MICHELANGELO AND THE BATHS OF DIOCLETIAN:
AN ANALYSIS OF HIS RE-USE OF THE RUIN FOR THE CHURCH OF
SANTA MARIA DEGLI ANGELI E DEI MARTIRI

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Abstract

In 1561, an 86 year old Michelangelo Buonarotti was asked by Pope Pius IV to design a church in the city of Rome. At the time Michelangelo was already living in Rome, designing another church, St. Peters Basilica, for which he had just completed the wood model of the massive dome. He did not need this new commission for financial or status purposes, but Michelangelo had a restless spirit, which pushed him into achieving greater goals. He was attracted more by a new challenge than by the idea of actually finishing what he had begun. This commission was unequivocally something new for the artist to test the abilities he had perfected throughout his life and, in doing so, he created a final architectural masterpiece. The commission for Santa Maria degli Angeli was not meant to be a new construction project, but rather, it was an adaptation of the ruined ancient roman *thermae*; The Baths of Diocletian. In this reuse, Michelangelo’s design of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri within the ruins is a clear instance of a deliberate reuse of an existing structure by an architect; one that was not an assertion of power nor an accretion of material, but rather an architectural intervention that embraced change and provided a rebirth for a decaying structure. It has always been known that the church was built within the fabric of a ruin, but now, from a contemporary vantage point, what can be gained by re-framing it? Piecing together the history and architecture to create a basic understanding of why this project was successful; not as a new construction, but as an adaptive reuse. From the understanding of the site and 16th century preservation efforts, to an analysis of the circulation and materiality within the church, this thesis will examine Michelangelo’s design to better understand his strategy.
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I dedicate this thesis to my Opa, Gerard Vandermeys.
7/24/1924 - 4/29/2015
My whole life my Opa has inspired me to take chances and to never leave a road untraveled.
He taught me that there is no such thing as a dead end,
because with every end comes the beginning of something new,
if you look at it in a different way.
While he is no longer able to continue with me on my journey to becoming an architect,
I hope that in his end, he can find a new road that takes him to
the most amazing places imaginable.
I love you, I miss you, and I will never forget you.

Liebe
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Introduction:

In 1561, an 86 year old Michelangelo Buonarrotti was asked by Pope Pius IV to design a church in the city of Rome. At the time Michelangelo was already living in Rome, designing another church, St. Peters Basilica, for which he had just completed the wood model of the massive dome. He did not need this new commission for financial or status purposes, but Michelangelo had a restless spirit, which pushed him into achieving greater goals. He was attracted more by a new challenge than by the idea of actually finishing what he had begun.¹ This commission was unequivocally something new for the artist to test the abilities he had perfected throughout his life and, in doing so, he created a final architectural masterpiece. The commission for Santa Maria degli Angeli was not meant to be a new construction project, but rather, it was an adaptation of the ruined ancient roman thermae; The Baths of Diocletian. In this reuse, Michelangelo’s design of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri within the ruins is a clear instance of a deliberate reuse of an existing structure by an architect; one that was not an assertion of power nor an accretion of material, but rather an architectural intervention that embraced change and provided a rebirth for a decaying structure. It has always been known that the church was built within the fabric of a ruin, but now, from a contemporary vantage point, what can be gained by re-framing it? Piecing together the history and architecture to create a basic understanding of why this project was successful; not as a new construction, but as an adaptive reuse. From the understanding of the site and 16th century preservation efforts, to an analysis of the circulation and materiality within the church, this thesis will examine Michelangelo’s design to better understand his strategy.

Img. 1.1 Interior Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, January 2015, Image by author.
Chapter 1: The Site

*Evolution of the Baths of Diocletian*

306-1561
The monumental grounds for the church commission, approximately 130,000 square meters, were not empty in 1561. Still standing on the site were the ruins of the ancient bath complex dating back to 306 AD. One of the most challenging elements of this analysis is to understand fully the site in its entirety and how it has changed over the centuries. Dozens of architects and artists have played a role in its adaptations, but instead of working backwards and subtracting elements that have been added up to the 21st century, the Baths of Diocletian in this analysis will be reconstructed from their origins to the point of their abandonment. Then, when the 16th century depictions of the ruins are analyzed, we will have a better understanding of what the spaces were once used for and how they may have appeared in ancient Rome; as compared to how they appeared in ruins.

The Baths were built in only eight years from 298 to 306 AD, by emperor Maximian, in the name of his co-ruler Diocletian, to be the largest bath complex in the entire Roman Empire. Located at the juncture of the Quirial, Viminal, and Esquiline Hills, as depicted in Leonardo Bufalini’s Map of Rome from 1551, the complex was a hub for cultural and political activities, and was a center for leisure and social interaction in the city. (Img.1.1 & 1.2) The construction required thousands of slaves, many of whom may have been Christians in the Pagan city of Rome. From all over the empire, materials were excavated, imported from places such as Greece and Egypt, to decorate the structure in the best marble and granite available, while Bavarian forests supplied the wood for beams and frameworks to construct the vaults and arches. Specifically for the Christian

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2 Diana DePardo-Minksy, Paper, Renovatio Romae: Rhetoric of the Renewal at the Baths of Diocletian from the Tetrarchs to Michelangelo, Chapter 1 Refer to 136-144 in a discussion of the possible scarcity of the tradition of Christian slaves. Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University 2014.
slaves, the labor consisted of working in stone and sand quarries. Their main responsibilities were to make the bricks and to construct the massive bath complex on site.3

3 Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, Antico e Moderno, “La costruzione assorbì migliaia e migliaia di braccia, a Roma e oltremare: greci ed egiziani nelle cave dei marmi pregati; carpentieri, che nelle foreste dovevano provvedere al legname per le impalcature, le armature delle volte e degli archi; trasportatori, addetti alle vettovaglie e al vestiario. Tutti coloro che nelle milizie avessero rifiutato di obbedire al comando di onorare gli Dei tradizionali, sarebbero stati obbligati ai lavori nelle cave di pietra e di rena, nella fabbricazione dei mattoni e nella costruzione degli edifici.” 2007 http://www.santamariadegliangeliroma.it
After analyzing many different floor plans of the Baths of Diocletian from artists and archaeologists such as Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, Antonio Palladio and Rondolfo Lanciani, as well as contemporary floor plans found at the site, the analysis produced a more accurate plan to depict how the bath complex stood in 306 AD. While this is in no way the exact floor plan, for the original is lost to history, it gives us the general idea of what existed so that we can show how the spaces were used in ancient Rome. (Img. 1.3)

(Img. 1.3) Reconstruction of the Baths of Diocletian from 306 AD, plan created by author.
Surrounding the main structure of the baths, was a perimeter wall that enclosed the exterior grounds. Encompassed within the walls were many programmatic spaces including Greek and Latin libraries, and theater seating, from which people could watch athletic competitions. The complex was bilaterally symmetrical and utilized the latest in Roman engineering and technology to make it an enjoyable space for the citizens of the city. Coming from the north-east to the south-west, as was the way people would have entered in ancient Rome, on either the northern or southern side, the visitor would first go into the *atria*, the changing rooms, and *apodyterium*, the larger changing rooms. Here, he or she could store belongings and change before entering into the complex; all spaces of the complex were accessible for both men and women, but women would usually come in the morning with the children and men would come in the afternoon. From here the visitor could enter directly into the *natatio*, outdoor pool, or into the *palaestrae*, outdoor gymnasiums, depending on the activities they wanted to do; but the main axis was through the gymnasium. In the open air outdoor *palaestrae* there would be activities equivalent to volleyball or calisthenics, with colonnades of monolithic Egyptian granite columns framing the spaces designated for these sports. The narrow *ephebeum* acted as indoor sport courts, but more importantly acted as a conduit to the gardens. Next, the visitor would go out through the *ephebeum* and follow paths leading to the series of bathing structures starting from dry and moving to wet. At the corner, the visitor would first go to the *laconicae*, saunas, then to two smaller warm bath rooms, and would end in the *sudatorium*, steam room. Next he or she would enter into the main *caldarium*, or hot baths room. This space was much larger and offset from the others, signifying its importance in the bathing hierarchy. Heated water poured continuously into the pools because the Romans saw running water as much more hygienic than stagnant water. From here the visitor would enter into the *tepidarium*,
where the waters were warm but not as hot as the *caldarium*. This prepared the body for its entrance into the *frigidarium*, or cold baths room.  

The *frigidarium* was the most impressive space in the complex and acted as the social hub for the citizens of Rome. It was full of light and air and bustled with various activities revolving around the indoor swimming pools. The walls, ceilings and floors were covered in the most expensive materials and best crafted works that expressed the power of Rome. This space, of any room in the complex, was the most ornate. While the images created by Edmond Paulin in the 19th century may be false in their details, what they still express are the emotions that might have been felt here by the visitor; intricate mosaics, monolithic columns of Egyptian granite, frescoes and sculptures filling every wall and niche would surround the visitor in elegance. Four exterior buttresses supported the massive groin vaulted ceilings that towered over the space. Everything was engineered and built so that it could last for centuries. *(Img. 1.4 & 1.5)* From the *frigidarium* the visitor could then enter into the final phase in the bathing sequence, the *natatio*, or the outdoor swimming pool. Side pavilions of the *frigidarium* flanking the *natatio* would allow bathers to enter back into the changing rooms, so they could gather their belongings and leave, or go through the whole bathing sequence over again.

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(Img. 1.4) Edmond Paulin, Les Termes de Diocletien Restauration des Monumens antiques par les architects pensionnaires de l'Academie de France a Rome, Paris 1890, Reconstruction of the Frigidarium from the Baths of Diocletian.

(Img. 1.5) Edmond Paulin, Les Termes de Diocletien Restauration des Monumens antiques par les architects pensionnaires de l'Academie de France a Rome, Paris 1890, Reconstruction of the section from the Baths of Diocletian. Caldarium to the right & Frigidarium to the left.
To keep the complex beautiful and efficient there were a series of service corridors and mechanical spaces that maintained the main systems; the Baths of Diocletian from a slave’s perspective were a fairly dark and dank place. Hidden underground passages, used as roads to bring in the fuel for the fires that kept the *caldarium* at a comfortable temperature, weave under the grounds, while small spiral stairs allowed access to the roof where repairs could be made.\(^5\) This world of the slave, to this day, has yet to be fully excavated or even explored, but from excavations completed at the Baths of Caracalla, also in Rome, the mechanical systems that kept the complex running can be imagined here as well. The slaves were forced to build and maintain the Baths of Diocletian, but their identity was hidden.

