

The *Ballatoio* of S. Maria del Fiore in Florence Alessandro Nova

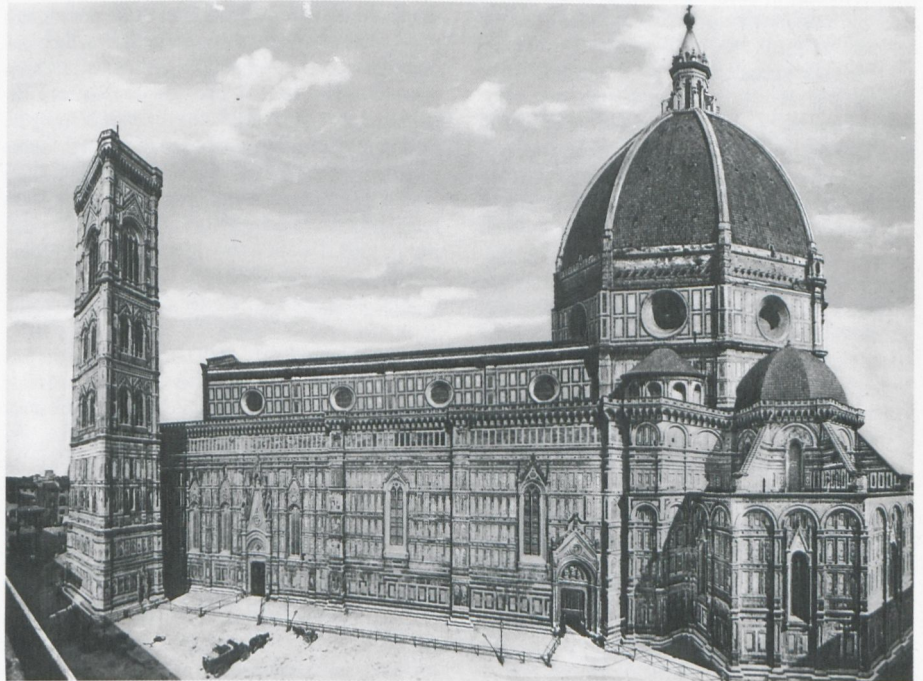
The *ballatoio* is the only part of Florence Cathedral that was never completed, and the complex developments surrounding its fate are matter of debate. As far as the models in the Museo dell'Opera are concerned, there is a telling report prepared in 1601 by Alessandro Allori, architect in charge of the building's maintenance, suggesting that they be inventoried to ascertain their original purpose (Guasti 1857: 157), and hence by the time Florence was under the rule of the grand dukes, the real purpose of these models had already been forgotten. Such problems are compounded by the occasionally generic information provided by the sources, the not always reliable attributions of modern critics, and the appalling damage caused by the flood of 1966.

The oldest document to have come down to us regarding the *ballatoio*—curiously ignored until now, though it sheds light on a passage of the famous *Instruction* drawn up by Filippo Brunelleschi in 1420—is the celebrated fresco by Andrea di Bonaiuto in the Cappellone degli Spagnoli, which clearly shows a view of the fourteenth-century model of the cathedral behind the depiction of the *Church Militant*. In this project (1367), the cathedral's drum was crowned by a simple open *ballatoio* or gallery resting on consoles, comprising a quatrefoil openwork parapet quite similar to that of the lower *ballatoio* around the base of the tribunes. This extremely simple solution was to have been enriched by the addition of statues of prophets, placed in correspondence to the piers of the drum and the ribs of the vault, an idea that Michelangelo later repropounded in a very ambitious project drawn up between 1516 and 1520.

In his scheme of 1420 Brunelleschi still seems undecided about the solution to adopt for the *ballatoio*: "A passage must be built outside, above the windows, forming a gallery resting on consoles with openwork parapets and of a height of about 2 *braccia*, harmonious with the small tribunes below, or, rather, two passages, one above the other, resting on a richly ornamented cornice; and the top passage should be uncovered" (Guasti 1857: 29-30). The first solution called for a modest openwork parapet, about

1.17 meters high and proportional to the existing one at the base of the tribunes. This proposal is far removed from Brunelleschi's architectural language and, in fact, is no more than a description of what we see in Andrea di Bonaiuto's fresco, in other words, a description of the model of 1367. The second solution, which proposed a double passage, covered below and open above, is the one Brunelleschi most likely aimed to realize.

The building records reveal that the brick model that the architect had built in 1418 was embellished by a wooden *ballatoio* and lantern, whose construction had involved the contribution of Nanni di Banco and Donatello (Saalman 1980: 62). In July-August 1419 Brunelleschi received the substantial sum of 50 lire and 15 *soldi* in part payment for wood and for the lathesman's and the carpenter's work on the lantern and the passage of the model (Guasti 1857, doc. 20). On 29 December 1419 Brunelleschi, Nanni di Banco, and Donatello were paid 45 gold florins for the model of the dome (Guasti 1857, doc. 43). Since it is unlikely that the two sculptors contributed to solving the technical and structural problems, one can assume they oversaw the work of the two craftsmen engaged on the costly details of the *ballatoio* and lantern. This means that in the model of 1418 Brunelleschi had already devised a rough design for the *ballatoio*, but, as noted above, it cannot have differed greatly from the one in the model of 1367; this explains the participation of Donatello and Nanni di Banco in the realization of the statues of the prophets. At any event, the alternative alluded to in the *Instruction* of 1420 makes it clear that Brunelleschi—at the time taken up with the much more challenging technical problems of the design—had still not devised a definitive solution for this part of the dome. As the culmination of work on the cathedral, the *ballatoio* was fundamental from an aesthetic point of view, but it was utterly insignificant structurally, which was Brunelleschi's chief concern at this stage. The wording of the *Instruction* suggests that Brunelleschi would have addressed the problem of the *ballatoio* only after having completed the dome's vault and lantern.



Brunelleschi's model of the dome was destroyed in 1432 (Saalman 1980: 133) and his last years of activity at S. Maria del Fiore were dedicated to raising the lantern. However, Vasari (1877, II: 362), recalls that "having decided to finish the *ballatoio*, [Brunelleschi] made various drawings which upon his death remained in the custody of the Opera, but which, through the negligence of the officials, are today lost." Even assuming that Vasari was well-informed and that the architect had indeed executed drawings for the *ballatoio*, we may never know how he intended to solve the problem of the dual passageway. Yet scholars have not resisted the temptation to advance some hypotheses. Nardini Despotti (1885: 77) was convinced that Brunelleschi had not planned for a gallery with arches like those partially realized later, but with single slender columns whose entablature was to be supported on the upper row of projecting masonry of the drum, still visible on the uncompleted faces of the octagon. Sanpaulesi (1941: 12; 1977: 25) attributed the conception of the Opera model no. 141 to a joint design by Brunelleschi and Lorenzo Ghiberti, even though this fragmentary model is far from Brunelleschi's style. More recently, Marchini (1980: 918-919) has reaccredited him with the creation of Opera model no. 160-163, which reproduces the entire apse area of the cathedral. In the model, which according to the author's hypothesis dates to 1429, the openwork of the fourteenth-century *ballatoio* over the tribunes has been replaced by a banded cornice that echoes the other, equally rough ones, at the base of the drum and at the foot of the vault. According to Marchini, a model so scarce in detail is typical of Brunelleschi's working method, and the wider band of the upper *ballatoio* was to have housed an open gallery similar to the one made by Baccio d'Agno in 1514-15. However, the attribution seems rather implausible in this case as well.

