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A

Raphael's *Parnassus:* The Harmony of the Universe and the Julian Vision of Rome

BONNIE LYNN KATZIVE

At first glance, Raphael's *Parnassus* in the Stanza della Segnatura appears to be the least politically charged of the room's four large wall frescoes. *Parnassus* (fig. 1) is an idyllic representation of Apollo, Muses and poets atop Mount Parnassus (or perhaps Helicon), hardly a political subject in and of itself. Outside of the image's original context, one might connect Raphael's fresco with the Golden Age so fervently desired by nearly every Western ruler since Augustus Caesar, but would probably divine little other political significance. When examined, however, in its original context in terms of setting, patronage, and iconographic tradition, *Parnassus's* participation in the Stanza's celebration of Pope Julius II's power and imperial aims may be seen in a much richer and more specific way.

Raphael's particular depiction of the subject can be associated with a number of themes—the conception of Julius's reign as the birth of a new Golden Age, Renaissance ideas about the function and value of poetry, and a Renaissance conception of the structure and harmony of the universe—that, although essentially poetic, are easily co-opted for use as political symbols. At the heart of the expression of each of these themes in the painting is an emphasis on harmony guided by Apollo, an ancient deity with whom, significantly, Pope Julius sought to identify himself in establishing his own political authority.

The only surviving documentation of a program for *Parnassus,* or for that matter any of Raphael's other frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura, is Paolo Giovio's enigmatic reference to the two Stanze decorated during Pope Julius II's reign, stating that they were painted "ad praescriptum Julii pontificis,"[1] according to the prescription of Julius the Pope. Giovio provides few details of Julius's prescription. In the absence of an explicit program, scholars, nevertheless, have made numerous attempts to associate the room with different schools of philosophy or theology

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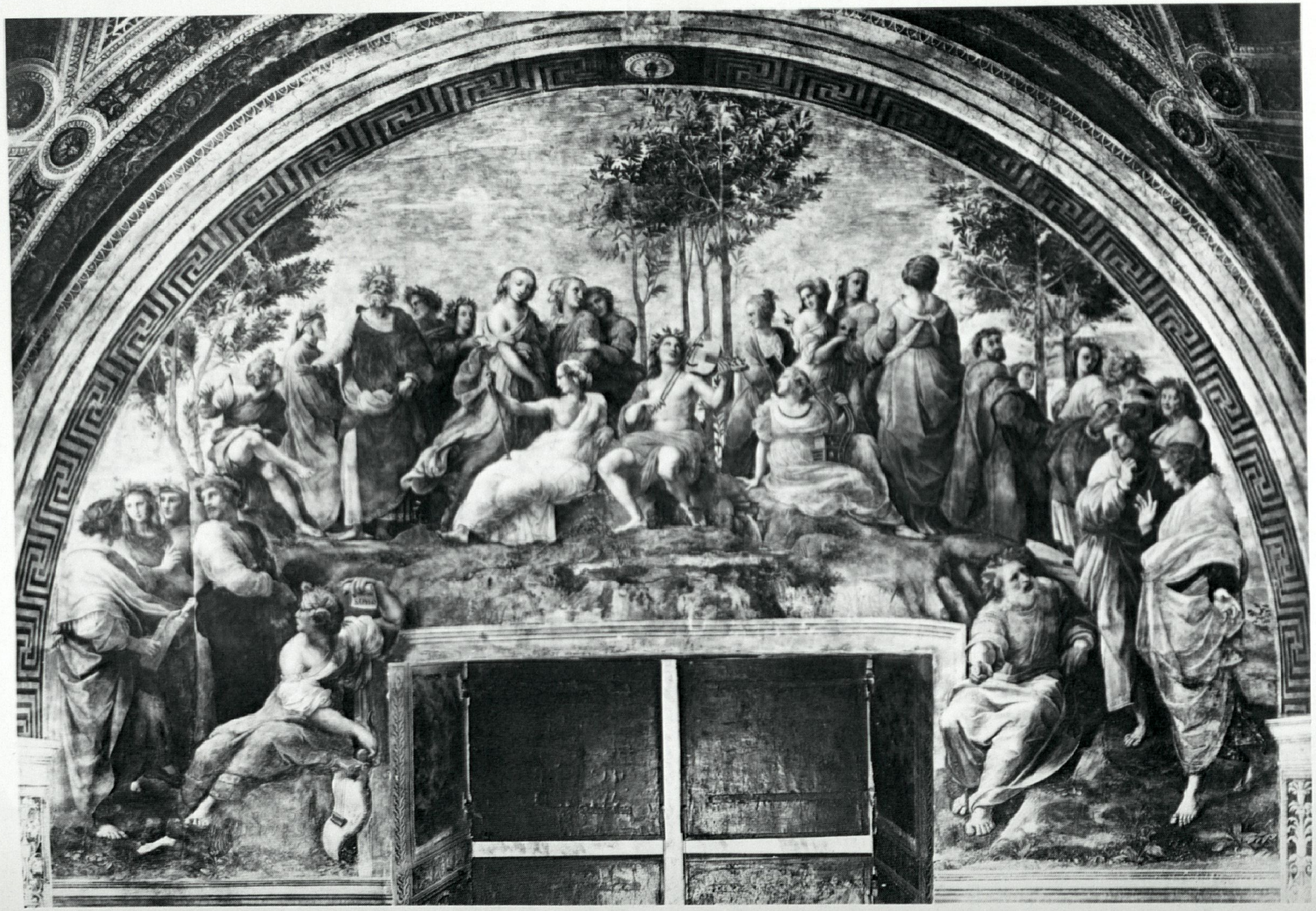
An earlier version of this paper was presented as an Honors thesis to the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Washington University in St. Louis. I am grateful to my sponsor, Claudia Rousseau, for her thoughtful comments and assistance. I would also like to credit her with first suggesting that a cosmological interpretation of *Parnassus* might be possible. I also wish to thank Harold Ellis, Deborah Weiss, Randolph Starn, and especially William Wallace for their valuable suggestions and support.

[1] P. Giovio, "Ralphaelis Urbanitis Vita," in *Raffaello nei documenti,* ed. Vincenzo Golzio, Vatican City, 1936, 192. "Pinxit in Vaticano nec adhuc stabili authoritate cubicula duo ad praescriptum Julii Pontificis, in altero novem Musae Apollini cythara canenti applaudent...." This is Giovio's sole reference to the Stanza della Segnatura. The other room Giovio refers to here is the Stanza d'Eliodoro.



1. Raphael, *Parnassus,* 1508-1511, fresco. Rome, Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican Palace (photo: Alinari/ Art Resource, New York)

(Neo-platonic, Franciscan, Dominican)[2] or specific literary sources (Dante, court panegyrics).[3] Perhaps the most convincing approach has been to consider the room not as a separate project, but as part of Julius's greater political program for arts and letters at his court. Recent scholarship has demonstrated that Julius cultivated certain themes in his patronage which alluded to the creation of a Christian Roman empire under his reign.[4] The new empire was to be built on the ruins of the old, adopting and surpassing the ancients' highest virtues and greatest glories. Julius propagated the myth of the return of the Golden Age of peace and justice prophesized by the Cumaean Sibyl in Vergil's fourth *Eclogue* in order to promote his vision.[5] The last Golden Age was considered to have been the reign of Augustus, when peace, faith, justice, and the arts had flourished. During the new, Christian Golden Age, Rome would be the temporal and spiritual center of the world, from where all power would emanate, its renewed glory symbolized by the magnificence of the new St. Peter's.

This vision of a renewed Rome is clearly reflected throughout the Stanza della Segnatura frescoes. Specific references to Roman settings and to Roman antiquity occur throughout the room. Four small panels on the ceiling portray scenes from Roman history. The oblong corner panels on the ceiling are painted to resemble antique mosaics (fig. 2). Nancy Rash-Fabbri has demonstrated that the majority of the decoration is consistent with the themes of a new Golden Age and the return of justice and harmony.[6] Specific allusions to Julius's Rome are also present; the temple in the *School of Athens,* for example, resembles Bramante's plan for St. Peter's. On the opposite wall is the *Disputà,* which takes place upon a partially built altar. This structure, with neither walls nor ceiling, is undoubtedly intended as a reference to the construction of the new St. Peter's, begun only a few years prior to Raphael's work in the Stanza. The high altar of St. Peter's was, in fact, open to the air until 1514, three years after the completion of the *Disputà.*[7] The Stanza's fictive view of St. Peter's is completed by the design of the upper portion of the composition, which

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[2] Neo-platonic interpretations include E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images,* London, 1972, 85-101 and G. Danbolt, "Triumphus Concordiae: A Study of Raphael's Camera della Segnatura," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrif,* XLIV/3-4, 1975, 70-84. A Franciscan interpretation can be found in H.B. Gutman, "Zur Ikonologie der Fresken Raffaels in der Stanza della Segnatura," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte,* XXI, 1958, 27-39 and a Dominican interpretation in L. von Pastor, *The History of the Popes,* trans. F.I. Anthrobus, VI, St. Louis, Missouri, 1950, 580-590.