It must be noted as well that our understanding of the Baths of Diocletian today is much more thorough and well documented due to centuries of research and investigation. The baths were not found by Michelangelo in their pristine conditions and these contemporary findings were not available in 1561. The baths are detailed here for the sake of understanding the complex as a whole in our contemporary setting, but they must be seen from a Renaissance perspective as well. There was some mention by Leon Battista Alberti in his 1450, *De re Aedificatoria (On the Art of Buildings)*, of the layout of the Baths of Diocletian, as well as other bath complexes, but they were not very detailed in their descriptions. Still, the main aspect that can be taken away is that there was a knowledge of the hierarchical bathing sequence, beginning in the main *caldarium* and ending in the *frigidarium*. This concept is very important later on as we discuss Michelangelo’s design.

In 476 AD the Roman Empire ended, but many systems in the city of Rome still continued to function. It was not until the Goths cut the aqueducts supplying the city with water in 537-8 AD that the Baths of Diocletian actually went out of use. During the Middle Ages the bath complex was no longer used and was abandoned, then fell into disrepair and finally was exploited for its rich materials. Most marble and columns, were taken as spolia. The marble was pulverized to make lime mortar and the grounds of the baths were excavated to obtain pozzolana or pozzolanic ash, which was the main component used in concrete construction. No one tried, or had the funds to maintain the immense *thermae* structure and it was left to decay.

The first attempt to reuse the complex was in 494 AD, before the baths were fully out of use by the church of S. Ciriaco alle Thermae di Diocleziano. It was dedicated to Saint Cyriacus

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7 Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Mariri, Antico e Moderno, “Lo splendore delle Thermae di Diocleziano non fu di lunga durata. Nel quinto secolo, a causa della distruzione degli acquedotti da parte dei Goti, caddero in disuso, e per secoli vennero depredate di ogni materiale di valore, fino a diventare cava di pozzolana per i costruttori del Medioevo.” 2007 http://www.santamariaedegliangiroma.it
who spent his life ministering to the slaves who worked to build the structure and was subsequently tortured and beheaded for his actions by Emperor Maximian or Galerius. However, this did not change the space architecturally as it was built in the void between the bathing block and the perimeter wall. (Img. 1.7) 

Other than this, important families tried to claim ownership of the site on the basis of power. The rival families of the Colonna and Orsini fought over and usurped portions of the structure, both funding construction projects that reused it, but nothing came to fruition. Eventually the site became a hunting and riding ground for the nobles, detached from any new construction or city planning developments that were occurring throughout the rest of Rome. (Img. 1.8) Still, it must have been an amazing experience to ride a horse through the central groin vaulted spaces of the ruined frigidarium, as nature quickly took over the once ornately decorated Baths of Diocletian.

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Monsignor Jean DuBellay who was first the ambassador to the Holy See and then a Cardinal in Rome, had an interest in the exploration of ancient culture. In 1534 he purchased a section of the Baths of Diocletian, the library on the south-west side of the complex. (Ref. Img. 3.8 & 3.16) There he built a villa named, villa *suburbana*, or suburban retreat, and he created a garden in the space of the theater seating with a long wall separating it from the rest of the complex. This element was the first on the site to physically reuse a portion of the ruined structure. At this time the complex was on the outskirts of the city and it was used as a pleasure retreat and not for any religious purposes.\(^{10}\)

In 1541 Antonio Lo Duca became a spokesperson for the ruined site. A priest who was devoted to the cult of the angels, Lo Duca, through his contacts with high ranking Church officials and aristocratic patrons, was eager to promote his cult, especially in the city of Rome. While well connected and politically active, Lo Duca was also a very passionate man who was

prone to taking an obsessive approach when it came to his beliefs. Prior to the cult, he started as a Sicilian friar at the cathedral of Palermo in Italy. In 1516, according to Gaspare Palermo, in the small church of Sant'Angelo, Lo Duca was working as suddenly a piece of plaster fell from the wall. Behind it was a fresco depicting the seven angels with their respective iconography and names: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Barachiele, Geudiele, and Sealtiele. Lo Duca simultaneously had a vision of the archangels urging him to spread the devotion of the cult and build a church in dedication to them. Well aware of the connection the Baths of Diocletian had with forced Christian labor of ancient Rome, the priest visited the site in 1541. He experienced there an ecstatic vision of the poor slaves forced into the construction of the complex and was convinced that the ruins of the Baths had been divinely ordained to become a church dedicated to the cult of the angels. The project proposed by Lo Duca did make sense for his cult and would produce a powerful statement that relied solely on architectural and spiritual connections to the ruins.

There was just one problem, as Pope Paul III put it, The Baths of Diocletian were, “troppo gran macchina!” This would mean a huge construction project that would cost too much to be economically feasible. Lo Duca could have abandoned the idea at this point and searched for a new way to get his church, but he was persistent. He pleaded for nine years to get approval for the project and in 1550 it seemed he was finally given the opportunity. Pope Julius III allowed for a temporary chapel within the ruins. Our Lady, Queen of the Angels, was planned on the longitudinal axis of the frigidarium, but only lasted for one year as the nobles wanted to maintain the grounds for riding, leaving Lo Duca to beg again for another ten

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12 Matteo Catalini Historia dell’erettione della chiesa di Santa Maria degli Angioli in Roma, Roma 1597. From David Karmon, Michelangelo’s “Minimalism” in the design of Santa Maria degli Angeli. pg 3. 2008.

13 David Karmon, Michelangelo’s “Minimalism” in the design of Santa Maria degli Angeli. pg 3. 2008.
years.  

With the elections of 1560 came a new Pope, Pius IV. That same year, Pius IV’s nephew, Carlo Borromeo, who was a papal legislator, bought DuBellay’s villa and gave it to his newly elected Uncle. When Lo Duca approached Pope Pius IV about the church project he was already aware of the site and agreed to fund the proposal. On July 27, 1561, Pius IV issued a statement which named the foundation of the new church at the site of the Baths of Diocletian. He declared that “preservation [conservare] of the ancient bath complex was a primary papal concern: after having lain for many centuries derelict and neglected.” This project would make a significant contribution to the church architecture in Rome.

Pope Pius IV approached Michelangelo, not only because he was already living in Rome, but also, possibly, because the artist was a famous figure among architects, being the chief architect for St. Peter’s Cathedral, and he would draw in more attention to the project. Michelangelo, although very devoted to the catholic faith throughout his whole life, was especially so towards the end. He was aware of the temporalities of life and wanted to express his feelings of love and respect for God, as well as the fear of eternal damnation, in his works. His works became intensely personal, so much so, that he destroyed a large portion of them in an attempt to forget. The final years of his life were plagued with suffering and sorrow as he prayed for forgiveness for his sins. In two of his last sculptures, both partially shattered and incomplete, Michelangelo’s final Pietas express a deeply moving acceptance of human fragility and mortality. (Img. 1.9) The commission for Santa Maria degli Angeli came at a delicate time in his life, but Michelangelo


16 David Karmon, Michelangelo’s “Minimalism” in the design of Santa Maria degli Angeli. pg 3. 2008.

17 Frederick Hartt, Michelangelo: Michelangelo Buonarroti 1475-1564, New York 1984
succeeded and brought to life the vision of Antonio Lo Duca within the ruins of the Baths of Diocletian.

(Img. 1.9) Rondanini Pietà by Michelangelo. Named for the Roman palace where it long stood, the Rondanini Pietà is the sculpture on which Michelangelo was working only six days prior to his death on February 18, 1564. Michelangelo did not have a chance to finish the Rondanini Pietà (6 feet 3-5/8 inches tall) which now resides in the Castello Sforzesco in Milan.
Chapter 2: The Context

Evolution of Conservari in Rome

476-1561
The reuse of structures after the fall of Rome in 476AD began very quickly. These reoccupations were, more often than not, motivated by a scarcity of resources and by an immediate need for protection and shelter in the chaotic state of the empire. In many instances the impressive buildings of Rome became hosts for parasites that had no real consideration or respect for the existing architecture; acting as accretions that signified a gradual occupation over time.\(^\text{18}\) Still, it must be noted that preservation or conservari, was not a word that would be used in the context of buildings during the Middle Ages. Most decisions were based on need rather than architecturally motivated, so it is assumed today that no one really gave a second thought to these reuses and how the accretions would affect their overall architectural history.

One example in which this process of reuse is clear can be found in the Roman city of Arles in France. The inhabitants’ only chance for survival and protection from invading armies after the fall of the empire, was to barricade themselves within the town's abandoned amphitheater. The immense structure, once a celebrated attraction, had completely fallen out of use, but in this time of chaos and turmoil found a new life (Img.12). The arcades were filled in, the open arena and seating were built upon and the result was an amphitheater adaptively reused as a fortification; similarly seen in the case for the Theater of Marcellus in Rome. Over time, the structure became a village with houses, chapels, public spaces and alleys, separately constructed, with their only connection being the foundations of a forgotten roman ruin. Late into the middle ages, however, this form of reoccupation largely stopped. Christian and pagan monuments still succumbed to plunder, however, but not as extensively as a conversion project, and most medieval interests in ancient methods and monuments remained primarily with the clergy, not with architects and craftsmen.\(^\text{19}\)


"A ruin—yet what ruin! from its mass
Walls, palaces, half cities, have been rear’d;
Hath it indeed been plunder’d, or but clear’d?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric’s form is near’d:
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all years, man, have reft away. “

-Lord Byron, fourth canto, Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, description of the shattered skeleton of the Colosseum in Rome 19th century. 20

The amount of destruction seen in the drawings of Rome in the Renaissance, was not caused only by natural decay, earthquakes, and invasions, but also largely by the citizens of Rome itself. The use of spoliation as a means of new construction and reuse, lasted from the fall of the empire and well past the time of the Renaissance. When scholars use to the term spolia, in reference to the buildings of antiquity, they define it as the re-allocation of materials from one building to another, wherein the pieces will be reused in a construction separate from their initial intended purpose; the translation of already worked materials into a new context.21 The process of dismantling material and using it for new buildings was a very common practice in the middle ages and was an action that paralleled the economic situation at the time. It was a quick and easy way to create fortification and shelter and was a natural response by the people still living in the city to protect themselves from invading armies. The grand architectural endeavors undertaken by ancient Rome were funded in part by the military conquests that sustained and expanded the empire. However, after 476AD, there was no longer money to fund any projects, so the urban fabric suffered. With a failed economy, architectural design was no longer a necessity and it

