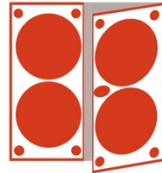




UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO
DIPARTIMENTO DI BENI CULTURALI
E AMBIENTALI



Fenestella

Dentro l'arte medievale / Inside Medieval Art



I – 2020



Fenestella è una rivista ad accesso aperto sottoposta a revisione reciprocamente anonima
Fenestella is Double-blind peer-reviewed Open Access Journal

Editore / Publisher

Università degli Studi di Milano, Dipartimento di Beni Culturali e Ambientali

Direttore / Editor

Fabio Scirea (Università degli Studi di Milano)

Comitato editoriale / Editorial staff

Mauro della Valle (Università degli Studi di Milano)

Simona Moretti (Università IULM, Milano)

Fabio Scirea (Università degli Studi di Milano)

Assistente editoriale / Editorial Assistant

Andrea Torno Ginnasi (Università degli Studi di Milano)

Comitato scientifico / Editorial board

Marcello Angheben (Université de Poitiers, CESCO)

Xavier Barral i Altet (Université de Rennes 2, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia)

Giulia Bordi (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

Manuel Castiñeiras (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

Sible De Blaauw (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Albert Dietl (Universität Regensburg)

Manuela Gianandrea (Sapienza Università di Roma)

Søren Kaspersen (University of Copenhagen – *emeritus*)

Miodrag Marković (University of Belgrade)

John Mitchell (University of East Anglia)

Giulia Orofino (Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio meridionale)

Valentino Pace (già Università degli Studi di Udine)

Paolo Piva (Università degli Studi di Milano)

José María Salvador González (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Wolfgang Schenkluhn (Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, ERZ)

Contatti / Contact us

Università degli Studi di Milano

Dipartimento di Beni Culturali e Ambientali

Via Noto 6, 20141 Milano

<https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/fenestella>

redazione.fenestella@unimi.it

Sommario / Contents

- 1 La storiografia e l'iconografia dei timpani del Portail Royal (Chartres)
Paolo Piva
- 23 Iconographic Interpretation of the Temple as a Theological Symbol in Images of the Annunciation of the 14th and 15th Centuries
José María Salvador-González
- 43 Il pulpito e il pavimento di San Liberatore alla Maiella: distruzione, alterazione e ricomposizione degli arredi liturgici
Eleonora Tosti
- 79 Monumental Painting of the Byzantine World c. 1100. Style and Imagery
Irina Oretskaia
- 115 Sainte-Marie de Taüll : le programme eucharistique et angélique du bas-côté sud
Marcello Angheben
- 145 The veneration of *spolia*: the Madonna della Colonna in St. Peter's in Rome
Lex Bosman

In copertina: Chartres, Portail Royal (foto di Fabio Scirea)

The veneration of *spolia*: the Madonna della Colonna in St. Peter's in Rome

Lex Bosman

University of Amsterdam

A.F.W.Bosman@uva.nl

Abstract

In the context of the history of planning, designing and constructing new St. Peter's the concepts of *renewal* and *continuity* can be insightful. Renewal was the essence of the plans of Pope Julius II (1503-1513) of around 1505, since the wording in documents points to renewal instead of replacing the old church completely: words like *reparare et exornare*, *rehedificare* and *instaurare* were used. When in the early 17th century pope Paul V decided to tear down the remainder of the old basilica, the chapter feared that many of the monuments, altars and tombs in the old basilica would disappear, which would diminish the visibility of the *continuity* of the basilica and its chapter.

One of those objects was the so-called Madonna della Colonna, a fresco of the Virgin and Child painted on the third column on the left in the old basilica. This miracle-working image became increasingly popular in the last quarter of the 16th century was officially recognized when in 1578 an altar was installed to direct the cult. This underlines the situation where the remaining eastern part of Old St. Peter's still functioned as the important basilica, while to the west the new building was gradually being constructed.

Both the history of planning and designing the renewal of St. Peter's and the continuous functioning of the remaining eastern part of the early Christian basilica shows that both *renewal* and *continuity* were crucial here. One of the elements judged necessary to ensure continuity was the Madonna della Colonna, which was thus transferred to a new altar in new St. Peter's.

Keywords: Old St. Peter's Rome; Spolia; Medieval Art; Medieval Architecture

How to cite: Lex Bosman, *The Veneration of spolia: the Madonna della Colonna in St. Peter's in Rome*, «Fenestella» I (2020): 145-163.

DOI: [10.13130/fenestella/14355](https://doi.org/10.13130/fenestella/14355)

The concepts of *renewal* and *continuity* are widely used and they seem particularly appropriate for the history of the process of planning and building new St. Peter's in the Vatican. The Madonna della Colonna, as it is known will be presented here to demonstrate some of these aspects. This image of the Madonna and Child was painted on the third column on the left in old St. Peter's and lost its original position in the period of construction of the last, eastern part of New St. Peter's. Its history may help to understand how the planning and construction of the new St. Peter's, the renewal of the early Christian church was interwoven with those elements of the old building that were considered to be necessary to secure the continuity of this important monument¹.

The discipline of architectural history often focuses on elements that are 'new', thereby sometimes neglecting such elements that ensure the continuity of age-old institutions². This applies to St. Peter's in Rome as well, since the structure of the early Christian basilica remained unchanged for over a thousand years. Over the centuries, valuable and growingly important testimonies of the position of this church were gathered in the building of St. Peter's, while throughout all these centuries, the architecture of the early Christian basilica did not undergo any radical changes. During this whole period, many monuments such as papal sepulchral monuments and decorations like the Madonna della Colonna were added. The unity of both the architecture and the added monuments increasingly embodied the history and tradition of this church, the most important church of Christianity in Europe.