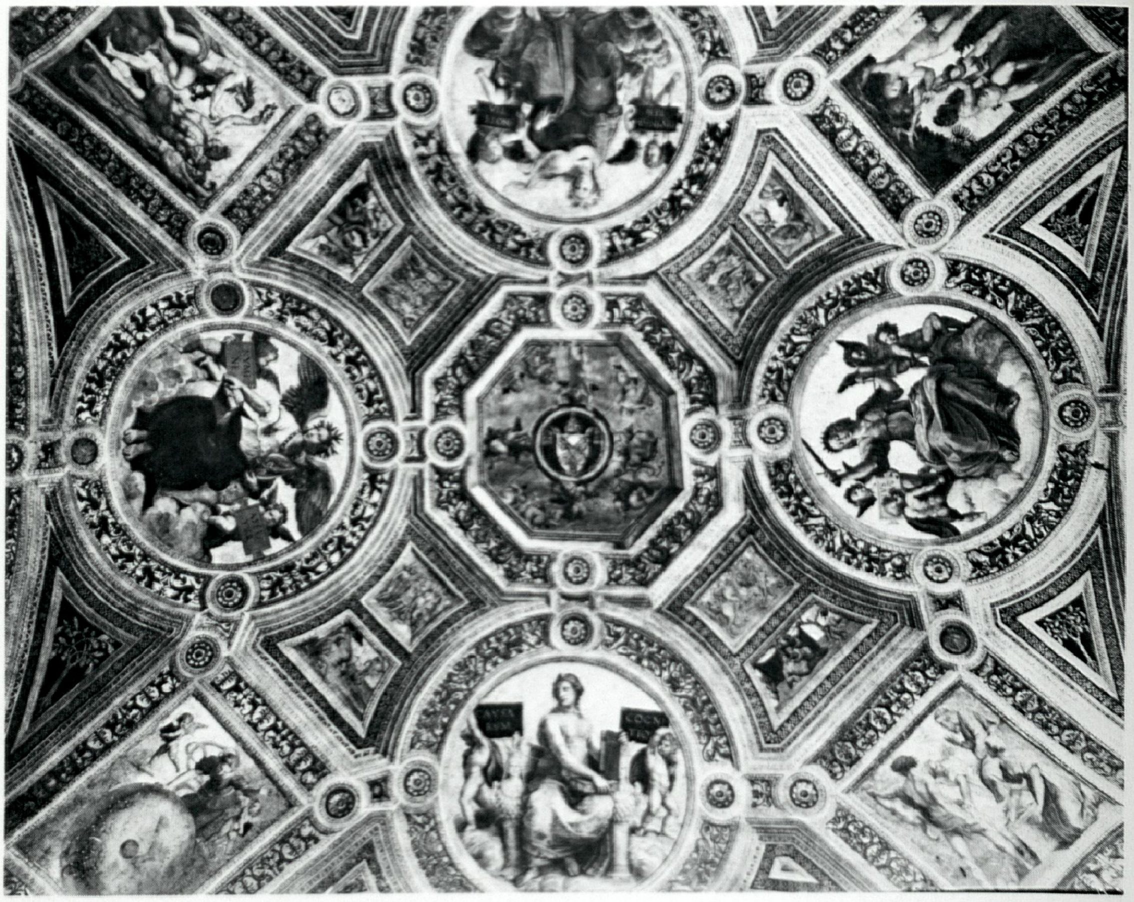
[3] Discussions of Dante's influence in the Stanza's program, based on Landino's commentary on the *Comedy,* are found in Gutman, 33 and in J. Pope-Hennessey, *Raphael,* New York, 1970, 139-140. J. O'Malley, on the other hand, has tentatively suggested an oration delivered in 1508 as a possible source in, "The Vatican Library and the *School of Athens*: a text of Battista Casali, 1508," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies,* VII/2, 1977, 275-276.

[4] For a discussion of Julius's efforts to cultivate this image see C.L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome,* Bloomington, Indiana, 1985, especially chapters III and V. For an assessment of Julius's personality and the character of his reign see L. Partridge and R. Starn, *A Renaissance Likeness,* Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980.

[5] Vergil, *Eclogues,* IV, v. 4. For a discussion of the Golden Age predicted in the Fourth Eclogue and its relationship to the theme of justice in the Stanza della Segnatura see N. Rash-Fabbri, "A Note on the Stanza della Segnatura," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts,* XCIV, October, 1973, 97-103.

[6] Rash-Fabbri, 101-103.

[7] Stinger, 200 and J. Shearman, *Raphael's Cartoons in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen and the Tapestries for the Sistine Chapel,* London, 1972, 9.



2. Vault of the Stanza della Segnatura 1508. Rome, Vatican Palace (photo: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)

uses images of Christ, apostles, saints, prophets and angels framed by gold rays to recall traditional apse mosaics. Despite the clear importance of the St. Peter's image, the only fresco specifically mentioned in Giovio's account of the Stanza della Segnatura is *Parnassus*.[8]

John Shearman has noted that the two most prominent figures in the Stanza are Christ in the *Disputà* and Apollo in *Parnassus*. Shearman explains Apollo's presence in reference to the probable function of the room as Julius's private library.[9] The tradition of associating libraries with Apollo (as a sort of patron) dates back to antiquity. The most notable example is Suetonius's description of Augustus's great Palatine library, in which he names it the Library of Apollo.[10] Pope Sixtus IV, Julius's uncle, was familiar with the tradition of dedicating libraries to Apollo, and did so with his own.[11] The use of the Apollo image in Julius's own library, however, had more than functional significance, and was closely related to Julius's political aims.

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[8] Giovio, 192.

[9] J. Shearman, *The Vatican Stanze: Functions and Decoration*, London, 1972, 16.

[10] *Ibid.*, 16, and E. Schröter, "Der Vatican als Hügel Apollons und der Musen. Kunst und Panegyrik von Nicholas V. bis Julius II," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte*, LXXV/3-4, 1980, 214-215.

[11] Shearman, *Vatican Stanze*, 16, and Schröter, 214-215.

The *Parnassus* fresco depicts Apollo on Mount Parnassus playing a *lira da braccio.* The Renaissance instrument, an early violin, replaces Apollo's usual, classicizing lyre. He is surrounded by the nine Muses, many of them bearing attributes such as musical instruments, books, and dramatic masks. The items they hold recall the attributes of the Muses on antique sarcophagi such as the Mattei sarcophagus, which Emmanuel Winternitz has suggested as a source for Raphael's Muses.[12] Eighteen poets line Parnassus's slopes, including figures from antiquity as well as the Renaissance. Their identities remain speculative, with four exceptions. The group of three men on the upper left represents Dante, Homer, and Vergil. Dante and Homer are clearly recognizable from established traditions for their portrayal. Homer, in accordance with tradition, is blind. Vergil is distinguishable chiefly through the gaze which Dante directs toward him, as if acknowledging Vergil's inspiration for Dante's *Divine Comedy.* The fourth clearly identifiable figure is Sappho, seated by the left window, bearing a scroll with her name. She is the sole figure in the painting to be identified explicitly, perhaps because of her mythic role as the inventor of stringed instruments.[13] The identities of the other poets are less certain; some appear to be portraits, and conjectures include such notable men as Horace, Statius, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Ariosto.[14]

Although the theme of the painting is derived from antique and medieval traditions, its realization is unmistakably new in terms of both visualization and meaning. Illustrations of Apollo and the Muses almost invariably show Apollo occupying the peak of Parnassus, whereas the Muses' domain is another mountain, Helicon, or a separate part of the twin-peaked Mount Parnassus. In a manuscript of the *Ovide Moralisé* from around 1400, an illustration entitled *Mons Helicon* depicts the Muses bathing in the Castalian spring flowing from below Apollo's feet (fig. 3). Apollo plays his lyre and wears a crown as well as displaying a nimbus of light. He is clearly the superior source of inspiration.

The scene is actually a fusion of the Parnassus and Helicon traditions, for Apollo is shown ruling Helicon, the domain of the Muses. Raphael's *Parnassus* takes this fusion even further, depicting only one peak and placing Apollo and the Muses in a single group.[15] Even more innovative in Raphael's representation is the inclusion of poets on the sacred peak, an idea rarely illustrated in art, but sometimes aspired to in poetry.

