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THE BELVEDERE AS A CLASSICAL VILLA

By James S. Ackerman

A fresco of extraordinary interest for both its subject and its style has been hanging in the Castel Sant’Angelo in Rome since its transference to canvas, probably at the end of the last century. Perhaps because it is so often seen, it has never attracted notice, and the only published indication of its existence is a photograph in a monograph on the Castel in which it appears hanging in the dim background of the second Camera di Clemente VII.1

Together with a second fresco fragment on canvas from the same room, it has recently been removed to the corridor of a small suite known as the Appartamento del Castellano. The origin of the second is established by a label reading: “Affresco attribuito a Vasari [doubtful] proveniente dal Palazzo Altoviti.”2 With no evidence other than the recent physical proximity of the two frescoes, this indication of provenance has come to be applied as well to the first.3 But given the marked dissimilarity of both the style and the purpose of the two fragments, it is certainly permissible to set aside the tradition which associates them, and to investigate the one as an autonomous work.

The fresco we are to consider here is clearly part of an architectural composition which originally formed the decorative frieze of a sala of considerable size (Pl. 12a).4 It is framed below by a painted entablature, and above by a cornice, while at either end the original composition apparently continued with further scenes and figures. The portion which remains is divided into two parts by a fantastic volute, around and within which masks, a parrot, garlands of fruits and vegetables, and draperies are arranged. The projection of the entablature above and below the volute suggests that in its original position it either surmounted or “carried” an architectural element such as a pilaster or beam. To the right of the volute a female allegorical figure reclines on a varicoloured rinceau. The yellow drapery which covers her left leg billows behind her head, while she rests her left arm on the back of a unicorn posed in an undignified heraldic position.

While the decorative figures to the right are conceived in more or less the same relief plane as the architectural elements, the scene to the left abandons this tectonic metaphor to reveal a sweeping landscape composition seen as if through an aperture in the frieze. That this portion of the composition is intended to imply a sort of window is evident from the dark band which frames it above and on the sides, suggesting the inner surface of the masonry. What we see beyond is a majestic complex of buildings, partly in decay, constructed on a steep rise at the foot of which is a lake artificially

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1 M. Borgatti, Castel Sant’Angelo in Roma, Rome, 1931, fig. 275.
2 This palace, which formerly stood at the opposite terminus of the Ponte Sant’Angelo directly across the Tiber from the Castel, was destroyed, and its decorations dispersed, during the construction of the river embankment in 1887/8.
3 In his brief description of the Clement VII rooms, Borgatti (op. cit., p. 570) assigns both frescoes to the Palazzo Altoviti.
4 Measurements inside the frame: 1·42 × 3·90 m.
a—Fresco, c. 1545, Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome (p. 70)

b—The Belvedere seen from the Vatican Palace (p. 71)
The Vatican Belvedere, Fresco (detail of Pl. 12a), Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome (p. 71)
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dammed by the building on the lower right. (Pl. 13). At the upper left a well-cultivated hedge crowns an area of dense natural foliage in the midst of which appears a masonry enclosure. Craggy mountains rise in the background to the right above another group of buildings.

The impression that this composition is simply an architectural fantasy modelled on the decorative landscapes of antique wall-painting is reinforced by the evident lack of narrative purpose. To be sure, the barques in the foreground are engaged in a martial skirmish which a group of classically-robed figures to the right is unconcernedly observing; but whatever the implication of this action, it is subordinated to the exposition of the architectural complex. The principal subject of the composition is, then, the architecture itself; but that this architecture is not simply a fantasy of the painter becomes evident on closer inspection.

The primary clue to the identity of the buildings is virtually self-evident, for a careful rechecking of the edifices in the distance to the right proves that they are nothing less obvious than the Castel and Ponte Sant'Angelo with their fortifications. The cylindrical body of Hadrian's tomb, surmounted by the cubical palace erected gradually during the first half of the sixteenth century, is unmistakable. In addition, both the monumental gateway familiar from sixteenth-century views, and the bridge with its balustrade are accurately portrayed.1

The point of vantage from which this group may be seen at this particular angle is the roof of the Vatican Palace; but the author of the fresco has clearly carried it off to another site behind a high hill. His sense of topography will perhaps seem less licentious if we proceed on the hypothesis that he has merely contracted the broad panorama visible from his elevated perch, and that the Castle before him has to this end been brought behind the Mons Vaticanus on his left. This hypothesis is justified by the appearance of a faintly indicated structure at the crown of the hill, with its mediaeval crenellations silhouetted against the sky. The building exists to-day, though in great part hidden from view by subsequent construction. It is the Belvedere of Innocent VIII, built as a summer retreat at the summit of the north-eastern slope of the Vatican hill. It may be recognized not only by the crenellations, but by one of its two towers which appears on the right, and a short lower extension at the left.2

The terraced hillside is now readily identifiable as the site of the Cortile del Belvedere, the connecting link between the Vatican Palace and the Museum which since the early sixteenth century has grown up around the garden of Innocent's villa. Yet the Cortile appears here in a form so different from the present crowded complex of courts and high buildings (Pl. 12b),

1 The gateway here shown was known as the Porta Collina or Porta Aenea, and was constructed by Alexander VI in 1500. In a Lafréry engraving of 1567 it appears partly demolished. It was completely razed by Urban VII. Cf. Borgatti, *op. cit.*, pp. 237, 379.

2 Most of the north façade of the original Belvedere is still visible to-day in somewhat altered form, while the south façade seen in the fresco is hidden under later construction. For sketches of the building in its original state, see Hermann Egger, *Codex Escorialensis*, Vienna, 1906, I, 63; II, 8; and the three views of Heemskerk in C. Huelsen, *Die Römischen Skizzenbücher von Marten van Heemskerk*, Berlin, 1913-1916, II, pp. 24, 31 f., 68 ff.; Plates 42, 67, and 130.
that the fresco would seem to represent a purely imaginative project. The villa is now obscured by a two-storey palace. At the centre of this palace, where the fresco depicts a low exedra accessible by a stairway of circular plan, there now rises the great three-storey “nicchione,” with a triangular stair at its base. Where we see a broad stairway leading to a lower, semi-domed exedra and a ramp, the court is now divided respectively by the high library building and the lower Braccio Nuovo of the Museums. The lowest level is the site of a large courtyard flanked on both left and right by four-to-five-storey corridors and suites. The impression that the fresco is a fanciful remodelling of the dreary enclosure is supported by the poetic ruins of the western corridors, and the impossible lake in the foreground. But that such a structure actually existed in the early sixteenth century, and that it is here delineated with considerable accuracy is beyond question, and may be demonstrated from documents of the time.

Vasari records as the first activity of Donato Bramante after the election of Julius II in 1503, the systematization of “that area which was between the Belvedere and the palace, which he wished to have in the form of a rectangular teatro (!), enclosing a small valley which was between the ancient papal palace and the building which Innocent VIII had newly made as a papal habitation; and furthermore by two corridors in this valley, one might pass from the Belvedere to the Palace along loggie; . . . and also from the valley one might ascend to the level of the Belvedere by a system of stairways of different sorts.”  

Vasari continues to describe Bramante’s project as comprising two passages of two superimposed orders in the lower court, rising to the ground level of Innocent’s villa, carrying as a third storey a loggia 400 paces in length running the entire distance from the Vatican Palace to the villa. In the lower court, the ground was to be levelled and a fountain erected between the passages. Vasari proceeds: “Of this design Bramante finished the first corridor which leads from the palace to the Belvedere on the side toward Rome (to the right in the fresco), excepting the last loggia which was to go on top; but the part toward the woods opposite (left in the fresco) was well founded, but impossible to finish, as the death of Julius (1513) and then of Bramante (1514) intervened.” Vasari says that Bramante was also able to complete the statue-court around the garden of the villa, but that the corridor towards the woods was left undone until the time of Pius IV (1559-65). He further adds that the inordinate speed demanded of the architect by the Pope (“che aveva voglia che tali fabbriche non se murassero, ma nascessero”), resulted in faulty construction, and that a portion 80 braccia in length crumbled in the time of Clement VII (1523-34), and had to be reconstructed and buttressed under Paul III (1534-49).

