Zwei aktuelle Entwicklungen fordern die Architekturgeschichte dazu heraus, das Verhältnis von Bild und Bau zu überdenken: das verstärkte bildwissenschaftliche Interesse der Kunstgeschichte und das Aufkommen eines Typs von Architektur, der versuchsweise als »iconic building« umschrieben worden ist. Der vorliegende Band nimmt diese Herausforderung zum Anlass, um neue Perspektiven eines Verständnisses von architektonischer Bildlichkeit zu erproben. Ein besonderes Augenmerk gilt dabei Wahrnehmungsformen von Architektur, die das alltägliche Bewohnen und Benutzen überschreiten und außergewöhnliche, visuelle und sinnliche Erfahrungen vermitteln. Die Metapher vom »Auge der Architektur« spielt auf jene Momente an, in denen ein Bau aufgrund seiner bildlichen Qualität uns solcherart ›anzusprechen‹ oder ›anzublicken‹ scheint, dass wir ihn in gänzlich neuer Weise wahrnehmen. Vom Film über digitale Entwurfstechniken, von Architekturphotographien bis zu klassischen Themen wie den Säulenordnungen, Schaufassaden und Architekturen im Bild wird das Thema hier verhandelt.
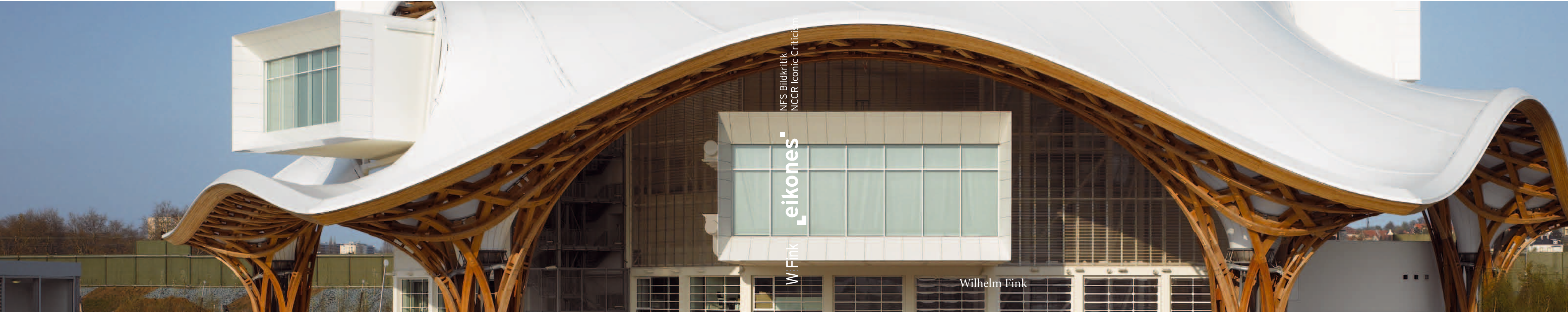
Das Auge der Architektur
Andreas Beyer, Matteo Burioni, Johannes Grave (Hg.)

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Das Auge der Architektur

Andreas Beyer, Matteo Burioni, Johannes Grave (Hg.)

Wilhelm Fink

Das Auge der Architektur. Zur Frage der Bildlichkeit in der Baukunst

Andreas Beyer | Matteo Burioni | Johannes Grave (Hg.)

Inhalt

Michelangelo's Laurentian Library, Music and the *Affetti*

Cammy Brothers

The challenges of interpreting Michelangelo's Laurentian Library highlight some of the limitations of architectural history as it is currently practiced. It is fitting that architecture that pushes the limits of conventional form should also test interpretation. In the nineteenth century, the library was often condemned for its excess, seen as an embodiment of the decline and decadence of Mannerism.[1] More recently, the challenge it poses has been manifest in the clustering of interpretations along two opposed poles, focusing either on its sculptural qualities or its structural logic. I will suggest that such readings, while containing elements of truth, do not fully acknowledge either the fundamentally architectural character of the library, or its radical and expressive qualities. However, in the last part of the paper I will explore how ideas about affect and empathy, drawn from sixteenth-century music theory, provide an alternative means of understanding Michelangelo's achievements in the library.

The Laurentian Library (1524–59) was Michelangelo's first major architectural project in which the body was not directly represented. In each of his previous endeavors, he had designed a structure to enclose, encase, or in some way frame figures, whether painted or sculpted, in the round or in relief. The library, by contrast, had no

symbolic or allegorical function: it did not need to point to anything beyond itself. In the library vestibule and reading room, architecture fills the void left by the absence of both iconography and figures [Fig. 1a and 1b]. The frame becomes the figure, taking over the position and significance conventionally occupied by figurative sculpture. In other words, architecture becomes the subject.

Michelangelo arrived at this position partly as a consequence of the drawing procedures he had adopted at the beginning of his career. The series of formal manipulations he had perfected in the figurative realm and transferred to architecture allowed him, in his early projects, to treat architectural elements in a manner equivalent to his treatment of the figure, and thus to achieve a measure of parity between figure and architecture in his designs for the Medici Chapel. When these same procedures were applied to a uniquely architectural subject, they produced architecture of the same complexity and tension as his figures.

In the process of investing architecture with the expressive capacity of the figure, Michelangelo developed a lexicon of forms poised between classical morphology and geometrical abstraction. The forms were largely drawn from his earlier projects, as well as from existing buildings, both ancient and modern. The maneuvers by which he transformed these precedents – inversion, reversal, scale shift, and displacement – mimic those carried out with figures to generate new poses for the Sistine nudes.

Even before Serlio and others sought to standardize architectural practice beginning in the 1530's, the orders and their proportions as prescribed by Vitruvius provided a system by which to organize designs and give order to the composition of the wall. Although Michelangelo's designs employed orders, nothing about them was fixed – not their typology, their proportion, or their spacing.[2] As a consequence, Michelangelo defined and manipulated architectural components with greater flexibility than is evident in drawings by his contemporaries.[3]