Among Brunelleschi's immediate successors as works supervisor, only Antonio Manetti Ciaccheri, *capomaestro* from 1452 to 1460, seems to have tackled the problem of the *ballatoio*. From a document related to the competition of 1507, we come to know that the winners were to incorporate some of the elements of the "*modellum antiquum, factum et datum per Antonium Manettum*" (Guasti 1857, doc. 341). For this reason, modern critics have credited Brunelleschi's great rival Manetti with the parts of the drum realized between the former's death and the interventions of 1507-15. To some extent, this is also due to the fact that Brunelleschi's first biographer, Antonio di Tuccio Manetti, spoke out against Ciaccheri's tampering with the original design: "And when Filippo was dead, then without the least fear, [Ciaccheri] used everything he could against Filippo's fame and against his work, begun and not finished...; hence the damage... of the main facades and main outside pilasters of the dome of S. Maria del Fiore" (Manetti 1970: 115). According to the biographer's next passage and the interpretation offered by Saalman, Brunelleschi's model, or even the one of 1367, required that the corner pilasters of the drum maintain the same width, without tapering, from the base to the architrave supporting the *ballatoio*. But Ciaccheri took it upon himself to extend the entablature over the attic of the nave to the perimeter of the drum, linking the whole complex horizontally with a course of masonry; and, furthermore, after having broken the vertical thrust of the pilasters with this horizontal band, he reduced the width of the upper part of the pilaster, now divided into two segments. In the words of the biographer, Ciaccheri "reduced the pilasters in width on the upper side; that first he made this mess, when... it had been the intention of who had begun that it be a single member only, the tapering in width makes it appear as two members, one above the other, of which neither one nor the other pleases" (Manetti 1970: 115). That these variations must be attributed to Ciaccheri and, as a consequence, the design of the drum facing, is confirmed by a document of 1477, generally overlooked (Doren 1898: 256), in which the *operai* order the realization of the "*modellum factum per antonium manettj olim capudmagistrum cupole e lanterne dicte ecclesie tempore sua vita circa faccies dicte cu-*

pole." However, it is important to remember that it was not Ciaccheri but Giuliano da Maiano who finished the project, as noted in Vasari's *Lives*. Ciaccheri in fact died in 1460, and a detailed view of the dome in the background of a portrait of Dante painted by Domenico di Michelino for the cathedral in 1465 shows that, five years after Ciaccheri's death, work on the drum had not yet been started. Giuliano da Maiano became the *capomaestro* of the cathedral site in 1477, and the view of S. Maria del Fiore in the background of a fresco (1481-85) by Domenico Ghirlandaio in the Sala dei Gigli in the Palazzo Vecchio shows that at the start of the 1480s the walls around the drum windows had still not been faced with marble. In any case, da Maiano kept his post as *capomaestro* until his death in 1490, and since Vasari's narrative (1877, II: 469-470) is too detailed not to be reliable, he must have completed the decoration of the drum in the last years of his life. According to the biographer, Giuliano da Maiano "made the decorations of white and black marble around the windows, and likewise the marble corner pilasters, over which Baccio d'Agno erected the architrave, frieze and cornice, as described below. It is true that, as far as one can see in some drawings of his hand that are in our Book, he wished to make another order of frieze, cornice and *ballatoio*, with some frontispieces [i.e. pediments] on each of the eight sides of the dome; but he did not have the time to carry this out, because, absorbed in his work, one day flowed into the next, and he died." This neglected passage of the *Lives* makes it possible to attribute to Giuliano da Maiano one of the Museo dell'Opera models (no. 137), but the artist did not convince the *fabbricieri* to approve the substantial modifications to Ciaccheri's design. The reliability of Vasari's account and the attribution to Manetti Ciaccheri of the existing design seem to be confirmed by the correspondence of the documentary information and the working procedure at S. Maria del Fiore, where the *operai* or works trustees were in the habit of making the new *capomaestri* swear they would respect the previously approved designs and models. In other words, it is no coincidence that the formers' exhortations to realize the "*modellum factum per antonium manettj*" for the facing of the octagon dates to 1477, the year in which Giuliano da Maiano was appointed *capomaestro*. According to our reconstruction of the facts, it is likely that as soon as he had taken up his post (1 April 1477), Giuliano tried to make substantial modifications in Ciaccheri's design (hence, the drawings that Vasari mentions and the wooden model) and that the *fabbricieri* instead urged him (4 November 1477) to follow the already approved *modellum*, from which it was categorically forbidden to diverge ("*et de eo non exeatum ullo modo*"). In this respect, it should be remembered that even Brunelleschi pledged to respect the model of 1367 and that the *operai* were very conservative and reluctant to take issue with the decisions made under oath by their predecessors. In conclusion, da Maiano's efforts came to nothing and the architect limited himself to carrying out Ciaccheri's design, namely, the dichromatic facing of the drum, the tapering of the upper pilasters at the level of the windows, the elaborate three-banded architrave still visible on the eastern side of the octagon, and the frieze with trefoil inlay work, dismantled in 1508. Da Maiano's sole personal contribution, roundly criticized by Manetti the biographer, must have been the enlargement of the outer splays of the drum windows; according to Manetti, Brunelleschi's true intentions were altered "out of a certain ignorance on the part of the later *capomaestri* [those after Ciaccheri], who made the window splays on the outside too wide, which cannot now be rectified" (Manetti 1970: 115).

During the final years of Giuliano da Maiano's office, the team of architects at the cathedral saw the arrival of Il Cronaca (alias Simone del Pollaiuolo), who was to become *capomaestro* in 1495, five years after da Maiano's death. The Medici had just been expelled from the city, and the turbulent political climate brought work on the cathedral to a halt. In 1502 Il Cronaca submitted a request for a reduction in salary—activity on the site was languishing so much that it weighed on his conscience to receive pay-

ment for work not done. It is no coincidence that the artist had been and perhaps still was an enthusiastic follower of Savonarola. Il Cronaca's petition is dated 14 April 1502, but in September that year the Florentine patrician Piero di Tommaso Soderini was elected gonfalonier for life, an event that opened a new era in the politics and art of republican Florence. A personal friend of many artists, and of Michelangelo in particular, Soderini stimulated the economic and cultural life of the city, rallying its finest creative minds around the refurbishment of the town hall. Il Cronaca, Baccio d'Agno, Giuliano and Antonio da Sangallo were called upon to participate in a systematic program involving almost all the government-sponsored ventures, from the most challenging ones to those of normal administration. It was Soderini who commissioned the *Battle of Anghiari* and the *Battle of Cascina* to Leonardo and Michelangelo; and it is likely that it was he who urged the resumption of activities at S. Maria del Fiore. Just a few months after Soderini's lifelong appointment, Michelangelo signed a contract (24 April 1503) with the cathedral *operai* for the realization of twelve statues of the Apostles (only one of which he got as far as roughing out, the *St. Matthew* today in the Accademia) and it was during these years that the sculptor finished the colossal "pro-Republican" *David*. This was the climate in which the problem of completing the *ballatoio* of the cathedral returned to the fore, a project which, as a crowning element of the city's most representative building, should have born the emblem of the newly found power of the civic government—the arms that proudly decorate the friezes and architraves of some of the models entered for the 1507 competition (nos. 138 and 140, Museo dell'Opera).

Some letters published by Marchini (1977a: 46-47) reveal that the *operai* met in July 1507 to deal with the question and, following a tried-and-true procedure, they tried to involve the greatest number of artists and craftsmen, inviting the participation of even those who were working elsewhere, outside the city. These letters are infused with a deep communitarian and republican spirit. The message sent to the goldsmith Riccio says that since he was well versed in architecture, it seemed "appropriate to make the effort to give you this slight inconvenience, hoping that as a *good citizen* you will bear this annoyance with a light heart, et maxime, *being a public thing* and about our temple." The letters to Michelangelo, at the time in Bologna, and to Sansovino, perhaps resident in Rome, both dated 31 July 1507, are steeped in the same civic spirit. To Michelangelo: "Our very dear, beloved citizen... And we wish to interpret your judgment as *loving of your city*." To Sansovino: "Your absence has grieved us not a little, nevertheless we trust in you as a *zealous advocate of this city* and we might say as a Florentine, and for this, our labor of love, would you make a drawing and model of the thing as a talented professor of this art?" These and other already known documents suggested to Marchini that Michelangelo, Sansovino and other architects participating in the competition were the authors of the models conserved in the Museo dell'Opera. As we shall see in the individual catalog entries, such attributions are, at best, problematic. What is certain is that the winning model (8 November 1507) was the one submitted by Il Cronaca, Giuliano da Sangallo and Baccio d'Agno (Guasti, 1857, doc. 341). On this occasion, the administrators examined five projects and selected the one by the three architects, who were to work alongside Antonio da Sangallo the Elder, specifying, however, that they would also have to bear in mind the "*modellum antiquum, factum et datum per Antonium Manettum*." Working jointly and of common accord, the four were to conserve what had been accomplished in the fifteenth century in order not to waste the expenses already sustained and, starting from the area above the frieze, which had already been started on two sides of the octagon, were to incorporate wherever possible the elements of their model with the most effective ones of Ciaccheri's design. It was a compromise that soon proved to be impossible to implement. The model presented by Il Cronaca and partners (no. 142, Museo del-

l'Opera) retained the fifteenth-century trefoil frieze and added a costly modification to the drum decoration.

