuto operare: perché nella novità di sì belle cornici, capitegli e base, porte, tabernacoli e sepolture fece assai diverso da quello che di misura, ordine e regola facevano gli uomini secondo il comune uso e secondo Vitruvio e le antichità, per non volere a quello agiugnere. La quale licenzia ha dato grande animo a

quelli che hanno veduto il far suo, di mettersi a imitarlo, e nuove fantasie si sono vedute poi alla grottesca, più tosto che a ragione o regola, a'loro ornamenti; onde gli artifici gli hanno infinito e perpetuo obligo, avendo egli rotti i lacci e le catene delle cose che per via d'una strada comune eglino di continuo operavano. Ma poi lo mostrò meglio, e volse far conoscere tal cosa nella Libreria di San Lorenzo nel medesimo luogo, nel bel partimento delle finestre, nello spartimento del palco, e nella maravigliosa entrata di quel ricetto. Né si vidde mai grazia più risoluta nel tutto e nelle parti, come nelle mensole, ne'tabernacoli e nelle cornici, né scala più comoda; nella quale fece tanto bizzarre rotture di scaglioni e variò tanto della comune usanza delli altri, che ognuno se ne stupì.'

that Michelangelo had conceived the design 'in measure, order and rule' in a 'quite different' way from those who worked 'following common usage, and following Vitruvius and the works of Antiquity'. This idea he then encapsulates in his unforgettable comment that Michelangelo 'broke the ties and chains' which had restricted previous architects to a 'common road'. Finally he turns to the Laurentian Library, remarking that Michelangelo had demonstrated his ideas there all the better, and had wished them to be made known ('volse far conoscere').

My view of Vasari's account is that it is misleading and problematic. By placing such emphasis—and so simplistic an emphasis—on the notion of novelty and freedom from precedent, he presented Michelangelo's architecture as if somehow lacking a methodological basis; and in this important respect, his account provided the template for subsequent criticism. In what follows I shall attempt to characterise Michelangelo's method, and in particular his use of specific architectural types. I do not deny his preoccupation with novelty, or that his approach changed very considerably between designing the S. Lorenzo façade and the Laurentian Library, but I shall contend that his reliance on prototypes was maintained throughout. What changed were, rather, the sorts of prototypes he chose and the ways he adapted them. I shall be arguing that, in fact, the development in Michelangelo's architecture, culminating in the Laurentian Library project, was to a large extent a development of his method, which was finally very elaborate as well as being very distinctly his. As for Michelangelo's own sense of his method, this is perhaps alluded to in Vasari's comment that he wished his ideas to be 'made known' in the Laurentian Library.

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It is quite apparent that Michelangelo was already committed to the practice of using architectural prototypes when he was commissioned to design the S. Lorenzo façade, in the aftermath of some sort of competition staged in 1515/16, involving Raphael and other prominent architects.[4] Michelangelo's project underwent a design evolution in 1516–17, which resulted in the production of two separate schemes.[5] His earlier proposal, referred to in copies as the *primo disegno* (Fig. 1), is closely connected to a façade design relating to the S. Lorenzo commission, which had been devised by the aging Giuliano da Sangallo shortly before his death in 1516 (Fig. 2).[6] The

4. The competition is recorded by Vasari (as in n. 3, ed. Milancsi, VII, p. 188; ed. Barocchi, I, pp. 54–55; and also in the *Life* of Sansovino, ed. Milanesi, VII, p. 496). See e.g. S. Borsi, *Giuliano da Sangallo. I disegni di architettura e dell'antico*, Rome 1985, pp. 472–91. There are major difficulties in interpreting what actually took place, as it is unclear what form the competition took, why the schemes of the apparent competitors are of such differing format, and whether or not the several surviving schemes produced by Giuliano da Sangallo were directly connected with it.

5. For extensive discussion of Michelangelo's schemes see Ackerman (as in n. 1), I, pp. 11–20; II, pp. 3–17; H. A. Millon in idem and C. H. Smyth, *Michelangelo architetto. La facciata di San Lorenzo e la cupola di San Pietro*, Milan 1988, pp. 1–89; Argan and

Contardi (as in n. 1), pp. 80–82, 161–72; C. Elam, 'Drawings as Documents. The Problem of the San Lorenzo Façade', in *Michelangelo Drawings*, ed. C. H. Smyth, Washington, D.C. 1992, pp. 99–114; H. A. Millon, 'Michelangelo and the Façade of S. Lorenzo in Florence', in *The Renaissance from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo. The Representation of Architecture*, ed. idem and V. M. Lampugnani, Milan 1994, pp. 565–72.

6. The *primo disegno* is known from a number of copies existing in two variants (the first: Munich, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung 33256; the second: Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Wicar Collection, *Livre de Michel-Ange*, no. 772ᵛ; Rugby School 54.II; Modena, Biblioteca Estense MS Campori, App. 1755, gZ 2-2, fol. 71; Siena, Biblioteca Comunale MS S.IV.I, Biringucci Sketchbook, fol. 145). Giuliano da Sangallo's scheme is Florence, Uffizi 277A (with a variant,
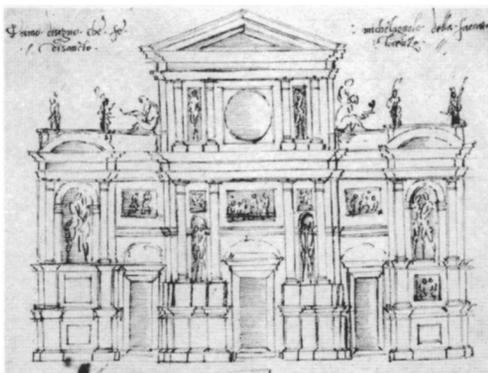
Figure 1. Copy (early 16th-century) of Michelangelo's *primo disegno* for the S. Lorenzo façade in Florence (Munich, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung 33256, detail)
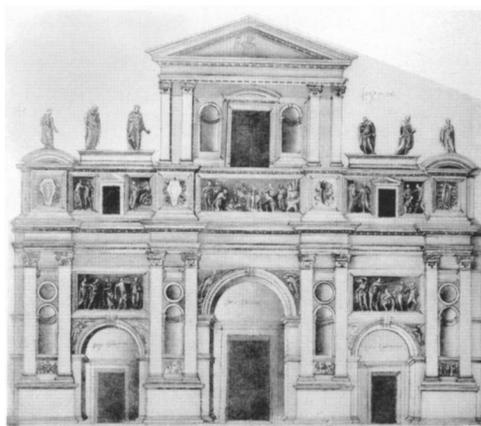
Figure 2. Giuliano da Sangallo, church design connected with the S. Lorenzo façade (Florence, Uffizi 277A)

similarities, which have never been fully appreciated,[7] show that the Sangallo design is the prototype and that the *primo disegno* is little more that a simple re-adjustment, conforming to the shape, format and ornamental vocabulary of the original, and repeating such noteworthy features as the segmental pediments over the end-bays. Michelangelo's final scheme (1517), known from a surviving wooden model (Fig. 3) and several related drawings, is likewise based on a design devised by Giuliano da Sangallo (Fig. 4), one this time produced specifically for the S. Lorenzo façade.[8] This design provides the immediate prototype for the overall composition, with its tall mezzanine and its upper storey with pedestals, despite the format and detailing being rather varied, and the main architectural order being changed from Doric to Corinthian.

It should be said straight away that the use of Sangallo's design as a prototype entailed serious ramifications. With their wide and narrow bays, fluted columns and niches, neither scheme was particularly Florentine in its style. Indeed, Michelangelo's façade, which was to be realised in white marble, owes little to previous Florentine traditions of architecture and almost nothing to the style of Brunelleschi's early-fifteenth-century church interior, with its dark-stone forms and sparse articulation.[9]

Uffizi 278A); see Borsi (as in n. 4), pp. 472–80. The Marian imagery of the relief decoration above the central portal (The Adoration of the Magi) suggests that the scheme may have originally been intended for a different church. That it was then taken up in connection with the S. Lorenzo façade is suggested by annotations above the portals referring to scenes of St Lawrence.

7. Several commentators have, none the less, drawn attention to Sangallo's scheme, including M. Hirst, *Michelangelo and his Drawings*, New Haven, CT and London 1988, p. 83, who notes its connection to Michelangelo's own large-scale 'presentation' drawing of the S. Lorenzo façade (Florence, Casa Buonarroti 45A). This drawing is a variant of the

primo disegno and can be understood as another variation on the Sangallo prototype.

8. Florence, Uffizi 281A; also known from a variant, Uffizi 276A; see Borsi (as in n. 4), pp. 485–89.

9. This is not to say that it is completely divorced from Florentine tradition. It follows the example of Alberti's S. Maria Novella façade in having a lower storey of half-columns (actually full columns halfway recessed into the wall) and an upper one of pilasters; and it looks back to the local precedents of Il Cronaca's church of S. Salvatore al Monte (c. 1490) and Florence's medieval Baptistery for the motif on the upper storey of a tabernacle framed by pilasters. The unusual and very striking elaboration of the
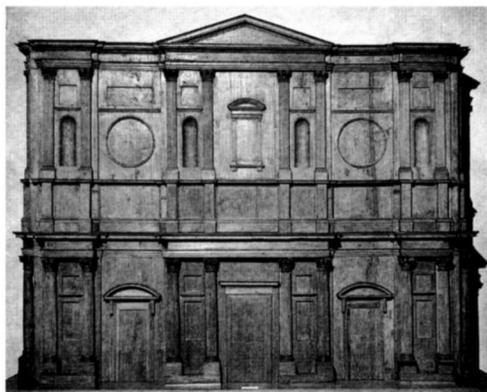
Figure 3. Model of Michelangelo's final design for
the S. Lorenzo façade (Florence, Casa Buonarroti)

Figure 4. Giuliano da Sangallo, project for the
S. Lorenzo façade (Florence, Uffizi 281A)

Figure 5. Bramante and Andrea Sansovino, Santa
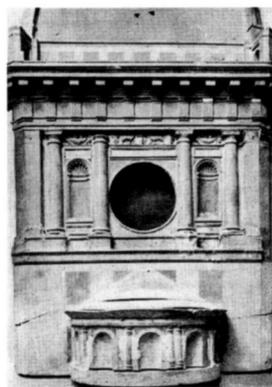Casa, Loreto (Photograph: Conway Library)

Figure 6. Attr. Giuliano da Sangallo. Florence,
Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, no. 140

Instead, it is conceived in a decidedly modern *all'antica* manner, in keeping with various prominent monuments from classical Antiquity, and similar in appearance to various *all'antica* buildings put up in other parts of Italy during this same period, such as the Santa Casa in Loreto (begun 1509; Fig. 5), the Caracciolo Chapel in Naples (c. 1515) and Antonio da Sangallo the Elder's Madonna di S. Biagio at Montepulciano (1518).[10] It was also akin to certain schemes produced very recently in Florence, such as one of the unrealised proposals made in 1515/16 for the drum of the Cathedral, which is recorded in a model (Florence, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, no. 140) and attributed to Giuliano da Sangallo (Fig. 6).[11]

corners, where the entablature is set back on both the front and the sides in two stages, is anticipated in the Piccolomini altar (1481–85; Figs 11, 12) in Siena Cathedral, the central alcove of which is also recessed in two stages.

10. A similar point is made by W. E. Wallace (*Michelangelo at San Lorenzo: the Genius as Entrepreneur*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 13 and 48), who considers Michelangelo's use of white marble and full columns

as particularly indicative of a deliberate imitation of Antiquity, and suggests as a possible model the Septizodium in Rome. Michelangelo's scheme is more closely related, however, to the ancient arches of Septimius Severus and Constantine.

11. For the drum see e.g. A. Nova, 'The *ballatoio* of S. Maria del Fiore in Florence', in *The Renaissance from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo* (as in n. 5), pp. 591–97. Other schemes in Florence designed in a similar

Figure 7. New Sacristy, Florence, interior
(Photograph: Conway Library)

Figure 8. Old Sacristy, Florence, interior
(Photograph: Conway Library)

It is clear, however, that Michelangelo changed his approach when he came to design the New Sacristy, the Medici burial chapel which was commissioned in 1519 and occupied him until the late 1520s or perhaps later.[12] For—as Vasari expressly states—his scheme was designed 'in imitation' ('ad imitazione') of Brunelleschi's Old Sacristy, a structure attached to the same church in a corresponding position, and a work which thus served as a prototype that was now specifically Florentine.[13] The New Sacristy has a layout of similar size and arrangement, with a larger and a smaller domed space, while the larger space (Fig. 7) has an articulation comparable to that on the end-wall of the Old Sacristy (Fig. 8), with dark-stone pilasters and other architectural forms set against a white-plaster background.

'High Renaissance' style include Raphael's Palazzo Pandolfini (1516/17) and, later, Baccio d'Agnolo's Palazzo Bartolini-Salimbeni (1520). Cf. also the temporary façade to the Cathedral and the triumphal arches erected for the entry of Pope Leo X into Florence in 1515. For a survey of Florentine architecture during this period see e.g. G. Morolli, 'Firenze 1495–1527: un classicismo mancato', in *Raffaello e l'architettura a Firenze*, ed. A. Calvani, Florence 1984, pp. 119–39.

12. For the New Sacristy see J. Wilde, 'Michelangelo's Designs for the Medici Tombs', this *Journal*, XVIII, 1955, pp. 54–66; Ackerman (as in n. 1), I, pp. 21–32; II, pp. 22–30; C. Elam, 'The Site and Early Building History of Michelangelo's New Sacristy', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XXIII, 1979, pp. 155–86; H. Saalman, 'The New Sacristy of San Lorenzo before Michelangelo', *Art*

Bulletin, LXVII, 1985, pp. 199–228; Argan and Contardi (as in n. 1), pp. 85–94, 175–85.

