

Cybele. An anachronism in
**Vasari's Biography
of Michelangelo**
and its reasons

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(Part II)

IV - Vasari's Interpretation and Mariette's *Globe*

Modern literature views Vasari's neoimperial interpretation of the 1505 project with some skepticism.¹ Such an interpretation is supported by three kinds of evidence. First, despite the fact that the *prisoners* could change their meaning after 1513, there is at least one drawing by Michelangelo which proves that the 1505 project had an explicit imperial and military character: in one of the sketches for the *prigioni*, housed in Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Parker 297 *recto*, there are a clearly visible helmet and a body armor *all'Antica*, behind the figure, which show that around 1505-1510, (the meaning of the *prisoners* could change after 1513²), "the captives signify the military triumphs of the Pope, like those designed by Leonardo da Vinci for the monument to the Milanese Gian Giacomo Trivulzio."³ / **Fig. 17** /

Second, according to Lastricati, this project was based on the Septizonium, which during the Renaissance was considered as Septimium Severus' mausoleum. Moreover, some numismatic representations of the *consecratio*, which were mistakenly considered as models of imperial mausolea, would have strongly appealed both to Pope Julius and to Michelangelo, as Frazer has

¹ After Justi (1900/1922), only Lindahl "Michelangelo erster Entwurf" (1963), Frazer, "A Numismatic Source" (1975) and Elhanan Motzkin followed (partially) Vasari's interpretation. According to Motzkin ("Michelangelo's *Slaves* in the Louvre. *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 120, 1487 (1992), p. 208), Vasari's attempt to combine the *prisoners* and the *virtues*: "is unanimously rejected by modern art historians".

² According to Motzkin ("Michelangelo' *Slaves*" (1992), p. 213), after 1513, "the *Slaves* have taken on a new meaning."

³ Hartt, *Michelangelo drawings*, New York: Abrams, 1971, p. 84, Cat. n. 89, dated by the author 1511-1513. In his *Corpus dei Disegni di Michelangelo*, Novara, 1975, vol. I, Cat. 157r., p. 117, Charles De Tolnay remarked: "una corazza, come emblema, indica che è un soldato fatto prigioniero". There is another sheet, kept in Firenze, Casa Buonarroti 42 F r., which shows a study for the *prigioni* and a study for a body armor. This drawing was first published by De Tolnay in *Michelangelo*, vol. IV (1954/70), n. 133. In his *Corpus*, I, Cat. 59 *recto*, p. 66, De Tolnay wrote: "schizzo di una figura nuda: probabilmente un prigioniero per la Tomba di Giulio II; schizzi di corazze. ... schiavo sulla destra, nella versione ... di 1513-1516 (ma il motivo esisteva già nel progetto del 1505)."

pointed out.⁴ Third, Julius II was deemed to have the soul of an Emperor, a *Caesareus animus*, as stated in a letter of congratulations upon his election.⁵ He identified himself and was identified as a new *Imperator*, a "Julius the Second" or an "Alter Caesar".⁶ He was hailed a "second Julius Cesar", for instance, by one of his preachers, Cristoforo Marcello, during the 1511 All Saints' Day sermon. Erasmus's first verses of his "Epigram Against Julius II", probably from the same year, bear witness to the popularity of this epithet: "Ut examussim quadrat in Iulii / Nomen secundi. Plane es alter Iulius." In fact, recollecting his stay in Rome, in 1510, Luther wrote in 1538 that the flatterers called the pope "instead of (...) *summus Pontifex*, as formerly, Prince and *Pontifex maximus*, names which in olden times were borne by the heathen Roman emperors, like Julius, Nero, etc. They no longer say, 'The Pope is in Rome', but *Princeps est ad urbem*." Similarly, Julius II had already been compared by Raffaele Maffei to Suetonius' Tiberius.⁷ In the year of Luther's arrival in Rome, Julius II's image as *Caesar* and as a new Mars was made most explicit in Giovanni Antonio Flaminio's panegyrics.⁸

More than just a literary construct, this image was embedded in Julius' ceremonial life. It had been meticulously built up by Paris de Grassi, who organized for example the apparatus for the triumphal entry in Bologna, in November 11, 1506. For this celebration, thirteen triumphal arches were raised and three thousands ducats were struck which were distributed to the crowd with imperial prodigality in the form of gold and silver coins. The obverse of those coins depicts Julius's

⁴ For the Septizonium, see Lindahl, "Michelangelos erster Entwurf", p. 73-77. For the imperial *consecratio* represented on Roman coins and its influence on the structure of Michelangelo's project, see Frazer, "A numismatic source" (1977), p. 77.

