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Large Bronzes in the Renaissance

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Frontispiece: Attributed to Danese Cattaneo,
Mars as a mythological personification of the
Choleric Temperament (detail), c. 1540/1550, bronze.
The Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society
Purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B.
Whitcomb, 49.417; photograph by Dirk Bakker and
Robert Hensleigh

The Angel and the City: Baccio Bandinelli's Project for the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome

Let me first explain the title of this essay. In the end, there is really only one city, Rome; and in the end there is only one angel, the Archangel Michael (figs. 1, 2). These two supreme entities were celebrated together in a wonderful exhibition held in 1987, titled *L'angelo e la città*, at the Castel Sant'Angelo on the occasion of the restoration of the gigantic bronze figure of the archangel—9 braccia (5 m) high, the size of Michelangelo's *David*—by the Flemish sculptor Peter Verschaffelt (1710–1793), cast in thirty-five pieces and set atop the building in 1752.¹ Verschaffelt's spectacular image was the last in a long series of such sculptures stretching back into the Middle Ages. My concern here is with a brief, abortive, but nonetheless pregnant moment in that millennial history of urban sacrality.

My purpose is to give twenty minutes of fame to a not unknown, but I think, still not fully appreciated project by Baccio Bandinelli, the sculptor who is by all odds the most reviled and underestimated artist of the Renaissance. He was also—and the two characteristics were often interrelated—one of the most inventive and intensely expressive artists of the Renaissance. The work in question, never executed, forms part of the endlessly tormented history of Bandinelli's life, character, and largely unfulfilled potential. The project is known from only two sources, a brief description by

Vasari in his life of Bandinelli, and a sadly rubbed drawing in the Louvre, rediscovered and published thirty years ago by Maria Grazia Ciardi Duprè (fig. 3).² Here is Vasari's account of the project, which originated when Clement VII, Giulio de' Medici, having crowned Charles V emperor in Bologna in October 1529, returned to Rome with Bandinelli in his entourage:

His Holiness resolved to fulfill a vow which he had made in the castle of St. Angelo to finish the marble tower in front of the Ponte a Castello, by placing seven bronze figures, six braccia high, lying in various attitudes and crowned by a bronze angel with a sword in its hand, to stand on a column of variegated marble. The angel was to be Michael, the custodian of the castle, who had released him from prison. The seven figures were the seven mortal sins, to show that with the help of the angel the Pope had overcome all his impious enemies. A model was prepared, and the Pope ordered Baccio to make the figures in clay of the proper size, to be afterwards cast in bronze. Baccio completed one of the figures in Belvedere, which was much praised. To pass the time, and as an experiment in casting, he made many small figures, such as Hercules, Venus, Apollo, Leda and others, which being cast in bronze by Maestro Jacopo della Barba of Florence succeeded excellently.³

Although it shows an abbreviated version with no column and only two defeated enemies of the angel, Duprè's association of the drawing with the Castel Sant'Angelo

Baccio Bandinelli,
*The Archangel Michael
with Two Deadly Sins*,
c. 1530, drawing
Musée du Louvre, Paris;
photograph Réunion des Musées
Nationaux inv. 92



project is certainly correct and has never been questioned.

To grasp the project's art-historical significance, one must first grasp its political significance, for it was conceived in response to one of the most disastrous and perilous situations in the entire history of the church. When Vasari says that it was commissioned by Clement in fulfillment of a vow, he can only refer to what Clement regarded as his miraculous escape from the Castello during the siege and sack of the city by the mercenary troops of Charles V in 1527.⁴ Having fled to Orvieto, where he had been able to recoup and regain control, Clement regarded this dramatic event as a veritable liberation of the church itself from the predations of

secular power, and he conceived the sculpture as a commemoration of this act of divine intervention and as a warning to future enemies of the church.

The conception of this grandiose monument drew upon three distinct traditions pertaining to what might be called angelic intervention in the affairs of the church, of which Michael is the protector saint. The most obvious is the tradition that associated St. Michael with the city of Rome, from which the Castel Sant'Angelo derives its name, and the monumental figure of the saint that had replaced the bronze image of the Emperor Hadrian atop his mausoleum after it was converted into the stronghold of the papacy. This substitution of angelic for

1. Castel Sant'Angelo, tomb of emperor Hadrian (A.D. 117-138), Rome
Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome

2. Peter Verschaffelt, *The Archangel Michael*, 1747, bronze
Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome

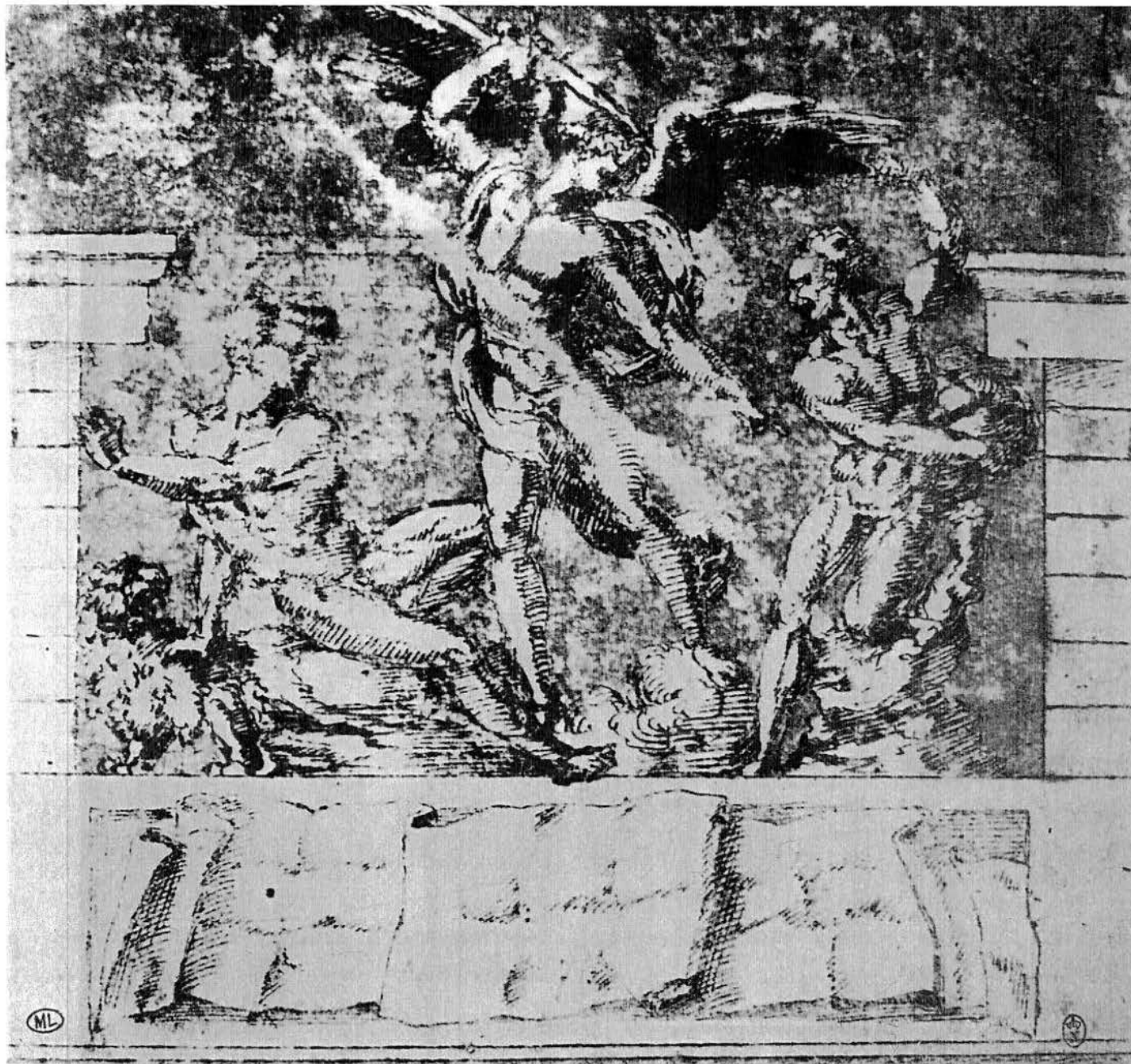
3. Baccio Bandinelli,
*The Archangel Michael with
 Two Deadly Sins*, c. 1530,
 drawing
 Musée du Louvre, Paris;
 photograph Réunion des Musées
 Nationaux inv. 92

imperial rule was accomplished by a famous salvific apparition of the archangel to Pope Gregory the Great in 590, according to *The Golden Legend*:

When Gregory had instituted the Greater Litany, and was praying devoutly that the people of Rome might be delivered of the plague, he saw an angel of the Lord standing upon the castle which was once called the Tomb of Hadrian; the angel was drying a

bloody sword, and putting it up into its sheath. From this sign Gregory understood that his prayers were heard, and erected a church at that same place in honor of the angel, whence the Castle has since been called the Fortress of the Holy Angel. This apparition is commemorated on May 8.⁵

The event was often included in depictions of the life of St. Gregory and the deeds of the archangel (figs. 4, 5).⁶ In recollection of



the event and of the penitential procession in which the city celebrated it, Nicholas III (1277–1280) erected a great marble sculpture of Michael atop the castle.⁷ The figure seemed to reenact the heavenly apparition of the angel with his sword in its scabbard, signaling the cessation of God's just ire at man's sins, as the rage of the plague was always interpreted. The angel over the city was replaced several times, including a figure with copper wings and sword commissioned by Nicholas V in 1453,⁸ before a "statua dorata dell'angelo tenente la spada fuori del fodero" ("gilded statue of the angel holding his sword out of the scabbard") was destroyed by an exploding powder keg in 1497.⁹ Bandinelli's project was evidently intended to succeed this figure, which seems to be reflected in

Raffaello da Montelupo's marble statue with bronze accoutrements, including the sword outside the scabbard, commissioned by Paul III in 1544 (fig. 6);¹⁰ this work stood on the Castello until it was replaced by Verschaffelt's monument. The pestilential deliverance was in fact twofold. The plague had also taken hold during the siege and there was danger from this quarter as well as from the Lutheran *landsknechts* who made up the bulk of the imperial forces.¹¹ The providential liberation in the night of 6–7 December 1527 thus also echoed the original Gregorian episode that occasioned the baptizing of Hadrian's tomb as the Castel Sant' Angelo.

Bandinelli clearly intended to reiterate and magnify this traditional image of the

4. Spinello Aretino,
*Apparition of St. Michael
to Gregory the Great*,
late 1300s, fresco
San Francesco, Arezzo;
photograph Alinari 1927





5. Anonymous, *Apparition of St. Michael to Gregory the Great*, c. 1530, fresco
Trinità dei Monti, Rome;
photograph Anderson 1271

divine surveillance of the city of the popes. But the project also alluded to what might be described as the original instance of angelic intervention on behalf of Christianity; that is, the liberation of St. Peter himself from the Mamertine prison, which permitted Christ's first vicar to fulfill his mission of establishing the church in Rome. The most familiar illustration of the liberation of St. Peter was that by Raphael in the Stanza d'Eliodoro in the Vatican, where the angel is shown breaking Peter's chain behind bars, and leading him out of the darkness (fig. 7). Clement's reference to this apostolic event in relation to his own liberation was made explicit in a medal attributed to Cellini, in which the two episodes are melded into one image (fig. 8); the medal was issued in two versions with different inscriptions, one referring to the pope himself, "Misit D(ominus) Angelum suum et liberavit me," the other to the city of Rome, "Misit Dominus angelum suum. Roma."¹²

The angel of the Gregorian legend was naturally shown scabbing his weapon, but Bandinelli gave the papal and urban angelic tradition an entirely new aspect: the benign angel, harbinger of God's beneficence, has been transformed into the heroic champion taking vengeance on God's enemies. In this sense the figure recalls the traditional image of Michael defeating the devil, in which role he is the official guardian of the Church (fig. 9). Bandinelli's Michael is again quite different, however: shown virtually nude, unheard of for an archangel, he arches and twists his powerful body, brandishing the sword in an extreme cut above, over, and across his head.

Michael as conqueror of the seven deadly sins has a dual resonance, notably with the mighty fiery angel of the tenth chapter of Revelation, who came down from heaven holding an open book and roaring like a lion, whereupon seven thunders opened their voices, and he announced that the end of time had come.¹³ Ciardi Dupré quite properly identified the left-hand figure as the sin of Ire or Fury, symbolized by the roaring lion at his side. The attribute of the figure at the right is indecipherable, but I think it can only be Vainglory or Pride. Ire and pride are the two sins most appropriate to the fury of the brutal sack of the city and the arrogant



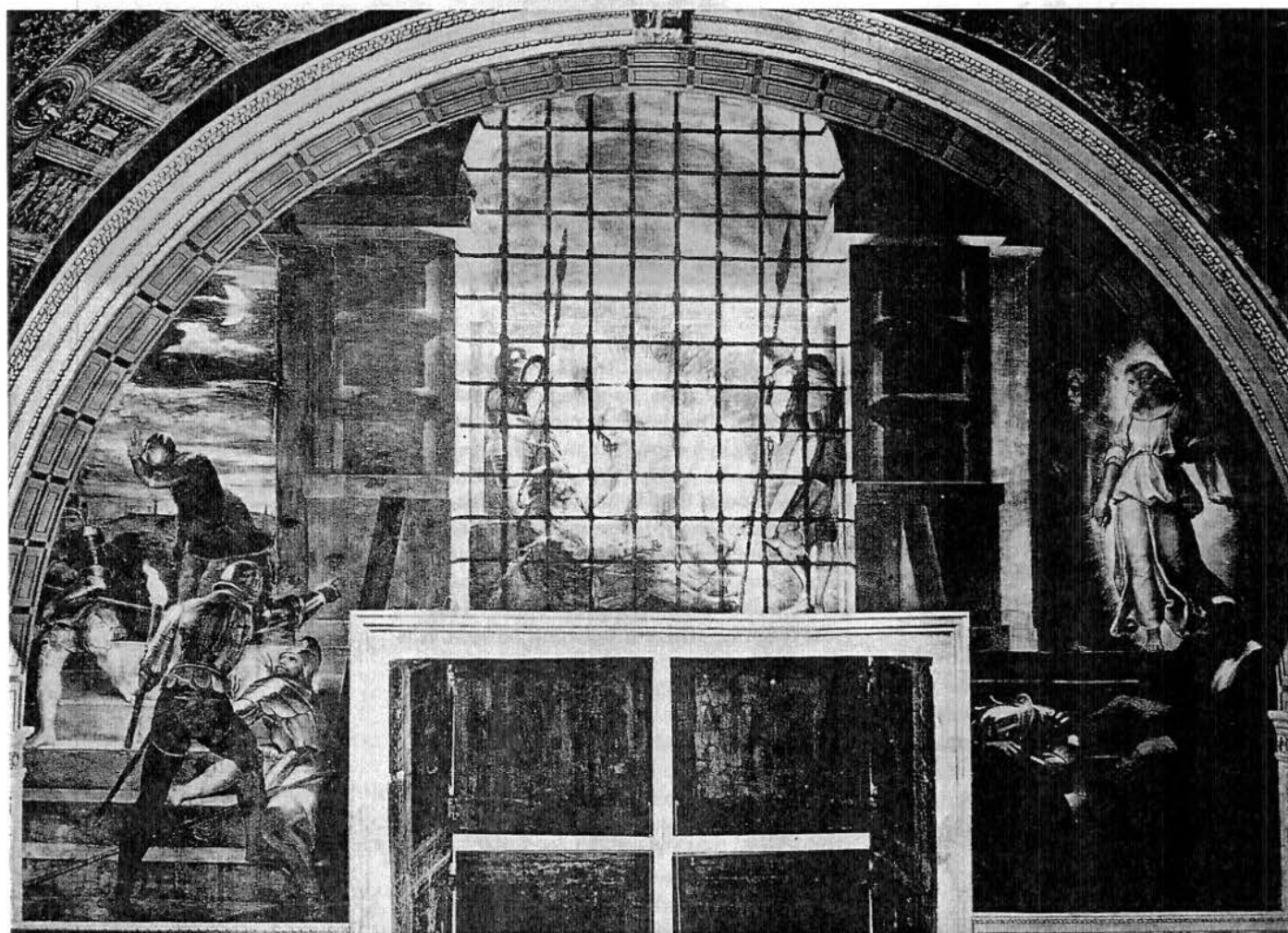
6. Raffaello da Montelupo,
The Archangel Michael,
1544, marble and bronze
Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome;
photograph Alinari 19964