13. See above n. 3. The same observation had been made by Antonio Billi already in the 1520s: 'Nella architettura ha composte tante altre cose fuori del modello della nuova sagrestia di Santo Lorenzo, dove si potrebbe dire, che nella meggiore parte habbia auto esemplo della vechia, fatta in decto Santo Lorenzo, ordinata insieme con la chiesa di Filippo di ser Brunellescho' (*Il Libro di Antonio Billi*, ed. C. Frey, Berlin 1892, p. 53). Vasari also compares the lanterns of the New and the Old Sacristy (as in n. 3, ed. Milanesi, VII, p. 192; ed. Barocchi, I, p. 58). For further discussion of the lantern see W. E. Wallace, 'The Lantern of Michelangelo's Medici Chapel, *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XXXIII, 1989, pp. 17–36.
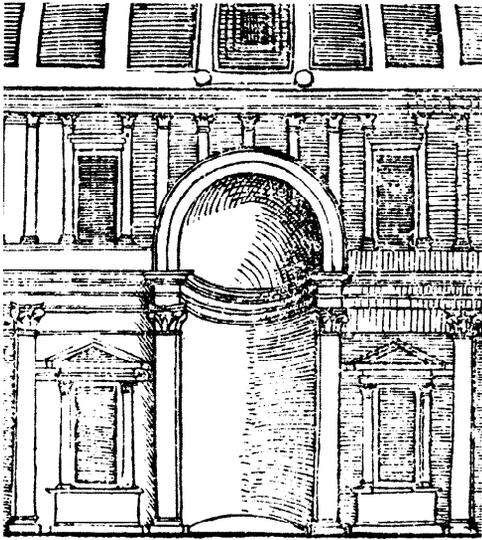
Figure 9. Pantheon, Rome, interior
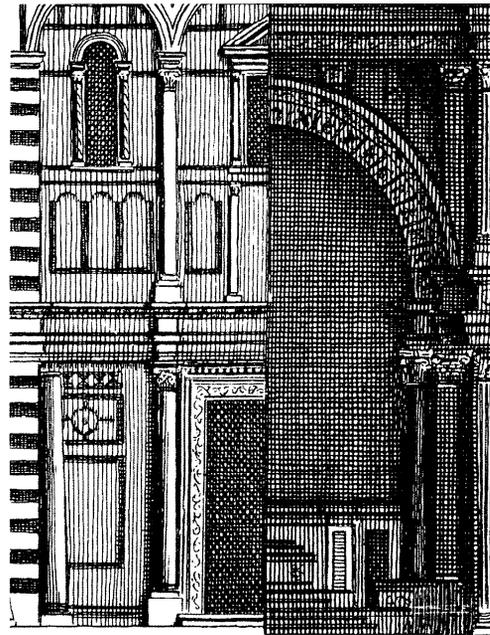(Serlio, *Tutte l'opere*, Book III, fol. 52ʳ, detail)

Figure 10. Baptistery, Florence, exterior and interior
(G. Richa, *Notizie istoriche ...*, V, pl. 2, detail)

Yet there are still significant differences between the two, pointing to a second prime prototype which, as Wilde first observed, is clearly the Pantheon.[14] This ancient building is known to have been studied and especially admired by Michelangelo, who regarded the lower storey of its interior as a 'disegno angelico'.[15] Its interior resemblance to the New Sacristy is considerable and is seen in various features not found in the Old Sacristy, such as the two-storey elevational format, the arches cutting through into the upper storey and the coffered dome (Fig. 9).[16] A resemblance is also evident (though unacknowledged by Wilde) in the way the Pantheon's lower storey—the part of the design most admired by Michelangelo—is echoed in the New Sacristy (see Figs 27 and 7). The Pantheon has a series of recesses fronted by column screens which alternate with tabernacles, while the New Sacristy has tomb recesses faced with pilasters alternating with tabernacles above the portals in the corners. It is as though the prototype of the Pantheon has been conceptually conflated with that of the Old Sacristy to produce a new design that has elements of both, and thus associations that are now both *all'antica* and Florentine.[17]

14. J. Wilde (as in n. 12), p. 63; idem, *Michelangelo: Six Lectures*, Oxford 1978, pp. 123 and 140.

15. Some of Michelangelo's ideas about the design of the Pantheon are recorded by Vasari in his *Life* of Andrea Sansovino (as in n. 3, ed. Milanesi, IV, pp. 511–12). These were that the building was designed by three architects who were responsible, respectively, for the lower storey of the interior, the upper storey of the interior, and the exterior portico. For Michelangelo's view of the lower storey of the interior as a *disegno angelico* see T. Buddenseig, 'Criticism and Praise of the Pantheon in the Middle Ages and the

Renaissance', in *Classical Influences on European Culture AD 500–1500*, ed. R. R. Bolgar, London 1971, pp. 259–67 (265 n. 2); and T. A. Marder, 'Bernini and Alexander VII. Criticism and Praise of the Pantheon in the Seventeenth Century', *Art Bulletin*, LXXI, 1989, pp. 628–45 (637–38).

16. The coffered dome also has local precedents in the dome of the *coretto* designed by Michelozzo (c. 1460) behind his tabernacle of the Annunciation in SS. Annunziata, and in the dome executed by Luca della Robbia's workshop (c. 1460) over the porch of the Pazzi chapel.

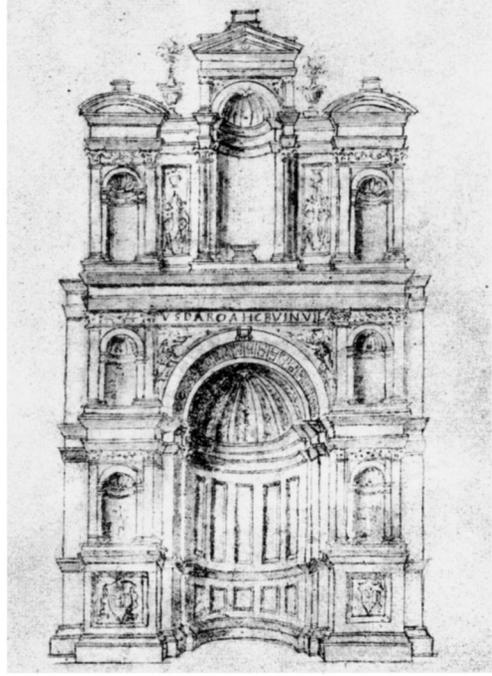Figure 11. Piccolomini Altar, Siena Cathedral
(Photograph: Conway Library)

Figure 12. Giuliano Sangallo, *Taccuino senese*, fol. 20^r

There are other precedents too for the design. The layout of the larger space, which is conceived as a Greek cross with short arms, looks back to the similarly planned chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal (designed and built from 1460) in Florence's S. Miniato al Monte.[18] The internal elevation recalls, additionally, that of the Florentine Baptistery which, like the Pantheon, has two storeys with an arch cutting into the upper level (Fig. 10).[19] There are even close precursors for the precise format of the architectural articulation, in particular the Piccolomini altar (1481–85) in Siena Cathedral (Fig. 11), which is attributed to Andrea Bregno, although a design relating to it is also recorded in a drawing by Giuliano da Sangallo (Fig. 12).[20] This

17. The lower-storey pilasters are more like the Pantheon's than those in the Old Sacristy in that their shafts have an odd rather than an even number of flutes and their Corinthian capitals have three rather than two tiers of acanthus.

18. The idea of a Greek cross occurred at an early stage in the design process. A preliminary sketch plan (Florence, Archivio Buonarroti I, 77, fol. 201^v / C. 178^v) shows Michelangelo taking up the basic arrangement of the Old Sacristy with its end-wall pilasters, and then continuing the pilasters onto the other walls, and roughing in to the left and right secondary spaces of identical shape to the altar space at the end; see Elam, 'Michelangelo's New Sacristy' (as in n. 12), pp. 163–64.

19. In a sense, the arrangement in the New Sacristy can be regarded as a deliberate reworking of that in the Baptistery where, as in the Pantheon,

the arch slices through the pilasters of the upper storey. It can also be seen as a reworking of the similar arrangements in various more recent Florentine works. On the façade of the Pazzi chapel (executed c. 1460), the pilasters flanking the arch are laid on top of the archivolt, while on the exterior of Buggiano's Cappella della Madonna di Piè (c. 1447) at Pescia, and inside Il Cronaca's S. Salvatore al Monte, the upper order is simply omitted in the vicinity of the arch. The upper-storey window tabernacles are again similar to those from S. Salvatore al Monte, as noted by C. de Tolnay, *The Medici Chapel*, Princeton 1948, p. 30.

20. Giuliano da Sangallo, *Taccuino senese* (Siena, Biblioteca Comunale MS S.IV.8), fol. 20^r: in the edition of R. Falb, Siena 1902, ad. loc.; see Borsi (as in n. 4), pp. 276–77. Borsi calls attention to the oddity of its inclusion in the sketchbook, postulating
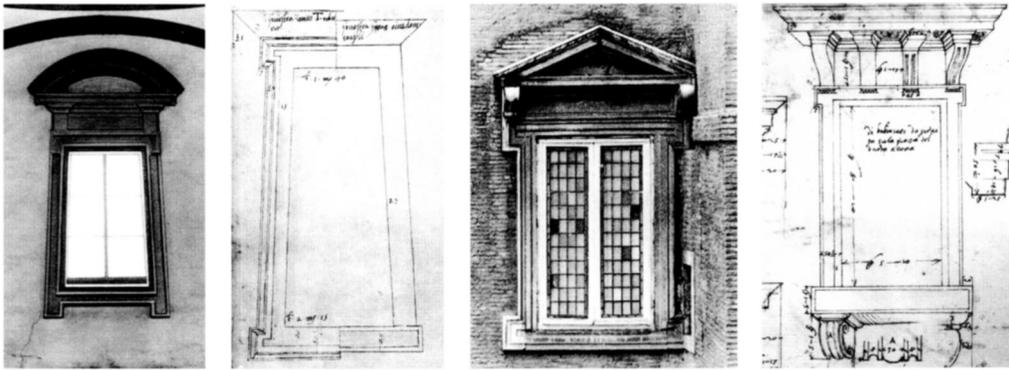
Left to right: Figure 13. New Sacristy, Florence, high level window; Figure 14. Temple of the Sibyl, Tivoli (London, Sir John Soane's Museum, Codex Coner, no. 32, detail); Figure 15. Vatican Palace, window; Figure 16. Palazzo Fusconi-Pighini, Rome, window (Florence, Uffizi, 2732A)

monument was well known to Michelangelo since he had designed and (with Baccio da Montelupo) executed statues for it in 1501–04. It not only has a similar three-bay composition of pilasters and central arch, but also provides a close parallel for the ingenious arrangement on the New Sacristy's lower storey, where the pilasters are aligned with those above them but are then laid on top of plain strips that are free to carry the central arch.[21]

Michelangelo's method regarding the basic design for the chapel was therefore to take up and combine his principal prototypes and then to re-adjust and regularise them to produce a scheme for a 'New' Sacristy that can legitimately be described as in some sense novel.[22] Subsequently, he introduced further novelty when finalising his designs for several of the scheme's subsidiary components. In doing so, he adopted procedures that were similar to the one he had followed previously, although not precisely identical.

This is apparent, for example, from the design of the windows in the lunettes beneath the dome (late 1520s or after; Fig. 13).[23] Here, as has been noted, Michelangelo based the general form for his frame—with its tapering sides and its projecting 'ears' (of a kind) at the corners—on the window frames of the Temple of 'the Sibyl' at Tivoli (Fig. 14), adding a pediment supported on blocks positioned on the frame's

that Giuliano may have been involved in the altar's final completion. Another possibility is that he was involved with the project much earlier, which may explain why the altar is so much more sophisticated in design than other monuments executed by Bregno. It might even be that the design in the Siena sketchbook was originally developed for an entirely different project, as this would explain why the insignia on the plinth displays the lilies of Florence rather than the Piccolomini arms. The pairing of the pilasters and the strips in the New Sacristy have a further parallel in the vestibule of Giuliano da Sangallo's sacristy of S. Spirito (1489) where, at either end, the columns supporting the entablature run up against unadorned stone strips beneath an archivolt.

21. The arrangement also recalls that of the porch to the Pantheon, where the pilasters flanking the main entrance are laid on top of further pilasters carrying the arch above.

22. The chapel was never an actual sacristy, but it is nevertheless called the 'New Sacristy' by Vasari and in early documents.

23. In my view their date is unclear, but see the recent discussion by P. Joannides in *L'adolescente dell'Ermitage e la Sagrestia Nuova di Michelangelo*, ed. S. Androsov and U. Baldini, Pistoia 2000, pp. 137–40, who argues that they were designed in the early 1530s. They are to be the subject of a forthcoming article by Caroline Elam, who was also kind enough to discuss with me her ideas about the issue of novelty in Michelangelo's architecture in relation to the patronage of Pope Clement VII, which will be the subject of another paper.

upper edge.[24] In so doing, he devised a new type of frame, yet one that was still rooted in recent precedent. His pediment, with its supporting blocks, seems to be derived from other designs of the period, such as a window design attributed to Giuliano da Sangallo from the apartment of Julius II (1507/8) in the Vatican palace (Fig. 15). This likewise has a frame with 'ears' and a pediment supported on consoles on top of it.[25] Another likely recent prototype was from Peruzzi's now-destroyed Palazzo Fusconi-Pighini (c. 1523) in Rome, where the frame had 'ears' and an upper cornice carried on more substantial consoles, taking the place of triglyphs in the frieze (Fig. 16).[26] Peruzzi's design was, in fact, recognised in its time as a new invention, having been praised as such by Clement VII—who was Michelangelo's patron for the New Sacristy.[27] Michelangelo's design has similar features, but it is itself a new invention, in being based upon a novel combination of a prime ancient prototype with various prominent modern examples, and then elaborated further in its detail.

For the marble tombs in the two side-recesses (finalised 1524), Michelangelo seems to have followed a rather different procedure.[28] It involved him basing the three-bay format (see above, Fig. 7) on that of previous tombs, especially Antonio Pollaiuolo's tomb of pope Innocent VIII (1492–98; later altered) in St Peter's, Rome (Fig. 20), but now raising up the pilasters onto a tall podium to fit in with the general outlines of the chapel's design. At the same time, he updated this format, by recycling his own S. Lorenzo façade scheme (Fig. 3), with its coupled order, three rectangular openings and flanking segmental pediments. His new design betrays affinities with certain recent Roman projects;[29] yet his manner of treating the architectural forms also draws strongly on previous Florentine tradition. The motif of paired pilasters with exceptionally slender proportions, for example, finds a precedent in Mino da Fiesole's tomb of Bernardo Giugni (d. 1466) in the Badia.[30] The unusual tapering of

24. The derivation from the Temple of 'the Sibyl' window is noted e.g. by Hirst (as in n. 7), p. 94. This window was sketched by Michelangelo (Florence, Casa Buonarroti 8A, C. 512ʳ), copying a drawing in the Codex Coner; see T. Ashby, 'Sixteenth-Century Drawings of Roman Buildings Attributed to Andreas Coner, *Papers of the British School at Rome*, II, 1904, pp. 28–29, no. 32.

25. This feature of a pediment supported on consoles rising from the frame is also found in Sanmicheli's Petrucci chapel in Orvieto (1515–16), which was related to the window in the Vatican palace by C. L. Frommel, 'Roma e l'opera giovanile di Sanmicheli', in H. Burns, C. L. Frommel and L. Puppi, *Michele Sanmicheli: Architettura, linguaggio e cultura artistica nel Cinquecento*, Milan 1995, p. 25. The New Sacristy frames are also reminiscent of the portals of Alberti's Palazzo Rucellai, which have cornices supported on consoles resting on the architrave.

