

ASCANIO CONDIVI

VITA DI
MICHELAGNOLO BUONARROTI

a cura di Giovanni Nencioni
con saggi di
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INTRODUCTION

Among the many extraordinary features of Michelangelo's career, not the least strange was the appearance of two biographies within the space of three years. The artist had received his complimentary copy of Vasari's *Vita* soon after its publication by Lorenzo Torrentino, in the spring of 1550, at a moment close to his seventy-fifth birthday¹. While rumours of Vasari's plans may have reached him, what seems clear is that, although the one living and still active artist included in the *Vita*, Michelangelo had not been consulted about the details of his own biography and was unhappy about its contents. Condivi, in the preface to his readers, refers to the omissions and mistakes in recent accounts of Michelangelo's life (without alluding to Vasari by name). He does not state that it is these shortcomings which have promoted the writing of his own account. He writes only that their appearance has led to the accelerated publication of his own book. Yet the dialectical link between the two *Vite* is so pronounced that it is difficult to avoid concluding that the earlier book actuated Michelangelo's wish to present his own - and very different - record of his past, one which he might hope would replace Vasari's ill-informed and potentially damaging biography².

Condivi also refers to another cause of the precipitate publication of his own *Vita*. This is a threat of plagiarism. Those to whom he has entrusted the fruits of his biographical efforts, his

¹ G. Vasari. *Der literarische Nachlass*, ed. K. Frey, I. Munich, 1923, pp. 290-4 and G. Vasari, *La Vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, ed. P. Barocchi, 5 vols. Milan and Naples, 1962, IV, pp. 1576-80.

² That the earlier *Life* provoked the writing of Condivi's is generally agreed. One piece of evidence does, however, exist that could be interpreted as a biographical concern on Michelangelo's part a number of years earlier: his repeated request of 1548 to his nephew Leonardo to send to him his precise birthdate from Florence, as he has lost his own record of it. See his letter in *Il Carteggio di Michelangelo*, ed. P. Barocchi and R. Ristori, IV, Florence, 1979, pp. 296-7.

'fatiche', threaten to exploit his work for their own purposes. He returns to his fears on this score in his very last paragraph, once more invoking the danger of others taking the credit for his own work. These remarks lend substance to the thesis that what he had put together had been handed to others for critical comment and, as we shall see below, for extensive rewriting.

Another aim of Condivi's in this preface is to insist on his inadequacies as a writer and yet, at the same time, emphasise that he is a privileged biographer. To compensate for his lack of literary skills, he presents himself as having enjoyed 'stretta dimestichezza' with the artist. The contents of the book, 'cose diligente e fidele', are based on a prolonged intimacy with his subject, '... cavate con destrezza e con lunga pazienza dal vivo oraculo suo'.

There are no grounds for doubting his claim. But the steps by which he came to form so close a tie with Michelangelo and become the great man's chosen biographer are still obscure and may always remain so. Condivi was not, like so many of Michelangelo's closest friends in his later Roman years, a Florentine. He came from the relatively obscure town of Ripatransone in the Marche. The Marche were, however, a part of the papal state and there is evidence that, at a later date than the one which concerns us here, Condivi would travel to Rome on business affairs of his home town. These visits were, however, fairly brief, whereas the stay which interests us lasted, with interruptions, several years³.

Condivi was probably born in 1524 or 1525. He is documented as a painter in Ripatransone by 1541⁴. The only clue concerning his arrival in Rome is his own brief autobiographical aside in the Vita that Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi, good friend of Michelangelo,

had been his own patron (p. 60). Ridolfi had been absent from Rome between 1543 and 1545, returning from North Italy in December of the latter year. He would die during the conclave which would elect Cardinal Giovanni Maria del Monte as successor to Paul III, in January, 1550⁵. Condivi's link with the cardinal, must, therefore, have been formed at some point between 1546 and 1549. His relations with the Ridolfi family continued after the cardinal's unexpected death, for letters survive which show that he carried out a bronze bust of the Roman republican hero Sulla for a younger brother of the cardinal, Lorenzo. The work was cast in the summer of 1551 and is now lost⁶.

Condivi, therefore, could have met Michelangelo in Ridolfi's circle. It was for Cardinal Niccolò that Michelangelo undertook to carve a potent symbol of their shared republican ideals, the marble bust of Brutus, on which he probably worked soon after the cardinal's return to Rome and which he would leave unfinished. Prominent in the Ridolfi household was Donato Giannotti, like the cardinal a fuoruscito, and his closest confidant, whom Michelangelo had known for many years. Their familiarity may have begun as early as the 1520s in Florence and probably was renewed when both served the last Florentine republic. Michelangelo is one of the four interlocutors in Giannotti's two dialogues concerning Dante's journey through Hell; these were probably composed in 1546⁷.

⁵ No biography of Ridolfi exists. For his Roman circle see R. Ridolfi, *Opuscoli di storia letteraria e di erudizione*, Florence, 1942, *passim*.

⁶ G. Milanesi, 'Alcune lettere di Ascanio Condivi e di altri a messer Lorenzo Ridolfi', *Il Buonarroti*, 2nd ser. III, 1868, pp. 206-13.

⁷ Ridolfi, *Opuscoli*, pp. 132 ss. The best available edition of the dialogues (first published only in 1859) is *Dialogi di Donato Giannotti*, ed. R. de Campos, Florence, 1939. For further bibliography on Giannotti see M. Hirst, 'Michelangelo and his First Biographers' in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. 94, 1996, *Lectures and Memoirs*, p. 71.

³ For Condivi's movements see C. Grigioni, *Ascanio Condivi. La vita e le opere*, Ascoli Piceno, 1908, pp. 15 ss. and G. Settimo, *Ascanio Condivi biografo di Michelangelo*, Ascoli Piceno, 1975, pp. 29 ss.

⁴ Settimo, *Ascanio Condivi*, p. 26.

However, in his first preface, addressed to Pope Julius III, Condivi states that it was through his good offices that he had come to study under the master's supervision. Michelangelo's relations with the new Pope were good and from the time of the election he became involved in giving advice about two projects which particularly absorbed Julius, the creation of a Del Monte chapel and the development of his summer residence, the Villa Giulia. Indeed, it was the planning of the family chapel which brought him into his first significant contact with Vasari, author of the recent life which had left him dissatisfied. Condivi's own links with the curia remain undefined in this period, but there was to be at least one later occasion when he would become involved in affairs which brought him to the papal court⁸. And Pope Julius, the book's dedicatee, is the subject of lavish praise in the later pages of the biography.

There can be no doubting that Michelangelo did take the younger man under his wing. The most striking evidence of this is the existence of his cartoon, drawn in black chalk, measuring well over two metres high, now in the British Museum, and Condivi's own panel painting, painstakingly dependant on it, now in the Casa Buonarroti. The cartoon bears every indication of having been made at speed. Yet the artist's readiness, at his advanced age, to undertake the task reflects his quixotic generosity towards his protégé and exemplifies his inclination, evident over many years, to come to the help of those whose gifts could never present a threat to his own supremacy⁹.

The episode of the cartoon and painting was familiar to Vasari. He was probably a personal witness of the circumstances, if, as

has been persuasively proposed, the cartoon was made in 1550 or 1551 - close, in date, to the genesis of Condivi's Vita¹⁰. Vasari's reference in his second edition Life of 1568 is notable for its brutal disparagement of Condivi's efforts. Although sharpened by his resentment of the strictures that Condivi had implicitly voiced in his own book, his comments are not wide of the mark. His scorn of Condivi as a painter is only a part of a more extended discussion of Michelangelo's failed pupils, and Vasari was undoubtedly expressing a general perception about the great man's workshop¹¹. Curiously enough, Condivi himself defensively brings up the issue in a late passage of his own book (see pp.63-4), stressing the artist's readiness to teach despite reports to the contrary, and adding that he has been let down by those he tried to help, a potentially highly self-damaging admission.

The titlepage of both issues of Condivi's book bears the date 16 July 1553. By late 1554 he was once more back in the Marche where he would pursue a varied and active career as painter and local notable in Ripatransone until his death by drowning in 1574. Had he not produced the text that here concerns us, he would at most have warranted a footnote as a frequenter of

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹¹ Paolo Giovio had already referred to Michelangelo's reluctance to teach in a brief life published only in the eighteenth century, but Vasari did not base his own remarks on Giovio. The passage in 1550 was very mild compared to that of 1568; he had written: 'S'è ancora curato molto poco avere per casa artefici del mestiero; e tuttavia in quel c'ha potuto ha giovato ad ognuno'. For the 1550 passage see *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, eds. R. Bettarini and P. Barocchi, 6 vols., Florence, 1966-87, VI, p. 115, and for the 1568 passage, *ibid.*, p. 111. In the second edition, the charge is less that Michelangelo turned pupils away than that those he accepted were unable to benefit, adopting and exploiting Condivi's own words to his acute disadvantage. Vasari may also have been mortified by Benedetto Varchi's remark in his 1564 *Orazio Funerale* that Condivi was his intellectual equal: Varchi had referred to the two biographers as '...due bellissimi, e accortissimi ingegni, e quello che assai importa intenditissimi di tutte queste Arti...' (*Orazio Funerale* Florence, 1564, p. 15).

⁸ Noteworthy is the fact that, in a notarial act drawn up in Ripatransone in May 1550, Condivi is described as '... in Romana curia residenti...' (Grigioni, *Ascanio Condivi*, p. 39 note 82).

⁹ For the cartoon, see J. Wilde, *Italian Drawings in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. Michelangelo and his studio*, London 1953, pp. 114-6.

Michelangelo's circle and as a recipient of the British Museum cartoon. Nevertheless, he could be described as upwardly mobile, for in early 1555 he married Porzia Caro, a niece of Annibale Caro, a leading figure in Farnese circles and one of the most prominent literary men of the age. He, like Paolo Giovio, was reading part of Vasari's manuscript in late 1547 and attempted to persuade Vasari to write more simply: 'In un'opera simile vorrei la scrittura apunto come il parlare'¹². The link between Caro and Condivi is highly significant. For once one has held in one's hand Condivi's own surviving letters, the conclusion is inescapable that he could never have written the text of the book as published. The contrast between his lamentable epistolary skills and the uncluttered style of the book was already clear to Gaetano Milanesi in the nineteenth century. Milanesi saw that the manuscript had undergone substantial revisions (see above, p. III). He did not specifically name Caro, but the suggestion is implicit and the identification was assumed by later editors of the *Vita* and by Condivi's own modern biographers, a number of whom attempted to contest the proposal¹³. Emphatic in affirming Caro's role was Giovanni Papini in his biography of the artist¹⁴.

¹² For this much discussed letter see Vasari, *Der literarische Nachlass*, I, pp. 209-10.

¹³ For Milanesi's publication of four letters in the Archivio di Stato in Florence, see his *Alcune lettere* ..., pp. 206-13. They were reprinted in Grigioni, pp. 17-18 and there survives one addressed to Michelangelo from Ripatransone of uncertain date, perhaps of 1556: see *Il Carteggio*..., ed. P. Barocchi and R. Ristori, V, p. 61. It has been claimed that Condivi was elected to the Accademia Fiorentina in September 1565; D. Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, Princeton, 1981, pp. 24 and 465, note 48. However, this 'M. Aschanio da Ripa' was playing a very active role as a member of the Accademia in 1566 and 1567, when Condivi is documented as property purchaser, painter and local administrator in Ripatransone: see Hirst, 'Michelangelo and his First Biographers', p. 71, note 24, for the details.

¹⁴ G. Papini, *Vita di Michelangiolo nella vita del suo tempo*, Milan, 1949, p. 490. Pointing to the evidence of a revisore, he stated that this 'non poté essere che Annibal Caro'. Unfortunately, the issue of the intervention of a "revisore" is nowhere raised by G. Patrizi in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Rome, XXVII, 1982, voce Ascanio Condivi. For the issue of revision see also above, pp. II-III.

More recently, Wilde adduced a number of arguments why Caro is likely to have acted as revisore or 'ghost writer'. Indeed, he even went so far as to call Condivi 'the ostensible author of the book'¹⁵. He pointed to the fact that Caro is described as having recently become a friend of the artist, although no independent record of their friendship exists. Caro is included in the select company of Bembo, Sannazaro, Vittoria Colonna and others, as the best poets to have taken Petrarch as a model. He pointed to the further fact of Condivi's own marriage to Porzia Caro and indicated that the *Vita*'s simplicity of style conforms to Caro's own literary prescription to Vasari¹⁶. Other points could be added. Important is the fact that Caro and Condivi were fellow Marchigiani; Condivi's marriage actually took place at Civitanova where Caro had been born in 1507. Even the inclusion of Giovanni Guidiccione among the poets who have followed Petrarch is telling, for Guidiccione had been one of Caro's most important early patrons and had acted as 'revisore' of his patron's *Canzoniere* at Guidiccione's own wish¹⁷.

