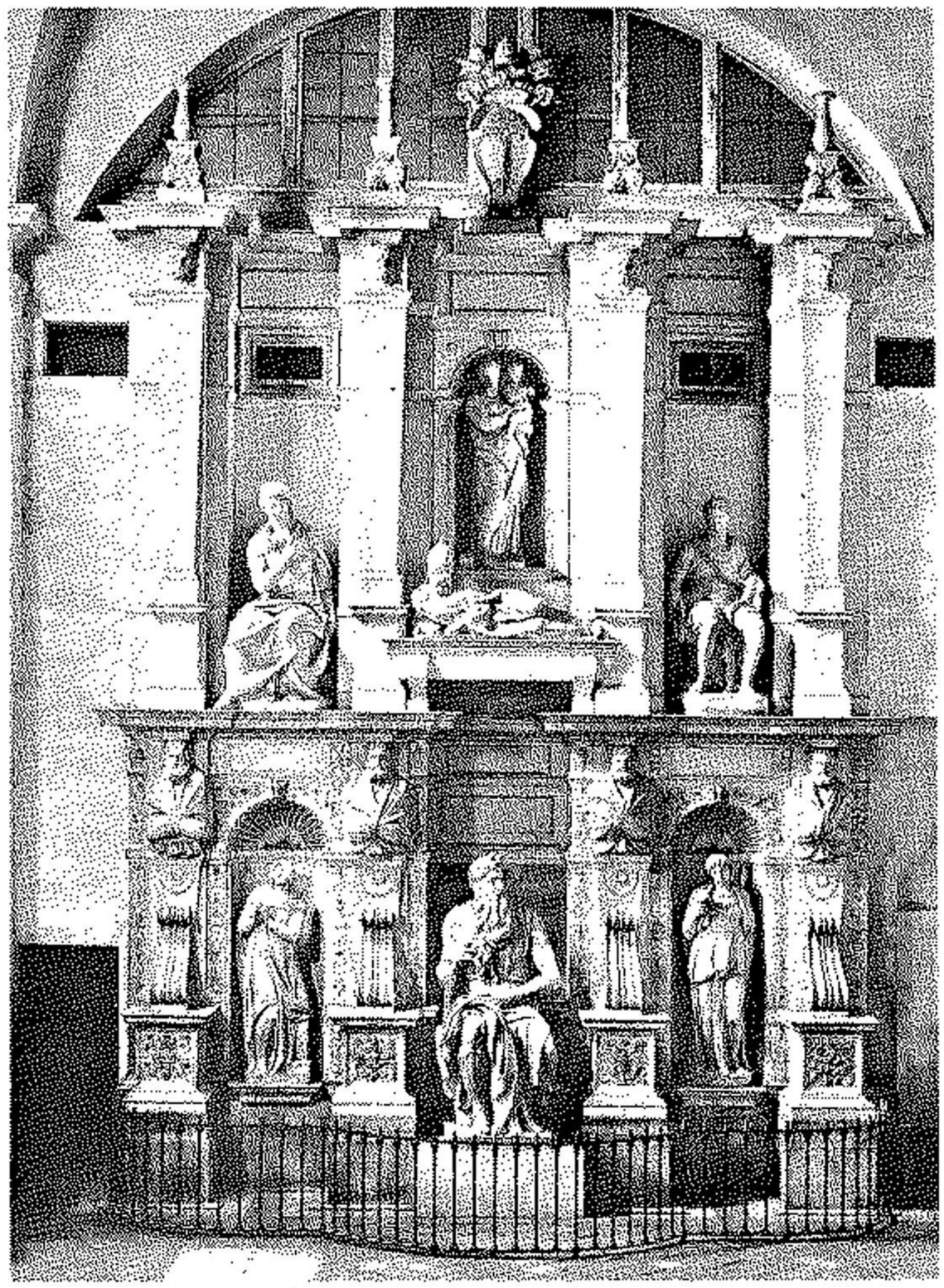
LEO X.