ambition of the pope's enemies to usurp his authority. In this context the project takes on an unexpected resonance and portentous significance, which had been adumbrated in the great fresco cycle of enthroned popes that accompany the narrative scenes in the Sala di Constantino of the Vatican, commissioned originally in 1519 by Clement VII's cousin Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici), to illustrate by the example of the first Christian emperor the historical basis for the superiority of papal over secular authority. The portrayal of Gregory the Great had alluded to the same theme of righteous retribution (fig. 10). It has been shown that the allegory at Gregory's left, wielding a fasces of lightning and holding a book, must refer to the "Scourge of God" (the biblical plague of locusts), the pope's power and authority to

punish those who persist in sin, and to the same "mighty angel" of the apocalypse (Revelation 10:2), who descended from heaven carrying an open book, traditionally interpreted as the divinely ordained power of the pope to coerce wrongdoers with the papal bull.¹⁴

This conception of Michael as the avenging angel of the apocalypse may help to explain another remarkable feature of Bandinelli's design. It is noteworthy that Clement chose as the site for the new archangel not the Castello itself but the great Torrione that Antonio da Sangallo had built for Alexander VI (1492–1503), immediately in front of the Castello, to guard the passage to the Vatican from the Ponte Sant'Angelo (see fig. 5). This had been the crucial point of the papal defense during the siege;¹⁵ the

7. Raphael, *St. Michael Liberating St. Peter from the Mamertine Prison*, c. 1514, fresco
Stanza d'Eliodoro, Vatican, Rome; photograph Anderson 1107





composition seems to indicate that the sculptures were to be placed between two crenellations, so that the figures would be perceived as if on the verge of precipitating into the abyss below. Seen thus, Bandinelli's composition may indeed be understood as a sort of visual synecdoche for a much larger theme taken up around the same time by Domenico Beccafumi for an altarpiece representing St. Michael defeating Lucifer and the Rebel Angels, commissioned for the church of the Carmine in Siena. A first version of the picture (fig. 11) was abandoned before it was finished, replaced by a new composition that was installed in the church, where Vasari reports seeing it in the company of Baldassare Peruzzi, who, we know, left Siena for Rome in 1535 (fig. 12).¹⁶

The fame of these works procured for Domenico a commission to do a panel for the

Carmine of St. Michael subduing Lucifer. Being a man of ideas, he thought of a new treatment of this theme to prove his ability. Thus he began a shower of nude figures, representing Lucifer and his followers driven out of heaven, though they were rather confused owing to the labour he bestowed on them. The picture remained unfinished, and after Domenico's death it was taken to a room near the high altar at the top of the stairs in the great hospital, where it may still be seen. It is remarkable for some nude figures finely foreshortened. In the Carmine, where it was to have gone, another was placed representing God upon the clouds, surrounded by angels. In the middle is St. Michael in armour, pointing as he flies to Lucifer, who is driven to the centre of the earth amid burning walls, falling rocks and a flaming lake, with angels in various postures and nude figures swimming about and suffering torment, the whole done with such style and grace that the place

8. Attributed to Benvenuto Cellini, *St. Michael Liberating St. Peter from the Mamertine Prison*, 1527, Medal of Clement VII
From Philippus Bonannus, *Numismata pontificum romanorum*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1699), 1:184, 192, no. IX

9. Raphael, *St. Michael Killing the Dragon*, c. 1502/1503, oil on panel
Musée du Louvre, Paris; photograph Réunion des Musées Nationaux no. 65Eh2616, inv. 608

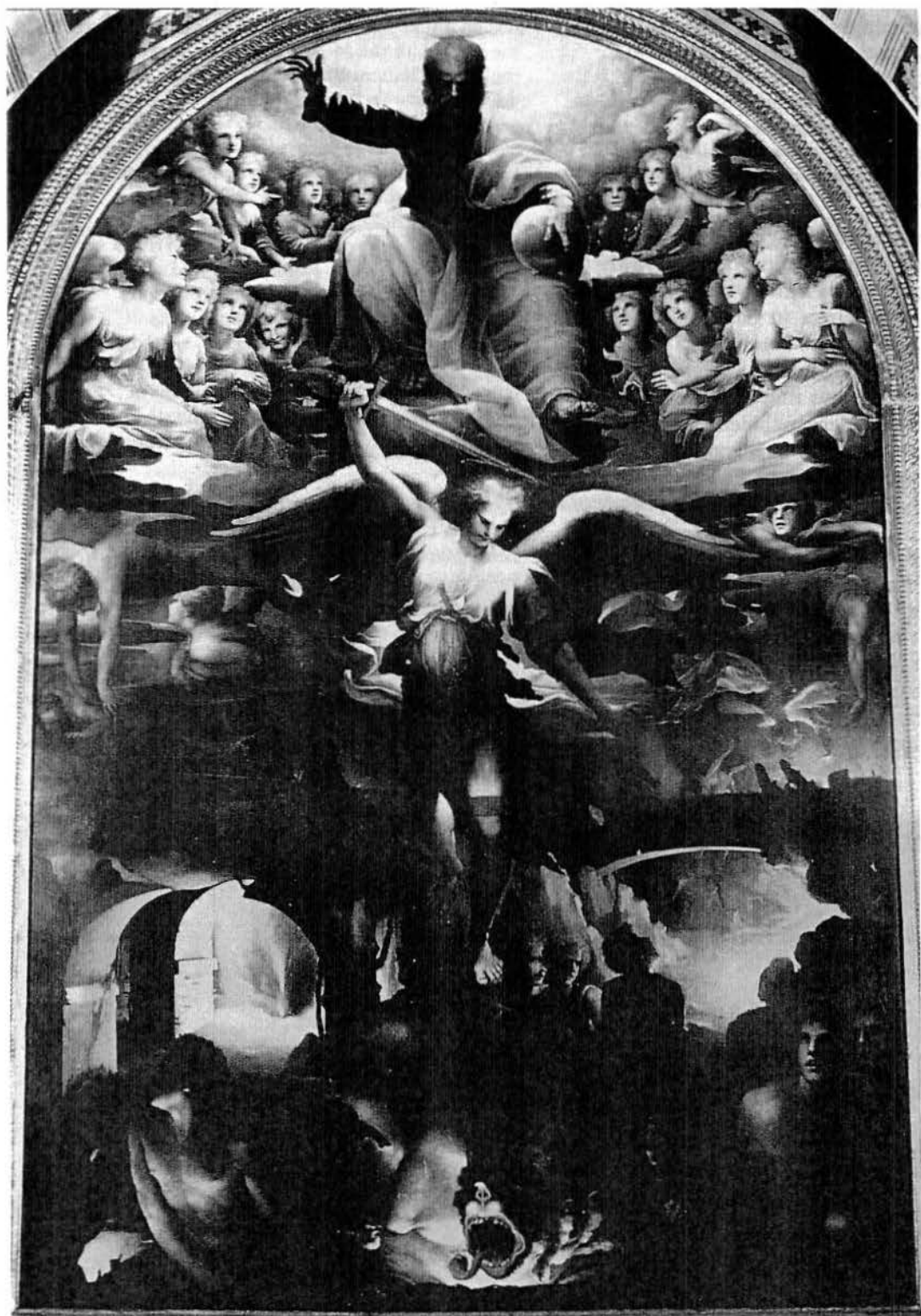
10. Giulio Romano,
Pope Gregory the Great,
1524, fresco
Sala di Constantino, Vatican, Rome;
photograph Alinari 7956





