

THE REBUILDING OF THE BASILICA OF ST. PETER AND THE VATICAN PALACE. (Cont)Pope Paul III (Cont.)

To erect this dome of Sangallo's, much of the Vatican Palace would have been destroyed, and it would have thrown the work of Bramante out of proportion. Sangallo died without acceptance of the idea. Giuliano Roman sought the superintendancy but he died in 1546.

Michaelangelo was now 72 years old and had been seriously ill in 1544 and 1545. Architects since Bramante had brought only confusion, and Paul III was convinced that only Michaelangelo could carry on the work properly. The artist refused all salary so that he could work purely for the love of God and the veneration of St. Peter, and accepted the task. Paul III granted him unrestricted power with no necessity of rendering accounts, and early in 1547 Michaelangelo set to work on St. Peters, with loud opposition from partisans of Sangallo. The Pope's oral commission was put into writing to silence his critics in 1549.

Rejecting Sangallo's plan, Michaelangelo submitted his plan, calling it a completion of Bramante's. The Greek cross floor plan was retained but his own plans sought to bring harmony to the work and preserve what Bramante had done. Retaining the central dome, surrounding quadrate, the cross arms of equal length and terminal apses of Bramante, he gave up the galleries, lateral porches and corner towers of Bramante, narrowed the space around the dome and made the dome the dominating factor. This may have been done because of financial considerations, so that the completion of the basilica could be foreseen in a calculable time.

A fresco in the Vatican Library shows a huge porch with ten gigantic columns, all subordinate to the huge dome, which is thrown into relief by four smaller domes at the angles of the Greek cross. Michaelangelo used truncated walls to connect the apses with the quadrate, which is both cumbersome inside and out. His baroque windows and semi-cupolas drew much criticism. In the dome he produced a work marvelous inside and out, with ascending continuity of construction borrowed from the gothic and expressed in classical lines. Without Bramante's towers, the dome had to be higher, and a symbol of the supreme spiritual authority transmitted by Christ to St. Peter and his successors was the result of the design of Michaelangelo.

POPE JULIUS III.

The opponents of Michaelangelo, admirers of Sangallo, attacked him in the hope of seeing him discharged by Julius III. Michaelangelo defended himself before the Fabbrica of San Pietro, the principal charge being that he guarded the secrets of his studio. Julius III ratified his position on January 23, 1552, on the terms of Paul III. Exhaustion of the Papal Treasury meant decreasing amounts for the work on St. Peters, and attempts were made to entice Michaelangelo to work elsewhere, but he was determined to spend his remaining powers working only for God.

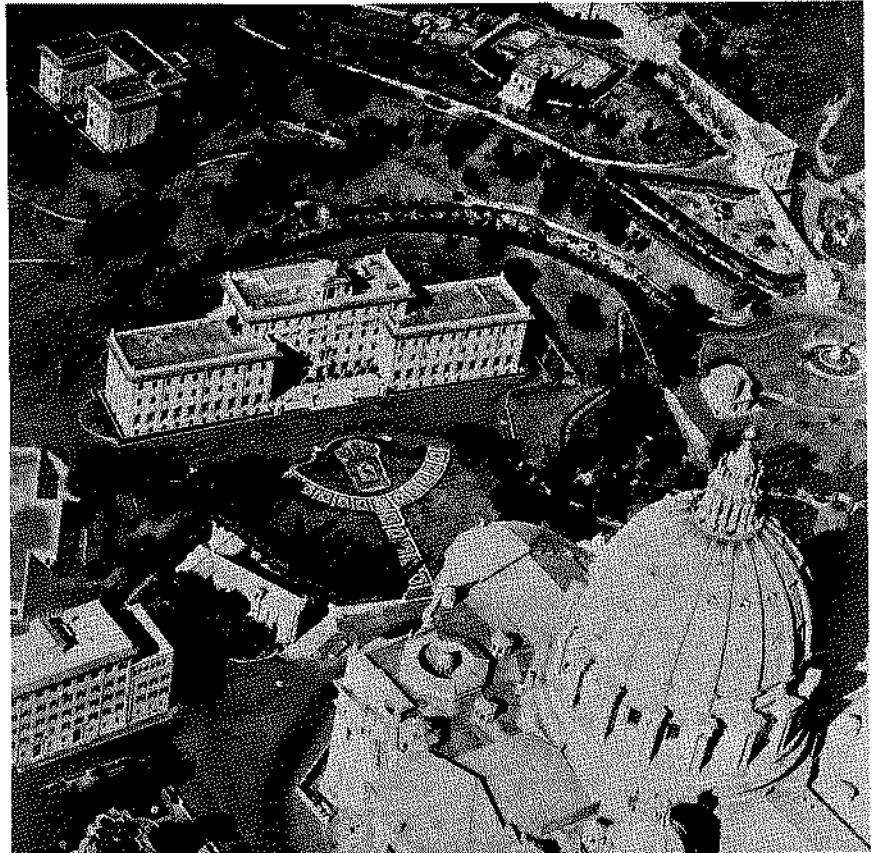
In the brief reign of Marcellus II and under Paul IV, the work on St. Peters suffered from lack of money (1555 to 1559)