21 Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, Anachronic Renaissance, Spolia, Zone Books 2010, read as research in Columbia University PHD seminar course, Aesthetics of Decay, Professor Jorge Otero-Pailos Spring 2015
became impossible to import precious materials into the city. Still, while the ability was gone, later in the Middle Ages as the threat of invasion decreased, the desire to ornately decorate structures in the ways of ancient Rome came back strongly and so spoliation became a means to recreate this lost elegance. As stated in chapter 1, structures such as the Baths of Diocletian, were quarried for their rich architectural materials. Columns, cornices, mosaics, etc. were all taken and used in palaces, government buildings and churches.²²

As Rome adopted Christianity, new church construction became a priority. The act of reoccupying ancient Roman ruins for religious purposes was a common trend in Rome in the early middle ages and is still evident to this day. The Pantheon, used as Santa Maria Rotunda, The Temple of Antoninus and Faustina as San Lorenzo in Miranda, The Temple of Minerva as Santa Maria sopra Minerva, the Temple of Romulus as Santi Cosma e Damiano and many others, stand as examples of this early form of architectural adaptation which all utilize spoliation to create more impressive spaces.²³ By the 15th and 16th centuries the spolia process became an organized business endeavor as it was readily utilized in the rebuilding of the papal capital.²⁴

In the 15th century, Humanism gave importance to the individual, emphasizing the human form and heritage. With works such as Flavio Biondo's 1444, _Roma Instaurata (Rome Restored)_ , ruins began to be seen as an archaeological resource, thus creating an intriguing contrast between ancient and modern Rome. Consequently, the act of giving these historical artifacts names and a history took away their anonymity. This paved the way for architects to try and adapt ancient classical forms for modern buildings; seen in books such as Leon Battista Alberti's 1450 _De re Aedificatoria (On the Art of Buildings)_ . Naturally, this sparked curiosity in the

²² Philip Jacks, Restauratio and Reuse: The Afterlife of Roman Ruins, 2008
aesthetic quality of the decaying structures and the yearning to see them as they were originally.\textsuperscript{25} The beginning quote of Andrea Palladio’s 1554 L’antichita states, “Being aware of the great desire in everyone to acquire a thorough understanding of the antiquities in, and other worthy features of, so celebrated a city, I came up with this idea of compiling the present book as succinctly as I could, from many completely reliable authors, both ancient and modern, who had written at length on the subject.”\textsuperscript{26} Niccolò Niccoli, Filippo Brunelleschi, Francesco di Giorgio, Andrea Palladio and Etienne Duperac, to name a few, were, throughout the Renaissance, trying to piece together the detritus of the past into a “Rinascita di Roma,” as if time were an irrelevant factor in the importance or reality of the historic fabric. They studied and rebuilt, in drawings, the structures and ornamentation of antiquity; creating depictions of an imaginary existing building. While there were, of course, many other factors that lead to these reconstructions, including recovery from a loss of knowledge about craftsmanship, stone carving, etc., it is important to understand how this was a very common architectural phenomenon of the Renaissance era, as much as was the use of spoliation.\textsuperscript{1527}

In the Renaissance the Popes often used ruins and spolia to assert their power, especially in Rome. Martin V who became Pope in 1417 and moved the papal capital back to Rome in 1420, undertook to transform and restore the city. These actions question the famous paradigm of the Renaissance as a period of revival that brought a new understanding of antiquity after centuries of neglect and abandonment.\textsuperscript{28} In reality, this movement brought about a reuse in which history was more erased than restored, and in which the ruins were systematically plundered for

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{26} Andrea Palladio, L’antichita di Roma, 1554
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Anne-Marie Sankovitch, Anachronism and Simulation in Renaissance Architectural Theory, Anthropology and Aesthetics, 2006 pg. 189-190. The President and Fellows of Harvard College acting through Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.
  \item \textsuperscript{28} David Karmon, The Ruin of the Eternal City: Antiquity and Preservation in the Renaissance Rome, Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011. pg. 4
\end{itemize}
materials with which to build and decorate churches and palaces of papal Rome, or, were themselves, covered in contemporary recreations of historic fabric. It was not meant to be a blatant overwriting of history, but this is what inevitably occurred. The result was a jumbled mess of multiple recreations competing with each other, rather than creating a seamless unification in architectural design. Architects in the Renaissance easily gave into this anachronistic version of reuse in which the contemporary additions and reconstructions were seen more as out of place accretions of material rather than of being from the antiquity themselves.  

Flavio Biondo when he was deciding on whether or not to leave Rome stated, “We see so much devastation of antiquity every day that this alone can sometimes even make us weary of living at Rome”.

For all the devastation that occurred, there was equally a growing understanding of antiquity in the Renaissance. As buildings were stripped of their historic materials, artists, architects and even Popes began to take notice of what could ultimately be lost and tried to limit the amounts of plundering. In 1431 Eugenius IV issued a Papal bull which decreed that ancient remains of Rome should not be destroyed, “to demolish the monuments of Rome is nothing other than to diminish the excellence of this same city, and that of the entire world... Not even the smallest stone of the Coliseum should be allowed to be destroyed.” Ironically, Eugenius himself approved the removal of some marbles from the Coliseum to be used in the stairs at the Lateran Basilica, not even ten years later. While this was in contradiction with his own words, spoliation was deeply embedded in construction practices and old habit do die hard. In the Letter to Leo X written by Andrea Palladio and humanist Baldassare Castiglione, they comment on this long standing practice, “this new Rome which we see today, however great, however beautiful, however adorned

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with palaces, churches, and other buildings, all has been built with the lime made from ancient marble.”

Nonetheless, elsewhere in Rome there was a growing understanding of how the structures of antiquity were being treated. Bernardo Bembo, a Venetian dignitary who attended the coronation of Julius II in 1504, commented on the stark difference between what was occurring at Santa Maria Rotunda (The Pantheon) where most of the historic fabric was still remaining and Santa Maria sopra Minerva where all the historic fabric was either removed or covered over; two churches programmed within ancient Roman Temples. “On 30 April, in the morning, we visited the church of Santa Maria Rotunda (as it is now called, but the structure was built by Marcus Agrippa, and it was originally called the Pantheon). This temple has a square portico as its vestibule with very high columns made of costly stone; it is the only surviving example, I would argue, of the temples of antiquity. The temple of Minerva [the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva], which we saw the same day, only retains its original name, for it has been restored [instauratum], and it has been significantly altered.” The continual restoration that was occurring at Santa Maria sopra Minerva, while ensuring continual functional use, did not guarantee the maintaining of the original form of the historic Temple. At this site, as we can see today, all physical traces of the ancient temple have been completely covered by the modern church. Santa Maria Rotunda (The Pantheon), in contrast, while it has gone through its own phases of erasure, has had many efforts to repair and maintain the original shape and materials of the historic fabric, leaving it then, as it is now, the most intact surviving ancient Roman building, “…the only surviving example.... of the temples of antiquity.” From this we can see that people were beginning to see...

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the difference between what was called *instauratum*, or restoration which meant the use of spoliation and contemporary *rinascita* in alterations, and *conservari*, or the preservation of the remaining material fabric of antiquity.

*Img. 2.3* Santa Maria Rotunda, The Pantheon, image taken by author

*Img. 2.2* Santa Maria sopra Minerva, with no trace of Temple of Minerva, image taken by author
While these examples give us a small glimpse of the projects of the Renaissance they can by no means fully encompass the thoughts of all Renaissance architects. There are many factors that have played a role in the architectural landscape of Rome, but it is important to have a context by which to compare the work completed elsewhere in the city in the 16th-century. By 1561, Rome had changed at the hands of Popes and architects all working in the context of the plunder and/or conservari of ancient Rome. 19th century archaeologist and historian Rondolfo Lanciani in his work *Storia degli Scavi di Roma*, surveyed the history of excavation in Rome from the 11th century through the Renaissance, and depicts 16th century Rome, in particular, as a terrible scene of destruction, “*they traversed the valley of the Roman Forum like a devastating meteor... destroying the monuments down to the level of the ground*.” From Lanciani’s standpoint, he could not fully take into account how this plundering, while creating irreversible change, was also creating an interesting dynamic in architectural history. These practices were so common and embedded into construction that they were not seen for their harmful effects, but rather, as a means to incorporate ancient Rome into the modern city. This notion would be taken one step further with the ideals of the Counter Reformation. Popes during this period reused the pagan structures for Christian programs to show their authority and their power over them. Still, while a political statement, these actions changed the meaning of the ancient structures from prisons of Christian slaves to Christian relics which, in their ruined state, expressed the trials of the Christian faith in Rome and how they should be tools to remember this history.

In late 15th-century Rome, as part of papal tours, there were reenactments of important religious events called *sacre rappresentazioni*, or passion plays, which reinforced the increasing piety in the city. These theatrical traveling shows would use and revive ancient landmarks offering

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35 In a talk given by Diana Depardo-Minsky in 1998, “Michelangelo’s Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri in a Counter Reformation Context” given at the Society of Architectural Historians Conference, April 6, She says Michelangelo had a multiplex meaning: imperial and an evocation of early Christianity.
the audience an opportunity to experience a version of the past in the present. They saw the structures as Christian relics that helped emphasize the religious experience of the viewer and used the enslaved Christian history to do so. The Coliseum, for example, was infamous for being the location where there was a significant amount of slaughter of Christian innocents. The ruined amphitheater became a relic rather than a decaying structure. “Staging the climactic resurrection scene against the splendid panorama of the deteriorating area reinforced the idea of the enduring moral victory of Christianity over the errors of the pagan past.” This concept became increasingly popular throughout the city in the 16th-century and will be very important when we analyze Michelangelo’s design for Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri.

