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5. Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message", in Stephen Heath, ed., *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 18–19.

6. Keith Miller, *St Peter's* (London: Profile Books, 2007), 85.

that were further developed in the following decades by a number of architects in a new palimpsest.

Bramante's half plan operated in the realm of pen and paper, independent of its existence as built reality (for Bramante's proposal was never fully constructed or realized). However, despite the fact that the plan was never put into practice as Bramante drew it, the influence of his drawing was nonetheless significant. Over the thirty years that followed the drawing's execution, the plan of St Peter's oscillated between a centralized church and a more traditional longitudinal basilica, but all eleven of the building's subsequent architects (a catalogue of the leading "designers" of the time that includes Raphael, Michelangelo, Maderno and Bernini, among others) would be bound by Bramante's basic scheme. "Whoever departs from Bramante departs from the truth", said Michelangelo.⁶ In its final state, the plan of the temple ultimately does follow a basilican format, but the presence of the centralized scheme is inescapable. More than this, however, St Peter's as drawn by Bramante defined a generic framework rather than providing a specific solution, and thus the drawing represented more of a *set of conditions* rather than a *physical or concrete phenomenon*. Abstracted from its overall form and from concrete reality, the building is deprived of its particular existence and therefore begins operating only in relation to a collective idea of what a temple is, constantly updating the representation of the work and thus reducing it to an always-changing figure. The plan becomes a diagram with the power to simultaneously construct and expose an idea while at the same time simplifying and idealizing the complexity of the work into something essential yet potentially multiple.

Still one of the most important buildings in the world, St Peter's is found today in the smallest nation on earth – Vatican City. From Bramante's proposal through to the project's final form, the visitor has had to enter the church by walking up a staircase that serves to elevate the sacred space and leads to a transitional area where one crosses from the secular world into the sacred interior. First the walled city within a city, then the plinth on which the building rests and finally the blunt definition of the building outline together create an operation of subsequent delimitations through which the building's influential presence endures. Bramante's description of a generic framework rather than a specific solution is what generates the radical instrumentality of his half plan.

FALSE EVIDENCE: THE 20TH-CENTURY HISTORIOGRAPHY OF BRAMANTE

M.J. Wells

In 1976, Peter Murray noted the lack of literature on Bramante, in comparison to scholarship focused on Raphael and Michelangelo, in the foreword to a work that was to alter that trend: Arnaldo Bruschi's study of Bramante, published in Italian in 1969 and later reworked in English.¹ Murray proposed two reasons for an absence of interest in Bramante's work before Bruschi. Firstly, he suggested that the neglect of scholars had led to a general public unaware of "the true greatness of this extraordinary genius",² and secondly, that few of Bramante's buildings still survive, and those that do are either incomplete or "need an experienced and sympathetic eye to discern their merit".³

The lost architecture of Bramante is a topic in itself. The Palazzo Caprini (1500–10), destroyed in 1936 to make way for the Via della Conciliazione, was the earliest (built) appearance since antiquity of a Doric order, alongside the Tempietto of San Pietro in Montorio. The palace's façade was formed by a rusticated arcade of shops below a piano nobile of apartments formed with paired columns mounted by a Doric entablature. An attic storey is cleverly hidden with windows inserted in the metopes of the entablature. As Georgia Clarke has noted, this division of storeys and use of an antique motif was a device for separating the social and functional roles of the palace.⁴ In a sense, Bramante's design for the Palazzo Caprini became the universal paradigm for a palace façade in the *all'antica* style.⁵ For Bruschi, the façade of the palace portrays a sort of expressionistic emphasis and idiosyncratic licence that suggested the way toward Mannerism.⁶

Contemporaneous to the palace, Bramante and his workshop designed a project that utilized antique motifs but on a much vaster scale. The Cortile del Belvedere (1504–6) connected the Vatican Palace

1. Arnaldo Bruschi, *Bramante architetto* (Bari: Laterza, 1969), and idem, *Bramante* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).

2. Bruschi, *Bramante*, 8.

3. Ibid.

4. Georgia Clarke, *Roman House, Renaissance Palaces: Inventing Antiquity in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 280.