Vasari’s accuracy in this instance is fully attested by contemporary documents. That construction was begun immediately on the election of Julius II is indicated by an inscription, now lost, which recorded the removal in 1504 of the great basin from the baths of Titus to the site of the projected museum.2

1 Ed. Milanesi, IV, pp. 155 ff.
2 JULIUS II PONT. MAX. LABRUM. LAT. PED. XXIII S. AB TITI VESPASIANI THERMIS IN CARINIS TEMPORUM/ INIURIA CONTRACTUM IN VATICANOS HORTOS ADVEXIT. PRIMAMQ. IN FORMAM RESTITUIT ORNAVITQ. PONT. SVI AN. PRIMO MDIII. (V. Forcella, Iscrizione delle Chiese e d’altri Edifici di Roma, VI, Rome, 1875, p. 55, § 122.)
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Documents from 1505-13 indicate continuous activity in various portions of the Cortile, corridors, and loggie.¹ One of these, which records the levelling of the lower court in preparation for a bullfight, suggests a likely explanation for the term "teatro" used by Vasari and other contemporaries in reference to this portion of the complex.² Consistent with Vasari's account of the interruption of the programme, no records of new building exist from the pontificate of Leo X (1513-21). The report of the fall of a considerable portion of the structure is supported by various contemporary accounts which vary considerably in their estimate of the extent of the damage. It took place on January 7, 1531, and the Pope was very nearly involved in the disaster.³ Evidence of 1534-36 demonstrates that in that period it had not yet been repaired;⁴ but reconstruction was begun by Baldassare Peruzzi, who died early in 1536, and completed with new additions by Antonio da Sangallo the younger from 1541 until his death in 1546.⁵ The buttressing which Vasari says was made necessary took the form of shoring-arches constructed in brick inside the original arches of the ground-floor corridor, and is still visible today. Finally, the most energetic phase of building, which quite changed the aspect of the site, took place during the pontificate of Pius IV under the direction of Pirro Ligorio. At that time the Nicchione was raised over the building at the head of the court (which had been heightened to two stories

³ Cf. L. Pastor, Storia dei Papi, Rome, 1923 et seq., IV, 739 ff., documents 133-4. The first of these, a letter from Girolamo Cattaneo to the Duke of Milan, dated Jan. 7, 1531, reads: "Hoggi ad hore 17 vel circa al medesimo solito che S. Stà. va in Belvedere è caduto el muro dil corridore che va a Belvedere da la zima sino al fondamento et sonno 3 volte una sopra de l'altra perchè sonno ancora tre gli corridori. La longhezza del muro fracto ponno passar 20 canne al usanza Romana. La causa è stata che mai fu coperto diplo che lo fece fare papa Julio . . ." The estimate of damage at 20 Canne (44-6 m.) is close to Vasari's 80 Braccia (47-60); but Baldassare Peruzzi in a working-drawing for the restoration (Uffizi, Arch. 569) notes in the lower corridor: "rotto can. 15" (33-75 m.).
⁴ The corridors were still in a ruinous state when seen by a German traveller, Johannes Fichard, in 1536 ("Observationes antiquitatum et aliarum rerum . . . quae Romae videntur collectae per me Johannem Fichardum J.C. in eadem urbe Mense VIIibri et VIIIibri anno MDXXXVI," Frankfurthisches Archiv, III, 1815, p. 50), and by Marten van Heemskerk, whose sketches of 1534-36 are cited in note 2, p. 71.
⁵ On his engraving of the Cortile del Belvedere celebrating the Tournament held there in 1565, Antonio Lafréry appended a short history of the buildings, reading in part: "Minacciando poi rovina detto edificio, et mancandogli alcune cose fu dalle bon. me. di Clemente 7° et Paulo 3° sotto la cura di M. Baldassare Peruzzo et dalla fe. re. di Giulio 3° per ingegno d'Antonio da Sangallo instaurato." The personalities are correctly given, as attested by a number of working-drawings by the two architects in the Uffizi Gallery. The chronology, however, is quite inaccurate. Some makeshift repairs may have been carried out by Clement VII, but the major work was done under Paul III. Peruzzi's activity falls between his return from Siena in the winter of 1534/5, and his death in January 1536. That of Antonio Sangallo is recorded in documents on the reconstruction starting in Sept. 1541 (Archivio di Stato, Rome, Camerale I: Fabbriche, § 1509, f. 30 ff.). It is unlikely that the reconstruction was still in progress after Antonio's death in October 1546, much less that it dragged on into the pontificate of Julius III (1550-5).
in the 'fifties), and a greater part of the eastern, or left-hand corridor mentioned by Vasari was completed.¹

What Vasari failed to mention, however, is that the open loggia on the third storey of the lower court, joining with the corridor visible in the upper court in the fresco, was actually carried out by Antonio da Sangallo, who was an assistant of Bramante until the master's death. In a drawing by Antonio in the Uffizi Gallery, a carefully delineated Ionic capital is identified by the architect: "pilastro palmi 3 nel vivo del terzo ordine del coritoro de belvedere di peperigno terminato per me ant⁰ sangallo per che Bramante lo lasso imperfetto." A guide to St. Peter's composed later in the century assigns the completion of the loggia to the pontificate of Leo X, which would suggest that Antonio carried on without interruption after Bramante's death.²

The historical plausibility of the fresco representation once determined, it remains to consider the extent of its descriptive accuracy. Until now, our conception of Bramante's project has been formed from a number of early sixteenth-century sketches varying in precision and conflicting in data. The present fresco, as the only complete perspective of the complex before alterations changed its character, on the one hand clarifies the interpretation of this data, and on the other is amply supported by it.

The chief comparative document is a plan drawn by an anonymous follower of Bramante, which appears in a sketchbook in the Soane Museum (Pl. 14a).³ It is obviously copied from Bramante's master-plan rather than from the building itself, since it shows the left as well as the right-hand corridor; the two joined by a terminating wall in the lower court which was ultimately built according to another plan.⁴ We immediately see that

¹ Cf. R. Lanciani, Storia degli Scavi di Roma, Rome, 1902-7, III, p. 213 ff., for some indications of the activity of Pius IV. The majority of pertinent documents on the chronology of the Belvedere after the death of Bramante are unpublished—a gap in our knowledge of the sixteenth century which I hope to fill shortly. The gradual destruction of the original concept beginning with the bisection of the court by the library building in 1587-90 is reviewed by J. Hess: "La Biblioteca Vaticana," L'Illustrazione Vaticana, IX, 1938, p. 233 ff.

² Onophrius Panvinius, "De Rebus . . . Basilicae Sancti Petri Libri Septem" (Vat. lat. 6115, 6237, 6780, 7010), in A. Mai, Spicilegium Romanum, Rome, 1839-44, IX, p. 376: "Julius II arium quo villam palatio coniugerent, incohavît; Leo X perfevit triplex porticus, et cubícula struxit." The cubicula are probably the rooms at the right of the exedra in the upper court, shown in the plan.

The drawing, Uffizi, Arch. 303, is illustrated by Dagobert Frey: Michelangelo-Studien, Vienna, 1920, fig. 18, and p. 52.

³ T. Ashby, Jr., "Sixteenth-century drawings of Roman buildings attributed to Andreas Coner," Papers of the British School at Rome, II, 1904, p. 23 ff.; Pl. 25; and "Addenda," loc. cit., VI, 1913, p. 184 ff. Here a number of sixteenth-century sketches relating Bramante's project are cited and illustrated, and the tradition of Bramante's authorship of the Nicchione convincingly destroyed. The sketchbook is roughly dated by a letter written in Rome on Sept. 1, 1513, which appears on f. 43 of the volume, although some of the drawings may be ten or fifteen years later.