When we compare, even superficially, the basilica of St. Peter as it was built in the first half of the fourth century with the huge St. Peter's that was built during the 16th century, and only completed in the 17th century, it is obvious that the architecture of the new St. Peter's does not show any architectural concepts or elements that could bear a sense of continuity in this church building, neither in its elevation nor in its ground plan. Yet the concepts of *history* and *tradition* constitute crucial factors in most projects aiming to renew, or renovate, a church building and in the case of St. Peter's they were of great importance, as we will see.

Throughout the history of architecture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, one can establish that, in general, a clear break between old and new was hardly ever pursued. Such a break would imply that the patron, and those who formed part of the institution of a certain church, would place themselves outside the well-established order and hierarchy which formed the necessary backbone of society. To attract attention is one thing, but to attract attention by departing from the established and widely accepted rules and rituals of hierarchy is something patrons – whether bishops, counts, kings, popes or others – were not seeking. When a certain church building represented much more than the definition of a specific space for a specific purpose, but at the same time sheltered relics and images, monuments and tombs, much tact and ingenuity was needed to replace the old church with a new one. The rituals and practices of clergy and lay people alike had developed over the years within the spaces available, thus creating a strong unity between the architecture, its furnishing and the different groups and individuals who were using it.

Renewal was the essence of the plans of Pope Julius II (1503-1513) of around 1505, since the wording in documents points to renewal instead of replacing the old church completely: words like *reparare et exornare*, *rehedificare* and *instaurare* were used by

¹ Here I like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their careful reading of the drafts and their helpful suggestions, and Machtelt Brüggem Israël for her advice.

² Important examples where continuity was key in Trachtenberg 2010.

Julius II in connection with the work that should be undertaken at St. Peter's³. Of course, Julius was not the first to develop plans to renew the basilica of St. Peter and indeed serious work had already been done in the 15th century, without however having reached a more or less final result⁴. The sanctified character of this age-old church and its monuments confronted him with a rather serious dilemma when he set out to have a new part of St. Peter's built: the demolition of some parts of the old basilica was necessary to build a new part, but on the other hand, this would be interpreted as a sacrilege⁵. The renewal that Pope Julius II was aiming at consequently threatened to disturb the continuity of the church of the apostle Peter and cause a break with well-known and well-accepted rituals in an equally well-known context. The project undertaken by Julius to let Michelangelo design and execute a prestigious and large tomb for himself, for which a suitable place in St. Peter's basilica was to be found, should be considered as the starting point for a project that eventually would become much larger than both Julius and Michelangelo could have envisaged. This ambitious project probably presented the impetus to start on an endeavour that would eventually turn out to be far more ambitious: the renewal of the church of St. Peter itself.

The initial phase of the project is not as clear as is often suggested. Because Bramante was already employed in the Vatican, it is often assumed as self-evident that he was the main architect right from the start. In the light of the difficult ambition that Pope Julius II was beginning to fulfil, it is very likely that no fixed programme was available to begin with, and that, as yet, no choice had been made as to which architect should lead the operation. It seems that Pope Julius II invited several architects to present him with their ideas on a possible new church building, or at least plans for the renewal of the existing early Christian basilica.

Projects by three different architects have been preserved. Bramante was one of these architects, but it is unclear if he already held the most prominent position. The first few designs presented by these architects do not share any common elements, which is striking. A comparison between the drawings delivered in this initial phase by Giuliano da Sangallo, Fra Giocondo and Bramante clearly shows that there were no well-defined instructions yet, since they are all essentially different from each other. Although Fra Giocondo's longitudinal plan does not show any clear points of reference to either old St. Peter's or to what would much later become the new St. Peter's, it would appear that this architect introduced the concept of using both several architectural elements to be associated with the old church *and* a space large enough to house many of the monuments from the old basilica. The project provided enough wall surface against which to place the monuments of the old basilica, making the concepts of *history* and *tradition*, and of *renewal* and *continuity* important in our understanding of what happened with St. Peter's from the early 16th century onwards. Fra Giocondo's plan has, in the past, been discarded undeservedly⁶. It seems to be impossible to determine the chronological order of the plans that were presumably presented by the three architects. And although it seems very likely, it is not certain that no other architects made designs at this stage.

It cannot be ascertained whether or not Bramante produced his famous and impressive plan on parchment (Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, U 1A) – which has not come down to us in its original dimensions – in this phase or slightly later. Giuliano da Sangallo, for his part, designed a centrally planned church. Sangallo seems to have taken the possibility

³ Frommel 1976: 106, 108-109, 115; Kempers 1996; Thoenes 2005: 72-82; Kempers 2013: 388-394.

⁴ Roser 2005; Richardson 2013.

⁵ Günther 1997a and 1997b; Bosman 2004: 57-75.

⁶ Bosman 2002; *Petros eni* 2006: 54-56, cat. I.14.

into account that Old St. Peter's could indeed be replaced by a single new structure: no elements of the old architecture were incorporated into his project. A comparison between Fra Giocondo's longitudinal plan and Sangallo's centralized project clearly demonstrates the absence of explicit guidelines for the architect, at least in this initial phase of the preparation for the building operations.