26. For Palazzo Fusconi-Pighini see C. L. Frommel, *Der Römische Palastbau der Hochrenaissance*, 3 vols, Tübingen 1973, II, pp. 189–97; III, pl. 76–77; A. Bruschi, 'Baldassare Peruzzi nel Palazzo di Francesco Fusconi da Norcia', *Architettura, storia e documenti*, II, 1986, pp. 11–30.

27. Sebastiano Serlio, *Tutte l'opere d'architettura et prospetiva*, Venice 1619, book IV, fol. 146ᵛ.

28. For the dating see P. Joannides, 'Michelangelo's Medici Chapel: Some New Suggestions', *Burlington Magazine*, CXIV, 1972, pp. 541–51; Argan and Contardi (as in n. 1), pp. 177–81. The tombs may have been conceived more as 'sculpture' than 'architecture', a suggestion made by Ackerman (as in n. 1), I, pp. 26–30. It should be pointed out, however, that their dark-stone framework is more conservative in design than the dark-stone window frames in the upper lunettes.

29. In their pairing, and in the way they rise from broad strips beneath them, the pilasters recall those in a scheme by Giuliano da Sangallo (c. 1513) for the Torre Borgia of the Vatican palace (Florence, Uffizi 134A; Borsi, as in n. 4, pp. 453–56). The coupling of this smaller order with a taller framing order takes a cue from various previous works, including the top storey of Bramante's Cortile del Belvedere (c. 1504–) and a number of schemes by Raphael such as his façade designs for St Peter's.

30. For Pollaiuolo's tomb see most recently E. Frank, 'Pollaiuolo's tomb of Pope Innocent VIII', in *Verrocchio and Late Quattrocento Italian Sculpture*, ed. S. Bule, A. Phipps Darr and F. Superbi Gioffredi,

Figure 17. Sacristy of S. Spirito, pilaster capital
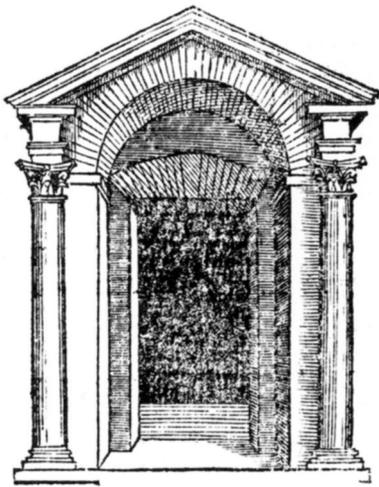
Figure 18. Ancient structure near Foligno
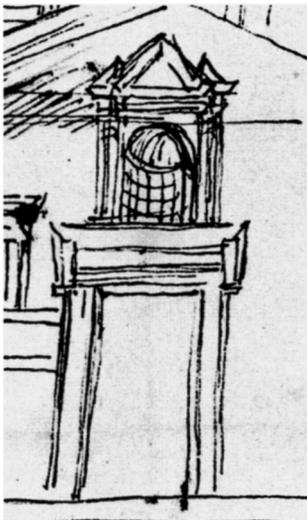(Serlio, *Tutte l'opere*, Book III, fol. 74ᵛ)

Figure 19. Mausoleum of Annia Regilla outside
Rome, façade as drawn by Antonio da Sangallo the
Younger (Florence, Uffizi 1168A, detail)

Figure 20. Antonio Pollaiuolo, tomb of Pope
Innocent VIII in St Peter's, Rome
(Berlin, Kupfertich-Kabinett)

Figure 21. Michelangelo, New Sacristy, Florence,
portal and tabernacle
(Photograph: Conway Library)

the pilasters has an obvious source in Donatello's Cavalcanti *Annunciation* (c. 1435) in S. Croce.[31] The non-standard capitals decorated with masks have a parallel on the same monument, although they have a still closer model in one of the lower-storey pilasters from Giuliano da Sangallo's sacristy of S. Spirito (1489; Fig. 17).[32]

For the portals and tabernacles in the corners (c. 1524),[33] Michelangelo apparently adopted yet another method of working. Their design has been widely characterised as 'odd' for the way the tabernacles stand directly on the cornices of the portals, with I-shaped recesses extending up into the areas of their pediments (Fig. 21). Yet although the tabernacles are plainly unlike those inside the Pantheon or, for that matter, on the façade of Raphael's recent Palazzo Pandolfini in Florence (1516/17), their design still has some notable precedents.[34] The stacked composition is anticipated in the Old Sacristy (Fig. 8), which has niches above tabernacled portals (both designed by Donatello), but it has much more in common with features from certain ancient mausolea. The mausoleum of Annia Regilla outside Rome, recorded c. 1520 in an early drawing by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (Fig. 19), had a portal with a cornice carried on brackets, supporting a tabernacle with a broken pediment framing a niche.[35] For their precise composition, the New Sacristy taber-nacles had another close precedent in the façade of an ancient mausoleum near Foligno (later illustrated by Serlio; see Fig. 18), where an opening framed by the tabernacle extends into the area of a broken pediment and has a further square-topped recess set within it.[36] They are also foreshadowed in other ancient works, including another mausoleum outside Rome, drawn in the so-called *Livre de Michel-Ange* (c. 1535) in Lille, which has a façade with tabernacles framing I-shaped recesses.[37] In addition to these, an important modern precedent is the tabernacle in Giuliano da Sangallo's Gondi chapel (1504) in S. Maria Novella, Florence, where a round-headed recess cuts through the surmounting entablature (see Fig. 40). The interpretation of the New Sacristy design suggested by these examples is that it was not so much a rejection of classical precedent as an ingenious reformulation of

Florence 1992, pp. 321–42. The tomb was dismantled in 1507 but would still have been well known to Michelangelo. It also provides a key model for his seated *capitani*. The sarcophagi in the New Sacristy have a notable design precedent in the sarcophagus in the chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal made by Antonio Rossellino; see de Tolnay (as in n. 19), p. 31.

31. For further discussion see P. Davies and D. Hemsoll, 'Entasis and Diminution in the Design of Renaissance Pilasters', in *L'emploi des ordres dans l'archi-tecture de la Renaissance*, ed. J. Guillaume, Paris 1992, pp. 339–53. The scale-like ornamentation decorating Donatello's pilasters also provides a precedent for that on the supports of the New Sacristy sarcophagi, and on the volutes holding up the pediments. For Michelangelo's debt as a designer to Donatello see Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (as in n. 2), pp. 144–63.

32. Cf. G. K. Loukomski, *Les Sangallo*, Paris 1934, pl. 38. See also de Tolnay (as in n. 19), p. 31.

33. For the dating of the tabernacles see de Tolnay (as in n. 19), p. 56; Ackerman (as in n. 1), II, p. 25.

34. Tabernacles of similar design are also found on the façade of Baccio d'Agnolo's Palazzo Bartolini-Salimbeni in Florence (1520).

35. For Sangallo's drawing (Florence, Uffizi 1168A) see A. Bartoli, *I monumenti antichi di Roma nei disegni degli Uffizi di Firenze*, 5 vols, Florence 1914–22, II, fig. 468. For discussion of this and other early drawings see A. Nesselrath, *Das Fossombroner Skizzen-buch*, London 1993, pp. 139–43. A further notable parallel is on the façade of another mausoleum, which has a square-topped portal supporting a simi-larly sized tabernacle framing a rectangular recess. This building is drawn in the *Livre de Michel-Ange* (as in n. 6), no. 754; see F. Lamerle, 'Livre de dessins de Michel-Ange', in B. Brejon de Lavergnée, *Catalogue des dessins italiens. Collections du Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille*, Paris 1997, pp. 302–03.

36. Serlio (as in n. 27), book III, fol. 74[v]. The monument was on the road from Foligno to Rome.

37. *Livre de Michel-Ange* (as in n. 6), nos 731[v] and 736[v]; Lamerle (as in n. 35), pp. 294–97.

classical elements that were derived from identifiable sources. For the design's formulation involved a whole range of models and motifs, which Michelangelo merged together, further elaborating on the resulting ensemble.[38] This method was to be taken up and pushed even further forward in the design of the Laurentian Library.

Following Vasari, there has been a tendency to regard the Laurentian Library, designed in the years after 1524, as being completely novel in its design, meaning that it is without precedent.[39] This view, however, is at the very least misleading and in some respects quite wrong, and this applies even to the underlying conception. Its overall layout, for example, as a long, tripartite reading room preceded by a separate and taller vestibule, is comparable to that used previously for the Medicean library (1440s) at S. Marco in Florence.[40] The arrangement of the reading room (Fig. 22), as a single space with no internal supports, has an obvious antecedent in the Piccolomini Library of Siena Cathedral, as does the architectural system of a tall order of pilasters rising from the level of the lecterns. This, in the Piccolomini Library, is the format used for Pinturicchio's painted decorations (1502–08) which, as in the Laurentian Library, have the pilasters rising from above the lecterns (now rearranged), and towards a coffered ceiling (Fig. 23).[41]

More immediately relevant to this discussion, however, is the elevational composition of the Laurentian reading room, with its regular bay-system of pilasters, recessed panels and two rows of apertures, open below but blind above. For this there are specific models. One prime prototype is surely Raphael's Palazzo Alberini (1515), with its façade divided by pilasters into bays which, as in the Laurentian reading room, contain inset panels bordered by thin stone frames (Fig. 24). Another may well be Palazzo Vidoni-Caffarelli (c. 1524), a work by a close follower of Raphael where, as in the reading room, the order is Doric and the windows are surmounted by blind mezzanine openings (Fig. 25).[42] If these are the models, however, they are not simply merged together, since certain individual elements of the composition were then derived from elsewhere.[43] In particular, the unusually-shaped windows

38. The *paterae,* swags and urns, for example, are motifs all found on ancient cinerary altars. The panelled but otherwise very simple Doric-type pilasters have a close parallel in those decorating the courtyard windows of Baccio d'Agnolo's recent Palazzo Bartolini-Salimbeni.

39. See R. Wittkower (as in n. 1); Ackerman (as in n. 1), I, pp. 33–44; II, pp. 33–42; S. Sinding-Larsen, 'The Laurenziana Vestibule as a Functional Solution', *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia,* VIII, 1978, pp. 213–22; R. Lieberman, 'Michelangelo's Design for the Biblioteca Laurenziana', in A. Morrogh et al., *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth,* 2 vols, Florence 1985, II, pp. 571–84; Argan and Contardi (as in n. 1), pp. 94–145, 186–97. For explicit statements on the library's supposed novelty see e.g. Lieberman, p. 576; Wilde, *Michelangelo* (as in n. 14), pp. 140–42.

40. The S. Marco library is also very similar in size. F. Salmon, 'The Site of Michelangelo's Laurentian Library, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians,* XLIX, 1990, pp. 407–29 (419), makes the further point that one of the initial suggestions for the siting

of the library, on the cloister's axis and extending perpendicularly, was similar to the positioning of the S. Marco library.

41. For the original arrangement of the lecterns in the Piccolomini Library see G. V. G. Shepherd, *A Monument to Pope Pius II: Pintoricchio and Raphael in the Piccolomini Library in Siena 1494–1508,* Ann Arbor 1993, pp. 24–26. The pilaster arrangement is also presaged by Brunelleschi's Pazzi Chapel, where the internal pilaster order rises from the level of a surrounding bench.

42. This façade arrangement is also found on a project drawing for Palazzo Alberini; see Frommel, *Der Römische Palastbau* (as in n. 26), III, pl. 6e; P. N. Pagliara, 'Palazzo Alberini', in *Raffaello architetto,* ed. C. L. Frommel, S. Ray and M. Tafuri, Milan 1984, pp. 171–88.

43. The mezzanine windows, with their jambs formed with balusters, are similar to those with baluster-shaped jambs on the courtyard *piano nobile* of Giulio Romano's Palazzo Maccarani (c. 1522/23) in Rome. The baluster form, however, has a long pre-history in Michelangelo's art. Balusters are used

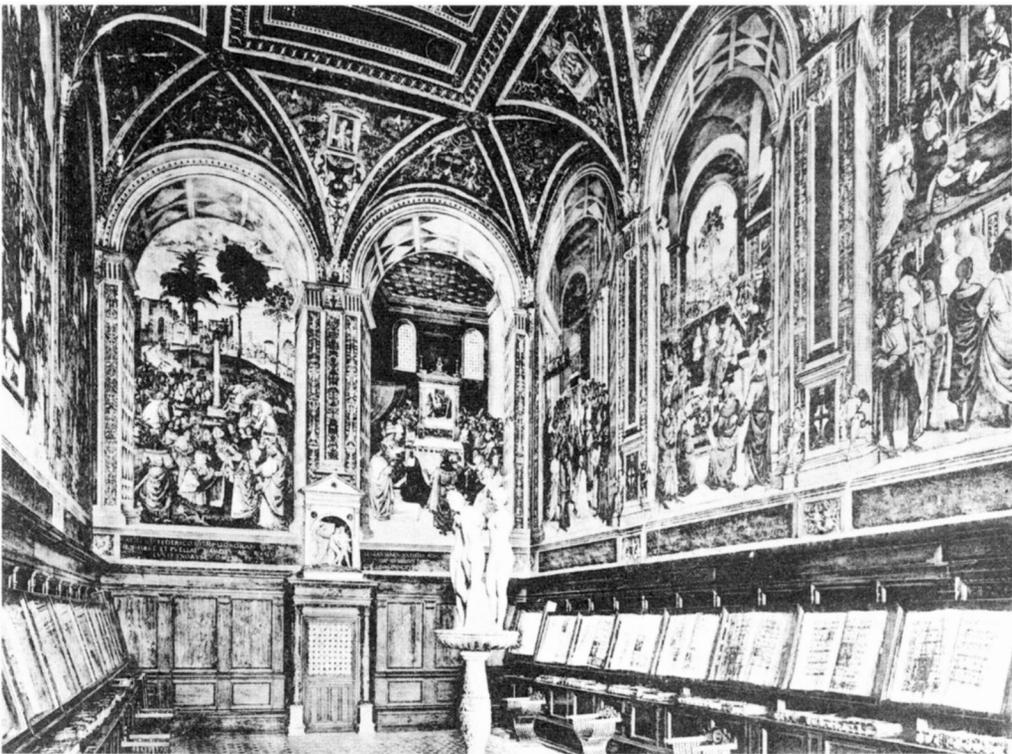Figure 22. Laurentian Library, Florence, reading room

Figure 23. Piccolomini Library, Siena Cathedral

Figure 24. Palazzo Alberini, Rome, *piano nobile* (Photograph: Conway Library)

Figure 25. Palazzo Vidoni-Caffarelli, Rome, *piano nobile* (Photograph: Conway Library)

(Fig. 35), with their 'ears' supported on volutes, recall a window design, probably by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, for the chapel of Leo X (c. 1514) in the Castel S. Angelo, Rome (Fig. 36).[44] The method followed here, therefore, seems to have involved a procedure—perhaps even a strategy—of assimilation and mixing, which was then followed by a process of transformation, with the detailing being modified and the scheme as a whole being translated into the Florentine idiom of dark stone against a white-plaster background.[45]

Even the extraordinary entrance portal at the end of the reading room recalls a number of schemes from existing buildings. Its design (devised 1526, realised 1533) takes the form of one element superimposed upon another: a pedimented frame on a pedimented tabernacle.[46] As such, it is comparable to—although not precisely the same as—the interior arrangement of the upper storey of the Pantheon, where the frames of the apertures (prior to their eighteenth-century alteration) overlapped the flanking pilasters (see Fig. 9).[47] Even more relevant, perhaps, are certain very

to frame the inscriptions in the lunettes of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, and to frame the pedestals of the paired putti above them. They are also incorporated into the lower openings of his façade to the chapel of Leo X (c. 1514) in the Castel S. Angelo, Rome.