⁴ The execution of Bramante’s project was assigned to, and even begun by, Giuliano da Sangallo in 1513. Records exist for the laying of foundations (K. Frey, Jhb. d. Preuss. Kunstsamml.; Bethef XXI, 1911, p. 20, document 90), and an elevation drawing of the portion before the Torre Borgia is in the Uffizi collection (Arch. 134; cf. G. Marchini, Giuliano da Sangallo, Florence, 1942, p. 99 and Pl. XIXb). This was interrupted by the death of Julius, and the area left untouched until the pontificate of Pius IV, when Pirro Ligorio designed and executed a theatre-hemicycle. The plans for this project have been published by Adriana Modigliani: "Disegni inediti di
b—Giovanni Antonio Dosio, View of the Belvedere, Drawing, 1558-60, Uffizi, Florence (p. 75)

a—Plan of Belvedere, Drawing after Bramante, 16th cent., Soane Museum, London (p. 74)

c—Plan and Perspective of the upper Exedra of the Belvedere, Serlio, Libro Terzo delle Antichità, 1566 (p. 77)
the building in the fresco carries out the essential elements of this plan: the northern terminus with its niche and round staircase (‘B’ in the plan); the ramp rising above a sort of nymphaeum (‘C’ in the plan); and the monumental stairway below, with its central passageway flanked by colossal steps, presumably the seats of the “teatro.” The principal difference is that the fresco fails to represent the open arcades and membering of the corridor in the lower court. The reason for this is obvious: that the painter had to be rather offhand with the architecture in order to make his sea-battle plausible. Finally, though it is difficult to recognize in a photograph, the ruined arcade of the topmost corridor to the right is properly represented by the painter as a series of arches carried on piers with coupled pilasters (‘E’ in the plan).

A second drawing, attributed to Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533- after 1609), and probably executed in 1558-60, makes an even more striking comparison with the fresco, as the court is here seen from the identical point of vantage (Pl. 14b). In the sketch, however, Bramante has already begun to disappear, as the northern wall has now become a two-storey palace, and the ingenious circular staircase of the exedra, a smaller echo of the central ramp. The change was made in 1551 on Michelangelo’s designs, and if we refer again to the plan we will see how it came about. With the decision to construct suites of rooms at the head of the court, Bramante’s exedra became a rather a nuisance, as it would have cut off those on the right from those on the left. As the court behind forestalled the construction of a rear passageway joining the wings, the exedra had either to be destroyed entirely, or made itself into a passageway. The latter alternative was easily achieved by enclos-

Pirro Ligorio,” Rivista del R. Ist. d’Archeologia e Storia dell’ Arte, IV, 1932/3, pp. 211-26. The present hemicycle, a substitution of Benedict XIV (740-58), retains only the plan of the Ligorio project.

1 Uffizi, Arch. 2559. P. G. Hübner, “Der Autor des Berolinensis,” Monatshfte für Kunstwissenschaft, IV, 1911, p. 367, n. 19, makes the quite ingenious observation that the building materials and foot-path sketched by Dosio in the lower court give evidence of the construction of the Casino of Pius IV, which is situated just behind the aperture in the West wall. The Casino was begun in 1558 (W. Friedländer, Das Kasino Pius des Vierten, Kunstgeschichtliche Forschungen, III, Leipzig, 1912, pp. 3, 129) and by 1561 the West corridors of the Cortile were already under construction (the cornerstone was laid by the Pope on Aug. 1, 1561; cf. Concilii Tridentini Diarium, ed. Merkle, II, Friburg, 1912, p. 542); thus the drawing may be dated with relative accuracy. The attribution of this perspective to Girolamo da Carpi (Alberto Serafini, Girolamo da Carpi, Rome, 1915, p. 60) is irresponsibly made on the unsupported supposition that Girolamo designed the second storey at the northern end of the court, and that this typical veduta

is his working-drawing.

A drawing remarkably similar to the well-known Dosio perspective has recently been published by Mongan and Sachs: Drawings in the Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, 1946, I, 44 f.; II, figs. 45-6. This sketch, attributed tentatively to Ammanati, shows the roof of the second storey in construction. I believe that it may be assigned to the years 1552-3, on the basis of documents on the programme of Julius III.

2 I.e., in the Vatican Palace, most probably at the window of the Stanza dell’Incendio, which is roughly on the central axis of the Cortile.

3 Vasari, VII, p. 228: “... in Belvedere ... si riche la scala che v’è ora in cambio della mezza tonda che veniva innanzi, saliva otto scagioni, ed altri otto in giro entrava in dentro, fatta già da Bramante, che era posta nella maggior nicchia in mezzo Belvedere; Michelangelo vi disegnò e fe fare quella quadra coi balaustrì di peperigno, che vi è ora, molto bella. Aveva il Vasari quell’anno finito da stampare l’opera delle Vite. ...” The reference at the end of the passage is to the first edition of the Lives, 1556 (n.s., 1551);
ing it with an outer wall, that was raised along the topmost of the concave steps; thus creating a semicircular corridor. So the exedra seen by Dosio, while it echoes Bramante’s idea, is formed by the new wall, and is articulated not by niches, but by the windows which light the corridor behind. With this remodelling, Bramante’s stairway became obsolete, leading only to a masonry barrier. By designing a stair in front of the building, Michelangelo masked the new awkward inequality of levels, and gave access to a small semicircular podium, suitable for dining or relaxation in the open air.¹

The corridor at the right of the upper court is essentially the same as the one represented in the fresco, as is the garden wall with its gate, visible at the upper left in both. The three stories of the lower court are precisely represented by Dosio, but have already lost their Bramantesque quality.² The ground-floor arcade is fortified with the shoring-arches mentioned above, while the upper loggia, which was once open to the winds, is now walled in except for the three arched windows in each bay.

In further comparing the fresco with the two drawings, we see that the former errs in omitting the foundations that flank both the colossal steps leading to the lower court, and the central ramps. These were evidently conceived as towers reaching to, or perhaps slightly above, the cornice of the loggie. I believe that the main purpose of these was aesthetic, as Bramante was devoted to the device of revealing unexpected space behind mass. The same device is used (see detail “B” of the plan) to mask the sides of the northern niche from the distant observer. Finally, it should be noted that the colossal steps which appear in the plan and fresco, are missing from Dosio’s perspective. They were in fact built only in the pontificate of Pius IV to provide seats for the great tournament of 1565: the most elegant, and the last theatrical celebration in the court previous to the wave of sobering influence of the Counter Reformation.³ Here, then, the fresco represents Bramante’s project rather than the fact; and probably only from hearsay, since it gratuitously supplies a flight of podia at the point where the colossal steps meet the smaller ones at the centre. The rectangular stepped platform at the foot of the central stairs has, like the corridors, been sacrificed to nautical fancy.

The preceding observations help to establish the fact that at least from the level of the ramps northward, Bramante’s project is correctly portrayed. In this lies the peculiar importance of the representation, because while a number of elevation-drawings and plans of the lower court have made its

¹ For a detailed study of the alteration differing in part from that above, see D. Frey, Michelangelo-Studien, pp. 18-22. Frey’s assumption that the conception of the stairs presupposes the construction of the Nichione, which would then be attributed to Michelangelo (p. 24), is rendered unlikely by the evidence of the Dosio sketch. As the exedra is there roofed, with every indication of an intended permanence, the notion of the Nichione evidently developed well after the construction of the stairs. The assumption has also been attacked on aesthetic grounds (E. Panofsky, “Bemerkungen zu D. Freys ‘Michelangelo-Studien,’” Wasmuths Monatshefte, V, 1920/1, Archiv, p. 35).