Michelangelo, being a Renaissance man, was aware of and knowledgeable about antiquity and of the early attempts of reuses, but had a unique interest in them. He knew the political and social climate and was influenced by it, but simultaneously knew how to ignore it. He said “he who wishes to work well must withdraw himself from all cares and vexations, since art demands contemplation, solitude, and ease of life, and will not suffer the mind to wander.” As Vasari noted, Michelangelo’s unprecedented designs, “broke the bonds and chains that had previously confined [artists] to the creation of traditional forms.” He had an approach to working with the historic fabric that was different from the ways of his contemporaries. In projects such as the 1526 Basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence with his refusal use spolia in the construction, and even in New St. Peter’s Basilica with his strong criticisms against the demolition of existing columns by Bramante, Michelangelo expressed an attitude that favored the ideas of conservare in architectural design.

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37 Giorgio Vasari, Life of Michelangelo / Giorgio Vasari ; translated by Gaston du C. de Vere ; edited and with an introduction by Frank Sadowski., 1511-1574

38 David Karmon, Michelangelo’s “Minimalism” in the design of Santa Maria degli Angeli. Michelangelo’s engagement with preservation issues pgs 6-8 2008.
Further, as discussed by Francesco Benelli in “Vario tanto della commune usanza degli altri”: the function of the encased column and what Michelangelo made of it in the Palazzo dei Conservatori at the Campidoglio in Rome, there were even indications in some of the artist’s sculptures of an appreciation for the ecological qualities of historic fabric, especially found in ruins.\textsuperscript{39} What is suggested in Michelangelo’s work is that he had a vested interest in the process of revealing the historic elements in a way that made the new seem like it was always there, but hidden within the fabric. \textsuperscript{40} He was, throughout his career, revered as a master sculptor, having created dozens of pieces such as The David 1501-1504 that are still treasured to this day. Unlike most sculptors, who prepared a plaster cast model, and then marked up their marble block to know where to chip, Michelangelo mostly worked free hand, starting from the front and working towards the back, letting the forms emerge from the natural stone. \textsuperscript{41} In the mid 1500’s he created a series of sculptures where his figures emerged from the marble “as though surfacing from a pool of water,” as described by Vasari in his work Lives of the Artists. The Awakening Slave circa 1520-23 is a powerful piece that gives the impression that the slave is struggling to free himself from the block of marble, adding the element of action to the static sculpture. (Img. 2.3)\textsuperscript{42} It demonstrates Michelangelo’s ability to show selective moments, but hints at something much more; leaving it to the imagination. It also suggests that Michelangelo may have had an appreciation for and acceptance of the “unfinished” in his works. The manner in which his hand meets with the natural material is a beautiful expression of a smooth carved form speaking effortlessly with a rough untamed one.

\textsuperscript{39} “Michelangelo seems… to have wanted to represent the moment of the completed column’s unveiling from the material that once surrounded it, through a narrative progression arising from the thought of a sculptor but expressed through architectural elements created by the techniques typical of architectural construction sites.” Francesco Benelli 2009 “Vario tanto della commune usanza degli altri”: the function of the encased column and what Michelangelo made of it in the Palazzo dei Conservatori at the Campidoglio in Rome


When Michelangelo approached the new site for Santa Maria degli Angeli, he was faced with a ruin; the material remains of brick, concrete, marble, and granite that once made up the structure of the Baths of Diocletian. He saw the layers of rubble that covered the grounds, the holes in the walls where precious materials were removed, the mounds where pozzolona was excavated and the vegetation that so effortlessly filled in the missing architectural elements. The ruins stood as a realization of how the city had, not so much abandoned the baths, but neglected them. The structure was not perfectly preserved; impervious to time and people and the natural process. It was in every way a representation of its time, with prominent projections of different periods of its history displayed in its walls. To understand the design of Michelangelo’s church within the ruins of the Baths of Diocletian, it is imperative that we understand the remaining fabric as it stood in 1561; 1255 years after its initial construction. To accomplish this, the existing and available images of the ruins before and during Michelangelo’s intervention must be analyzed in order to formulate as precise as possible an understanding of the remains. Once we visualize what was there, we can then analyze Michelangelo’s reuse.

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43 In a conversation with Diana Depardo-Minsky, she spoke about her tour of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri with concrete expert Lynn Lancaster and it has been determined that the structural core is definitely still ancient remains from the Baths of Diocletian. April 21, 2015.
Chapter 3: The Ruin

An Analysis of Contemporary Illustrations

1550-1563
The ruin analysis will be completed as follows.

1. The first part is a verbal description of each of the depictions of the baths; analyzing only the images that include the portions of the ruins necessary to understand what was on the site in 1561.

2. All the images with similar views will be put together to show how they changed over time and how they differ between artists.

3. From the floor plans generated by each of the images, there will be a comparison made between the original Baths of Diocletian versus what is left as ruin. At the end, this will be combined to create an overall map that will, as accurately as possible, document the remaining structural components as seen in 1561.
The earliest depictions of the ruins of the Baths of Diocletian are sketched by the Dutch portrait and religious painter Maerten van Heemskerck in 1520. (Img. 3.1 & 3.2) The engravings show the derelict conditions of the site in the 16th century. Maerten, who stands at the north-west corner of the site within the ancient outer wall, facing the south-west facade and looking south, sees a large portion of the ruined thermae. Starting with the rooms directly in front of him, the laconicae is the first and most intact space, but its pediment is deteriorated heavily. The image does not show much about the materiality, but gives us a basic outline of what was there. Next, we see the warm baths room which is missing a large portion of its south-west facade and roof, but the coffered archway seems to be in stable condition. The small caldarium and the sudatorium to the right are both entirely missing their south-west facades and roofs, leaving them exposed to the elements, as large dirt mounds begin to pile over the floors. The main caldarium is missing a large section of the roof and almost its entire north-west facing walls, but the main south-west facade still holds its shape, outlining it as a recognizable silhouette of the ancient structure. Beyond that, as Maerten looks towards the thermae’s southern sudatorium and small caldarium, the image becomes rather amorphous. It looks as though the main structural elements remain on the south-west facade, but the roof has completely deteriorated away; in this case it is difficult to make an accurate assumption of what remained. In the background, behind the main caldarium, we can see two peaks of the roof over the frigidarium space which indicates that much more is hidden behind this first depiction of the ancient thermae.
Missing Ceiling & Roof

Missing Walls

Uneven ground throughout

Elements Demolished in Michelangelo’s deign

Heavy Vegetation

Missing Pediments

Deteriorated Walls

(Img. 3.2) Marten van Heemskerck, The Baths of Diocletian, c. 1520, From Von Herbert Siebenhuner’s, S. Maria Degli Angeli In Rom in Munchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst Bd. 1 (1950) - Bd. 63 (2012) p.181
The next image featuring the Baths of Diocletian are found in the works of Franz Anonymus in 1550. (Img. 3.3) In this first image, Franz is standing in the northern outdoor gymnasium looking south towards the frigidarium. The palestra, which was once covered with large white, green, red, and black mosaic patterns, surrounded by a peristyle of finely carved Egyptian granite columns, is shown here as a neglected dirt field, with boulders of carved stone littering the space in front of the immense frigidarium. This image shows how complex and impressive the structure was and how it had withstood the centuries of decay largely intact. While the roof seems to have deteriorated and become over grown with vegetation, the vaults over the interior space remain; as seen through the middle bay entrance where the facade has fallen. At the top left of the image, Franz draws in the background the last remaining pieces of the east facade overlooking the natatio. While no images exists of the entire east facade in its ruinous form before 1561, glimpses such as these help us to realize that not all the columns were taken as spolia from the ornately decorated facade. Two columns are seen flanking the middle bay of the frigidarium, while the rest of the expensive materials are gone.

(Img. 3.4) In this image, Franz is standing at an elevated position on the opposite southern outdoor gymnasium. Similar to the previous image, the main difference is that the entire vault over the frigidarium can be seen as remaining ancient fabric. We can begin to appreciate here how much of the space actually survived and how significant the remaining fabric is. The roof is gone, there are no traces of expensive materials on the facade and the mounds of dirt and fallen debris begin to pile into the massive arched openings.
Remaining Section of East Elevation
Remaining Pediments
Pile of rubble

Original Vaults
Remnants of coffered archway
Remaining Columns

(Img. 3.3) Franz Anonymus, The Baths of Diocletian, c. 1550, From Von Herbert Siebenhuner’s, S. Maria Degli Angeli In Rom in Munchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst Bd. 1 (1950) - Bd. 63 (2012), Cambridge, Trinity College
Remaining Section of East Elevation

Original Vaults

Deteriorated Walls

Pile of rubble

Heavy Vegetation

Evidence of Spoliation

(Img. 3.4) Franz Anonymus, The Baths of Diocletian, c. 1550, From Von Herbert Siebenhuner’s, S. Maria Degli Angeli In Rom in Munchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst Bd. 1 (1950) - Bd. 63 (2012), Cambridge, Trinity College
In 1550 another artist, architect and sculptor depicts the ruins of the ancient *thermae*, Giovanni Antonio Dosio. (Img. 3.5) In this image, Dosio is standing outside of the western section of the ancient perimeter wall of the complex looking east towards the main *caldarium*. To the left we can see the, largely intact, domed hall which is today the Church of Saint Bernardo. To its right are the remains of the presumed library and the outdoor theater space. Above the domed hall, to the left, we can see one of the half domed *exedrae* of the northern perimeter wall with a large portion of the vault collapsed. Beyond this to the right we see the *laconicae* in rather good condition, but here the facade of the saunas seem to be in much better condition than in (Img. 3.1), but with a similar collapsed roof. To the right of this is the small *caldarium* with a largely decayed facade and collapsed roof. The main *caldarium*, as compared with (Img. 3.2), seems to have many more elements that were not depicted by Heemsckerck, including large remaining sections of the main facade and decorative columns in the middle bay. Still, here it too is largely in ruin, with the middle top section gone and the roof collapsed. In the background of the main *caldarium* we can see the portion of the half domed space that acts today as the main entrance to Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri.

(Img. 3.6) In a similar position, Dosio creates a much more detailed depiction of the south-west facade of the complex, emphasizing not only the outlining structure, but also material decay. Starting to the left we cannot see the *laconicae*, but we do see the warm baths room with almost its entire facade still intact and even the existence of some decorative columns at the bottom right hand corner of the wall. Looking beyond the pediment, however, we can still see the collapsed roof within. To the right of this, again, the facade and roof of the small *caldarium* are gone, but the partition wall to the warm baths room is completely intact. The main *caldarium*, as previously depicted, is missing the central facade and roof, but some columns remain. Here, as compared to (Img. 3.5) the walls of the two side bays are shown as more deteriorated with holes.
from where precious stones were removed. To the right we can see a small portion of the first two warm baths room which have lost their facades and roofs.