POPE PIUS IV.

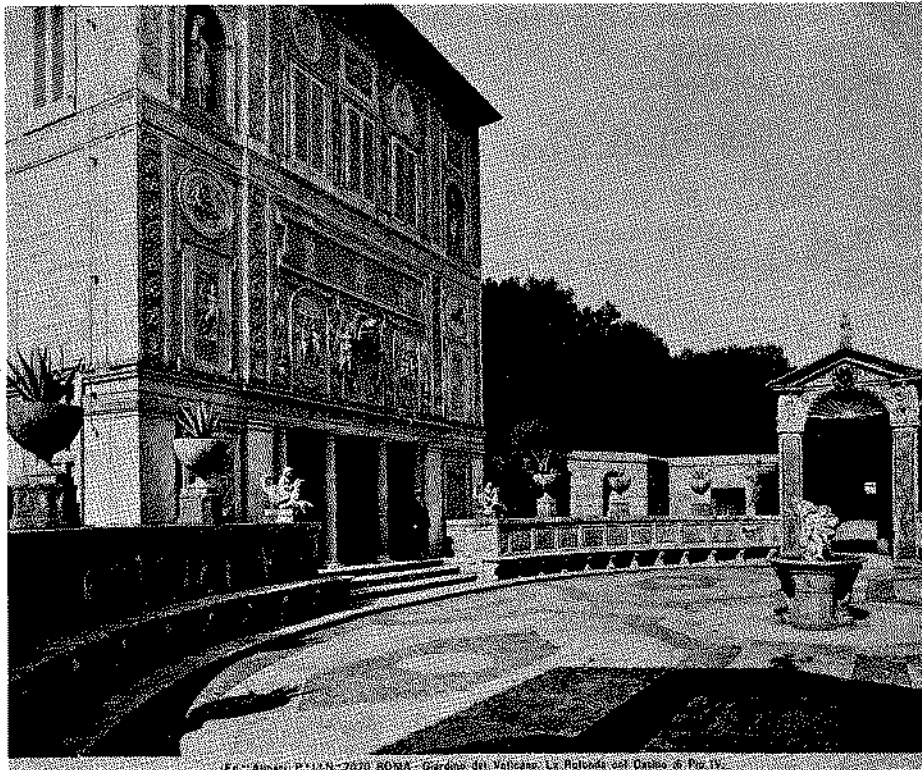
Pope Pius IV was bound by an election capitulation to continue the work on St. Peters, added to which he was interested in building and from piety he wanted the work to go on. Michaelangelo was confirmed as architect and protected from his enemies by Pope Pius IV. At the age of 86 he offered to resign, but was refused. In 1563 Nanni Bigio turned the Fabbrica against Michaelangelo. He wanted the youthful Pier Luigi Gaeta as superintendent of the works. The Fabbrica named Bigio for the job and Michaelangelo threatened resignation and was backed up by Pius IV.