In Caro's one vernacular prose work relevant for comparison, his translation of Longo Sofista's *Amori Pastoralis di Dafne e di Clloe*, the parallels of construction and vocabulary are striking. And one highly idiosyncratic usage in the *Vita*, the adoption of

¹⁵ J. Wilde, *Michelangelo*, Six Lectures, Oxford 1978, p. 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12. Caro makes no appearance in the artist's carteggio and two letters discussed below, of 1553, do not suggest personal intimacy. Nor does a later letter of 1562, in which Caro writes of Michelangelo's inaccessibility (see A. Caro, *Lettere Familiari*, ed. A. Greco, III, Florence, 1961, p. 93). The inventory of Caro's books does not list Condivi's *Vita*, but in it we find no more than a generic reference to books in octavo. He did own a bronze 'testa' of the artist, which can only be one of the casts of Daniele da Volterra's portrait bust. See A. Greco, *Annibal Caro*. Cultura e Poesia, Rome, 1950, p. 130.

¹⁷ See G. Guidiccioni, *Rime*, ed. E. Chiorboli, Bari, 1912, p. 332. Caro's extensive role as 'revisore' of his friends' writings is attested to in his letters, see also F. Sarri, *Annibal Caro*. Saggio Critico, Milan, 1934, p. 85.

'corni delle lunette' in the long description of the Sistine ceiling, finds a remarkable parallel in Caro's letter to Taddeo Zuccaro of 1562 concerning the projected murals at Caprarola. In the letter, when he turns to the lunettes, Caro uses 'corni' and 'corno' repeatedly¹⁸. Even in the book's title, Condivi is called the collector or assembler; it reads 'Vita... raccolta per Ascanio Condivi...', and the choice of word, one he adopts again in the preface to the reader, although not decisive, is noteworthy¹⁹.

That Antonio Blado was Condivi's publisher is also of interest. Blado was very close to Caro. He had published his polemical *Commento di Ser Agresto da Ficaruolo...* in 1539, and had himself appeared as the character Barbagrìgia in Caro's *Commedia degli Straccioni*. He had also published two editions of Giannotti's influential book on the Venetian republic. The choice of Blado seems, therefore, to have been determined at least in part by the circles in which Condivi moved²⁰.

There are traces in the book of the haste to which Condivi alludes. As is well known, two issues of the book exist, both bearing the same date. The three new passages inserted in the second

¹⁸ For this usage, see A. Caro, *Lettere Familiari*, III, 1961, pp. 132, 136, 137, and 138. As pointed out to me by Giulio Lepschy, Caro and Condivi are uniquely credited with this usage in an architectural context in the Cinquecento: see S. Battaglia, *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*, III, Turin, 1964, p. 790, no. 20. The style and the orthography of Caro's vernacular prose has as yet been little discussed. But one may also compare the use of 'vano' and 'vani' in the detailed description of the Sistine ceiling (p. 31) with Caro's repeated adoption of the same word in his letter of May 1565 to Onofrio Panvinio concerning the programme of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese's studio at Caprarola. See *Lettere Familiari...*, III, p. 237.

¹⁹ Resistance to the suggestion that Condivi's material was rewritten seems to betray an unfamiliarity with Cinquecento practice. For example, the notorious *Beneficio di Cristo* had been completely rewritten by Marcantonio Flaminio prior to publication in 1543.

²⁰ On Blado, tipografo camerale since 1535, see F. Barberi in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Rome, X, 1968, pp. 753-757 and G. Fumagalli and G. Belli, *Catalogo delle Edizioni Romane di Antonio Blado...*, Rome, 1891 and 1961.

impression led to the introduction of two leaves without foliation in signature L (see p. 53 below). One of these is the passage where the names of Caro and Guidiccione are introduced. The second insertion (see pp. 55-57) is the lengthiest and seems to have been added to emphasise Pope Julius III's liberality and to supplement the very few references to Michelangelo as an architect. A small number of errors in the earlier issues were corrected, but others remained²¹.

Despite his admission of literary incompetence and the evidence that he himself did not write the text of the *Vita* which we read, Condivi refers to two further promised publications about Michelangelo. One is a collection of his sonnets and madrigals (p. 66), the other an anatomical treatise based on what the artist has taught him, a work to be prepared with an 'uomo dotto', presumably the celebrated Realdo Colombo who is referred to in the passage (p. 58). No other evidence of his involvement with these projects appears to survive. Nevertheless, the intention may have existed and plans for further publications abandoned when Condivi returned to the Marche soon after the appearance of the *Vita*.²²

II

Condivi declares that his aim is to record the life and to record

²¹ For example, Urbino is capitalised in the later printing, and Brucciolo substituted for Bruciolo. But errors of pagination remained; pp. 46, 48 and 49 are wrongly numbered in the copies of the two issues belonging to the British Library. An incomplete check list of the issues belonging to European libraries can be found in E. Steinmann and R. Wittkower, *Michelangelo Bibliographie 1510-1926*, Leipzig 1927, p. 91, together with an excellent collation.

²² Condivi refers to Colombo as the 'amicissimo' of both Michelangelo and himself. And a letter of Colombo to Duke Cosimo de' Medici of April 1548 survives, in which he explicitly refers to the help Michelangelo has given him in the preparation of an anatomical treatise: '... La fortuna mi apresentava il primo pittor del mondo a servirmi in questo...'. For a recent republication of the letter, see A. Parronchi, *Opere giovanili di Michelangelo*, II, pp. 193-4.

the work. And here we at once enter into the world of ambiguity which surrounds his text, ambiguity disguised by the book's simple language, plain narrative structure and his own disclaimers. Although intended to make good Vasari's omissions and misunderstandings in his *Life* of 1550, Condivi's book is also a partial survey, a fact which owes to its very particular agenda: to exonerate Michelangelo over his delays in working on the tomb of Julius II and his failure to complete the monument in an adequate fashion. The book in fact appeared exactly forty years after the death of the Rovere pope's death. That the primary aim of the artist in promoting the book was personal vindication is confirmed by a letter written by Caro on 20 August 1553 to a member of the della Rovere court at Urbino. The letter, the importance of which has not always been recognised, refers explicitly to the weight accorded in the *Vita*'s text to the protracted saga of the tomb and to Michelangelo's exculpatory explanations, his 'giustificazioni'. Caro concedes that much can be said against the artist, alludes to the part others had played in diverting the artist from his obligation and asks that Duke Guidobaldo pardon him, 'e sarà cagione di prolungar la vita a quest'uomo singolare e anco di renderlo consolatissimo...' ²³. A second letter, dated 17 November, followed, after the *Vita* had been read at the court of Urbino. Once more, Caro stresses the part that Julius II's executors, and successive popes, had played in impeding the artist's progress with the project, 'contra sua voglia'. Read together, the two letters confirm that the 1553 *Life* is a pièce justificative ²⁴.

²³ In this letter, for which see A. Caro, *Lettere Familiari* ..., II, Florence, 1959, pp. 147-8, Caro explains that he has delayed writing because he has been awaiting the appearance of the book. Wilde, *Six lectures*..., p. 12, believed it demonstrated that he was familiar with the contents prior to publication. See also G. Vasari, *La Vita*..., ed. P. Barocchi, IV, pp. 1878-80.

²⁴ Caro, *Lettere Familiari*..., II, pp. 153-4.

In his *Life* of Michelangelo of 1550, Vasari had shown no understanding of the biographical significance of the project for the artist. He does not provide an account of the various stages which the project underwent and made an allusion to the financing of the final phase of the work which must have deeply wounded the artist ²⁵. In Condivi's *Vita*, 'la tragedia della sepoltura' dominates the central part of the book. Condivi returns to the subject again and again and, when he reaches the end of the story, he actually apologises for dwelling on the subject at such length (p. 48). That Michelangelo's financial probity had been repeatedly challenged is not ignored; on the contrary, Condivi refers to the issue on several occasions. We find the work 'infamia' employed a striking number of times. It appears in the passage concerning events just after Julius II's death (p. 36), in the discussion of the artist's situation after Clement VII's summons for him to come to Rome (p. 44), and, once more, when he describes the last act of the 'tragedia', where he writes: 'E questo è quel di che Michelagnolo si duole, che in luogo di grazia, che se gli veniva, n'abbia riportato odio e acquistata infamia' (pp. 48-9).

Michelangelo's unease over the repeated charges of financial bad faith levelled at him in both public and private is reflected in letters he had written decades before the appearance of the book. The issue continued to haunt him and his predicament became almost unbearably acute in the period following the completion of the *Last Judgement* in the autumn of 1541. Subsequently, under pressure to undertake the mural decoration of the Cappella Paolina and faced by a dangerous delay on the part of Duke Guidobaldo in ratifying what would prove to be the final contract, Michelangelo came close to breakdown. His desperation is manifest in a celebrated draft of a letter of October 1542, and Condivi may have read the text and drawn upon it for the sen-

²⁵ Vasari also confuses Guidobaldo della Rovere with Francesco Maria.

tence quoted above.²⁶ Not even the ratification of the final contract saved the artist from persistent obloquy. At a moment close to the completion of the monument in San Pietro in Vincoli, Michelangelo would receive an exceptionally defamatory letter from Pietro Aretino, alluding to his misuse of funds he had received from Julius II. And Duke Guidobaldo remained unrecconciled²⁷.

It is the issue of the tomb that prompts some of the most vivid episodes introduced into the Vita. Most familiar is that of the initial 'betrayal' of the artist by his patron, his exclusion from the pope's presence and his subsequent flight to Poggibonsi (p. 26). Michelangelo's anxiety to give so detailed an account of his misfortune must have been accentuated by the complete misunderstanding of the quarrel between patron and artist published by Vasari, who had reported that it had taken place midway through work on the Sistine ceiling²⁸. The episode also allows for the introduction of Bramante as hostile conspirer.

Another, quite different, episode, once more illustrative of the artist's helplessness in the hands of others, is the arresting story of the newly elected Pope Paul III's visit to the workshop of Macello de'Corvi in 1534. Paul is insistent that Michelangelo must proceed with the painting of the *Last Judgement*, and Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga is reported to have remarked that the *Moses* was alone sufficient to do honour to the tomb of Julius II (p. 46). The details do not strike one as invention. But the apologetic context is clear: Michelangelo had been the prisoner of the popes, a thesis to which Caro returns in his letters.

On the occasions when the artist takes on a new assignment (with the consequential neglect of the tomb project), Condivi

reports his unwillingness to proceed. Perhaps the most provocative example is the passage where he turns to the facade of San Lorenzo. He dwells on Michelangelo's unwillingness to accept the commission. We are told that he left Rome in 1516 'piangendo' and that he was compelled to shoulder the entire burden alone, '...sopra di sé tutto quel peso...' (p. 36). Yet there survives an embittered letter addressed to him by Jacopo Sansovino, remonstrating with him over his own brutal exclusion from a share in the enormous programme.²⁹ In this case, as in the very well known conflict with Vasari over Domenico Ghirlandai's role as teacher, Condivi's text is a rebuke to the earlier biographer, here more carefully hidden. For, in an unusually well informed comment on the abortive scheme, Vasari had attributed the collapse of the undertaking precisely to the artist's exclusion of collaborators.³⁰

It is in keeping with the apologetic character of the book that most of the significant unfinished sculptures are omitted. The only exceptions are the *St. Matthew* and the statues in the New Sacristy at San Lorenzo, none of which Condivi can have seen. The section devoted to the Sacristy is very confused (pp. 40-41, and for further comment, Elam below). Either Condivi completely misunderstood the artist or he was given no adequate guidance at this point. It is not without interest that Condivi's references seem to echo those published by Vasari three years earlier. While the biographer concedes that the statues lack 'l'ultima mano', he states that this does not jeopardise the appreciation of their beauty, a formulation very closely modelled on Vasari's³¹.

Nowhere is suppression of the unfinished stranger than in the

²⁶ For this text see *Il Carteggio* ..., IV, pp. 150-5.

²⁷ For Aretino's letter, *Il Carteggio* ..., IV, pp. 215-17.