² Dosio’s efforts to provide an exact description of the buildings extended to distorting the perspective of the lower court to permit a clear exposition of its articulation. An engraving of this tournament from the shop of Duperac and Lafréry shows the steps completed. Cf. Th. Hoffmann, Raffael als Architekt, Leipzig, 1908-11, IV, Pl. XII, 1. Hoffmann’s volume contains the most complete collection of visual documents on the history of the Belvedere and Vatican Palace.
history relatively clear, the elevation intended by Bramante for the upper court has remained a mystery. The cause of the mystery has been first an unwillingness in modern times to give up the tradition that Bramante designed the present majestic Nicchione, and second the persuasive evidence that he planned at least the second storey.\(^1\) The principal source of this conviction is Serlio’s engraving of the niche (Pl. 14c).\(^2\) Serlio obviously made his preparatory sketch while construction was still in progress, as the strangely chewed appearance of the upper portion is intended to signify. Over the entablature on either side there rises what appears to be the rudiments of a second storey. I think that comparison with the fresco makes obvious the conclusion that what Serlio saw were merely low rectangular panels which would have been framed by a slight cornice just above the portion which he sketched. From the fresco we can see that such an attic would have had to be provided in order to bring the cornice of the front wall up to the level of the cornice of the exedra; the bases, and hence the capitals, of the exedra pilasters being so much higher than those of the wall. It is moreover structurally improbable that a mere wall such as is indicated in the plan would have been erected to a height of two stories.\(^3\)

I have so far left unexplained the incomplete condition of the western gallery, since it is here that the painting apparently ceases to be documentary. But before putting down this portion to the workings of the romantic imagination, I would like to consider whether at some time during the sixteenth century the corridors could in fact have been abandoned in mid-passage. There are two distinct possibilities: first, that the perspective was drawn during a halt in the early stages of construction, or second, that it describes, however inexacty, the condition after the accident of 1531.\(^4\) The first alterna-

\(^1\) D. Frey (op. cit., p. 24 ff.), discussing the pertinent material from the early sixteenth century, concludes that a one-storey elevation was intended. His solution, however, fails to embrace all of the seemingly contrary evidence, and the reconstruction which he offers does considerable violence to the data given in Serlio’s engraving of the exedra.

\(^2\) Book III, f. 119/20, ed. 1566. Serlio’s drawing is by no means the only document illustrating Bramante’s exedra in elevation, but I have chosen it as the only one of the group which is both clear and objective. For comparison, cf. the fantasy based on the exedra-design (a two-storey loggia), by Giulio Romano (?), inscribed 1524, in the window-jambs of the Vatican Sala di Constantino (unpublished); the so-called du Cerceau drawing, Windsor Castle, no. 10496 (T. Ashby, British School Papers, II, 87; VI, 197 ff., and fig. 6; D. Frey, op. cit., p. 20 and fig. 5; A. Blunt, French Drawings at Windsor Castle, London, 1945, p. 15. I understand that Mr. Blunt has recently withdrawn the attribution to du Cerceau, originally made by Geymüller, Les du Cerceau, Paris, 1887, p. 13 f.); the sketch of Amico Aspertini, Brit. Mus., Codex 1862-7-12-394, f. 29 (Ashby, loc. cit., VI, 200, and Pl. 39; D. Frey, op. cit., p. 24, and fig. 6, and others); Francesc de Hollanda’s fantasy on the exedra (Ashby, loc. cit., II, 24 and fig. 2; E. Tormo, Os Disenhos das Antigualhas que vio Francisco d’Ollanda, Madrid, 1940, p. 89 ff., and Pl. 19v); and the last of the series, an inaccurate sketch by Battista da Sangallo in the Lille sketchbook, Musée Wicar, \(\S\) 731 (H. Pluchart, Musée Wicar: Notice des Dessins, Lille, 1889, p. 161 f.; K. Tolnay, “Beiträge zu den Spätener Architektonischen Projekten Michelangelos,” Jhb. d. Preuss. Kunstsamml., LI, 1930, p. 29, n. 1, and fig. 18).

\(^3\) The photograph may yet cause a certain confusion about this matter of a second storey, because a building rises over the right half of the northern wall which gives the appearance of an attic-storey. In the original it clearly recedes to a point just behind the wall, as it is painted in a dull earth-red, while the wall itself is blue-grey.

\(^4\) The Heemskerk sketches cited in note 2, p. 71, indicate that the extent of destruction
tive implies that the fresco was conceived before the death of Bramante, who finished the second storey, and poses the problem of explaining why a third storey should have begun at this point, and further, how a painting executed well before 1514 could have so many features of the late style of Raphael and his workshop. Certainly only the latter alternative is acceptable, because it explains the really ruinous state of the corridors, which were untouched during the years 1531-35, and after Peruzzi’s death again left, as we see them, to the creativity of nature. Accordingly, we can prove not only the reliability of the painter, but, in a general way, the date of his work; for a sketch must have been made after the accident and before the reconstruction. As the records show the reconstruction to have been well advanced by the end of 1541, we may assign the view to the decade 1531/41.

In searching for a more exact date, it occurred to me that there might be some evidence in the scene of some building executed during the decade established. Having associated all of the architecture of the Cortile with Bramante’s programme, there remained only the possibility of identifying the rectangular enclosure in the woods to the left. It proved that this enclosure is readily recognizable in the perspective of the Belvedere engraved by Mario Cartaro in 1574, where it is identified as “giardino secreto di Papa Paulo III.”1 Fortunately, the creation of a garden in the woods by the Belvedere in the early years of the pontificate of this Pope is fully documented in the payments of the Tesoriera Segreta.2 Excavations started in November 1535 and continued through 1536. It is probable that the walls were erected in the course of the following year, and a payment for finishing the last parterre of the garden was made on November 2, 1538. With this identification, the period in which the Cortile could have been seen as it is in the fresco is narrowed to at most the four years 1537-41. The date of the actual execution of the fresco I shall consider in discussing the identity of the artist.

In attempting to establish the documentary significance of the fresco, I have not intended to minimize its intrinsic interest as a work of art; for it is the extraordinary conception of the painting that first attracted my notice. Actually it is unique among the vedute of the sixteenth-century Rome in that its subject is not merely presented, but, so to speak, criticized. Interwoven with an objective description of the scene is a historical commentary, emphasized by the revival of a historical vocabulary, expressed in such a way that we are led to consider not so much the iconography of the painting as the iconography of the architecture which it depicts.

It is immediately apparent that the overall conception of the scene is

1 The engraving is reproduced in D. Frey, op. cit., fig. 14; W. Friedlander, Kasino, fig. 1. A copy of it made by Claudio Duchet in 1579 may be seen in Th. Hoffmann, Raffael, IV, Pl. XI, 1.

2 The records appear in two volumes of the Tesoriera Segreta which escaped their proper habitat in the Rome archives, and are in a private collection in Paris. They have been published in their entirety by L. Dorez: Le Cour du Pape Paul III, Paris, 1932. For the discussion of the Garden of Paul III, cf. I, 14 f., and for documents: II, passim.
uncommonly close to the architectural landscapes of Roman painting. Careful analysis proves the similarity to be the result of studied imitation. To begin with, the very conception of a landscape seen through the framework of an architectural frieze originates in Roman decorative frescoes. To take one of the many surviving examples, a fragment from Pompeii in the Naples Museum employs in a remarkably similar fashion the two characteristic architectural devices of our frieze: the entablature above and below the scene with its painterly profusion of moldings, and the dark neutral band bordering the landscape itself. Within the Belvedere landscape we immediately recognize a familiar juxtaposition of nature and architecture: uncultivated woods, and a foreground body of water with boats are the stock accoutrements of the ancient formula. The symbolizing of natural herbage by a single gracefully delineated tree, is here adopted (at the left) without concern for its fantastically disproportionate size; while in the background the craggy mountains which impetuously rise from the plain are tardy importations from the hellenistic East. The elements of landscape, moreover, are rendered in such a way that the transitions from the space of the foreground to that of the rear are, as in most antique landscapes, vague and figurative rather than descriptive. Miniscule figures and beasts-of-burden are casually deployed about the buildings in the Roman manner, which they follow also in their puppet-like articulation, emphasizing action rather than form. This imitation is carried on in the type of movement and gesture, and finally in the costume of the armoured boatmen (not to mention the barques themselves), and incidental observers.