⁵ Apud Ludwig Pastor, *Geschichte der Paepste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters* (1895), Engl. transl., 1977, Vol. 6, p. 212. See also Nicole Dacos, "Arte Italiana e arte Antica". *Storia dell'arte italiana*, Part I, Vol. III. Turin: Einaudi, 1979, 30-39, p. 30: "Giulio II (...), che si considera come un sovrano temporale piú che spirituale, vuole essere paragonato a un imperatore romano."

⁶ Fascinated by hieroglyphic writing, Bramante, according to Vasari, planned to decorate the Belvedere with the inscription *Julio II Pont. Maximo*: "e aveva fatto fare una testa in profilo di Giulio Cesare, e con due archi un ponte che diceva: *Julio II Pont.*, ed una aguglia del circolo Massimo per *Max*." Quoted by E.H. Gombrich, "Hypnerotomachiana", in *JWCI*, XIV (1951), p. 120-125 and *Symbolic Images. Studies of Art of the Renaissance*, London, 1972. See also Maurizio Calvesi, *Il sogno di Polifilo Prenestino*. Roma, 1983, p. 63. As Arnaldo Bruschi pointed out: "Giulio II sarà il nuovo Giulio Cesare. Il nome assunto rappresenta un programma esplicito che scavalca la tradizione medievale e rimanda all'antichità. Forse nel 1506, farà addirittura coniare una medaglia con la significativa iscrizione: IULIU(S) CAESAR PONT II." In, *Bramante architetto*, Bari: Laterza, 1969, p. 613, but see also p. 609-25.

⁷ *Epigramma Erasmi in Iulium II*. *Ausgewaehlte Schriften*, V, Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges., 1968, 2-5. In 1538, Luther also referred to the popes elected after Julius, but his criticism was evidently based on his Roman experience (1510). See *Luther's Works*, gen. ed. H.L. Lehmann, Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, Vol. 34, p. 238. Raffaele Maffei, *Brevis sub Iulio Leoneque Historia*, 235r. (1522), ed. by John d'Amico in *Archivum Pontificiae Historiae*, 18, 1980, 157-210.

⁸ *Carmina XXXI and XXXIII-XXXVI*, Ms. Vatican 2870. See Marco Vattasso, *Antonio Flaminio e le principali poesie dell'Autografo Vaticano 2870*. Roma: Tip. Vat., 1900, 50-52. Julius II is compared in these poems with Caesar and Jupiter. Another of Flaminio's poems, quoted by Gregorovius, introduces the comparison with Mars. Cf. *Geschichte der Stadt Rom in Mittelalter von V. zum*

XVI Jh. (1859-1872), Engl. transl. (1912), 1967, VIII, 1, p. 70, n. 2.

Julius II was so pleased by these poems that he sent Flaminio fifty pieces of gold. The metaphor of the new Mars was to have good fortune. In honour of Leo X's triumph of April 11, 1513, Agostino Chigi erected an arch which bore the inscription: "Olim habuit Cypris sua tempora; tempora Mavors / Olim habuit; sua nunc tempora Pallas habet". It alluded of course to Alexander VI, Julius II and Leo X, respectively. The same image is still present in Philippe Du Plessis Mornay's *Le Mystère d'Iniquité*, Ginebra, 1612, p. 1290: "Il [Julius II] délaissa ... la chaire de S. Pierre, pour prendre le titre de Mars, dieu des Batailles". Apud Emmanuel Rodocanachi, *Le Pontificat de Jules II. 1503-1513*. Paris: Hachette, 1928, p.103.

effigy and the reverse, St. Peter.⁹ Michelangelo's 14-foot bronze statue of Julius II, executed in Bologna at the beginning of 1507, represented the apex of his celebration as *Imperator*. Vasari (and Condivi) recount that Michelangelo had planned to place a book in the pope's left hand; when asked about it, he reportedly exclaimed: "Mettivi una spada, ché io non so lettere!"¹⁰ This ephemeral sculpture ended up holding the proverbial Petrian keys, but in vain, because Roman wags joked that Julius had thrown St. Peter's keys into the Tiber and, indeed, in his *Chronica Citizense*, Paul Lang wrote: "Julius papa non tam apostolorum sedis claviger, quam armiger."¹¹

In light of such a mythic and imperial warlord image, Vasari's interpretation of the 1505 project appears most persuasive. It is evident from a 1548 letter from Baccio Bandinelli, that the pope fancied himself an Alexander the Great.¹² More importantly, a parallel was made between the pope and Jupiter. This comparison, mentioned in Flaminius' eulogies as well as by Giles of Viterbo¹³ even appeared in one of the most solemn masses in San Pietro in a Good Friday sermon (by Inghirami?, Casali?)¹⁴ which referred to Julius as *Jupiter optimus maximus*, whose power was unlimited and whose right hand brandished a thunderbolt.¹⁵ Upon hearing this sermon in 1509, Erasmus criticized it in the *Ciceronianus*: "But what has all this to do with the Julius who is the head of the Christian religion, the vice regent of Christ, the successor of Peter and Paul? What could be more utterly frigid and banal?"¹⁶ The meaning of this *similitudo* between the pope and the god is noteworthy. The supreme god of the Roman pantheon, Jupiter was given several qualifiers. The title *Optimus Maximus*, bestowed upon the god on the Capitoline Hill, designated the protector of the Roman military campaigns and the administrator of justice.¹⁷ In his *De Cardinalatu* (1510), Paolo Cortesi proposed a metaphorical synthesis for this image of Julius as Emperor and as Jupiter *Optimus Maximus*, a cosmic metaphor (*ex natura caelestium rerum*) suggested to him by Raffaele Riario, then Dean of the Sacred College. This cosmic metaphor was the Globe suspended at the center of the universe as a sign of the equanimity with which Julius II administered justice.¹⁸