Bramante somehow acquired Sangallo's drawing, held it against a window and roughly traced the crossing piers on the reverse of the sheet, which he then used to sketch another solution. The analysis of this drawing is very interesting for the scholarly debate on the connections between old and new St. Peter's, as Bramante apparently tried to use the old early Christian basilica as a basis for some crucial elements for a new part of the church: the width of the nave is indicated here as a guideline and, in fact, in the present St. Peter's, the width of the nave is indeed the same as that of the old basilica. The same method of working can be found in another of Bramante's drawings (Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, U 20A). Here, he first drew the ground plan of Old St. Peter's and then the ground plan of an unfinished 15th century project to build a much larger transept and a deep choir. Only the foundations of this project were built. Once again using the width of the nave of the basilica from the 4th century, Bramante set out to sketch some options to renovate and enlarge the church⁷. It is evident that the idea of using elements from the old basilica, including architectural elements in the form of *spolia* in these initial stages of the project was encouraged – probably at the instigation of Fra Giocondo – in order to visualize the continuity of the institution. The word *spolia* is used here in the sense that it has been given since the early 16th century to indicate re-used (building) material⁸. And indeed, most of the 44 columns from the nave would eventually be used again in the new building; it is in fact most likely that 36 of them were used, to be more precise. On another level, which concerns the places of popular cult, the problem of continuity must have become more important as the plans for and construction of new St. Peter's would gradually unfold. And that is the level where the Madonna della Colonna gained a meaningful position.

Throughout the history of designing and building new St. Peter's, there seem to have been problems with re-using structural architectural elements from the old church. It seems almost ironic that the most crucial architectural element of classical architecture, the column, was so difficult to re-use in a building of which the history would span a large period of Renaissance architecture that sought so ingeniously to reinstate the importance of the classical column, both in theory and in architectural practice. Though the initial construction work was begun in April 1506, the architectural concept of ambulatories as designed by Bramante would be partly realized by his successor Raphael and Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, the assistant at the time. In the southern transept, *spolia* columns from the old basilica were erected along the half circular ambulatory of the transept; construction work on the ambulatory began in 1519. This concept would never be completed, however, since Michelangelo drastically changed the transept and with the determination that he is famous for, had the ambulatory demolished soon after he became the architect of St. Peter's in 1546⁹.

Whatever the plans for a new St. Peter's were, it was very important, vital even, to accommodate the monuments and places of cult and worship that had accumulated in the old basilica. When we consider the project to *renew* St. Peter's, an interesting kind of

⁷ Bosman 2004: 60-75; Niebaum 2001/2002: 87-184; Satzinger 2005: 45-58; Frommel 2006: 32-35; *Petros eni* 2006: 57-58, cat. I.15; Frommel 2007: 105-108.

⁸ A few titles about *spolia*: De Lachenal 1995; Kinney 2016; Brilliant, Kinney 2011; Altekamp, Marcks-Jacobs, Seiler 2013 and 2017.

⁹ Bosman 2004: 89-90.

problem was formed by several images on walls, such as frescoes. These images could have easily disappeared together with the surrounding architecture once it had been decided that a specific part of Old St. Peter's was to be demolished. Indeed, most of the painted decoration of the old basilica did disappear, with only a few exceptions. The large narrative cycles on the walls of the nave were simply much too large to be preserved. Only pictures of these frescoed nave walls of the basilica survive to give us an impression of how these narrative cycles functioned¹⁰. Miracle-working images could rely on being treated with special care, however; the popular attention and devotion they attracted were a meaningful element which marked the importance of the building and the institution.

The Madonna del Soccorso was one of the miraculous images of the Madonna in St. Peter's: it was originally a fresco in the oratory of Saint Leo I but was moved several times. As an important image for popular devotion and cult, this fresco was eventually given an important new position in the Cappella Gregoriana in 1578¹¹. Another interesting example is the Madonna della Colonna, a rather small image of the Madonna and Child originally painted on the third column on the left of the entrance to the church¹² (fig. 1). It seems likely that it was painted around 1400 and repainted again in the 16th century. The specific kind of marble of this column, called «portasanta», has reddish spots, closely resembling the colour of human blood, next to grey and orange. My determination of the marble as portasanta was helped by the fact that the unpainted material is visible under the part of the image that still exists. Grimaldi described the material of the column as «a Chii lapidist columna», which was an older name for portasanta¹³.

At least from around 1575 the Madonna della Colonna was working miracles according to Alfarano and it was in 1578 that an altar was erected for this miraculous painting of the Madonna at the initiative of Lodovico Bianchetti, Pope Gregory XIII's chamberlain; the architect in charge of St. Peter's, Giacomo della Porta, made the design¹⁴. Perhaps the increasing popular devotion for the Madonna prompted the official interference to have the image repainted. Apparently, the popular cult was turned into a more official place of worship by granting the image an altar. Well situated at a short distance from the entrance of Old St. Peter's, the Madonna della Colonna apparently received more and more attention and was said to have worked increasingly more miracles. Alms and several more substantial donations were given to add more decorations to the altar and its immediate surroundings. The box which served to collect alms for masses was usually opened once a month, which was done for the first time on 8 June 1578. One of the decorations adorning the image was a canopy made of cloth; candlesticks and several votive images such as wooden angels and crowns were donated both by private citizens and clergymen to honour and adorn the image of the Madonna della Colonna and its altar. Several altar frontals were also donated, such as the white damask one given by Lodovico Bianchetti, and another one with silver and gold and with a picture of the image of the Madonna that was donated by Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585)¹⁵.

¹⁰ Nilgen 1999; Roser 2005: 45-47; Richardson 2013; Proverbio 2016.

¹¹ Bellini 2002; Ugonio 1588, f. 100 r-v.; Grimaldi, *Descrizione della basilica*, ff. 369v-370r. See the recent Zollikofer 2016.

¹² Alfarano, *De Basilicae Vaticanae*: 65, 187, nr. 46; Ugonio 1588, f. 99r.