²⁸ *Le Vite* ... eds. R. Bettarini and P. Barocchi, VI, pp. 35-6.

²⁹ *Il Carteggio* ..., I, p. 291.

³⁰ *Le Vite* ..., VI, p. 51.

³¹ Vasari had written (*Le Vite* ..., VI, p. 57) that despite the lack of completion '... si conosce... nella imperfezione della bozza la perfezione dell'opra'. Condivi writes: '... né il bozzo impedisce la perfezione e la bellezza dell'opéra'.

case of the two marble tondi begun for Bartolomeo Pitti and Taddeo Taddei. Vasari had referred to both in his *Vita*, noting however their unfinished state: '...abbozò e non finì due tondi di marmo...'³². Yet Condivi does mention, albeit with a confusion over the medium, the group of Virgin and Child as far away as Bruges. But the group made for the Mouschron, unlike the tondi, had been brought to the pitch of perfect finish which was Michelangelo's aim for his statues.

In referring to works begun many decades earlier and especially those undertaken in Florence, Condivi was completely dependant on his master. There appears to be, in fact, in the whole book, only two references by Condivi to information provided by a third party³³. In the case of the unfinished bust of *Brutus*, however, we encounter a very particular case. We cannot here impute Condivi's silence to ignorance, for the bust had been undertaken for his own patron, Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi who had died three years before the appearance of the book and for whose brother, Lorenzo, Condivi, as we have seen, had himself made the bust of another republican hero, Sulla. Here, different considerations of Michelangelo's are likely to have come into play: his own expressed fears of Duke Cosimo's vindictive policy towards members of the Florentine republican party in Rome in the middle and later years of the 1540's. Cardinal Ridolfi was their moral leader and the bust was probably begun for him in 1546. Ridolfi's sudden death in the conclave following the death of Paul III was even suspected to have been the work of Cosimo's agents, who, in early 1548, had murdered Lorenzino de' Medici, the new Brutus, in exile in Venice.³⁴ It is worth our notice that Vasari, although

³² *Le Vite* ..., VI, pp. 21-2.

³³ See pp. 56 and 59 for comments made by members of the curia.

³⁴ For a fuller discussion of the dating of the bust and the reasons which may have induced Michelangelo to break off work on it see Hirst, 'Michelangelo and his First Biographers...', pp. 78-80.

in Rome in 1546, evidently knew nothing about the bust, for the 1550 *Life*. And only years later, in one of his recorded comments on his pupil's book, did Michelangelo bring himself to refer to the *Brutus*.

These *postille*, first published by Procacci and now convincingly attributed by Caroline Elam to Tiberio Calcagni, are an astonishingly vivid record of the artist's reactions on re-reading the book that he had promoted³⁵. Some are relatively trivial, some expressing exasperation over Condivi's exposed misunderstandings, others actuated once more by the artist's inveterate self-protection. We do not know when Calcagni made his notes, but it seems at least possible that Michelangelo picked up the book once more in 1561, prompted by Condivi's renewed presence in Rome to attempt to establish Ripatransone as a bishopric. A letter of one of Condivi's friends reports that the artist and his biographer met frequently during the visit³⁶. Calcagni was already a trusted member of the master's inner circle by 1560, when he is documented as involved in the negotiations between the artist and Duke Cosimo over the designs for San Giovanni dei Fiorentini³⁷.

Errors on Condivi's part are cruelly exposed in the *postille*. That he had frequently misunderstood the artist's *viva voce* furthers the conclusion that Michelangelo had been no more anxious to find a highly intelligent biographer than he had sought gifted pupils.

³⁵ See below for an analysis of the *postille*.

³⁶ For the visit and the letter of December, see Settimo, *Ascanio Condivi*, pp. 53-4. We learn that Condivi '...è stato nei giorni appena trascorsi molto spesso insieme a Michelagnolo e con lui ha celebrato le sante feste ...'. To date the *postille* to the time when artist and biographer renewed their acquaintance may seem paradoxical. But we should recall Wilde's observation in *Michelangelo*. Six Lectures, p. 14, that Michelangelo extended friendship to Vasari at the very time when he was supervising Condivi's revisionist 'rejoinder'. Perhaps the idea of a second edition was being considered in the early 1560s.

³⁷ *Il Carteggio* ..., V, pp. 206 and 218.

The comments that Calcagni recorded raise a number of questions. They put in doubt the presumption that the artist had looked at the manuscript with any care after its stylistic revision – or even before. However, if he had taken no further interest in the contents after his pupil had laid down his pen, the problem remains as to who was responsible for the additions to the second issue. One of these suggests Michelangelo's own intervention³⁸.

Nowhere can we find in Condivi's text the eloquent passages of description which we meet with in Vasari. Yet the book, written on a consistently restrained level, is an engrossing read. Some of the biographical episodes have an exceptional immediacy, in part a consequence of Condivi's frequent use of direct recorded speech; a familiar example is Michelangelo's rejoinder over the youthfulness of the Virgin of the *Pietà*³⁹.

The book's emphasis on the early years is very marked, and this is certainly a reflection of the master's dissatisfaction with Vasari's frequent confusions⁴⁰.

An example of this immediacy of detail is Condivi's account of the young artist's flight from Florence in 1494 and his subsequent stay in Bologna. Vasari had known nothing about this episode. Michelangelo's finding of a new patron is one of the several moments in the narrative where, faced by adversity, Fortuna intervenes to save him. He had failed to comply with the obligation '... che qualunche forestiere entrasse in Bologna, fusse in

³⁸ The third interpolation (p. 57) is confined to a brief elaboration of the criticism of Dürer's *Four Books on Human Proportion* in the first issue. It is not easy to accept that it was Condivi or Caro who added the criticism that Dürer had neglected the whole issue of movement, the '... atti e gesti umani. . .', in his treatise.

³⁹ See p. 20. The adoption of direct speech is very frequent up to pp. 46-7 in the present edition.

⁴⁰ For a review of Vasari's failings, see Hirst, 'Michelangelo and his First Biographers...', pp. 68-9.

sull'ugna del dito grosso suggellato con cera rossa...' (p. 16). Led to the Ufficio delle Bullette, the artist is unable to pay the fine. He is providentially saved by Aldrovandi who happened to be in the office and who pays the sum required and invites him to his own house. The commission for the Arca di San Domenico statues follows. The story may seem too good to be true. Yet the circumstance described by Condivi, of the law that wax must be applied to the unghia, is one that can be verified⁴¹. And the passage, which can scarcely have been based on a ricordo available in Rome nearly sixty years later, confirms Condivi's reference to Michelangelo's 'tenacissima memoria' (p. 64).

The description of the years preceding the flight to Bologna is, notoriously, more controversial. Condivi's account has an abundance of detail lacking in Vasari's Life of 1550, but it once more confirms his dependence on Michelangelo. While both biographers attest to the reality of the sculpture garden at San Marco, Condivi excludes any reference to Bertoldo, whom Vasari had specifically named. This silence, and the celebrated passage where Domenico Ghirlandaio's importance for the young artist is violently disparaged (pp. 10-11), are indicative of the ageing master's wish to present himself as an autodidact, the pupil of nobody⁴². But this is not sufficient reason to discard Condivi as a source. Some of his anecdotes may seem suspect. Yet evidence frequently ignored, or the emergence of new evidence, can give credibility to what it is easy to dismiss as fable. One can cite, for example, the colourful anecdote of Lorenzo il Magnifico's procurement of an

⁴¹ For confirmation, see L. Simeoni, 'L'Ufficio dei Forestieri a Bologna dal secolo XIV al XVI', in *Atti e Memorie della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Provincie di Romagna*, Series IV, XXV, 1935, pp. 13 ff. of the estratto.

⁴² We should recall here that, when we turn to the first period in Rome, the artist goes beyond suppression and, in the case of the identity of the patron of the *Bacchus*, provides Condivi with misinformation (p. 19). See, most recently, Hirst in M. Hirst and J. Dunkerton, *The Young Michelangelo...*, London, 1994, pp. 29-31.

office in the Dogana for the young man's father, Lodovico. Recently dismissed as invention, the appearance of a hitherto unpublished letter of Lodovico's of 1513 confirms the fact of Lorenzo's munificence just over twenty years earlier⁴³.

Paradoxically, the Vita becomes less immediate, detailed and vivid, the closer it approaches the time of its composition. For example, the use of direct speech almost disappears⁴⁴. There are fewer references to specific works, and a number of minor projects referred to by Vasari are completely omitted. Condivi dedicates fewer words to the murals in the Cappella Paolina than to his earlier lengthy description of how Michelangelo had fortified the campanile of San Miniato (p. 40). We are given a fine description of the 'Florence' *Pietà*, and yet, while he provides valuable accounts of two of the finished drawings for Vittoria Colonna, we find no mention of the earlier presentation drawings which the artist had made for Tommaso de' Cavalieri, an omission which was certainly contrived by Michelangelo himself. Vasari had written an admiring passage about them in his own Vita⁴⁵. The reader learns rather little about Michelangelo's aims and practise as an architect although here, once again, he is portrayed as the gifted autodidact who had taught Bramante how to design scaffolding (p. 58).

In the closing pages, Condivi turns to the personality instead of the works; we read of the artist's magnanimity, the generosity

⁴³ See *Il Carteggio indiretto di Michelangelo*, eds. P. Barocchi, K. Loach Bramanti and R. Ristori, I, Florence, 1988, p. 41.

⁴⁴ For exceptions see p. 63 and the elaborate anti-Bolognese anecdotes on pp. 64-5. Condivi's remarks about Francia offer an alternative to what Vasari had written, and may have been inserted to divert attention from the astonishing quotation ascribed to Michelangelo in the text of 1550, that he (Francia) and Cossa should go off to the bordello; see *Le Vite* ..., VI, pp. 31-2.

⁴⁵ Michelangelo's defensiveness about the earlier drawings was probably actuated by Aretino's insinuation that only 'Gherardi' and 'Tommasi' could hope to receive them; see Aretino's letter to the artist of November 1545 in *Il Carteggio*..., IV, p. 216.

which he has carefully concealed, and the chastity of his life. The agonised hero of the earlier pages has triumphed through his fortitude and the range of his genius - which has even included divination⁴⁶. He has become the serene and universally admired master, now surrounded by friends and the recipient of the beneficence of Pope Julius III, whose veneration extends to his reported wish to have the artist embalmed at his death (p. 56).

Nearly two hundred years would pass before Condivi's Vita would be republished, and, despite the efforts of Gori and his distinguished collaborators, the text of 1746 is far from satisfactory.⁴⁷ The first attempt at a critical edition was published by Karl Frey in 1887. The book is still useful, for by publishing the texts of Condivi and of Vasari's Life of 1568 together, one can appreciate how mercilessly Vasari plundered the earlier account. Frey saw in Condivi's book a true autobiography, 'seine Selbstbiographie'.⁴⁸ Procacci, when he published the *postille* in 1964, observed how seriously they impaired Frey's claim.⁴⁹ And Schlosser,

⁴⁶ On successive pages Condivi alludes to the prescience of the artist. On p. 38, he refers to a visit of Michelangelo to Rome (it is that of December 1523). He returns to Florence, a disappointed man, already foreseeing the sack of Rome, still over three years in the future: '...se ne tornò a Firenze, massimamente dubitando della rovina, la qual poco da poi venne sopra Roma'. On p. 39 we find another example, concerning his warnings to the Florentine Signoria about the danger to which the city was exposed in 1529. If the man who rejected his words had listened to him (unidentified but Francesco Carducci, 'arrabiato' successor to Niccolò Capponi as Gonfaloniere), he would not have subsequently lost his head. Carducci was beheaded in the cortile of the Bargello in October 1530.

⁴⁷ A. Condivi, *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti*..., ed. A. F. Gori, Florence, 1746. One textual slip, where we find Christ in the Crucifixion sheet for Vittoria Colonna described as... 'in atto divino...', instead of '...in atto di vivo...' reappears in a number of later editions.

⁴⁸ K. Frey, *Sammlung ausgewählter Biographien Vasaris. II, Le Vite di Michelangelo Buonarroti scritte da Giorgio Vasari e da Ascanio Condivi*..., Berlin 1887, p. XXIV.