5. Ibid., 282.

6. Bruschi, *Bramante*, 174.

to an existing villa at the top of the Vatican Hill built by Innocent VIII in the late 15th century. Alongside an extension of the existing villa with a sculpture gallery, the Cortile was formed by three levels of courtyards created by surrounding loggias that enclosed gardens, fountains and an open-air theatre. The Cortile had another function as an enceinte: the loggias that connected up the hill formed an extension of the Vatican fortifications. Despite the physical absence of these buildings, both live on in famous drawings, in particular Andrea Palladio's sketch of the Palazzo Caprini⁷ and Giovanni Antonio Dosio's *vedute* of the Cortile from the Vatican Palace.⁸

Many historians have been led astray by the beguiling combination of drawing and language in their search for Bramante's lost or incomplete projects. The precedent for this was set in the century of Bramante's death when it was proposed that the Tempietto is an incomplete project. Sebastiano Serlio's *Book III: On Antiquities*, first published in 1540, presented the Tempietto with an additional colonnade and four small chapels formed by apses in each corner. Serlio annotated the drawing with the remark: "The plan shown below in the figure was the invention of Bramante, although the part which was to harmonise with the old work was never built."⁹ Complementing this is a remark by Vasari claiming that the Tempietto would have been "even more beautiful . . . if the whole extent of the cloister, which is not finished, had been brought to the form that is to be seen in a drawing by his hand".¹⁰ Despite the lack of evidence in the form of a building or drawing, the attribution of this additional colonnade to Bramante became an accepted truth among historians and architects, notwithstanding Hubertus Günther's demonstration that there is a lack of coherence between Serlio's plan and the site itself.¹¹

When architects are given the opportunity, as Adrian Forty has noted, most will choose the medium of expression of drawing before that of language due to the former's directness and precision.¹² It is through these attributes that drawings project a reality. Despite their absolute nature – either there is a line or there isn't – this reality does not exist beyond the surface of the paper. In the absence of drawings attributable to Bramante (for there are none definitely by his hand), the architectural historians of the 20th century resorted to producing their own representations. In their studies of Bramante, all of the major 20th-century historians of the Renaissance are guilty of this, including Bruschi, James Ackerman and Christoph Frommel. These contemporary drawings are used in a variety of ways: as a means to

hypothetically reconstruct lost projects, to demonstrate the characteristics of surviving buildings and to analyze patterns and proportional relationships.

In 1954, Ackerman published *The Cortile del Belvedere*, an extraordinary study of the Cortile which combined his doctoral dissertation with a catalogue of primary sources from 1504 to 1585.¹³ From these documents and drawings, Ackerman reconstructed a history of the site and its buildings from the time of Julius II to that of Gregory XIII. As Ackerman sees it, the historian's task is complicated by the fact there are two buildings to be reassembled from the fragments of evidence: the Cortile as conceived by Bramante and the Cortile as it was later executed by others. Ackerman reconstructed Bramante's project for the Cortile through a three-page fold-out isometric projection which runs from the Vatican Palace up the Vatican Hill, taking in the three courtyards, flanking loggias, exedra and statue court. Each element of the Cortile is annotated with a chapter presenting the primary evidence for its reconstruction (usually drawings and maps) alongside an analysis of the element itself. The primary visual resources are the relevant drawings of the Codex Coner, a pair of sketchbooks rebound as one in the 18th century that, after passing to James Adam and others, is now held in Sir John Soane's Museum in London. Ackerman saw the relevant drawings in the Codex Coner as having their source in original drawings by Bramante and his workshop. Hence, he described them as providing "the soundest basis for reconstruction [of the Cortile]".¹⁴ As Ackerman recognized, the Codex Coner has a complex history and seems to be the product of multiple draughtsmen. One of these is almost certainly the Florentine woodworker-architect Bernardo della Volpaia who worked with Bramante and members of the Sangallo circle.¹⁵ There surely is a link to Bramante, but Ackerman's reliance on the Codex as an accurate or definite source for the Cortile's reconstruction is hugely problematic. Firstly, it relies on the premise that there was a definite plan of the Cortile project by Bramante that could be copied, but there is no evidence that such a drawing was ever made. Vasari suggests that a model for Bramante's design was made but does not discuss a drawing.¹⁶ Secondly, Ackerman argues that the idea that the drawing "is made from the original project is indicated by its inclusion of features that were never executed as we see them here".¹⁷ This might be one explanation, but another could be the draftsman's use of *inventio*, the act of discovery and invention, in the recording of the Cortile. Later in his reconstruction of the exedra, which was altered

Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 131.

10. Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere (London: Medici Society, 1912–14), vol. 4, 143.

11. Hubertus Günther, "Bramantes Hofprojekt um den Tempietto und seine Darstellung in Serlios drittem Buch", in *Studi Bramanteschi: Atti del congresso internazionale, Milano, Urbino, Roma, 1970* (Milan: De Luca, 1974), 483–501.

12. Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 37.

13. James S. Ackerman, *The Cortile del Belvedere* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1954).

14. *Ibid.*, 19.

15. Tilmann Buddensieg, "Bernardo della Volpaia und Giovanni Francesco da Sangallo: Der Autor des Codex Coner und seine Stellung im Sangallo-Kreis", *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 15 (1975), 94–96.

16. Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters*, 142.

7. *Study of Donato Bramante's Palazzo Caprini*, London, Royal Institute of British Architects, R.I.B.A. PALLADIO XIV/11.

8. Uffizi A 2527, Florence, Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe.

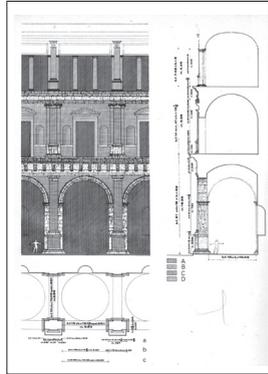
9. Sebastiano Serlio, *On Architecture: Volume 1, Books I–V of Tutte l'opere d'architettura et prospetiva*, trans. Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks (New

17.
Ackerman, *Cortile del
Belvedere*, 195, cat. 4b.

18.
Ibid., 31.

19.
Ibid., 19.

20.
Bruschi, *Bramante*, 88.



Arnaldo Bruschi's
reconstructed elevation
study of the Cortile del
Belvedere.
From Arnaldo Bruschi,
Bramante (London: Thames
and Hudson, 1977), p. 96,
fig. 102

after Bramante's death and subsequently destroyed and replaced by the Nicchione, Ackerman notes that the difficulty of reconstruction increases in direct proportion to the number of primary sources drawn upon: nine witnesses record five different solutions for the form of the exedra's staircase.¹⁸ Ackerman follows the descriptions of Vasari and Peruzzi, who indicate that the exedra was formed by two sets of eight steps. He then takes licence with these descriptions, noting that the figures do not include the circular half-landing and semi-circular landing of the exedra. An axonometric projection included here demonstrates this composition in relation to the surrounding hemicycle through a reconstruction of Ackerman's interpretations. This approach is typical for Ackerman: earlier in the study he explains that his methodology consists in bringing together the large volume of evidence (to reduce the margin for error), comparing and evaluating this evidence and then attempting to propose a reconstruction. Despite the obvious flaws and inconsistencies of such a reconstruction, his purpose possesses a tragic heroism due to its desire to restore "to its proper form and deserved position . . . one of the major monuments in the history of architecture".¹⁹

In his later study, Arnaldo Bruschi separated Bramante's projects and buildings into two groups defined by the main characteristics of their design. The works in the first group are categorized by their organization of interior space and expression of exterior volume, and for Bruschi, the most complete example of this is the project for St Peter's.²⁰ The most important characteristic of the second group is Bramante's interest in the total plan or the urban strategy of the project, with the best example of this being Bramante's work at the Vatican Palace and on the Cortile.²¹ Together with his scholarly and well-written analysis of the cultural context of Rome in the early Cinquecento, Bruschi provides a series of drawings that serve to give authority to his historical narrative. In his study of Bramante at the Vatican, Bruschi reconstructed the colonnades of the lower court of the Cortile in orthogonal plan, section and elevation. This reconstruction is based on Ackerman's scholarship and a series of details of the Cortile's entablatures annotated with measurements in the Codex Coner. There is a ground-floor arcade, roughly twelve metres high, with Doric pilasters on each pier, above which there are Ionic pilasters alongside aedicules framed with alternating segmental and triangular pediments. At the top are Corinthian pilasters with pairs of smaller Doric columns above the aedicules.²² (Bruschi later