Knowing that he would not live to see the completion of his efforts, Michaelangelo made a clay model from which a wooden one was prepared. He finished most of the drum of the Dome, and the south arm and tribune were completed and the north tribune nearly so. In 1561 he almost died but recovered and continued his work at St. Peters as well as several works of sculpture. However, in February, 1564, death finally came to bring an end to his tremendous labors.

Pius IV refused to name his successor for five months. Then Pirro Ligurio was named first architect and Jacopo Vignola as second. Both were later dismissed for not adhering to the plans of Michaelangelo. Guglielmo della Porta was considered as their successor.



Michaelangelo's Dome



(Re-Amazon P. 114-120, ROMA - Garden of Vatican, Lt. Palazzo del Dato, a. Por. IV.)

Pius IV saw to a great deal of work in the Vatican. He started the completion of the Belvedere, practically finished in August, 1561. Two floors of the new facade were completed in 1562. The large cortile was enclosed on the west and Pirro Ligurio was assigned to complete Bramante's plan there, as well as to superintend the building of the Nicchione or huge niche, planned by Michaelangelo for Julius III. The idea of a huge colonnade around St. Peters Square was in the mind of Pius IV in June 1564, although it was not realized until generations later.

The Casino of Pius IV.

(10)

(Photo- Alinari Bros. Florence)

The Casino of Pius IV is the crown of his works in the Vatican. Pirro Ligurio (1510-1583), architect, engineer, painter, writer, antiquarian, constructed this edifice in the Vatican Gardens near the Belvedere, planning it from his comprehensive knowledge of ancient Roman monuments. It was begun in 1558, halted, begun again in 1560 and completed late in 1562. It consists of two buildings, the Casino and the Loggia, separated by an oval cortile. They are examples of the decorative art rather than of architecture. On it worked Fedorigo Zuccaro, Santi di Tito and Fedorigo Barocci. (Pastor Vol. XVI, pp. 409-457.)

Pope GREGORY XIII.

Gregory XIII appointed Giacomo della Porta to succeed Giacomo Vignola as head architect of St. Peters in 1573. Interest in tombs and antiquities was aroused by continuing discoveries, but no accurate record of their contents was kept, as the work progressed on St. Peters. A report of 1584 tells of the progress. The drum of the cupols had been finished for several years, but no one seemed to want to build the dome because of difficulties that might be encountered.

The Gregorian Chapel designed by Giacomo della Porta was built in ancient marble by Girolamo Muziano. (Pastor Vol. XX, pp. 565-574.) In the middle of the Belvedere galleries was erected the Tower of the Winds, 73 meters high, to serve as an astronomical observatory. (Pastor XX, pp. 609-621.)

POPE SIXTUS V.

Sixtus V accomplished the raising of the Vatican obelisk (called obelisks by the ancient Romans, and by the middle ages names giglie). This was the only obelisk remaining standing from ancient times, having been brought from Heliopolis to Rome by Caligula and set in the center of the spina of the circus which he commenced, but which Nero completed, called the Circus of Nero. Nicholas V had intended to place it in front of St. Peters, resting on a colossal bronze of the standing figures of the Four Evangelists.

The difficulty of lowering and lifting this mass of red granite was realized by the account given by Pliny of the Vatican obelisk and by the Ammianus Marcellinus story of the erection of the Constantine obelisk in the Circus Maximus. For more than one thousand years no such problem had been solved, and there was no record of the machines which had been used in ancient times.

Michaelangelo and Sangallo had declared the idea impracticable. Yet Sixtus V was determined to carry out the idea and had a wooden model erected in St. Peters Square. A Commission of Cardinals was appointed for the work. Architects and mathematicians were called in to solve the problem. Three general plans evolved.