¹³ Grimaldi, *Descrizione della basilica*: 227 (ff. 188r-189r); Bosman 2004: 35-38.

¹⁴ Alfarano, *De Basilicae Vaticanae*: 65; Grimaldi, *Descrizione della basilica*: 141, 227.

¹⁵ Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Arch. Cap. S. Pietro, Arm. 54-55, Sagrestia Conti diversi, nr. 41, *Liber B.M. Virginis de Columna* 1578-1583, ff. 1 r, 3r, 5v, 24r, 27v, 33v; Inventari nr. 11, Inventario delle Reliquie della Basilica e dei beni immobili e mobili [...] 1581, ff. 122, 123, 126, 129, 130v, 155, 156; BAV, ms Vat. Lat. 11911 *Compendio delle chiese*: 257-258. Zollikofer 2016: 37.

Lodovico Bianchetti, who was also a canon of St. Peter, was closely connected with the realisation of the interior design and decoration of the Cappella Gregoriana in the new part of the church from 1578 onward; as mentioned earlier it was there where the Madonna del Soccorso would be placed¹⁶.

The interest for the altar of the Madonna della Colonna shows that the remaining eastern half of the early Christian basilica continued to be used as St. Peter's church, while to the west, the new part of St. Peter's was gradually taking shape (fig. 2). The Madonna della Colonna fits in the continuity of the use of the basilica and its altars, monuments and miracle working images, whereas the renewal of St. Peter's took form in the newly built parts. As such both miracle working Madonna images may have reflected the actual situation of an old and a new St. Peter's, since in the same years the popular cult for the Madonna della Colonna in the remaining part of Old St. Peter's was disciplined and made more official by means of the creation of an altar and the Madonna del Soccorso was getting a prominent position in the part of St. Peter's¹⁷.

An interesting feature is the specific kind of image painted on a column. The only other still existing image of a Madonna painted on a column in a Roman church that I know of, is the Madonna del Rifugio in the church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli in Rome, which seems to date from the 15th century (fig. 3). Like the Madonna della Colonna, this image apparently received serious attention from the faithful and was subsequently adorned with an altar and an architectural surrounding which still exist¹⁸. To single out such a venerated image of course meant that the cult status of the image was officially recognized and sanctioned by the institution responsible for the church building. Although paintings on columns are relatively uncommon, in Santa Maria in Aracoeli, another column has been decorated with a painted image as well, albeit not a Madonna. It seems rather likely that, in the post-Tridentine era, the official recognition of the Madonna della Colonna served to show the importance of popular devotion of images, even in the most important church building of the Catholic Church in Europe, where the veneration of the tomb of the apostle Peter, of course, still formed the reason for its existence.

We should consider the possibility that the idea of connecting a new part of the church to the remainder of the old, early Christian basilica was still very much alive in the second half of the 16th century. Building activity in the old basilica, as well as designs for altars like the one for the Madonna della Colonna, continued to show the use of this part of St. Peter's as a church building that housed various important points of interest, apparently both for common lay people and for the purpose of representation of popes and cardinals¹⁹. Only a few decades later however, the situation would be completely different. When on a day in September 1605 mass was held at the altar of the Madonna della Colonna, a piece of stone fell down from one of the windows in the clerestory above, and of course this was seen as a 'sign from heaven'. Fortunately, nobody was hurt but the instability and insecurity of the remaining part of the old basilica were clearly demonstrated in the eyes of those who favoured the demolition of the old basilica²⁰. Pope Paul V came to a very rapid decision, or to put it differently: perhaps this was the incident the Pope had been hoping for to speed things up. At this time, the history of building new parts of St. Peter's church was already some hundred years under way. As long as the remainder of the early Christian basilica was still standing upright, the completion of the

¹⁶ Zollikofer 2016: 33-34, 37

¹⁷ Zollikofer 2016: 157-158.

¹⁸ Buchowiecki 1970: 494.

¹⁹ Roser 2005.

²⁰ Severano 1630: 40; Bosman 2004: 126-127.

new church as an entirely new structure would remain impossible. Immediately after the incident with the falling stone, the Pope decided that the remaining part of Old St. Peter's had to be torn down. The chapter of St. Peter was not consulted in this decision, however, and in response to the resolution made by Paul V, the canons wrote a surprisingly sharp letter about this to the Pope. They complained that the first part of the demolition of the early Christian basilica, some one hundred years earlier under Julius II, had led to the loss of many important monuments belonging to the history and the tradition of the church of St. Peter. Many of the altars and oratories in the old basilica had vanished into oblivion – «andata in oblivioni» – they complained²¹. Even though they were fighting a battle already lost, the protest did have some result. One of the key elements in the letter is the demand for careful treatment of the monuments and pieces of decoration in the remaining part of the old basilica. Obviously, the canons feared that more parts of the history of their age-old institution would be lost, which would also cut some of the important ties connecting their position with the tradition and the history of the church. Continuity was at stake here, since the very foundation of the existence of the chapter seemed to be torn apart. The chapter needed the history and its visual evidence – the basilica from Constantine's time with the monuments in it – as important legitimation on which its activity was based. The Madonna della Colonna was one of these important monuments. Apart from that it seems likely as well that the reduction of the centres of worship in St. Peter's, to which donations were attached, would reduce the income of the canons.