⁴⁹ U. Procacci, 'Postille contemporanee in un esemplare della vita di Michelangelo del Condivi', in *Atti del Convegno di Studi Michelangioleschi*, Florence and Rome, Rome, 1966, p. 280. See now Elam, below.

unaware of their existence, had many years earlier acutely noted that Condivi was not an Eckermann⁵⁰. Nevertheless, despite the omissions, evasions and mistakes, Condivi's *Vita* remains a rich and enduring resource.

MICHAEL HIRST

The bust of *Brutus*. For its acquisition by Ferdinando de' Medici from the *eredità* of Diomede Lioni, see A.S.F., Guardaroba Medicea, 132, c. 436: «1590. Una testa di marmo di Bruto autà della eredità di Messer Lioni mandatoci di Siena Messer Lorenzo Bonsi per ordine di Messer Lorenzo Usinbardi questo dì 10 dicembre 1590...». A «testa di Bronzo di Michelagnolo Bonaroti» was acquired from the same source on the same day: Guardaroba, 132, c. 480.

⁵⁰ See J. Schlosser Magnino, *La Letteratura Artistica*, Florence and Vienna, 1956, p. 359 (first edition, *Die Kunstliteratur*, Vienna, 1924, p. 317). Schlosser wrote of the text: '...il fatto che vi siano non poche inesattezze tecniche si può spiegare da un lato con la memoria non più salda del vecchio, e dall'altro coi malintesi dell'ascoltatore e annotatore'. He spared the artist the charge of obfuscation.

Postille to Condivi's *Vita di Michelangelo* (the readings are those of Caroline Elam and Giovanni Nencioni, revised from those of Ugo Procacci)

1. A. Anzi dice che l'arte sua è la scultura; l'altre fa et à fatte per compiacere ai principi. Della storia, che quando la vedeva, conosceva le fatiche della arte a chi se ne inamora esser legieris[si]me.
2. B. Questa opera in casa a Fior[enza] imperfetta.
3. C. Disse mi non haver detto mai tal cosa.
4. D. Disse quelli delle notomie come se li po[r]geva l'occasione.
5. Mai lassò li studii per la lira o 'l provisare.
6. E. Che ne havea sentore da altri mi disse, confermando 'l sognio. Però, antivista la fuga dei Medici per parole raccolte da vari cittadini, si partì.
7. G. E di più disse haver pregato 'l Car[dina]le a non farne parola, e che faceva errore a parlarne.
8. H. Che ancora vivevano in quel tempo, disse, li scarpellini che lo condussero.
9. I. Errò, d[illegibile]e a Judetta et Oloferne; e che quando son buone non ci occorre tanti pulimenti.
10. L. Questa era, disse, una pazzia venutami per detta. Ma s'io fusse sicuro di vivere 4 volte quanto son vissuto, sare'vi io entrato.
11. M. Non credo questo, disse, di Bramante, ma ebbe in quei tempi cattivi artefici. E non si seppe quello si sa oggi in tutte le arte.

12. O. Mi partii 'l giorno avanti, così in venti ore.
 13. P. Fu vero, e ne haveva già fatto uno modello, mi disse.
 14. Q. Che utima¹ mano? L'era fornita come ora, ma io non la volev[o]
scoprire in pezzi.
 15. R. O questo non dissi io mai, non che al papa, a persona male di
niuno.
 16. T. Che quindici anni! Baie tutte.
 17. L. Se tutte le cose ratoppate stessero così!
 18. O. Bastava dire tante bra[c]cia.
 19. Alla prospetiva no, ché mi pareva perdervi troppo tempo.
 20. Sì, e per lui incominciai quella testa di quel Bruto che ti donai.
 21. E questo suo ritratto lo ò sempre voluto in casa.
 22. Dissemi: È vero, e se tu vòl far bene, varia sempre e fa' più tosto
male.
 23. Del coito. Questo ho io fatto sempre, e se ti vòl prolungar la vita,
non lo usare o pure quanto puoi 'l meno.
 24. Pietra. Errore chiarito nella morte.
- N.B. Le postille sono riprodotte nell'autografo alle pp. 67-72, insieme
a due lettere di Tiberio Calcagni.

¹ *Utimo* was a vernacular form for *ultimo*.

'CHE UTIMA MANO?': TIBERIO CALCAGNI'S *POSTILLE* TO CONDIVI'S LIFE OF MICHELANGELO*

In 1966 the late Ugo Procacci published a fascinating group of marginal annotations made in a sixteenth-century hand to a copy of Condivi's *Vita di Michelangelo* which had passed from the Landau-Finaly library to his own possession¹. Despite their extraordinary interest – which derives from the fact that they record Michelangelo's own reactions to some passages in Condivi's text – these *postille* have made little impact on the scholarly literature. The decision to incorporate transcriptions of them into a new edition of Condivi's *Vita* is therefore extremely welcome. Both Giovanni Nencioni and the present author have found that some of Procacci's transcriptions could be improved, with occasionally illuminating results, although, unfortunately, we have had to work from photographs since access to Procacci's copy has not been possible.

There are, alas, only twenty-four annotations, most of them fairly laconic. The majority are signalled in the margins with letters of the alphabet, from A to T, but the last four are not marked

I should like to express my gratitude to Michael Hirst, for proposing that I write this piece, and for making many astute suggestions; to Giovanni Nencioni for sharing his new readings of the *postille*; to Pina Ragionieri and the staff of the Casa Buonarroti for giving me generous access to the Archivio Buonarroti and help with obtaining photographs; to Walter Kaiser and Patricia Rubin for kind hospitality at Villa I Tatti making this research possible; and to Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt for supporting the project in every way. A version of this article will be published in 1998 in *Renaissance Quarterly*.

¹ U. Procacci, 'Postille contemporanee in un esemplare della vita di Michelangelo del Condivi', in *Atti del Convegno di Studi Michelangioleschi* (Firenze-Roma, 1964), Rome, 1966, pp. 279-94.

in this way. Some passages have been flagged with a letter, but not annotated further. Puzzlingly, the letters L and O are repeated. It is difficult to make complete sense of all this, but it would appear that the *postillatore* first marked passages with a letter, and then subsequently annotated them; the annotations without letters are all towards the end of the text. The lettering implies a systematic campaign of annotation, rather than spontaneous jottings.

The *postillatore* purports in most cases to be recording corrections and comments that Michelangelo had made to him: '*Mi disse*' is the usual formula. But occasionally he takes over the artist's voice and writes in the first person, as though simply writing down the words as he had heard them. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that he had on one or more occasions been through the text with Michelangelo and had taken notes, which he had subsequently recorded in the margins of his own text. In every case the comments are fresh and convincing: Michelangelo's authentic tones of irritation and impatience come through loud and clear. When writing of what the artist said to him, the *postillatore* mostly uses the past historic '*disse*', but, interestingly, the very first annotation is in the present tense², implying that Michelangelo was still alive at the time of writing. The final comment takes exception to Condivi's account of Michelangelo's health, and was certainly written after the artist's death in 1564: '*Pietra. Errore chiarito nella morte*'³.

² 'Anzi dice che l'arte sua è la scultura ...' (see note 17 below). Procacci had read '*disse*', but the word is clearly '*dice*', and '*fa*' also appears later.

³ *Postilla* no.24. Procacci, *loc. cit.*, p. 294. As shown below, the *postillatore* was closely in touch with the inner circle at the time of Michelangelo's death, and would have heard the opinions of his doctors. Is he saying that, contrary to what Condivi claims, Michelangelo's kidney-stones had not been averted or cured by the treatment of his doctor?

The author and purpose of the *postille*

Who was responsible for these annotations? Procacci did not go into this question in detail, beyond suggesting tentatively that the annotator's name might be recorded in a faint inscription on the title page giving the then ownership of the book; this he transcribed as: 'Conventus Sancti Antoni de Lacu ad usum Fratris Fulgentii', with a possible date of 'Ag[osto] 1570'⁴. The handwriting of this inscription is, however, quite different from that of the marginal notes and, whoever Fra Fulgenzio may have been, he is not directly relevant to our quest.

The *postillatore* was evidently someone who knew Michelangelo well for at least the latter part of the period between 1553 (the publication date of Condivi's biography) and the artist's death in 1564; he records the master's comments incisively and convincingly. The handwriting is an educated one, the writing style economical and eloquent, the orthography largely correct. The author would seem to be Florentine, since he knows about works in Florence (the *Battle of the Centaurs*, as well as Donatello's *David* and *Judith and Holofernes*⁵, while measurements in Florentine *braccia* come naturally to him ('bastava dire tante bra[c]cia', he comments at one point)⁶. The advice he reports Michelangelo as giving to him on matters artistic – 'se tu vòl far bene, varia sempre' – and personal – to refrain from 'coito' in the interests of long life⁷ – suggest that he was a practising artist and quite young.

The marginal reference to Michelangelo's *Brutus* next to the

⁴ Procacci, *loc. cit.*, p. 281.

⁵ *Postille* nos. 1 and 9. See notes 17 and 21 below.

⁶ He is taking exception to the laboured description of the *Moses* on the tomb of Julius II as 'di grandezza meglio di due volte al naturale'.

⁷ *Postille* nos. 22 and 23. See notes 48, 57 and 58 below.

passage mentioning Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi in Condivi's text prompted me to pursue the possibility that the *postille* might have been written by Tiberio Calcagni (1532-65), the young Florentine sculptor and architect to whom the aged artist entrusted the completion of this bust (now in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence) and who also repaired and recarved the *Pietà* (now in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in the same city)⁸. Calcagni, who died at the age of thirty three, less than two years after the master to whom he referred affectionately as 'nostro Vecchio'⁹, also had the responsibility of making drawings and models for the late architectural projects, S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini and the

⁸ For the *Brutus*, see notes 33-35 below. For the Florentine *Pietà*, see C. de Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, IV, Princeton, 1960, pp. 149-51. For the book in preparation on the *Pietà*, see note 10 below.

⁹ In the letters cited at note 13 below.

¹⁰ For Calcagni, see the rather inadequate entry by G. Casadei Mugnai, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, s.v. He was born in February 1532, died on 7th December 1565, and was buried in S. Giovanni Decollato where an extant tombstone records that he was buried by his mother, Lucrezia Bonaccorsi, and his brothers Raffaele, Nicola and Orazio (V. Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese e altri edifici di Roma*, VII, Rome, 1876, p. 60, no. 138: 'D.O.M./ TIBERIO CALCAGNEO FLORENTINO. AC RO. CIVI/ HVMANITATE AC LIBERALITATE IN OMNES/ OMNIBUS. IVCVNDISS[IM]O/ CHARITATE. AC PIETATE. IN SUOS/ SUI ETIAM. CHARISS[IM]O/ QUI DV[M] AD STATVARIAS ARTIS. ET ARCHITECTVRAE/ EXCELLENTIAM PRAESTANTIAM SVMMO STVDIO/ CONTENDERET/ IMMATVRA MORTE. MAGNO OMNIVM DOLOR[E]/ EREPTVS. EST/ VIX. ANN. XXXIII. MEN. XI/ OBIT VII. IDVS. DECEMBRIS. M.D.L.XV/ [scudo] LVCHRETIA. BONACHVRSIA MATER. AC/ RAFFAEL. NICHOLAVS. HORATIVS. FRATRES/ NON. SINE LACRIMIS. PP.'). The identity of his father can be deduced from another inscription recorded by Forcella (*ibid.*, p. 549, no. 1135), now lost, from S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini. This is the tombstone of Roberto Calcagni, who died on 5th November 1560 at the age of 82. His wife's name is recorded as Lucretia Bonacarta, but this must be a mistake by Schrader (*Monument. Ital.*, p. 137) from which Forcella took the transcription. Evidently Roberto was a Florentine resident in Rome who had been granted Roman citizenship for his work 'conficiendis sacrarum vestium ornamentis' for Paul IV Carafa. Franca Trincheri Camiz and William Wallace have kindly informed me of Roberto's will of 1st September 1560, which mentions that he has a *bottega* in the rione Ponte near the Palazzo Alberini (Rome, Archivio di Stato, Notai Auditor Camerae 6183, cc. 2^a-3^a), and of an inventory of his house dated 1st November 1561 (*ibid.*, 6190, insert no. 542). These will be discussed in the chapter on Calcagni by William Wallace in a forthcoming book edited by Jack Wasserman on Michelangelo's Florentine *Pietà*. Apart from his work for Michelangelo, Tiberio restored

Sforza Chapel in S. Maria Maggiore¹⁰. Partly because of his early death, Calcagni has been little studied, but his surviving letters, most of them to Michelangelo's nephew Lionardo during the artist's last years, show him to have been the sensitive and reliable figure described by Vasari¹¹, and also one who could write fluent prose enlivened by eloquent turns of phrase. Although not as intimate with Michelangelo as Daniele da Volterra and Tommaso dei Cavalieri, and not present at the artist's deathbed, Tiberio was certainly part of the inner circle¹².