44. The design is shown in a drawing by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (Florence, Uffizi 1259A^v) apparently for the chapel; see M. Tafuri, '"Roma Instaurata,"' in *Raffaello architetto* (as in n. 42), p. 87; Argan and Contardi (as in n. 1), p. 64.

45. The Doric order has non-standard capitals and bases. The entablature has no frieze, although in this respect it is rather like those on the lower storeys of Raphael's Palazzo Alberini and Palazzo Branconio dell'Aquila (1518) in Rome (Figs 24, 37).

46. For the dating of the portal see Wittkower (as in n. 1), pp. 167, 186–90; Ackerman (as in n. 1), II, p. 35.

47. It also recalls the arrangement of the portal of Bramante's Tempietto (c. 1510 or earlier) in Rome,
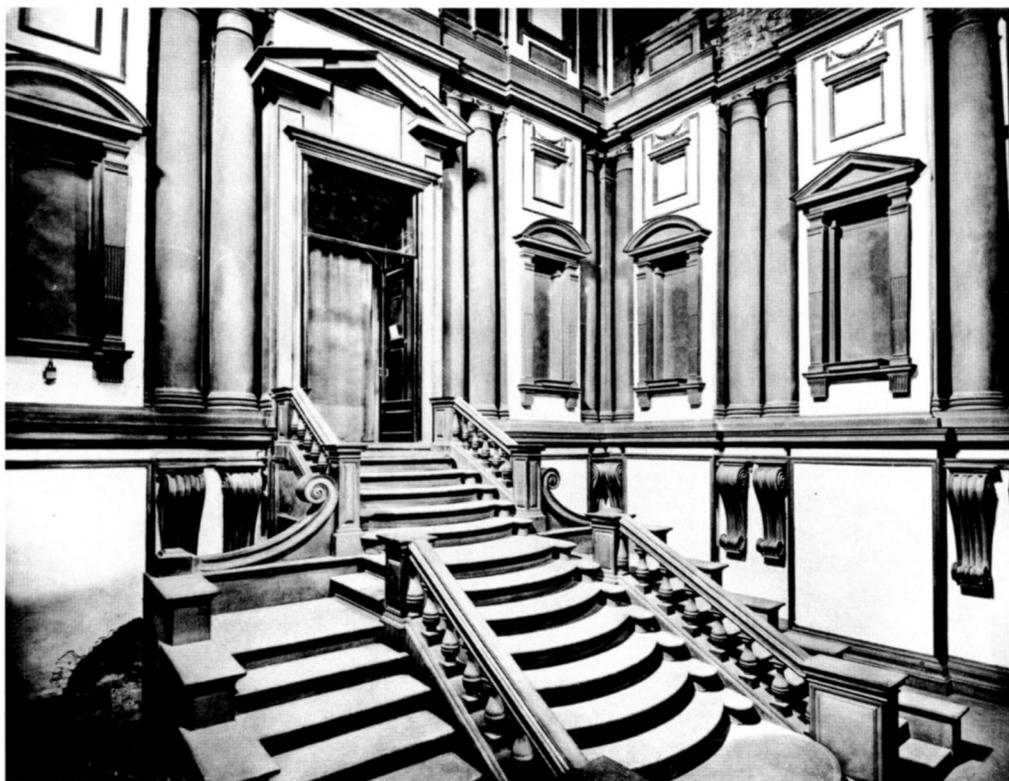
DAVID HEMSOLL

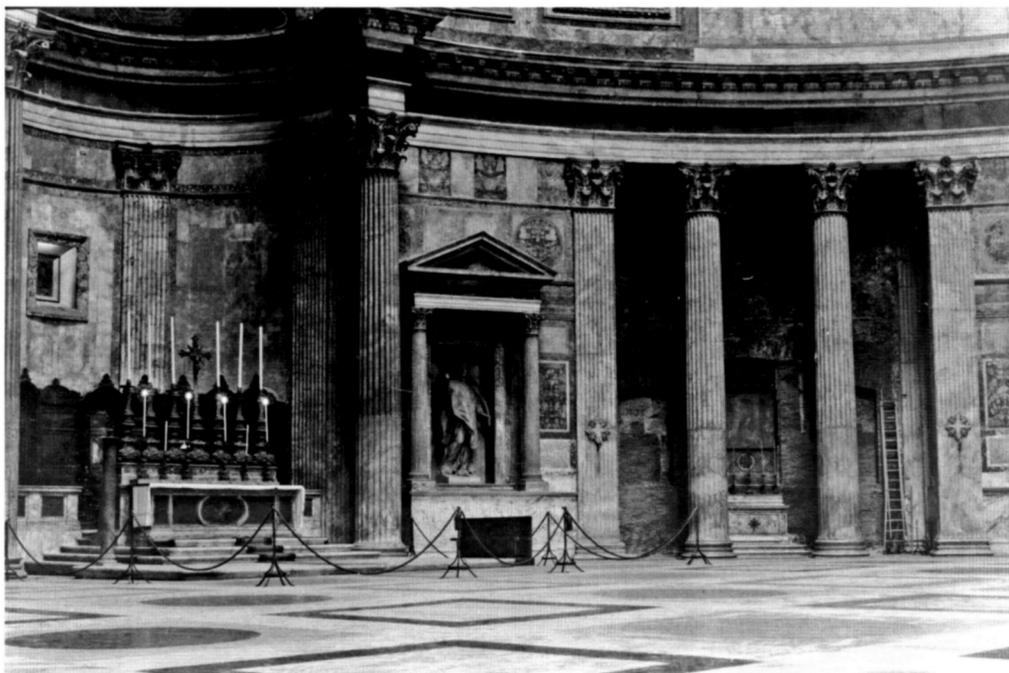Figure 26. Laurentian Library, Florence, *ricetto*

Figure 27. Pantheon, Rome, interior, lower storey (Photograph: Conway Library)
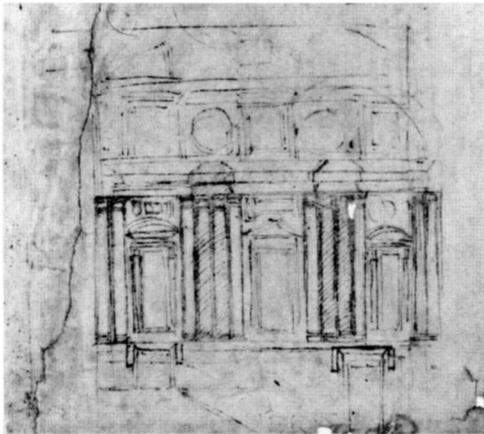
Figure 28. Michelangelo, preliminary scheme for *ricetto* (Florence, Casa Buonarroti 48A, detail)

Figure 29. Baldassare Peruzzi, *Presentation of the Virgin*, detail (Rome, S. Maria della Pace)

recent schemes from Raphael's circle in Rome. The design is distinctly akin to the entrance portal of Giulio Romano's Villa Lante (c. 1523), where a pedimented tabernacle is superimposed over the neighbouring pilasters of the lower-storey order.[48] It also rather echoes the form of the portal of Giulio's Palazzo Maccarani (c. 1522/23), where a rusticated lintel is superimposed upon the pediment of a tabernacle which, as in the Laurentian reading room, is framed in the central bay.

For the library's celebrated vestibule or *ricetto* (Fig. 26), Michelangelo again based his design on a range of prototypes and it is by identifying these that we can, I believe, best understand some of the *ricetto*'s more puzzling features, especially the allegedly 'odd' arrangement of the wall elevations, with their columns set into tight recesses and their protruding tabernacles in between. The method he followed to reach the design, however, was now a little different. In the first place, the main prototypes, judged perhaps to provide an appropriate contrast to the more reticent reading room,[49] are this time all antique. In the second, the various ancient prototypes are all merged together and then amalgamated with yet further models of differing origin.

For the *ricetto* elevations (Fig. 26), one of the principal prototypes is again surely the interior of the Pantheon, which provides the basic model for the alternation of the columns with areas of wall that have tabernacles with both triangular and segmental pediments (Fig. 27). This debt is all the more clear in a preliminary drawing made at an early stage in the design process (Fig. 28), which shows the columns

where the frame overlaps the pilasters flanking it. The Tempietto's portal, and that of Alberti's S. Sebastiano which is similarly arranged, are discussed in C. L. Frommel, 'La porta ionica nel Rinascimento', in *Studi in onore di Renato Cevese*, ed. G. Beltramini, A. G. Giavarina and P. Marini, Vicenza 2000, pp. 251–92. The arrangement of a pediment within a pediment also has a pedigree, being a feature of a design by Leonardo da Vinci (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Codex Atlanticus, fol. 114ʳ⁻ᵛ; C. Pedretti, *Leonardo architetto*, Milan 1981, p. 146; Argan and Contardi, as

in n. 1, ill. 54), and a feature too of a project by Giuliano da Sangallo (or an associate) believed to be for the Palazzo dei Penitenzieri, Rome (Florence, Uffizi 279A; Borsi, as in n. 4, pp. 468–71).

48. This arrangement has a precursor in Raphael's Palazzo Jacopo da Brescia (1514/15) in Rome where, on the side-elevation, a central tabernacle overlaps the pilasters next to it; see Frommel, *Der Römische Palastbau* (as in n. 26), III, pl. 21.

49. The idea of contrast is discussed by Lieberman (as in n. 39) pp. 573–74, 579–80.
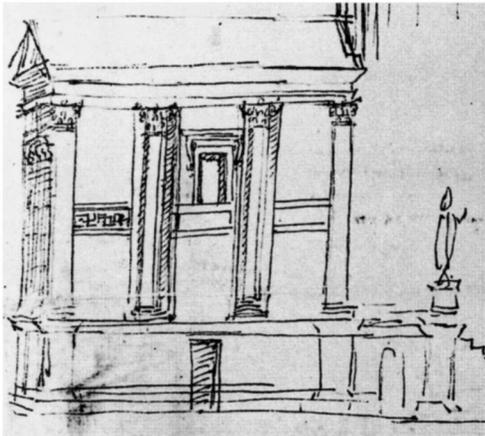
Figure 30. Mausoleum of Annia Regilla outside
Rome, side-elevation, drawn by Antonio da Sangallo
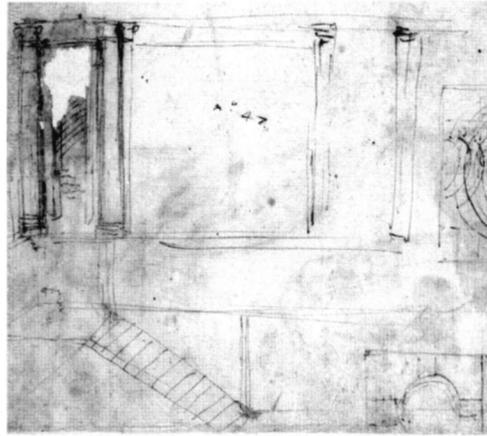the Younger (Florence, Uffizi 1168A, detail)

Figure 31. Michelangelo, preliminary study for the
Laurentian Library *ricetto* (Haarlem, Teylers
Museum A 33b^v, detail)

flanked by pilasters, the tabernacles surmounted by decorative panelling, and
the upper storey considerably lower than in the final scheme.[50] A comparable
composition of columns and wall areas with framed openings had been used by
Peruzzi for the painted decorations of his Sala della Prospettiva (1516–17) in the
Farnesina, Rome, which could thus constitute a modern precedent. More recently,
in 1523, Peruzzi had employed a similar arrangement of columns and wall areas with
inset niches for part of the tower structure in the background of his fresco of the
Presentation of the Virgin in S. Maria della Pace, Rome (Fig. 29); and here the columns
are set back behind the framing pilasters, just as in Michelangelo's preliminary
drawing. These parallels suggest that Michelangelo's thinking about his ancient
prototype was mediated through the work of his contemporaries.[51]

Another prime prototype for the *ricetto* design could well be the mausoleum of
Annia Regilla (Fig. 30), as was observed by Sinding-Larsen.[52] This provides a model
not only for the motif of the columns recessed into the wall but also for the whole of
the three-bay composition with its terminal pilasters. It even provides a counterpart
for the tall basement, which corresponds with a flight of steps. This comparability
between the mausoleum and the Laurentian Library is most evident in one of Michel-
angelo's preliminary drawings (Fig. 31), which gives the order the appearance of a
series of single columns slotted into tight recesses, and omits many of the intervening
features.[53]

50. Florence, Casa Buonarroti 48A.

51. Setting columns back behind the line of flank-
ing pilasters was also a common practice in previous
Florentine architecture, and is seen, for example, in
Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti.

52. See Sinding-Larsen (as in n. 39), pp. 215–16.
Recessed columns are a feature of other ancient
buildings including an imposing tomb monument on
the via Appia outside Rome, for which see Nesselrath
(as in n. 35) pp. 148–49. They are an occasional
feature too of some earlier Renaissance schemes,
such as the unfinished Ca' del Duca (c. 1460) in

Venice, the Palazzo della Loggia in Brescia (begun
1492), the portal (now destroyed) to Raphael's
Farnesina stables (1512/14) in Rome, and an un-
realised design for a villa by Leonardo da Vinci
(Turin, Biblioteca Reale, Treatise on Bird Flight; see
Pedretti, as in n. 47, p. 215). The recessed columns
in Giuliano da Sangallo's Gondi chapel (discussed
below, p. 50; ill. Fig. 40) are also particularly relevant.
Recessed columns were also, of course, a feature of
Michelangelo's S. Lorenzo façade scheme.