⁹ Cf. Sigismondo de' Conti, *Historiarum* (ca. 1507), p. 1506. Raffaele Maffei, *Brevis Historia*, ed. D'Amico, 235v., narrates that the pope introduced a new coin, called the *Julius*, which was designed in ancient fashion.

¹⁰ According to Pastor (*History of the Popes*, 6, p. 512) and Barocchi, *Commento*, vol. II, p. 397, this dialogue between the artist and the pope is testified in a letter by Michelangelo. See Barocchi and Ristori, *Il Carteggio*, vol. I, XIV and XV.

¹¹ That is the reason why Julius II's keys would not fit the lock of the heaven's gate, according to Erasmus' 1517 *Dialogus, Iulius exclusus e coelis*. For the same reason, one can reasonably suppose, Epistémon meets the pope in his Lucianic descent to hell (*Pantagruel*, chap. XXX). For Lang's statement, see Gregorovius, *History*, p. 71, n. 1. Michelangelo's Pasquinade on Julius II's Rome (Frey, X and Guasti, 156): "Qua si fa elmj di chalicj e spade" evidently reflected the same idea.

¹² Apud Barocchi (ed.), *Commento*, Vol. II, p. 247. But Barocchi considers it fictitious.

¹³ See Jacks (1993), p. 171f.

¹⁴ See Silvana Seidel Menchi, "Alcuni atteggiamenti della cultura italiana di fronte a Erasmo (1520-1536)". *Eresia e riforma nell'Italia del Cinquecento*. (Miscellanea I) Florence: Sansoni, Chicago: Newberry, 1974, 71-133, p. 106, n. 169; O'Malley, *Praise and Blame*, 1974, p. 114.

¹⁵ See O'Malley, *Praise and Blame*, 1979, p. 19.

¹⁶ In *Ciceronianus*, 993C. Quoted from R. J. Schoeck, *Erasmus of Europe. The Prince of Humanists 1501-1536*. Edinburgh Un. Press, 1993, p. 69.

¹⁷ Cf. Robert Schilling, "Jupiter". In Y. Bonnefoy (ed.), *Mythologies*, The Un. of Chicago Press, 1991, vol. I, p. 621.

¹⁸ Apud Gennaro Savarese, "Idee per una teoria delle immagini nel De Cardinalatu". *La Cultura a Roma tra Umanesimo ed Ermetismo (1480-1540)*. Roma: De Rubéis, 1993, p. 16. The globe as a symbol of justice was to have a good fortune, as it reappears in Vasari's *Allegory of Justice*, kept in Naples, Capodimonte.

We know that the globe was equally a distinctive symbol of the emperor's might as it appears in the *Antiquitatum fragmenta* by Giovanni Marcanova,¹⁹ as well as in Francisco de Hollanda's engraving of 1538, which is apparently an ideal restoration of Marcanova's fragments. / **Fig. 18** / And we should keep in mind that in his triumphal march from Castel Sant'Angelo to the Vatican Palace, in 27 March 1507, the pope was preceded by a quadriga pulled by white horses, carrying a globe which served as a basis for an oak tree.²⁰ Thus, we can assume that Raffaele Riario's *inventio* had already determined Paris de Grassi's (and Bramante's?)²¹ works for this famous entry. And certainly it had also influenced Michelangelo's 1505 project. For we can now understand the meaning of Michelangelo's drawing, owned and described by Mariette in 1746, the famous drawing whose fragment is kept today in the Uffizi (Inv. 608 E): / **Fig. 1** /

*"La description que fait le Condivi du Tombeau de Jules II... est tout à fait conforme au dessin original que j'ai de cette magnifique composition. (...) Sur le tombeau se seroit élevée une grande Piramide, dont le sommet se seroit terminé par une figure d'Ange portant un globe. Tel est l'idée que Michel Ange s'étoit proposé de suivre, suivant le dessin arrêté, que j'ay dans ma Collection."*²²