Calcagni's letters in the Archivio Buonarroti and the British Library, dating from 1561 to 1564¹³, are unquestionably written in the same confident and vigorous hand as the *postille* (see Fig. 25, 26). Particularly characteristic are the ampersands, the extravagantly large 'c's, and the abbreviations of 'per', but a comparison of individual capital and small letters reveals a whole series of

the church of S. Angelo in Borgo in 1565, where his work is recorded in an inscription but has disappeared as a result of eighteenth-century restructuring (Forcella, *ibid.*, vol. X, Rome, 1877, p. 258, no. 414).

¹¹ G. Vasari: *Le vite dei più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. G. Milanesi, Florence, 1878-85, Vol. VII, pp. 99, 243-44, 262-64. According to Vasari, Calcagni had made Michelangelo's acquaintance through Francesco Bandini and Donato Giannotti.

¹² The most extended account of him I have found is in G. Papini, *Vita di Michelangelo nella vita del suo tempo*, Milan, 1949, esp. ch. CLXII 'Tiberio Calcagni'. Papini, who unfortunately gives no bibliographical references, prints portions of an important letter of 8 August 1561 to Lionardo Buonarroti which is not in the Archivio Buonarroti, and has escaped the net of the *Carteggio indiretto* (see note 13 below). Papini thanks Giovanni Poggi as head of the Archivio Buonarroti in his acknowledgments and it seems probable that it was through Poggi that Papini knew this letter, a copy of which is not among those discussed and published in R. Wolf, *Documenti inediti su Michelangelo*, Rome/Budapest, 1931 (my thanks to Michael Hirst for this last reference).

¹³ Florence, Archivio Buonarroti (hereafter AB), VII, n. 130, XXXIV, nn. 165-72; and London, British Library, Egerton MS 1977, fols. 16-19; published in *Il Carteggio di Michelangelo*, ed. P. Barocchi and R. Ristori, V, Florence, 1983, p. 218, and *Il Carteggio indiretto di Michelangelo*, Vol. II, ed. P. Barocchi, K. Loach Bramanti, R. Ristori, Florence, 1995, pp. 107-09, 152, 154-55, 157-59, 161, 164, 169-70, 174, 181, nos. 310-11, 343, 344, 346, 347, 349, 351, 356, 359.

equivalences, while the *ductus* as a whole is instantly recognisable. The orthography in both letters and marginalia is clean, with the occasional use of a Florentine aspirate 'h'.

Having now established that Calcagni was the annotator, the purpose of the *postille*, and their lack of subsequent influence, becomes clearer. In addition to a private desire on Michelangelo's part to put the historical record straight on particular points, one could possibly have imagined the notes as being intended to inform Vasari, who in the 1560s was busy incorporating many of Condivi's observations and indeed much of his text into the second edition of the *Vite*¹⁴. But Vasari can never have seen the *postille*, for none of the corrections they record appears in the 1568 edition – a fact which makes them even more interesting for modern scholars. After Calcagni's premature death in 1565, his copy of Condivi evidently disappeared from any historiographic circuit, finding its way to the indistinct address of 1570 recorded at the front of the book, and evading notice for nearly four hundred years.

The character of the *postille*

As Michael Hirst has shown¹⁵, Condivi's Life of Michelangelo had a very definite agenda – a defence of the artist against the charge

of having failed to fulfil his commitments to the heirs of Julius II, and an account of his biography largely coloured by the 'Tragedy of the Tomb'¹⁶. Looking back over his life, Michelangelo must have been tormented by the number of commissions left unfulfilled and the number of sculptures left unfinished. He was anxious that his biographer should ignore or underplay unfinished sculptures wherever possible, and should propagate the myth of the artist's reluctance – overridden by powerful patrons – to accept non-sculptural commissions. For his part, Condivi had never been to Florence and did not know important unfinished works there, such as the Pitti and Taddei tondi. Moreover his powers of understanding had their limits (he was no Boswell), and in his anxiety to exculpate his master he often went too far. It is indeed over issues of profession and professionalism, finish and lack of finish, that the *postille* are at their most fascinating. They are also revealing of the aged artist's desire to modify the harsh judgments of other people attributed to him (probably correctly) in Condivi's text. It must be emphasised that although in some cases Michelangelo is clearly making factual corrections to Condivi's account, in others his *arrière pensées* are flagrantly self-justificatory, and may be no more reliable than the original information he had supplied to his hapless biographer.

Finito and non-finito

When writing of Michelangelo's early relief of the *Battle of the Centaurs* now in the Casa Buonarroti, made at the time when

¹⁴ That Calcagni was asked by Vasari to furnish information on Michelangelo's works is clear from a letter written by Calcagni to Vasari on 30th September 1564 (Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Carteggio d'Artisti I, fol. 47 r-v; published, with a few mistakes, in K. Frey, *Der literarische Nachlass Giorgio Vasaris*, II, Munich, 1930, pp.112-14), in which he sends or promises drawings of S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini among other things, but says he has not time to supply information about 'questi pittori'. Vasari records that Calcagni accompanied Taddeo Zuccaro on a trip to Florence, probably in 1563. They visited Vasari and saw him at work on the Salone dei Cinquecento (G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. R. Bertarini and P. Barocchi, 5, Florence, 1984, p. 567). My thanks to Michael Hirst for this reference.

¹⁵ See M. Hirst, 'Michelangelo and his First Biographers', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Volume 94: 1996 *Lectures and Memoirs*, pp. 63-84; and *idem*, in the present volume, above.

¹⁶ That even Condivi's exculpatory account of the tomb was not sufficient for Michelangelo is clear from the gloss objecting to the biographer's use of 'ratoppata' to describe the final result in S. Pietro in Vincoli: 'Se tutte le cose ratoppate stessero così!' (Procacci, *loc. cit.*, p.292).

the young artist was working in Lorenzo de' Medici's garden on Piazza San Marco, Condivi made a characteristically well-meaning but slightly misdirected comment. The relief was so successful, Condivi reported, that 'quando la rivede, cognosce quanto torto egli abbia fatto alla natura, a non seguitar prontamente l'arte della scultura, facendo giudicio per quell'opera quanto potesse riuscire. Né ciò dice per vantarsi, uomo modestissimo, ma perché pur veramente si duole d'essere stato così sfortunato, che per altrui colpa qualche volta sia stato senza far nulla dieci e dodici anni'. (Although Condivi writes in the present tense, it is unlikely, as Hirst has pointed out, that Michelangelo had seen the Battle relief since 1533, when he left Florence for the last time.) There is nothing worse than having one's regrets misquoted, or even quoted too correctly. No doubt Michelangelo was annoyed at Condivi's implication that he had not eagerly embraced the art of sculpture and also at the statement that he had sometimes found himself doing nothing for ten or twelve years. Hence the response recorded by Calcagni 'Anzi dice che l'arte sua è la scultura; l'altre fa et à fatte per compiacere ai principi. Della storia, che quando la vedeva, conosceva le fatiche della arte a chi se ne inamora esser legieris[si]me'. Procacci, reading 'imponerà' for 'inamora', found the second half of this annotation 'un po' strana e oscura'¹⁷. With the new reading it is quite clear: love of art makes art's labours light – a notion connected, but not identical, to the concept of 'difficoltà'¹⁸.

¹⁷ Procacci, *loc. cit.* (note 1 above), p. 282.

¹⁸ For 'difficoltà', see D. Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, Princeton, 1981, ch. IV: " 'Fatiche' in the context of sculpture include the physical labour of working the marble; see Michelangelo's reply to Varchi in the Paragone debate, where he speaks of the greater 'difficoltà, impedimenti e fatica' in sculpture as opposed to painting"; P. Barocchi, ed., *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento fra manierismo e controriforma*, Bari, 1960, I, p. 82; for 'le fatiche dell'arte' in general, see G. Vasari, *La vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, ed. P. Barocchi, 5 vols., Milan and Naples, 1962, IV, 1835-36.

Condivi goes on to say that scarcely had Michelangelo finished the *Battle of the Centaurs* than Lorenzo de' Medici died. Calcagni, however, contradicts this 'finita' by referring to 'Questa opera in casa a Fior[enza] imperfetta'¹⁹. Condivi, who had never seen the relief, did not know that it was unfinished, and Vasari does not record the fact. The annotator was here perhaps reporting his own knowledge of the work in Florence (to which he might have had access because of his friendship with Lionardo Buonarroti), rather than Michelangelo's comment to him, although we cannot be sure of this. It is notable that Bocchi, who greatly admired the relief, wrote that 'Ella non ha avuta l'ultima mano, come si vede, e pur mostra vigore e forza, e pare che si muova ogni figura in sua attitudine'²⁰.

The next remark about finish is of extreme interest, and deserves to be much better known. Condivi, who did not of course know any works of art in Florence at first hand, made an egregious mistake when writing about Michelangelo's bronze David commissioned by Soderini for the Maréchal de Gié. In the context of Donatello's bronze of the same subject then in the courtyard of the Palazzo della Signoria, which was, as Condivi surely meant to point out (but the text became slightly dislocated at this point, probably as a result of rewriting or editing), the model Michelangelo was asked to follow,²¹ Condivi reports

¹⁹ Pace Procacci, *loc. cit.*, p. 282, who reads 'mi par perfetta'; for the relief, see the entry by M. Hirst in *Il Giardino di S. Marco. Maestri e Compagni del giovane Michelangelo*, ed. P. Barocchi, exh. cat., Casa Buonarroti, 1992, pp. 52-61. Hirst notes that the *non-finito* of the work had already been remarked by Giovanni Borromeo in 1527; *ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁰ F. Bocchi, *Le Bellezze della Città di Firenze*, Florence, 1591, pp. 167-68; see also Vasari, ed. Barocchi (as at note 18 above), II, pp. 100-03.

²¹ For the complicated vicissitudes of Donatello's *David*, and whether or not Michelangelo was asked to copy this statue, see F. Caglioti, 'Donatello, i Medici e Gentile de' Becchi: un po' d'ordine intorno alla 'Giuditta' (e al David) di Via Larga, V', *Prospettiva*, forthcoming; the conclusions are anticipated in *idem*, 'Il perduto 'David'

Michelangelo's praise of Donatello's excellence as a sculptor, his only reservation being that the Quattrocento master 'non aveva pazienza in repulir le sue opere, di sorte che, riuscendo mirabili a vista lontana, da presso perdevono riputazione'. In his general anxiety to exculpate Michelangelo from criticism for *non-finito*, Condivi puts into his master's mouth the sort of attack that might have been made on many of his own works. Scholars have sometimes taken this remark seriously as a criticism of Donatello's *David*, but the *postillatore* puts us right: 'Errò: d[illegibile] e a Iudetta et Oloferne; e che quando son buone non ci occorre tanti pulimenti'. As Procacci noted, it had always seemed odd that Michelangelo of all people should criticise Donatello for lack of finish, and that he should choose the *David* which, although faulty in casting, is highly 'pulito', seemed incomprehensible²². A comment on the much rougher-surfaced *Judith* that in the case of such a fine work scrupulous finish was unnecessary, accords far more with a modern assessment of Donatello's work²³.

But it is the *postilla* concerning the Sistine Ceiling frescoes that reveals how wide of the mark were Condivi's well-meaning

attempts to anticipate and pre-empt possible criticism of Michelangelo's lack of finish. The passage provoking the comment is extremely well known. Condivi writes that Julius II was so impatient to see the first half of the vault that he insisted it be uncovered, 'ancor che fusse imperfetta e non avesse avuta l'ultima mano'²⁴. Condivi's remark is just as odd as the one he puts into Michelangelo's mouth about Donatello's sculpture, but in the Roman context there is less excuse. To underline the vehemence of Michelangelo's rejection of this judgment, Calcagni assumes his person: 'Che utima mano?'²⁵ L'era fornita come ora, ma io non la volev[o] scoprire in pezzi'.