Michelangelo's drawings reveal how other interests came to take precedence over the orders. Projection and recession, absence and presence, light and dark, large and small are employed to constitute what sixteenth-century critic Cosimo Bartoli aptly called a »new order« (*nuovo ordine*) and Francesco Bocchi called »a different rule« (*altra regola*).[4] In some cases, these interests emerge from Michelangelo's graphic practices themselves. For example, his habit of using a single page for different subjects often led to dramatic juxtapositions of differently sized elements, which may in turn have triggered his manipulations of scale in the vestibule and reading room. Furthermore, Michelangelo's habit of drawing different parts of the design on separate sheets may be responsible for the disjunctive character of the built architecture, as if it were an assemblage of discrete parts. Aside from documenting aspects of the design that emerged directly from graphic practices, the drawings also reveal
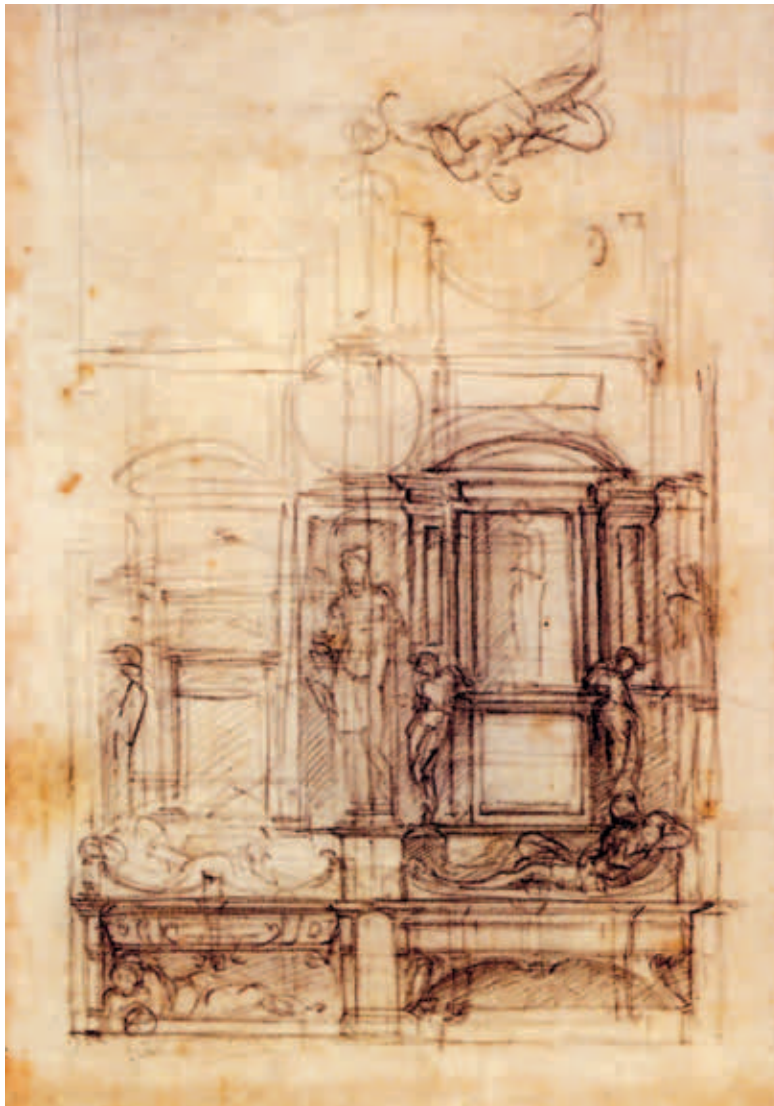
2 Michelangelo, Medici Chapel tomb design, black chalk, British Museum, London.

how a number of the library's most radical ideas began modestly, but developed into their final form through a series of small variations.

The drawings for the library further suggest the way in which the gradual dissolution of the wall coincided with the transformation of the frame into the figure. Stated in painterly terms, the ground gradually gives way so that all that remains is the figure. This should not come as a surprise, considering that as early as the Battle of the Centaurs, Michelangelo virtually eliminated any allusion to

landscape.[5] In the relief as well as in his figure drawings, he avoided even the barest reference to the ground plane. Yet in architecture even more than in sculpture or painting, structural logic makes the avoidance of the wall all the more remarkable.[6]

Michelangelo's substitution of the figure with architecture becomes apparent through the comparison of two drawings, one for the chapel and the other for the library. A black chalk study for the chapel at the British Museum and a pen sketch for the library

3 Michelangelo, Laurentian Library study, red chalk and pen, Casa Buonarroti, Florence.

vestibule at Casa Buonarroti both feature aedicules with round pediments alternating with recessed rectangular niches, with roundels above [Figs. 2, 3]. The most obvious difference occurs in the tall rectangular niches. The full standing figure of the tomb drawing is replaced, in the vestibule sketch, by paired columns.

There is nothing exceptional about a wall with columns. But an interior wall employing columns framed as if they were figures confounds the visitor's expectations. In replacing the figure with columns, Michelangelo subverts the classical norm according to which niches of any kind should be occupied by figures. Furthermore, by introducing columns into the composition, he entirely changes the architectural logic of the wall. In the Medici Chapel, the corner pilasters of the chapel, sober in both their *pietra serena* material and their Brunelleschian form, remain utterly unrelated to the marble composition. But in the vestibule, the columns are the composition: even set back – almost enclosed – within the wall, they control it. Essentially Michelangelo has erased all figural traces from a composition that seemed dependent on them for its genesis. And yet the architecture that remains is not an empty shell. Rather, the drama created in the tomb compositions by the interplay of figure and architecture is matched, in the library, by the tension between purely abstract elements – wall and column, projection and recession, solid and void, presence and absence.

Contrasts between presence and absence would have been familiar to Michelangelo as a poet writing in the shadow of Petrarch. Petrarch constructed a complex relation between subject and object through the device of reflexivity. His account of Laura, although of an external object, is also the means by which the poet establishes his voice and authority, and wins his poetic laurel. He also fashions a discourse about absence; Laura's absence creates the need for the poet to evoke her in language. The poems focus on the object of the author's desires, but the elusiveness of the object keeps the reader's attention firmly on the author's skills. In Michelangelo's love poetry, although the paradigm remains essentially Petrarchan, the subject is much more vulnerable and is continually threatened with dissolution.[7]

In the library and vestibule, Michelangelo makes architecture the subject, and at the same time he activates the relation between the visitor and the architecture. This is achieved using the vocabulary of exterior architecture, turned inwards. Exterior architecture is typically viewed in conditions not entirely distinct from that of viewing paintings; while often including relief elements, it is essentially flat.

The unusual effect of the vestibule is a consequence, in part, of its status as both façade and enclosure, meaning that it is both image and experience. These two conditions interact, with disorienting results: the density of the articulation of the interior façade, the impossibility of viewing it from a distance, its multiplication on all four walls, and the bold, dramatically competing element of the stairs, combine to mean that the visitor does not know where to look or where to go. This effect of disorientation was noted by early commentators, and was not unique to Michelangelo's architecture. Vasari observed the way in which the viewer is surprised and awed in the Sistine Chapel and Bocchi wrote about being stunned (»abbagliato«) in the library.[8]

Much *all'antica* architecture of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century sought to confirm, indeed flatter, the expectations of the viewer or visitor. The flourishing of this culture was founded on the principle of recognition. Michelangelo did not defy this culture altogether, but played with it: he did so by using displacement and abstraction to estrange familiar classical elements. Although a visitor to the vestibule could easily recognize classical free-standing columns, their disposition on the interior of the building, their pairing, and their enclosure would have challenged his or her preconceptions.

Indeed, Michelangelo's resistance to convention is perhaps most apparent in his use of the orders. In several ways at once, the vestibule and reading room undo the system of the orders by which architects from the early fifteenth century had begun to construct a coherent means of composing a wall.[9] Michelangelo undermines the impulse to name the orders. All of the cues used to identify them – the shape of the capital and base, and the proportions of the width and height of the shaft – convey different and contradictory information.[10] The various manipulations Michelangelo applied to architectural forms estranged them, in effect removing them from the set of conventional proportions and relationships on which their meaning depends. Michelangelo did not undermine classical architecture but exposed it for what it is: a set of forms that have come to have a merely conventional relationship to their origins, whether structural or ornamental.

Michelangelo challenged the primacy of structure and function in architecture but proposed an alternative. He gave priority

to the Vitruvian value of beauty (*venustas*), adding to it the Albertian virtue of pleasure (*voluptas*). Furthermore, he borrowed ideas from poetry and rhetoric, introducing the concept of contrast (*contrapposto*) and of difficulty (*difficoltà*).[11] While Michelangelo has often been seen as deliberately subverting Vitruvian principles, one might argue instead that he extended and challenged Albertian ones.

For instance, Alberti's concept of *varietas* contains the seeds of ideas about contrast and dissonance, which are important to the library. Explaining *varietas*, he suggests an analogy to music:

> »Variety is always a most pleasant spice, where distant objects agree and conform with one another, but when it causes discord and difference between them, it is extremely disagreeable. Just as in music, where deep voices answer high ones, and intermediate ones are pitched between them, so they ring out in harmony, a wonderfully sonorous balance of proportions results, which increases the pleasure of the audience and captivates them.«[12]

The passage contains the idea of contrast – here between deep and high voices – as a source of pleasure. While Alberti introduces this musical example in relation to the idea of harmony, in a sense Michelangelo's deliberate creation of architectural disharmony might be seen as an extension of this theory.