(Img. 3.7) In a third depiction looking at the same facade, Dosio’s fascination with the main caldarium is apparent. While no element has changed between (Img. 3.5) and (Img. 3.6), he may have felt that an even more detailed drawing of the main facade of the caldarium was necessary to explain its state of decay. The closer we get to the space the more intricate it becomes, divulging more and more of its history and materiality, which ultimately gives the ruin its picturesque and deeply emotional connotation. Enough fabric remains here that the viewer is able to fill in the missing pieces and experience the structure as it was in ancient Rome.

(Img. 3.8) This emotional quality can also be seen in the next image created by Dosio. Here he stands within the grounds, the small caldarium to his right, but out of the view, as he looks directly towards the exedra of the western perimeter wall. To the left, we see the outlines of the domed hall and the southern perimeter wall protruding from it. Next to this we can see Cardinal DuBellay’s c.1550 villa, which filled in the library, and the garden wall erected in the same time. In the right of the image we see the main caldarium, but are unable to make any additional observations because of the lack of detail. The main message to derive from this image comes from its chiaroscuro definitions. While materials are not the main focus in this depiction, the artists conveys the deep shadows and recesses that create an entirely new space from the ancient ruins. It is a highly evocative image as it speaks to the nature of the ruin; this solid versus void phenomenon created by the deterioration of fabric. Here the deterioration is further developed as it is hidden in shadow while other sections are displayed in light. This is a concept that will be very important to Michelangelo’s design.
(Img. 3.5) Giovanni Antonio Dosio, facade of main caldarium of the Baths of Diocletian c. 1550. From Luciana Gaudenzi and Mariasanta’s In Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri: Incontro di Storie 1991 p. 57
(Img. 3.6) Giovanni Antonio Dosio, facade of main Caldarium of the Baths of Diocletian c. 1550. From Luciana Gaudenzi and Mariasanta’s In Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri: Incontro di Storie 1991 p. 51
(Img. 3.7) Giovanni Antonio Dosio, facade of main Caldarium of the Baths of Diocletian c. 1550. From Luciana Gaudenzi and Mariasanta’s In Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri: Incontro di Storie 1991
(Img. 3.8) Giovanni Antonio Dosio, facade of main Caldarium of the Baths of Diocletian c. 1550. From Luciana Gaudenzi and Mariasanta’s In Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri: Incontro di Storie 1991 pg. 48
In 1561, Flemish painter and etcher as well as publisher and distributor of prints, Hieronymus Cock, created a set of drawings of the site, two of which are extremely critical in understanding what remained at the time. (Img. 3.9) In this image Hieronymus is standing at an elevated position in the southern outdoor gymnasium looking north towards the *frigidarium*. Just as in the depiction of this similar view from Franz Anonymus (Img. 3.4), we can see the impressive brick arches and massive vaults. The towering structural element of the east facade stands in the background, while piles of rubble litter the scene in the foreground. Vegetation dominates the roof and deteriorated tops of walls, as if the whole structure were a mountain with a section cut through it side uncovering its interior caves. This image does show one element that was not shown in the others, nor in any floor plans, and this is an entry way on the lower right hand side before the wall of the *apodyterium* begins. It opens into the southern flanking arm of the *frigidarium* which overlooks the *natatio*. It is at a much more human scale than the other openings, but it is uncertain whether or not it was an addition by the artist to adjust the scale of the engraving, much as the figures in the foreground are.

(Img. 3.10) In this image, Hieronymus is standing in the middle bay of the lower barrel vaulted spaces next to the main *frigidarium* looking south. Starting to the left of the image another rare portion of the decorative east facade can be seen. While most of the precious stones are gone, some pediments remain over the now empty niches. This view in particular, will be very useful when we discuss Michelangelo's work, for he paid attention to very similar views. To the left of the barrel vaulted space at the bottom, a small partition wall can be seen where the structure of the window casing once stood. In the right side of the image the expansive vaults dominate the space lightly landing on massive original Egyptian granite columns and decorative cornices. While in other images we can see these vaults, it is in this depiction that the viewer can truly grasp the gravity of the situation. The condition of the portions of the structure around the *frigidarium*, such as the *ephebeum* and the *apodyterium*, are in a much further state of decay,
relying mostly on memory to fill in the missing fabric; but from within the frigidarium, with so much remaining fabric, it is easy to visualize the space of the ancient Roman construction. Gazing at the crisp lines on the ceiling towering over the lower decrepit sections of the wall makes the space both comforting and imposing, imposing for its sheer size and comforting because it realizes the fundamental reason for architecture, which is shelter. With all the secondary interior partitions and columns gone, the spaces create a woven lattice work of solid versus void, broken at points by deteriorated sections of wall and peaks of vegetation.
(Img. 3.10) Hieronymus Cock, Flemish (Antwerp 1510 - 1570 Antwerp) & Joannes van Doetecum, Dutch (Deventer active 1554 - c. 1600 Haarlem), Third View of the Baths of Diocletian, Views of Roman Ruins, c 1561 http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/182156?position=11
This collection of images is by no means the final and absolute depiction of the ruins of The Baths of Diocletian, but what it does offer us is a comprehensive view of what may have remained when Michelangelo approached the site in 1561. Analyzing these images is the closest we can come to the actual truth, even though the images themselves are highly reflective of the time period and of the artists’ interests, showing what they wanted to show rather than, maybe, all that remained. For example, in (Img. 3.4) and (Img. 3.10) the artists show the same facade looking from the southern outdoor gymnasium, north towards the frigidarium. They both show the same basic components: two smaller arched entry ways flanking one large arched opening over which there is a ceiling and in the background at the top right is a thin and tall brick wall with decorative cornice work and columns jutting out over the ruin. From this we can more confidently state that these parts of the baths were still standing when Michelangelo approached the site.

The next stage, is to study artists’ drawings completed while the project was going on. This will show the most recent images of the remaining fabric, but they cannot be the only images examined because they too are interpretations and, therefore, should be compared with the previous images to create a better understanding of the site. They also may reflect some 16th-century design choices and, therefore, must be analyzed both as a ruin and as Michelangelo’s design. The following images were completed between 1563 and 1564 and will be examined here to understand the material remains of the ruins.

In 1563, Bernardo Gamucci published a set of drawings in his book Libri Quattro dell’antichita della Citta di Roma that were based on images created by Antonio Dosio of Santa Maria degli Angeli during the construction phase. They were engravings, so the images as depicted in the text are backwards, but for this analysis they are corrected. (Img. 3.11) In this image Dosio stands at an elevated position outside of the south-western exterior perimeter wall looking north-east towards the complex. Here we can see that a larger portion of the perimeter
wall is intact as it extends all the way to the farthest edge of the site. In the space that was once used for theater seating, there exists the formal garden created by DuBellay which is surrounded by the decaying wall that has haphazard vegetation growing on top of it. The garden is ended by a very long wall that spans the length of the facade with an arched opening at its center, directly aligning with the entryway of the main *caldarium*; this is the same wall as depicted in *(Img. 3.8)* but DuBellya’s villa is out of frame.

Looking from the right, past the *laconica*, we can see a large amount of the structure that stands including the *ephebeum*, *apodyterium* and the *atrium*. The extent of their decay is not clear in this image, but their southern exterior walls seem to be intact. For the warm baths room, the small *caldarium* and the *sudatorium*, the facades seem to be largely undamaged, and only the roof over the *sudatrimonium* appears to have collapsed. This, however, is different from any of the images we have already analyzed of these spaces including *(Img. 3.5)*, *(Img. 3.6)*, *(Img. 3.1)* and *(Img. 3.3)* where all the facades and roofs where either highly deteriorated or collapsed. The image becomes even more peculiar when we analyze the main *caldarium*. Just as in the other depictions of this space, the two side bays are in more stable condition than the middle bay, which has collapsed. However, there are major differences shown here which make the analysis very interesting. To begin, the two side bays have been resurfaced in a stucco, squared to look like ashlar masonry, as this was an element used at the original *thermae* complex. On the right-hand side, the wall has been repaired and a curved wall has been added with smaller columns at its base. There are also two extra columns inside the archway of the right-side bay, and the columns, along with the two columns shown in the middle bay as seen previously.

The vault over, at least the middle section of the *caldarium*, has also been rebuilt. To the left we can see a fragmented portion of the small *caldarium* and the warm baths room, but they too look as though they have been completely reconstructed. It is possible that by the time Gamucci reached the site, efforts were well underway to stabilize and recreate some of these
architectural elements lost over time due to decay and spoliation. In the background we see the vaults of the frigidarium, and, while it looks as though major repairs have been made, it is far enough away that we can make no real assumptions.

(Img. 3.12) In this image, Dosio is standing at an elevated position in the main frigidarium space looking north, with the future site of the chancel to the right and the tepidarium to the left. He depicts the interior of the frigidarium through the architectural tool of a perspective section. Starting to the right we see, what is turning out to be, a rare image of the east facade. It shows that most of the marble pediments remained, but all the other sculptures have been taken or destroyed. Just below this in the threshold of the barrel vaulted space there is a partition wall, similarly seen in (Img. 3.10), but here one of the column from the column screen remains. However, it is difficult to determine whether or not this was a 16th-century column rather than original fabric; especially because there is only one other image of the space before 1563 and it does not depict its existence. In the frigidarium space the original fabric is depicted, and, while highly polished and possibly repaired and treated, shows the incredible amount of the remaining ancient Roman construction. In the center we see the amazing concrete vaults that define the space, landing on four of the eight original Egyptian granite columns with intact decorative cornices.
In the foreground on the left-hand side of the central bay is a column on its side, but it is interesting why Dosio would show this element when the rest of the interior grounds have been cleared of debris? When Antonio Lo Duca first had his vision to create the church within the ruins, there were only seven of the eight massive original granite columns standing. He named them after the seven angels to whom the church is dedicated (Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, Jeudiel, Salatiel, Baraquiel and Uriel), so this fallen piece may represent the new column. While the origins of the eighth column are unknown, its resemblance to the other seven, after visiting the site today, is almost identical. All the way at the end of the space we can see into the outdoor gymnasium and get a glimpse of the interior wall of the *ephebeum*. At this time Michelangelo’s nave was not yet constructed, the only hint that it will be in its current location is shown in this image on the right hand side at the beginning of the barrel vaulted space. There is a small alter with a figure kneeling down before it.