Three observations on this famous passage seem still necessary. 1. Mariette's *figure d'Ange* could not be possibly equated with Condivi's angels.²³ It must be envisaged as a *Winged Victory*, which was a very common attribute of imperial apotheoses or triumphs. In his *Fasti et Triumphi Romae a Romulo Rege usque ad Carolum V Caes. Aug.* (Venice, 1557), Onofrio Panvinio reproduced several coins bearing the "Winged Genius of Victory on a Globe" as attributes of Constantine. / **Fig. 19** / The engraving *Marcus Aurelius crowned by Victory*, published in Antoine Lafréry's *Speculum Romanae Magnificentia* affords another example of this kind of allegorical figure in Renaissance iconography.²⁴ / **Fig. 20** / 2. Obviously Mariette described here an image he had under his eyes. He imagined the monument, not the drawing, as the verbal tenses and the

¹⁹ Manuscript of the Modena Biblioteca Estense e Universitaria, cod. L.5.15, fol. 29v.. See *Da Pisanello alla nascita dei Musei capitolini. L'Antico a Roma alla vigilia del Rinascimento*, Rome, 1988, 38-45; Maria Teresa Fiorio, "Broken Sculpture: Michelangelo and the Aesthetic of the Fragment". In *The Genius of the Sculptor*, Montreal, 1992, 69-84, Fig. 21.

²⁰ Paris de Grassi's narrative was published in *Le Due Spedizioni Militari di Giulio II tratte dal Diario di Paride Grassi Bolognese Maestro delle Ceremonie della Cappella Papale, su Manoscritti di Bologna, Roma e Parigi*, ed. by Luigi Frati (Documenti e Studj pubblicati per cura della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Provincie di Romagna. Vol. I), Bologna, 1886, p. 175: "Apud moem Adriani versus Palatium spectaculum nobile adfuit, et visu mysterioque delectabile. Currus erat triumphalis a quadrigis albis tractus, et is erat in forma rotunda, super cuius planitie decem pueri alati... Super caput pueri erat quidem orbis magnus in forma sphaerae astronomicae, ac super sphaera quercus aurea magna, quae inter duas palmas magnas erecta ad coelum suos ramos..."

²¹ For a discussion of this hypothesis, see Bruschi, *Bramante* (1969), p. 638-39.

²² Quoted from Echinger-Maurach, *Studies*, p. 392.

²³ It could not represent the *Fortuna alata* either, as it appears in the famous woodcut which decorates Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice, Aldine, 1499), even if there are evident formal similarities between this woodcut representing probably the *Tempio della Fortuna*, Lastricati's second project for Michelangelo's catafalque in San Lorenzo housed in the Munich Kupferstichkabinett and Michelangelo's drawing owned by Mariette. See De Tolnay, IV, p. 17 and Maurizio Calvesi, *Il Sogno di Polifilo prenestino*, Roma, 1983, p. 75.

²⁴ Ancient models of the globe and of the winged victory (either Roman versions of Nike, or the Genius of the Senate) as imperial symbols can be found in Hadrian's coins, in Septimius Severus' Roman Arch, in Caracalla's famous *cameo of Nancy*, etc. On the iconography of the winged victory and the globe from Augustus to Constantine, see R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Roma. La Fine dell'arte antica*. Rome, 1970, 27-32, 63.

word *arreté* in this description could mistakenly suggest. For Mariette uses the same tense to describe both the bottom (i.e. the Uffizi drawing) and the (now missing) top registers of the project. Moreover, no ancient or modern French dictionary allows the supposition that by *arreté* Mariette meant fragmentary. The meaning of the word is undoubtedly *segmented*, and we do know that the Uffizi drawing is composed by two very old parts. It can thus be assumed that the drawing had been originally folded up in four parts.²⁵ 3. Raffaello da Montelupo's drawing representing a *Winged figure holding the globe of Heaven*, housed in Paris, Ecole des Beaux-Arts (De Tolnay, IV, fig. 237), considered as a copy from a lost drawing by Michelangelo, adds supplementary evidence to Mariette's description.

Evidently Vasari's description was based on another drawing. But his interpretation of Michelangelo's project is strengthened by Mariette's drawing: in 1505, Michelangelo, Julius II and their advisers (and Riario was most likely among them) produced a near divine image of the pope resembling the *Imperator invictus* who, having imposed universal dominion, serenely administers justice. The idea of the pope as universal pastor presupposed war, especially after the loss of Constantinople, and was at the very heart of the Roman ideal of reform. It was propounded not only by the sacred orators of the court but also by the pope himself, for example, in the speech given on his behalf to the opening session of the Fifth Lateran Council (May, 1512).²⁶ Reclaiming Rome and its imperial past, the preachers at the papal court looked back at Roman institutions with genuine admiration, according to O'Malley: "the Church was the *Res publica Christiana*. It was the *Imperium Romanum*."²⁷ Accordingly, a contemporary inscription in Via de' Banchi, near the Ponte Sant'Angelo, reads:

*To Julius II, Pontifex Maximus, who, after enlarging the boundaries of the Papal State and freeing Italy, adorned the city of Rome (...) with fine streets which he measured and widened in accordance with the majesty of the Empire.*²⁸

As pointed out by Brian Horrigan, the reference to the "majesty of the Empire" was a quotation from Suetonius, which underscored the correlation between Julius II's restored Rome and the Rome of the Emperors.²⁹ Thus, on the singular alternation of the *virtu' et arte ingegnose* and the *prigionia*, as Vasari describes Michelangelo's 1505 project, was superimposed the very image of a new Imperial Rome which could once again face Virgil's challenge (VI, 851-82): *Hae tibi erunt artes, pacisque imponere morem, / Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.*

²⁵ According to De Tolnay, "this allusion to a pyramid with an angel at its apex must be a *lapsus memoriae*, for the Uffizi drawing has never included this part".

²⁶ See John W. O'Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome. Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450-1521*. Durham (N.C.): Duke Un. Press, chapter six. The speech was published in Nelson H. Minnich, "Concepts of Reform Proposed at the Fifth Lateran Council". *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 7 (1969), 237-238. Symptomatically enough, the council reaffirmed Boniface's theory of the supremacy of the Roman pontiff over all potentates and individuals whatsoever.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

²⁸ I follow the translation provided by James S. Ackerman, "The Planning of Renaissance Rome, 1450-1580." *Rome in the Renaissance. The City and the Myth*. Papers of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the Center for Mediaeval & Early Renaissance Studies. Ed. by P.A. Ramsey, New York, 1982, 3-19, p. 8. The inscription was also published by Bruschi, *Bramante*, p. 618, n. 15.

²⁹ "Imperial and Urban Ideology in a Renaissance Inscription". *Comitatus*, 9 (1978), 73-87.

V - Final Considerations: the *De aurea aetate*, of 1507.

A last word might be said about the objection most often raised to Vasari's interpretation: the chronology. The *provincie soggiogate* represented by the prisoners are said to be historically impossible, since Julius II began the first of his military campaigns in August, 1506.³⁰ This objection is only logical if one admits the impossibility of representing what has not yet happened. But in this case, why would Julius II have commissioned his mausoleum so early, i.e., not long after the first anniversary of his election? Above all, why would he have allowed his monument to be embellished with a bronze frieze on which, as Condivi attested, "si poteuan vedere i fatti di tanto pontifice"? Unless one denies outright the existence of this frieze (described also by Vasari as a *fregio di storie di bronzo*), one can only conclude that the iconography of the 1505 project was a *desideratum*. As an instrument of propaganda, it was part of the arsenal of power, and like any other prospective view, it exerted an influence upon the predicted event.³¹ The pope's deepest desire after his election was to broaden the temporal and spiritual power of the Church. It was reasonable that such an ambition should be reflected in the iconography of his mausoleum. Therefore, this objection becomes an important argument in favor of Vasari: the pope and his advisors could project such an exaggeration of his expansionist "feats" precisely because they were still only a *desideratum*, not yet confronted with the real difficulties of the enterprise.

Let us examine the meaning of this expansionism. Unlike duke Valentino, Julius II did not only desire Bologna, Rimini, Faenza, Ferrara, or the *rocche* of Fano, Cesena, Forlì, Imola, Forlimpopoli, etc., in sum the territory of Romagna and of Emilia, and the Venetian possessions on the peninsula. Julius II's "provinces" rather designated an universal conception of ecclesiastical power. As early as 1954, De Tolnay conceded that: "In the sentence of Vasari there is a residue of the real program: the infidel races subjugated by the true faith". This is not merely a supposition. Julius II attributed great importance to the conquest of new provinces for Christendom. One of the pretexts for taking up arms against Venice lay in its attitude toward the Turks, which was considered by the pope as unpropitious to a new crusade. By 1504, the tomb of Isabella I of Castile at Alhambra, Granada, had become the symbol of the *Reconquista*, of the triumph of Christendom over Islam. This was, in a way, the Church's triumph too. On 21 April 1492, Raffaele Riario, who was to become Julius II's most important adviser, had already celebrated the conquest of Granada by a solemn performance of Carlo Verardi's *Historia Baetica*, and, accordingly, the Pope's *Segretario*, Sigismondo de' Conti, wrote around 1506: "she [Isabella I] had with magnanimous constancy and true piety restored the city to its Christian name and cult."³²

Another example shows more tangibly the ideological and political identification between the military expansion of Christendom and Julius II's *desiderata*. On 25 September 1507, King Manuel I of Portugal wrote the pope to inform him of three new Christian exploits: the landing in Ceylon,

³⁰ As stressed by Barocchi, *Commento*, vol II., p. 292: "E' questo uno dei punti di maggiore divergenza tra i due biografi". Since Bottari, the literature on Julius II's repeats, with few exceptions, this objection to Vasari's *provincie soggiogate*.