Worried about the expenses that such a project entailed, the *operai* asked the architects to respect what had already been completed as far as the frieze, and approved the project for the *ballatoio* proper as well as the possible replacement of the capitals set between the corner pilasters of the drum and the frieze. However, they realized almost immediately that Ciaccheri's elegantly decorative frieze was out of proportion with the new *ballatoio*. As we know from Giovanni Cambi's *Istorie* (1785–86, III: 63), the frieze “was full of certain flowers in black marble, which was made only on two faces of the dome where they had begun renovation, and the reason why this frieze was removed was because it was deemed too small and paltry for such a cornice and *ballatoio*.” The frieze of marble inserts was reutilized to decorate the floors of the S. Pietro and S. Paolo chapels inside the cathedral (Cavallucci 1881: 87–88) and was replaced by a frieze of classical inspiration with festoons capped by winged faces of putti alternated with lion heads. Since the gallery was realized under the reign of Pope Leo X, it is tempting to believe that these heads were inserted in homage to him, but a payment dated 22 January 1508 to Baccio d'Agnolo (Marchini 1977a: 47) informs us that the architect had already made a lion head in plaster “for the model of the frieze to be made for the gallery of the dome.” In addition to shedding light on the emblematic significance of these heads, which were originally meant to refer to the *marzocco* (heraldic symbol of the Florentine dominion) and not to the pope, the document also reveals that just two months after the agreement under which the artists pledged to conserve what had already been executed during the fifteenth century, the *fabbricieri* had realized the incompatibility between the sixteenth-century project and Ciaccheri's model. And, indeed, on 12 May 1508, the wardens decided to dismantle the old frieze and replace it with the one we see today (Guasti 1857, doc. 342).

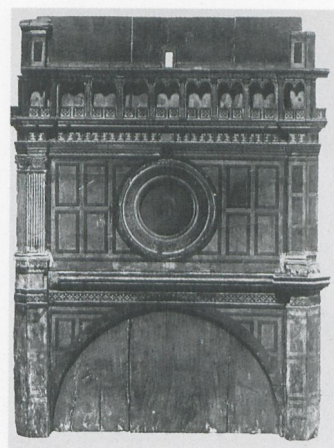
In November 1507, Il Cronaca, Giuliano da Sangallo and Baccio d'Agnolo not only won the commission for the *ballatoio*, but the two Sangallo brothers and Baccio d'Agnolo were elevated in rank to work alongside Il Cronaca as cathedral *capomaestri*. All pledged to work in unison for the good of the public and the *fabbrica* (Guasti 1857, doc. 343). Yet, differences of opinion and rancor were not long in coming, and the situation was complicated when, on 21 September 1508, Il Cronaca met his premature death. On 11 December 1508, the two Sangallo brothers resigned from their posts, both on the grounds of ill-health (Guasti 1857, doc. 345). The document makes it clear that neither Giuliano nor Antonio da Sangallo wanted to renew the commitment, and on the same day, Baccio d'Agnolo was left standing alone as the *capomaestro* of the cathedral site, a position which he held until his death in 1543.

Because of this discord, the project was interrupted once again, but after the return of the Medici in 1512, it was decided to complete at least one of the sides of the *ballatoio*. At the end of December 1513, Baccio d'Agnolo was joined by Nanni di Baccio Bigio in the position as *capomaestro* (Guasti 1857, doc. 347), and in September 1514, arrangements were made for transporting from Carrara the pieces for the plinth, the pilasters, the architrave, the frieze, the arches and the cornice of the gallery (Guasti 1857, doc. 349). The finished part of the gallery on the southeast side of the octagon was inaugurated on 24 June 1515, to celebrate the feast of St. John. As is well-known, the work attracted the criticism and sarcasm of Michelangelo upon his return from Rome in the summer of 1516. As Vasari reports (1877, 353–354) in the *Life of Baccio*: having “made the design and model of this *ballatoio*,” he carried out all of the part that can be seen on the Bischeri side; but Michelagnolo Buonarroti, upon his return from Rome, seeing that they were cutting away the protruding morse that Filippo Brunelleschi had purposely left exposed, objected heatedly and work was stopped. He said that it seemed to him that Baccio had made a cage for crickets, and that such a great structure required some-

thing larger and made to another design with art and grace, which, it did not seem to him, Baccio's design had, and that he would show them what to do. So, when Michelagnolo made a model, it was discussed at length among many expert artists and citizens before the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, and in the end neither one nor the other of the models was realized. Baccio's design was criticized in many particulars; not that it was not fine in itself, but because it was too small for such a structure; and for this reason this *ballatoio* has never seen its completion.” That Michelangelo had in effect designed a grandiose solution suited to Brunelleschi's imposing dome is confirmed by Casa Buonarroti 50A and 66A, executed between 1516 and 1520. Michelangelo intended to dismantle the dichromatic facing designed by Ciaccheri and to frame the windows of the octagon between two rectangular slabs; moreover, he wished to replace the corner pilasters with Corinthian or composite columns resting on a very high base, all supporting an imposing three-tiered entablature. Finally, having moved the passage to a higher level than the present one, the project called for a series of eight statues to be placed high up in correspondence with the eight ribs. The idea was ambitious indeed, if not unfeasible, and remained on paper, but it is highly representative of that mixture of utopia and megalomania typical of Buonarroti's genius.

At any event, it was not just Michelangelo's criticisms that halted Baccio d'Agnolo's project. Vasari's account, quoted above, is confirmed in Giovanni Cambi's *Istorie* (1785–86, III: 70–71), where there is mention of the Florentines' bad reception of the work when it was unveiled: “In this year [1515], on the day of St. John, the first side of the dome was unveiled, toward the side of the Bischeri ... It appeared to everyone that the new addition cut a poor figure alongside the great frieze below with its lion heads and sill, which stood out much more than the finished work above. If it is continued, you shall see, it will not be in this year 1515.”

The failure of Michelangelo's bold alternative led to the definitive suspension of work. Fortunately, several proposals for the completion of the *ballatoio* put forward at the end of the nineteenth century and the first years of our own (Ginevri 1903: 3–5) were not followed through. Of the project realized by Baccio d'Agnolo, in addition to the “cage for crickets,” there remains a fragment of the frieze on the eastern side of the octagon, a reminder of this important but unfortunate undertaking. What should have been a glowing emblem of a new “popular” government came to symbolize the disinterest of the newly installed Medici dynasty for things public. The lion heads on the frieze, originally conceived as a symbol of the civil authority of the commune, could easily have been recycled as a homage to the Medici pope, who chose the name Leo X. Yet nothing was done. The interrupted frieze came to symbolize an era of political confusion during which artists had to fend for themselves—often changing camps with impunity—between republican hopes and the self-interested politics of an arrogant family by now intent on consolidating its absolute power (witness the unchallenged priority given to Michelangelo's projects for S. Lorenzo), or distracted by more pressing commitments in Rome.



268

ANTONIO MANETTI CIACCHERI
(attrib.)