Giovanni Antonio Dosio created another image at this time as well that was not published by Gamucci. *(Img. 3.13)* The section perspective looks in the opposite direction than *(Img. 3.12)*, standing in the central bay and looking north, with the *tepidarium* to the left and the central bay to the right. Because the building is bilaterally symmetrical, there is not much difference between the images, but here, Dosio conveys the amazing presence of the vaults over the main space. In this depiction it is also clear enough to see the vaults over the two outer rooms of the *frigidarium*, as we look past the central bays and towards the *ephebeum* in the back; we already knew these vaults were remaining thanks to the images drawn by Hieronymus Cock.
Views Looking Towards Western Facade
Views Looking Towards *frigidarium*

1550 1550 1561

Views from within *frigidarium*

1561

1563

1563-64

1563-64
(Img. 3.14) Reconstructed Plan Baths of Diocletian, plan drawn by author.

(Img. 3.15) Plan of the ruins of the Baths of Diocletian in black over the original plan of the site in grey, plan drawn by author.
(Img. 3.16) Reconstruction of the plan of the ruins of the Baths of Diocletian as of 1561, plan drawn by author
Chapter 4: The Design

Analysis of Michelangelo’s Church
The analysis of Michelangelo’s design will be completed as follows.

1. The first part is the floor plan that shows Michelangelo’s design within the Baths of Diocletian as determined through the analysis. The larger plan is shown to indicate how it relates to the site and the smaller details the portions reused by Michelangelo.

2. The second part will be a serial vision analysis which will consist of a series of images, along with a map, that represent the changes and contrasts in the character of the built environment that the visitor would experience when moving through the spaces created by Michelangelo.

3. Next, using these images, along with other images created by architects and artists, the design will be dissected in layers to unfold all the elements of Michelangelo’s church.
   
   A. The first layer talks about the inclusion of the caldarium in the design.
   
   B. The second talks about the ruins as a Christian relic and how this was utilized as a design element by Michelangelo.
   
   C. The third part talks about the attention given to the frigidarium ruin in the design and how it is the final space of the procession as intended by Michelangelo.
   
   D. The last part talks about the acceptance of the ruin and how Michelangelo’s design choices made the church a successful reuse project.
(Img. 4.1) Reconstructed plan of Michelangelo's Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri and rest of complex in 1564, plan drawn by author
Ruined Walls Without Roof
Ruined Walls With Roof
Spaces With Roof
Entrance
Addtions

Chancel Addition:
Natatio

Nave:
Frigidarium: White Washed Interior Walls

Baptistery:
Tepidarium

Main Entrance:
Caldarium

Main Axis

(Img. 4.2) Reconstructed plan of only Michelangelo’s Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri in 1564, plan drawn by author
Serial Vision Analysis:

Based on the Ruin analysis a more complete picture of the ruin can be had within which Michelangelo's design can be drawn. The following images are how the spaces would look after Michelangelo's church was constructed, 1564-1565, from a compilation of existing drawings and contemporary photographs taken by author.
A. Now that we have a clearer understanding of what remained on the site when Michelangelo first arrived in 1561, we can analyze his reuse more thoroughly. For many years the physical structure acted like a quarry for materials, while the symbolism of the site created tension between power and religion in the changing political world of Rome. The challenge for the design was how modern functions could be integrated into the existing structural lattice work of physical, as well as the temporal qualities of the site. When Antonio Lo Duca first proposed Santa Maria degli Angeli, he wanted the new church to be aligned with the longitudinal axis of the frigidarium running south to north, as seen earlier in, “Our Lady, Queen of the Angels.” This would introduce the least amount of intervention in the fabric, which in turn, would mean the most economical solution to the programmatic change. However, Michelangelo’s design is entered from the south-west and moves towards the north-east, through the transverse axis. The first and most pragmatic reason for this is that the south-west facade, with DuBellay’s garden and the ruined caldarium, were the public face of the site that turned towards the population of Rome in 1561. While the original entrance was to the north-east, no images, as seen in chapter 3, were being created looking towards this side before Michelangelo, but rather, artists were looking to the south-west facade. This further seems to indicate that the caldarium was the new principal facade in the modern city. Michelangelo, presumably then, was simply working with this existing circulation and incorporating it into his design as a way to create a strong connection to the rest of 16th-century Rome.

While the north-western and south-eastern openings of the frigidarium were plausible candidates, structurally and in terms of circulation for the main entrance to the new church, they would have created a rather flat solution to such a complex site. If the patrons were to walk directly into the main section of the nave, there would be a diminished effect from the excitement

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44 David Karmon, Michelangelo’s “Minimalism” in the design of Santa Maria degli Angeli. pg 2. 2008.

that exists within the towering ancient ruins. Michelangelo saw something deeper in the project as he used more of the thermae’s ruined fabric.

In his drawing (Img. 3.11), Antonio Dosio, emphasizes the main caldarium as a part of the procession from DuBella’s garden and into Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, shown by the figures walking along the path that are leading into the space. As first noted by Diana DePardo-Minsky in 1998, and further agreed upon in this analysis, Michelangelo’s church integrated more of the historic fabric into its design by having the main entrance be through the main caldarium of the ruined bath complex.46 Georgio Vasari in his Life of Michelangelo 1511-1574, comments on the importance of, and appreciation for, the design of the new entrance as well, “…designed by his hand prevailed over many other made by excellent architects, being executed with such beautiful considerations …that it caused his holiness and all the prelates and lords of the court to marvel at the judgment of the lovely conceptions that he had drawn. He availed himself of all the skeletons of those Baths, out of which was seen formed a most beautiful temple with an entrance surpassing the expectations of all the architects; from which he acquired infinite praise and honor ...”47 Based on the ruin analysis in chapter 3, it would make sense that the “entrance surpassing the expectations of all architects” would be similar to that depicted in (Img. 3.11). However, as noted by Diana DePardo-Minsky48, and strongly suggested by Herbert von Siebenhuner49, there is another possibility for how the main entrance was designed. In a 16th century medal cast, presumably to commemorate the dedication of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, we see the image of a tripartite facade with a central opening flanked by two windows all separated by pilasters and topped by a segmented curved pediment with Pope Pius IV’s arms situated in the center.(Img. 4.3)

46 In a talk given by Diana Depardo-Minsky in 1998, “Michelangelo’s Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri in a Counter Reformation Context” given at the Society of Architectural Historians Conference, April 6, she argues that the caldarium was part of Michelangelo’s plan.
47 Georgio Vasari in his Life of Michelangelo 1511-1574, pg...
48 Diana DePardo-Minkey, Paper, Renovatio Romae: Rhetoric of the Renewal at the Baths of Diocletian from the Tetrarchs to Michelangelo, Chapter 3, Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University 2014.
49 Herbert von Siebenhuner, S. Maria degli Angeli in Rom pgs 179-206
Siebenhuner argues that the depiction is meant to be curved, which would make it very similar to what Luigi Vanvitelli, the architect who altered Michelangelo’s church in 1749, designed in the niche entering into the tepidarium. However, as Minsky and Ackerman agree upon, this facade is flat, indicating an entrance other than the curved niche. This image would then fit well over the ruined facade of the main caldarium as they have the same overall arrangement, as depicted in Minsky’s projection rendered by Garrett Finney.

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50 Herbert von Siebenhuner, S. Maria degli Angeli in Rom pgs 179-206

51 Diana DePardo-Minksy, Paper, Renovatio Romae: Rhetoric of the Renewal at the Baths of Diocletian from the Tetrarchs to Michelangelo, Chapter 3, Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University 2014.
There is no definitive answer as to how the main entrance was actually designed by Michelangelo, but in both the analysis of the medal, and of Dosio's image, it is strongly suggested that the main *caldarium* was an important factor in the overall design of the church. If this medal's image does actually represent the true design of the main facade by Michelangelo, then what I would compare it to, in this analysis, is the 1523 Awakening Slave, as discussed in chapter 1. This sculpture was part of a finished facade design for the Tomb of Pope Julius II, but because of many factors, including budget, the original was never realized. Still, the parts that were partially completed suggest that Michelangelo was accepting an unfinished work and was interested in how it expresses more of the ecological nature of the materials from which he was sculpting. While the 1561 image on the medal may be the originally designed facade, in Dosio's 1563 image, I feel, the true essence of Michelangelo's work is realized. Having the patrons walk

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through the massive ruined hole in the facade creates, for them, a closer connection to the ruin. They literally reuse this portion of the building by entering through it and experiencing its decay. What Michelangelo is accomplishing here, is a very sympathetic response to the existing historic fabric. (Img. 4.6)

Construction undertaken by Michelangelo on this project are documented through the summary of Roman excavations by Rodolfo Lanciani, “Storia degli Scavi di Roma,” from 1902. In reference to Santa Maria degli Angeli, the account books dated before Michelangelo’s death recorded the acquisition of very common 16th-century building materials, such as brick, lime, and volcanic sand (pozzolona), but no valuable materials were mentioned.53 As discussed in chapter 2, Michelangelo was opposed to the idea of spoliation in his architecture and the removal of

53 The Building Accounts (ASR, Camerale 1, Fabbriche, reg. 1525) have been published in part; see Appendiz 1 in Lidia Cangemi, La Certosa di Roma, Salzburg AustriaL Institut fur Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universitat Salzburg, 2002. from Rodolfo Lanciani, Storia degli Scavi di Roma, 1902, these sources from David Karmon, Michelangelo’s “Minimalism” in the design of Santa Maria degli Angeli. pg 5. 2008.
material as spolia from his projects. If any columns were inserted as part of the design they were either new or reused from the site. Still, it is more likely that they were reused materials because the building accounts only reported payment for a travertine cornice and six travertine capitals for the chancel surrounding the high altar. These would be newly quarried from the active travertine mine at the time in Tivoli, but no mention of large quantities of granite or marble are stated. 54 His use of rebuilt columns and vaults and the restored walls of the caldarium entrance, as depicted by Dosio, are all tools that we still use today in archaeological site management projects. We showcase some portions of the history of the site while not completely reconstructing it; just enough where the visitor can understand the facts. This process of reconstructing certain elements, such as columns, from the ruin is called anastylosis, which was not a term that would be known in Renaissance Rome, but suggests that Michelangelo was a forward thinker who was influenced more by the ruin than by the work of his contemporaries. 55