While ideas of contrast and dissonance received thorough consideration in the realm of music, their conception was founded on principles of classical rhetoric that had already found their way into the literature of art.[13] Leonardo responded to these ideas in a less measured way than Alberti, advocating direct contrast:

> »[…] in narrative paintings one ought to mingle direct contraries (*i retti contrari*) so that they may afford a great contrast to one another, and all the more when they are in close proximity; that is, the ugly next to the beautiful, the big to the small, the old to the young, the strong to the weak; all should be varied as much as possible and close together.«[14]

The direct juxtaposition of opposites, both at the level of detail and of overall organization, underlies the library's conception. This idea had not been articulated specifically in relation to architecture, but examples of its application to the visual arts abounded in the art of Leonardo and his contemporaries.

The overall composition of the vestibule and reading room does not adhere to a conventional architectural logic but to Michelangelo's own rules. This logic is characterized by multiplicity and complexity, but if it had to be reduced to one principle, it might be described in terms of contrasts, or to use a period term, »*contrapposti*«. The term *contrapposto* is most familiar to students of Italian Renaissance art as a way of referring to the pose, often used in Roman sculpture and taken up again in the fifteenth century, of weight unevenly distributed on one side of the body. Visually, the pose conveys both tension – because of the asymmetry – and relaxation. But the term relates to the concept of antithesis, and was derived from rhetoric.[15] It was much exploited as a poetic device by Petrarch and indeed by Michelangelo, emulating Petrarch.[16]

The theme of contained force, and of contradiction, are also apparent in Michelangelo's love poetry dedicated to the young Roman nobleman, Tommaso de' Cavalieri (whom he met in 1532). The first stanza of Michelangelo's sonnet 87 to his lover contains both ideas:

> »I wish I wanted, Lord, what I don't want:
> between my heart and the fire hides a veil of ice
> which moderates the fire, so that my deeds
> don't match my pen, and makes my page a liar.«[17]

The contrast between fire and ice, as metaphors for the conflicting emotions of romantic love, was a trope of Petrarchan poetry.[18] But here this conflict is layered with several others: between the writer's desire and his sense of duty, and between words and deeds. The formal strategy of contrast, and the conceptual problem of truth, both come into play in the Library. Contrast surfaces through the opposition of extrusion and recession, presence and absence, vestibule and reading room. The sense of discrepancy between appearance and reality pertains to the representation of structure in the vestibule. The protruding walls appear to be load-bearing, whereas in fact the columns are.

Perhaps in response to the poetic challenge Cavalieri posed, Michelangelo's poems destabilized the relation between lover and beloved, subject and object, even more than Petrarch had. In the *Canzoniere*, Petrarch's insistent play on the name of his beloved Laura and the word ›*lauro*‹ (or laurel, signifying honor and triumph) create a hermetic circle of reference through which the poet's praise for Laura is a means of displaying his skill and advancing his status.

In Michelangelo's sonnets for Cavalieri, the poet's identity itself is at risk of dissolving into that of the beloved. In Sonnet 89 he writes,

»I see, with your beautiful eyes, a sweet light
that with my blind ones I could never see;
I bear, with your feet, a burden upon me
to which my lame ones are no longer accustomed.
I fly, though lacking feathers, with your wings;
with your mind I'm constantly impelled toward heaven;
depending on your whim, I'm pale or red,
cold in the sun, hot in winter's coldest depths.
Within your will alone is my desire,
my thoughts are created in your heart,
and within your breath are my own words.
Alone, I seem as the moon is by itself:
for our eyes are only able to see in heaven
as much of it as the sun illuminates.«[19]

The first line is adapted from the first line of Petrarch's Sonnet 72, »My noble Lady, I see in the moving of your eyes a sweet light/that shows me the way that leads to Heaven…« But while Petrarch here and elsewhere writes of the beauty of Laura's eyes and of his own gaze seeing her image everywhere, for Michelangelo, Cavalieri's gaze *is* his gaze. While the phrase »I see, with your beautiful eyes, a sweet light« already suggests the dissolution of the poet's

identity, by the last stanza the distinction between subject and object is gone without a trace: »for our eyes are only able to see…«

The link between this poetic strategy and Michelangelo's architecture is not direct, but some parallels might be suggested. His drawings of the library document the process by which he sought to dissolve our conventional understanding of a wall. The effect of these manipulations – counter-posing projection and recession, presence and absence – was to complicate the relation of subject and object, visitor and building. Just as Michelangelo's poetry undermines his own authorial voice, and thus contradicts one of the fundamental premises of poetry, so the demands placed on the visitor in the library vestibule challenge the definition of architecture.

The Stair

Of all aspects of the Library, the stairway has attracted the greatest attention [Fig. 4]. It is also the one major element completed without Michelangelo's direct supervision, decades after his final departure for Rome. The stairway has elicited such attention, and generated so many hyperbolic descriptions, in part because it operates gesturally rather than linguistically. Characterizations of it have tended to focus on dynamic natural metaphors: it is likened to flowing lava or water.[20]

The need to employ organic metaphors in accounts of the vestibule and stairway suggests an impulse to move the discussion

4 Michelangelo, Laurentian Library vestibule, view of staircase.

beyond the realm of architecture. In other words, the assumption is that the qualities of movement and tension discerned by generations of observers could not inherently belong to architecture, but must be external to it. But Michelangelo's own drawings suggest otherwise. His fluid renderings of classical bases reveal the dynamic qualities of the ancient forms themselves (*Corpus* 525 verso, 528 verso; [Fig. 5a and 5b]). Bases may have evolved from the need to deflect water, but also from the desire to convey the impression of weight bearing down on them. Palladio recognized the expressive form of bases, and how they convey a sense of the natural forces of gravity. Explaining architecture's relation to nature, he wrote, »because it is very appropriate [*convenevole*] that those objects upon which some great weight is placed are compressed, the ancients put bases under columns, which with their toruses [*bastone*] and scotias [*cavetto*] appear to be crushed by the weight above.«[21] In other words, in their origins the ancient forms had the same qualities that Michelangelo invested them with: it was only by decades of conventional usage that these dynamic characteristics had given way to static ones.

The drawings suggest how the scheme evolved from a stair along the wall into one occupying the central space of the

room. More than any other decision, this established the conditions through which the vestibule is experienced. Remarkably, the surviving drawings indicate that this solution was reached without any perspective renderings of how the space might appear.[22] The stairway itself is rendered in perspective, but how its mass might sit in the room is not graphically examined. Michelangelo's choice of perspective for the stair itself suggests his recognition that no other convention – either plan, section, or elevation – could adequately convey its volumetric properties.

Perhaps the most extraordinary sheet of studies for the Laurenziana is at Casa Buonarroti (*Corpus* 525; [Fig. 5a and 6]). Recto and verso overlay large-scale designs for bases with perspectival studies of the stairs. The studies reveal a conception of the stairway as an isolated object rather than belonging to a larger space. Michelangelo thus applied the approach he had taken with details – as discrete elements, independent from the context to which they belong – to a monumental scale, designing a stairway separately from the room in which it stood. It also begins to account for the sense of disconnectedness between the stairway and the surrounding room, and the discordant effect upon the visitor.