Placing mortal poets on the peak not only emphasizes the relationship of

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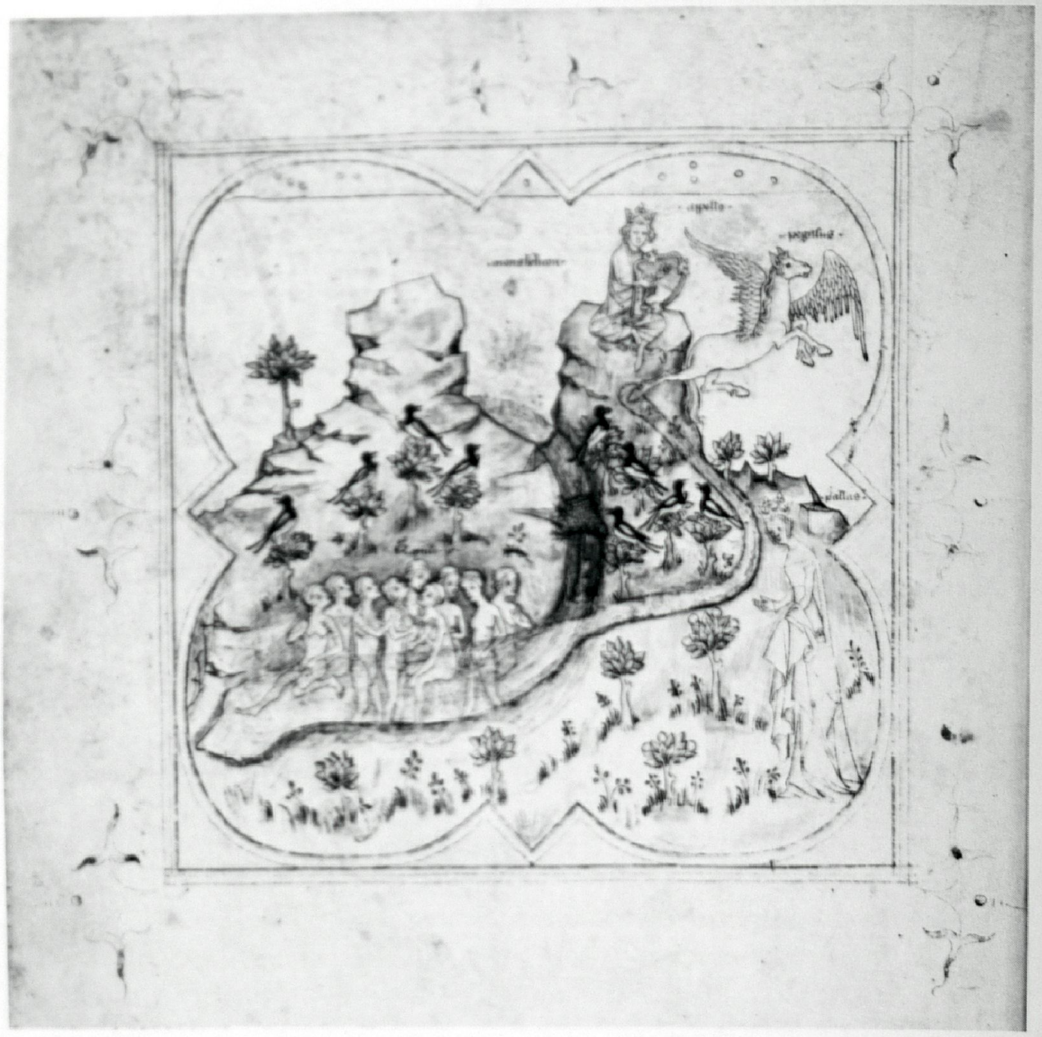
[12] E. Winternitz, *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art,* New York, 1967, 192-196.

[13] For Sappho as inventor of stringed instruments, see Winternitz, 198 and note.

[14] For attempts at specific identifications of the other poets, see D. Redig de Campos, *The "Stanze" of Raphael in the Vatican,* Rome, 1963, 30-31, J.D. Passavant, *Raphael d'Urbin et son père Giovanni Santi,* Paris, 1860, II, 77, and Giorgio Vasari, *Artists of the Renaissance,* trans. G. Bull, New York, 1978, 295.

[15] K. Meyer-Baer, "Musical Iconography in Raphael's *Parnassus,*" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* VIII, December, 1949, 94. Schröter, 235, suggests that the twin peaks are condensed in order to emphasize a parallel between Mount Parnassus and the Vatican Hill.



3. *Mons Helicon,* Ms. fr. 871, fol. 116v, c. 1400, from the illuminated manuscript *Bible Moralisée.* Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

Apollo and the Muses to poetry, but also suggests something about the status of poets in Renaissance culture. The eighteen men represented here are clearly among the greatest poets of history, hence, they are honored by their inclusion in the realm of the immortal Apollo and Muses. All of the poets wear laurel crowns, a personal symbol of Apollo and the attire granted to victors of literary and athletic contests in ancient Greece and Rome. It was believed, in fact, that the Roman poets Vergil and Horace had been thus crowned on the steps of the ancient Capitol—an event emulated on Petrarch's behalf in 1341.[16] The laurel wreath came to symbolize the poet's fame and highest achievement; in the Renaissance, fame was regarded as a form of immortality. Laurel leaves were therefore a highly appropriate sign of such fame, as indicated in an account of Petrarch's Coronation Oration:

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[16] J.B. Trapp, "The Poet Laureate: Rome, *Renovatio,* and *Translatio Imperii,*" in *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth,* ed. P.A. Ramsey, Binghamton, N.Y., 1982, 95, and 104.

> The [laurel] tree is shady, to signify rest after toil; its leaves are not only never-fading but they preserve from time anything wrapped in them; it is a holy tree; its touch brings truth to a sleeper's dreams and the gift of Pythian prophecy to poets; evergreen, it signifies never-dying fame....[17]

Petrarch claims special honor for poetry in the form of the laurel crown; he is the harbinger of the special position attained by poetry among the liberal arts in the Renaissance.

The true poet, according to Renaissance literary theory, is the recipient of divine inspiration which permits him to present moral, physical, and religious truth in the guise of fiction. Poetry, then, is somewhat akin to theology in its true subject matter, if not in its approach. This concept was established very early in Renaissance literature, and, as Charles Trinkaus has demonstrated, is clearly evident in works by Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Landino.[18] For example, in a letter to his brother Gerardo, Petrarch claims that theology is really poetry about God, and that poetry originated as a means of using more elevated expression to describe elevated subjects.[19] This notion is clearly reflected in the vast amount of Renaissance poetry throughout Europe which takes God, faith, the heavens, or man's place in the cosmos as its subject. The relationship between poetry and theology is further described in Boccaccio's *De genealogia deorum,* in which he claims that the *prisci poetae,* the ancient pagan poets, were theologians writing sacred literature.[20]

Expression of these themes relating poetry and theology continued throughout the Renaissance, notably in the works of Tuscan humanist Cristoforo Landino. Trinkaus points out that among commentators on the linkage of theology and poetry, Landino places particular stress upon the concept of the poet as divinely inspired.[21] According to Landino's commentary on Vergil, poets may be differentiated from other men: "...those who are affected by a power of this sort [of divine inspiration] the Greeks called poets because they both ascend above men and yet are not able to become gods."[22] The role of poets on earth is thus to create a ladder or bridge between the realms of man and God. To Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Landino, then, one writes and reads poetry in order to gain comprehension of the higher realm, and thus the poet is both a philosopher and a theologian.

If the poet is also a theologian, then a theologian (or a pope) can also join the ranks of the poets immortalized on Parnassus's slopes. This association is suggested

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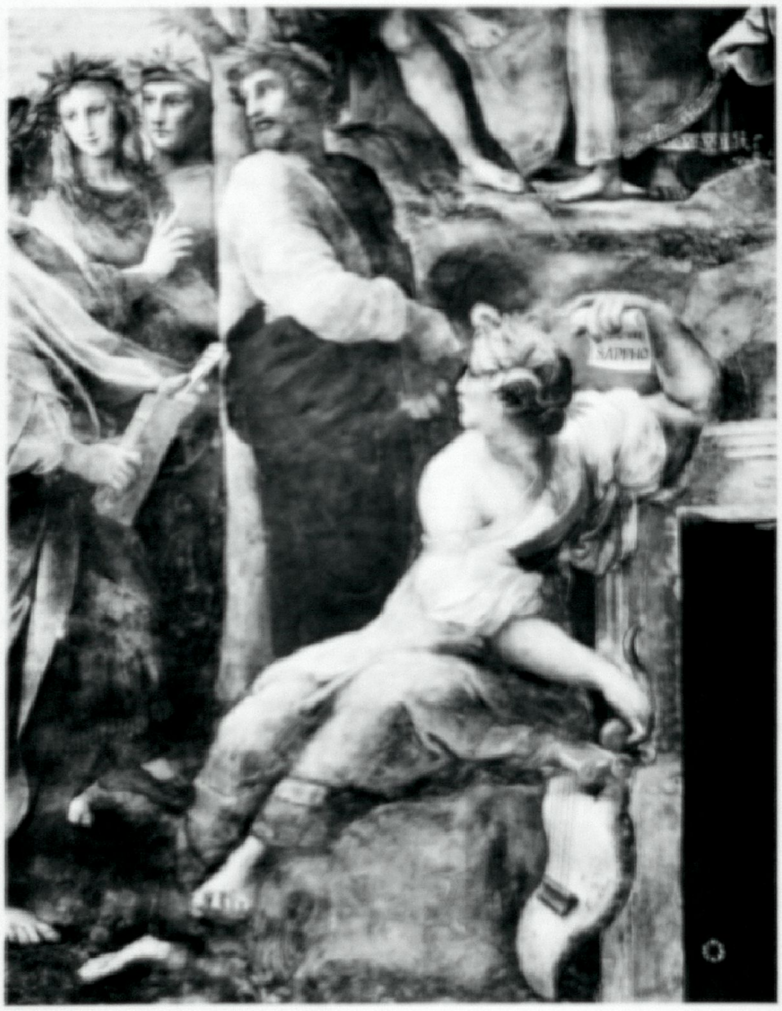
[17] *Ibid.,* 105.
[18] C. Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness,* II, London, 1970, 683-721.
[19] *Ibid.,* 689-690.
[20] *Ibid.,* 693-697.
[21] *Ibid.,* 713.
[22] *Ibid.*



4. Detail of fig. 1, Sappho from *Parnassus*
(photo: Anderson/Art Resource, New York)

by the illusionary extension of *Parnassus* into the space of Julius's library. Raphael accomplishes this through the two figures framing the window below the fresco, the poetess Sappho and an unidentified male poet. Sappho props her left elbow in front of the border between the painting and window recess and seems to lean out from the painting into the space before it. Her right hand is curled around a stringed instrument at her feet. The musical instrument, almost certainly an invention of Raphael's, is also painted to appear in front of the border frame (fig. 4).[23] On the opposite side of the window, a man in classical robes points outward as he converses with two other poets on the slope above him. His hand appears to reach into the actual physical space of the room. The position of his right leg, painted on top of the border frame, strengthens the illusion, for it causes the leg to appear to protrude beyond the wall. This extension of the painting into real space is emphasized further by the recession of the window into the wall, a contrast to the forward movement of the figures in the fresco. The conflation of real and fictive space extends *Parnassus* into the room, implying that the viewer is also a member of the assemblage of immortalized, visionary men crowned on the mountain's slopes and shares with them the receipt of inspiration from above.[24] In this manner, the room itself becomes Julius's own Parnassus, in which the arts and letters of his Rome are glorified and inspired.