claimed that this design recalls the image of a palazzo appearing in a marquetry door at the ducal palace in Urbino, Bramante's hometown, but Bruschi's reconstruction is far more nuanced and elegantly composed than the image depicted in the door.) The reconstructed elevation is hatched to show the various materials that made up the façade of this element, which connected the Vatican Palace to the middle courtyard. However, Bruschi himself demonstrates the problem of this sort of reconstruction: each of the three sources he uses – the Codex Coner, Peruzzi's description and modern measurements – has a differing dimension for each portion of the colonnade. This episode demonstrates two clear historiographical problems: firstly, the problem of how to interpret and utilize a variety of primary sources that are not coherent in their description of an object; and secondly, the problem of presenting of this interpretation through new drawings as something absolute and complete in order to demonstrate, not just illustrate, a historical argument. However, Bruschi also uses drawings in another way: to demonstrate facts and show facets of buildings that a photograph would fail to capture – for instance, the section that depicts the rising ground line (0.915 m) from the Vatican Palace to the middle court. Following this, Bruschi presents a plan and elevation to show the disjunction between pedestal heights at the north-east corner of the upper court. Here the building and its topography are presented through the analytical device of a drawing. These manipulations of ground and scenic background demonstrate that Bramante emphasized the *spettacolo*, or illusionary effect, of façades for theatrical reasons in the design of the Cortile.²³

To demonstrate the sorts of issues faced by architectural historians in examining drawings from the 15th century, I would now like to examine a drawing that has been previously attributed to Bramante, U104A. The recto of U104A presents a survey of one half of the Baths of Diocletian in Rome with the addition of a few sketched reconstructions. From the third quarter of the 15th century, there is a series of drawings that indicate the baths were the site of determined and accurate surveys carried out by artists and architects in their study of ancient Rome.²⁴ U104A is a prime example of this study, for it is littered with annotated measurements in *palmi* for individual walls, piers and columns. The number of annotated measurements on the drawing suggests that the draughtsman was interested in recording the exact dimensions, forms and internal relationships of the baths' structural elements. Larger spans between structural elements have

21.
Ibid.

22.
Ibid., 96.

23.
Ibid., 103–4, figs. 110–13.

24.
M.J. Wells, "Representation & Reconstruction: A Contribution to the Study of the Baths of Diocletian through Ground Plan Drawings c.1475–c.1575", M.A. thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, 2014.

25. Alfonso Bartoli, *I monumenti Antichi di Roma nei disegni degli Uffizi di Firenze* (Florence: Bontempelli, 1914–22), vol. 6, 11.

26. Christoph L. Frommel, “Bramante e il disegno 104 A degli Uffizi”, in Paolo Carpeggiani and Luigi Patetta, eds., *Il disegno di architettura: Atti del convegno, Milano, 15–18 febbraio 1988* (Milan: Cuerini, 1989), 161–68.

27. Christoph L. Frommel and Nicholas Adams, *The Architectural Drawings of Antonio da Sangallo the Younger and His Circle Vol. 1: Fortifications, Machines, and Festival Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), 9.