53. Haarlem, Teylers Museum A 33b^v.
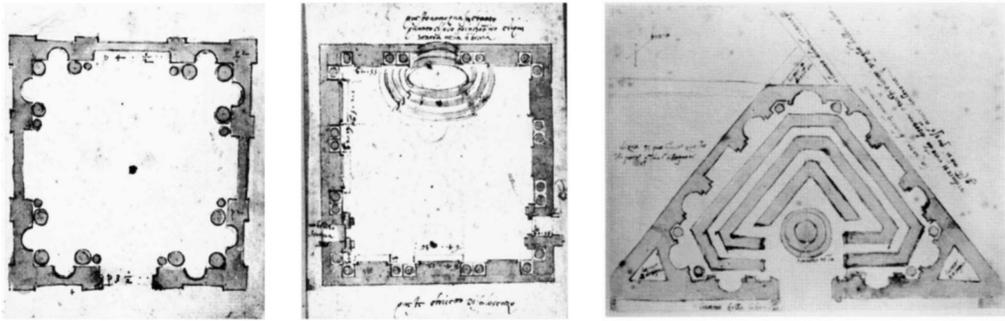
Figures 32, 33. Mausoleum near Rome; and Laurentian Library, Florence, plan of *ricetto* (Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts, *Livre de Michel-Ange*, nos 793 and 794ᵛ)

Figure 34. Michelangelo, project for 'secret library' (Florence, Casa Buonarroti 80A)

A third ancient prototype which seems relevant is another mausoleum outside Rome, known from drawings of the period including one in the *Livre de Michel-Ange* in Lille, where a great many drawings of the Laurentian Library are also to be found.[54] The mausoleum is shown there in plan (Fig. 32) and this, like the *ricetto*'s plan (Fig. 33), is of a square, three-by-three-bay format, with whole columns framing a series of tabernacles and niches. The same building, I suggest, served as a model for the so-called 'secret library', which was going to be attached to the far end of the reading room, and is known from surviving drawings (Fig. 34).[55] In that scheme, the mausoleum surely provided the specific prototype for the niches along the walls, with their alternately curved and straight backs, and for the free-standing columns at the corners.[56] In the *ricetto* design, it could well have supplied the initial starting point for the wall composition, although the design would have then been configured to accord more with the other principal prototypes, with the resulting synthesis afterwards modified yet further.[57] The design would then have changed even more, when

54. *Livre de Michel-Ange* (as in n. 6), no. 793; Lamerle (as in n. 35), pp. 316–17. The mausoleum is identified by Lamerle as being outside Porta S. Croce, Rome, on the basis of an inscription on a related drawing in an earlier sketchbook (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 'Bramantino' sketchbook, fol. 28). The Lille sketchbook, which is incomplete and has now been dismembered, contains numerous drawings of Michelangelo's architectural works. They are found on 26 of the 184 surviving pages, and feature a project for a tomb connected with the New Sacristy (no. 735), the façade of the chapel of Leo X in the Castel S. Angelo (no. 740), projects for the S. Lorenzo façade (nos 746ᵛ and 772ᵛ), the New Sacristy lantern (no. 751ʳ⁻ᵛ), the window design for Palazzo Medici (no. 769ᵛ) and, in great detail, the Laurentian Library (19 pages: nos 794ᵛ–803ᵛ). The majority of the drawings were attributed to Raffaello da Montelupo by A. Nesselrath, 'Il "Libro di Michelangelo" a Lille', *Quaderni dell'Istituto di Storia dell'Architettura*, XXIV, 1994, pp. 35–52, who dates the sketchbook to after 1535 (pp. 38–39), although there are grounds for dating its compilation slightly earlier, very soon after Raffaello became one of Michelangelo's assistants in the New Sacristy in 1534. None of

the modern buildings illustrated dates from after the early 1530s, while the elevational drawing of the Laurentian *ricetto* (no. 795) shows its condition in the early 1530s before the heightened upper storey was partly added. The sketchbook illustrates many works that are linked in this article to Michelangelo's architectural schemes, including canonical antiquities such as the various mausolea mentioned here and above nn. 35, 37, and the Pantheon (nos 766ᵛ, 789ᵛ); modern works in Rome such as Bramante's Tempietto (nos 726ʳ⁻ᵛ, 727ᵛ–28ᵛ) and his Cortile del Belvedere staircase (no. 733), Palazzo Vidoni-Caffarelli (no. 739) and Villa Lante (no. 723); and the Baptistery in Florence (nos 718ᵛ–19ᵛ).

55. Florence, Casa Buonarroti 79A and 80A.

56. The way the columns frame corner alcoves, however, recalls the corner arrangement of a hall from the Roman baths at Viterbo, drawn in the *Livre de Michel-Ange* (as in n. 6), no. 792; see Lamerle, as in n. 35, pp. 316–17. The hall is also drawn in one of Giuliano da Sangallo's sketchbooks (*Taccuino senese*, as in n. 20, fol. 8ʳ; Borsi, as in n. 4, 259–61).

57. For the enlargement of the columns see Wittkower (as in n. 1), pp. 131–32.
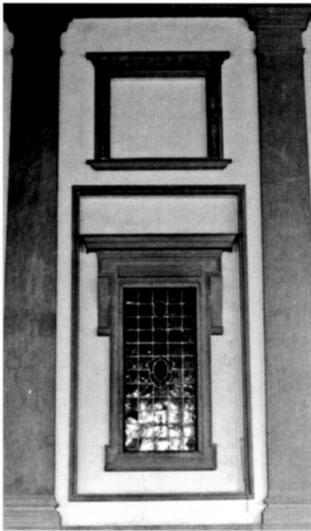
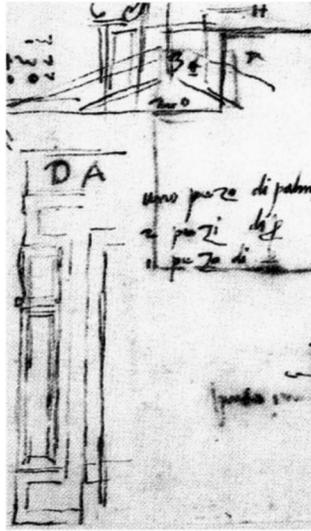Figure 35. Laurentian Library, Florence, reading room window

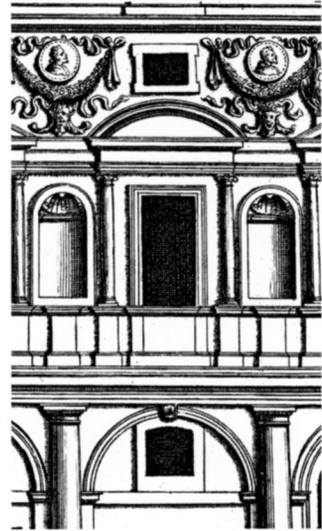Figure 36. Chapel of Leo X, window. Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (Florence, Uffizi 1259A^v, detail)

Figure 37. Palazzo Branconio dell'Aquila, Rome

the original plans for the ceiling were abandoned and the upper storey was increased in height.[58]

The *ricetto*'s design, however, not only unites these various prototypes but also makes reference to previous schemes devised by Michelangelo himself,[59] and to several other buildings. Some of the latter, again, are recent Roman projects, since the *ricetto* has obvious affinities with, for example, Palazzo Vidoni-Caffarelli (see Fig. 25) which likewise has a paired order, and Raphael's Palazzo Branconio dell'Aquila (1518), which has a *piano nobile* similarly with tabernacles, and mezzanine openings and decorative swags (Fig. 37), although in the *ricetto* the latter are combined together. In the arrangement of its corners, which have a column coupled with a square-sectioned terminal pilaster placed in the angle (Fig. 38), the *ricetto* also resembles the courtyard of Antonio da Sangallo the Younger's Palazzo Farnese (begun 1513/14) in Rome, with its half-columns and additional square-sectioned corner-pilasters (Fig. 39). Other references, however, are to local buildings. Thus, with its free-standing columns around the walls, the *ricetto* can be regarded as harking

58. See Wittkower, ibid., pp. 139–42 and 200–03; and P. Joannides, review of Wittkower's article as republished in *Idea and Image: Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, London 1978 and of Wilde, *Michelangelo* (as in n. 14), *Burlington Magazine*, cxxiii, 1981, pp. 620–22, who argues that this took place in 1533/34.

59. The placing of the columns on a plain basement zone is reminiscent of the arrangement of the tombs in the New Sacristy, with their pilasters raised up on plain socles. The positioning of the low-level portals beneath tabernacles recalls the arrangement of the portals and tabernacles in the New Sacristy, while the pairing of the portals seen in the early scheme illustrated above (Fig. 28) also follows the

precedent of the New Sacristy. The use of full columns follows on from the S. Lorenzo façade scheme, where the lower-storey order was one of full columns that are half recessed into the wall surface. In fact, the entire elevational composition, particularly of the wall facing the entrance into the reading room where the central bay is left blank, is very much anticipated by an early scheme for the Julius Tomb (New York, Metropolitan Museum, nos 62-931; see e.g. Hirst, as in n. 7, ill. 173), which has a main storey set out as three bays of half-columns rising from volutes, with side-bays containing niches and a central bay taken up by a flat panel in the form of a sculptural relief.
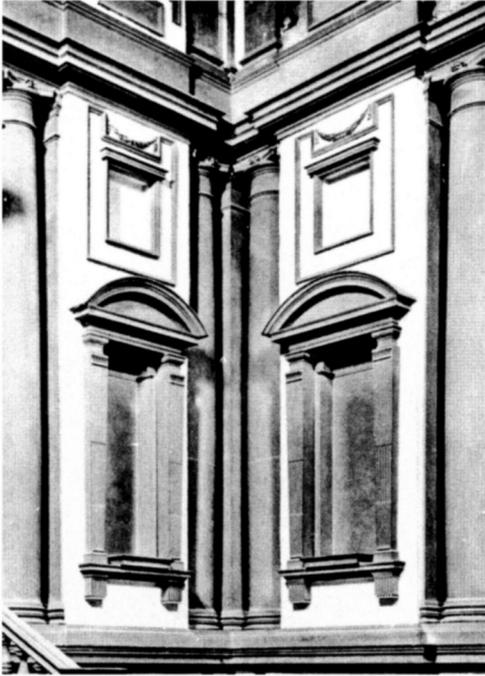
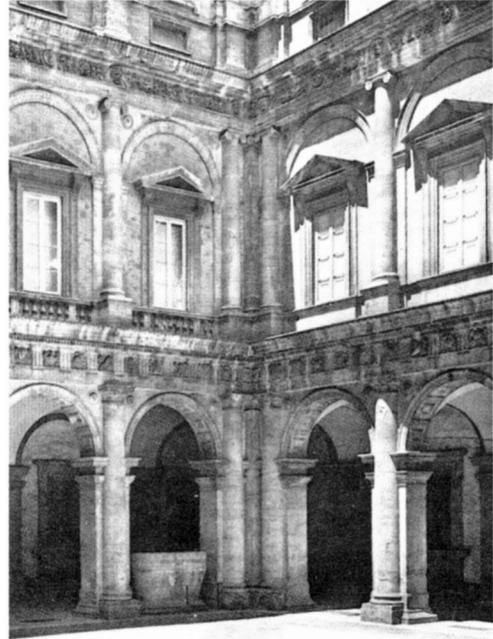Figure 38. Laurentian Library, Florence, *ricetto* corner columns (detail of Fig. 26)

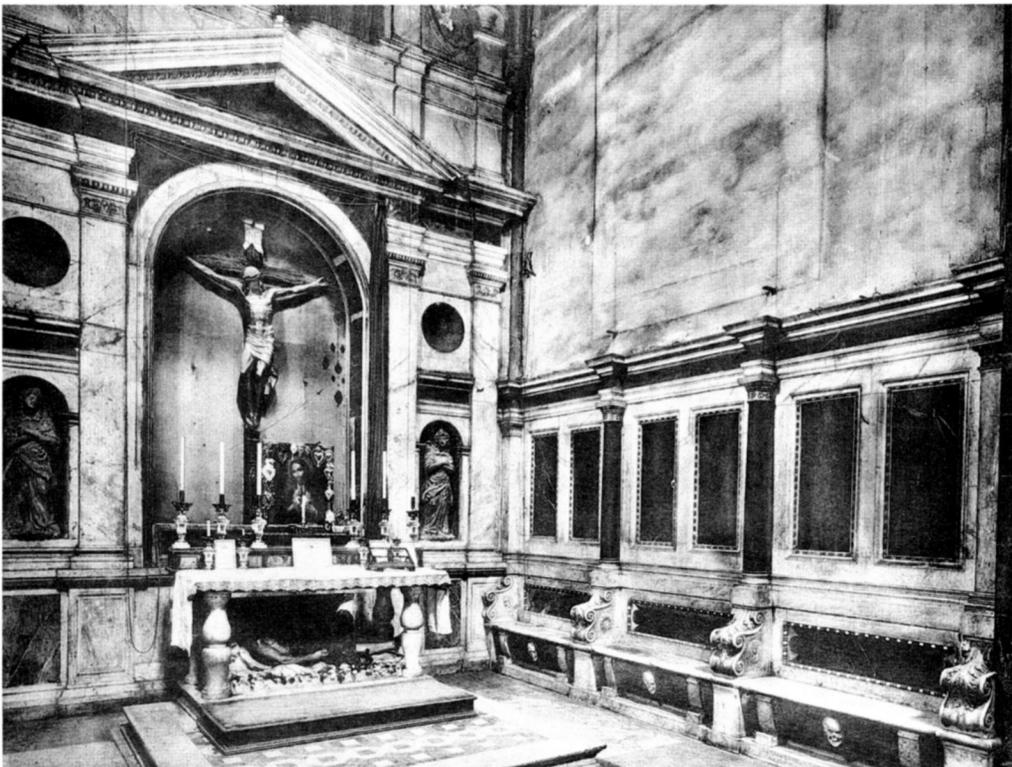Figure 39. Palazzo Farnese, Rome, corner of courtyard

Figure 40. Gondi chapel in S. Maria Novella, Florence
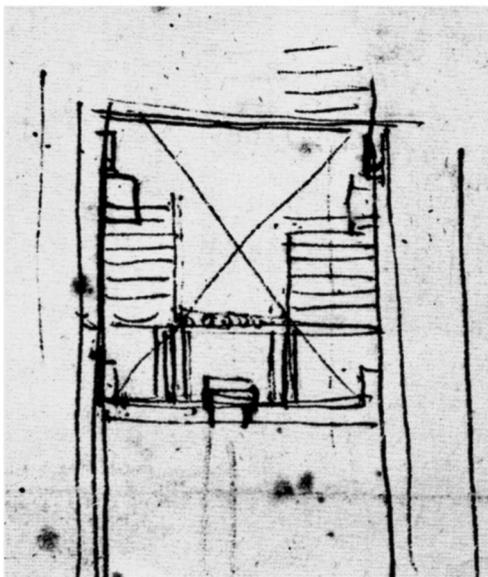
Figure 41. Florence, Casa Buonarroti 89A^v
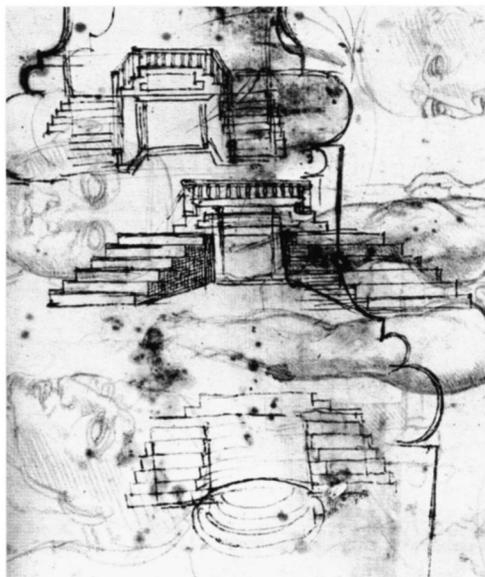
Figure 42. Florence, Casa Buonarroti 92A^v

back again to the Florentine Baptistery with its column-lined interior (Fig. 10).[60] It is also anticipated in some very notable respects by Giuliano da Sangallo's Gondi Chapel (1504) in S. Maria Novella, where the side-walls have small-scale columns that are recessed slightly into the wall surface, framed by pilasters in the corners and supported upon volutes (Fig. 40), a feature which in the *ricetto* has given rise to so much comment.[61] The *ricetto*'s corner arrangement (Fig. 38) is additionally presaged in Brunelleschi's Old Sacristy (Fig. 8), which has pilaster fillets—as the *ricetto* does, on its upper storey—in the rear corners of the chapel area which are suggestive of more substantial supports embedded within the fabric of the wall. These particularly Florentine associations are themselves then complemented by the traditional Florentine usage of dark stone and white plaster.