This typological similarity to Roman landscape is presented in technical terms which substantially reinforce the reference. The palette, with its predominately neutralized pastel tones, and juxtaposition of cold grey-blue and lifeless greens to yellow ochres and earthy reds, while betraying an occasional subdued sign of the Renaissance scale, demonstrates an intended imitation of the antique. By comparison with the clear and brilliant colour so popular among the followers of Raphael and Michelangelo, the restriction of range and avoidance of intensity here indicates a self-conscious adjustment to an antique scheme foreign to the painter; as is evident in the contrast with the livelier colour of the decorative portions of the fresco.

It is perhaps improper to persist in referring to the landscape as a fresco, for the reconstruction is faithful to the extent of reproducing the antique secco technique. The paint apparently has a lime-like binder which tends to give a pastel-effect to its tone, and here and there the heavy mixture remains well above the surface of the plaster. The frequent employment of a rapidly-applied impasto for the highlights, which effects the delineation of figures in action with an extreme economy of strokes, is strikingly close to the impression-
istic technique of the majority of Roman paintings in which landscape plays a predominant part. The figures in violent action are rendered in a fluid style, the most expressive portions of their bodies heavily splashed on in a fluid and thick whitened paste, without concern for detail. Figures at rest are delineated with varying precision in overlaid vertical strokes which emphasize their elongated proportions. Wooded landscape is hastily characterized by suggested foliage sketched onto an undifferentiated green ground; while bushes, such as those spraying forth from the ruins, are thinly sketched in earthy colours.

For all of these technical devices ample comparative material is available from examples of ancient painting that survive to-day. It is unlikely, however, that any amount of diligence would bring to light the specific models employed, considering the number of Roman frescoes lost since the sixteenth century. Probably the landscapes and figure compositions from Nero's Golden House were influential, as they constituted the largest fund of Roman decoration known to the Renaissance, but the decayed state of the remaining decoration renders it virtually useless in this connection.¹ For the sake of a rapid comparison I turn to a Roman landscape cycle in excellent condition which, though discovered only a century ago, suggests itself for its stylistic similarities as well as its availability: the Odyssey landscapes in the Vatican Museum.² Here the colour, though brilliant in the architectural framework bordering the scenes, is reserved in range and subdued in intensity. Except for the not uncommon predominance of green in the sky and water, and the violet atmosphere of the middle-ground, the palette is remarkably close to that of the Belvedere fresco; particularly in the earthiness of the colours employed in the landscape and architectural elements. The greens of the foliage are similarly toned down with an admixture of red-browns. More striking similarities appear in details: the underpainting of the architectural elements with a thin yellow ochre; the symbolic rendering of water with long horizontal strokes of a light neutral colour on a dark base; the cursive indication of foliage, and in particular those isolated clumps of bushes which spray out from their roots fountain-like; the representation of shadow in reds and browns. The relationship is perhaps closest in the painting of figures: their elongated proportions; their gestures, exaggerated in action and languid at rest; a strong contrast of light and dark, and the sharp shadows which they throw. In the rendition of draped figures painted in light and varied pastel tones, the likeness carries into the long elliptical strokes which make the body and its elements into attenuated ovals. A comparison particularly revealing in this connection may be made between the group of figures in the lower corridor and a similarly posed group which receives Ulysses into the underworld (Pl. 15a, b). The parallel carries further into the shorthand delineation of the ghostly figures in the rear.

This comparison is valid only to a certain point, in all likelihood because the Castel fresco is a pastiche of ancient impressionist landscapes, and not an


a—Visit to the Underworld, Detail of Roman Fresco, 1st cent., Vatican Museums (p. 80)

b—Figures in antique style, Detail of Pl. 12a (p. 80)
a—Temple of Fortune, 1st cent. B.C., Palestrina (p. 85)

b—Plan of the Hippodrome and Adjoining Palaces, Palatine Hill, Rome (p. 87)
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interpretation of a particular style. Whatever comparative material is chosen, traces of the Renaissance painter's technique and observation will betray the contrasts; as particularly his precision of line and consideration of detail, not to speak of the meticulously rationalized perspective.

Of the many elements of iconography, style, and composition borrowed from antique wall painting, the only one which definitely inhibits the proper representation of the sixteenth-century scene is the artificial body of water in the foreground. That a lake of this kind could not have been even temporarily provided is evident not only from the actual architecture of the eastern corridor, but from the topography of the Vatican hill, which slopes off towards the west in such a way that considerable constructions would have been necessary to dam the court on that side. Clearly this lake is a fiction intended to make the reference to ancient villa-landscapes inescapable. But the intention is evidently more complex than it first appears, because while the association of water, barques, and rural architecture is perfectly consistent with Roman models, the armed conflict in which some of the boatmen are engaged is not, strictly speaking, a proper element of the villa scene. ¹ It is moreover foreign even to the atmosphere of this fresco itself, given the casual deportment of the figures in the corridor, and stranger yet, the peaceful attire and pursuits of the boatmen at the left. In short, this battle, whether mock or serious, is brought into the composition at considerable cost to the accuracy, credibility, and even consistency of the representation, leaving us with the impression that it must be explained by something other than a taste for the bizarre.

The explanation proves to be one which, though not likely to occur to the modern observer, would have been quite obvious in the sixteenth century. We find the key in Renaissance topographical studies of ancient Rome. The first of these, Flavio Biondo's Roma Instaurata, ² devotes considerable discussion to the Vatican. In a passage describing the ancient topography of the area he writes: "Cornelius Tacitus, who treats particularly of the deeds of Nero, states that he enclosed a space in the Vatican valley in which he might manoeuvre the horses without having a public spectacle, and adds a little farther on that he constructed trysting-places and inns by the woods which he placed around an artificial pond.³ There was a temple of the God Vaticanus on this hill, of which we have given a description above from Bugellius; but the artificial pond, or, as it is called in Greek, the Naumachia, was just off this hill at the foot of Mount Aureus (Montorio), where one goes to the Porta Pertusa, and where, since the drying of the mud, we have recently seen a garden begun. Thus in many church writers we see a great part of the Vatican called the Naumachia, and in the life of St. Peter of which we

¹ While the sea-battles of Roman wall painting are sometimes represented against a vague architectural background (Monumenti della Pittura Antica Scoperti in Italia: Pompeii, III-IV (Tempio di Iside), Rome, 1941, PIs. III, IV) and conversely, a villa-landscape may include warships (Rostovstzef, op. cit., fig. 58 and p. 92), it is understandable that the pastoral and the martial remain separate.
³ Tacitus, Annals, XIV, 14-15.
have spoken, it is said that the church of St. Peter was built by the Naumachia; and similarly, the hospital which Pope Leo III built; and the area of the church of St. Andrea dedicated by Pope Symmachus; and St. Petronilla, which is situated at the Temple of Apollo at the obelisk, are called after the Naumachia.1

The Naumachia, or navale stagnum in question was one of the amphitheatres built in Imperial Rome for the staging of naval battles, and is now believed to be identifiable in ruins near the Castel Sant’Angelo. References to the Vatican area as the Naumachia are found in unbroken succession from the Constantinian list of Regions throughout the Middle Ages. Furthermore, the small church which stands just behind S. Anna dei Palafrenieri in the shadow of the walls of the lower court of the Belvedere was known in the sixteenth century as S. Pellegrino “ad Naumachiam.”2

There is a certain vagueness in the sources concerning the exact location of the Naumachia, but Biondo dispenses with caution to nail the position down firmly. By placing the Naumachia alongside St. Peter’s on the lower slope of the hill which rises to the Porta Pertusa (the western gate of the Leonine city), Biondo specifies the general area of the Vatican palace. The further indication that it was on the site of a recently-founded garden narrows the area down to either the “giardino segreto” which was later supplanted by the Cortile di San Damaso, or the “vigna” below the Borgia Apartments, referred to in the Diary of Burchardo.3 As the two were almost contiguous it is not necessary to choose between them, but I cannot resist singling out the latter, as it places the Naumachia precisely at the foot of the Cortile del Belvedere, where the lake appears in the fresco.4


3 Under the year 1488, Burchardo’s Diary refers to the second room from the eastern end of the Borgia apartments as the “Sala sopra la vigna subito dopo la sala dei Pontifici.” The vigna referred to is identified by Ehrle and Stevenson as being in the lower court of the Belvedere (Gli Affreschi del Pin turicchio nell’Appartamento Borgia, Rome, 1897, p. 19 ff.). It appears there is a bird’s-eye view of the Vatican in oil by Hendrik van Cleve reproduced in H. Egger, Römische Veduten, I, Vienna-Leipzig, 1911, Pl. 42, though not in his engraving of the same scene.