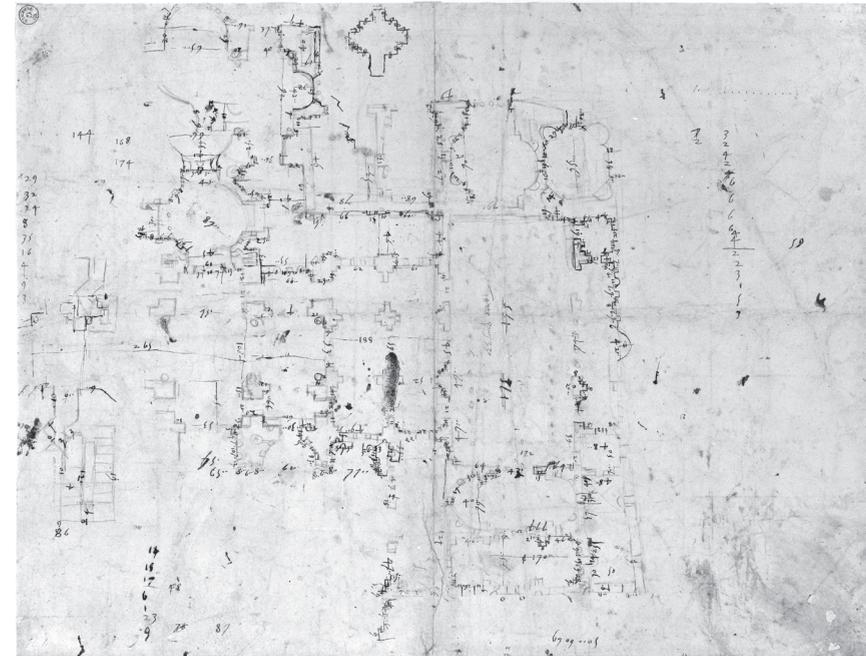
28. Hubertus Günther, *Das Studium der Antiken Architektur in den Zeichnungen der Hochrenaissance* (Tübingen: E. Wasmuth Verlag, 1988), 398.

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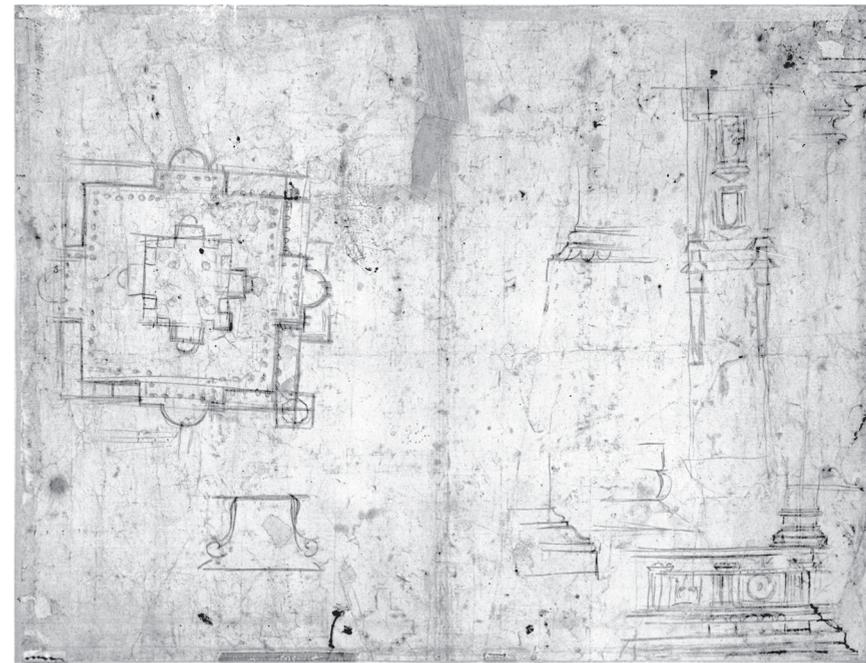
been recorded, and two columns of adding up these dimensions are clearly visible in the margins of the drawing. In addition to the ground plan, the draughtsman has drawn four enlarged “details” of portions of the baths. At the top of the drawing is an enlarged cruciform pier with the length of each face recorded. In the space where the *caldarium* should be, the draughtsman has drawn the detail of the doorway at a larger scale to represent how the curve of the doorway wall is reflected in the negative profile of the central portion that divides one room from the next. Another drawing of a detail at the bottom of the sheet shows the integration of the rotunda with a rectilinear staircase.