11. Domenico Beccafumi,
*St. Michael Defeating the
Seven Deadly Sins*,
c. 1524/1525, oil on panel
Pinacoteca, Siena; photograph Siena,
Soprintendenza 11170

12. Domenico Beccafumi,
*St. Michael Defeating the
Seven Deadly Sins*.
c. 1526/1530, oil on panel
San Nicolo al Carmine, Siena;
photograph Siena, Soprintendenza
30113



seems illuminated by the fire. Baldassare Peruzzi, the great Sienese painter, could never praise the work enough. One day, when I was passing through Siena, he took me to see it, and I was greatly struck by it, and also by the beauty and judgment displayed in the five little scenes of the predella, done in tempera.¹⁷

Beccafumi's archangel and the prominent pair of agonizing bodies flanked symmetrically down below closely resemble the corresponding figures in Bandinelli's design. The relationship to Bandinelli's project and the true significance of its subject are underscored by the fact that the predella of Beccafumi's altarpiece included a panel showing the episode of the angel appearing above Castel Sant'Angelo, where Michael performs the traditional act of scabbing his sword (fig. 13).

Beccafumi's picture provides some wholly unsuspected evidence for another unexecuted, but also seminally important project of this period, which elucidates his concept as well as Bandinelli's. In the 1568 edition of the *Vite*, Vasari gives the following account of the genesis of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel:

Just as Michelagnolo was proposing to begin the statues [of the Medici chapel in Florence], the Pope [Clement VII] was seized with a desire to have the walls of the Sistine Chapel painted with a Last Judgment, to show the powers of the art of design, and on the opposite wall he wanted to have Lucifer cast down from heaven with the rebel angels. Michelagnolo had made sketches for these ideas long before ... one of which was executed in the Trinità at Rome by a Sicilian painter who had served Michelagnolo many months and ground his colours. This work in the crossing of the church at the chapel of St. Gregory, although badly executed, possesses a certain wonderful power in the varied attitudes and groups of nudes raining from heaven, and converted into terrible devils on reaching the earth, a curious fancy.¹⁸

The sudden efflorescence of these related themes can hardly be coincidental. Beccafumi's work strongly evokes Vasari's account here of the Defeat of the Rebel Angels that Clement wanted Michelangelo to paint on the entrance wall of the Sistine chapel. The painting at Trinità dei Monti was destroyed in the eighteenth century, but the relevance of Beccafumi's composition gains support from the adoption in the eighteenth century



13. Domenico Beccafumi, *Apparition of St. Michael to Gregory the Great*, c. 1526/1530, oil on panel
The Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh

14. Domenico Corvi,
*St. Michael Killing the
Dragon*, c. 1750, oil on
canvas
Trinità dei Monti, Rome;
photograph ICCD E46624





15. Michelangelo, *The Last Judgment*, 1534–1541, fresco
Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome;
photograph Anderson 933



16. Michelangelo, *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple*, c. 1545, drawing
British Museum, London; photograph Gernsheim 37914

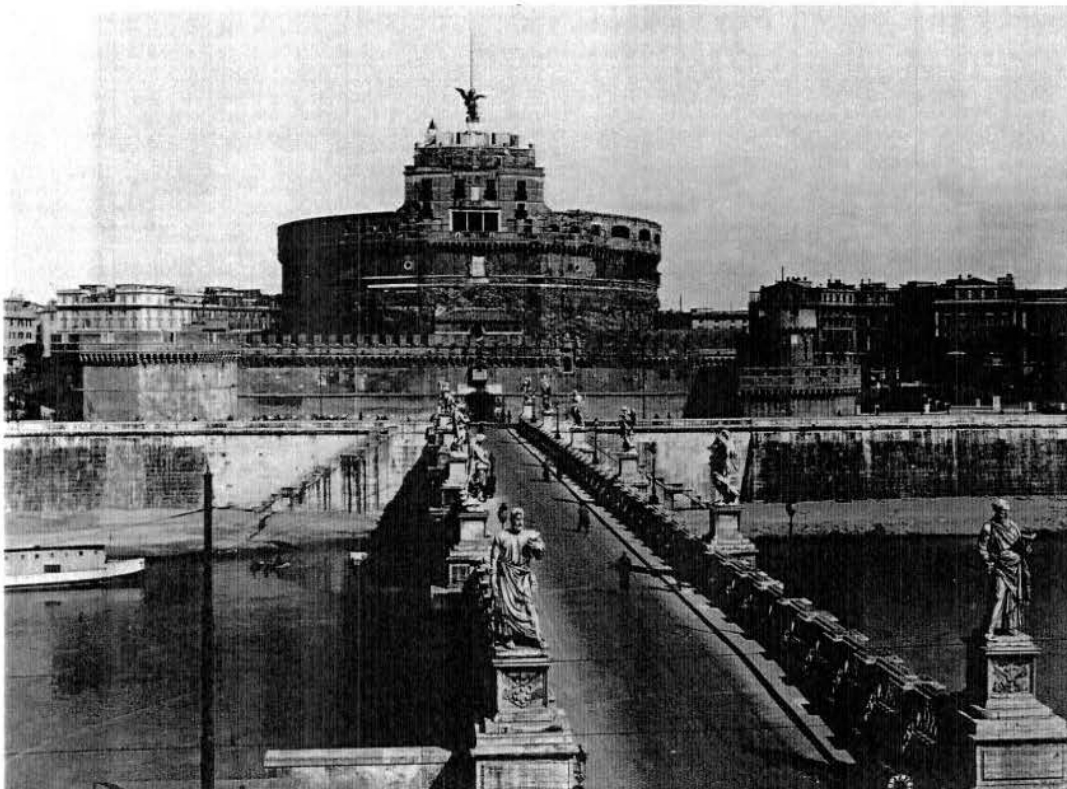
by Domenico Corvi of a similar pose for his figure of Michael defeating two demons in the altarpiece of a nearby chapel in the same church (fig. 14).¹⁹ Beccafumi's apocalyptic drama also foreshadows and elucidates certain features of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* itself (fig. 15). The marked similarity in pose and position between the Archangel and Christ suggests that St. Michael's appearance in the planned depiction of the Defeat of the Rebel Angels may have motivated his extraordinary and otherwise enigmatic omission from the *Last Judgment*.²⁰ Lucifer, after all, envied God's power, whereas the archangel embodied it: even Michael's name meant "who is like unto God," so that "both by his name and by his works he showed that what no other can do, the power of God can accomplish," and "when Lucifer sought to be equal to God," Michael "came forward, and cast the rebels out of heaven."²¹ By virtue of his God-like omnipotence and victories over sin, the devil, and the plague, Michael was the savior of Rome, protector of the pope, and patron of the universal church.²²