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[23] Winternitz, 188.

The *Parnassus* fresco is part of a complex of poems, processions, orations, and art created at the Julian court which was centered upon the closely related Parnassus and Golden Age themes.[25] The Renaissance conception of a Golden Age is founded on Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*, which prophesizes an age of bucolic peace initiated under Apollo and ruled by Saturn, to be associated with the birth of a savior. The Roman emperor Augustus promoted the idea that the gods had chosen him to fulfill the prophecy.[26] In Julius's time, the reign of Augustus was associated with a Golden Age of peace, harmony, faith and justice. This era brought forth the writings of great Latin poets such as Vergil, Ovid and Horace, as well as the expansion of the Roman Empire. Julius's patronage was oriented toward emulating and surpassing the achievements of Augustus and his predecessor, Julius Caesar, the Pope's namesake.[27]

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[24] I am grateful to William Wallace for having brought the suggestion of extension implied by the composition to my attention.

[25] Schröter, 214-215. For a more detailed account of the Golden Age and other literary themes in Raphael's *Parnassus*, see Schröter, "Raffaels Parnass: eine ikonographische Untersuchung," *Actas del XXIII Congreso de Historia del Arte*, Granada, 1973, 593-605.

[26] C. Rousseau, "Cosimo I de Medici and Astrology: The Symbolism of Prophecy," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1983, 123-125.
The most famous example of Augustus's association with the Golden Age is found in Vergil's *Aeneid*, where Anchises, Aeneas's father, reveals the future of Rome:

> ...this is the man, this one,
> Of whom so often you have heard the promise,
> Caesar Augustus, son of the deified,
> Who shall bring once again an Age of Gold
> To Latium, to the land where Saturn reigned
> In early times. He will extend his power
> Beyond the Garamants and Indians,
> Over far territories north and south...

(Vergil, *The Aeneid*, trans. R. Fitzgerald, New York, 1984, book VI, 790-797, 187-188).

[27] For Pope Julius II identified with Julius Caesar see Stinger, 91, 238-239, and 242-245, and Partridge and Starn, 47, 54-55, and especially 63. For Julius II identified with Augustus Caesar see Partridge and Starn, 52-54, and H.H. Brummer, *The Statue Court in the Vatican Belvedere*, Stockholm, 1970, 34. Julius seems to have quite logically preferred identification with his namesake. However, the idea of a Roman Golden Age bears a specific association with Augustus's reign, so in his attempts to establish a new Golden Age, Julius is implicitly identifying himself with Augustus as well.

In the context of Julius's efforts to bring about the return of the Golden Age, the illusionary extension of *Parnassus* into the Stanza acquires further significance. The setting of the painting suggests both a Golden Age paradise and a humanist or poetic *vigne*. This topos of an outdoor *locus amoenus* is familiar in Renaissance art and literature and connotes not only poetic inspiration, but also the idea of the harmony of nature being conducive to the exercise of the intellect. Gardens and natural retreats were seen as expressions of the harmony of God's creation, for they displayed the beauty of divine works and regenerated with the cycle of the seasons.[28] Thus the *locus amoenus* was conceived not only as a place to relax and forget cares, but also as a place where men too could partake of this harmony. *Parnassus*, then, represents not only the harmony of the Golden Age, but also the harmony of man and nature, the harmony of Apollo's music and the harmony of nature together inspiring the proliferation of art and learning.

Just as the *Disputà* and the *School of Athens* refer to Julius's Rome through allusions to St. Peter's, so does *Parnassus* allude to Julius's other major building project, Bramante's Cortile del Belvedere. There is a great deal of evidence suggesting that *Parnassus* was conceived to link harmoniously the Stanza to the Cortile, the two projects working as one in order to emphasize the harmony, peace and splendor of the new Golden Age in Rome. The Cortile del Belvedere had been under construction for nearly three years when Raphael began his work in the Stanza della Segnatura in 1508. The Cortile would be an immense complex, modeled on Classical imperial villas described by Roman writers.[29] It was designed to be seen from the north window of the Stanza—the window on the *Parnassus* wall.[30]

From this viewpoint, the architecture and one's view of it converge on the exedra, the Cortile's culminating structure, directly opposite the window.[31] James Ackerman has noted that the perspectival unity of the garden's architecture, meant to be seen from outside the garden itself, creates the effect of a painting with the window defining the frame.[32] Ackerman also suggested that the Stanza was to have served as the pope's private auditorium for theatrical events and spectacles taking place in the garden.[33] This link between the *Parnassus* wall and the Cortile is further supported by John Shearman's suggestion that the *Parnassus* wall and window were intended to be the most typically viewed part of the room. Shearman noted that the pattern on the floor is strangely asymmetrical, aligned to point northwest, toward the window looking out to the Cortile.[34] *Parnassus* thus functions as a linking point,

[28] For Renaissance ideas about gardens and retreats, see D.R. Coffin, ed., *The Italian Garden*, Washington, D.C., 1972, and T. Comito, *The Idea of the Garden in the Renaissance*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1978.

[29] Especially Pliny's letter concerning his Tuscan villa. J. Ackerman, *The Cortile del Belvedere*, Vatican City, 1954, 130-132.

[30] *Ibid.*, 123.

[31] *Ibid.* and A. Bruschi, *Bramante*, London, 1970, 100.

[32] Ackerman, 123.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Shearman, *Vatican Stanze*, 15-16.

providing a continuity between the Stanza and the Cortile and making both projects into a single, harmonious testimonial to Julius's recreation of Rome.[35]

The popes associated themselves with the Roman Empire not only through the Golden Age mythology and emulation of Augustus, but also, as Elizabeth Schröter has shown, through the image of Apollo, portrayed in the *Aeneid* as one of the gods particularly helpful to Aeneas in founding Rome.[36] Schröter cited poems and panegyrics associating Apollo with the rebirth of Rome, the new Golden Age, and presenting him as a protector of the city and its rulers. For example, in a poetic tribute Jacobus de Horetis styles Sixtus IV as "pastor Apollo," thus associating the pope with Apollo as a protective deity.[37] These efforts escalated under Julius, who continued and surpassed his uncle Sixtus's plans for the rebuilding of Rome and the expansion of papal power, and used the Apollo image with greater frequency in his patronage of arts and letters.

Julius's interest in cultivating the Apollo image to embellish his political program was encouraged not only by his uncle's precedent, but also by his possession of the famous *Apollo Belvedere* statue. He owned it while still a cardinal and had displayed it in the garden at his titular church, San Pietro in Vincoli.[38] The Cumaean Sibyl's prediction of a bucolic Golden Age initiated under Apollo is thus quite apt for Julius's papacy; Julius had been, in a sense, associated with Apollo even before the inception of his reign.

One of the most explicit references to the renewal of the Augustan Golden Age under the protection of Apollo is Evangelista Maddaleni Fausto di Capodiferro's *Ibidem Apollo Loquitur.* In this laudatory poem, the *Apollo Belvedere* sculpture speaks to Julius II, striking a parallel between Rome and heaven, and praising Julius as the keeper of souls on earth. Julius's efforts to protect and expand Italy are praised and are compared to those of the caesars.[39] Finally, Julius is told that Apollo has found a safe haven and is speaking to him from the Vatican Hill, where the Apollo statue was indeed placed.