The procedure followed for designing the *ricetto* walls, at least in regard to the amalgamation of different prototypes, was also followed by Michelangelo when designing the famous staircase.[62] Initially, he thought of a pair of parallel flights (Fig. 41) which, as Ackerman noted, were like those executed by Giuliano da Sangallo for

60. This similarity was evidently appreciated by Vincenzo Borghini, whose 'reconstruction' of the Baptistery interior has the columns framing areas of wall that contain tabernacles (*Discorsi*, Florence 1584; illustrated in Pedretti, as in n. 47, p. 18). A further precedent for the *ricetto* with its full columns could be the vestibule of Giuliano da Sangallo's S. Spirito sacristy, as mentioned by C. Elam, 'Michelangelo (Buonarroti). Architecture', in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. J. Turner, London 1996, XXI, p. 453.

61. Sinding-Larsen (as in n. 39), p. 215, notes that volutes are a traditional form for supporting columns in small-scale works. They are used by Michelangelo in this way in one of the early schemes

for the Julius Tomb (Metropolitan Museum, New York, nos 62–931; see above, n. 59). They can also be found, however, as column-supports in larger-scale works, e.g. on the top storey of the ancient Porta Borsari in Verona, on the façade of S. Agostino (1479) in Rome, and on the main façade of Porta Venezia (1518) in Padua. The *ricetto* volutes may have also had some perceived structural role (Sinding-Larsen, ibid.), as well as presumably marking the position of the stone footings needed to carry the columns' weight.

62. For a detailed history of the staircase see Wittkower (as in n. 1), pp. 155–80.

Figure 43. Scala dei Giganti of the Doges' Palace, Venice

the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano (c. 1485).[63] Later he toyed with an oval arrangement (see Fig. 33), presumably basing it on the celebrated circular staircase of Bramante's Cortile del Belvedere (begun c. 1504) in Rome; and he seems then to have experimented in combining the two models together (Fig. 42).[64] In its final form, however, the *ricetto* staircase (established in outline 1533/34) is very different from these two models and much more complex in its design, suggesting that Michelangelo considered yet another prototype which, I propose, was the Scala dei Giganti (post 1483) of the Doges' Palace in Venice (Fig. 43).[65] This work, enclosed rather

63. Ackerman (as in n. 1), I, p. 42. Michelangelo's plans at this early stage are shown on Florence, Casa Buonarroti 89A\(^v\). The Poggio a Caiano staircase was rebuilt to a different design in the later 16th century, but is known from early drawings (Borsi, as in n. 4, pp. 409–17). Vasari (as in n. 3, ed. Milanesi, I, p. 449) thought Giuliano's staircase was based on one shown in a painting by Master Stefano. The relevance of the Poggio a Caiano staircase is also discussed by R. O'Bryan, 'The Source of the Laurentian Staircase', *Rutgers Art Review*, XVII, 1997, pp. 16–48, but his insistence that the staircase owes more to Ammannati (who certainly designed some of the detailing) than to Michelangelo is at odds with Vasari, who specifically credits Michelangelo with its invention (ed. Milanesi, VII, pp. 193–94; ed. Barocchi, I, p. 59).

64. *Livre de Michel-Ange* (as in n. 6), no. 794\(^v\); Lamerle (as in n. 35), pp. 316–17; see Wittkower (as

in n. 1), pp. 165 and 163 fig. 32. Bramante's circular staircase has been destroyed but is recorded in the *Livre de Michel-Ange*, no. 733 (Lamerle, pp. 294–95). It was also illustrated by Serlio (as in n. 27, book III, fols 119\(^v\)–20\(^r\)). Michelangelo combines elements from the two schemes together in Florence, Casa Buonarroti 92A\(^v\). On the recto of this same sheet he devised a design based on the lower staircase of the Cortile del Belvedere.

65. For the date see Wittkower (as in n. 1), pp. 167–68. Michelangelo visited Venice in 1529. In a letter of 1555, he described the form of the *ricetto* staircase as well suited to the use of a lord and his retainers; see e.g. Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (as in n. 2), pp. 344–45. For such a function, the model of the Doges' Palace staircase would clearly have been most appropriate.

like the *ricetto* staircase within an architectural periphery,[66] provides an obvious model for an ascent clear of the side-walls and comprising two main flights separated by a half-landing. The eventual *ricetto* staircase combines these key features with elements from the other prototypes, especially the flanking flights at the bottom and the curving steps in the centre, so that the resulting arrangement, which is undeniably most original in conception, can nevertheless be regarded in its essentials as an ingenious hybrid.

This principle of mixing elements together to produce new designs was to be epitomised in the form employed for the *ricetto* columns, which can be regarded as emblematic of his whole approach. The columns, in essence, are a combination of the Doric with the Corinthian. They are Doric from the point of view of their plainness and the proportions of their capitals.[67] They are, however, Corinthian in their slender overall proportions, and in having elaborate bases with double astragals, and capitals with abacuses of typically Corinthian shape.[68] They are thus of a new type, although new in the sense that they depend on the standard forms of the two established orders, or 'styles' (*maniere*) as they were widely termed, which serve as their models.[69] Their new form is, of course, an example of the 'licence' (*licenzia*) which Vasari spoke about; but as we have seen, this licence was not at all arbitrary since it was firmly rooted in the conventions of the past, and it was also linked to contemporary notions of the 'composite' (*composito*), also referred to by Vasari, as will be discussed in further detail shortly.

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From this examination, it now becomes possible to see something of the way Michelangelo's methods of design developed; and to recognise a change in his approach. Early on, for the S. Lorenzo façade, the prototypes were recent and *all'antica*, but their use was relatively straightforward and literal. Later, however, the prototypes multiplied and were increasingly conflated, although the resulting designs were clearly Florentine in their associations. The reasons for this change of approach were many. Among the relevant factors were undoubtedly the differing locations and intended functions of the projects within the S. Lorenzo complex, as well as the changes of patronage. Pope Leo X was responsible for the S. Lorenzo façade, but Cardinal Giulio de' Medici commissioned the New Sacristy and then later, as Pope Clement VII, nurtured the design of the Laurentian Library. It is also fitting to acknowledge Michelangelo's growing confidence and capability as an architect; and his increasing awareness of current and past architecture through, for example, his visit to Rome in 1523, a golden opportunity for collecting useful design material, and

66. My thanks to Charles Robertson for the important point about enclosure.

67. The columns are described as a variation of the 'Doric style' by Cosimo Bartoli (as quoted below, n. 93).

68. The elaborate bases with double astragals are similar to those in the Pantheon. The capitals are not unlike those of the framing pilasters on Alberti's S. Maria Novella façade, which have fluted necks capped with abacuses of Corinthian shape. They are

even more like those on the façade of Alberti's S. Sebastiano in Mantua, which have plain necks although they are still of taller proportion, and thus not in the Doric proportions of the *ricetto* capitals.

69. The term *maniera* is used by Cosimo Bartoli (as quoted below, n. 93), and it occurs frequently in Serlio's architectural treatise, of which book IV, on the orders, was published originally under the title *Regole generali di architettura sopra le cinque maniere de gli edifici* (Venice 1537).

his journey to Venice in 1529. His apparent use of Raphael's schemes might even have been motivated in part by a desire to expropriate his former rival's personal style in the aftermath of his death in 1520.[70] Finally, we should view the development of Michelangelo's method against the background in Florence of an increasing mood of nostalgia for the times of Lorenzo *Il Magnifico*, coupled with a resurgence of national pride and of demands for greater autonomy.[71]

Yet to gain a deeper insight into Michelangelo's changing approach it is particularly instructive to relate his methods to the practices of certain other Renaissance architects. It is also revealing to consider the differing theories of imitation, that is literary imitation, which were current at the time. For in so doing, it becomes possible to see Michelangelo's practice from the perspective of two opposing outlooks (in architecture and literary imitation), and to understand it as shifting from the one to the other. The first of these viewpoints was strongly associated with Pope Leo X and early sixteenth-century Rome, and it accorded with the approach Michelangelo adopted for the S. Lorenzo façade scheme. The second was attuned to different aesthetic priorities which had longstanding links with Florence, and this, as we shall now see, provided the background for the approaches taken up in the New Sacristy and, ultimately, the basis for the approach finally elaborated in the Laurentian Library.

Turning, then, once again to the S. Lorenzo façade, it will be remembered that the final scheme was similar in appearance to contemporary buildings elsewhere in Italy. In fact, its *all'antica* style conformed closely with a stylistic consensus of that time, which was presided over by Raphael; and Michelangelo's design method also accorded with Raphael's to a very considerable extent and in two particular ways. In the first place, Michelangelo modelled his scheme closely on a prototype of clear calibre, as Raphael did when basing his designs on selected prototypes of architectural merit, which were often ancient but occasionally could be modern. In the second, he followed Raphael's design practice, exemplified in his Palazzo Branconio dell'Aquila, whereby he took up a suitable model (in this case the ancient markets of Trajan) but then considered himself free to adjust some of the detailing and even change the architectural order.[72]

Raphael's method itself accorded closely with an approach advocated for literature by Pietro Bembo and set out in his *Prose della volgar lingua* (written c. 1515, published 1525). Bembo argued that modern Italian writers should base their work on the best available models, in particular the works of Petrarch, so as to achieve an appropriate standard and a broadly universal acceptability across the whole of Italy. He drew an explicit comparison between this literary approach and the practice of the leading artists and architects of the day who based their works on examples from

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70. On the rivalry see esp. R. Goffen, *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian*, New Haven, CT and London 2002, pp. 171–264.

71. This new direction was given some focus at the regular meetings of scholars, including Niccolò Machiavelli, held in Florence's Orti Oricellari; see F. Gilbert, 'Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari. A Study on the Origin of Modern Political Thought', this *Journal*, xii, 1949, pp. 101–31. For the development of political philosophy in Florence during this

period see Q. Skinner in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. C. B. Schmitt, idem and E. Kessler, Cambridge 1988, pp. 434–41.

72. Raphael's method is analysed further in D. Hemsoll, 'A Question of Language. Raphael, Michelangelo and the Art of Architectural Imitation', in *Raising the Eyebrow: John Onians and World Art Studies. An Album Amicorum in His Honour*, ed. L. Golden, Oxford 2001, pp. 123–31.

Antiquity, praising in particular Raphael for his painting and architecture, and
Michelangelo for his painting and sculpture.[73] In so doing, he not only gave an
example to writers, but (as I have discussed elsewhere) also provided architects with
a theoretical basis for designing their buildings.[74] He furnished both professions
with a justification for the key concept of basing the new on the old; and then also
described a process for literature, which was readily applicable to architecture, of
selecting a particular 'style' (*maniera*) that was judged to accord with certain rules
and conventions of form and decorum. His work therefore established a theoretical
position which was precisely analogous to the practice embraced almost immediately
afterwards by Raphael when he based a new design on a suitable model, then recast
its details and changed its architectural order in accordance with a chosen *maniera*—
the term he used in his well-known letter on architecture to Leo X of around 1517.[75]
The same method, and the same theoretical position, are clearly both fundamental
to the design of the S. Lorenzo façade.

That Michelangelo should have taken up, or felt constrained to take up, an
approach similar to Raphael's for the S. Lorenzo façade is hardly surprising con-
sidering that this was his first major architectural commission, and that his patron
was Leo X. It was, therefore, almost inevitable that his methods, and to a large
extent his conception of architectural styles, would conform to those of Raphael and
other architects of the period who had designed *all'antica* buildings recently; and
that, in consequence, his scheme would appear disassociated from the architectural
traditions of Florence. In fact, it even seems possible that Michelangelo himself
was attentive to such distinctions and appreciated the cultural implications of the
scheme's style; this can, perhaps, be read into his much quoted claim that he
intended to make the façade the 'mirror of architecture and sculpture of all Italy.'[76]
I propose that his wish to design the façade in an exemplary manner (as a 'mirror')
and in an 'Italian' style, largely free of narrowly local associations, indicates a
conscious alignment on his part to the architectural outlook of Raphael and the
cultural orientation of Bembo.

As regards the New Sacristy, it now becomes most significant that Michelangelo's
abandonment of this initial approach, and his adoption of a new one, coincided very
closely with the rejection in Florence of Bembo's literary standpoint.[77] This rejection,

73. P. Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua*, ed. C.
Dionisotti, *Prose e rime di Pietro Bembo*, Turin 1960,
book III, chap. 1, pp. 183–85 (and ed. C. Vela,
Bologna 2001, pp. 109–10): '... tanto più sé dovere
essere della loro fattica lodati si credono, quanto essi
più alle antiche cose fanno per somiglianza ravici-
nare le loro nuove.' As Dionisotti notes (p. 184 n. 3),
Bembo eventually added Michelangelo's architecture
to this list, but only in the 1549 edition of the *Prose*.

74. The relationship between Raphael's method
and Bembo's theory is discussed in P. Davies and
D. Hemsoll, 'Sanmicheli's Architecture and Literary
Theory', in *Architecture and Language. Constructing
Identity in European Architecture, c. 1000–c. 1650*, ed. G.
Clarke and P. Crossley, Cambridge 2000, pp. 102–17,
esp. 104–05; and in some further detail in Hemsoll,
'A Question of Language' (as in n. 72), pp. 124–25.