Some time elapsed before Leo X hired Michaelangelo to work for him, because the artist was busy elsewhere on the monument to Julius II. Yet the idea of working on St.Peters caused the sculptor to ask work of LeoX and he was put in charge of the entire program. In 1516 he went to Rome with a sketch of the facade of St. Peters which met with Leo's approval, and then he departed for Carrara to secure marble for the monument to Julius II.

His design for the facade did not reach Rome until December, 1517, and the artist arrived in January, 1518, and made an agreement to execute the facade in eight years. The heirs of Julius II were pressing him, and with the two works on his hands, he chose to work on the tomb of Julius until 1520, when his contract for St. Peters was cancelled because no work had been done there.

Leo X had abandoned Bramante's design because of finances, but work on the new St. Peters was imperative because of the condition of the old Basilica. Bramante's demolitions were such that the old church was exposed to the winds on all sides and in 1513 it was impossible to use St. Peters for Easter, All Saints and Christmas. Bramante had remained architect -in-chief from the beginning of Leo's reign but was crippled by gout in the hands so that he could hardly work, and he was close to 70 years old. On Nov.1, 1513, Fra Gioconda da Verona was appointed his deputy, even though he was over 80. Giulio da Sangallo was appointed architect on Jan. 14, 1514. On his death bed Bramante recommended Raphael as his successor.



Monument to Julius II.
Only the three bottom figures are by Michaelangelo.-
At St. Peter in Chains, Rome. Photo: Allinari Bros. Florence.

Raphael was an accomplished architect, and provisionally took over Bramante's place on April 1, 1514. Leo X made Fra Giocondo and Raphael architects-in-chief on August 1, 1514. Giuliano da Sangallo was administrator and co-adjutor, responsible for carrying out the work but not rated as an architect. Fra Giocondo died July 1, 1515, and Raphael was then sole architect-in-chief. He submitted a first set of designs which did not please him and so he submitted a second set. The first had great longitudinal length and a dome too heavy for the pillars. It was censured by Antonio da Sangallo, bringing on the second design. Evidently a Latin cross floor plan was desired by Leo X. The work was never completed. Under Raphael only the small pillars that stand on both sides of the pillars of the dome were raised to about 40 feet and the arcades of the south side were ceiled over.

The Vatican Pavilion was opened and blessed by Paulo Card. Marella, personal representative of Pope Paul. Paul VI, speaking on April 20, said:"The Pieta is in New York and everyone is talking about it. We are happy to know that the Pieta is in America and has been received with veneration and applause."

There is a question as to whether Raphael strengthened the foundations. He worked to made the old St. Peters serviceable for divine worship. The process of demolition continued under Leo X and by November, 1518, the whole portico of the old basilica was down. Raphael's successor as architect was Antonio da Sangallo with Baldassare Peruzzi as co-adjutor.

Pope Leo X had assigned a huge sum of money to St. Peters construction. This was to be raised by issuing indulgences to all who contributed to the erection of St. Peters. The reaction in Germany is exemplified by the reaction of Martin Luther. Even in the Latin countries this idea met with opposition and brought meager contributions. The Fabrica di San Pietro, started by Julius II, was used by Leo X. But because finances were so muddled, the work slowed more and more. Leo X died in 1521 to be succeeded by Adrian VI, who continued the work on St. Peters, but died early in 1523.
(Pastor. History of the Popes, Vol. VIII, pp. 263-271; 288-347)

CLEMENT VII.