Possibly, as the construction of Santa Maria degli Angeli progressed, due to budgetary restrictions or design choices, I believe the facade on the coin was not realized, for there is no evidence of it other than on this coin. Rather, as depicted by Dosio, a beautiful facade that spoke to the historic nature of the ruin was created. However, this semi ruined state could have also lead to its ultimate destruction. If completed in the way Dosio depicts, this design was far beyond anything being constructed at the time in Rome, and may have not been as appreciated as previously thought. Vasari’s quote may have been speaking to the more finished facade depicted on the coin, “from which he acquired infinite praise and honor.” 56 In this case Dosio’s facade may not have been as loved, which is strongly suggested by its being missing today. In 1587, some twenty years after Michelangelo, Pope Sixtus V destroyed the remains of the caldarium which

54 The Building Accounts (ASR, Camerale 1, Fabbriche, reg. 1525) have been published in part; see Appendiz 1 in Lidia Cangemi, La Certosa di Roma, Salzburg AustriaL Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 2002. from Rondolfo Lanciani, Storia degli Scavi di Roma, 1902, these sources from David Karmon, Michelangelo’s “Minimalism” in the design of Santa Maria degli Angeli. pg 5. 2008.

55 Pamela Gerome, Archaeological Site Management, Course seminar Columbia University Fall 2015.

56 See Georgio Vasari in his Life of Michelangelo 1511-1574
then made way for Vanventelli’s work. The loss of this entrance is tragic and we may never know exactly what Michelangelo’s original design intentions were, but these are all elements of the intricate layering of the long and complex history of the Baths of Diocletian and will live on through this analysis.

“(SV-1) We begin outside of the main caldarium, facing east towards the structure. As shown this image by Dosio (Img. 3.11), and compared with the images of this view in its ruined state, we know that most of main structural elements were restored and a contemporary roof, mimicking the historic groin vault was constructed. While it is unknown what the new interior space of the caldarium was used for, its openness to the outside suggests it acted as a transitional area between the modern city of Rome and the church.”

![Image](Img. 3.11)

**(Img. 3.11)** Close up of Dosio’s accounts of the main entrance through the caldarium (Img. 3.11)

B. While minimalist in the amount of materials used in the construction, Michelangelo’s church was a rather dense and sophisticated expression of the new program within the historic fabric. He went above the expectations of himself, an 86 year old man living in a world where preservation was not even defined, to finish this church that protected and revitalized an abandoned space. He could have so put little effort into the project because of his involvement
with St. Peters Basilica at the same time, but he obliged. He may have seen something in the
ruined spaces; an opportunity that only comes when a structure is reused, to create a new layer in
its history that speaks to the architecture, not as an accretion of material but rather as a
palemsepts of ideas.

“(SV-2) As we move through the space, after entering the large ruined main facade, we
approach the smaller arched entryway in the center of the half domed niche which draws the eye in
lower from its initial reaction to the space. What this element introduces is the concept of the human
scale. Before the visitor enters into the tepidarium, the baptistry of the church, he or she is reminded
of their place as a humble, human, servant of God. It constricts the view between the two areas and
clearly signifies a change in the sequence.”

For the people of 16th-century Rome, the Baths of Diocletian, along with many other
pagan structures, were seen as Christian relics.57 There was already a lingering notion that the site
had a spiritual connection, as it was reused by S. Ciriaco alle Thermae di Diocleziano before it

57 See chapter 2
was even out of use. As discussed in chapter 2, with the passion plays in the Colosseum, the Baths of Diocletian also had a long historical connection to Christian martyrs. In 1510 Francesco Albertini commented in his work, *Opusculum de mirabilibus novae & veteris urbis Romae*, on 40,000 Christian slaves building the baths for Diocletian. This same account is also seen in Fulvio’s 1543 guide, Palladio’s 1554 guide, and Biono’s 1558 guide. This indicates that the thermae complex, as viewed by the citizen of 16th-century Rome, was a place of importance as much as the Colosseum would have been. Still, the 1515 *Letter to Leo X* created by Raphael and Baldassare Castiglione remains the most famous manifesto on the preservation of antiquity produced in Renaissance Rome, and in this letter the Baths of Diocletian are mentioned twice. As translated by Diana DePardo-Minsky, the text singles out the baths as “noble and well-conceived,” and as, “...relics... of Rome, [which reflect] the divinity of ancient souls.” Past political papal concerns, the baths complex was seen was a sacred site because of the scale and endurance of the ruins themselves. Michelangelo, having access to all these accounts, presumably, used this history to emphasize the importance of the ruin in his design of Santa Maria degli Angeli.

“(SV-3) After entering in through the smaller portal, we are now standing in the tepidarium, with its domed ceiling and oculus in the center. The space is empty and humbling, as the silent darkness forces the eye to adjust after coming in from the bright and open caldarium. The threshold into the frigidarium is lower and allows a diffusion of light into the space, while the oculus’s focused beam intensely illuminates a small area. Even today, the tepidarium grounds the visitors and prepares them for the transition into the frigidarium by removing all the distractions such as lights and sounds from the outside world; once you have entered here you are in a holy space.”


59 Diana DePardo-Minsky, Chapter 2, pgs. 178.
This is quite an amazing way to reuse the existing historic fabric because its inherent qualities are expressed and utilized for a new program without the introduction of any contemporary design elements. This space was used by Michelangelo for the baptistery because it had significant historical importance and architectural qualities acting as the transitional element leading into the nave of the church. Still, there is a special connection that can be experienced here with the new chancel. According to James Ackerman in, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, from 1971, the decision to build the chancel where it is, was a very pragmatic one, largely due to its location in the former main exterior pool, *natatio*, in that there was little debris in the way to delay construction. However, in this analysis, the *tepiderium* and the chancel are at similar scales with limited light and the eye is immediately drawn into the parallel space. From personal experience visiting the site today, this design feature gave me a reassuring feeling that the view of

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God is at the same scale as the individual. There is another small door at the end of the chancel which can be seen from the tepidarium, and was later used by the Carthusian monks to enter and exit the church without interacting with the visitor, further enhancing the concept of the scale.

C. In the 1955 reconstruction of Michelangelo's church in plan from H. Siebenhuner’s, “S. Maria degli Angeli in Rom,” in “Munchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst,” Siebenhuner claims that one of the large alterations done by the architect was the insertion of ten new masonry partitions between the existing internal structural piers.\(^{61}\) This shows the very pragmatic creation of new exterior walls that enclosed the interior of the church.

In “Historia dell'erettione della chiesa di Santa Maria degli Angeli in Roma nelle Thermae diocletianae” by Matteo Catalani in 1597, the author speaks about the importance of the location for the intervention, as later depicted by Siebenhuner, within the frigidarium and tepidarium, and how it was essential because it was an effort by Michelangelo to create a greek cross plan in the ancient thermae structure. Looking at the intervention from a contemporary standpoint, this acts as an absolute truth; the plan of the church versus the ruin is very clearly distinguishable. However, through further analysis of the 16th-century project, this element does not command as much attention as it has been given. Confining the program to exist within the rigid lines of a cross were not aspects, I believe, Michelangelo were trying to convey in his design, as will be shown in the coming analysis.

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\(^{61}\) Herbert von Siebenhuner, S. Maria degli Angeli in Rom pgs 179-206
Antonio Dosio created two more images of the space after Michelangelo’s design was implemented in 1564-1565. (Img. 4.11) & (Img. 4.12). According to the literature on these images from the contemporary exhibit of the history of the structure in Santa Maria degli Angeli, they are facing towards the new chancel, which seems correct in passing, but if we look closer, the truth becomes apparent. In the middle bay at each side, just after the arched openings, is a segment protruding out into the hall with a very distinctive doorway with a window above. If we look at (Img. 3.13) in the same location leading into the tepidarium, these exact openings can be seen, while at the same location in the area where the new chancel will be, there are no doorways at all. Also, looking out of the openings in the right and left flanking bays to the exterior, it is difficult to determine what the structures are in the background, but, if the image were facing in the direction of the chancel, there would be depictions of the ruined east facade.

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62 Exhibit on the history of the site is on display in the left hand chapel from the chancel. Date visited, January 2015.
Original Vaults

shows openness to exterior

Remaining Columns

Original Windows

Door and Window of Tepidarium

Axis into Chancel

“(SV-4) In this image we are standing in the frigidarium, now the nave. Its original concrete vaults and brick walls are completely white washed with the only color remaining coming from the massive red Egyptian granite columns. The new chancel has been inserted into the central bay in the opposite direction, here we look back towards the tepidarium, now the baptistry. The interstitial column screens that once divided the spaces between the flanking bays, are gone; allowing the patron to move throughout the church freely.”

Another image that argues the openness of the plan is the 1588 drawing by Girolamo Franzini. (Img. 4.14) This depiction shows the only surviving view of the column screen designed for the Carthusian monks to increase privacy from the rest of the church; an element that has always been attributed to Michelangelo. 63 However, after this analysis there is no proof in early depictions or descriptions of the space that show enough conclusive evidence to say this element

63 David Karmon, Michelangelo’s “Minimalism” in the design of Santa Maria degli Angeli. pg 7. 2008.
was part of Michelangelo’s design. Still, I do believe it was added later for the convenience of the monks.