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[35] The connection between the Stanza, *Parnassus,* and the Cortile is not only physical but thematic, as the Cortile also emphasizes ideas of Roman resurgence and harmonious rule. The accent of the Cortile on unity and harmony is reflected in a medal dated between 1504-1507 which depicts a profile portrait of Pope Julius II on the obverse, and a representation of the Cortile del Belvedere on the reverse. The inscription below reads VATICANUS.M. (Vaticanus Mons). Above the illustration is a longer inscription, VIA./.IVL.III.ADIT./LON.M./.ALTI.L.XX./.P.. The inscription records the evidently significant fact that the Belvedere courtyard was one thousand feet long and seventy feet high. This interpretation of the medal has been accepted by W. Lotz, "Lectures," R. Weiss, 181, and Ackerman, 192. These measurements are notable first of all for their sheer magnitude, which demonstrates that the Cortile was as colossal as any ancient monument and reflects Julius's desire to renew the glory of Rome. Secondly, the numbers are so round and precise that it seems clear that they were purposeful and convey a symbolic significance. Seventy is the product of 10, which usually represents unity, perfection, and order, and 7, the number of days of the Creation, the planetary bodies, and universality. V.F. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism,* New York, 1969, 79. One thousand, like its cube root, 10, traditionally represents unity or perfection (Hopper, 98 and 102). Together, these numbers recall many of the same themes of cosmic harmony and perfect unity expressed in the Stanza. Furthermore, 1000 also could signify the length of an age (Hopper, 78), an interpretation significant in the context of the Golden Age theme cultivated by Renaissance popes; it is likely that 1000 was intended to signify the length of the harmonious age of peace and justice inaugurated under Julius's rule.

[36] Schröter, 233.

[37] *Ibid.,* 219-220.

[38] Brummer, 44-46.

Having established Julius's identification with Apollo as a patron and as a personal symbol, we can now look more closely at the specific role played by Apollo in *Parnassus*. Raphael's composition represents inspiration and harmony not only in the context of human, terrestrial concerns, but also as a representation of the metaphor of the music of the universe, guided by Apollo. Apollo's followers, the Muses, traditionally inspire music as well as poetry in their role as movers of the celestial spheres. A Greek dialogue, *Epinomis*, attributed to a follower of Plato, tells us that the heavenly spheres make music as "a gift from the blessed choir of Muses [which] has imparted to man the services of measured consonance with a view to the enjoyment of rhythm and harmony."[40] The origin of the doctrine of the music of the spheres is attributed to Pythagoras, who discovered a mathematical correlation between the ratios of musical intervals and the ratios describing the relationship between the celestial spheres. Each sphere produces a tone as it moves. Iamblichus, a fourth-century Neo-platonist, claimed that

> Pythagoras himself was able to hear the harmony of the spheres, but, since he believed that no one else could, he made vocal and instrumental imitations of it, so that, indirectly, his disciples might be influenced by this celestial harmony.[41]

Thus, the tones of the spheres together produce a harmonious and perfect symphony, of which earthly music is only a pale imitation.

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[39] Capodiferro's poem appears in Brummer, 225. Its character is clear from the introductory lines:

Ille ego sum Iuli Iulaeque Gentis Apollo
Perpetuus custos tot qui te invicte periclis
Eripui nutuque meo super aethera vexi:
Non me marmoreum nunc aspicis, aspice verum
Qualis in aethereo sublimis spector Olympo.
Hinc tibi Romanas animas aequataque caelo
Moenia commisi Maiestatisque verende
Imperia.

Apollo's patronage of Pope Julius (cum Julius Caesar) is further made manifest in another section of the poem:

Nunc mihi maiori turgescunt numine corda,
Postquam Iuleis domus haec est parta columnis,
Quae me et magnanimum pariter venerantur Julum.

[40] Meyer-Baer, *The Music of the Spheres and the Dance of Death*, Princeton, 1970, 20.

[41] D.P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, London, 1975, 37-38.

The harmonious relationship of the Muses, spheres, and musical tones in which music has its basis is illustrated in the title page from Franchinus Gaffurius's 1496 publication, *Practica Musicae* (fig. 5). The print shows a Muse, Thalia, at the bottom, inscribed in a sphere marked "terra," earth. A column of spheres rises to each side. The spheres on the left contain Muses, who correspond to the celestial bodies (the seven planets and the fixed stars) represented in the spheres on the right. The arcs connecting the columns to a central axis, represented by a fantastic, serpentine creature, are labeled with the musical modes, tones and half tones thought to correspond to each sphere.[42] Two putti playing stringed instruments frame the upper corners of the page. Between them are the three Graces, arms linked, and, enthroned in the center, Apollo. His authority is declared by his crown and his position atop the serpent which connects the Muses, modes, tones, and planets. A scroll above Apollo reads: MENTIS APOLLINEAE VIS HAS MOVET VNDIQVE MV SAS [MVSAS], (the power of the mind of Apollo moves these Muses in every respect).[43]

Apollo's guidance of the harmonious movement of the universe is illustrated less diagramatically in Mantegna's *Parnassus,* executed for Isabella d'Este in 1497. As in the Gaffurius frontispiece, Apollo and the Muses refer to the harmony and music of the universe. Apollo's role as guide is clear: the music of his *lira* directs the Muses in their dance. The Muses join hands, signifying concord, and move gaily in a line which curves to suggest a circle, not coincidentally the shape that most perfectly expresses the ideas of harmony and unity.

Raphael's *Parnassus* illustrates the same principle of cosmic harmony ruled by Apollo and carried out by the Muses, but it is expressed in a fundamentally new and different way. In the representations by Gaffurius and Mantegna—and in nearly all others before Raphael—Apollo is clearly set apart from the Muses, governing them from the outside. Raphael breaks with tradition and places Apollo in the center of the Muses, a change which is significant not only in structure and composition, but also in adding a new level of meaning to the Parnassus theme.[44]

Shearman's observation that only Apollo is as prominent as Christ in the Stanza's frescoes points out that Apollo occupies not only the physical center of the fresco but the psychological center as well.[45] Although Sappho and two of the Muses

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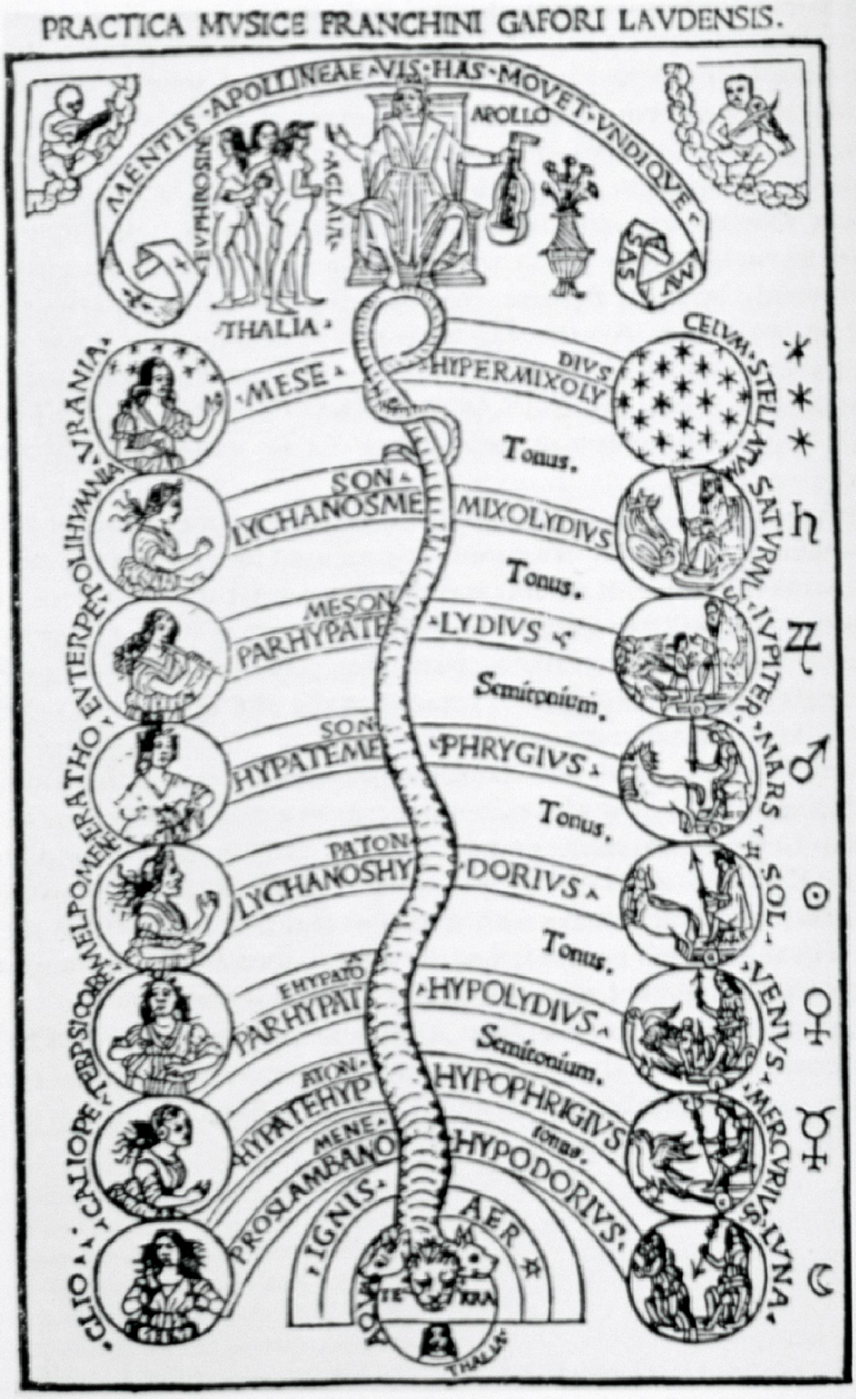
[42] For the identity and symbolism of the serpentine figure, see E. Panofsky, "Titian's *Allegory of Prudence:* A Postscript," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts,* Chicago, 1982, 146-168.