4 Hence the likelihood that an edition of Biondo is the source of the reference, rather
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This evidence leads inevitably to the conclusion that the painter has altered the view of the Belvedere with the object of reconstructing the ancient naval amphitheatre. In so doing he at once completes his imitation of the antique architectural landscape with the familiar body of water, refers to the ancient topography of the Vatican in its relation to the modern, and emphasizes the architectural conception of the lower court as a "teatro." 1

When I said a few pages back that this fresco is unique among contemporary works of its kind, I did not mean to imply that a return to antique models at that time was anything out of the ordinary. What strikes me, rather, is the painstaking thoroughness of this revival—in composition, style, technique, and subject-matter—to the extent that the personality of the artist himself is almost effaced. This kind of studious reconstruction is familiar enough in purely ornamental frescoes and stucchi of the mid-sixteenth century, but is ordinarily far less in evidence in larger landscape and figure compositions of this type. 2 It is quite obvious to me that something more than a demonstration of skill is implied in this rare immersion in the past, and that one ought to seek an explanation why it should have occurred just in this scene, and not elsewhere.

That the Cortile del Belvedere should be the one monument of a rapidly expanding Rome chosen for representation in ancient dress is not mere chance. It was not only the first truly monumental construction to rise out of the mediaeval city, but one in which for the first time an ancient sense of scale and spatial composition was revivified in a vocabulary of details studiously gathered among the ruins. Bramante's contemporaries must have been overwhelmed by his control of a vast area of seemingly unmanageable terrain within a rational tectonic scheme; an impression heightened by the unavoidable comparison to the fifteenth-century villa concept embodied in Innocent's lonely crenellated box which rose behind it. In fact, no contemporary church, palace, or villa was so completely free of the impediments of tradition and habit, for here a form of architecture which had been extinct since imperial times was suddenly brought to life. It is the architectural garden, which at the same time takes its form from the contours of the site, and re-forms its natural environment.

I cannot believe that the similarities in general concept between Bramante's project and the ancient villa are circumstantial. I am convinced, rather, that Julius II specifically commissioned his architect to compose in the Roman style, and that the plans were the result of considerable archaeological re-

1 It is interesting that among the very scarce visual records of ancient naval amphitheatres, two representations on Greek coins should have been drawn by Pirro Ligorio, the later architect of the Belvedere. Copies of his drawing are in the Vatican Library, *Vat. lat. 3439*, f. 168", identified, "Nel Libro di M. Pyrrho delle medaglie Greche a fogli 466."

2 The closest parallel, perhaps, is to be found in the two remarkable landscapes of Polidoro da Caravaggio in the church of San Silvestro al Quirinale in Rome (H. Voss, *Malerei der Spätrenaissance in Rom u. Florenz*, Berlin, 1920, I, p. 80 ff.); which, however, are better described as reinterpretations than as imitations of antique landscape.
search. If Bramante was constricted by the poverty of information then available on the Roman villa, he showed remarkable ingenuity in compensating for his ignorance. Perhaps the primary motivation was provided by ancient literary remains describing the palatial villa. A particularly suggestive source of inspiration could be found in the descriptions of Nero’s Domus Aurea, a city-villa which extended over a vast tract of land, significantly embracing a valley, between the Palatine and Esquiline hills.\(^1\) The imperial palace, so similar to the Vatican in site, was, according to Tacitus: “a palace the marvels of which were to consist not so much in gems and gold, as in fields and lakes and the air of solitude given by wooded ground alternating with clear tracts and open landscapes. The architects . . . had the ingenuity and courage to try the force of art even against the veto of nature . . .” In a more extended passage, Suetonius describes as a “porticus triplices” the mile-long colonnade linking its various parts. The possibility that Bramante considered this passage in composing his extensive three-storey arcade is suggested not only by the similarity in size and purpose, but by what the sixteenth century evidently regarded as a similarity in form. This is persuasively indicated by a reference to the arcade in the guide-book mentioned above as a “triplices porticus.”\(^2\)

Striking parallels are found in the most specific of the ancient villa-descriptions: the letter of Pliny the Younger on his Tuscan villa.\(^3\) On the orientation of the villa he writes: “The exposure of the main part of the house is full south (as is the short wall of the Belvedere); thus it seems to invite the sun . . . into a wide and proportionately long portico, containing many divisions, one of which is an atrium, built after the manner of the ancients. In front of the portico is a terrace divided into a great number of geometrical figures, and bounded by a box hedge (the bird’s-eye views of the Belvedere show the upper court and gardens flanking it laid out in geometrical parterres flanked by box hedges).\(^4\) The descent from the terrace is a sloping bank, adorned with a double row of box-trees, but in the shape of animals.” He further describes an elevated gallery with large open windows, which connects the main part of the villa with another suite of rooms alongside a hippodrome; a concept functionally and possibly formally similar to the linking of the Vatican with the museum. The hippodrome itself, though described by Pliny rather as a garden than an architectural composition, suggests in the following words, the generic form of the Cortile: “the raised path around the hippodrome, which here runs straight, bends at the farther end into a hemicycle,\(^5\) and takes on a new aspect, being embowered in cypress-trees and

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\(1\) Tacitus, *Annals*, XV, 42; Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum*, Nero, 31.

\(2\) Cf. the quotation in note 2, p. 74.


\(5\) It is worth noting that the term invariably
used in the building records to describe the exedra of the upper court is “hemiciclo,” and not the post-Ligorian “nicchione.”

1 Helen Tanzer (The Villas of Pliny the Younger, New York, 1924) has collected and added to the reconstructions of the past three centuries, which are remarkable as documents of changing tastes in archaeology.

2 The importance of Palestrina for Bramante’s design was first noticed by B. Patzak, Die Villa Imperiale in Pesaro, Leipzig, 1908, p. 138; expanded by D. Frey, op. cit., p. 36, and further by C. Huelsen (“Bramante und Palestrina, ” Egger Festschrift, Graz, 1933, p. 57 ff.) without knowledge of the previous comments. Huelsen further attributed to Bramante an anonymous plan (Peruzzi’s?) for the remodelling of the tower of Nicholas V, similar in form to a tomb near Palestrina. The attribution is the result of a confusion of towers, as Bramante designed a cupola for the Torre Borgia, executed in 1511 by Antonio da Sangallo the younger, and destroyed by fire in 1523. Cf. the Giuliano da Sangallo sketch for the Torre Borgia cited in note 4, p. 74 above. Details of the cupola were drawn by Peruzzi (Uffizi, Arch. 130), and identified: “Questa brucio di Luglio 1523/ tempore Adrianj vi/ Tore di borgia in palazzo di papa in roma.”


4 Bramante interprets this central element as a kind of nymphaeum (see plan, “C”), provided with niches for statues. This is the first use of a garden-grotto, which became standard in the generation after Bramante (Giovanni da Udine in Villa Madama; Peruzzi in Palazzo Massimo; Vignola in the Orti Farnesiani; Ligorio in Villa d’Este; etc.), and had thereafter a long history in garden design. Heemskeker singled it out as the only element of the Vatican City which he saw fit to sketch in plan (Huelsen, Skizzenbücher, II, 7; Pl. 8, with the identification, “Kirchengrundriss (?)”). It is possible that the articulation was inspired by the niched absidal grottoes of the two temples on the lower level of Palestrina.