The attribution of drawings to particular draughtsmen is an important factor in our understanding of how historians might consider the relationship between buildings and drawings. In the late 19th century, Alfonso Bartoli attributed U104A to Bramante.²⁵ In the 1980s, Christoph Frommel dated the drawing to circa 1508–9.²⁶ More recently, Frommel has reconsidered the drawing and dated it to between 1505 and 1506.²⁷ Despite their attribution of the drawing to Bramante, both Bartoli and Frommel believe that the measurements on the drawing look like they are in Giuliano da Sangallo’s handwriting. On the basis of this evidence, Hubertus Günther has attributed the drawing directly to Giuliano.²⁸ As discussed earlier, there are no drawings that can be *securely* attributed to Bramante, and yet Frommel has nonetheless interpreted Bramante’s intentions on the recto of U104A as an understanding of how a structural element like a pier could articulate four adjoining rooms or spaces while simultaneously supporting vaulting and a roof. This interpretation has arisen because Bramante faced this very challenge in his work on the construction of the four great piers at the crossing of the nave and transepts at St Peter’s. Bramante’s intentions for St Peter’s are commonly deduced from U1A, the “Parchment plan”, which depicts the design for a building composed of a juxtaposition of spaces of different sizes and forms separated by screens of columns, piers and walls. While at most the drawing only depicts one half of a proposal, scholars have simply mirrored the drawing along one axis in order to interpret Bramante’s design for St Peter’s as a Greek cross plan.

The connection between Bramante’s designs for St Peter’s and his possible study of the Baths of Diocletian is reinforced by scholars’ interpretation of the drawing on the verso of U104A: a ground-plan sketch of a square building with projecting apses on each side set within



Donato Bramante (?), *Plan of the Baths of Diocletian*, ca. 1506–8, pencil on paper, 535 x 410 mm, Florence, Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, U104Ar. Courtesy of Ex Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico ed Etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Firenze



Donato Bramante (?), ca. 1506–8, pencil on paper, 535 x 410 mm, Florence, Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, U104Av. Courtesy of Ex Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico ed Etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Firenze

29. Bruschi, *Bramante*, 149. See also Ian Campbell, "The New St Peter's: Basilica or Temple?", *Oxford Art Journal* 4, no. 1 (July 1981), 3–8; Christoph L. Frommel, "St. Peter's: The Early History", in H.A. Millon and V. Magnano Lampugnani, eds., *The Renaissance from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo: The Representation of Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 408.

30. Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 11.

a courtyard formed by a square precinct. Some scholars, including Frommel, have interpreted this drawing as a sketch of the plan for St Peter's influenced by the compositional principles derived from study of the Baths of Diocletian.²⁹ A more detailed plan in the Codex Mellon (probably drawn by a draughtsman in the *fabbrica* at St Peter's during Bramante's tenure) depicts a Greek cross plan formed by a crossing with four piers and contained within a peribolos-like precinct with elements borrowed from a variety of imperial bath complexes in Rome. However, there is no firm evidence that the drawing on the verso of U104A was a sketch for St Peter's or even that it derived from study of the Baths of Diocletian. Within these drawings there is the refracted image of antiquity, used as a means to design architecture in a contemporary context, and frustratingly difficult to dismantle into recognizable components that form a lineage established through the study of antiquity. This ambiguity, possibly due to our lack of language beyond a few annotations to explain the drawing, is the opposite of the drawings that illustrate 20th-century histories of Bramante.

Following Michael Baxandall's analysis of art history, the use of language alone in architectural history to describe and explain buildings is not unmediated: it is a constructed, interpretive description.³⁰ Just as in the manner that art history (language) relies on the presence of the picture for its meaning, architectural history relies upon the presence of the building or drawing to support language. When that picture, building or drawing is lost, then language loses its validity. In the case of Bramante, the historians of the 20th century produced drawings, often in the absence of buildings, to validate historical arguments. These drawings are meant to be some sort of impartial document, but in truth, of course, they represent the values and views of the historian in relation to primary material rather than Bramante's approach to architecture. It was through these contemporary drawings that an image of Bramante was constructed by the historians (and architects) of the 20th century.

THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS IS WRONG!

Francesco Zorzi