75. V. Golzio, *Raffaello nei documenti, nelle testimo-
nianze dei contemporanei e nella letteratura del suo secolo*,
Rome 1936, pp. 91–92. For discussion in this context
of the terms *maniera* and *ordine* see Davies and
Hemsoll (as in n. 74).

76. '... questa opera della facciata di San Lorenzo,
che sia, d'architectura e di schultura, lo spechio di
tucta Italia ...' Letter to Domenico Buoninsegni in
Rome, from Carrara 2 May 1517; *Il carteggio di Michel-
angelo*, ed. P. Barocchi and R. Ristori, I, Florence
1965, pp. 277–78 (277). The letter is quoted by
among others Ackerman (as in n. 1), I, p. 13; and
Wallace, *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo* (as in n. 10),
p. 9.

77. This is the argument set out in fuller detail in
Hemsoll, 'A Question of Language' (as in n. 72), pp.
127–28.

in train well before 1520, was finally aired in print in the mid-'20s through the publication of important works by Ludovico Martelli and Niccolò Machiavelli on the modern Florentine language.[78] Both writers took exception to the notion that their language was 'Italian', and both insisted that it was definitively 'Florentine' in its ancestry, and, moreover, that it was not tied to the past but was instead in a state of perpetual evolution. Michelangelo's new approach would be similar to theirs if his aim was, as I believe, to reassert a specifically Florentine style that was rooted in its own traditions but at the same time was open to innovation. The New Sacristy was designed 'in imitation' of Brunelleschi's Old Sacristy, but it was far from a close copy, being a 'new' design in so many respects.

In fact, Michelangelo's new approach also tallied very neatly with a particular aspect of this alternative literary outlook. In discussing the continuing evolution of the Florentine language, Machiavelli explained that new words were sometimes adopted but then modified so as to be given the 'same consonance' ('medesima consonanza') with the existing Florentine language and thereby converted into new Florentine words ('si convertono in Fiorentini').[79] This idea provides a striking parallel with Michelangelo's practice of adopting forms and motifs of non-Florentine origin, then modifying them and treating them in a Florentine manner, thereby converting them *alla fiorentina*, as is especially the case with the New Sacristy tombs, and also widely evident elsewhere in the New Sacristy as it would be, later on, in the Laurentian Library.

Beyond this, however, Michelangelo's new approach reintroduced a design method that had been prevalent in Florentine architecture during the later fifteenth century. Developed by Giuliano da Sangallo during the time of Lorenzo *Il Magnifico* in the 1480s, it involved the concept of combining together, architecturally, prestigious local Florentine buildings such as the Baptistery and the works of Brunelleschi with selected monuments from Roman Antiquity.[80] It is seen, for instance, in the vestibule of Sangallo's Sacristy of S. Spirito, which looks back to local prototypes such as the portico of Brunelleschi's Pazzi Chapel for its free-standing columns and coffered barrel vault, but also owes a debt to the ancient Portico of Octavia in Rome (drawn in one of Sangallo's sketchbooks),[81] in having facing rows of columns and openings in the side-walls. This is, fundamentally, the method taken up by Michelangelo for the New Sacristy, when he made the Old Sacristy his principal prototype but modelled the scheme on the Pantheon as well, and it is also comparable to his practice of using ancient prototypes for several of his other schemes.

78. L. Martelli, *Riposta alla epistola del Trissino* (1524), and N. Machiavelli, *Discorso o dialogo intorno alla nostra lingua* (c. 1525), both republished in O. Castellani Pollidori, *Niccolò Machiavelli e il 'dialogo intorno alla nostra lingua'*, Florence 1978. The two publications followed swiftly from the issue in 1524 of Giangiorgio Trissino's *Epistola de le lettere nuovamente aggiunte ne la lingua italiana*, where he repeated views on the 'Italian' language he himself had aired in Florence's Orti Oricellari in 1515.

79. '... qualunque volta ... è necessario che vi venghino nuovi vocaboli ...; ma riducendosi nel parlare con medesima consonanza con i vocaboli di quella lingua ch'e' trovano, et così diventano suoi:

perché altrimenti le lingue parrebbono rappezzate et non tornerebbon bene. Et così i vocaboli forestieri si convertono in Fiorentini, non i Fiorentini in forestieri: né però diventa altro la nostra lingua che Fiorentina.' Machiavelli (as in n. 78), paragraphs 29–30; ed. Castellani Pollidori, p. 234.

80. This thesis is argued in greater detail in D. Hemsoll, 'Giuliano da Sangallo and the New Renaissance of Lorenzo de' Medici', in *The Early Medici and their Artists*, ed. F. Ames-Lewis, London 1995, pp. 187–205.

81. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana MS Barb. Lat. 4424, fol. 35^v; see Borsi (as in n. 4), pp. 187–91.

Sangallo's pioneering design method, I would argue, can itself be linked to a contemporary literary approach.[82] Cristoforo Landino, in the preface to his commentary on Dante of 1481, suggested that the Florentine language could only be developed through a 'true and perfect familiarity with Latin writing' ('vera e perfetta cognizione delle latine lettere'), and that modern writers should turn to Dante but try to make their language more like Latin in its form and structure.[83] Sangallo's method paralleled this approach in the sense that he likewise turned to Florentine models, especially the works of Brunelleschi, but also looked to ancient prototypes as a means, so I presume, to improve on them and make them more modern. Michelangelo's adoption of a similar method for the New Sacristy suggests that his intention was, at least in part, the same: that is, to re-establish a Florentine architectural tradition and then further revitalise it so as to recreate a modern but local architectural style. The method followed in the Laurentian Library, particularly the *ricetto*, was to be a little different, but it was still founded on a similar approach.

Michelangelo's practice of amalgamating several prototypes, as most ambitiously demonstrated in the Laurentian *ricetto*, has no obvious precedent in previous Renaissance architecture. Yet to some extent it still follows on from Sangallo's example, as shown, say, in the sacristy of S. Spirito, where the scheme is based on a combination of local and ancient prototypes, but the end-result is none the less distinct from them. The sacristy's octagonal shape and outline design are based on the Florentine Baptistery, and the arrangement of the alcoves in the corners derives from a thermal hall from the Roman baths at Viterbo (again shown in one of Sangallo's sketchbooks), but the system of pilasters and arches on the lower storey depends on neither, and nor does the typically Florentine usage of dark stone and white plaster.[84]

It is this concept of bringing together many different prototypes that particularly distinguishes Michelangelo's new approach from the one he had adopted initially, and also from Raphael's outlook and the principle of imitation advocated by Bembo. By contrast, his new approach had a great deal in common with the view of literary imitation that had been propounded in Florence by Angelo Poliziano, a figure Michelangelo had been very close to in his youth.[85] Poliziano's view of literary imitation had indeed been diametrically opposed to Bembo's subsequent outlook in the crucial sense that he believed that the best writing, whether in Latin or the vernacular, should be based upon many models rather than just one. Thus, whereas Bembo (like many previous theorists) championed the works of Cicero and Virgil as

82. The connection was first suggested by J. B. Onians, *Bearers of Meaning: the Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance*, Princeton 1988, pp. 135–36.

83. C. Landino, ed. R. Cardini, *Scritti critici e teorici*, 2 vols, Rome 1974, I, p. 139.

84. *Taccuino senese* (as in n. 20), fol. 8ʳ; Borsi (as in n. 4), pp. 259–61. Another ancient building with a similar plan is the so-called Studio of Varro near Cassino, which was also drawn by Sangallo (Codex Barberini, fol. 8; Borsi, pp. 73–74). The pilasters and arches have something of a parallel in the so-called *Carceri Vecchie* outside Cassino (Codex Barberini, fol. 8; Borsi, pp. 74–75), which has half-columns and niches around its circular exterior.

85. Cf. Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (as in n. 2), pp. 194–95, 242–49. The concept of mixing discussed here is of course in some sense similar to the principle of basing works of art on the most beautiful parts of different examples found in nature, a theme addressed in an early poem by Michelangelo (poem no. 9, c. 1511; *The Poetry of Michelangelo*, ed. J. M. Saslow, New Haven, CT and London 1991, p. 77) and also addressed by Michelangelo's biographer, Ascanio Condivi, in his *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti* (ed. G. Nencioni, Florence 1998, p. 62).

the premier models for Latin prose and verse, Poliziano had recommended looking also to writers such as Quintilian and Statius, and then devising new works by means of a transformative process founded on a synthesis of many such authors.[86] He had argued, moreover, that the best literary works should be conceived not in a unitary style but through the using and mixing of several styles.[87] He had also recommended mixing models to produce a variety of effects, and to gain a freedom from constraint that would lead to writers cultivating their own individual styles. Many of these ideas were encapsulated in a well-known letter written around 1485 to his Roman correspondent Paolo Cortese, urging him to fill his mind when composing new works with the 'multifarious knowledge' of many authors, before remarking that 'nobody can write well if he does not diverge from the rules.'[88]

Michelangelo's new approach to architecture was like Poliziano's literary outlook not just in that he utilised multiple prototypes which were then adapted and transformed, but in several other respects as well. Just as Poliziano had recommended the mingling of styles, Michelangelo, for the Laurentian Library *ricetto*, combined different established architectural manners to produce a hybrid column-type. Much as Poliziano had advocated the creation of a variety of effects, Michelangelo chose a range of procedures to produce varying effects in the different parts of his schemes. And in striking fulfilment of Poliziano's belief that freedom of expression would lead to the creation of an individual style, Michelangelo was able to distance himself from his models, and to depart from the strict architectural 'rules' of Vitruvius and classical orthodoxy. The schemes he produced in this way have, correspondingly, been recognised as not only novel but stylistically very much his own.

The notions of mixing and stylistic novelty were, of course, to be tied in by Vasari later on with his use of the term 'composite' (*composito* and *composto*).[89] Specifically, Vasari described how Michelangelo, starting with the New Sacristy, adopted a new 'ordering of ornaments', and used a 'composite ornament' of a 'more varied and novel form than any other ancient or modern master.'[90] This term 'composite'

86. For Poliziano's literary theory see especially M. L. McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation in the Italian Renaissance: the Theory and Practice of Literary Imitation from Dante to Bembo*, Oxford 1995, pp. 187–227; P. Godman, *From Poliziano to Machiavelli: Florentine Humanism in the High Renaissance*, Princeton 1998, pp. 4 and 45–51. For the theory in a wider context see e.g. G. W. Pigman, 'Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly*, XXXIII, 1980, pp. 1–32.

87. For Politiziano's views on the mixing of styles see e.g. Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (as in n. 2), pp. 245–47.

88. Godman (as in n. 86), pp. 46–47; *Prosatori latini del Quattrocento*, ed. E. Garin, Milan 1952, pp. 902–4: 'Sed ut bene currere non potest, qui pedem ponere studet in alienis tantum vestigiis, ita nec bene scribere, qui tamquam de praescripto non audet egredi.'

89. Vasari used the word *composito* in his *Life* of Michelangelo (see above, n. 3), but the word *composto* in the expanded preface to the 1568 edition (ed. Milanesi, I, pp. 135–36; ed. R. Bettarini and P.

Barocchi, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architetti nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, I, *Testo*, Florence 1966, pp. 64–66). In this preface, Vasari described the various different architectural orders and included a discussion of Michelangelo's architecture under the Composite (termed the *composto*), thereby forging a disingenuous link between the two, just as Benvenuto Cellini had done in a short treatise on architecture written previously (B. Cellini, *I trattati dell'oreficeria e della scultura*, ed. C. Milanesi, Florence 1857, pp. 223–24; quoted in part by Barocchi, ed., as in n. 3, III, p. 815). Michelangelo undoubtedly used a hybrid order in the *ricetto*, but this was not a Composite 'order' in the sense of it having a standardised form and proportions, and constituting one of five canonical 'orders' like that described by Serlio in book IV (1537) of his architectural treatise.

90. Cited above, n. 3. Vasari also connected the concept of 'composite' with novelty in the preface to the 1568 edition of the *Lives*, where he associated the first four orders with the 'Greeks and Romans', noting their standardised forms, but connected the Composite with Michelangelo's New Sacristy and

implies that elements of the architecture were brought together from many different sources. But its use in architectural theory more generally relates also to an idea of mixing in language in order to produce new forms and styles, which was well established in the literary theory of the time.[91] Its use by Vasari, therefore, suggests that he perceived Michelangelo's architecture in a rather literary manner. It may even indicate that he was fully aware of its literary associations, which seems likely given that Florentine literary theorists closely acquainted with Vasari were exploring a notion of the *composto* in language and literature at around this very time. Pierfrancesco Giambullari, for example, had described the Florentine language in 1546 as being 'composed' (*composta*) from several different languages. Carlo Lenzoni (d. 1551), in a work published posthumously which was dedicated and formally presented to Michelangelo in 1556, likened Dante's mixing of styles to a modern 'Composite' order in architecture.[92] Vasari's close friend and colleague Cosimo Bartoli had inserted an appraisal of Michelangelo's architecture into a literary lecture given originally in the 1540s and published in 1567, where he noted how Michelangelo had 'varied' the *ricetto* columns from the Doric type used in Antiquity, and commented that architecture was especially praiseworthy when it was varied in 'style' (*maniera*).[93]

What is really being argued here, however, is that Michelangelo himself perceived his architecture in a similar way. That is to say that he had developed an approach to architecture which he understood as being closely in tune with

Laurentian Library, 'dove le porte, i tabernacoli, le base, le colonne, i capitelli, le cornici, le mensole et insomma ogni altra cosa, hanno del nuovo e del composto da lui, e nondimeno sono maravigliose nonché belle.' Later on, after remarking how Michelangelo developed his approach even further at Palazzo Farnese and St Peter's, he finally added that 'per che niuno può negare che questo nuovo ordine composto, avendo da Michelagnolo tanta perfezione ricevuto, non possa andar al paragone degli altri.'

91. See A. A. Payne, '*Mescolare, composti*, and Monsters in Italian Architectural Theory of the Renaissance', in *Disarmonia, brutezza e bizzarria nel Rinascimento*, ed. L. Secchi Tarugi, Florence 1998, pp. 273–94. It should also be pointed out that Serlio's concept of the Composite was probably related itself to literary theory. His schema of five orders was taken from a proposal made by his close friend, the literary theorist Giulio Camillo Delminio who, in his *Idea dell'eloquenza* (1530s), had envisaged the orders as being equivalent to different varieties of language, and had listed these orders or, rather, 'styles' (*maniere*), as the 'toscanica, dorica, ionica, corintia e mista.' On this see M. Carpo, *Alberti, Raffaello, Serlio e Camillo. Metodo ed ordini nella teoria architettonica dei primi moderni*, Geneva 1993, pp. 64–82.