The lower level of the ramp, which returns again to the axis, is now visible on the left side of the complex. Its precise form is still
temple-square at Palestrina (still the main piazza of the town) and the lower court of the Belvedere: both establishing the axis which is carried through the whole complex. Finally, the Temple of Fortune itself is placed at the highest point as a crowning element to the whole, reached by a broad flight of stairs arranged theatre-like in a concave semicircle. That this provided Bramante with his inspiration for the circular stairs of the upper exedra is virtually certain. The convex stairs with which he leads to the theatrical form is his own reconstruction, as the original front stairway had disappeared with the building of mediaeval and renaissance palaces on the site. In reconstructing Palestrina fifty years later, Pirro Ligorio demonstrated the connection between the buildings by drawing the entire stairway in a form identical with that of the Belvedere, and since Pirro’s sketches were for a long time the only renaissance records of Palestrina known, his interpretation had a considerable vogue among archaeologists.¹ In this way, the Palestrina which came to be known to the scholars of the last century was at least in part a copy of the Belvedere, and the circle was completed figuratively as well as formally. Excavations carried out only a few weeks before this writing have demonstrated for the first time that the original stair was narrow, straight, and on axis, thus indirectly adding another document to Bramante’s inventiveness. In all, the elements borrowed from Palestrina were such that the religious

¹For example, H. C. Bradshaw, “Praeneste: a Study for its Restoration,” British School Papers, IX, 1920, p. 233 ff. If Ligorio’s original reconstruction exists at Turin, as Bradshaw states, it has not to my knowledge been published. Copies have been noted in the Hofbibliothek in Vienna (§ 272. Bradshaw, fig. 4) and in the Vatican Library (Ottob. lat. 3373; Vat. lat. 3439. Cf. Egger, Krit. Verzeichnis der Samml. Architekt. Handzeichnungen der KK Hofbibliothek in Wien, Vienna, 1903. Reproductions of the Vatican 3439 drawings, fig. 20 and Pl. 5, here attributed to Girolamo Rinaldi, p. 68). The continuation of the Ligorian tradition in reconstructions of the 17th century has been studied by R. Wittkower, “Pietro da Cortonas Ergänzungspunkt des Tempels in Palestrina,” Goldschmidt Festschrift, Berlin, 1935, p. 137 f.

Less notice had been given to the more accurate reconstructions of Palladio (F. Burger, “Neue Rekonstruktionsentwürfe des Tempels in Præneste aus der Renaissance,” Zeitschr. für Geschichte d. Architektur, II, 1909, p. 203 ff.). Palladio correctly interprets the great central ramp, which is broken into small staircases by Ligorio. He connects the upper hemicycle to the space below it by two small flanking stairways, rather than completing the circle in the Bramante-Ligorio fashion. The drawings are in the Burlington-Devonshire Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

An unpublished drawing of the Anonymous Destailleur is the earliest known reconstruction of Palestrina. It appears on f. 115 of Volume B of the collection formerly owned by M. Hyppolyte Destailleur (cf. H. von Geymüller, “Trois Albums de Dessins de Fra Giocondo,” École Fr. de Rome: Mélanges, XI, 1891, p. 133 ff., where this drawing is not specifically mentioned). The collection was sold to St. Petersburg after having been photographed in large part by Geymüller. The films came to the German Archeological Institute in Rome in 1942 in the bequest of Herman Egger, with an explanatory note stating that the original drawings were lost in the Russian Revolution. The reconstruction concerns only selected details from the upper levels of the Temple, and probably was associated with another drawing not photographed by Geymüller. The representation of the exedra is strikingly similar to the Soane plan of the Belvedere, except that the staircase, like Palladio’s, is shown as a hemicycle. Unlike the Palladio stair, it has no link whatsoever to the ground-level. A staircase of circular plan is represented in another portion of the folio, but the confused order of the details presented, and the defective quality of the film make it difficult to interpret the author’s intentions.
character of the source did not obtrude into the design, and the quality of a villa could be fully retained.

The Palestrina solution for the building of an open terraced structure answered only the problem of elevation for Bramante. Adapting this to a plan which had to serve the functions of a corridor and a teatro required suggestions from ancient remains of a quite different sort. To follow this step we have only to turn back to the passage from Pliny. In Pliny's hippodrome, or garden-circus, could be found the required concentration of building around a limited area which was conspicuously absent in the broad lateral extension of Palestrina. Thus the main lines of the plan of the Belvedere—a rectangle in the proportion of 3:1—reproduces the circus-like plan preserved in a number of Roman structures associated with villas or palaces.  

Among examples in Rome and the Campagna, the "Stadium" on the Palatine provides perhaps the most convincing comparison (Pl. 16b). It is only slightly longer in proportion than the Belvedere: closed at both extremities, with a flat wall at the north-east, and a segmental one at the south-west. The most remarkable feature of the comparison is the arcade carried on piers with an applied order (half-columns rather than the pilasters of the Belvedere) which forms corridors on four sides. Traces of the construction along the rear walls show that the arcade was at least two stories in elevation, and the reconstruction of a third would not be unreasonable. This arcade was a late addition to the Stadium, but was certainly not recognized as such in the Renaissance. Although the Stadium is excavated into the hillside rather than following its level like the Belvedere, the similarity of site is suggestive. I doubt, however, that the longitudinal division into three parts is directly related to Bramante's conception, as the low walls separating the areas were first excavated in 1877.

That the Palatine hippodrome need not have been the principal source for these conceptions is indicated in a reconstruction of the Horti Sallustiani preserved in a drawing of the first half of the sixteenth century, probably by Aristotile da Sangallo. The central element of the area is reconstructed here as a hippodrome close in form to that on the Palatine, and ringed with arcades. Although these arcades are in part discontinuous, being interrupted on the long sides by heavy buttresses in every fourth bay, the lower court of

1 Dagobert Frey, in his perceptive commentary (op. cit., p. 36 ff.) was the first to note the complex relationships of the Cortile to antique forms, and in particular, the hippodrome, which, as he demonstrated, was re-used shortly afterwards at the Villa Madama. For a general discussion and bibliography of the ancient hippodrome, cf. P. Grimal, Les Jardins Romains . . . , Paris, 1943, p. 265 ff. Here the form is derived from the ancient gymnasium.


3 Published by Lanciani and Geymüller, "Quatre dessins inédits de la Collection Destailleur," École Fr. de Rome : Mélanges, XI, 1891, p. 159 ff. and Pl. II. The drawings are attributed there (p. 161) to Francesco da Sangallo, but the handwriting is identical with that found on drawings of his cousin Aristotile.

A similar reconstruction of a hippodrome, unidentified by the author, is found among the drawings of Sallustio Peruzzi. Cf. A. Bartoli, I monumenti Antichi di Roma nei Disegni degli Uffizi . . . , Rome, 1914, Pl. 372, dis. Arch. 687. Bartoli (Text, p. 115) inexplicably identifies the subject as the Forum of Trajan.
the Belvedere is brought to mind by the niches carved into the rear wall of the passages at the centre of each bay.\(^1\) The Circus of Maxentius on the Appian Way, known to the Renaissance as “Circo di Caracalla,” attracted a good deal of attention in the sixteenth century. Though closer to the functioning race-tracks of the Circus Maximus type, it resembles the hippodromes in its close association with a villa. It suggests the Belvedere, however, only in the emphasis on the central axis, effected by monumental arches on the short sides.\(^2\)

In considering these relationships, I have the impression that the Roman Hippodrome influenced the conception of the Belvedere in a still more fundamental way. Considering that all the examples of this form known to us are closely incorporated into the plan of a palace or villa, it seems likely that Julius would have had this association in mind when commissioning an addition to the Vatican Palace. His political efforts for the reunification of Italy, which he caused to be celebrated in the Stanze of Raphael, might contemporaneously be celebrated in even subtler fashion in architectural form. I think the Renaissance mind would have been quick to appreciate the connection between the Hippodrome of the Palatine and the Hippodrome of the Vatican. The Vatican, with the majestic façade of the Cortile San Damaso rising as a new Septizonium to mask its mediaeval form, began at the same time to reach out over the Mons Vaticanus as the Domus Augustiana had extended over the Mons Palatinus. The fabled splendour of the Domus Aurea was reflected in the embracing of hills and valleys. The choice of similar architectural forms associating the new city on one side of the Tiber with the ruins on the other, certainly added to the image of Julius as the new Caesar, restoring the Rome of the Church to the status of the Rome of the Emperors.