In recent years Condivi's 'ultima mano' has assumed extra significance, since accusations have been levelled at the Vatican restorers of having removed not only 'a secco' retouches made by Michelangelo to his fresco, but also a layer of tinted varnish supposedly applied by the master to tone down his colours²⁶. (Such an interpretation of 'ultima mano' as 'last layer' is not inconceivable, but it should be noted that the phrase is constantly used in the Cinquecento to mean 'final touches', and is surely so intended here)²⁷. Even were Condivi's comment reliable, however, such an interpretation of it by the critics of the restoration would be illogical and self-contradictory. For if the pope's insistence on seeing the first half of the ceiling meant that the '*ultima mano*' had not been applied, how could it have been removed by the restorers? Now, Michelangelo can be seen to respond to this controversy from the grave: 'Che utima mano?'.

mediceo di Giovanfrancesco Rustici e il 'David' Pultzky del Louvre', *Prospettiva*, 83-84, Luglio-Ottobre 1996, pp. 80-81; and *idem*, 'Il David bronzo di Michelangelo (e Benedetto da Rovezzano): il problema dei pagamenti', in *Ad Alessandro Conti (1946-94)*, ed. F. Caglioti, M. Fileti Mazza, U. Parrini, Pisa, 1996, pp. 86-132; see also L. Gatti, "'Delle cose de pictori et sculptori si può mal promettere cosa certa': la diplomazia fiorentina presso la corte del re di Francia e il 'Davide' bronzo di Michelangelo Buonarroti", *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, CVI, 1994, pp. 433-72.

²² Procacci, *loc. cit.* (note 1 above), p. 287. As Michael Hirst has kindly pointed out to me, however, the criticism of Donatello attributed to Michelangelo by Condivi is of Donatello's work as a whole, although the order of the passage makes it difficult not to interpret it – as Michelangelo himself evidently did – as a comment on the bronze *David*.

²³ For a superb discussion of the whole question of *non-finito*, see Vasari, ed. Barocchi (as at note 18 above), IV, pp. 1645ff, where a gallant attempt is made to give sense to Condivi's passage by citing the high finish that Michelangelo gave to some of his early sculptures.

²⁴ The remark is taken up by Vasari in 1568; see Vasari, ed. Barocchi (note 18 above), II, p. 335.

²⁵ Procacci, p. 290, read 'ultimamente'.

²⁶ See, especially, J. Beck, "The Final Layer 'L'ultima mano' on Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling", *Art Bulletin*, LXX, 1988, pp. 502-03.

²⁷ See Bocchi, cited at note 20 above, and Condivi on the New Sacristy sculptures, [p. 41 in the present text].

Condivi's strange comment seems to reveal a complete misunderstanding of Michelangelo's fresco technique, perhaps to be expected from someone who could write of the early negotiations for the ceiling, 'Michelagnolo, che per ancora colorito non aveva...', ignoring not only the artist's various essays in panel painting²⁸, but also his presumable experience of fresco in Ghirlandaio's workshop (although Michelangelo would have had his own reasons for not discussing any of these with his biographer). Condivi's statement that the first half of the ceiling was 'imperfetta' is particularly puzzling, given that in the first half Michelangelo, while largely sticking to a *buon fresco* technique, took care, for example, to gild the balusters on the thrones of the prophets and sibyls²⁹. If one were to try to take Condivi completely seriously, one would have to argue that the scaffolding was later re-erected and that Michelangelo returned to carry out the last touches at some subsequent point. But this contorted explanation is made redundant by the artist's comment to Calcagni: 'l'era fornita come ora'.

Condivi's remarks about the second half of the ceiling are equally off the mark, but have unfortunately been taken up with equal enthusiasm by commentators from Vasari onwards. Condivi claims to have been told by Michelangelo that here too the work was not finished as he would have liked because of the pope's impatience. It lacked the retouching with gold and ultramarine blue 'a secco' which would have made it richer. Once

Julius's 'furore' had passed, he then wanted Michelangelo to do this work, but the artist did not consider it worth while to re-erect the scaffolding for so little. At this point Condivi sticks into his narrative a revised version of the comments Michelangelo claims in a letter of 1524 to have made about the 'poverty' of the first programme for the ceiling – 'quei che sono quivi dipinti furon poveri ancor loro'³⁰. But here the historic poverty of the biblical figures is made the rhetorical excuse for not touching up their garments in rich colours and gold.

It is just within the bounds of possibility that Julius II, when looking at the second half of the ceiling, may have noticed and commented unfavourably on the fact that there was comparatively little use of gold and ultramarine when the vault was compared with the Quattrocento wall frescoes below. But what seems impossible is that Michelangelo had himself complained of its being unfinished as Condivi claims ('non è, come egli arebbe voluto, finita, impedito dalla fretta del papa'). The artist had, of course, decided in the second half of the ceiling to change the way the balusters were depicted. In the first half, as we have seen, they were entirely gilded, with a little shading indicated by means of dark hatched lines. This gave a rich but tonally distracting effect, as Alberti had long ago warned in the *Della pittura*³¹. In the second half, then, Michelangelo resorted to a dull brownish yellow for the balusters, using gold leaf only for the streaky vertical highlights. Two of the balusters have no gold at all (one of the three visible on Jeremiah's throne, and one of the two on Jonah's). These very small lacunae, which may have been intentional, hardly add up to a wholesale absence of gilding in the second half, as

²⁸ See J. Dunkerton and M. Hirst, *The Young Michelangelo*, exh. cat., National Gallery, London, 1994. Condivi himself makes Michelangelo's painted copy on panel of Schongauer's print of the Temptation of St Anthony the subject of a long and fascinating digression.

²⁹ The anomaly is noted by Hellmut Wohl in his English edition, *The Life of Michelangelo by Ascanio Condivi*, tr. Alice Sedgwick Wohl, London, 1976, p. 133, note 66. Excellent photos of the balusters may be found in *Monumenti Musei e Gallerie Pontificie. Michelangelo e la Cappella Sistina. Documentazione e Interpretazioni*, Rome, 1994, vol. I *Tavole. La Volta Restaurata*.

³⁰ This has been noted by all commentators since Kłaczko in 1898; see Vasari, ed. Barocchi (as at note 18 above), II, p. 447.

³¹ Leon Battista Alberti, *On painting and On sculpture*, tr. and ed. C. Grayson, London, 1972, pp. 92-93.

Condivi claimed, and the extant areas of the bronze roundels are also gilded, if in a more subdued way than in the first half.³²

In conclusion, then, Condivi's series of remarks about lack of finish in the Sistine Ceiling need to be seen in the context of interweaving biographical strategies and *topoi*: the need first to defend Michelangelo against accusations of lack of finish, and secondly to counterpose against the myth of the reluctant artist the myth of the over-impatient patron. Both myths of course had their basis in reality in this case, but were embroidered by Condivi with telling anecdotes in order to bring out their biographical force.

As a postscript to this discussion of *non-finito*, it may be added that one of the many unfinished works left out of Condivi's account is the bust of *Brutus* now in the Bargello. The natural place to have mentioned it, as Michelangelo and Calcagni saw, was in the passage referring to the artist's friendship with Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi, for whom Michelangelo had begun the bust³³. And it was even more natural for Calcagni to insert a reference to the *Brutus* at this point, since he himself had been given

the sculpture by Michelangelo to complete. Although this particular *postilla* is, unfortunately, extremely indistinct, it seems possible, indeed likely, that it makes reference to this fact, reading: 'Sì, e per lui incominciò quella testa di quel Bruto che ti donai'. Procacci transcribes the last three words as 'che li [i.e. to Niccolò Ridolfi] donai'³⁴, but the Cardinal died in 1550 and it is highly improbable that Michelangelo gave the unfinished bust to him and then retrieved it after his death for Calcagni to complete³⁵. Calcagni seems to have entered Michelangelo's entourage around 1555-56³⁶, and may have taken on the bust, along with the *Pietà*, shortly afterwards. We do not know whether or not the *Brutus* ever entered the possession of the Ridolfi family³⁷, but

³² See *Michelangelo e la Cappella Sistina* (vol. cited at note 29 above), pp. 34 and 36 for illustrations of the changeover in the method of gilding the balusters between the seventh and eighth bays; p.48.1 and 56.6, for the ungilded balusters on the thrones of Jeremiah and Jonah. Unfortunately the position is not quite correctly described in F. Mancinelli, 'La Tecnica Pittorica', in *Monumenti Musei e Gallerie Pontificie. Michelangelo e la Cappella Sistina. Documentazioni e Interpretazioni II. Rapporto sul restauro della Volta*, ed. F. Mancinelli, Rome, 1994, p. 16, where it is stated that none of Jeremiah's balusters are gilded, and Condivi's passage is adduced, giving haste as the reason. The diagrams of the gilding, *ibid.*, diagrams 48 and 57, are also inaccurate in detail.

³³ For an extremely interesting account of the political implications of the bust and why Michelangelo abandoned it, see Hirst, 'Michelangelo and his First Biographers' (as at note 15 above). I am entirely in agreement with Hirst and Thomas Martin ('Michelangelo's Brutus and the Classicizing Portrait Bust in Sixteenth-Century Italy', *Artibus et Historiae*, XXVII, 1993, pp. 67-83, following R. Ridolfi, *Opuscoli di storia letteraria e di erudizione*, Florence, 1942, p. 130) that the bust was begun years later than 1539, the usual date assigned to it, either shortly before or after Lorenzino de' Medici's death in 1548.

³⁴ Procacci, *loc. cit.* (note 1 above), p.292. Calcagni uses 'li' for 'gli', as in gloss 4.

³⁵ J. Wilde, *Michelangelo*. Six Lectures, Oxford, 1978, p.9, suggests that the bust remained unfinished because of the cardinal's death. Lorenzo Ridolfi continued in 1551 after his brother's death to commission busts of ancient personalities, including Julius Caesar, Philip of Macedon, Titus, Lucretia; some of these were in bronze, like the Sulla supplied by Condivi himself, and some must have been copies of ancient examples. See G. Milanese, 'Alcune lettere di Ascanio Condivi e di altri a messer Lorenzo Ridolfi', *Il Buonarroti*, 2nd ser. III, IX, 1886, pp. 206-13.

³⁶ His first surviving letter to Michelangelo, from a visit to Cosimo I in Pisa, in connection with the designs for S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini, is of 8th April 1560; see note 13 above. Vasari in 1568 refers to the *Brutus*, and to Calcagni's work on it, in the context of Calcagni's work on S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini, and states that he had already received the bust before that architectural work began (in 1559). Vasari's implied chronology, and his statement that Calcagni came into Michelangelo's orbit through both Francesco Bandini and Donato Giannotti (away from Rome in 1552-55) yields the approximate date for their meeting given here (see Martin, cited at note 33 above, pp. 78-79; it should be noted that Papini (see note 12 above) gives the same chronology for the meeting date, for Michelangelo's work on the *Brutus*, and its handing over to Calcagni – perhaps again with Poggi's help).

³⁷ Vasari in 1568, ed. Barocchi (as at note 18 above), IV, p.1800, says the bust was undertaken by Michelangelo at Donato Giannotti's request for Cardinal Ridolfi, but does not give its location; he seems to have seen it, since he describes 'certe minutissime gradine' on the head. The bust is said to be recorded at the Medici Villa at Petraia in 1584, in the collection of Duke Francesco de' Medici; see C. de Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, IV, Princeton, 1960, p. 132, but see now Hirst, p. XX above, for its acquisition by the Medici in 1590.

my reading of this *postilla* would suggest that Calcagni still had it when he wrote down his comment³⁸.

‘O questo non dissi io mai’

Another recognisable and characteristic thread running through the *postille* is Michelangelo’s anxiety to disclaim malicious comments he was alleged to have made about other people. On two occasions Calcagni is prompted to correct defamatory remarks about Bramante. The first is Michelangelo’s alleged accusation in relation to the Cortile del Belvedere, St Peter’s and what Condivi mistakenly calls ‘il convento di S. Pietro ad Vincula’ (in fact S. Maria della Pace) that the architect had enriched himself at his paymasters’ expense by deliberately using poor materials, that it then proved necessary to shore up his buildings against collapse, and that Bramante was afraid Michelangelo would reveal his malfeasance. Calcagni interjects: ‘Non credo questo, disse, di Bramante, ma ebbe in quei tempi cattivi artefici. E non si seppe quello si sa oggi in tutte le arte’³⁹. Here it is possible to believe that Michelangelo made both the original remark and its correction. Sixteenth-century Rome was rife with satirical comments concerning ‘Bramante ruinante’, and Michelangelo would have been only one among many to accuse the architect of poor constructional techniques, if not of peculation⁴⁰. How-

ever, the additional comment that Bramante could not rely on his workforce and that less was known in the early Cinquecento about ‘tutte le arte’, reflects Michelangelo’s own half-century’s experience as a designing architect with a ‘hands on’ approach, as well as an apparently undimmed belief in technical progress.