**6 Michelangelo,
Studies for the
Laurentian Library
vestibule stairs,
black chalk, pen and
red chalk, Casa
Buonarroti, Florence.**
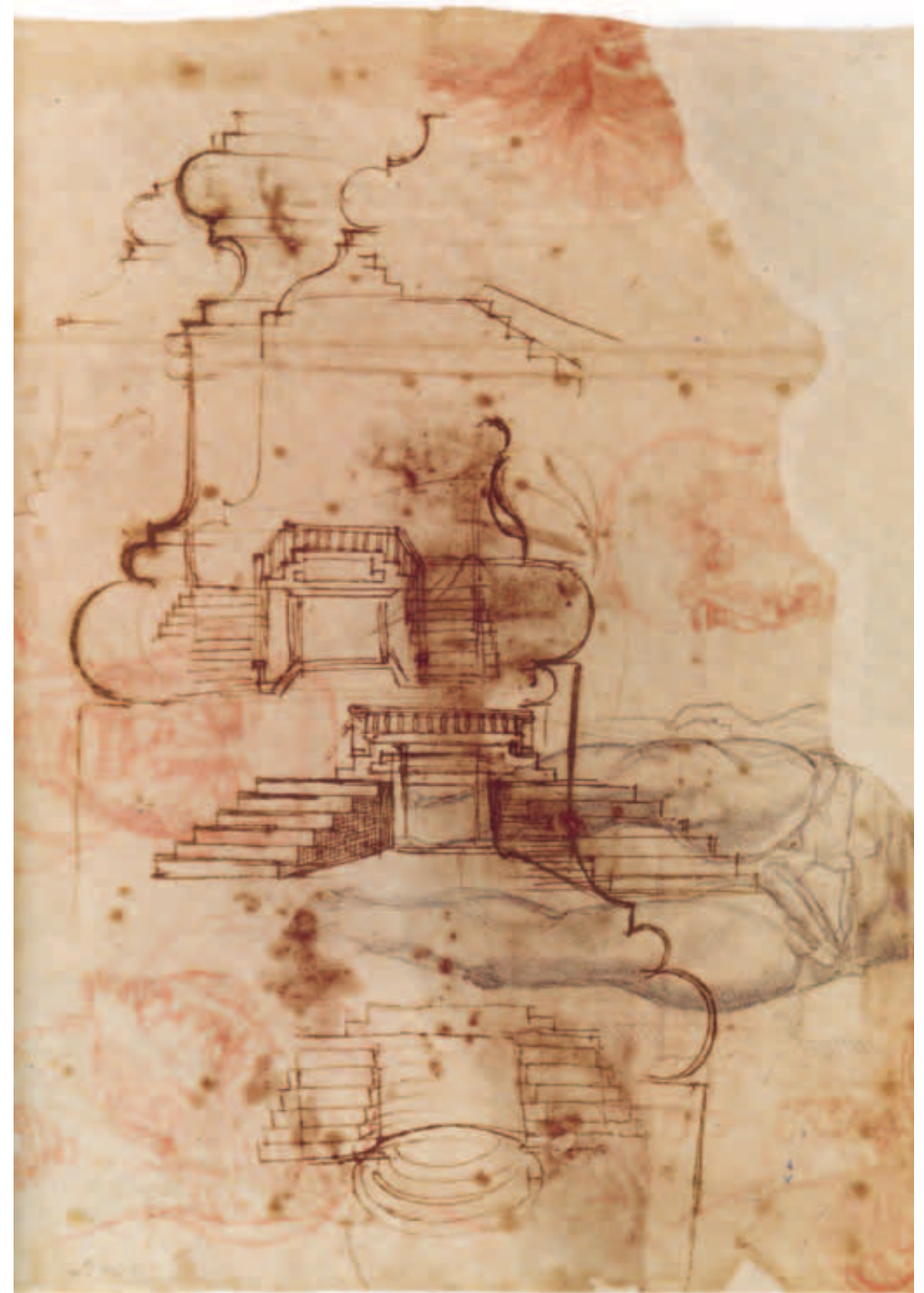
The schemes for the stairs on the recto of the sheet show how the act and manner of drawing itself may have generated the final design. The lowest of the three schemes begins with something very similar to the designs above, but Michelangelo makes the back wall curved, and then, as if in an afterthought, counters the concavity of the back with a series of convex circles. In some ways it is a modest origin for an architectural invention that has elicited outlandish descriptions. In other ways, however, this process of re-envisioning such a utilitarian, banal form as a stairway, and taking it through an open-ended series of permutations so as to arrive at an entirely new conception, has few parallels among the practice of his contemporaries. The verso of the sheet is upside down relative to the recto, and takes the lowest sketch of the stairs as the point of departure. By shifting the register twice, Michelangelo created a concatenated rhythm. In the upper left of this study, he focused on the point of intersection of the stairs, allowing a closer examination of the point of change and tension just as he did with his figural studies. The inversion of solid and void in the representation of the bases may be understood as a way of maximizing the space on the page, allowing both large-scale bases to read clearly. It also suggests the ease with which Michelangelo switched registers, from positive to negative, figure to ground: a tendency abundantly apparent in the Library itself. Unlike Peruzzi, another painter-architect, Michelangelo rarely employed perspective in his architectural drawings. This comes as less of a surprise when one considers how frieze-like his figural compositions are, eschewing the fashion for deep space and elaborate architectural or landscape backgrounds. When Michelangelo does employ perspective, as on this sheet, it is to represent a volume rather than a void.

The startling quality of the Casa Buonarroti sheet derives not only from the graphic metamorphosis of the stairway from one based on precedent to an entirely new one, but also from the overlay of studies of a different subject – a base – carried out at another scale. The drama is enhanced by the inversion of the relative proportion of these studies, so that the monumental stairway is portrayed as if small and the base as if monumental. The disproportionate scales give the sheet a disorienting, abstract effect. This is only heightened on the verso, which shows that Michelangelo turned the sheet upside down to continue drawing.

Michelangelo had considered the idea of a freestanding object in a contained interior space several times before, in unrealized projects for the Tomb of Julius II and the Medici Chapel. The stairway is not free-standing, but its occupation of the space is so complete that it produces an analogous effect. In an exchange of letters with Clement VII about the scheme for the freestanding Medici Chapel tomb, Clement had objected that it would have left too little surrounding room.[23] Yet this effect of crowding, avoided in the Chapel, seems to have become desirable in the vestibule. The distinction might be understood in relation to function: while the Chapel was meant for the performance of religious rites, the vestibule was a passageway, meant to bring visitors from the cloister into the reading room.[24]

In a conventional interior, the visitor is the subject, and the architecture a background against which his or her experience takes place. The extension of architecture into the realm of theatrical design is merely a dramatization of this tradition, in which the architecture becomes a literal backdrop for the actors. By contrast, in the Laurentian Library vestibule and reading room, the visitor is engaged as both spectator and actor.

The theatrical event for which the vestibule and stairs would have served as a stage was social theatre, an enactment of the hierarchical order. This conception must have been fundamental, because the main feature in common in many of the drawings is the division into three areas, with the implied privileging of the central one. This much is articulated in Michelangelo's letter about the stairway sent from Rome to Vasari in Florence in 1555, in which he indicates that the varied levels and entire composition of the stairs fixes the relation between the ruler and his attendants (»*el Signore*« and »*e' servi*«).[25] Thus while the architectural hierarchy is challenged, the social one is codified.

Perception and the Body

Architecture's relationship to the body – as shelter or analogue – has a long history and many valences. It surfaces in Michelangelo's anthropomorphic studies of architectural details, and in his well-known fragmentary letter.[26] From Vitruvius's account of architectural proportion by way of the human body, through Francesco di Giorgio's literal rendering of various bodies squeezed within column shafts, the mythical and metaphorical link between columns and bodies has always been strong. In the Library vestibule, Michelangelo puts this association to use. It is as if the columns, occupying the place of figures, stand in for them metaphorically; by extension, they become our own abstracted representation, and their condition

of enclosure and compression, a rendering of our own condition within the vestibule.