Within the frigidarium there is one more element that needs explanation and that is the construction of the windows. There are many sources that say in every upper story window, there existed two brick partitions inserted in the void, making them a three part system. This window is also seen in Girolamo Franzini’s image.\(^{64}\) However, after looking at the known images of the ruins of the frigidarium before, during and directly after Michelangelo’s intervention, there is no evidence to suggest they existed as such. The most convincing argument that denies their

\(^{64}\) Girolamo Franzini, Single surviving view of the altar and column screen (in Le cose maravigliose dell’alma citta Roma, Venezia 1588. From Cangemi, La Certosa di Roma. From David Karmon, Michelangelo’s “Minimalism” in the design of Santa Maria degli Angeli. pg 7. 2008.
existence is with the same original window that still survives today in its ruined state. In the
remains of the southern *apodyterium* the upper window is shown as it has been for centuries,
without any partitions. (Img. 4.15)

However, while this was not done in the spaces of the original voids, the three part
window was in fact used by Michelangelo while designing the partition wall to the exterior
central bay on the transversal axis. In *(Img. 4.16)* we are standing in the southern outdoor
gymnasium looking north towards the *frigidarium* and, as depicted on the second bay in as well
as indicated on Siebenbuner’s plan, we can see this partition. On the wall there exists in the image
a three part window as designed by Michelangelo. However, this precedent was later adapted into
the arched openings in the rest of the *frigidarium* but a different architect. There is also depicted
in *(Img 4.16)* an entryway designed by Michelangelo with a pediment above. While this was not
meant to be the main entrance, the artist here chose to move the exterior wall in one bay from the

(Img. 4.15) Window in ruin as seen today from *apodyterium*, photo taken by author.
The frigidarium space, including all the walls and vaults, was restored and made to be entirely white using a white wash.\textsuperscript{65} This is, presumably, why (Img. 3.12) and (Img. 3.13) look like new construction rather than a ruin. This act does not showcase an overwriting of history, but rather it expresses Michelangelo’s ability to confront the Christian martyr connections of the site. It is interesting that the complex could be reused as something so completely opposite as a church. How can an architect work within a space that has this stigma and create a successful reprogramming that does not tarnish the image of the church? What Michelangelo did is rather ingenious, for this argument. In the frigidarium by making the walls and vaults completely white, he added a new layer that, speculatively, symbolically cleared the interior sections from its

\textsuperscript{65} Livia Riga, Archaeologist, Site tour at Santa Maria degli Angeli, January 19th
association with Rome. As Diana DePardo-Minsky argues, the frigidarium is the culminating space in the spiritual exercise that evoked the visitor's own journey to salvation through the transitional-purification of space. Moving from the open caldarium which reflected early Christian churches, into the round baptistery of the tepidarium which acted as a vestibule to relive the conversion, while remembering the slaves in the fabric, and ending in the frigidarium nave creating faith within the purely Christian new apse for the solemnity of Communion. 66

D. “Cultural memory is not about giving testimony of past events, as accurately and truthfully as possible, nor is it necessarily about ensuring cultural continuity: it is about making meaningful statements about the past in a given cultural context of the present.” Cornelius Holtorf 2008. 67 The ruin itself does not provoke the memory, it is in its associations and articulations where the memory is produced. In Michelangelo’s church, the artist makes these meaningful statements in very interesting ways that are expressed at every scale. There is a particular instance in the design that has never been discussed in the literature of the intervention, but still exists today on the exterior portion of Michelangelo’s chancel insertion. On the southern face of the chancel at the point where the insertion touches the historic exterior east facade, a beautiful moment occurs. There remains here a niche where there would once have, presumably, stood that finely carved marble sculpture, but this element is gone. Michelangelo, instead of filling in this void, actually designed his insertion to dissect it directly through the center. The new seamlessly coexists with the old in this architectural element, while the niche is effortlessly remaining as a symbolic reminder that the wall from which the chancel extends is the ancient fabric of the thermae. (Img.4.17)


When the patron stands in the magnificent frigidarium space, made completely white and pure, he or she never really forgets its relation to the martyrs. As shown in (SV-4) when the viewer stands within the church he or she is still influenced by the exterior environment, as the upper portions of the walls were left open. The viewer can stand within the church and see the ruined portion of the east facade, with broken pieces of marble pediments clinging to a deteriorating brick wall. The ornate excessiveness of the Roman Empire is gone, but the memory of those who suffered and died to build it remain in the relic. This creates a much deeper connection to the church for the visitor and was a design choice by Michelangelo to keep this feature as it was in its ruined state. He said, “if life is a pleasure to us, death, being likewise by the hand of one and the same master, should not displease me.” The death of the martyrs in the form of the ruins was not feared in Michelangelo’s design but rather embraced.

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68 Diana DePardo-Minksy, Chapter 2, pg. 234 argues that Michelangelo left the exterior of the façade raw in places to not only emphasize the ancient fabric but also to associate with the rough exteriors of early Christian converted churches. It was also meant to honor the materials that served as relics of the slaves and evoke the struggle for salvation.

69 Giorgio Vasari, Life of Michelangelo / Giorgio Vasari ; translated by Gaston du C. de Vere ; edited and with an introduction by Frank Sadowski., 1511-1574
“(SV-5) As the viewer stands here in the left hand barrel vaulted chapel adjacent to the entrance coming from the baptistry looking out towards the exterior of the structure, the ruined facade with small portions of the pediments and lintels can be seen in view. Peaks of ruined thermae litter the scene in the background and the wall is completely exposed to the elements, with only the smaller partition wall defining the lower space. The viewer stands under the vault, that is itself part of this ruined landscape, but exists as something new within the old.”

A memorial’s historic purpose is to preserve the memory of the past and provide conditions for new responses. It should function as an environment for thinking through the past and present, fostering a new consciousness of the events that occurred so they may be learned from. Michelangelo’s design accomplishes this task through a delicate, yet powerful design that allows the visitor to express their faith while being reminded of the long struggle faced by the Christian martyrs. The project also tells a story of the slaves who built the baths. This story is what makes Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri a meaningful religious symbol that has remained a beloved church in the city of Rome for almost 500 years.

70 Markus Berger, Heinrich Hermann and Liliane Wong, Interventions/Adaptive Reuse. Difficult Reconciling Meaning, Department of Interior Architecture, RISD, 2006
Conclusion

In conclusion the analysis of Michelangelo’s Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri in the ruins of the Baths of Diocletian has produced multifaceted elements whose intricate layering combine to make the project a great work of architectural merit. I believe that after this research process, it is difficult to even consider this work to be a new construction, because its forms and ideals are so deeply embedded in the historic fabric. While not the first of its kind, this early example of adaptive reuse offers so much which we can still utilize in our contemporary projects. In this adaptation, Michelangelo proved to be ahead of his time. He had a delicate manner by which he executed the adaptation and I believe that he understood not only the physical components of working with a ruin, but also the temporal and ecological aspects that are produced inherently within the ruined fabric. While in the analysis it showed how Michelangelo was accepting of the unfinished work, the rest of Rome was not so understanding and quickly, after the completion of the church and Michelangelo's death in 1564, continued to add to it. They demolished the impressively reworked caldarium and covered the pure white interior with a high level of ornamentation that was seen as befitting of such an important religious landmark. Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri today has very little left of the original church but what the space does offer is a yearning to see it as it was in 1564 to better understand the thought process behind its grandest reuse. There have been hundreds of artists, architects, scholars and tourists etc. all trying to recreate how the Baths of Diocletian, as well as hundreds of other building in Rome looked before the fall of the empire. This act, while it is important for the understanding of architectural history, does not give due credit to the complete histories of the structures of antiquity. With so many layers of accretion it is illogical and unethical to express one as being more important, and this is how I believe Michelangelo saw the ruined thermae. It was not just a
bathing structure for the citizens of Rome, the Baths of Diocletian to thousands of people was a symbol of enslavement. The design, with its acceptance of the ruin and the maintaining of the historic circulation creates a space that allowed the viewer to appreciate both the grand structure of ancient Rome as well as the hardships endured by the people who built it.

(Img. 4.19) Drawing of Michelangelo’s Nave of Santa Maria degli Angeli, drawn by author
Appendix

(Img. A-1) Speculative reconstruction sketch of ruins as seen in 1561, drawn by author
(Img. A-2) Speculative reconstruction serial vision sketches of Michelangelo’s 1564 church, drawn by author
(Img. A-3) Entrance to Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, photo taken by author

(Img. A-4) North Elevation of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, photo taken by author
East facade of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri where Michelangelo’s Chancel extends from wall, photo taken by author
(Img. A-5) East facade of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, photo taken by author
(Img. A-6) Interior view of Michelangelo’s chancel, re-decorated by Luigi Vanvetelli, photo taken by author
(Img. A-7) View inside of nave of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri showing the original concrete vaults from the Baths of Diocletian, photo taken by author
(Img. A-8) On site sketch of east facade with Michelangelo's chancel extending from it, drawn by author

(Img. A-9) Sketch showing niche connection with Michelangelo's chancel, drawn by author
(Img. A-10) Sketch of main facade of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, view from Cafe Piccarozzi, drawn by author
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**Images**


Rondanini Pieta by Michelangelo, Named for the Roman palace where it long stood, the Rondanini Pietà is the sculpture on which Michelangelo was working only six days
prior to his death on February 18, 1564 Michelangelo did not have a chance to finish the Rondanini Pietà (6 feet 3-5/8 inches tall) which now resides in the Castello Sforzesco in Milan.


Franz Anonymus, The Baths of Diocletian, c. 1550, From Von Herbert Siebenhuners, S. Maria Degli Angeli In Rom in Munchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst Bd. 1 (1950) - Bd. 63 (2012), Cambridge, Trinity College

Giovanni Antonio Dosio, Baths of Diocletian c. 1550. From Luciana Gaudenzi and Mariasanta’s In Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri: Incontro di Storie 1991 p. 57

Hieronymus Cock, Flemish (Antwerp 1510 - 1570 Antwerp) & Joannes van Doetecum, Dutch (Deventer active 1554 - c. 1600 Haarlem), Third View of the Baths of Diocletian, Views of Roman Ruins, c 1561

http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/182156?position=11


Foundation medal for Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, 1561. (Herbert von Siebenhuner, “S. Maria degliAngeli in Rom,” Munchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst VI, 1955, fig. 19)

Luigi Vanvitelli, Façade of S. Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri. Replaced in 1911 (Mirella Serlorenzi and Stefani Laurentia, Terme di Dioclezione, S. Maria degli Angeli, Rome: EDUP, 2002, 122, fig. 179

Reconstruction of Michelangelo’s church in plan from H. Siebenhuner’s, “S. Maria degli Angeli in Rom,” in “Munchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst,” In grey is remaining ancient fabric and in black is Michelangelo’s insertions

Girolamo Franzini, Single surviving view of the altar and column screen (in Le cose maravigliose dell’alma citta Roma, Venezia 1588. From Cangemi, La Certosa di Roma.)