When the remaining eastern half of the early Christian basilica was finally demolished, the monuments and tombs were described and rather carefully dismantled to be raised again in the new building. Not all of these monuments would return in the new building, however; several of them found a new home in other churches in Rome. But quite a few of the monumental elements of Old St. Peter's found their way to the new building as *spolia*²². As a direct result of the opposition against the demolition of the early Christian basilica, Pope Paul V had the large crypt underneath St. Peter's, the Grotte, built in order to function as a memoria of the old, early Christian church. Quite a few decorative elements from the old basilica were put on display in the Grotte. During the process of pulling down the remainder of the old church, various fragments and architectural elements were alienated from the complex, several of which were obtained by the Pope's nephew Scipione Borghese, the cardinal who was famous for his art collection²³. Also, in February 1607, the venerated image of the Madonna della Colonna was detached from the column itself, to be temporarily stored in the sacristy. This was a difficult job, since the image had to be sawn carefully from the column shaft in order to be preserved; of course, the piece of marble itself should not be damaged. As a much-venerated image of the Madonna, this extraordinary painting was apparently intended to carry on its traditional function in a new context. In the same month, the column from which the image was detached and its counterpart on the north side of the nave were carefully lifted, during which operation they were protected by wooden poles²⁴. This brings some aspects of the use of *spolia* columns in St. Peter's to the fore, as a means to secure and to visualize the continuity of the building in a process of renewal. It does not seem unlikely that the careful operation with regard to the Madonna della Colonna was yet another

²¹ BAV, ms Reg. Lat. 2100. Niggli 1971: 34-36; Kempers 1996: 238-239; Rice 1997: 34-38. Recent edition of the letter with English translation: Richardson, Story 2013: 408-409.

²² Kinney 2005: 16-47.

²³ Città del Vaticano, Archivio della Fabbrica di San Pietro (AFSP), Arm. 1 A 11, Materie diverse 1536-1697, f. 307.

²⁴ AFSP, Arm. 26 A 183, Entrata e uscita 1607-1608, f. 25v; Sindone 1744: 59-61.

direct result of the letter of protest with which the chapter of St. Peter had tried to prevent the demolition of most of the old, venerated monuments and images in Old St. Peter's.

As stated earlier, from the beginning of the project to renovate St. Peter's it had not been very clear how this renovation should take place. Against older opinions favouring a first master design by Bramante, it now seems rather likely that, initially, there was no elaborated plan to tear down Old St. Peter's completely in order to build a whole new church²⁵. Plans and projects were made and changed again, and, in my opinion, it is telling that no complete design exists from after 1505, which would show that a complete demolition of the old church was planned from the start. On the contrary, it is far more likely that a coexistence of a part of the old church and a new part was the initial objective. How to connect the old and the new parts was a key problem for most of the architects of St. Peter's during the 16th century.

One of the architects who had to deal with this problem was Antonio da Sangallo the Younger. The demolition of most of the western part of the old basilica in the first years of the building project of new St. Peter's had left the remaining half of the nave and side-aisles open, as a result of which the use of the old church was severely hampered. In 1525, Sangallo had the side-aisles closed to the west by walls, and in 1538 the famous «Muro divisorio» in the nave was built²⁶. This effort led to a situation where the size of the columns of the old nave, 30 Roman feet, became the dominant architectural element again, as it had been in the old early Christian basilica. Entering San Pietro from the east, the visitor would see ten pairs of columns with a length of 30 Roman feet which were still standing by that time. The height of the large arch in the Muro Divisorio was based on two painted pilasters, also 30 feet high. Then the visitor would enter the new part of the church through the arch in the Muro divisorio, and in the new western part, the *aediculae* with two columns each, with a height of, again, 30 feet, became the dominant architectural feature in the interior (figs 4, 5). A significant number of these pairs of columns were *spolia* from the early Christian basilica of St. Peter. Sangallo had made the design for the *aediculae* in 1537.

Another important element hinting at the coexistence of a remaining part of the early Christian basilica and a newly built church is the Cappella Paolina in the Vatican. The design and the construction of this chapel by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger took the existing part of the old basilica into consideration but proved to be a serious problem once it was decided to build a new eastern part of St. Peter's as well. The Cappella Paolina obstructed construction in the 17th century and both the chapel and the eastern part of St. Peter's had to be modified to realize the latter's construction²⁷.

It is highly probable that, in order to build the *aediculae*, Antonio da Sangallo used columns which had become available when the western part of the early Christian basilica was gradually torn down. In my opinion, the concept of continuity was one of the leading principles for Sangallo, and during his period as architect, the two concepts of *renewal* and *continuity* were not on opposite sides anymore. It is fair to say then, that the whole idea to make a connection between the new architecture and the remaining part of the old basilica initiated the use of *spolia*-columns in new St. Peter's. Because the *spolia* columns were material from the early Christian basilica, but used again in the new architecture, they could serve very well as the visual connection between the two parts of St. Peter's.

²⁵ Wolff Metternich, Thoenes 1987: 14-17; Kempers 1996: 218-219; Thoenes 2002 (1994): 394-395, 402-405, 414-415; Bosman 2004: 60-75.

²⁶ AFSP, Arm. 4 G 259, ff. 13v, 14r, 15r, Nov. 1525; Arm. 24 F 3, f. 54; Bosman 2004: 90-100 (98-99).

²⁷ Kuntz 2003 and 2005; Bosman 2004: 92-100, 143-145. See also Thoenes 1992.