³¹ On the relationship between prophecy and political propaganda in Julius II's wars, see Ottavia Niccoli, *Profeti e Popolo nell'Italia del Rinascimento* (1987), Engl. transl. Princeton Un. Press, 1994. But see Motzkin, "Michelangelo's *Slaves*" (1992), p. 209: "Whoever made up the program was presumably not a prophet, so [Vasari's interpretation] is most unlikely".

³² See Maria Dolores Rincón Gonzales, *Historia Baetica de Carlo Verardi (Drama Humanístico sobre la Toma de Granada)*. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1992, p. 55f.

Lourenço de Almeida's naval victory over the Zamorin of Calicut, and the discovery of the island of Madagascar. Julius II's reaction was described in detail by O'Malley; the pope declared three days of thanksgiving in Rome, which were to culminate in a solemn celebration in Saint Peter's on December 21, the feast of Saint Thomas Apostle. This celebration consisted of a procession of the pope, cardinals, and prelates to Saint Peter's, a Mass offered by one of the cardinals, the exhibition of relics for public veneration, the publication of a plenary indulgence, and a sermon preached, both in Latin and in Italian, by the *solemnis praedicator* Giles of Viterbo.

The pope requested Giles to put his sermon into writing and the *libellus* was then sent to the king: *De invento orbe terrarum et Tapobrane insula, de Lusitani regis victoria, de aurea*³³ The complex text of this speech is the most eloquent propaganda document of Julius II's pontificate. The topos of the *aurea aetas*, evidently allusive to the Augustean ideology consecrated by Virgil (*Aen.* VI, 791f.),³⁴ elucidates not only the program of his mausoleum, but also the decision to reconstruct St. Peter's basilica.³⁵ Giles of Viterbo started with the theological and historical proof that this pontificate coincided with the advent of the Golden Age, i.e., the Age of Christ and of the universal triumph of the Church, following the ages of Lucifer, Adam and Janus. Manuel of Portugal's accomplishments were viewed in this context. The pope was so interested in the idea of expansionism contained in this sermon that in a letter to Giles of Viterbo dated June 17, 1508, he simply titled the sermon *de ecclesiae incremento*. According to Giles, a providential plan singled out the Etruscan hill of the Vatican to be the seat of Christianity. There was, therefore, a line of continuity between the Etruscans and the Christians, between Janus and Peter. As Hartt pointed out, the pope, who had been the Cardinal of S. Pietro in Vincoli, strongly identified himself with his apostolic predecessor "whose church he was rebuilding and whose work he was emulating, and in a way, challenging."³⁶ Thus, by deciding to situate the tomb in the heart of the universal church,³⁷ he intended to make its iconography an emblem of his divine mission: to conquer the provinces not yet under the Church's temporal power and to complete the task of winning over a world that was gradually submitting to Christian powers. The prisoners as provinces subjugated by Julius II were indeed signs of the advent of the Golden Age.

³³ Giles of Viterbo's Discourse on the Golden Age was published from a manuscript in the Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo Distrital of Évora and discussed by John W. O'Malley, "Fulfillment of the Christian Golden Age under Pope Julius II: Text of a Discourse of Giles of Viterbo, 1507". *Traditio*, XXV, 1969, 278-338, Introductory essay p. 265-78. Engl. tr. in Francis X. Martin, *Friar, Reformer, and Renaissance Scholar. Life and work of Giles of Viterbo 1469-1532*. Villanova: Augustinian, 222-284. According to Germana Ernst (*Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 42, Roma, 1993, *ad vocem*), another manuscript containing probably the oral version has been found. See Gennaro Savarese, "Egidio da Viterbo e Virgilio", *La Cultura a Roma tra Umanesimo ed Ermetismo (1480-1540)*. Roma: De Rubéis, 1993, 83-104, p. 91. On Giles of Viterbo's sources, see Jacks (1993), p. 180f. See again note 23.

³⁴ See Eugenio Manni, "La leggenda dell'età dell'oro nella politica dei Cesari". *Atene e Roma*, III, VI (1938), p. 112-117: "Con i versi 791-794 del VI libro dell'*Eneide* abbiamo la prima affermazione della nuova concezione secondo cui l'Augusto impersona il Genio dell'età aurea, concezione questa a sfondo nettamente politico.... Ma chi poteva garantire questa pace tanto desiderata se non un principe, cui le stesse qualità intrinseche (...) assicurino costantemente la *vittoria*?"

³⁵ On this sermon, see Pfeiffer: "Kaum ein schriftliches Zeugnis vermittelt einen so synthetischen und zugleich reichhaltigen Ueberblick ueber die platonisierende Theologie der Zeit Papst Julius II. wie die Rede (...) ueber das goldene Zeitalter." *Zur Ikonographie von Raffaels Disputa*, p. 178f. See again note 23.