[43] For a more detailed discussion of the iconography of Gaffurius's frontispiece see E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance,* Harmondsworth and Baltimore, 1967, 265-269.

[44] Meyer-Baer, 1949, 87, notes that Raphael does not merely break with tradition, but transforms it. After his version of *Parnassus,* almost all others show Apollo in the center, surrounded by the Muses.

[45] Shearman, *Vatican Stanze,* 16.


PRACTICA MVSICE FRANCHINI GAFORI LAVDENSIS.
MENTIS·APOLLINEAE·VIS·HAS·MOVET·VNDIQVE·MVSAS
APOLLO
EVPHROSINE
AGLAIA
THALIA
VRANIA
POLIHYMNIA
EVTERPE
ERATHO
MELPOMENE
TERPSICORE
CALLIOPE
CLIO
MESE
HIPERMIXOLYDIVS
Tonus.
LYCHANOS MESON
MIXOLYDIVS
Tonus.
PARHYPATE MESON
LYDIVS
Semitonium.
HYPATE MESON
PHRYGIVS
Tonus.
LYCHANOS HYPATON
DORIVS
Tonus.
PARHYPATE HYPATON
HYPOLYDIVS
Semitonium.
HYPATE HYPATON
HYPOPHRIGIVS
tonus.
PROSLAMBANOMENE
HYPODORIVS
IGNIS
AER
AQVA
TERRA
THALIA
CELVM STELLATVM
SATVRNVS
IVPITER
MARS
SOL
VENVS
MERCVRIVS
LVNA

5. Franchinus Gaffurius, *Practica Musica*, frontispiece, 1496. Published in Milan (photo: University of California at Berkeley History of Art Department Slide Library, Berkeley)

also bear musical instruments, Apollo is the only one who plays, his music inspiring the lyrical, contemplative attitudes of the Muses and the thoughtful discourse of the poets below. The power of his music to move the spheres is also indicated by a unique characteristic of his *lira da braccio*: it has nine strings, a number which corresponds to the number of Muses and the number of spheres.[46] A normal *lira da braccio*, however, has only seven strings, hence it is fairly certain that the correspondence of strings to spheres is a deliberate illustration of the connection between Apollo's music and the movements of the heavens. *Parnassus*, then, is an illustration not only of cosmic harmony, but of cosmic hierarchy as well.

One interpretation of Apollo's significance in *Parnassus* which has not been dealt with extensively in literature on the Stanza is his role as deity of the sun. Like all of the pagan gods of antiquity, Apollo's powers are varied. He is the god of knowledge and prophecy. He inspires reason and measure and is a patron of the liberal arts, in which context he appears as a niche sculpture in the *School of Athens*. As we have already seen, he is connected especially with music and poetry in his role as musician and leader of celestial harmony. But, above all, Apollo represents the sun, a role which would have been instantly associated with him by any educated person in the Renaissance. It would be very surprising indeed if such an identification of Apollo was neither intended nor noticed in the *Parnassus* fresco, given the Renaissance tendency to enjoy multi-leveled symbolism in painting and literature.[47] In fact, viewers would have had a very good reason to make this identification, for the Vatican Hill, in antiquity, had been consecrated to Apollo, and was clearly associated with his role as lord of the sun.[48]

That *Parnassus* represents Apollo in several roles at one time is consistent with traditional representations of the god. For example, in the manuscript illustration of *Mons Helicon* (fig. 3), Apollo plays a lyre while rays of light emanate from his head, thus indicating his dual powers as the deity of sun and music. A slightly later representation of Apollo (c. 1420) which includes other attributes as well occurs in an illustrated mythology handbook, *Libellus de imaginibus deorum*. Under the description of Apollo is a delicate line drawing of the traditional twin summits of

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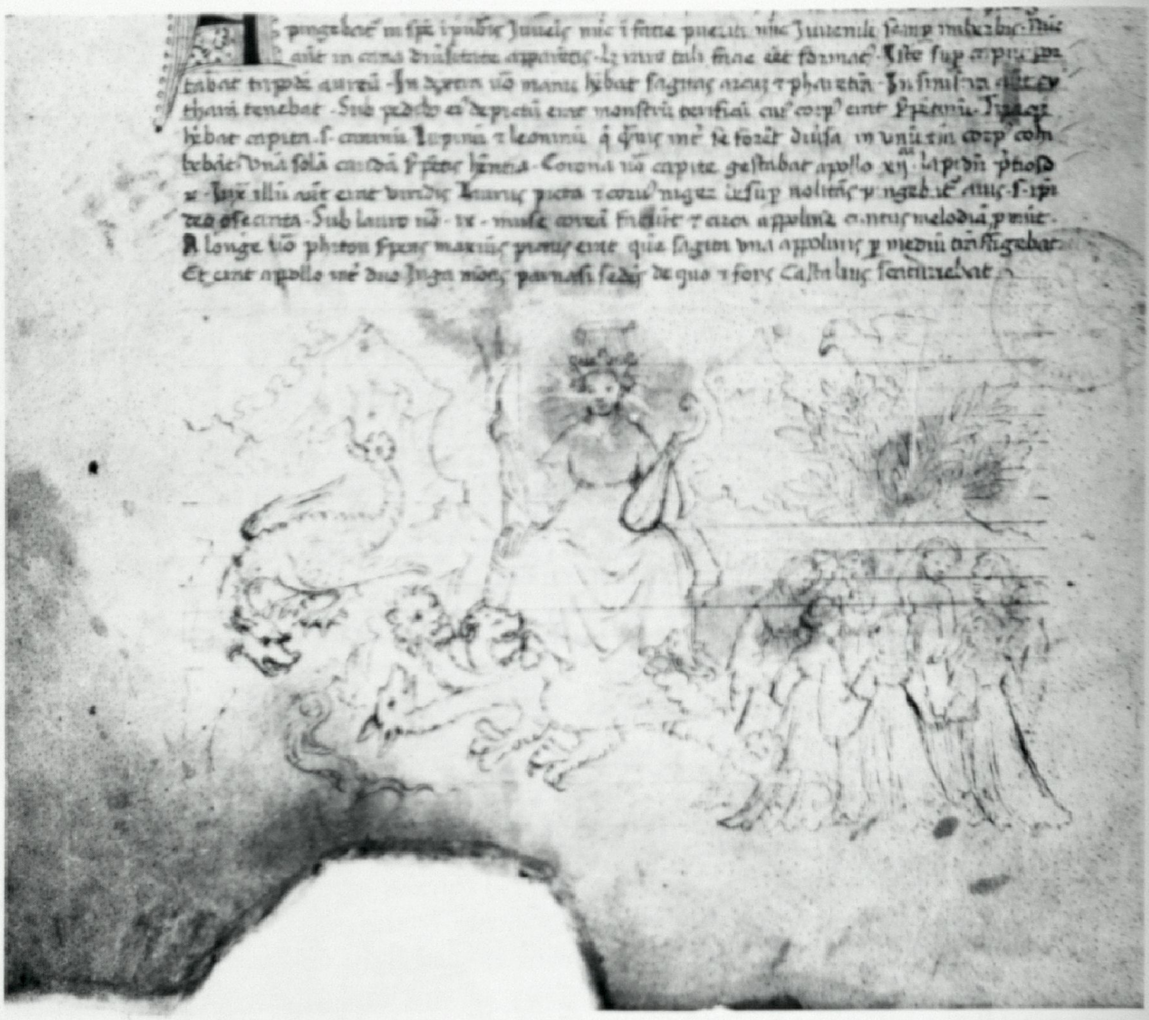
[46] Winternitz, 199-200.

[47] The notion that a painting is of higher moral and intellectual value if its meaning is difficult to ascertain is reflected in many Renaissance paintings, and is explicitly stated in Cortesi's *De cardinalatu*, a treatise dedicated to Julius II. For example, in his chapter on the ideal decoration of a cardinal's palace, Cortesi concludes that "the more erudite are the paintings in a cardinal's chapel, the more easily the soul can be excited by the admonishment of the eyes to the imitation of acts, by looking at [painted representations] of them." This passage is found in J.F. D'Amico and K. Weil-Garris, "The Renaissance Cardinal's Ideal Palace: A Chapter from Cortesi's *De cardinalatu*," in *Studies in Italian Art and Architecture 15th through 18th Centuries*, ed. Henry A. Millon, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1980, 93.

[48] Stinger, 274, Shearman, *Vatican Stanze*, 16. Shearman, 50, note 105, also notes that Fulvio describes the peak of the Vatican Hill (site of the Villa Belvedere and the statue court) as "Vaticanus apex, phoebo sacratus." It should be pointed out that Phoebus was the appellation of Apollo used most often in describing the deity's role as Sun-god.



6. Page from *Libellus de imaginibus deorum*, Ms. Reg. lat. 1290, fol lv., lower half, c.1420, illuminated manuscript. Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (photo: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome)

Mount Parnassus (fig. 6). Apollo sits enthroned in the center, holding a cithara in his left hand, and the bow and arrows with which he shall slay Python in his right hand. As in the *Mons Helicon* manuscript, his head is surrounded by the rays of light which identify him as the Sun-god. Apollo is shown with the same attributes in a different setting in Francesco Cossa's *Triumph of Apollo*, in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara. Here Apollo sits, not on Mount Parnassus, but on a triumphal wagon. The rays of the sun do not emanate from his head, but from the disk of the sun, which he bears in his right hand.