The library has inspired generations of writers to indulge in lavish metaphors for a reason. The conventions of architectural description are inadequate to its mode of address—the way in which it greets and envelops the visitor. In particular, the intense physicality of the experience of the library, both in terms of movement through space and its visceral effect on the body, poses a challenge to descriptive modes rooted exclusively in vision. It is the challenge of the haptic and somatic over the merely optical.[27]

In emptying the wall composition of all traces of the human body, Michelangelo did not discount its presence altogether. Rather, for the first time among his architectural projects, his attention shifted to the body of the visitor. Although all interior architecture in some manner engages the body of its occupants, it is an understudied phenomenon, and one that architectural history has provided few tools with which to describe or analyze. The effects of the space on the body in the vestibule and reading room are hard for anyone who has visited them to deny. Michelangelo engages the body through physical evocations of compression and release, through movement made conscious by repeated rhythms on the wall, and through ornamental elements that pertain to the physical proportions of the human body.
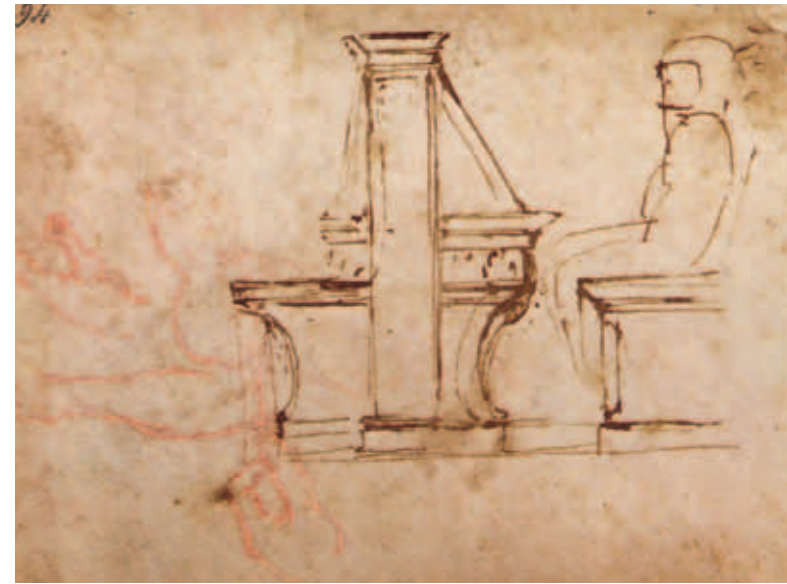
In the library, Michelangelo made his consideration of the body of the visitor explicit in a sketch for the reading desks: uniquely among known drawings for fifteenth- and sixteenth-century furnishings, it includes the user [*Corpus* 558 recto; Fig. 7]. The schematically drawn human figure allowed an analysis of the ergonomics of the body relative to the desk. The design integrates the dual functions of providing a seat for the reader and a display shelf for the books, while also functioning visually as a continuation of the pilasters on the wall. The use of the figure appears to be aimed at aiding in the calculation of the correct slant for the back of the bench, shown in the sketch at an angle but upright in the final design. Michelangelo's representation of the figure at the desk implies a consciousness of the figure's presence throughout the library, even when not explicitly evoked. Although this aspect of Michelangelo's architecture is obvious, and was acknowledged by his contemporaries, it has been neglected by architectural historians because our way of describing architecture remains profoundly limited to the ocular.

The appearance and effect of Michelangelo's architecture is often accounted for by reference to its sculptural qualities. The critical success of this characterization perhaps lies in its capacity to explain elements of the library that cannot be assimilated into a normative definition of architecture. But it has other, and perhaps more illuminating implications. Life-size, freestanding sculpture

7 Michelangelo, Sketch of reading-room desks, red chalk and pen, Casa Buonarroti, Florence.

has a relationship to the viewer unlike that of any planar object. It confronts the viewer with its physicality, and invites an engagement that is not merely ocular, but dynamic and visceral. While single point perspective painting has one ideal vantage point from which it should be seen, freestanding sculpture invites the viewer to move around it. Similarly, while painting may invite intellectual praise for its beauty, sculpture can elicit erotic desire. In Anton Francesco Doni's dialogue *I Marmi* of 1552, one of the interlocutors envisions the figure of Dawn as made of flesh: »I touch her in stone and she moves my flesh, and pleases me more than if it had been flesh I touched. Nay, I am become marble, and she is flesh.«[28]

Furthermore, the resemblance in scale and three-dimensionality of the sculpted body to the body of the viewer encourages identification, projection, and empathy. The viewer recognizes – and this is especially the case with Michelangelo's unfinished works – the physical effort that the sculptor undertook to produce the sculpture. To some extent these conditions are unique to sculpture: figural painting, no matter how much it engages the viewer through gesture, gaze and composition, is flat; and although the viewer may well appreciate the artist's mastery in its physical production, it is generally perceived as a product of the artist's hand rather than his whole body. Architecture is generally even more distant from the physical, because the architect does not execute it. But Michelangelo challenges this removal of architecture from the physical realm by employing elements of a human scale as well as details so finely crafted that they invite meditation on their making.

All interior architecture has some effect on the body, by necessity and by definition. As embodied subjects, we cannot view it without being in it (except for through the anomalous condition of photography). The compression and tension of the vestibule may also be felt in any small, dark room. But the sense of claustrophobia produced by a small space is not the same as the sense of compression in the vestibule. The vestibule operates both optically and somatically – through sight and sensation – whereas the claustrophobic response is visceral – felt, not seen.

Architecture, Music and the ›affetti‹

Architectural history and criticism, of Michelangelo's time as well as of the present, has not cultivated an adequate means of accounting for the significance of movement, time and the body in architecture – all elements of crucial importance to the interpretation of the library. Another branch of sixteenth-century theory and criticism did, however, consider these issues with reference to a distinct creative art: music. While analogies to poetic theory may be justified through Michelangelo's direct knowledge of it as a practicing poet, the same case may not be made for music. Instead, it might only be suggested that music, poetry and theatre were all continuous enterprises in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and that the culture of music infused many other disciplines.

Although there has been some scholarly consideration of the relation of music and architecture, it has tended to focus on mathematical proportions, rather than on broader issues of structure and reception.[29] Vitruvius devoted considerable attention to the mathematical aspects of the relationship, as did Alberti.[30] Alberti and Leonardo also discussed aesthetic categories shared by music and art, such as harmony.[31]

Although Michelangelo did not allude to music in his letters or poems, at least one of his contemporaries considered his achievements in light of those of a composer. Cosimo Bartoli suggested an intriguing analogy between Michelangelo's achievements in architecture, painting and sculpture and those of Josquin in music. In the context of a dialogue in the *Raggionamenti accademici* (1567) concerning whether music deserves praise or blame, Josquin is described as Michelangelo in being »a monster of nature«, unrivaled, and who like Michelangelo »opened the eyes of all those who delight of these arts, or who will delight in future.«[32] The intention of the comparison is simple – to establish Josquin's superiority over all of his contemporaries – but it nonetheless demonstrates the possibility, for a sixteenth-century thinker, of considering an artist and a composer together.