92. P. Giambullari, *Il Gello*, Florence 1546; C. Lenzoni, *In difesa della lingua fiorentina e di Dante*, Florence 1556; both discussed by A. A. Payne, 'Architects and Academies. Architectural Theories of *imitatio* and the Literary Debates on Language and

Style', in *Architecture and Language* (as in n. 74), pp. 118–33 (123–24). See also Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (as in n. 2), p. 246. Lenzoni's work was dedicated to Michelangelo by Cosimo Bartoli, who had it published. For its presentation to Michelangelo see Vasari (as in 3, ed. Milanesi, p. 242, ed. Barocchi, pp. 98–99), who quotes a letter from the artist of 1556.

93. C. Bartoli, *Ragionamenti accademici sopra alcuni luoghi difficili di Dante*, Venice 1567, 1b–2b: '... si servì Michelagnolo nel far le colonne della maniera Dorica, ma non osservò già le misure degli Antichi ... Io per uno lo lodo grandamente, perche se egli ha variato dagli Antichi, egli ha tenuta una proporzione nelle cose sue, che è molto grata a chi la riguarda, et diletta molto chi accortamente la considera ... quando nelle cose della Architettura si varia in maniera ... questo certamente è cosa molto lodabile.' The passage is reproduced in full in C. Davis, 'Cosimo Bartoli and the Portal of Sant'Apollonia by Michelangelo', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XIX, 1975, pp. 261–76 (275–76). It is noted by J. Bryce, *Cosimo Bartoli (1503–72): the Career of a Florentine Polymath*, Geneva 1983, 270–71; and by Payne, 'Architects and Academies' (as in n. 92), p. 123. Serlio also regarded Michelangelo's approach in a rather literary way in the dedication to book IV of his treatise, by describing Michelangelo's 'bright light' in architecture as causing not just the 'Latin name' but also Tuscany to be illuminated; see *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture*, ed. V. Hart and P. Hicks, I, New Haven and London 1996, p. 251.

established and respectable theories of language and literary imitation, and that he finally conceived of a 'composite' architecture that was strongly Florentine in its spirit but at the same time allowed him plenty of scope for personal invention. It is significant, I think, that many of the figures involved in these literary debates were personally known to Michelangelo. Moreover, one of them, Giambullari, had been a canon of the church of S. Lorenzo since before 1515 and was eventually, in 1550, put in charge of the Laurentian Library.[94] It may be relevant too that Michelangelo had developed his approach with the intention—at least according to what Vasari tells us—of demonstrating his ideas and wishing them to be 'made known', and that he had conspicuously paraded his approach with the hybrid 'style' of the *ricetto* columns. For the design method he adopted for the library and, presumably, any theoretical position connected with his architectural ideas, would have been recognisable to those destined to frequent it.

Yet there is more to Michelangelo's method than a reliance on past prototypes and a set of procedures for using and adapting them. It also involved a growing and sustained engagement with architectural anthropomorphism. This concept has a history in architectural theory which goes back to Vitruvius,[95] and Michelangelo's interest in it is exemplified, for instance, in his designs for decorative details based on human forms, including the masks on the New Sacristy capitals and those on the abacuses of the *ricetto* columns. It is manifested too in the profiles of certain moldings, particularly the pilaster bases of the New Sacristy tombs with their nose-like projections.[96] It is even witnessed in the whole forms of some motifs, especially the supports of the *ricetto* tabernacles which are wider at the top, like herms and thus like men's bodies.[97] A similar interest is evident, I would propose, in the way the articulation is handled in the New Sacristy and Laurentian Library, which can be read as drawing on an anthropomorphic metaphor that formed a common strand of architectural thought. This metaphor is between the architectural framework and the bones of a human body, and was used repeatedly by Alberti in the fifteenth century.[98] It occurs as well in writings by associates of Michelangelo, including Vasari

94. See F. Pignatti, 'Giambullari, Pierfrancesco', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, LIV, Rome 2000, pp. 308–12.

95. There exists no comprehensive survey of this theme in architectural theory, but for some recent discussion see e.g. M. Frascari, *Monsters of Architecture: Anthropomorphism in Architectural Theory*, Totowa, NJ 1991. For this aspect of Michelangelo's approach see also Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (as in n. 2), pp. 418–47.

96. Their profile is virtually identical to that shown in a drawing (Florence, Casa Buonarroti 10A) where an eye is sketched in to make the profile very like that of a whole face. For further discussion see Summers, ibid., p. 154.

97. Michelangelo had intended to use actual herms for the central tabernacle of his tomb of the Magnifici in the New Sacristy, which is known from an autograph project drawing (Paris, Louvre, inv. no. 837). On this tomb, which was never executed, see Joannides in *L'adolescente dell'Ermitage* (as in n. 23);

and idem, 'Michelangelo's Medici Chapel' (as in n. 28), pp. 126–28. The volutes below the columns may have been thought to resemble knees or legs, like those of the so-called *finestre inginocchiate* designed by Michelangelo for the Palazzo Medici (cf. Vasari, as in n. 3, ed. Milanesi, VII, p. 191; ed. Barocchi, I, p. 56).

98. L. B. Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, III, chaps 6, 8, 12, 14; VII, chap. 4; IX, chap. 5. For a broader discussion of Alberti's use of anthropomorphic metaphors see J. B. Onians, 'The Biological Basis of Renaissance Aesthetics', in *Concepts of Beauty in Renaissance Art*, ed. F. Ames-Lewis and M. Rogers, Aldershot 1998, pp. 12–27. The metaphor of bones was also used by Antonio Manetti with reference to Brunelleschi's studies of ancient architecture; see Antonio di Tuccio Manetti, *The Life of Brunelleschi*, ed. H. Saalman and C. Enggass, University Park, Pa., and London 1970, pp. 50–51; and, for further discussion, Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (as in n. 2), pp. 323 and 432.

and also the physician Realdo Colombo who later planned to collaborate with
Michelangelo on a treatise on anatomy.[99] In Michelangelo's architectural schemes,
it appears to me to have had a direct bearing on their conception and form. In the
case of the New Sacristy (Fig. 7), the lower-storey pilasters are laid on top of plain
stone supports forming part of the wall, that are in a sense thus like structural
'bones'. In that of the Laurentian reading room (Fig. 22), the pilasters correspond
with a structural 'skeleton' of piers that frame panels both inside and out, and also
support the cross-beams of the ceiling. For the *ricetto*, however, the metaphor seems
to have been made more literal, in that the columns are bunched together and then
recessed behind the line of the wall, providing a powerful evocation of 'bones'
exposed within the building fabric (see Figs 26, 38).[100]

Moreover, I would suggest that Michelangelo made the *ricetto* scheme rather
less like his prototypes than he might otherwise have done, so as to strengthen the
resemblance to certain forms and features of a human body. This new direction is
attested to in Michelangelo's subsequent remarks about his architecture in a well-
known late letter that deals explicitly with the theme of anthropomorphism. For in
it, Michelangelo states that the 'members of architecture derive from the members
of man', and he adds that architects can only understand this if they are masters of
the human body 'and most of all of anatomy', a way of thinking which would seem
most apt in relation to the design of the *ricetto*.[101]

This new direction is itself consistent with a theoretical position set out by
Michelangelo's pupil Ascanio Condivi, in his biography of the artist of 1553. Condivi
explains that one of his master's great achievements in painting and sculpture was
that he acquired his knowledge not from the 'work and industry of others but from
nature herself', which he emphasises as being Michelangelo's 'true model' ('vero
esempio'). He contrasts this artistic achievement with the literary practice of Bembo
and others, who had excelled in poetry but nevertheless simply based their work on
the model of Petrarch.[102] What Condivi does, therefore, is to map out a theoretical

99. Vasari (as in n. 3, ed. Milanesi, VII, p. 261; ed. Barocchi, I, p. 111), in connection with Michelangelo's S. Maria degli Angeli in Rome. R. Colombo, *De re anatomica*, Venice 1559, p. 9; as cited and discussed by A. Parronchi, *Opere giovanili di Michelangelo*, II, Florence 1975, pp. 191–233; see also Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (as in n. 2), pp. 433–36. A further writer to make the analogy is V. Danti, *Trattato delle perfette proporzioni*, Florence 1567, I, chap. 12 (ed. P. Barocchi, *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento*, I, Bari 1960, p. 243); see Summers, ibid., p. 433.

100. The supposed structural ambiguity of the *ricetto* columns being set back behind 'wall-piers', and thus relinquishing their function of support, is commented on by many writers, e.g. Wilde, *Michelangelo* (as in n. 14), pp. 143–44. It should be noted, however, that numerous other Florentine buildings, including derivatives of the *ricetto* such as Vasari's façade to the Uffizi, have columns that are juxtaposed with genuinely structural piers, and that the interior of the Pantheon has a comparable arrangement. It should also be noted that the *ricetto* columns

were intended to have the structural function of supporting the beams of the unrealised ceiling, and, as Wallace documents (*Michelangelo at San Lorenzo*, as in n. 10, p. 161), they were actually installed at the same time as the *ricetto*'s brick walls were being built.

101. G. Milanesi, *Le lettere di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, Florence 1875, no. 490: 'E però è cosa certa, che le membra dell'architettura dipendono dalle membra dell'uomo. Chi non è stato o non è buon maestro di figure, e massime di notomia, non se ne può intendere.' For discussion see Clements (as in n. 2), pp. 318–26, emphasising the Vitruvian basis to the outlook expressed in the letter; and Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (as in n. 2), pp. 418–46. The letter also makes particular mention of the features of the face, in which connection it seems significant that the apertures in the ceiling originally intended for the *ricetto* were referred to as *occhi* (see Wittkower, as in n. 1, p. 133, citing letters of 1525); and that Michelangelo drew actual eyes to indicate windows in the vault on one of his schemes for S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini (1559–60; Casa Buonarroti 120A; see Summers, ibid., p. 430).

background which can be related to Michelangelo's evolving approach to archi-
tecture, by identifying two opposing methods, one based on the close imitation of
artistic prototypes and the other on the 'true model' of nature. In doing so, he
provides some insight into Michelangelo's own eventual perception of these two
methods of procedure, and his wish to base his architecture more directly on
'nature', even though this was so at odds with normal practice and expectation. It
should be added that the design method which is discernable in Michelangelo's
later architecture is closer to the procedure he habitually followed in his painting
and sculpture, which was to use prototypes but then recast them on the basis of
studying from nature.[103] Nature indeed provided a 'true model', but in the sense, I
suggest, that it served as a guiding ideal, just as, in the architecture of the *ricetto*, it
came to provide a reference point and an ultimate authority for the scheme's final
constitution.

In designing the *ricetto*, therefore, Michelangelo continued to use prototypes but
he selected and adapted them to be congruent in various ways with anthropomorphic
forms and principles. From an interpretational point of view, he succeeded in linking
and reconciling the concept of the *composto* with an ideal of imitating from nature. A
comparable approach in architecture was outlined by his follower, Vincenzo Danti,
in his treatise on proportion published in 1567.[104] Danti argued that art can both
imitate nature and produce new *composti*—which are 'composed' from naturalistic
forms drawn from several different sources, and include not only grotesques and
other inventions but also 'the ornaments of all the buildings that are composed by
architecture'.[105] He even concluded that architecture is the best representative of
this form of imitation, and he distinguished it from the other arts by explaining
that architecture 'composes things on its own', and that it 'appears to have much
more artifice and perfection'.[106] Danti's position, in other words, is that architectural
designs have the intrinsic and definitive characteristic of being *composti* put together
from multiple sources, and that they follow their own laws although they are still
governed, in some sense, by the authority of nature. The architectural conception of
the *ricetto* appears notably similar, in that the design is in many senses a composite
put together from many different sources, and structured in accordance with certain

102. Condivi (as in n. 85), pp. 52–53: 'È stato
Michelagnolo, fin da fanciullo, uomo di molta fatica,
e al dono della natura ha aggiunta la dottrina, la
quale egli, non dall'altrui fatiche e industrie, ma
della stessa natura ha voluto apprendere, mettendosi
quella inanzi come vero esempio.'

103. Such as the contemporary painting of Leda
(now lost), which was obviously based on ancient
prototypes, but redrawn from studies from life; see
Hirst (as in n. 7), pp. 73–74.

104. Danti (as in n. 99), book I, chap. 11; ed.
Barocchi, I, pp. 235–41. For further discussion see
Summers (as in n. 2), 'Michelangelo on Architec-
ture', and *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, pp.
148–49 and 275.

105. Danti, ibid., ed. Barocchi, p. 235: 'E non ha
dubbio alcuno che l'arte del disegno può, con la
pittura, con la scultura e con l'architettura, tutte le
cose che si veggono imitare o veramente ritrarre ...

e, che è più, può fare nuovi composti e cose che
quasi parranno tal volta dall'arte stessa ritrovate
[che] non sono imitate dalla natura, ma sì bene
composte parte di questa cosa naturale e parte di
quella cosa naturale, facendo un tutto nuovo per
sé stesso ... sotto cui si comprendano tutte le specie
di grottesche, di fogliami, d'ornamenti di tutte le
fabbriche che l'architettura compone.'

106. Danti, ibid., ed. Barocchi, p. 237: 'Ma è ben
vero che l'architettura, perché compone le cose da
sua posta, cioè non imita nella maniera che fanno
l'altre due [i.e. painting and sculpture], sì come
è detto, pare che sia di molto maggior artifizio e
perfezzione.' Rather disappointingly, however, Danti
then explains that in architecture the process of
imitation is relatively easy, since it had been made
subject to *regole*, *ordini* and *misuri* through the achieve-
ments of the ancients.

basic architectural conventions, but is still able to conform to an ideal of naturalistic imitation.

So, in the final analysis, we are able to understand Michelangelo's formative development as an architect, and acknowledge the Laurentian Library as its real culmination, far better if we examine Michelangelo's changing methods. For, in so doing, we can turn away from a view of Michelangelo working in an artistic vacuum, and regard him instead as responding to a range of ideas and practices of his time. While we may perceive some truth in Vasari's remark that Michelangelo had broken the 'ties and chains' of architecture, we recognise nevertheless that his innovation was carried forward in a constant dialogue with past formal precedents and contemporary alignments.[107]

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107. Vasari's view accords with Condivi's assessment (as in n. 85, p. 57) of one of Michelangelo's subsequent designs, which was that it was 'inusitata e nuova, non ubbligata a maniera o legge alcuna, antica over moderna.' Condivi then added, however, that Michelangelo had succeeded in 'mostrando l'architettura non esser stata così dalli passati assolutamente trattata, che non sia luogo a nuova invenzione, non men vaga e men bella', and thus acknowledged that Michelangelo's approach was the result of balancing novelty with past tradition.