*Model of the Drum and Ballatoio
of S. Maria del Fiore*

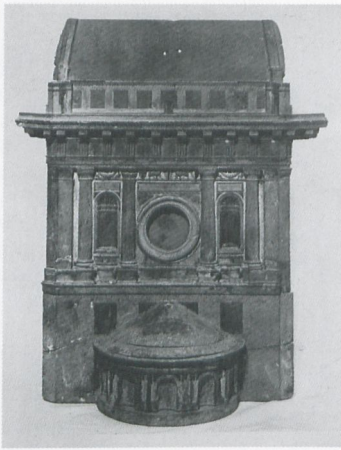
Florence, Museo dell'Opera di S. Maria del Fiore, 136
Three vertical panels in white poplar, with black, white and green tempera.
138 × 98 × 12.5 cm

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Nardini Despotti Mospignotti 1885b: 75–76; *Catalogo* 1891: 33; Poggi 1904: 58–59; Sabatini 1943: XX; *Guida* 1948: 15; Marchini 1977a: 36–37, 43.

In the past, model no. 136 was always considered anonymous and usually linked to the 1507 competition. However, Marchini (1977a) attributed it to Manetti Ciaccheri and proposed a dating of between 1451 and 1460 when the architect was *capomaestro* of the Opera (actually, Ciaccheri took his post in 1452). Marchini's attribution is based on the fact that model no. 136 bears the closest resemblance to the project that was realized, which can still be seen today. The decoration of the drum facade, the square pilaster in the right-hand version (the panels of which were diminished from three to two during the execution of the project, probably overseen by Giuliano da Maiano), the simple entablature with three consecutive bands, without capital and the trefoil-motif frieze (dismantled in 1508) correspond to what was effectively realized. Marchini's attribution therefore seems justified, also on the strength of the “archaic” aspects of the model, such as the decorative band at the base of the drum and the motif of the openwork parapets of the *ballatoio*.

As far as the model is concerned, note-worthy are both the variation with fluted pilasters capped by ornate fifteenth-century capitals, on the left at window height, and the reduction of the width of the pilasters on this side of the drum; the lower corner pilasters measure 6.7 cm, while the upper ones measure only 6 cm. This fact is significant since, according to Antonio di Tuccio Manetti, Brunelleschi's first biographer, Manetti Ciaccheri altered the original project by reducing the width of the drum's upper pilasters.

Finally, it should be pointed out that in this model the twin arches of the gallery were originally supported by columns, probably Doric like the fluted pilasters that separate them, the base of which left traces above the openwork parapet. A.N.



269

GIULIANO and ANTONIO DA SANGALLO THE ELDER
(attrib.)

*Model of the Drum and the Ballatoio
of S. Maria del Fiore*

Florence, Museo dell'Opera di S. Maria del Fiore, 140

Two overlapping panels in white poplar with red, green-blue and white tempera.

113.5 x 72.5 x 13 cm

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Nardini Despotti Mospignotti 1885b: 75-76; *Catalogo* 1891: 33; Poggi 1904: 58-59; *Guida* 1948: 15; *Disegni di fabbriche Brunelleschiane* 1977: 15; Marchini 1977a: 41-42, 45; 1987: 244; Satzinger 1991: 86.

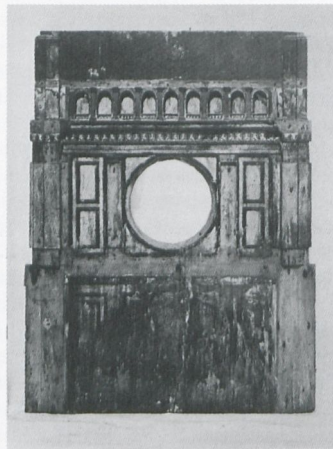
The museum's first catalog lists model no. 140 among those submitted to the 1507 competition, but Marchini proposes 1516 and attributes it to Antonio da Sangallo the Elder. Originally, the scholar had advanced the theory that the model was the fruit of a collaboration between the two Sangallo brothers, because a drawing in the Uffizi (7954A) by Giuliano shows a sketch with a plan quite similar to that of the model (*Disegni...*, 1977: 15); prompted by an informal and undocumented reopening of the competition for the *ballatoio*, the elderly Giuliano is supposed to have designed in 1516 a new and grandiose solution, while Antonio, an acclaimed carpenter, would have done the model (this hypothesis has been rejected by Borsi 1985: 458-459). However, in later analyses, Marchini (1977a: 41, and especially 1987: 244) did not hesitate to attribute to Antonio also the design of the drum facing: the majestic motif of the niches framed by Doric columns supporting an imposing entablature and the robust cornice resting on corbels show "a vigorous crudeness" typical of Antonio. Satzinger (1991) has recently upheld this attribution and dating (1515 instead of 1516).

Yet, as with no. 138, the emblems of the city and that of the Florentine people—the latter framed by two lambs, symbol of the wool guild, which had been entrusted with the supervision of the construction and maintenance of S. Maria del Fiore—make it impossible to date model no. 140 to the period under Medici rule. However, since in 1507 the Sangallo brothers had joined Il Cronaca and Baccio d'Agnolo in the realization of the winning model, positively identified by scholars as no. 142, model no. 140 can only be considered a second thought on the part of the two brothers. In fact, it is possible that in the course of 1508, they became aware of the inadequacy of the model designed in collaboration with the other two partners and that they thus sought to create a solution more appropriate to the mass of the dome. This would explain the discord between the *capomaestri* of the Opera and Giuliano's and Antonio's resignations "for reasons of health" presented on 11 December 1508 (see the document published by Guasti 1857, doc. 345).

It may be significant that while almost all the other models in the museum bear at their base the outline of the cathedral's nave or of the apse tribunes, no. 140 is the only one to show one of Brunelleschi's *tribunette morte*. This could mean that no. 140 was at odds with the require-

ments of the 1507 competition, since having chosen the side of the octagon toward the nave of the cathedral or one of those toward the tribunes, the competitors may not have been aware of the problem of the relationship with Brunelleschi's *tribunette*. If true, these considerations would confirm a date later than 1507 for model no. 140. Finally, it should be mentioned that Hirst (1988b: 92) has tentatively linked two red chalk sketches by Michelangelo on a sheet today conserved at the Uffizi (1872Fr.) to the 1507 competition and that the solution proposed on the left, a niche with a shell-capped conch framed between two massive columns, is quite similar to the proposal for the drum in model no. 140.

A.N.



270

IL CRONACA, BACCIO D'AGNOLO and GIULIANO DA SANGALLO

*Model of the Drum and the Ballatoio
of S. Maria del Fiore*

Florence, Museo dell'Opera di S. Maria del Fiore, 142

Three horizontal panels in white poplar with black, green and white tempera.

96 x 73 x 7 cm

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Nardini Despotti Mospignotti 1885b: 75-76; *Catalogo* 1891: 33; Poggi 1904: 58-59; Tosi 1927-28a: 610-611; Sabatini 1943: XX; *Guida* 1948: 15; *Disegni di fabbriche Brunelleschiane* 1977: 14; Marchini 1977a: 36-37, 40-41, 44; Tolnay 1980: 29; Argan and Contardi 1990: 56.