One area in which musical theory was particularly well developed concerned the *affetti*.[33] The theory surrounding the *affetti* developed in part out of the classical tradition of blaming the arts for their capacity to stir the emotions. Many of these positions were taken up in fifteenth and sixteenth-century musical treatises, which discussed at length the power of music to move its listeners. A number of these focused on the danger posed by music; for example Carlo Valgulio wrote in 1507: »So great is the power of musical airs [*cantici modi*] in either moral direction that we ought to investigate which kinds should penetrate citizens' souls – particularly tender ones: whether they should be seemly, serious, and severe, or, on the contrary, fickle, languid, varied, and soft […].«[34]

While Plato had suggested how the power of music could corrupt, Aristotle observed that it might also heal. In the *Politics* he noted that particular melodies could cure madness through the process of purging.[35] Aristotle does not elaborate on this theory, although he does define tragedy with reference to it: »Tragedy is an imitation of an action […] through pity and fear affecting the proper catharsis, or purgation, of these emotions.«[36]

In the late sixteenth century, Lorenzo Giacomini elaborated on the implications of Aristotle's theory in his *Orazioni e discorsi* of 1597. He believed that in experiencing passion through its representation on stage, or its expression in music, men were purged of it. He wrote: »From harmonies that serve to waken the affections… persons who are quickly moved to sorrow, pity and fear, as well as people in general, receive a purgation, alleviation, and relief that not only is not injurious but is delightfully salutary.«[37] His definition of *affetti* is concrete, almost physical: »a spiritual movement or operation of the mind in which it is attracted or repelled by an object it has come to know.«[38] Giacomini's discussion of tragedy makes explicit parallels to other arts, and also raises an important point about how distinct audiences would experience tragedy differently.[39]

The theory of the affections in rhetoric, poetry and music was formulated decades after the completion of the library, but elements of the intellectual tradition that informed this theory were already in place. While it is not possible to claim that ideas articulated by Giocomini late in the century were present in Michelangelo's mind when he designed the library, Aristotle's definition of tragedy and reference to catharsis would have been well known. Furthermore, the idea of the capacity of language to evoke extreme emotions would have been familiar to any reader of Petrarch.[40]

Speculatively, I would suggest that the sequence of the vestibule and library has a cathartic effect on the visitor. By passing through the density and complexity of the vestibule, the visitor can experience its tension, which is then released by the light, rhythmically regular, subtly articulated reading room. In other words, passing through the vestibule could prime the visitor for the more concentrated, tranquil state necessary for reading and study.

Is it possible, then, that Michelangelo's intention was not simply to create a formal contrast between the density of the vestibule and the order of the reading room, but actually to purge the visitor to the library of any remaining tension before entering the reading room by replicating that state in the walls. In this sense the vestibule is not just a physical antechamber but an emotional one, necessary to establish the contemplative state of mind required of a library reader? While Michelangelo may not have been thinking explicitly in terms of catharsis, he did (as suggested earlier) set up a deliberate series of contrasts between the vestibule and reading room.

Wölfflin might have described this contrast in terms of breath. He wrote:

>»I can well imagine that someone might assert that the impression of a mood conveyed by architecture is based in our own involuntary effort to imitate other forms through our organization – in other words, that we judge the vital feeling of architectural forms according to the physical state that they induce in us. Powerful columns energetically stimulate us; our respiration harmonizes with the expansive or narrow nature of the space. In the former case we are stimulated as if we ourselves were the supporting columns; in the latter case we breathe as deeply and fully as if our chest were as wide as the hall.«[41]

While Wölfflin's claims sound eccentric in the context of contemporary modes of architectural criticism, they are in keeping with the character of sixteenth-century writings on music, in their emphasis on bodily response.

Yet more than one hundred years after Wölfflin's essay, architectural history still relies on interpretive paradigms derived from painting (most of which – somewhat ironically – come from Wölfflin's later writings). These can be useful in some regards, such as in the reading of a façade. But they are severely limited when applied to interior architecture.

With few exceptions, architectural history has consistently eschewed interpretations which might take into account aspects of the physical response to buildings.[42] But as sixteenth-century music theory suggests, this is far from an anachronistic approach to the period. A renewed interest in phenomenology across art history and architectural criticism makes Wölfflin's otherwise unfashionable ideas seem potentially timely again.[43]

Michelangelo's upending of conventions in the Laurentian Library challenged its visitors and interpreters from its origin. Sixteenth-century visitors such as Bocchi struggled to arrive at a new set of critical terms adequate to account for this new work. The difficulty many more recent studies have had in accounting for, or

even describing, Michelangelo's architecture arises in part from a mismatch between the scholarly apparatus that has come to dominate architectural history and the kind of analysis his work invites. But writing on architecture from the early history of the discipline, by Wölfflin and others, offers potential insight into the neglected territories of architectural history. Considering not just the optical effect but the bodily response to Michelangelo's spaces, guided by sixteenth-century music theory, has the potential to open alternative avenues of interpretation.

There is a certain irony in the fact that although the Laurentian Library is of great historical importance, its significance lay not in the conventional sense of providing an authoritative model, but rather by testing the limits of architecture. On the one hand, it pushed architecture into a position that could not be sustained. On the other, it supplied the lexicon of forms and set of working procedures that Michelangelo would continue to use for the rest of his career.

Cellini, praising Michelangelo's architecture, wrote that with its »infinite beauty (*infinita bellezza*), that calls the eyes of men to see, or rather forces them.«[44] This strategy, of forcing men to see, was essentially an unsustainable one for architecture. The condition of the library speaks to a central dilemma of architecture, perpetually caught between the urge to be the subject and the expectation that it acts as the shell.[45]

Endnotes

1 This essay extends ideas presented in Cammy Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, New Haven/London 2008. For excerpts from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critiques of the library, see Paola Barocchi (ed.), *La Vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568, Giorgio Vasari*, 5 vols., Milan 1962, vol. 3, pp. 836–844; they are mentioned in James S. Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, London 1961, 2 vols. (abridged 1 vol. reprint 1986), p. 95. The reception of the library is also entwined with the history and historiography of Mannerism; see John Shearman, *Mannerism*, Harmondworth 1967, esp. pp. 15–30.

2 For a nuanced discussion of the reception of Michelangelo's use of the orders, see Caroline Elam, ›Tuscan Dispositions‹. Michelangelo's Florentine Architectural Vocabulary and Its Reception, in: *Renaissance Studies* 19 (2005), pp. 46–82.

3 Peruzzi offers a significant point of comparison in this regard, however; see Cammy Brothers, Figura e architettura nei disegni di Michelangelo, in: Caroline Elam (ed.), *Michelangelo e il Disegno di Architettura*, Venice 2006, pp. 90–92. Peruzzi's design method will be discussed in a forthcoming book by Ann Huppert.

4 Cosimo Bartoli, *Ragionamenti accademici sopra alcuni luoghi difficili di Dante*, Venice 1567, fol. 2v; and Francesco Bocchi, *Le Bellezze della città di Fiorenza*, Florence 1591 (modern edition edited by John Shearman, Farnborough 1971), p. 283.

5 Penley Chiang's seminar paper for my fall 2002 seminar on Michelangelo suggested reading the vestibule in terms of »figure/field,« as well as the connection to the Battle of the Centaurs.

6 Wolf comments on Alberti's definition of the wall and columns; P. M. Wolf, Michelangelo's Laurenziana and »inconspicuous tradition,« in: *Marsyas* 12 (1964/65), pp. 18–19.

7 The notion of the object is especially slippery in Michelangelo's poems to Tommaso Cavalieri, due to the complexities of using a Petrarchan model to address a male object of desire. Petrarch's construction of Laura is lucidly described by Robert Durling, Petrarch's ›Giovane Donna sotto un verde Lauro,‹ in: *Modern Language Notes* 86 (1971), pp. 1–20; John Freccero, The Fig Tree and the Laurel: Petrarch's Poetics, in: Patricia Parker and David Quint (eds), *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, Baltimore/London 1986, pp. 34–40 (originally published in *Diacritics* 5 [1975], pp. 20–32); and Nancy Vickers, Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme, in: *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1981), pp. 256–279. Related aspects of Michelangelo's poetry are discussed by Paschal Viglionese, Iconic and Metalinguistic Expression in the Poetic Language of Petrarch and Michelangelo, in: *Forum Italicum* 18 (1984), pp. 240–263; and Gregory Lucente, Lyric Tradition and the Desires of Absence: Rudel, Dante, and Michelangelo (›Vorrei uoler‹), in: *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 10 (1983), pp. 305–332.