³⁶ According to Hartt (*Michelangelo*, 1968, 122-23), Raphael made of his St. Peter liberated from prison (in the fresco of the Stanza d'Eliodoro) a recognizable portrait of Julius II.

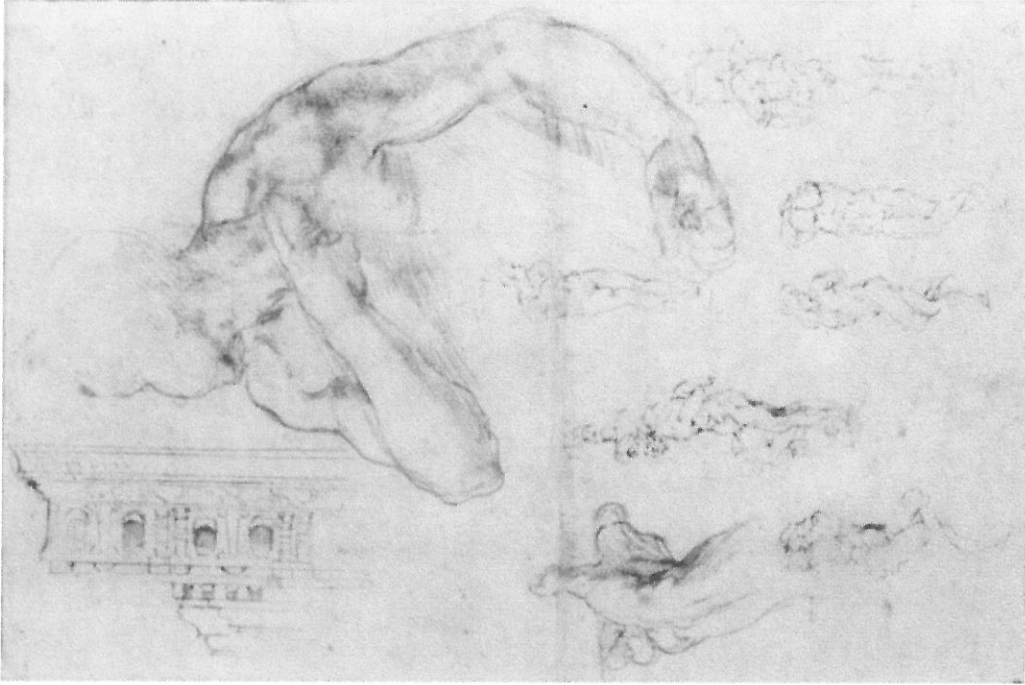
³⁷ Although the precise position of the mausoleum in Bramante's plan remains controversial (under the cupole or at the choir), this emplacement had undoubtedly an emblematic fonction. See note 10.

The symbolic content of the figure of the prisoner, *persona obligata* in a culture dominated by the *Trionfi*, was evident. The Roman Arches and the Columns, a tangible sign of the imperial triumphs, stirred up the imagination. From 1475 to 1503, Flavio Biondo's *Roma Triumphans*³⁸ was published four times and from Mantegna's cycle of canvas to Jacopo Ripanda's frescoes at the Palazzo dei Conservatori (1507-1513), the iconography of the imperial processions had become fashionable. Furthermore, around 1500, the Triumph had acquired numerous metaphysical and religious connotations without losing its primarily political and military significance. Thus, far from being exclusive, the neoimperial and expansionist meaning of Michelangelo's 1505 project, was enriched by echoes of other "epic" or "agonistic" discourses, including the metaphysics of love (from Petrarque and Ficino to Francesco Colonna) and Savonarola's *Triumphus Crucis*.³⁹