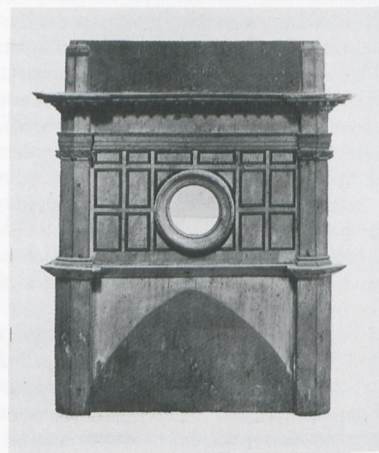
Listed in the first museum catalog of 1891 among the models submitted to the 1507 competition, no. 142 was first identified by Tosi (1927-28) as the one by Il Cronaca in collaboration with Giuliano da Sangallo and Baccio d'Agnolo, who were later joined by Antonio da Sangallo the Elder. It is not clear how the four artists divided up their tasks, but an examination of the model in the light of information contained in the documents published by Guasti (1857, docs. 341-345) makes it possible to advance some hypothesis. Model no. 142 is characterized by a loggia with single archways at the base of the vault, and bears the closest resemblance to what Baccio d'Agnolo realized in 1514-15; since the model shows a substantial departure from the facing of the drum done according to Manetti Ciaccheri's design (the two pilasters flanking the window), it is very likely the one presented by Il Cronaca, Giuliano da Sangallo and Baccio d'Agnolo in November 1507. It is a simple design, the main idea for which should be attributed to Cronaca, at the time acting alone as *capomaestro* of the cathedral site, assisted by Giuliano; Baccio must have been asked to participate in the endeavor thanks to his acclaimed skills in carpentry. However, once the model was presented and the competition won, the *fabbricieri* asked them not to dismantle anything that had already been built, and therefore to forgo the idea of the drum's facing; furthermore, the three architects were to work in concert to integrate the best parts of their project with the elements of the "modellum anti-

quum, factum et datum per Antonium Manettum" (Guasti 1857, doc. 341).

However, in September 1508, Il Cronaca suddenly passed away—a premature death—and two months later, the Sangallo brothers resigned from their posts. When work on the *ballatoio* was resumed in 1514-15, Baccio d'Agnolo limited himself to realizing the loggia design of 1507.

His only modifications were quite minor, such as replacing the stubby balusters of the parapet with other larger, fuller ones and adding the fluting to the pilaster strips framing the arches.

Work on the *ballatoio* was interrupted because of the criticism of Michelangelo and other Florentine architects and citizens. In addition to esthetic reasons (in his *Istorie*, Giovanni Cambi writes that "it appeared to everyone that this latest addition cut a poor figure compared to that great frieze below"), misgivings of a purely technical nature must have held some sway. A report written in 1694 by Giovambattista Nelli to the grand duke states that already in 1671 the architects Gherardo and Pier Francesco Silvani had recommended reinforcing "Baccio d'Agnolo's *ballatoio* (which, having been reinforced other times, had threatened to shift again)" (Guasti 1857, doc. 391). A.N.



271

ANONYMOUS (formerly attributed to Michelangelo Buonarroti)

*Model of the Drum and the Ballatoio
of S. Maria del Fiore*

Florence, Museo dell'Opera di S. Maria del Fiore, 143

One panel in white poplar, with green-blue and white tempera (restorations in ram wood).

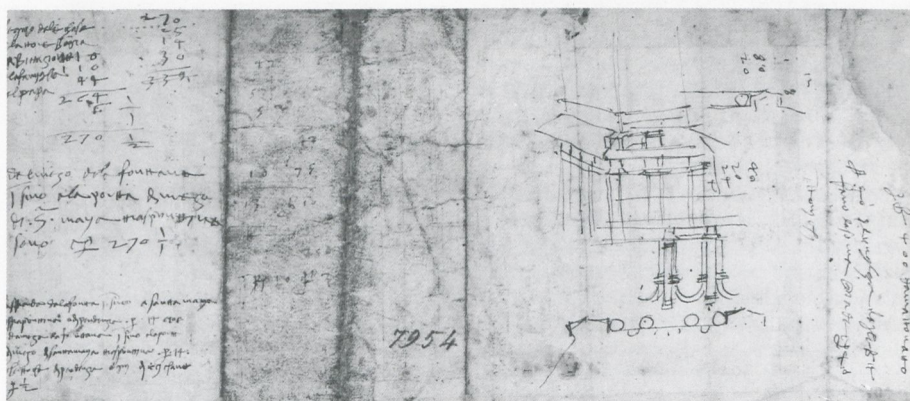
96 x 71.5 x 10.5 cm

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Nardini Despotti Mospignotti 1885b: 75-76; *Catalogo* 1891: 33; Poggi 1904: 58-59; Sabatini 1943: XX; *Guida* 1948: 15; Saalman 1975: 376; Marchini 1977a: 39-40, 44; Tolnay 1980: 28-29; Ristori 1983: 171; Argan and Contardi 1990: 56.

Model no. 143 has always been cataloged among those submitted to the 1507 competition, but Marchini (1977a) is the only one to have proposed an attribution; spurred by the discovery of a letter dated 31 July 1507 in which the *fabbricieri* invited Michelangelo to participate in the competition for the *ballatoio*, Marchini thought he perceived in this model a glimmer of Buonarroti's design. According to the scholar, "the classifying solution of a high architrave resting on Ionic-style pilasters" and the addition of a row of rectangular marble panels above the drum window appear in Casa Buonarroti drawings 50A and 66A, which Michelangelo executed in 1516-20 when he decided to correct the errors made by Baccio d'Agnolo in the realization of the *ballatoio*. Marchini himself was forced to admit that the drawing supposedly sent by Michelangelo, who was then residing in Bologna, had been misinterpreted by whoever rendered the "general" project in wood, so much so that the brick "teeth" to

which the imposing entablature was to be anchored are absent in the model. Actually, the architectural language of model no. 143 has very little to do with Michelangelo's drawings of ten years later. If Marchini's attribution were to be accepted, the model would mark Michelangelo's debut as an architect and this would explain some of its clumsiness, such as the introduction of a strip of rectangular panels in green and white marble above the drum window to emphasize the insertion of elegant capitals over the corner pilasters. But in any case, it seems wiser to reject the attribution, even though the monumental cornice in place of the open *ballatoio* anticipates Michelangelo's proposed solution—as Saalman (1975) already noted, though he bluntly rejected the idea that Michelangelo was the model's author. Should anyone wish to repropose the name of Buonarroti, a point in favor of attribution is that the odd curved capitals are similar to the ones Michelangelo used in a project for the facade of S. Lorenzo (Casa Buonarroti 45A). All the same, it is hard to believe that he threw himself enthusiastically into the undertaking because in 1507, the artist was at grips with the execution of the larger than life bronze statue of Pope Julius II. Hirst (1988b: 92) has tentatively suggested identifying two red chalk sketches on a sheet in the Uffizi (1872Fr.) as Michelangelo's initial coy response to invitation of the cathedral *operai*, and a letter sent from Bologna to the artist's brother seems to confirm that he was examining the problem: "I would like you [Buonarroti] to find the herald Sir Agniolo and tell him that I have not yet answered because I could not, and that the thing is all right" (10 August 1507). However, the sketches that Hirst takes into consideration present solutions quite different from those in model no. 143: the first shows a majestic articulation of the drum similar to that of model no. 140, and the second envisages a loggia with a series of arches curiously similar to the one that Il Cronaca and partners proposed in model no. 142. Furthermore, after initially responding affirmatively to the requests of the *fabbricieri*, Michelangelo seems to have dedicated himself to the difficult task of polishing the statue of Julius II which had been poorly cast by master founder Bernardino: "[Buonarroti] Please go to find the herald and *commendatore* Tomaso and tell them that for this I do not have time to write to them, that is, to answer their letters, which I much appreciated" (12-14 October 1507). This letter is dated slightly more than three weeks before the announcement of the results of the competition for the *ballatoio* of S. Maria del Fiore. That model no. 143 dates to 1507 seems to be confirmed by the fact that its height and width (96 × 71.5 cm) correspond to those of model no. 142 (96 × 73 cm) attributed to Cronaca, Giuliano da Sangallo and Baccio d'Agnolo. But the project's author must remain for the present anonymous.

The model bears clear signs of restoration; the bases of the corner pilasters are not in white poplar but in ramin, an exotic wood of southeast Asia. A.N.