8 Giorgio Vasari in: Paola Barocchi (ed.), *Le vite*, Florence 1966, vol. 6, p. 48; Bocchi 1591 (as in note 4), p. 285. I have discussed this response of being stunned in relation to the concept of aporia in an essay: Cammy Brothers, Michelangelo, Architecture, and the Stingray, in: Alexander Nagel and Lorenzo Pericolo (eds), *Subject as Aporia in Early Modern Art*, Aldershot 2010, pp. 159–178.

9 This is of course a gross simplification; scholarship on the origin, evolution and intepretation of the orders is vast, but usefully considered by Christof Thoenes and Hubertus Günther, Gli ordini architettonici: rinascita o invenzione? in: Marcello Fagiolo (ed.), *Roma e l'antico nell'arte e nella cultura del Cinquecento*, Rome 1985, pp. 261–310.

10 Elam discusses Michelangelo's use of the orders in the Library, and the problems of identification; see Elam 2005 (as in note 2).

11 Summers discusses *contrapposto* and *difficoltà*; see David Summers, Maniera and Movement: The Figura Serpentinata, in: *Art Quarterly* 35 (1972), pp. 269–301, and *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, Princeton 1981, pp. 82–87 and 177–185.

12 Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach and Robert Tavernor, Cambridge (Mass.) 1988, Book One, section 9, p. 24.

13 Many related texts and issues are discussed by Summers 1972 (as in note 11); see also the discussion of the *figura serpentinata* by Johannes Wilde, Zwei Modelle Michelangelos für das Julius-Grabmal, in: *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 2 (1928), pp. 199–218.

14 Cited by Summers 1981 (as in note 11), p. 274.

15 Summers discusses the ideas of Cicero and Quintillian with regard to contrast in rhetoric; see David Summers, Contrapposto: Style and Meaning in Renaissance Art, in: *Art Bulletin* 59 (1977), pp. 344–353.

16 Saslow cites several examples of Petrarch's use of antithesis, referring to Petrarch's sonnets 19, 89, 257, 261, 281 and others; James M. Saslow, *The Poetry of Michelangelo. An Annotated Translation*, New Haven/London 1991, p. 208, note 2.

17 »Vorrei voler, Signor, quel ch'io non voglio:/ tra 'l foco e 'l cor di ghiaccia un vel s'asconde/ che 'l foco ammarza, onde non corrisponde/ la penna all'opre, e fa bugiardo 'l foglio« (sonnet 87 in Saslow 1991 [as in note 16], p. 208).

18 Michelangelo himself used the trope in another poem for Cavalieri (sonnet 88, in Saslow 1991 [as in note 16], p. 210).

19 »Veggio co' be' vost'occhi un dolce lume/che co' mie ciechi già veder non posso;/porto co' vostri piedi un pondo addosso,/Volo con le vost'ale senza piume;/col vostro ingegno al ciel sempre son mosso;/dal vostro arbitrio sono pallido e rosso, freddo al sol, caldo alle più fredde brume./Nel voler vostro è sol la voglia mia, i miei pensier nel vostro cor si fanno, nel vostro fiato son le mie parole./Come luna da sé sol par ch'io sia,/ché gli occhi nostri in ciel veder non sanno/se non quell tanto che n'accende il sole« (sonnet 89 in Saslow 1991 [as in note 16], p. 211).

20 Ackerman credits Tolnay with the comparison to lava (Ackerman 1961 [as in note 1], p. 116; original cited by Barocchi 1962, vol. 3, p. 879). Wittkower describes the stairs as a cascade; see Rudolf Wittkower, Michelangelo's Biblioteca Laurenziana, in: *Idea and Image. Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, New York 1978, pp. 11–72, p. 60 (originally published in *Art Bulletin* 16 [1934], no. 2, pp. 123–218, p. 206).

21 »…perche è molto convenevole, che quelle cose, sopra le quali qualche gran carico è posto, si schizzino; posero sotto le colonne le base: le quali con quei loro bastoni, & cavetti paiono per lo sopraposto peso schizzarsi«; Andrea Palladio, *I quattro libri d'architettura*, Venice 1570, book 1, ch. 20, p. 51; translation by Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield, *The Four Books on Architecture*, Cambridge (Mass.)/London 1997, p. 51.

22 Maurer discusses Michelangelo's avoidance of perspective in the context of Renaissance drawing conventions generally; see Golo Maurer, *Michelangelo. Die Architekturzeichnungen. Entwurfsprozess und Planungspraxis*, Regensburg 2004, pp. 104–117.

23 Paola Barocchi and Renzo Ristori (eds), *Il carteggio di Michelangelo*, edizione postuma di Giovanni Poggi, 5 vols., 1965–83, vol. 2, p. 260. Earlier examples of a large object within a small space include Alberti's Capella Rucellai at San Pancrazio, and, in broad terms, Bramante's Tempietto. On the Capella Rucellai, see Howard Burns, Leon Battista Alberti, in: Francesco Paolo Fiore (ed.), *Storia dell'architettura italiana: Il Quattrocento*, Milan 1998, pp. 140–142.

24 Caroline Elam, Firenze 1500–1550, in: Arnaldo Bruschi (ed.), *Storia dell'architettura italiana. Il primo Cinquecento*, Milan 2002, p. 226.

25 Michelangelo writes of »detta parte di scala aovata abi come dua alie, una di qua e una di là, che vi seguitino e' medesimi gradi, ma diritti e non aovati. Questi pere e' servi, e el mezzo aovato per el Signore« (*Carteggio*, vol. 5, p. 48, in a letter to Vasari of 28 September 1555). This is also the letter in which Michelangelo says he remembers the stairs as if in a dream: »Mi ritorna bene nella mente come un sognio una certa iscala, ma non credo che sia a punto quella che io pensai allora, perché mi torna cosa ghoffa« (pp. 47–48).

26 Ackerman 1961 (as in note 1), pp. 37–52; Summers 1981 (as in note 11), pp. 418–446; Marcus Frings, Zu Michelangelos Architekturtheorie. Eine neue Deutung des sog. Prälaten-Briefes, in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 61 (1998), pp. 227–243.

Endnotes

27 Sixteenth-century accounts are often richer than contemporary ones, notwithstanding the insight afforded by theories such as phenomenology in the intervening centuries, in part because Renaissance viewers depended in their descriptions on first-hand observation, while the intermediary of photography privileges vision over other senses.

28 Anton Francesco Doni, *I Marmi*, ed. by E. Chiòrboli, Bari 1928, book 2, pp. 20 – 23 (unpublished translation by John Shearman).

29 An influential example is Rudolf Wittkower's discussion of Palladio and his reliance on musical proportions; see Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, New York/London 1962 (reprint 1971), pp. 132 – 142. For a more comprehensive view, see Deborah Howard and Malcolm Longair, Harmonic Proportion and Palladio's ›Quattro Libri‹, in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 41 (1982), no. 2, pp. 116 – 143.

30 Alberti later suggests that the mathematical means for composing pleasing relationships has already been established by musicians. The very same numbers that cause sounds to have that *concinnitas*, pleasing to the ears, can also fill the eyes and mind with wondrous delight. From musicians therefore who have already examined such numbers thoroughly, or from those objects in which Nature has displayed some evident and noble quality, the whole method of outlining is derived. This is followed by a discussion of the mathematically harmonic relationships in music, and by the assertion that »Architects employ all these numbers in the most convenient manner possible…« (Alberti 1988 [as in note 12], book 9, section 5, p. 305).

31 Alberti, as mentioned above, and Alberti 1988 (as in note 12), book 1, section 9, pp. 24; Leonardo, *On Painting*, ed. by Martin Kemp, New Haven/London 1989, pp. 34 – 37.