The frescoes facing across the Old and New Testament cycles on the walls and ceiling of the chapel would have illustrated the

equivalence of God's two chief agents in the perennial struggle against evil, beginning with Michael's prelapsarian victory over the devil and ending with Christ's victory over death at the end of time. The foreordained fate of the enemies of the church portrayed in the scene of the Defeat anticipated their ultimate fate on Judgment day. It may also be significant in this context that Bandinelli's project for Clement showed Michael defeating not the rebel angels but the seven deadly sins, who return in the fearsome debacle Michelangelo juxtaposed with the seven trumpeting angels of the Apocalypse. Vasari's description recalls his account of Bandinelli's project:

At the feet of Christ are the seven angels described by St. John, with the seven trumpets, the sound of which makes the hair rise, so terrible are they to see. There are two angels, each holding the Book of Life, and hard-by are the seven mortal sins in the shape of devils dragging souls to Hell, in fine attitudes and admirably foreshortened.²³

The underlying theme and compositional scheme evidently became a sort of leitmotif at the Vatican: striking analogies appear later



17. Lorenzo Lotti and Paolo Romano, *St. Peter and St. Paul*, 1531–1532 and c. 1460, marble. The entrance to Ponte Sant'Angelo and Castel Sant'Angelo is shown flanked by the statues.
Photograph Anderson 59

in a series of drawings by Michelangelo for an otherwise unrecorded depiction of *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple*, which has been dated to the 1550s and may have been intended for the entrance wall of the Pauline chapel (fig. 16).²⁴

We cannot be quite certain of the relative chronology of these works, but the coincidence of dates we do have is extraordinary: Bandinelli's project about 1530; Beccafumi's altarpiece certainly in existence by 1535 but normally dated some years earlier; the *Last Judgment* commissioned in the fall of 1533. Vasari's cryptic remark that Michelangelo had planned a Fall of the Angels "molti anni innanzi" suggests that the idea may have originated in the project for the Sistine Chapel. But it is a sobering thought that the visitor to the holy city would first have encountered Bandinelli's powerful conflation of the Archangel Michael as protector of Rome, as victor over Lucifer and his cohorts, and as victor over the seven deadly sins. The work's threefold political function was explicitly defined by Vasari himself, for whom the angel represented "the custodian

of the castle, who had released him from prison," and the figures of the seven mortal sins were "to show that with the help of the angel the Pope had overcome all his impious enemies" (see p. 309 above).

Perhaps most intriguing is the possibility that Clement VII's projects may have been coordinated. Bandinelli's huge bronze group formed part of a major reorganization of the Ponte Sant'Angelo itself, which included placing at its entrance two monumental statues of Saints Peter and Paul bearing inscriptions that testify to a wholly new conception of the entrance to the Holy City as a kind of topological metaphor for the eschatology of salvation (figs. 17, 18). According to Vasari:

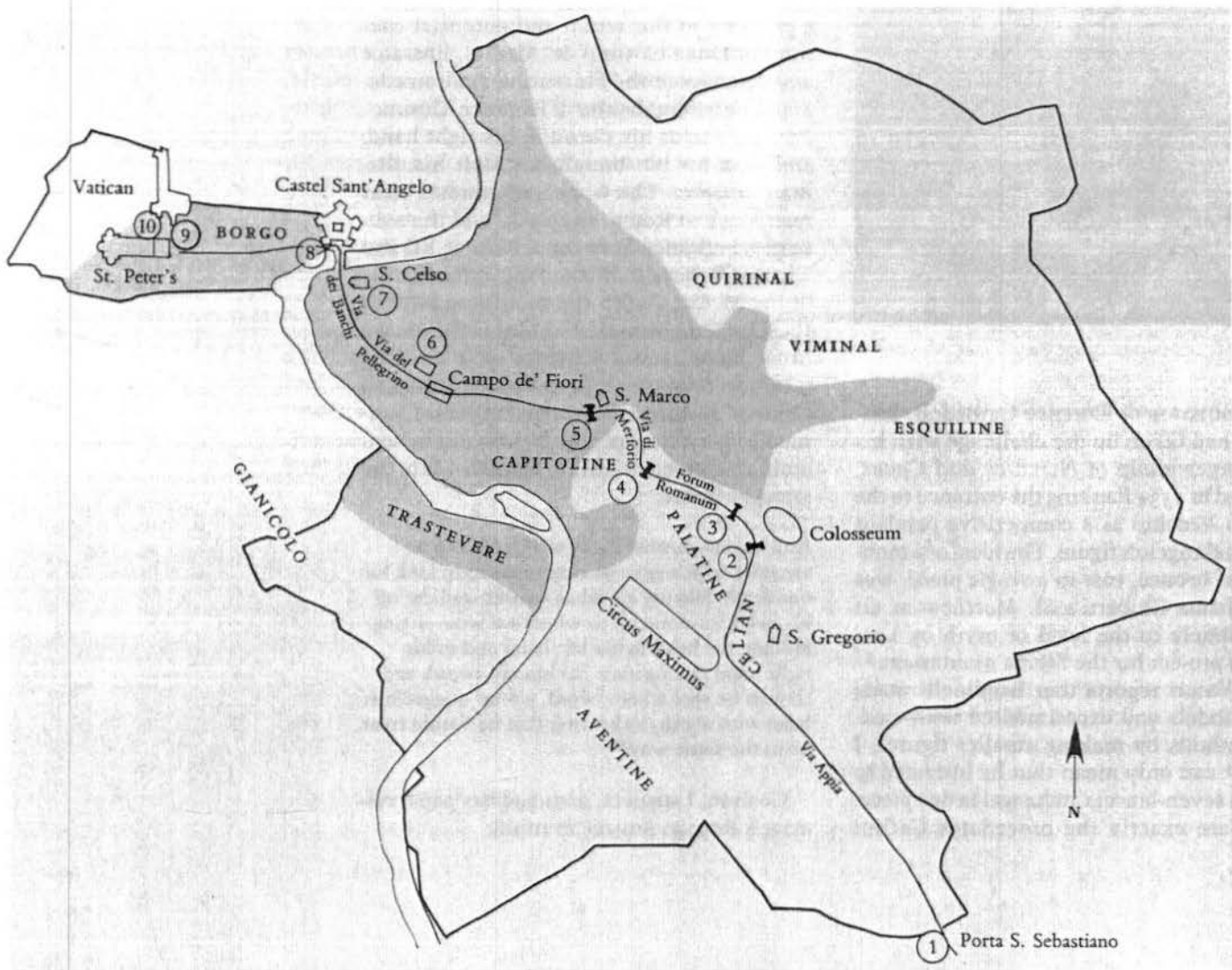
The Pope had observed that during the fighting at the Castle of St. Angelo two marble chapels at the end of the bridge had proved harmful, because they had been occupied by arquebusiers who from their vantage ground killed all who exposed themselves on the walls. He resolved to remove the chapels and set up two marble statues on the site on two pedestals. One was a St. Paul, by Paolo