272
GIULIANO DA SANGALLO
Architectural Sketches

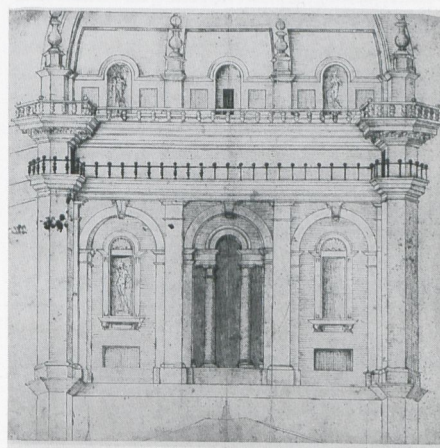
Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Uff. 7954Av.
Pen and brown ink.
17.6 × 41.6 cm
INSCRIBED: "disegno del ce chase dela ttore Borgia [per] abitazione dela famiglia del papa"; this is followed by some calculations: "110 + 110 + 44 = 264 + 6½ = 270½; other calculations: "270 + 25 + 14 + 30 = 339" (the number 339 is crossed out); "dal mezo dela fontana j[n]sino ala porta dj mezo di S.ta maria traspuntina sono ch[anne] 270½; "la strada dala fonta[na] j[n]sino a santta maria in traspuntina adj pendenza [plalmi] 14 cioe da mezo la fontana j[n]sino ala porta dj mezo disantamaria traspuntina [plalmi] 14 che ttoccha dipendenza ogni dieci chane [plalmi] ½." Rotating the sheet 90 degrees, it reads: "B 400 dj amattonatto; B 40 per lungheza largho B 14 fano la soma ..."; other measurements follow: "8; 80 + 20; 40 + 20 + 24 = 84."

PROVENANCE: Gaddi Collection (18th cent.); Abbot Vincenzo Parigi (1830); Count Bernardino di Campello (ca. 1870); Baron Heinrich von Geymüller (1876); Uffizi (1908).
BIBLIOGRAPHY: Fabriczy 1902b: 117-118; Ferri 1908: 58; Ackerman 1949-51: 254 (only the recto); *Disegni di fabbriche Brunelleschiane* 1977: 15; Marchini 1977a: 42, 45; Borsi 1985: 186, 456-459; Satzinger 1991: 86.

This sheet by Giuliano da Sangallo was first published by Fabriczy (1902b), who, thanks to the inscriptions on the verso, had no difficulty in identifying the plans of four row houses on the recto as the design for the apartments of the pope's servants to be constructed near the Borgia tower in the Belvedere courtyard in the Vatican. The commission for this job dates to 1513, so it is likely that the sketches on the verso—the ones that interest us—should be dated around that time.

The first critic to identify the sketches on the verso as a proposed plan and elevation with a study of the corner pilasters for the drum and the *ballatoio* of S. Maria del Fiore was Ferri (1908). Since then no one who has examined the problem has ever challenged this association. Marchini (1977a) later pointed out how the plan sketched on Uff. 7954A verso corresponds to the solution proposed by the authors of model no. 140 in the cathedral's Museo dell'Opera, in which four heavy Doric columns frame two niches to the sides of the drum window. While this observation offers support to the attribution of model no. 140 to the Sangallo circle (and let it not be forgotten that Michelangelo had thought of a similar solution), this does not necessarily mean that the sketches on the verso of Uff. 7954A refer to the Florentine *ballatoio*. The inscriptions that accompany these drawings do not pertain to the project for the "papal" family's apartments alone, but also to renovations in Via Alessandrina in Borgo—facing St. Peter's in Rome—that Leo X had commissioned Giuliano da Sangallo to execute during those same years; in other words, the studies on the verso of the sheet may also be

viewed in the context of this ambitious project. In any case, whatever its original destination, the elevation of the open gallery on Uff. 7954A verso is an important document endorsing Giuliano's involvement in the creation of the Museo dell'Opera model no. 142, submitted to the 1507 competition in collaboration with Il Cronaca and Baccio d'Agnolo. While the heavy corbels at the base of the pilasters dividing the arches are clearly visible in the drawing and absent from the model, they were reused by Baccio d'Agnolo when he realized one of the sides of the *ballatoio* in 1514-15. A.N.



273
ANONYMOUS (formerly attributed to Aristotile da Sangallo)
Design for the Drum and the Ballatoio of S. Maria del Fiore

Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Uff. 6714A
Traces of black chalk and stylus, pen and brown ink, brown wash.
39.2 × 40.1 cm
INSCRIBED: (top left, in black chalk) "61"; (on backing, in ink) "14".

PROVENANCE: Mediceo-Lorenese estate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Disegni di fabbriche brunelleschiane*, 1977: 13-15; Marchini 1977a: 45; Ghisetti Giavarina 1991: 94.

In the Gabinetto's catalog entry this sheet is attributed to Aristotile da Sangallo and defined as a "perspective elevation of an interior of a dome bearing some resemblance to that of S. Maria del Fiore." But Marchini (*Disegni ...*, 1977) pointed out that it was a project for the drum and exterior *ballatoio* of the Florentine dome.

The project's proportions, more developed in height than in width, would be better suited to the crown of a grandiose campanile (like that of S. Biagio at Montepulciano) than to a side of the drum of a cathedral; however, the roughly drawn outline of the nave at the bottom of the sheet and especially the oval traced with the stylus of a

compass in the area later taken up by the Serliana added on a piece of paper glued to the original sheet seem to confirm Marchini's theory.

The drawing's attribution to Aristotile da Sangallo is based on the fact that it belongs to a collection of some eighty sheets assigned to him *en bloc* in the nineteenth century. However, it is a heterogeneous group and recent studies (Ghisetti Giavarina 1991) have made it clear that many of these drawings were actually done by Tommaso Boscoli, the artist who carved the statue of Pope Julius II for Michelangelo's monument in S. Pietro in Vincoli as well as a faithful collaborator of Antonio da Sangallo the Elder, who completed the work on the sanctuary of S. Biagio at Montepulciano. In the group are also sheets that cannot be attributed either to Aristotile or to Boscoli, and Uff. 6714A is the work of an anonymous artist (Ghisetti Giavarina 1991).

In any case, there is no doubt that the drawing was done by a member of the Sangallo circle.

In the opinion of this writer, it documents a project, perhaps even a wood-en model now lost, by Antonio da Sangallo the Elder.

The Serliana motif was dear to Antonio and he used it in the window in the center of the facade of SS. Annunziata in Arezzo (1502-20 and 1528-34) and in one of the sides of the courtyard of the Palazzo Del Monte in Monte S. Savino (1512-17). Furthermore, the idea of placing a corbel at the peak of an arched decorative element, as in those above the niches at the sides of the Serliana, reappears in the first level of the S. Biagio campanile, while the Doric pilasters flanking the pillars supporting the Serliana anticipate those on the ground floor of the rectory of Montepulciano. The showy crowning members are also a motif frequently employed by Sangallo, but here it is more interesting to note how they echo Brunelleschi's decoration of the lantern.

If this bizarre design truly does refer to S. Maria del Fiore, it should be pointed out that the parapets of the two uncovered passageways are topped by globes that could be an allusion to the emblem of the Medici family. The failure of the project realized by Baccio d'Agnolo in 1514-15 probably persuaded more than one artist, and not just Michelangelo, to dust off or radically revamp ideas developed for the 1507 competition. As already in part anticipated by Marchini (*Disegni...* 1977: 14), Uffizi drawing 6714A probably documents Antonio da Sangallo the Elder's renewed interest in the challenging problem of the cathedral's *ballatoio*. A.N.

503-504; *Disegni di fabbriche Brunelleschiane* 1977: 14; Marchini 1977a: 39-42, 44-45; Tolnay 1980: 29; Morselli 1981: 127; Ristori 1983: 171; Ackerman 1986: 295; Argan and Contardi 1990: 56.