May 6-14, 1527 saw the sack of Rome with its bloody massacre and senseless destruction of property, including St. Peters and the Vatican Palace, where the only thing not violated was the tomb of St. Peter. The artists of Rome were scattered or killed. Clement VII had come to the throne with a depleted treasury, yet under him the Sala di Costantino was decorated by Giulio Romano and Penni. For the continuation of the building of St. Peters, a College of Sixty was appointed to see that the funds were directed to the right purpose, but it was such a clumsy organization that it was replaced by the Fabbrica di San Pietro. Before the Sack of Rome, Baldassare Peruzzi had been appointed architect. This was renewed in 1531, but Peruzzi had to be summoned to Rome in 1533. In the Vatican Clement VII completed the Court of St. Damasus. Michaelangelo had been working on the defenses of Florence between 1527 and 1529, and with the victory of the Medicis, Clement VII had to sheild him from reprisal.
(Pastor. Vol.X, pp.345-353.)

PAUL III.

Michaelangelo had returned to Rome just before the death of Clement VII to work on the monument to Julius II. Being afraid of receiving new commissions from the Pope, he held aloof from the Vatican, being now an old man. But he was unable to withsatnd the request of Pope Paul III who appointed him chief architect, sculptor and painter of the Vatican in September, 1535.

Paul III protected him from the heirs of Julius II by law, so that Michaelangelo could begin the painting of the Last Judgement in the Sistine Chapel, which had been suggested by Clement VII. Baldassare Peruzzi was reappointed architect of St. Peters with Antonio da Sangallo overseer of the work.

Paul III saw to the completion of Bramante's corridor leading to the Belvedere. The Pauline Chapel and the Sala Regia were added to the Vatican. The Sala Regia, an ante-chamber to the Sistine Chapel, was built from designs of Sangallo and necessitated the destruction of several rooms, including the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, which had been decorated by Fra Angelico for Nicholas V. Begun in 1540 and finished in 1573, the Sala Regia was decorated later by Zucchero.

The Last Judgement- Michaelangelo.
Sistine Chapel- Vatican.
Photo- Fratelli Alinari, Florence.

The work on the Last Judgement was begun between April 10 and May 18, 1536, after the wall was prepared and the scaffolding raised. The suggestion of Sebastiano del Piombo that the work be done in oil, as well as his offer to help were rejected. The cartoons were begun in September, 1535. A great number of drawings and sketches remain, but not the originals. With the exception of the mixing of the colors by Francesco Amatori, Michaelangelo did the whole painting, and with the interruption of only one ecclesiastical function in November, 1538, he finished the upper portion in December, 1540. It is recorded that the papal master of ceremonies objected to the nudes in the fresco and was them himself painted into the picture- apparently an apochryphal story.

The bottom of the fresco was unveiled October 31, 1541, on the eve of All Saints. Because of the objection to the nudes, Daniele da Volterra, one of the Master's pupils, was commissioned after the death of Michaelangelo to cover the nudity with alterations limited to absolute necessity. At Volterra's death, Girolamo da Fano continued this work from 1566. Under Sixtus V other effacements were made, and more of the same under Clement XIII. Despite all this, the effect of this huge picture, 60 by 30 feet, is spellbinding. At the age of 67 Michaelangelo wanted to finish the work on the tomb of Pope Julius II. Paul III persuaded him to paint the Pauline Chapel, since damaged by fire, the last work of the brush of Michaelangelo. At the same time he brought to conclusion the tomb of Pope Julius II, three statues instead of the planned 40. It was erected in the Church of St. Peter in Chains and contains as the central figure his great Moses.

During the last days of Clement VII the work on St. Peters had come to a halt and grass and undergrowth were rank on the works of Bramante. Paul III had reappointed Peruzzi and Antonio di Sangallo to continue the plans and make a wooden model of the work. Sangallo drew up for St. Peters a great dome resting on two tiers of arcades and a huge vestibule, making it comparable in length with the present basilica. He intended to keep the Greek Cross floor plan and still cover the area occupied by old St Peters.

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Il Collezionista, April 1, 1964, tells of Vatican's plan to issue four Values on April 22, 1964, commemorating Vatican participation in the New York World's Fair. Paul VI is on the 15 and 100 Lire; the Peita on the 50 Lire; a detail from the Pieta on the 250 Lire.