In the southwestern corner of the new part of St. Peter's, a chapel was built and decorated in the 1580's, and it was here that the image of the Madonna della Colonna was finally placed in a new altar, in the year 1607 (fig. 6). Construction of this new chapel was begun when Vignola was architect of St. Peter's, but most of it was built by his successor Giacomo della Porta. The altar in the new chapel was a variant of the altar with tabernacle in the newly built Cappella Gregoriana, where the fresco of the Madonna del Soccorso was placed after its removal from a wall in Old St. Peter's and subsequent positions. For this altar with tabernacle, Giacomo della Porta based his design on the altar that he had built for the Madonna della Colonna when it was still attached to the column in Old St. Peter's²⁸. So, being one of those devotional monuments in the remaining part of Old St. Peter's, the painted image of the Madonna della Colonna was finally removed from its column and was given a place in new St. Peter's in a chapel, flanked by two *spolia* columns in an *aedicola*. Surprisingly perhaps, these flanking columns were not the same columns of the third pair in the old basilica. Apparently, the new altar was seen as a new surrounding for an old, venerated image, for the construction of which the old columns of portasanta marble were not considered to be necessary either. Granite columns were now placed on either side of the Altar of the Madonna della Colonna; the column from which the painted Madonna had been detached and its counterpart on the north side of the old basilica would be positioned as columns flanking an altar in a new chapel of the 17th century part of St. Peter's²⁹ (fig. 7). The tabernacle of the altar in which the Madonna della Colonna was placed in 1607 fits well in a typological tradition, in which Giacomo della Porta played a major part, since he first designed the tabernacle for the image on the column (fig. 8). A later variant of this type was used in the famous Cappella Paolina in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. The dominating architecture is an important feature of this kind of altar tabernacle, which frames and singles out a venerated image and thereby presents the cult image detached from the surrounding space. The objects were thus presented and subsequently venerated as relics³⁰. In post-Tridentine Rome, the image of the Madonna della Colonna was used to continue its miraculous existence in a new and well-designed architectural context. At the initiative of Cardinal Lorenzo Bianchetti, the newly built altar for the Madonna della Colonna and the tabernacle were decorated with alabaster and different kinds of colored marble. Apparently, he and his older brother Lodovico shared an interest to enrich specific monuments with these colourful and rich materials. After Michelangelo's Pietà had been placed in the choir of the canons in 1568, Canon Lodovico Bianchetti paid for the polychrome decoration which surrounded the sculpture³¹.

The history of this Madonna della Colonna allows some conclusions to be drawn. Interestingly, the type and material of this *aedicola*, as well as the painted Madonna della Colonna are elements that visualize the continuity of old and new St. Peter's. At the same time, the new setting of the Madonna in new St. Peter's may have distanced it more from popular cult and veneration. From the 15th century onwards, the painting was seen and increasingly venerated as a miraculous image, which helped to heal people. To further this popular veneration, the altar was built in 1578. However, when Pope Paul V decided to tear down the remaining part of the old basilica, the Madonna della Colonna had

²⁸ Pinelli 2000: 591; Baglione, *Le nove chiese di Roma*: 60; Bellini 2002: 339-341. Cf. Zollikofer 2016: 26-27, 152-153.

²⁹ The portasanta columns are used in the second chapel on the right or on the left: *aedicola* 43 or (most likely) *aedicola* 3. The columns in *aedicola* 3 seem to be slightly less regular in their surface than those in *aedicola* 43. See also Bosman 2004: 149, fig. 57.

³⁰ Ostrow 1996: 151, 155-156; Warnke 1968: 61-102.

³¹ Grimaldi, *Descrizione della basilica*, ff. 188r-189r; Rice 1997: 21, 291, Doc. 3.

become one of those monuments of importance for the canons of St. Peter. The canons showed their reluctance towards Paul V's plans to demolish the last part of the early Christian basilica, since they felt they needed the old basilica and its monuments to base their present position upon. During the transformation of its meaning, the Madonna della Colonna played an interesting and important part when we reconsider the concepts of *continuity* and *renewal*. Saving the Madonna della Colonna from oblivion changed its meaning considerably: from a popular miraculous image, this representation became part of the treasure of the canons of St. Peter, and gradually lost its meaning and importance as remainder of the old basilica. While belonging to those elements and monuments from the Old St. Peter's, which to some seemed essential for the *continuity* of the institution and its church, the *renewal* of the church of St. Peter's seriously changed the meaning of the Madonna della Colonna.

Bibliographical References

Primary Sources

Alfarano T., *De Basilicae Vaticanae antiquissima et nova structura* [ca. 1570-1582], D.M. Cerrati (ed.), Roma 1914.

Baglione G., *Le nove chiese di Roma* [Roma 1639], L. Barroero (ed.), annotation M. Maggiorani, C. Pujia, Roma 1990.

Grimaldi G., *Descrizione della basilica antica di S. Pietro in Vaticano*, R. Niggl (ed.), Città del Vaticano 1972.

Severano G., *Memorie sacre delle sette chiese di Roma*, Roma 1630.

Sindone R., *Altarium et reliquarium sacrosanctae basilicae Vaticanae...descriptione historica*, Roma 1744.

Ugonio P., *Historia delle stationi di Roma che si celebrano la quadagesima*, Roma 1588.

Secondary Literature

Altekamp S., Marcks-Jacobs C., Seiler P. (eds), *Spoliierung und Transposition*, Berlin-Boston 2013 (Perspektiven der Spolienforschung 1).

Altekamp S., Marcks-Jacobs C., Seiler P. (eds), *Zentren und Konjunkturen der Spoliierung*, Berlin 2017 (Perspektiven der Spolienforschung 2).

Bellini F., *La costruzione della Cappella Gregoriana in San Pietro, di Giacomo della Porta: cronologia, protagonisti e significato iconologico*, in M. Caperna, G. Spagnesi (eds), *Architettura: processuabilità e trasformazione*, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Roma 1999), Roma 2002: 333-346.