Model no. 144 was long considered the oldest among those in the Museo dell'Opera. In the catalog of 1891 it was already attributed to Antonio Manetti Ciaccheri and although Poggi (1904) accepted the attribution with reservations, the model was associated with the fifteenth-century architect's name until 1965, when De Angelis d'Ossat suggested that it was the work of Michelangelo, dating it to 1516. According to De Angelis (1965 and 1966c), the model's entablature "corresponds exactly, in height and position, to the gap between the two series of stone" left by Brunelleschi, and this solution is identical to the one shown in Casa Buonarroti 50A recto, certainly by Michelangelo. As the author notes, the model displays how the *ballatoio* passageway was not to be decorated with an open loggia, but rather illuminated by four embrasures in the frieze of the imposing entablature. The attribution to Michelangelo was endorsed by Marchini (1977a), Morselli (1981) and Argan and Contardi (1990), while Ackerman (1986) rejected it.

If we are to believe Vasari (V: 353-354), Michelangelo criticized the part of the *ballatoio* built in 1514-15 because "such a great structure required something larger" than what Baccio d'Agnolo had designed. It is hard to believe that the modest solution proposed in model no. 144 would have satisfied Michelangelo's ambitious creativity: the capitals of the corner pilasters are characterized by a gaudy decoration that clashes with the elegant capitals in Casa Buonarroti 50A and 66A. Furthermore, the expedient of piercing the frieze of the entablature with embrasures to illuminate the passageway is too clumsy to be attributed to Michelangelo. Rather than a work designed by Michelangelo in 1516, this model is more likely the product of one of the artists who participated in the 1507 competition, and has since fallen into anonymity.

No. 144 underwent major restoration: much of the entablature was reconstructed and the model's "original" condition is documented by a photograph in the Kunsthistorisches Institut of Florence. A.N.

soldi / 40 / cinque ce[n]toquaranta / d / millesette ce[n]to setta[n]ta / 1200 / 600"; to the left of the sketch in red chalk of the drum there are other numbers that are hard to decipher.

PROVENANCE: Casa Buonarroti.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Gotti 1875, II: 178; Berenson 1903a, no. 1420; Geymüller 1904: 34; Frey 1909-11: 84-85; Thode 1908-13, II: 139-140 and III: 41; Berenson 1938, no. 1420; Tolnay 1948: 211-212; Hartt 1950: 242; Dussler 1959: 74-75; Ackerman 1961, II: 18-19; Berenson 1961: no. 1420; Barocchi 1962a, I: 53-54; 1964a: 55-56; Barbieri and Puppi 1964a: 832-833, 1000; De Angelis d'Ossat 1965, II: 286-291; 1966c: 501-504; Bardeschi Ciulich and Barocchi 1970: 71; Tolnay 1970: 32, 211-212; Ackerman 1971: 306; Hartt 1971, no. 192-193; Saalman 1975: 374-380, 400-401; Tolnay 1975b, no. 121; Marchini 1977: 39-40, 44; Tolnay 1977: 58; Saalman 1977: 852-853; Di Stefano 1980a: 875; Tolnay 1980: 28-29, 30; Morselli 1981: 127; Berti et al. 1985: 20, 66; Rocchi et al., 1985: 89; Ackerman 1986: 295; Argan and Contardi 1990: 56.

The attribution of this sheet to Michelangelo has never been challenged, but the first scholars to make a critical analysis of these sketches did not agree as to their purpose; recently, their dating has also become open to debate. Berenson thought that the sheet illustrated the interior of a dome, in all likelihood that of the New Sacristy in S. Lorenzo. This opinion was shared by Frey, who believed he could discern the study of the drum of the dome that Michelangelo designed for the new Cappella Medici; Tolnay felt that the red chalk sketch on the verso was related to the altar of the same chapel, a hypothesis reluctantly accepted by Ackerman. However, Geymüller had already realized in 1904 that CB 50A contained preparatory studies for the drum of the dome of S. Maria del Fiore and since then, most critics have agreed with him.

As far as the chronology is concerned, the sheet has always been dated to between 1516, the year of the artist's return to Florence and of his mocking criticism of the side of the *ballatoio* built by Baccio d'Agnolo, and around 1520, the year of the rough draft of the letter written on the verso of CB 66A, which bears other studies for the same project. Following the discovery of a letter of 31 July 1507 which the *fabbricieri* at S. Maria del Fiore sent to Michelangelo, inviting him to participate in the competition for the *ballatoio*, Tolnay (1980) pointed out that the sketch on the recto of 50A could date to 1507, an opinion seconded by



274

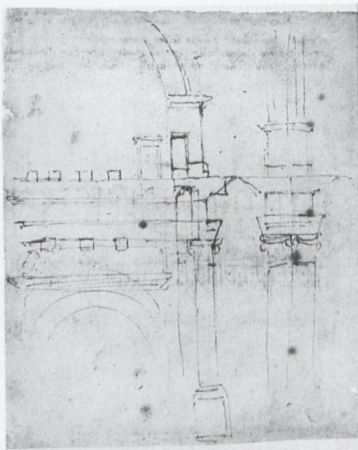
ANONYMOUS (formerly attributed to Antonio Manetti and to Michelangelo)
Model of the Drum and the Ballatoio of S. Maria del Fiore

Florence, Museo dell'Opera di S. Maria del Fiore, 144

One panel in white poplar, with two vertical elements added to the sides; much of the architrave is restoration work.

54.5 x 58.5 x 10 cm

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Catalogo* 1891: 33; Poggi 1904: 59; Tosi 1927-28a: 610; *Guida* 1948: 15; De Angelis D'Ossat 1965: 290-291; 1966c:



275

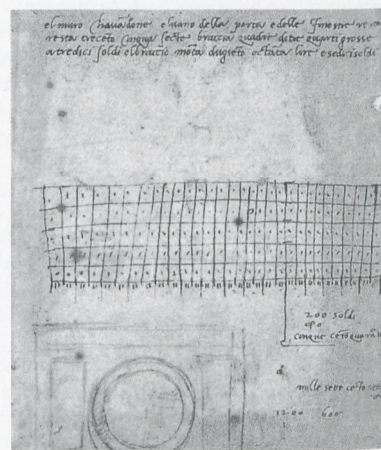
MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI
Designs for the Drum and the Ballatoio of S. Maria del Fiore

Florence, Casa Buonarroti, CB 50Ar

Pen and brown ink (recto); annotations and graphic calculations in pen and brown ink and architectural sketch in red chalk (verso); the paper is torn and stained.

25.1 (left) and 24.1 (right) x 20.2 (bottom) and 19.7 (top) cm

INSCRIBED: (verso) "el muro chaval[n]done el vano della porta e delle finestre resta / resta trece[n]to cinquanta secte braccia quadre di tre quarti grosse / a tredici soldi el braccio mo[n]ta dugi[n]to octa[n]ta lire e sedici soldi"; below the graphic calculation: "200



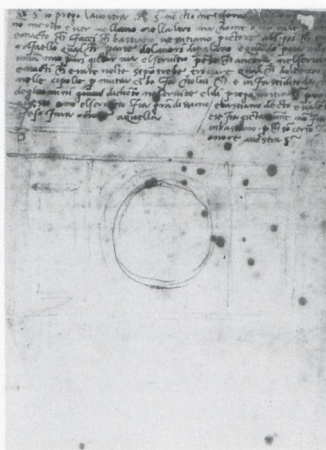
Argan and Contardi (1990), even though Tolnay himself decided in favor of the traditional dating of 1516. Indeed, there is no reason to anticipate the chronology of these studies, also because the note on the verso of 50A dates to the winter of 1519. As Bardeschi Ciulich and Barocchi (1970) revealed, the annotation refers to a room in the house in Via Mozza, and should be seen in connection with another note concerning the "widow's wall," that is, the part of a house owned by a widow which Michelangelo planned to purchase to enlarge his own (Bardeschi Ciulich and Barocchi 1970); the negotiations for this transaction took place during the winter of 1519, and since the draft of the letter on the verso of 66A is from 1520, it is plausi-

ble that the sketches on the two sheets date to 1519–20. It is a well-known fact that Michelangelo's parsimony led him to reuse, even after many years, the same sheets of paper for his personal notes. Thus, the note of 1519 and the draft of 1520 fix, in theory, straightforward *ante quem* terms, but the fact that both date to the same period suggests that these studies for the *ballatoio* were executed in 1519–20. This, however, does not exclude the possibility that the artist executed others in 1516 as well.