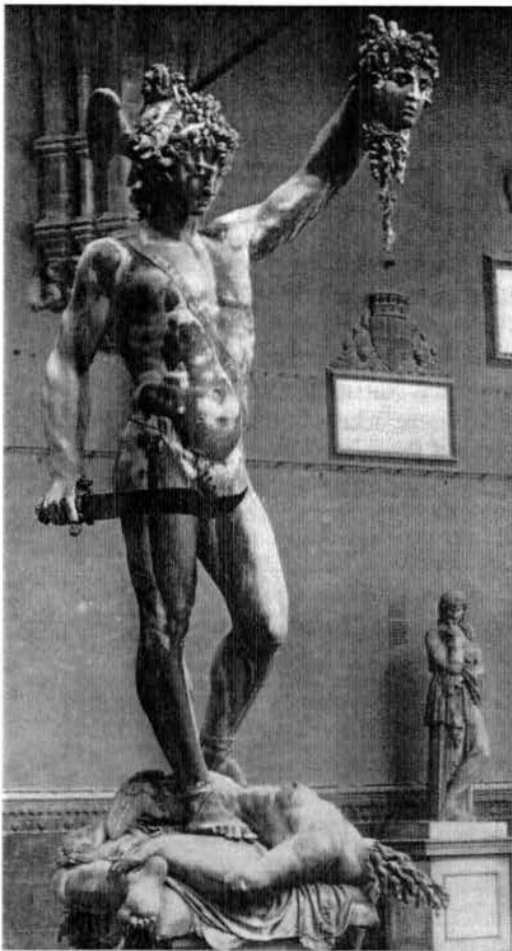
Romano, spoken of elsewhere, the other a St. Peter, was given to Lorenzo, who acquitted himself well but did not surpass his rival.²⁵

Under St. Peter is written: "HINC HUMILIBUS VENIA" ("Here forgiveness to the humble"); under St. Paul: "HINC RETRIBUTIO SUPERBIS" ("Here retribution to the prideful"). With Bandinelli's St. Michael appearing in his vengeful mode on the bastion beyond, proleptic of the two scenes that would await the visitor in the Sistine Chapel, the passage to the Holy City and the sanctuary of the popes became a veritable pilgrimage of penitence, recapitulating the history of salvation from the beginning to the end of time.

Finally, there is another, material sense in which Bandinelli's project is also proleptic, for unless I am mistaken, it took up a technical theme that had sounded like a kind of *basso profundo* through the history of Italian sculpture since the early Renaissance. I refer to the challenge of executing large and complex works without piecing them together.²⁶ The marble sculpture carved *ex uno lapide* (the phrase used by Pliny in praise of such outstanding examples of bravura, both manual and intellectual) had achieved almost mystical stature since Michelangelo succeeded, where others had failed, in carving the *David* from a gigantic block originally quarried in 1466 for a figure to be placed

18. Plan showing route of Charles V's entry into Rome, 1536
From André Chastel, *The Sack of Rome, 1527* (Princeton, N.J., 1977), 211





19. Benvenuto Cellini, *Perseus*, 1545, bronze
Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence;
photograph Brogi 3087

atop a buttress of Florence Cathedral. Bandinelli had taken up the challenge with his even larger group of *Hercules and Cacus*, installed in 1534 flanking the entrance to the Palazzo Vecchio as a competitive pendant to Michelangelo's figure. The ideal of a monumental bronze, cast in a single piece, was raised from Ghiberti's *St. Matthew* at Or San Michele to the level of myth by Leonardo's project for the Sforza monument.²⁷ When Vasari reports that Bandinelli made large models and experimented with casting methods by making smaller figures, I think it can only mean that he intended to cast his seven-braccia archangel in one piece. These are exactly the procedures Cellini

adopted fifteen years later, when, as he reports in his autobiography, he made his famous bust of Duke Cosimo as an experiment for the one-piece casting of his five-braccia-high figure of *Perseus*²⁸—"the biggest single-piece bronze the world had known," as it has neatly been described by Michael Cole (fig. 19).²⁹ Cellini had of course lived through the Sack of Rome in Castel Sant' Angelo and was there in the city while the older sculptor—his bitter and invidious rival—was planning his archangel, so Cellini certainly knew all about the project. When they are juxtaposed, it seems clear that there is more than a family resemblance between these two savior-protector-avenger figures, one pagan and secular, the other Christian and ecclesiastical. The *Perseus* was endowed with an unequivocal moral and political message, as a warning to the actual and potential enemies of Duke Cosimo de' Medici, liberator and defender of the Florentine Andromeda. Standing before the city of Florence, Cosimo-*Perseus* wields his sword in his right hand, and with his left brandishes aloft his ultimate weapon. The work incorporates clear references to Rome, the Sack, and the subsequent alliance between Clement VII and Charles V that established the dynastic rule of the Medici—with the menacing force of the Emperor himself.³⁰ Indeed, the image must have served Cosimo as a chilling reminder to his republican opponents of Dio Cassius' recollection of the Emperor Commodus' gory "beaux gestes" toward the senators assembled to admire his prowess in the arena at Rome:

And here is another thing that he did to us senators which gave us every reason to look for our death. Having killed an ostrich and cut off his head, he came up to where we were sitting, holding the head in his left hand and in his right hand raising aloft his bloody sword; and though he spoke not a word, yet he wagged his head with a grin, indicating that he would treat us in the same way.³¹

Cosimo, I suspect, also had his papal relative's Roman project in mind.

NOTES

In memory of Bruno Contardi (1953–2000): admired scholar, good friend, inventor, and guiding spirit of *L'angelo e la città*

1. *L'angelo e la città*, 2 vols., 1: eds. Bruno Contardi and Marica Mercalli; 2: ed. Giovanna Curcio [exh. cat., Castel Sant'Angelo] (Rome, 1987).
2. Maria Grazia Ciardi Duprè, "Per la cronologia di Baccio Bandinelli, fino al 1540," *Commentari* 17 (1966), 159–161. Subsequent discussions of the project include Rome 1987, 1:112, 120; André Chastel, *The Sack of Rome* (Princeton, N.J., 1977), 192–193; Kathleen Weil-Garris, "On Pedestals: Michelangelo's *David*, Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus* and the Sculpture of the Piazza della Signoria," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 20 (1983), 404–405; Rudolph Preimesberger, "Die Inschriften der Engelsbrücke," in Jörg Traeger, *Kunst in Hauptwerken: Von der Akropolis zu Goya: Vortragsreihe der Universität Regensburg* (Regensburg, 1988), 204–226, who aptly describes the political and eschatological significance of the project.
3. Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, ed. William Gaunt, 4 vols. (London and New York, 1963), 3:197; Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, eds. Rosanna Bettarini and Paola Barocchi, 6 vols. (ongoing) (Florence, 1966–), 5, Testo:250–251:

se n'andò a stare a Lucca. Quivi s'intrattenne fino a tanto che Carlo V imperadore venne a ricevere la corona in Bologna; dipoi fattosi vedere al Papa, se n'andò seco a Roma, dove ebbe al solito le stanze in Belvedere.

Dimorando quivi Baccio, pensò Sua Santità di soddisfare a un voto, il quale aveva fatto mentre che stette rinchiuso in Castel Sant' Agnolo. Il voto fu di porre sopra la fine del torrione tondo di marmo, che è a fronte al ponte di Castello, sette figure grandi di bronzo di braccia sei l'una, tutte a giacere in diversi atti, come cinte da un Angelo, il quale voleva che posasse nel mezzo di quel torrione sopra una colonna di mischio, et egli gusse di bronzo con la spada in mano. Per questa figura dell'Angelo intendeva l'angelo Michele, custode e guardia del Castello, il quale col suo favore et aiuto l'aveva liberato / e tratto di quella prigione, e per le sette figure a giacere poste significava i sette peccati mortali, volendo dire che con l'aiuto dell'Angelo vincitore aveva superati e gittati per terra i suoi nimici, uomini scelerati et empì, i quali si rappresentavano in quell sette figure de'sette peccati mortali. Per questa opera fu fatto fare da Sua Santità un modell, il quale essendole piaciuto, ordinò che Baccio cominciasse a fare le figure di terra grande quanto avevano a essere, per gittarle poi di bronzo. Cominciò Baccio e finì in una di quelle stanza di Belvedere una di quelle figure di terra, la quale fu molto lodata. Insieme ancora, per passarsi tempo e per vedere come gli doveva riuscire il getto, fece molte figurine alte

due terzi e tonde, come Ercoli, Venere, Aplooini, Lede et altre sue fantasie; e fattele gittar di bronzo a maestro Iacopo della Barba fiorentino, riuscirono ottimamente. Dipoi le donò a Sua Santità et a molti signori: delle quali orane sono alcune nello scrittoio del duca Cosimo, fra un numero di più di cento antiche, tutte rare, e d'altre moderne.