The second disclaimer, about a similar comment that Bramante had wilfully destroyed the columns of Old St Peter’s is a more generic protest: ‘O questo non dissi io mai, non che al papa, a persona male di niuno’. The original remark may or may not have been Michelangelo’s – again it belonged to a common stock of contemporary accusations against Bramante – but one can well imagine Michelangelo coming up with the further comment that it was much easier to build a wall than to ‘make’ a column: in other words to order and quarry the stone, have it perfectly cut by masons and then to erect it. The passion for the monolithic column was a very Florentine one that went back to Brunelleschi, and was among Michelangelo’s most cherished architectural tenets⁴¹.

In his denial (‘Dissemi non haver mai detto tal cosa’) that he had ever made the harsh judgment of Piero di Lorenzo de’ Medici that was attributed to him (‘che nel medesimo luogo del padre era restato ma non nella medesima grazia’), Michelangelo is probably just betraying his usual nervousness about being caught out in an anti-Medicean statement⁴². But it is possible that he did not at all times share unequivocally in the prevailing *damnatio* of Piero’s memory. After all, Piero had kept Michelangelo on as a member of the household after Lorenzo’s death, and the artist had main-

³⁸ This accords with the opinion of Martin (see note 33), p. 83, note 65.

³⁹ Uncertain reading; Procacci, p. 289, has ‘in sulla arte’.

⁴⁰ For a recent summary, see F. Borsi, *Bramante*, Rome, 1989, pp. 25–31, ‘La fortuna negativa, il ruinante’. For a sensitive and subtle account of Michelangelo’s relations with Bramante, see C. Robertson, ‘Bramante, Michelangelo and the Sistine Ceiling’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XLIX, 1986, pp. 91–105.

⁴¹ See W.E. Wallace, *Michelangelo at S. Lorenzo: The Genius as Entrepreneur*, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 48–51.

⁴² See, for example, G. Spini, ‘Politicità di Michelangelo’, in *Atti del Convegno di Studi Michelangioleschi* (Firenze-Roma, 1964), Rome, 1966, pp. 110–70, esp. pp. 111–12, 127; and Hirst, ‘Michelangelo and his First Biographers’ (note 15 above).

tained contact with the exiled Medici during his first period in Rome, even if his patronage ultimately proved unsatisfactory⁴³.

Professionalism and Michelangelo's art

It is in relation to a comment about Piero that Michelangelo seems to have misread Condivi's text while discussing it with Calcagni. When Condivi writes of the improvisatory skills of the musician who told Michelangelo of his dream foretelling the Medici expulsion⁴⁴, he adds 'del che anch'egli profession faceva', that is of singing to the *lira da braccio*. Condivi, as Procacci saw⁴⁵, almost certainly was referring here to Piero himself as the musician, and the *postillatore* was over hasty in his anxiety to deny that Michelangelo had ever wasted his time in this way as a young man: 'Mai lassò li studii per la lira o 'l provisare'.

Condivi's statement that when Michelangelo set to work again after the Siege of Florence on carving the tombs in the New Sacristy, it had been fifteen years since he had touched his chisels, and that he then made all the sculpture in the Sacristy in a few months, 'spinto più dalla paura che dall'amore', was a dreadful muddle: he was presumably trying to imply that, since the time when Leo X had set the artist to work on the architecture of the S. Lorenzo façade, Michelangelo had had no opportunity to prac-

tise his real profession as a sculptor. Calcagni's succinct comment: 'Che quindici anni! Baie tutte' is entirely apt, as are Procacci's editorial comments⁴⁶. Not only would Michelangelo have been irritated by the statement that he had carved no sculpture between 1515 and 1530, a period in which he had completed the *Risen Christ* in S. Maria Minerva and worked on at least six sculptures for the New Sacristy as well as the Accademia Slaves (and, perhaps, the *Victory*), he might also have been annoyed by the suggestion that he was impelled more by fear than by love to resume work for Clement VII – to whose merits as a patron Condivi later pays a fulsome tribute, embroidering it with a classical parallel presumably supplied to him by Annibale Caro⁴⁷.

Calcagni confirms Condivi's story that the Prior of Sto Spirito gave Michelangelo an early opportunity to carry out anatomical investigation ('Disse quelli delle notomie, come se li po[r]geva l'occasione')⁴⁸. But later on, where Condivi is commenting in general on Michelangelo's studies, mentioning architecture, anatomy and perspective, Calcagni records Michelangelo's brusque contradiction of the idea that he had expended much effort on this last: 'Alla prospetiva no, ché mi pareva perdervi troppo tempo'. This rings entirely true, for the artist's relative lack of interest in formal perspective is indeed evident from all his paintings and pictorial reliefs.

One comment made by Michelangelo to Calcagni carries a broader theoretical charge. This comes at the point where Condivi praises Michelangelo's extraordinary visual memory and avoidance of self-repetition. The marginal comment adds: 'Dis-

⁴³Barocchi, *Vita*, II, pp.160–61; for the letters describing an abortive commission in Rome from Piero, see *Carteggio* I, pp.35–59.

⁴⁴The next gloss confirms the story of the dream, but adds that Michelangelo had heard of it from others (i.e. perhaps not from Cardiere himself), and had predicted the flight of the Medici from comments made to him by various Florentines 'Che ne havea sentore da altri mi disse, confermando 'l sogno. Però, antivista la fuga dei Medici per parole raccolte da vari cittadini, si parti' (Procacci, *loc. cit.*, p.285).

⁴⁵Procacci, *loc. cit.* (note 1 above), p. 284 (though referring, by a slip of the pen, to Lorenzo).

⁴⁶Procacci, *loc. cit.* (note 1 above), p. 291.

⁴⁷For Caro's role, see Hirst, *loc. cit.* at note 15 above, and his introduction in the present edition.

⁴⁸The writing here is indistinct, but Procacci's reading, p. 284, 'come sedi poteria locare tutte' cannot be correct.

semi: È vero, e se tu vòl far bene, varia sempre e fa' più tosto male'. This satisfyingly epigrammatic remark, with its play on 'far bene' and 'far male' (Procacci rightly interprets it as 'sbagliare magari ma non ripetersi')⁴⁹ could be taken to sum up the 'mannerist' aesthetic of variety and novelty that was so important in the Cinquecento.

Tall stories

The *postille* confirm the veracity of two of Condivi's stories which might otherwise seem too 'tall' for belief. The first is that Michelangelo had once had the idea of carving one of the Carrara mountains into a latter-day Colossus, which would have been a landmark for travellers. Here the marginal comment reads: 'Questa era, disse, una pazzia venutami per detta. Ma s'io fusse sicuro di vivere 4 volte quanto son vissuto, sare'vi io entrato'⁵⁰. Recalling celebrated real and projected ancient examples such as the Colossus of Rhodes or the statue of Alexander the Great holding a city in his hand that Vitruvius tells us Dinocrates offered to his imperial patron, Michelangelo's fantasy encapsulates all his heroic engagement with his primal material and the figures locked within it⁵¹.

The second surprising story concerns Michelangelo's alleged commission from the Ottoman Sultan in 1504-06 to construct a

⁴⁹ Procacci, p. 293. For 'varietà' in Michelangelo, see Summers, *op. cit.* at note 18 above, *ad indicem*, esp. p. 181, quoting Serlio (*Tutte le opere*, Venice, 1619, Bk VII, folio 94): 'Gran cosa è veramente di voler variare in quelle cose c' hanno in sé pochissimi termini'.

⁵⁰ Not 'da tanto', *pace* Procacci (*loc. cit.*, p. 288). Michelangelo used the phrase 'per detta' (not 'per l'età', *pace* Procacci) in the sense of 'tanto per dire'.

⁵¹ See the discussions cited in Vasari, ed. Barocchi (as at note 18 above), II, pp. 283-84.

bridge over the Golden Horn, from Pera to Constantinople, and to serve the Turk in other 'affari'. The *postillatore* comments: 'Fu vero e ne haveva già fatto un modello, mi disse'. Commentators on the Condivi passage have rightly drawn attention to a letter of 1st April 1519 written to Michelangelo from Adrianople⁵². The writer, a certain Tommaso da Tolfo, recalled conversations with Michelangelo fifteen years earlier in the house of Giannozzo Salviati, where they had discussed the possibility of the artist going to Constantinople, and Tommaso had discouraged him on the grounds that the then sultan 'non si dillectava di figura', indeed 'l'aveva in odio' (as a simple-minded observer of the Muslim world might expect). Now, said Tommaso, the situation had changed, and the present sultan (i.e. Selim II, ruled 1512-20) had recently paid 400 ducats for a mediocre recumbent female nude. Michelangelo should come out at once via Ragusa, and Tommaso would give the *luogotenente* at nearby Chosa instructions to provide an escort for him, sending money to the Gondi bank. Much of this is repeated by Condivi at a later point in the life of Michelangelo, mentioning the Gondi bank, the preferred disembarkation point and so on. In addition, he refers to specific letters to the artist from the sultan, sent by way of certain Franciscan friars. Could Condivi have had access to the letter from Tommaso da Tolfo, or did the whole story come from Michelangelo himself – another example of the artist's phenomenal powers of recall? At all events, the two episodes have evidently been conflated, and Condivi does not realise that two sultans were involved. It must have been Bajazet II (ruled 1481-1512) who issued the original invitation⁵³, by which the artist had been seriously tempted,

⁵² Vasari, ed. Barocchi, II, p. 253 (without further comment); E. Spina Barilla, in A. Condivi, *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, Milan, 1964, pp. 109-10.

⁵³ As pointed out by Spina Barilla, *loc. cit.*

before Soderini told him it would be better to die in the pope's service than to live in that of the sultan.

The whole story is indirectly confirmed by the fact that Leonardo da Vinci too had designed for the sultan a bridge over the Golden Horn, of which there is a drawing in Ms L in Paris, labelled 'Ponte da Pera a Ghostantinopoli'⁵⁴. Furthermore a letter from Leonardo exists in the Topkapi archive, translated into Turkish, outlining projects for the bridge and for some mills, evidently in response to a specific request⁵⁵. It is most remarkable that the sultan should have turned to these two great Florentine rivals for a major civil engineering project. Almost as interesting, for students of Michelangelo's career, is that he should have been asked to make, and indeed made, a design for the bridge as early as 1504-06 (and this is probably correct, since Leonardo's letter and drawing are usually dated c.1502). It shows that he was deeply involved in architectural design and had acquired an international reputation as a potential architect some ten years before his first generally recognised building project⁵⁶.

Abstinence prolongs life

Since Michelangelo's sexual orientation has been the subject of

⁵⁴ C. Pedretti, *Leonardo architetto*..., pp. 170-71; L. Firpo, in *Leonardo da Vinci Engineer and Architect*, exh. cat., Montreal, 1987, p. 289. The MS is thought to date from 1502 when Leonardo was in the service of Cesare Borgia.

⁵⁵ F. Babinger and L.H. Heydenreich, 'Vier Bauvorschlge Lionardo da Vinci's an Sultan Bajezid II (1502-03)', *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Gttingen*, I, Philologisch-historische Klasse, 1952, I, pp. 1-20. I am grateful to Anna Contadini for this reference.

⁵⁶ It would also be interesting to know if Michelangelo had any knowledge from his contacts across the Adriatic of the buildings of Bajezid in Istanbul. The mosque of 1505-06 has pendentives supporting a dome which are roofed over in a manner very similar to the exterior of the New Sacristy; see O. Aklanapa, *Turkish art and architecture*, London, 1971, pp. 211-18, pls. 157-62.

much speculation, it cannot fail to be of interest that Calcagni gives an emphatic confirmation of Condivi's statement that the artist believed in total abstinence: 'Del coito. Questo ho io fatto sempre, e se ti vi prollungar la vita, non lo usare o pure quanto puoi 'l meno'. The best discussion in the literature of Michelangelo's sentimental attachment to young men is that of an empathetic observer, John Addington Symonds, who made it the subject of a sensitive, but necessarily veiled, chapter in his nineteenth-century biography of the artist⁵⁷. In a letter to Edmund Gosse, Symonds wrote less guardedly of Michelangelo: 'if he had any sexual energy at all (which is doubtful), he was a U', referring to the term 'Unring' which Carl Heinrich Ulrich had invented to denote homosexuality⁵⁸. Michelangelo's advice to his young protégé is not inconsistent with Symonds's assessment, even if a Freudian viewer might suggest that his 'sexual energy' was sublimated rather than altogether absent.