Although in all of these earlier representations Apollo is presented as leader of the Muses, he does not appear among them as he does in Raphael's fresco. If we try to apply Apollo's role as Sun-god to *Parnassus*, we immediately encounter a problem: if he represents the sun, and the Muses the spheres, then his placement in the center might be read as a diagram of a heliocentric cosmos. Yet *Parnassus* cannot represent heliocentrism for several reasons. The painting was made before Copernicus's ideas were even propounded, much less accepted. And although heliocentric conceptions of the cosmos were present among the Greeks, they were not among the ideas endorsed by mainstream philosophers or the educated class in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Indeed, the idea of heliocentrism would undoubtedly have seemed heretical to Pope Julius. It can be demonstrated, however, that the placement of the sun—not in the physical center of the universe—but in a central position, is perfectly consistent with traditional cosmology, with Scripture, and with Neo-platonic efforts to reconcile pagan wisdom with Christian theology. Indeed, as we shall see, interpreting Apollo as the sun in the center adds a Christian dimension to *Parnassus,* a painting usually discussed as a purely mythological, pagan subject.

The figures on *Parnassus*'s peak can be read as a diagram of the Ptolemaic system.[49] The early sixteenth-century's conception of the universe varied little from that expounded by Ptolemy in the second century A.D. Minor alterations had been made to account for new observations, but these concerned only philosophers and astrologers. To most people, the universe was conceived in the same manner as it had been thirteen hundred years before, when Ptolemy established his system of astronomical calculations for predicting celestial motions in a geocentric universe. The earth was thought of as unmoving in the center of the universe, surrounded by eight crystalline spheres which carried the planets and fixed stars around the terrestrial globe. The order of the spheres from earth was: Luna, Mercury, Venus, Sol, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and, last, the *primum mobile,* or sphere of fixed stars. Thus, there are seven spheres between the center of the universe, earth and the boundary of the universe, the sphere of the fixed stars. Regarded in a diagrammatic way, the sun, inhabiting the fourth sphere, would be in the exact sequential center of this system, central in, but not the center of, the universe—just as Apollo rests at the center point of *Parnassus.*

This diagrammatic interpretation, although it provides an acceptable explanation for Apollo-Sol's central location in *Parnassus,* does not adequately account for the hierarchical superiority of the sun in Raphael's allegory, nor for the role of the poets. Even in a geocentric cosmos the sun was thought to play an essential role in maintaining the harmony of the universe and had many qualities not attributable to any other celestial body. Most significant was, of course, the provision of light and warmth to the earth, but the sun had many other extremely important functions. It ruled the Zodiac, lit the face of the moon, and, some people thought, the stars as well. The sun also provided the stationary earth with cycles of time, such as day, night, the measure of the year and the four seasons. But the sun's superiority derived not from these physical attributes as much as from an allegorical one. As the source of light in the physical world it not only regulated earthly life, but was perceived in most religions and philosophical traditions as the physical substance closest in nature to the spiritual light of the divine. We can thus regard *Parnassus* not only in terms of the inspiration of Apollo's divine music, but also in terms of the influence of his divine light. This interpretation can be supported by examining another allegory concerning the nature and influence of the sun in the universe, Marsilio Ficino's essay, *De sole*.

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[49] This diagrammatic interpretation of *Parnassus* was suggested to me by Claudia Rousseau. I am very grateful to her for her guidance in the exposition of the cosmological interpretation of *Parnassus* presented here.

Ficino wrote *De sole* in 1493, about fifteen years before Raphael began to paint in the Stanza della Segnatura. This essay is reviewed here, not as a source for the painting, but as an illustration of ideas quite prevalent in philosophical thought of the period. In fact, Ficino's essay contains very little original material, but is instead a consolidation of hermetic, Neo-platonic and Christian ideas concerning the role of the sun in the universe and its relationship to divine intelligence. He informs us that all of the ancient traditions are in accord and "have placed the sun at the center of the world, even if in different ways."[50] Although *De sole* acknowledges Apollo, the sun, as regulator of physical harmony in the universe and therefore central in it, the sun's centrality is really an allegorical motif—it is central in the resemblance of its light to that of God.

At the outset of his argument, Ficino tells us that the text is not really about the sun, but about God: "…it is within our power to ascend from this sensible light [of the sun] to that of God; not, however, by arguments, but by analogies drawn with light."[51] And as we shall see, light is indeed the factor which provides for this allegorical correspondence. Ficino details how the behavior of sunlight parallels that of the divine light in that it "illumines, gives life and form, and turns toward the heavens every creature of sense,"[52] just as the light of God illumines and attracts the soul.

In this vision, the light of the sun is the metaphorical key to the ascent of the soul, for it provides a comprehensible image of God to help man achieve a higher spiritual state through knowledge of things divine. We ascend from "the image," the sun, to "the model," the divine intellect.[53] The human intellect can be conceived of as inspired by the sun in that the sun's light, like the intellectual light which inspires the human mind, is originally derived from God. Thus, the sun is really an intermediary between heaven and earth, at the midpoint not only of the spheres, but of the cosmic hierarchy as well.

In applying this idea of hierarchical ascent and descent to *Parnassus*, we see that Apollo, the sun, is indeed not the original source of inspiration, but instead directs his enraptured gaze toward the medallion of *Poetry* above him (as seen in figs. 1 and 2). She is winged and rests on clouds, reflecting her celestial nature as well as the loftiness of poetry's matter, and bears a lyre. Beside her, a putto holds a plaque which reads *numine afflatur,* "divinely inspired." It is from this figure, which represents the Idea of Poetry in the mind of the Creator, that Apollo receives the inspiration which diffuses down the hierarchy to the Muses, the poets, and through them to earth, the bottom of the hierarchy.

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[50] Marsilio Ficino, *"De sole,"* in *Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. A.D. Fallico and H. Shapiro, I, New York, 1967, 127. Ficino's ideas concerning light and the sun are derived from a variety of sources, including Hermetic texts, Plato, Iamblichus, Plotinus, St. Augustine and St. Bonaventure. An excellent discussion of antique and medieval conceptions of light along these lines may be found in J.A. Mazzeo, *Medieval Cultural Tradition in Dante's Comedy*, Ithaca, New York, 1960.

[51] Ficino, 119.

[52] *Ibid.*, 134.

[53] *Ibid.*, 130.

Parnassus can be related not only to the concept that the universe is hierarchically arranged, but also to the idea that the different levels of a hierarchy may contain microcosms modeled after cosmic structure. For example, in the *Heptaplus,* an exegesis of the Mosaic account of the Creation, Pico della Mirandola asserts that God generated four corresponding worlds: the elemental world, the celestial world, the angelic and invisible world, and the human world. Since all four worlds are analogous, that which takes place in one world can be represented by the corresponding action of another. This, Pico tells us, is the basis of allegory.[54] Thus Christ, who is the light generated by God's Word, the sun, and Apollo, emblem of the sun, are all analogous as intermediaries between the divine intelligence of God and the lower world of man. They are the means by which divine inspiration descends from the original Idea to its corrupt imitation on earth, and their actions, though varied in nature, are also analogous. Thus the universe is moved on a spiritual level by the non-corporeal light of God, while on a physical level, the universe is guided by the light of the sun. *Parnassus* illustrates a symbolic, imaginary level, in which the music of Apollo's lyre diffuses like the light of the sun. Yet when the music of Apollo reaches the human world, one discovers that it is not really Apollo's music but the music of God himself inspiring human minds—the music of the spheres and the rays of the sun replicating the harmony and unity that is the divine Intellect.

In the context of this hierarchy, in which earthly poetry reflects what is conceived by God, it is interesting to note an idea about the nature of poetic creation which was gaining increasing popularity in humanist circles at this time: the metaphor of poet as creator.[55] Poetry, it was thought, could be conceived of as an imitation of Divine creation. Just as God created the universe with His word, the poet creates a poem, which is an imagined world, with his words. This idea of a creator of art resembling the creator of the world was applied not only to poetry, but to painting as well. In fact, Raphael placed his own portrait in the room in a way which suggests that he, like many of his contemporaries, conceived of painting in just such a manner. He appears on the right side of the *School of Athens,* as part of the group observing the cosmographers studying various spheres and globes. The parallel established here is that both philosopher and painter seek to comprehend the harmony of God's cosmos, the one by means of study and the other by means of imitation.

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[54] Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Heptaplus,* trans. D. Carmichael, in *Oration on the Dignity of Man, On the Being and the One, Heptaplus,* intro. P.J.W. Miller, New York, 1985 (Library of Liberal Arts no. 227), 78-79. For a discussion of Pico's own use of allegory in *Heptaplus* see R. Waddington, "The Sun at the Center: Structure as Meaning in Pico della Mirandola's *Heptaplus,*" *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies,* III, Spring 1973, 69-86.

[55] The history and implications of this idea are explored in E.N. Tiegerstedt, "The Poet as Creator: Origins of a Metaphor," *Comparative Literature Studies,* V, 1968, 455-488 and also R.J. Bauer, "A Phenomenon of Epistemology in the Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Ideas,* XXXI, 1971, 281-288.