4. The history and art-historical repercussions of the Sack of Rome have been explored with magisterial scope and acumen in Chastel 1977.
5. Jacobus da Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger (New York, 1969), 580.
6. A valuable survey will be found in Rome 1987, 1.
7. Rome 1987, 1:96–97: "et ipse Angelus cum gladio in vagina sculptus in lapide mirae magnitudinis" ("and the angel itself with its sword in the scabbard sculpted in a stone of amazing size").
8. Cesare D'Onofrio, *Castel S. Angelo e Borgo tra Roma e Papato* (Rome, 1978), 168: "agnuolo nuovo messo in castello," with "l'ale e le penne e spada . . . tutti de rame."
9. Chastel 1977, 279 n. 44; D'Onofrio 1978, 168–170.
10. For the payments to Montelupo, whose angel was later restored by Bernini, see D'Onofrio 1978, 280, 305, 314, 322.
11. On the plague during the siege, see Cesare D'Onofrio, *Roma val bene un'abiura* (Rome, 1976), 233–258.
12. On the two liberations and the medal, see Chastel 1977, 190–191.
13. Revelation 10:1–6.
14. Rolf Quednau, *Die Sala di Costantino im vatikanischen Palast. Zur Dekoration der beiden Medici-Päpste Leo X. und Clemens VII.* (Hildesheim and New York, 1979), 305–308, citing Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia ovvero descrizione di diverse imagini cavate dall'antichità, et di propria inventione* (Rome, 1603), 165:

Il fulmine è segno del castigo di coloro, che ostinatamente perseuerano nel peccato, credendosi alla fine della vita ageuolmente impetrare da Dio perdono. Significa etiandio il fullmine la caduta d'alcuni, che per vie torte in ingiuste sono ad altissimi gradi della gloria peruenuti, oue quando più superbamente siedono non altrimenti, che folgore percipitosi, cascano nelle miserie, & climità. Per le locuste, che riempiono l'aere, & la terra s'intende l'vniuersal castigo, che Iddio manda alle volte sopra i popoli, accendendosi l'istoria de flagelli d'Egitto, mandati per cagione della pertinacia, & ostinata voglia del Faraone.

And Nicolas de Lyra, *Biblia sacra*, 6 vols. (Venice, 1588), V:255D: "'Et vidi alium angelum fortem . . . et iris in capite eius.' Moraliter autem potest exponi de summo pontifice bono, qui imperiales pileo coronatur. & dicitur angelus fortis propter magnitudinem potestatis. & descendens de coelo, quia datur a Deo.

'Et habebat in manu sua libellum apertum.' Quia potestatem coercendi malos per bullam" ("And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven ... and a rainbow was on his head," may be explained morally as the good pope crowned with the imperial cap, said to be a strong angel because of the magnitude of his power, descending from heaven because sent by God. 'And he had in his hand a little book open,' because of his power to punish evildoers with his bulls").

15. Also the weakest, because the attackers were able to shoot with impunity from the chapels on the other side of the bridge, shown in figure 5, which Clement then replaced by the statues of Peter and Paul discussed below.

16. See Piero Torriti, *Beccafumi* (Milan, 1998), 126-143; Pascale Dubus, *Domenico Beccafumi* (Paris, 1999), 136-140.

17. Vasari/Gaunt 1963, 3:142-143; Vasari/Bettarini and Barocchi 1966-7, 5, Testo:167-168:

Dopo, essendo allogata a Domenico per la fama di queste opere una tavola che dovea porsi nel Carmine, nella quale aveva a far un San Michele che uccidesse Lucifero, egli andò, come capriccioso, pensando a una nouva invenzione per mostrare la virtù et i bei concetti dell'animo suo. E così, per figurar Lucifero co' suoi seguaci cacciati per la superbia dal cielo nel più profondo a basso, cominciò una pioggia d'ignudi molto bella, ancora che per esservi molto affaticato dentro, ella paresse anzi confusa che no. Questa tavola, essendo rimasa imperfetta, fu portata dopo la morte di Domenico nello Spedale grande, salendo una scala che è vicina / all'altare maggiore, dove ancora si vede con maraviglia, per certi scorti d'ignudi bellissimi; e nel Carmine, dove dovea questa esser collocata, ne fu posta un'altra, nella qual è finto nel più alto un Dio Padre con molti Angeli intorno, sopra le nuvole, con bellissima grazia; e nel mezzo della tavola è l'angelo Michele armato, che volando mostra aver posto nel centro della terra Lucifero, dove sono muraglie che ardono, antri rovinati et un lago di fuoco, con Angeli in varie attitudini et anime nude, che in diversi atti nuotano e si cruciano in quel fuoco: il che tutto è fatto con tanto bella grazia e maniera, che pare che quell'opera maravigliosa, in quelle tenebre scure, sia lumeggiata da quel fuoco; onde è tenuta opera rara: e Baldassarri Petrucci sanese, pittor eccellente, non si poteva saziare di lodarla: et un giorno che io la vidi seco scoperta, passando per Siena, ne restai marvegliato, sì come feci ancora di cinque storielle che sono nella predella, fatte a tempera con bella e giudiziosa maniera.

18. Vasari/Gaunt (1963), 4:138-139; Giorgio Vasari, *La vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, ed. Paola Barocchi, 5 vols. (Milan, 1962-1972), 1:70:

Per che volendo Michelagnolo far porre in opera le statue, in questo tempo al Papa venne in animo di volerlo appresso di sé, avendo desiderio di fare le

facciate della cappella di Sisto, dove egli aveva dipinto la volta a Giulio II suo nipote; nelle quali facciate voleva Clemente che nella principale, dove è l'altare, vi si dipignessi il Giudizio universale, acciò potessi mostrare in quella storia tutto quello che l'arte del disegno poteva fare; e nell'altra dirimpetto sopra la porta principale gli aveva ordinato che vi facessi quando per la sua superbia Lucifero fu dal cielo cacciato e precipitati insieme nel centro dello inferno tutti quegli angeli che peccarono con lui. Delle quali invenzioni molti anni innanzi s'è trovato che aveva fatto schizzi Michelagnolo e varii disegni, un de' quali poi fu posto in opera nella chiesa della Trinità di Roma da un pittore ciciliano, il quale stette molti mesi con Michelagnolo a servirlo e macinar colori. Questa opera è nella croce della chiesa alla cappella di San Gregorio, dipinta a fresco, che, ancora che sia mal condotta, si vede un certo che di terribile e di vario nelle attitudini e groppi di quegli ignudi che piovono dal cielo e de' cascanti nel centro della terra, conversi in diverse forme di diavoli molto spaventate e bizzarre, et è certo capricciosa fantasia.

19. Filippo Titi, *Studio di pittura, scoltura, et architettura nelle chiese di Roma (1674-1763)*, eds. Bruno Contardi and Serena Romano (Florence, 1987), 1:198; 2, ill:1346.