Conclusion

The unfortunate Calcagni had all too little opportunity to decide whether or not to follow his beloved master's injunctions. But we must be grateful to him that he recorded these and other comments before his own premature death. Calcagni's *postille* are instructive not simply for their vivid immediacy and the crumbs of information they contain, but also for the light they throw on Michelangelo's own attitude to Condivi's biography both before and after it was written. While there is no doubt whatever that the *Vita* was composed at the artist's own behest, and that

⁵⁷ J. Addington Symonds, *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti*, 2 vols., 1893, II, pp. 119, 125-66.

⁵⁸ See P. Grosskurth, *John Addington Symonds*, London, 1964, pp. 257-61, esp. p. 259 and note. The letter, in the Brotherton Collection, is dated 18th September 1891.

Michelangelo must have supplied the detailed information on which it was based, this does not mean that the text is always an exact representation of his views or recollections. (And if he read the final edited version of the text before it was printed, he cannot have done so with great attention, or he would not have allowed the more glaring errors – not all of which are, incidentally, corrected in the *postille* – to stand.) It is particularly fortunate, then, that Calcagni's copy and notes should have survived, reminding us once again how much care is needed in the reading of Michelangelo's biographies. This is, as I have stressed, just as true of the *postille* themselves as of the text they are glossing; but the task of discriminating among them between genuine corrections and disingenuous obfuscations is still worth undertaking.

CAROLINE ELAM

CRITERIO DI EDIZIONE

La ristampa odierna di una stampa cinquecentesca pone problemi delicati. Il criterio – quando non si tratti di un testo che richieda, per motivi intrinseci o estrinseci, una riproduzione diplomatica – è quello di renderne agevole e chiara la lettura a un lettore non familiare con la paleografia, senza alterarne la sostanza linguistica, cioè la sua identità storica. La quale è costituita, oltre che dalla qualità e dal significato delle parole, dalla struttura fonetica, morfologica e sintattica. La chiave della struttura fonetica è la scrittura, che ha un carattere duplice: di resa della sostanza fonetica e fonologica del testo e di testimonianza di una tradizione culturale. Quanto al primo carattere, la resa fonetica e la fonologica sono entrambe presenti nella scrittura dell'italiano antico come in quella dell'italiano odierno: lo dimostrano per questo le diverse pronunce della medesima scrittura causate dai diversi sostrati dialettali dei lettori, e per l'italiano antico i vistosi grafemi che tentano di riprodurre fenomeni fonetici areali (per es. il rafforzamento fonosintattico).

Quanto al secondo carattere, la testimonianza di una tradizione culturale è dimostrata dalle scritture etimologiche, dovute alla incombenza della memoria del latino, le quali spesso si alternano a quelle proprie del volgare insinuando il sospetto di due pronunce parallele, una dotta e una popolare. Da quanto abbiamo detto si deduce che l'ipotesi di una scrittura coincidente con la pronuncia non è né presupposto né scopo prudente per un editore, essendo la pronuncia fenomeno prevalentemente spontaneo e la scrittura riflesso e tradizionale.

La ristampa della condiviana Vita di Michelangelo, stampata dai Blado nel 1553, pone anche la questione della coincidenza della cultura letteraria dimostrata dal testo con quella dell'autore, non confermata dalle sue lettere autografe¹. È molto probabile che, secondo una prassi consueta, il testo condiviano sia passato per la penna di un dotto revisore della celebre stamperia romana, non ignara dell'importanza del libretto; sembrano attestarlo una certa accuratezza ortografica e certe

¹ Vedile in G. Milanesi, *Alcune lettere di Ascanio Condivi e di altri a messer Lorenzo Ridolfi*, in «Il Buonarroti», settembre 1868, pp. 206-210.

spie culturali. La prima è evidente anche nella interpunzione fitta e attenta, nella presenza di un elenco di «error per inavertenza» e nella consapevolezza di altri errori «di poca importanza, sì di qualche paroluzza come di littere, virgule, accenti e punti» rimessi al giudizio dei lettori (c. 50). Le seconde compaiono nelle grafie dotte dei nomi propri classici, biblici e germanici. Abbiamo dunque, ai fini editoriali, deciso di considerare il testo condiviano nella sua consistenza terminale, prescindendo da questioni genetiche; e ci siamo fondati su un esemplare della *princeps* in cui dopo la stampa dell'opera sono stati inseriti tre nuovi passi sostituendo il foglio L, che da duerno è diventato terno (cfr. E. Steinmann - R. Wittkower, *Michelangelo Bibliographie 1510-1926*, Leipzig 1927, p. 91 s.).

Il nostro trattamento del testo originario è stato il seguente. Dall'*errata corrige* della *princeps* ci siamo sentiti autorizzati a completarla eliminando i refusi residui, rendendo l'interpunzione e l'accentazione più moderne e più funzionali alla comprensione, e anche sostituendo ad antichi segni alfabetici eliminati dal Vocabolario della Crusca i nuovi divenuti normali dell'italiano odierno e foneticamente corrispondenti; precisamente: a *tj* e *ttj*, che originariamente indicavano la diversa pronuncia di *nazione* (dal lat. *nationem*) e *azione* (dal lat. *actionem*), l'unico *zj*; al trigramma *ngn*, che indicava la *n* palatale rafforzata, il digramma *gn*; alla congiunzione copulativa *et* e al suo simbolo & la semplice *e*, a distogliere dal vezzo di pronunciare il *t* finale. Abbiamo anche eliminato l'*h* etimologica, foneticamente e distintivamente superflua, di *hoggi*, *huomo*, *thesoro*, *adherenti*, *allhora*, *mathematici*, *stomacho* e sostituito il digramma *ph* con *f* in *philosophi* e *prophezia*; né abbiamo risparmiato l'*h* delle forme non omofone del verbo *avere*. Ma abbiamo conservato, quando corretta, la scrittura germanicheggiante dei nomi regi o feudali (*Henrico II*, *Mathilda*) o classicheggiante di nomi greci (*Hercole*, *Cygnò*, *Hippocrate*, *Homero*), quali indici di una memoria non incolta o addirittura antiquaria, vivissima nella Roma del Cinquecento.

I predetti e i congeneri casi di scrittura classicheggiante che abbiamo eliminati erano, rispetto alla riforma ortografica che sarebbe maturata a Firenze nel secondo Cinquecento, fatti di retroguardia umanistica che non intaccavano la sostanza fonetica. Altra cosa erano le scritture latineggianti che si discostavano dalle volgari spesso compresenti, giacché si può pensare che si avesse una pronuncia alternativa, dotta o popola-

re, di cui restano avanzi nell'italiano odierno, registrati nei dizionari (*oggettivo*, *obiettivo*, *obbiettivo*); nel testo condiviano *commodità* e *comodità*, *dubio* e *dubbiosi*, *obligo* e *obblighi*, *publico*, *repubblica*, *subietti*, *labra*, *provisione*, *approbato*. Più ampio, perché colpisce tanto parole derivate dal latino quanto neoformazioni romanze (e quindi è di più difficile motivazione), ma coimplicato col precedente per l'interferenza del tratto consonantico labiale, appare il fenomeno dello scempiamento o dell'alternanza di consonanti scempie e geminate (tenui e rafforzate), specialmente nelle parole prefissate con *a-* seguita da un elemento labiale, ma non esclusivamente in tale combinazione: *avvenuto* e *avenne*, *avienne*, *avenero*; *abondava*, *avventura*, *avedimento*, *inavertenza*, *avisato*, *abandonò*, *abandonato*, *adimandato*, *adormentato*, *adobbò*, *commesso* e *comesso*, *oportunità*, *rapresenta*. È evidente che la motivazione della pronuncia o scrittura latineggianti non è applicabile a ognuno di questi casi: non a quelli di *avienne* e *avenne* o di *adormentato*, né ai casi di *comesso* e di *oportunità*, perché in essi tale motivazione contraddirebbe la matrice latina. Ovviamente, non riuscendo a valutare la ragione di tali scelte, ci siamo astenuti dall'intervenire. Siamo invece intervenuti dove l'alternanza, fuor del condizionamento sopra citato, tra consonante scempia e geminata appariva frutto di una incertezza ortografica rettificata dalla presenza, spesso ripetuta, di forme con la geminata: *magiore* da *maggiore*, *moteggiare* da *motteggiare*, *capella* da *cappella*, *legere* da *leggere*, *azzuro* da *azzurro*, *nesuno* da *nessuno*, *scancelare* da *scancellare*, *eccellenza* da *eccellenza*, *citadino* da *cittadino*. L'emergente conoscenza delle forme normali autorizzava l'intervento sulle altre. Nel caso di lessemi complessi, che compaiono in scrittura pluriverbata o univerbata (*per ciò che*, *perciò che*, *perciòché*) abbiamo rispettata la varia forma del testo.

Lo stesso criterio d'intervento abbiamo adottato nel caso delle preposizioni articolate e del dimostrativo *quello*, per i quali alternano, se seguite da parola iniziante con vocale, le forme *al'*, *dal'*, *del'*, *nel'*, *sul'*, *quel'*, presenti anche all'interno di lessemi composti univerbati come in *alora* (etimologicamente *alhora*). Gli editori di solito risolvono il caso in due modi: o normalizzando, specie se nello stesso testo vi sono scritture con la doppia *l*, facenti fede della pronuncia e anche della sua resa grafica, oppure dissociando la preposizione dall'articolo: *a l'*, *da l'*, *de l'*, *ne l'*, *su l'*. Se adottiamo la seconda soluzione possiamo essere accusati di contribuire a prorogare una forma artificiale che non corrisponde alla

pronuncia e si è imposta nella lingua poetica fino a tutto l'Ottocento; né ci scusano le rime con *ne lo* e *ne la* della *Commedia* (Par. 11, 13; Purg. 17, 55), «divisione - secondo Gianfranco Contini - ... che certo non corrispondeva alla pronunzia popolare, e perciò all'uso normale dei manoscritti» e «prova solo l'arcaico scempiamento nato in posizione proclitica» (in Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori*, I, 1, p. 284, ed. Ricciardi, Milano 1984)¹. Ma proprio la Vita di Michelangelo del Condivi ci presenta in stampa lo stesso fenomeno: che nella dedica al papa e nella prefazione per i lettori, contenute nelle prime cinque pagine non numerate della *princeps*, è tanto prevalente da ritenerlo esclusivo. Contro le forme analitiche *a la* (8 volte), *a l'* (2 volte), *da l'* (3 volte), *de la* (9 volte), *de l'* (4 volte), *de gli* (1 volta), *de le* (1 volta), *a i* (1 volta) stanno le sintetiche *del'* (1 volta), *agli* (1 volta). Si tratta dunque di un fenomeno non solamente arcaico e, nel caso nostro, non rispondente alla pronuncia, ma di registro letterario, anche perché nel corso del racconto si alterna con forme sintetiche sia accorciate (tipo *al'*, *del'*, *nel'*), sia piene, coincidenti con le normali odierne. La frequente presenza della forma non articolata *de* in luogo di *di* (frequente anche nelle lettere) può rivelare l'azione di un sostrato dialettale che ha agevolato l'adozione delle forme analitiche. Pensiamo pertanto che la detta mistione e la presenza delle forme piene ci consentano di normalizzare secondo queste ultime la scrittura del racconto, mantenendo alla dedica e alla prefazione il loro carattere più letterario. Per il dimostrativo la forma *quel'* è stata normalizzata in *quell'*².

Riteniamo insomma che anche per il lettore odierno, purché gli siano evitate le difficoltà o ambiguità di lettura, convenga conservare i caratteri principali dell'identità storica della lingua antica, anche nella scrittura quando le sue forme abbiano, insieme con la funzione strumentale, implicazioni culturali.

¹ Sulla questione si veda ora la recente edizione critica della *Vita nova* curata da Guglielmo Gorni (Einaudi, Torino 1996), p. 291 s.

² Non è evidentemente variante grafica, ma di registro, quel *Michelangelo* che s'intretra due volte al costante *Michelagnolo* della *princeps* nella seconda interpolazione in lode di Giulio III (p. 55). E varianti di registro sono anche *angeli*, *angioli* e *agnoli* che compaiono nella descrizione del *Giudizio* (p. 49 s.).