Bosman L., *The dilemma of Pope Julius II: how to preserve the old St. Peter's while building a new St. Peter's*, in A.W.A. Boschloo, E. Grasman, G.J. van der Sman (eds), 'Aux quatre vents'. *A Festschrift for Bert W. Meijer*, Firenze 2002: 39-44.

Bosman L., *The Power of Tradition. Spolia in the architecture of St. Peter's in the Vatican*, Hilversum 2004.

Brilliant R., Kinney D. (eds), *Reuse Value. Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, Farnham-Burlington 2011.

Buchowiecki W., *Handbuch der Kirchen Roms*, 2, Wien 1970.

De Lachenal I., *Spolia e reimpiego dell'antico dal III al XIV secolo*, Milano 1995.

Frommel C.L., *Die Peterskirche unter Papst Julius II im Licht neuer Dokumente*, «Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte» 16 (1976): 57-136.

Frommel C.L., *San Pietro da Niccolò V al modello di Sangallo*, in *Petros eni* 2006: 31-77.

Frommel C.L., *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance*, New York 2007.

Günther H. (a), *Als wäre die Peterskirche mutwillig in Flammen gesetzt. Zeitgenössische Kommentare zum Neubau der Peterskirche und ihre Massstäbe*, «Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst» 48 (1997): 67-112.

Günther H. (b), *I progetti di ricostruzione della basilica di San Pietro negli scritti contemporanei: giustificazioni e scrupoli*, in G. Spagnesi (ed.), *L'Architettura della basilica di San Pietro. Storia e costruzione*, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Roma, 1995), Roma 1997: 137-148.

Kempers B., *Diverging perspectives: new Saint Peter's: artistic ambitions, liturgical requirements, financial limitations and historical interpretations*, «Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome» 55 (1996): 213-251.

Kempers B., *Epilogue. A hybrid history: The antique basilica with a modern dome*, in McKitterick et alii 2013: 386-403.

Kinney D., *Spolia*, in Tronzo 2005: 16-47.

Kinney D., *Trophies and Orphans: The Use of spolia Columns in ancient Churches*, «Sacred Architecture» 29 (2016): 11-17.

Kuntz M.A., *Designed for ceremony: The Cappella Paolina at the Vatican Palace*, «Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians» 62 (2003): 228-255.

Kuntz M.A., *Maderno's Building Procedures at New St. Peter's: Why the Façade First?*, «Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte» 68 (2005): 41-60.

McKitterick R., Osborne J., Richardson C.M., Story J. (eds). *Old Saint Peter's, Rome*, Cambridge 2013.

Niebaum J., *Bramante und der Neubau von St. Peter. Die Planungen vor dem 'Ausführungsprojekt'*, «Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana» 34 (2001/2002): 87-184.

Niggel R., *Giacomo Grimaldi (1568-1623). Leben und Werk des römischen Archäologen und Historiker*, München 1971.

Nilgen U., *Die römischen Apsisprogramme der karolingischen Epoche. Päpstliche Repräsentation und Liturgie*, in C. Stiegemann, M. Wemhoff (eds), 799. *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Große und Papst Leo III in Paderborn*, 3, Beiträge, Exh. Cat. (Paderborn, 1999), Paderborn 1999: 542-549.

Ostrow S.F., *Art and Spirituality in counter-reformation Rome: the Sistine and Pauline Chapels in Santa Maria Maggiore*, Cambridge 1996.

Petros eni. Pietro è qui, Exh. Cat. (Musei Vaticani, 2006-2007), Città del Vaticano 2006.

Pinelli A. (ed.), *La Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano / The Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican*, Modena 2000.

Proverbio C., *I cicli affrescati paleocristiani di San Pietro in Vaticano e San Paolo fuori le mura: proposte di lettura*, Turnhout 2016.

Rice L., *The Altars and Altarpieces of new St. Peter's. Outfitting the basilica, 1621-1666*, Cambridge 1997.

Richardson C.M., *Saint Peter's in the fifteenth century. Paul II, the archpriests and the case for continuity*, in McKitterick et alii 2013: 324-347.

Richardson C.M., Story J., *Appendix. Letter of the canons of Saint Peter's to Paul V concerning the demolition of the old basilica, 1605*, in McKitterick et alii 2013: 404-415.

Roser H., *St. Peter in Rom im 15. Jahrhundert. Studien zu Architektur und skulpturaler Ausstattung*, München 2005 (Römische Studien der Bibliotheca Hertziana 19).

Satzinger G., *Die Baugeschichte von Neu-St. Peter*, in J. Frings (ed.), *Barock im Vatikan. Kunst und Kultur im Rom der Päpste, 2, 1572-1676*, Ausstellungskatalog (Bonn-Berlin, 2005-2006), Leipzig 2005: 45-74.

Thoenes C., *Madernos St.-Peter-Entwürfe*, in H.A. Millon, S.S. Munshower (eds), *An Architectural Progress in the Renaissance and Baroque. Sojourns In and Out of Italy. Essays in Architectural History presented to Hellmut Hager on his Sixty-sixth Birthday*, PA University Park 1992: 171-193.

Thoenes C., *Neue Beobachtungen an Bramantes St.-Peter-Entwürfen*, in C. Thoenes, *Opus incertum. Italienische Studien aus drei Jahrzehnten*, Berlin 2002: 381-416 [first published 1994].

Thoenes C., *Renaissance St. Peter's*, in Tronzo 2005: 64-92.

Trachtenberg M., *Building-in-Time. From Giotto to Alberti and modern oblivion*, New Haven-London 2010.

Tronzo W. (ed.), *St. Peter's in the Vatican*, Cambridge 2005.