20. Leo Steinberg, "Who's Who in Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*: A Chronology of the Picture's Reluctant Self-Revelation," *The Art Bulletin* 74 (1992), 365 n. 39.

21. Voragine 1969, 578, 583. Voragine quotes from a Homily of Gregory the Great, which is also used in the Lessons of the Divine Office for the feast of St. Michael, September 29.

22. On Michael and his patronage, see Andrew A. Bialas, *The Patronage of Saint Michael the Archangel* (Chicago, 1954); and especially for Rome and the papacy, see Rome 1987, 1:94-118; Louise Rice, *The Altars and Altarpieces of New St. Peter's. Outfitting the Basilica, 1621-1666* (Cambridge, 1997), 345, index.

23. Vasari/Gaunt 1963, 4:142; Vasari/Barocchi 1962-1972, 1:77:

Sono sotto i piedi di Cristo i sette angeli scritti da san Giovanni Evangelista, con le sette trombe, che sonando a sentenza fanno arricciare i capelli a chi gli guarda per la terribilità che essi mostrano nel viso, e fra gli altri vi son due angeli che ciascuno ha il libro delle vite in mano; et appresso, non senza bellissima considerazione, si veggon i sette peccati mortali da una banda combattere in forma di diavoli e tirar giù allo inferno l'anime che volano al cielo con attitudini bellissime e scorti molto mirabili.

24. Charles de Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, 5 vols. (Princeton, N.J., 1943-1960), 5:77-78, 147, 211-213.

25. Vasari/Gaunt 1963, 2:291. Vasari/Bettarini and Barocchi 1966, 4, Testo:307-308:

Perciò che avendo il Papa veduto, quando si combatté Castello Santo Agnolo, che due cappellette di marmo che erano all'entrare del ponte avevano fatto danno—perché standovi dentro alcuni soldati achibugieri amazzavano chiunche s'affacciava alle mura, e con troppo danno, stando essi al sicuro, levavano le difese—, si risolvé Sua Santità levare le dette cappelle, e ne'luoghi loro mettere sopra due basamenti due statue di marmo. E così fatto mettere su il San Paulo di Paulo Rmano, del quale se è in altro luogo ragionato, fu data a fare l'altra, cioè un San Pietro, a Lorenzetto, il quale si portò assai bene, ma non passò già quella di Paulo Romano; le quali due statue furono poste, e si veggiono oggi all'entrata del ponte.

26. On this theme see Irving Lavin "Ex Uno Lapide: The Renaissance Sculptor's Tour de Force," in *Il cortile delle statue. Der Statuenhof des Belvedere im Vatikan. Akten des internationalen Kongresses zu Ehren von Richard Krautheimer, Rom, 21.-23. Okt. 1992*, eds. Matthias Winner, Bernard Andreae, and Carlo Pietrangeli (Mainz, 1998), 191-210. The carving of large, multiforme, monolithic groups became an important arena of professional competition among sculptors after the rediscovery in 1506 of the *Laocoön*, of which Bandinelli made a copy (both works were actually pieced together; Lavin 1998, 198). Wolfgang Liebenwein in a recent paper perspicaciously observes and discusses the relevance of the *Laocoön* to Bandinelli's St. Michael composition, and to Clement VII's plans for the Sistine chapel: Wolfgang Liebenwein, "Clemens VII. und der 'Laokoon,'" in *Opere e giorni. Studi su mille anni di arte europea dedicati a Max Seidel*, eds. Klaus Bergoldt and Giorgio Bonsanti (Venice, 2001), 465-478. Although Liebenwein is not concerned with technique, the relationship suggests that the St. Michael project was a "brazen" emulation of the ancient work in this respect as well.

27. The 1419 contract between Ghiberti and the Arte del Cambio gave him discretion to cast the St. Matthew in one piece or the head separately: Richard Krautheimer in collaboration with Trude Krautheimer-Hess, *Lorenzo Ghiberti*, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J., 1970), 1:86; 2:406. On Leonardo's horse: Diane Cole Ahl, ed., *Leonardo da Vinci's Sforza Monument Horse. The Art and the Engineering* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1995). After this essay was completed, Peta Motture kindly called my attention to what seems to me a remarkable sequel in the (distinctly Florentine) "battle of the bronzes," a life-size group of *Pluto and Proserpine* by Raffaello Peri, c. 1565, recently rediscovered, and now on loan from The National Trust to the Victoria and Albert Museum (Antonia Boström, "The Florentine Sculptor Raffaello Peri," *The Burlington Magazine* 140 [1998], 263-264, with earlier bibliography). This sculpture, described in a contemporary document as "due statue di bronzo gettate insieme" (the *Cerberus*

must have been cast separately), was in the Palazzo Salviati in Florence until the end of the nineteenth century, and must in turn have challenged Bernini in his famous marble group in the Villa Borghese, as noted in Antonia Boström, "A Bronze Group of the Rape of Proserpina at Cliveden House in Buckinghamshire," *The Burlington Magazine* 132 (1990), 829-840. I, followed by others, had related Bernini's sculpture to what now is revealed to be a small bronze reduction, including *Cerberus*, of Peri's monumental work—Irving Lavin, "Bozzetti and Modelli. Notes on Sculptural Procedure from the Early Renaissance through Bernini," in *Stil und Überlieferung in der Kunst des Abendlandes. Akten des 21. internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte in Bonn 1964*, 4 vols. (Berlin, 1967), 3:102; subsequent bibliography in Matthias Winner, "Ratto di Proserpine," in *Bernini scultore. La nascita del Barocco in Casa Borghese*, eds. Anna Coliva and Sebastian Schütze [exh. cat., Galleria Borghese, Rome] (Rome, 1998), 202 n. 24.

28. Benvenuto Cellini, *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, Robert H. Cust, trans., 2 vols. (London, 1910), 2:279-280: "And the first work that I cast in bronze was that large head, the portrait of the Lord Excellency, which I had fashioned in clay in the Goldsmith's Shop, whilst I had that malady in my back. This was a work which pleased me, and I did it for no other reason except to experiment in the clays for bronze casting." Benvenuto Cellini, *Opere di Benvenuto Cellini*, ed. Giuseppe Guido Ferrero (Turin, 1971), 494: "E la prima opera che io gittai di bronzo fu quella testa grande, ritratto di Sua Eccellenza, che io avevo fatta di terra nell'oreficerie, mentre io avevo male alle stiene. Questa fu un'opera che piacque e io non la feci per altra causa se non per fare sperienza delle terre da gittare il bronzo."

29. Michael Cole, "Cellini's Blood," *The Art Bulletin* 81 (June 1999), 214-235.

30. On the Medicean political symbolism of the *Perseus*, see Wolfgang Braunsfels, *Benvenuto Cellini. Perseus und Medusa* (Stuttgart, 1961), 3-7, and especially Corinne Mandel, "Perseus and the Medici," *Storia dell'arte* 87 (1996), 168-187, with references to the intervening literature. One wonders whether Cellini's conception might in turn have engendered the other familiar traditions of heroic victors displaying the repugnant heads of defeated monsters: David with the head of Goliath, Judith with the head of Holofernes.

31. Dio Cassius, *Dio's Roman History*, ed. Earnest Cary, 9 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1982), 9:113-114. For further discussion of the metaphorical context of Cellini's *Perseus* and the *Medusa*, see Irving Lavin, "Bernini's Bust of the Medusa: An Awful Pun," in *Docere delectare movere. Affetti, devozione e retorica nel linguaggio artistico del primo barocco romano. Atti del convegno* (Rome, 1998), 155-174.