The most accurate analysis of 50A and 66A is the work of Saalman (1975: 374–380) who expanded upon the sound observations offered by Geymüller (1904: 34) and Thode (1908: 139–140) early in this century. Geymüller was the first to recognize that 50A was a preliminary sketch for the drum of S. Maria del Fiore and to point out that Michelangelo wanted to crown the buttresses of the passageway with statues or candelabra in correspondence with the ribs of the vault, but it was Thode who realized that, at least in the left-hand version of 50A, the architect had not planned simple pilasters but rather columns. More recently, Saalman has pointed out that 50A recto shows not two sketches, but three: the first is on the extreme right and shows a frontal view of a corner of the drum and the vault; the second is at the center of the sheet and shows a section of one of the corners of the octagon; the third consists in a series of notes at the bottom of the sheet that show in a very cursory way a frontal view of a drum window and a frieze decorated with garlands. Saalman himself later explained that the latter sketches are drawn with studied carelessness, like stenographic notes; they should not be seen in the context of the section drawn in the center of the sheet since their position does not correspond to the one that these elements should have occupied had the design shown in the section in the center of the sheet been actually realized. Finally, taking his cue from one of Geymüller's observations, Saalman noted that Michelangelo meant to move the exterior passageway to a level higher than that of the *ballatoio* built by Baccio d'Agnolo in 1514–15; it was to run above the entablature and pass through the heavy buttresses that were to be erected in correspondence to the ribs of the vault.

What are the consequences of such a project? Vasari (1877, V: 353–354) informs us that Michelangelo had criticized Baccio d'Agnolo's *ballatoio* because "such a great structure [that is, Brunelleschi's dome] required something more impressive..." Baccio had restricted himself to respecting what was set forth in the *Instruction* that Brunelleschi drew up in 1420, inspired in part by the model of 1367, but Michelangelo had doubtless understood that, time permitting, Brunelleschi would have adopted a different solution. As De Angelis d'Ossat (1965) also remarked, Michelangelo's project would have completely upset the decisions made in 1420 and partially realized by Baccio d'Agnolo. In place of the simple gallery, Buonarroti had envisioned an imposing entablature with three superimposed bands supported by the exposed "teeth" stones devised by Brunelleschi; at the corners of the drum, the entablature would have broken forward to be sustained by columns on high pedestals, crowned by composite capitals; and the cornice would have supported a gallery the corner buttresses of which would have been topped by gigantic statues—an idea that must have greatly fired the artist's imagination. Finally, as CB 66A shows, Michelangelo considered replacing the white and green marble facing of the round drum with two rectangular panels, while the window was to be inserted in a square space. If realized, this project would have ensured that the dome of S. Maria del Fiore would today be considered not only the work of Brunelleschi but also of Michelangelo, and it is easy to imagine how this idea was immensely appealing to a man of Michelangelo's ambition. In the end, nothing came of it, perhaps because of the same technical difficulties that Baccio d'Agnolo had already encountered (Saalman 1975), but more probably because the *fabbricieri* and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici were quick to realize the high cost of such an operation and its profoundly utopian implications.

A.N.



276

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI
*Designs for the Drum and Ballatoio
of S. Maria del Fiore*

Florence, Casa Buonarroti, CB no. 66A

Red chalk; the draft on the verso is penned in brown ink; there are pieces missing and stains; watermark: Briquet 91.

27.2 (left) and 26.8 (right) × 20.8 (bottom) and 20.5 (top cm)

INSCRIBED: (verso) **Mons[igniore], io prego la vostra Reverendissima S[ignori]a non chome amico o servo, perché [io] non merito esser né. l'uno né. l'altro, ma chome omo vile, povero e macto, che facci che Bastiano venetiano pittore abi, poi che è morto Rafaello, qualche parte de' lavori di Palazzo. E quando paia a Vostra S[ignori]a inn. un mio pari gictar via el servitio, penso che, ancora nel servire e' macti, che rare volte si potrebe trovare qualche dolceza, chome nelle cipolle, per mutar cibo, fa cholui che è infastidito da' chaponi. Degl'uomini di chonto ne servite el di; prego Vostra S[ignori]a provi questo a me. El servitio fia grandissimo, e se fia gictato in me, non fia cos[i] in Bastiano, perché son certo farà onore a Vostra S[ignori]a; e Bastiano decto è valente omo, e so farà onore a quella.**

PROVENANCE: Casa Buonarroti.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Gotti 1875, II: 179; Milanese 1875a: 413; Berenson 1903a, no. 1434; Thode 1908–13, II: 139–140 and III: 41; Frey 1909–11: 84–85; 1923, fig. V; Berenson 1938, no. 1434; Tolnay 1948: 32, 211; Hartt 1950: 242; Dussler 1959: 76; Ackerman 1961, II: 18–19; Berenson 1961, no. 1434; Barocchi 1962a, I: 54–56; Barbieri and Puppi 1964a: 833, 1000; De Angelis d'Ossat 1965, II: 286–291; 1966c: 501–503; Tolnay 1970: 32, 211; Ackerman 1971: 306; Hartt 1971, no. 194–195; Saalman 1975: 375–380; Tolnay 1975b: no. 122; Marchini 1977a: 39–40, 44; Tolnay 1977: 8–9; Di Stefano 1980a: 875; Tolnay 1980: 29–30; Morselli 1981: 127; Berti et al. 1985: 20, 66; Rocchi et al. 1985: 89; Ackerman 1986: 295; Argan and Contardi 1990: 56.

Critical analysis of 66A is much like that of 50A. Berenson (1903a) thought that it was a study for a monument, while Frey (1909–11) felt that it was another design for the dome of the New Sacristy in S. Lorenzo. Despite clear indications of a vault above the entablature, Tolnay (1948) believed that 66A pertained to an initial project for the altar of the Cappella Medici, but as early as 1908 Thode (1908) had realized that it must be linked, together with 50A, to Michelangelo's efforts to find an appropriate solution to the difficult problem of the *ballatoio* of S. Maria del Fiore.

As far as the chronology is concerned, dating ranges between 1516 (Marchini 1977a; Tolnay 1980), the year of Michelangelo's return to Florence, and, more often, around 1520, the year that the letter on the verso of the sheet was drafted (for example, Barocchi 1962a e b). In relation to this, it is worth noting that the word "questo" in the last line of the draft is written over the red chalk sketch; thus, the date of the letter merely offers a *terminus ante quem*, but for the reasons set forth in the catalog entry for 50A, a dating of 1519–20 is plausible.

The solution explored by Buonarroti in 66A, to be seen alongside the sketches on 50A, is grandiose. The project realized by Baccio d'Agnolo, perhaps in collaboration

with Nanni di Baccio Bigio, had met with Michelangelo's mocking criticism because the small open gallery seemed to be crushed under the mass of the dome. (If it is true that Nanni di Baccio Bigio worked on the project, as a little-headed document published by Guasti [1857, doc. 347] seems to indicate, then the controversy over the gallery marks the beginning of a fierce and long-lived rivalry between Nanni and Michelangelo.) Michelangelo instead planned to modify the decoration of the drum facing and to frame each side of the octagon between two columns topped by composite capitals supporting an imposing three-banded entablature. The other aspects of the design, better documented in 50A, are discussed in that catalog entry. Here, however, it should be added that Michelangelo's original solution took its cue from and expanded upon Bramante's ideas for the dome of the Borgia tower in the Vatican, a work with which he was quite familiar as it had been erected while he was painting the frescoes for the Sistine Chapel.

In conclusion, Saalman (1977) believed that Uff. 7999A recto recalled the wooden model that Michelangelo had made upon his return to Florence, mentioned by Vasari. But the sketch, rather weak, does not offer decisive confirmation of this hypothesis.

A.N.