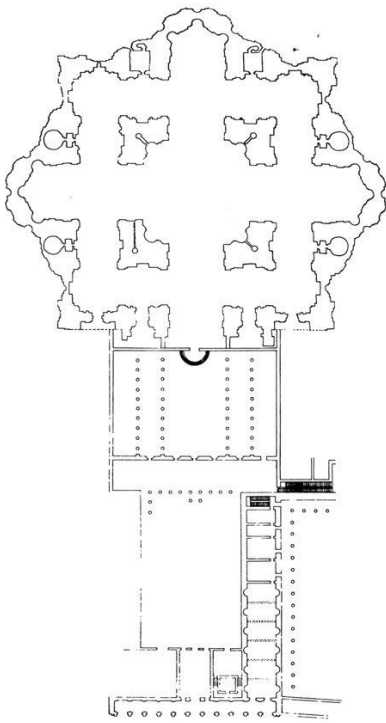
Warnke M., *Italienische Bildtabernakel bis zum Frühbarock*, «Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst» 19 (1968): 61-102.

Wolff Metternich F., Thoenes C., *Die frühen St.-Peter-Entwürfe 1505-1514*, Tübingen 1987.

Zollikofer K., *Die Cappella Gregoriana. Der erste Innenraum von Neu-Sankt-Peter in Rom und seine Genese*, Basel 2016.



1 Madonna della Colonna, St. Peter's (© Fabbrica di San Pietro in Vaticano)



2 Ground plan of St. Peter's around 1600 (from Thoenes 1992)



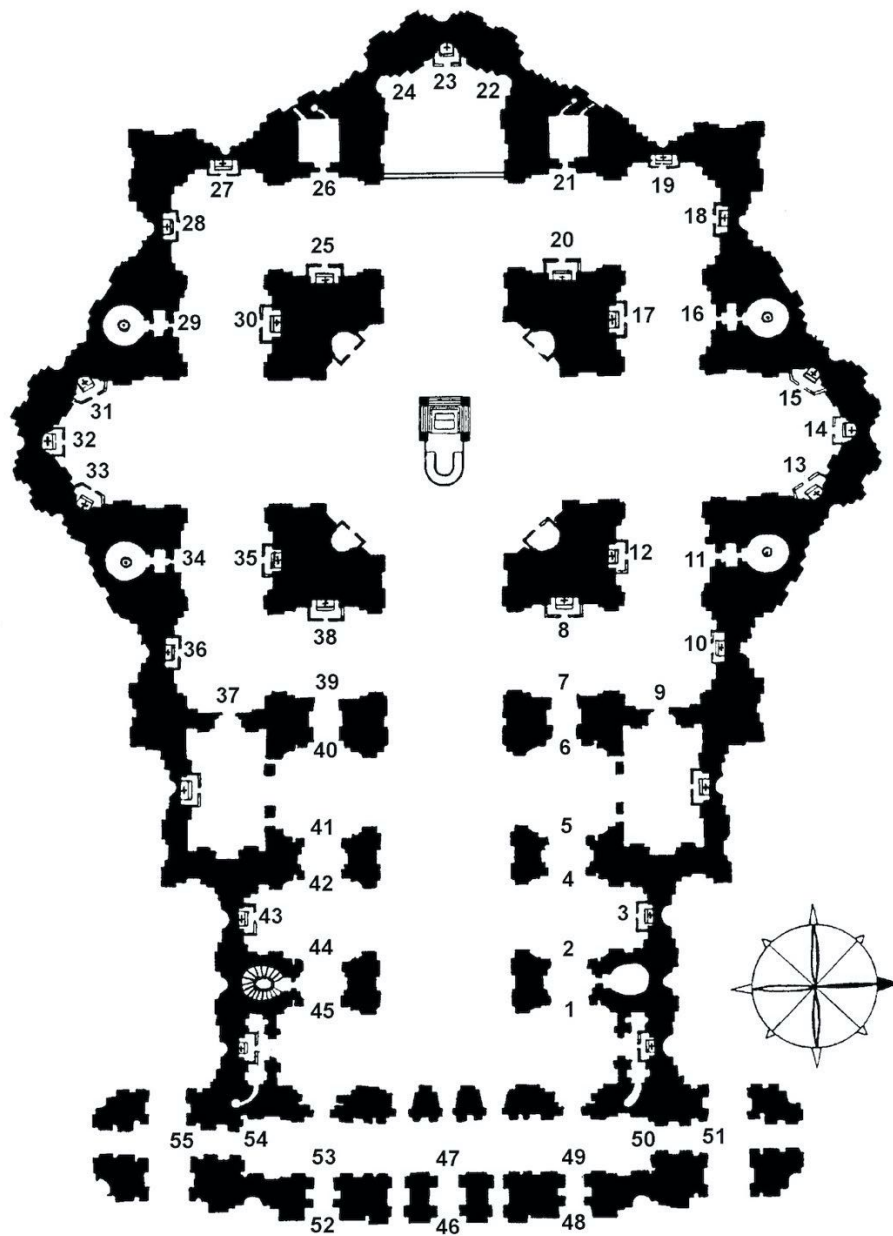
3 Madonna del Rifugio,
Santa Maria in Aracoeli,
Rome (photo Wikimedia)



4-5 St. Peter's interior, looking at the Cappella Gregoriana, and Altar with Madonna del Soccorso (photos L. Bosman)



6 St. Peter's, Altar with Madonna della Colonna (photo L. Bosman)



7 St. Peter's, plan with numbered column pairs
(L. Bosman and M. van Damme after Rice 1997).



8 Madonna della Colonna, St. Peter's (photo L. Bosman)