What other evidence is there to support the cosmological interpretation of *Parnassus* proposed here? It can be demonstrated that this reading of the painting is consistent with the room's other decoration which emphasizes the idea of a harmonious Christian universe with Rome as its center. The theme is carried out not only through the references to a Roman Golden Age of peace and justice already discussed above, but also through the coherent conception of the room itself, and through various representations of cosmic harmony.

The conception of the hierarchical nature of the universe displayed in *Parnassus* is reflected, although in varying form, in all three of the other wall frescoes. Knowledge, whether theology, poetry, philosophy, or jurisprudence, radiates from the divine Idea, represented by the personifications, to the figures below, and, finally, to the viewer in the Stanza. This radiation of knowledge is extended into the room through illusion, as in *Parnassus*, or by means of gesture. In the *School of Athens*, for example, Plato's gesture upward indicates the source of knowledge, whereas Aristotle points outward, toward the Stanza. Extension by gesture is also present in the *Disputà*, where a blonde figure looks out into the Stanza and gestures towards the monstrance holding the Eucharist on the altar, the means through which the spirit and body of Christ become accessible to man. On the extreme right, a man leans forward to see the monstrance, his head and shoulders almost appearing to protrude out of the painting into the room.

References to the order and nature of the universe consist not only in the hierarchical structure of the wall frescoes, but in specific references as well. Plato not only points heavenward, but also holds his *Timaeus*, a dialogue concerning the creation and order of the universe. Throughout the *School of Athens* men such as Ptolemy and Pythagoras engage in investigation and analysis of the harmony of the cosmos, diagramming, measuring, regarding globes and actively discussing their findings. This scene of exploration of the universe is linked to the depiction of the structure of the universe, *Parnassus*, by the rectangular ceiling panel between, depicting a Muse, Urania, floating above the outermost sphere of the fixed stars. She looks at her crystalline sphere, regarding the constellations depicted upon it. Rash-Fabbri has shown that the star pattern depicted on the sphere is approximately identical with the configuration of the constellations at the time of Julius's election to the papacy.[56] Thus, like *Parnassus*, this scene may be politically significant as well as indicative of the Renaissance conception of the universe.

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[56] Rash-Fabbri, 100.

These examples of cosmic harmony and hierarchy in the Stanza lend support to the interpretation of *Parnassus* as an intentional cosmic diagram. There are, however, some implications of this that require further discussion. How, for example, does it affect the interpretation of the room as a whole? And does the identification of Apollo with the sun relate to the identification of the popes with Apollo?

The introduction of a diagram of the universe to the room strengthens an interpretation of the room promoted by much recent scholarship: the Stanza della Segnatura represents the establishment of the Golden Age of the Catholic church, with its center in Rome. Nearly every panel refers specifically to Rome, either the ancient imperial capitol or the new Rome being established under Julius. Each wall refers to Julius's campaign of restoration and renewal: the room is a celebration of his efforts. *Jurisprudence* alludes to the emphasis of justice under the della Rovere pope.[57] The *Disputà* and *School of Athens* refer to the rebuilding of the church of St. Peter's, the most important church of the Christian religion, and the center of Christendom. *Parnassus* clearly refers to the Cortile del Belvedere behind it, and to the bucolic harmony of the new Golden Age. In its display of cosmic hierarchy it acquires a new, even more political significance.

In order to understand the political implications of the hierarchy illustrated in *Parnassus,* we must return to the popes' cultivation of Apollo and to the idea of a hierarchy of analogous worlds. Just as the Stanza della Segnatura displays that knowledge is hierarchically derived from above, so does the structure of the Catholic church display a hierarchy of authority, ultimately derived, like knowledge, from a divine source above. In *Parnassus,* inspiration passes from the celestial Idea to Apollo, from him to the Muses, and then to the poets. Papal authority, conceived by the Renaissance popes as both temporal and spiritual, passes from God to the pope, and then radiates from him to the faithful through the clergy of the universal church. This idea was consciously cultivated by the popes, as is evident from an oration delivered during Sixtus's reign by Domenico de' Domenichi. Domenichi describes Rome as the center of a Christian *imperium,* and claims that from its center in Rome the church administers the pope's authority and power throughout the world, "as rivers from a fountain, branches from a tree, or rays from the sun."[58] The structure of the church is therefore analogous to the structure of the universe, as displayed in *Parnassus.* This parallel is enhanced by consideration of Apollo's role as intermediary between earth and highest heaven.

In *De sole,* Ficino provides the sun with a variety of epithets and roles. The sun is the "Author of Every Harmony," the "Visible Image of God" in the sky, the means by which the light of heaven is communicated to earth, and the light which draws our attention heavenward. But Ficino also calls the sun the "Vicar of God on earth,"[59] a title commonly applied to the pope as well. Given the proliferation of comparisons of the pope to Apollo, it seems worthwhile to consider that the Apollo image may have been useful not only as a figure representing the guardianship of Rome but also as a metaphorical parallel to the pope's position in the hierarchy of the Church. In fact, the primacy of the sun in the sky, or of Apollo as presented in Raphael's vision of Mount Parnassus can be seen as analogous to the primacy of the pope on earth. The theme of papal authority is displayed in much of the Vatican decoration, including the Stanza d'Eliodoro and especially the Sistine Chapel.[60]

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[57] The fresco might also be considered as a more specific allusion to Julius's palace of justice which was planned, but never executed. A proposed elevation for this project appears on two medals, discussed in Weiss, 173-175.

[58] Stinger, 245.

It is also possible to regard Apollo's image in *Parnassus* as a reflection of the position in the universe of the city of Rome, the center of Christendom, and the home of the true intermediary between Heaven and earth, the church itself.[61] Just as Apollo is ruler of the sky, so was the renewed Catholic church in Rome to be the temporal and spiritual ruler of the earth. Rome even becomes analogous to Heaven itself, as in a 1507 oration given by Egidio da Viterbo: "Listen Romans, listen seven hills, and you above all, great Julius, Most Holy Father. Behold what the Spirit says: Christ is head of heaven, Rome head of earth; Rome sovereign, Christ sovereign."[62] Julius's vision of Rome was the renewal and extension of the ancient Roman empire, a Christian empire that would rule the terrestrial universe from the papal city, Rome. Like Apollo guiding the planets from the midpoint of the cosmos, the pope, "pastor Apollo," would regulate and inspire the earthly microcosm, his very own Parnassus.

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[59] Ficino, 129.

[60] For discussion of the theme of papal primacy in the Sistine Chapel see L.D. Ettlinger, *The Sistine Chapel Before Michelangelo*, Oxford, 1965, especially 104-119.

[61] Stinger, 79-81 and 295, and K.J. Pratt, "Rome as Eternal," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXVI, 1965, 31-33.

[62] Stinger, 245 and Pratt, 37.

Some Documents Concerning the Patronage and Collections of the Duke of Buckingham

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George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham (1592-1628) came from Leicestershire gentry stock. According to Sir Henry Wotton, the Duke's first biographer, the Villiers family "had continued about the space of 400 years rather without obscurity than with any great lustre."[1] Villiers was educated locally and travelled in France between May 1609 and 1612/13. He was introduced to James I at Apethorpe in 1614 and soon displaced the former favorite Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset. From about 1618 until his death in 1628, Buckingham was second in power only to the King. James I and Charles I favored him to an extreme degree. As he rose in power and influence, Buckingham established a remarkable collection of paintings and sculpture and a cabinet of rarities which he housed in a series of mansions in London, Essex and Rutland.[2] The purpose of this paper is to shed a little more light on the Duke's patronage and collecting activities by introducing and commenting on five previously unpublished or little known documents.

The early seventeenth century saw the birth of English connoisseurship. Sixteenth-century figures such as Lord Lumley[3] had paved the way for men such as the Earl of Arundel (who inherited some Lumley objects) and Charles I who presided over what was, outwardly, the most civilized court England has ever seen.[4] Writers of this period often assert the qualitative and quantitative superiority of the Arundel and the royal collections. These assertions, however, must be seen in a firm and particular context. The Duke's collections were established from scratch between 1618—when he finally established his personal and political indispensibility to James I—and 1628, the bulk of the objects accruing before 1626.[5] Arundel, in contrast, collected assiduously for over forty years and was a privileged legatee.[6] Charles I inherited the nucleus of his collection from his brother Prince Henry in

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[1] H. Wotton, *Reliquiae Wottonianae*, London, 1672, 208.

[2] For Buckingham's biography, see R. Lockyer, *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham 1592-1628,* Harlow and New York, 1981. For his collections see note 21 below and for his houses see note 22 below. For his cabinet of rarities, see P. Leith-Ross, *The John Tradescants, Gardeners to the Rose and Lily Queen,* London, 1984, chapter 6.

[3] L. Cust, "The Lumley Inventories," *Walpole Society*, IV, 1918, 15-35.

[4] O. Millar, *Van Dyck in England,* London, 1982, 9.

[5] On this, see R. Lockyear, "An English Valido? Buckingham and James I" in R. Ollard and P. Tudor-Craig, eds., *For Veronica Wedgewood These: Studies in Seventeenth-Century History,* London, 1986, 45-58.

[6] D. Howarth, *Lord Arundel and His Circle,* London and New Haven, 1985.