32 Bartoli 1567 (as in note 4), fols. 35v.-36r. The interlocutors are: Lorenzo Antinori; Piero D'Arica; and Pierfrancesco Giambullari: »L. Deh ditemi per vostra fede chi sono stati quegli, che voi havete conosciuti per tanto ecellenti quanto voi mi dite, & potete lasciar da parte quelli che sono stati avanti a tempi nostri, perche sarebbe un numero infinito, che io so bene che Ocghem fu quasi il primo che in questi tempi, ritrovasse la Musica quasi che spenta del tutto: non altrimenti che Donatello ne suoi ritrovo' la Scultura; & che Iosquino discepolo di Ocghem si puo dire che quello alla Musica fusse un monstro della natura, si come è stato nella Architettura Pittura & Scultura il nostro Michelagnolo Buonarroti; perche si come Iosquino non hà però ancora havuto alcuno che lo arrivi nelle composizioni, cosi Michelagnolo ancora infrattuti coloro che in queste sue arti si sono esercitati, è solo & senza compagno; Et l'uno & l'altro di loro ha aperti gli occhi a tutti coloro che di queste arti si dilettano, o si diletteranno per lo avvenire.« I would like to thank Anthony Cummings for sharing his thoughts regarding this passage.

33 Claude V. Palisca, The Alterati of Florence, Pioneers in the Theory of Dramatic Music, in: William W. Austin (ed.), *New Looks at Italian Opera. Essays in Honor of Donald J. Grout*, Ithaca/New York 1968, pp. 9 – 38, especially pp. 23 – 26; reprint in C.V. Palisca, *Studies in the History of Italian Music and Music Theory*, Oxford 1994, pp. 408 – 431.

34 In Proem to Titus Pyrrhinus (1507) on Plutarch's Musica; cited by Anthony Cummings, *The Maecenas and the Madrigalist. Patrons, Patronage and the Origins of the Italian Madrigal*, Philadelphia 2004, p. 49.

35 Aristotle, *Politics*, VIII, 7, 1342a; discussed by Palisca 1994 (as in note 33), p. 420.

36 Aristotle, *Poetics*, VI, 2, 1449b; cited by Palisca 1994 (as in note 33), p. 420.

37 Lorenzo Giacomini Tebalducci Malespini, *Orationi e discorsi*, Florence 1597, p. 42. Palisca elaborates, »No longer did the composer seek only to soothe and moderate emotions for ethical ends, but he aimed to move listeners to the strongest passions, perhaps thereby to purge them. The passions could be evoked only through vivid conceits and by exploiting the more exciting instrumental and vocal effects, melodic successions, and harmonies. The better a composer learned to sustain an affection, the more thoroughly could he induce purgation through a stimulated passion«; Palisca 1994 (as in note 33), p. 422.

38 »Altro non è affetto che seguitamento o fuga del anima di alcuna cosa appressa da lei, o come convenevole, o come disconvenevole«; Giacomini 1597 (as in note 37), fol. 38; cited by Palisca 1968 (as in note 33), p. 25.

39 Giacomini 1597 (as in note 37), fol. 33.

40 For example, see sonnets cited in note 16.

41 Heinrich Wölfflin, Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture, in: Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou (eds and trans), *Empathy, Form, and Space. Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873 – 1893,* Santa Monica (CA) 1994, pp. 154 – 155; in German: »Ich könnte mir also wohl denken, dass jemand mit der Behauptung aufträte, der Stimmungseindruck der Architektur beruhe allein darin, dass wir unwillkürlich mit unsrer Organisation die fremden Formen nachzubilden versuchen, mit andren Worten, dass wir die Daseinsgefühle architektonischer Bildungen nach der körperlichen Verfassung beurteilen, in die wir geraten. Kräftige Säulen bewirken in uns energische Innervationen, nach der Weite oder Enge der räumlichen Verhältnisse richtet sich die Respiration, wir innervieren, als ob wir diese tragenden Säulen wären und atmen so tief und voll, als wäre unsre Brust so weit wie diese Hallen […].« Heinrich Wölfflin, *Prolegomena zu einer Psychologie der Architektur* [1886], Berlin 1999, pp. 12 – 13.

42 Geoffrey Scott took up aspects of Wölfflin's ideas in his book *The Architecture of Humanism*. It enjoyed widespread popularity for several decades following its publication until it was suppressed and banished by the insistently mathematical and rationalist Wittkower, as Alina Payne has argued; see Alina Payne, Rudolf Wittkower and Architectural Principles in the Age of Modernism, in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53 (1994), no. 3, pp. 322 – 342; Branko Mitrovic, Apollo's Own: Geoffrey Scott and the Lost Pleasures of Architectural History, in: *Journal of Architectural Education* 54 (2000), no. 2, pp. 95 – 103.

43 A few recent examples from the realm of art history and architecture include: Mohsen Mostafavi and David Leatherbarrow, On Weathering: the Life of Buildings in Time, Cambridge (Mass.) 1993; and other essays, in: Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa and Alberto Perez-Gomez (eds), *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture* [republication of 1994 A + U publication], San Francisco 2006; Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, London 1996; David Rosand, *Drawing Acts: Studies in Graphic Expression and Representation*, Cambridge/New York 2002; Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*, New Haven 2000; and Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture*, Baden 1998.

44 Benvenuto Cellini, in: Carlo Cordié (ed.), *Opere di Baldassare Castiglione, Giovanni della Casa, Benvenuto Cellini*, Milan/Naples 1960, pp. 1109 – 1110; cited and trans. by Summers 1981 (as in note 11), p. 176. On the broader question of how works of art command viewers' attention in the Renaissance, see Robert W. Gaston, Attention and Inattention in Religious Painting of the Renaissance: Some Preliminary Observations, in: Andrew Morrogh, Fiorella Superbi Gioffredi, Piero Morselli and Eve Borsook (eds), *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth*, vol. 2, Florence 1985, pp. 253 – 268; and John Shearman, *Only Connect . . .: Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance*, Princeton 1992.

45 As a contemporary parallel, one might think of the controversies surrounding the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, designed by Frank Gehry and opened in 1997. The tension between displaying works of art to good effect and producing significant architecture also surfaced in Steven Holl's Bellevue Museum in Seattle, which closed just as the new museum was completed; its failure has been attributed in part to the fact that the dramatic space was ill-suited for the display of artwork; see Ann Wilson Lloyd, If the museum itself is an artwork, what about the art inside?, in: *The New York Times*, January 25, 2004, section 2, p. 29. It reopened in 2005 with an interior modified to suit its renewed focus on exhibiting decorative arts and crafts.

Figures

1a Michelangelo, Laurentian Library vestibule; photograph: Abhi Shelat.

1b Michelangelo, Laurentian Library reading room; photograph: Abhi Shelat.

2 Michelangelo, Medici Chapel tomb design, black chalk, 26.2×18.8 cm, British Museum, London, inv. 1859-5-14-822r; Cammy Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, New Haven/London 2008, fig. 186.

3 Michelangelo, Laurentian Library study, red chalk and pen, 26.5×19.6 cm, Casa Buonarroti, Florence, inv. 48 Ar.; Frank Zöllner, Christof Thoenes and Thomas Pöpper, *Michelangelo. Das vollständige Werk*, Cologne 2007, fig. 396.

4 Michelangelo, Laurentian Library vestibule, view of staircase; photograph: Abhi Shelat.

5a Michelangelo, Laurentian Library studies, red chalk and pen, 39×20 cm, Casa Buonarroti, Florence, inv. 92 Av.

5b Michelangelo, Study of bases, pen and ink with black chalk and red chalk, 28.2×25.8 cm, British Museum, London, inv. 1859-9-15-508v.

6 Michelangelo, Studies for the Laurentian Library vestibule stairs, black chalk, pen and red chalk, 39×20 cm, Casa Buonarroti, Florence, inv. 92 Ar.

7 Michelangelo, Sketch of reading-room desks, red chalk and pen, 16×20.1 cm, Casa Buonarroti, Florence, inv. 94 Ar.

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