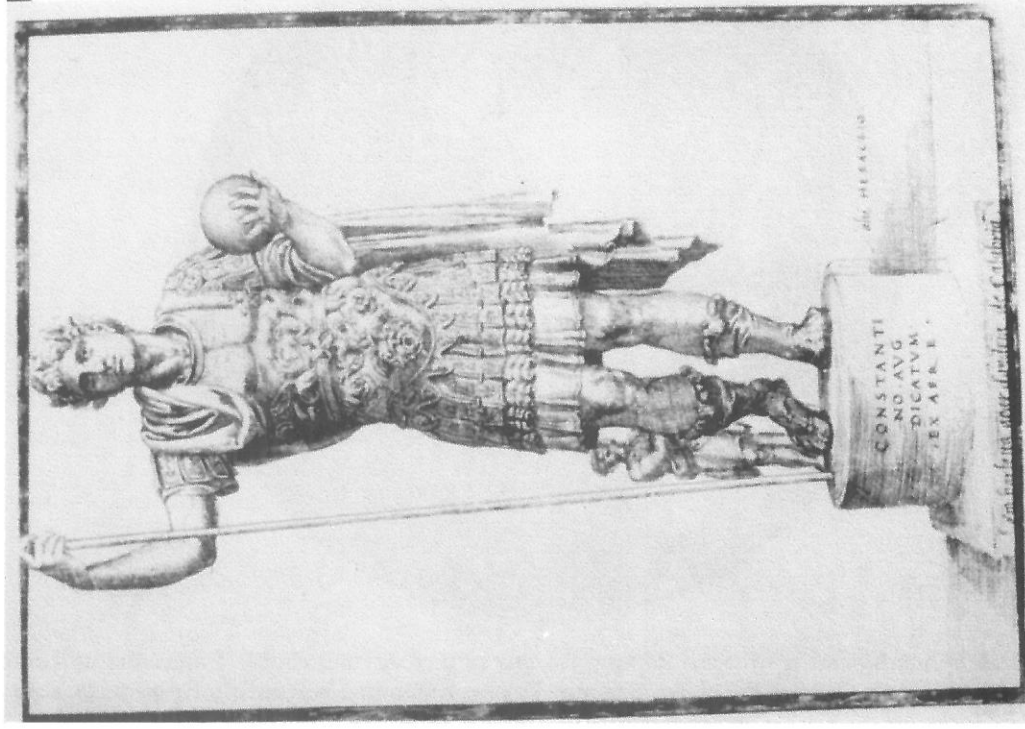
Luiz Marques, Universidade de Campinas, Brasil.

³⁸ In Book X, Biondo deals extensively with Roman Triumphs.

³⁹ For this interpretation, see Parronchi, *Opere Giovanili*, IV (1982/92), p. 36.



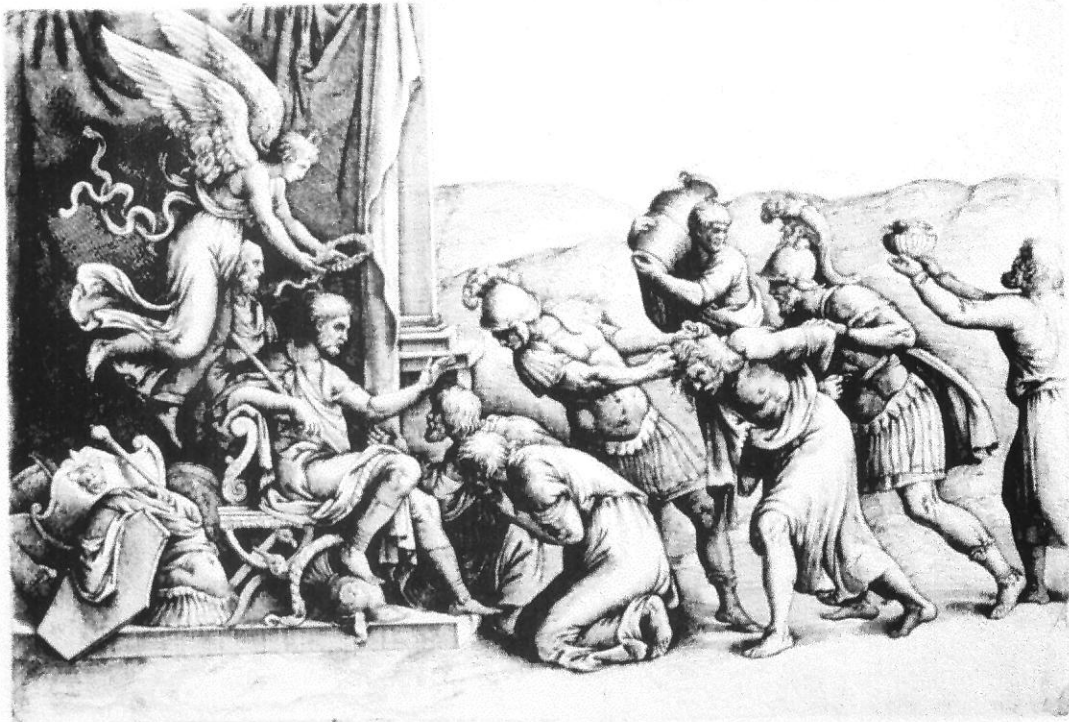
1 - Michelangelo - Sketches for the *prigionieri*.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Parker 297 recto.



2 - Francisco de Hollanda - *The Emperor Constantine*.
Engraving. Biblioteca del Escorial.



3 - *Constantinus Maximus with the Winged Genius of Victory on a Globe.* Engraving of a coin. Reproduced from Onofrio Panvinio, *Fasti et Triumphi Romae a Romulo Rege usque ad Carolum V Caes. Aug.* (Venice, 1557).



4 - *Marcus Aurelius crowned by Victory.* Engraving. Published in Antoine Lafréry's *Speculum Romanae Magnificentia*. The Regenstein Library, Chicago.