I return again to the fresco only to propose that its antique references and style serve to demonstrate the validity of this argument on the ancient sources of the conception of the Cortile. It is, in fact, so conceived as to force us to recognize what I have called the iconography of the architecture. Throughout the first half of the sixteenth century, Bramante’s project was seen as he meant it to be seen: a re-embodiment of the Roman Villa- or Palace-Garden. The destruction of this conception from mid-century onwards I see as the result, not so much of an inability to understand the original intention, as of a change in the attitude towards antiquity and its significance for the present. By 1550 the age of Humanism was in decline, and to Pirro Ligorio and his

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\(^1\) Although the drawing is a fanciful reconstruction, a hippodrome was without doubt the central feature of the gardens; hence the Renaissance references to the ruins as “Circo Sallustii” or “Circo Florae.” Cf. Jordan-Huelsen, loc. cit., p. 433 f. For the relation of the hippodrome to the general plan: Lehmann-Hartleben - Lindros, “Il Palazzo degli Orti Sallustiani,” Skrifter Av Svenska Inst. i Rom, IV (Opuscula, I), 1934, p. 219 f.


Other Villa-Hippodromes may be found in the vicinity of Rome, at the Villa of the Quintili on Via Appia, and Sette Bassi (cf. N. Lupu, “La Villa di Sette Bassi sulla Via Latina,” Ephemeris DACOROMANA, VII, 1937, esp. p. 165 f.).
followers the antique, and Bramante as well, served as a springboard for fanciful flights.\textsuperscript{1}

In conclusion I want to consider the problem of the authorship of the fresco, which has remained unsolved largely from disinterest. To begin with, the tradition ascribing it to the Casa Altoviti is undocumented, and is neither confirmed nor denied by what we know of the decorations there. Vasari gives us a clear account of his own activity in the palace, which involved the painting of a loggia and the ceiling of a Salone, the latter with figures of the Seasons in oils.\textsuperscript{2} This was accomplished rapidly in the autumn of 1553; in other words, at least twelve years after the date I have suggested for the planning of the Castel fresco.\textsuperscript{3} In any case, the style of the fresco makes it extremely unlikely that it fitted into a Vasari programme. That Vasari was not the only painter employed in the Palace is evident from the remains of one of its rooms transported to the Palazzo Venezia, with frescoes attributed to Giovanni da Udine or Pierino del Vaga.\textsuperscript{4} However, its scheme of delicate grotesques and medallions forestalls any useful comparison with the imposing composition we are attempting to place.

On the other hand, evidence in the fresco itself offers considerable ground for opposing the word-of-mouth tradition. The appearance of a unicorn in heraldic pose in a portion of the composition which cannot have other than a heraldic implication, strongly suggests that the work was commissioned by a member of the Farnese family.\textsuperscript{5} As a symbol for this family the unicorn appears almost as frequently as the fleur-de-lis of their coat-of-arms. In fact, a countless number of nude ladies solacing unicorns appear in the decoration ordered by Paul III (Farnese) for the Castel St. Angelo. This consideration, added to the fact that the Castel is drawn into the view of the Belvedere at considerable cost to topographical accuracy, led me to consider the possibility that the fresco was conceived for the Castel itself, and has always remained there. Stylistic comparison with other decorations in the Castel make this hypothesis not only credible but virtually inescapable. The attractive architectural metaphor of the fresco, while still a relatively rare device by the mid-sixteenth century, emerges in various forms in a number of rooms at the Castel. Furthermore, standard usage in this decorative programme is the separation of perspective vistas by allegorical figures, decorative garlands,

\textsuperscript{1}The problem of the antique revivals studied here, as well as Ligorio’s interpretation of antiquity in his designs for the Vatican, has been considered in a stimulating pamphlet which reached me only after the preparation of proofs: C. Elling, \textit{Villa Pia in Vaticano: et Renaissance-anlaeg og dets Forhold til Antiken}, Copenhagen, 1947. The author relates Ligorio’s designs for the Casino and the Nicchione to renaissance reconstructions of the roman Naumachia, a discovery eminently suited to the argument presented above.

\textsuperscript{2}VII, 695.


\textsuperscript{5}I am indebted to Dr. Jacob Hess for bringing this to my attention.
and architectural members. A close analysis of the decorative elements of our fragment makes evident its affinities with other frescoes in the Castel. The scroll supporting the figures to the right, which unexpectedly changes violently in colour from branch to branch, its leaves sharply and crudely delineated in a dull neutral tone, is an exact repetition of those bearing the putti of the frieze in the Camera dei Festoni.\(^1\) The garlands of fruit are conceived and executed in the same fashion as those of the Sala Paolina.\(^2\) The Belvedere scene, however, is quite different from and considerably superior to the landscapes associated with the decoration I have mentioned, but may also be paralleled in still another room.

The technical assurance (both in the painting and in the imitation of the Antique) evidenced in the landscape, permit comparison only with the fresco frieze in the Camera del Perseo.\(^3\) Here I see a decided similarity in the sense of limitless space, the articulation and proportion of figures, the painting of sky and water, and the reserved, classic balance of composition which contrasts so strongly with the mannerist designs of other rooms. If the fluid chiaroscuro—especially in the distant architecture—and the areas of brilliant colour in the Perseus scenes constitute marked disparities with our piece, may they not be ascribed to the fact that these scenes are not specifically intended as revivals of the antique, and on this account evidence a more personal style? In any case, the iconographic and stylistic evidence combine to produce a rather convincing demonstration of the provenance of the frieze. The Castel has surely been repaired and altered frequently enough since the time of Paul III to explain the destruction of the decoration of a large Salone, as the number of recently whitewashed walls will attest.

If this conclusion be granted, the final step is to find the author. This is fortunately simplified by the ample documentation of the programme of Paul III. In the early 1540's the apartments which Paul commissioned for his living quarters were being constructed under Antonio da Sangallo the younger.\(^4\) It is clear then, that the documents recording the decoration of these rooms from 1545-48, are, if not complete, at any rate indicative of the earliest activity.\(^5\) The death of Paul in 1549 establishes the other terminus for decorations with the Farnese insignia. These documents mention only two master-painters, Pierino del Vaga and Luzio Luzi, both with a number of assistants.\(^6\) I think the consideration of the rather shadowy figure of Luzio may be eliminated by the fact that the fresco is so clearly in the tradition of the Raphael circle, and, in the setting of the Castel Sant'Angelo is already old-fashioned in the sense of pre-mannerist. In weighing the attribution to

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1 Borgatti, *Castel*, p. 580, fig. 281.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 346, figs. 142-3; p. 577, fig. 278.
Pierino I find it more helpful than upsetting that a fresco executed in 1545 or after should utilize a sketch of the Belvedere made four or five years before, as Pierino was working almost steadily in various parts of the Vatican in the early 1540’s. It is possible that the Belvedere scene was executed by an assistant, but I take its superiority to the decorative portions to be a sign that the master executed it himself, leaving the rest to the painter of the Camera dei Festoni. In addition, the similarity to the Perseus scenes, universally accepted as Pierino’s, points in the same direction. I feel that the fascination and familiarity with antiquity which this fresco exhibits, is not only equal to, but of the same quality as the architecture it represents, and that it is similarly a typical document of what we call the High Renaissance. It is even questionable whether anyone other than Pierino, the last Raphael student in mid-century Rome, would have been up to the task of such a reconstruction and interpretation.