

Abstract

Raphael as a City Planner

This contribution focuses on Raphael's activity as an urban planner, but begins by defining the background to it, that is, the general conditions of urban planning in Rome during the High Renaissance. In this regard, three themes are individuated, i.e., how responsibilities were regulated, how the participation of the leading architects of St. Peter's is documented, and how the realization of the projects proceeded. All urban projects carried out under the Medici popes Leo X and Clement VII are then explored. In the first place, these popes continued projects begun by their predecessors. This was common practice for all popes of the period; Clement VII adhered particularly closely to this usage because he had been directly associated with, and substantially involved in urban planning under Leo X, as well as in other ventures. City planning under the two Medici popes in fact forms a unity. Three major projects planned by Raphael and, after his premature death, partially executed by Antonio da Sangallo, stand out: the regulation of the streets leading north from the city to the Vatican and the Villa Madama; the urbanization of the northern part of the city; and the redesign of the quarter facing the Ponte Sant'Angelo. The artistic highlight of the reorganization of the Campo Marzio was the creation of the Piazza del Popolo. The Medici popes' most elaborate urban scale project, however, was the redesign of the area in front of Ponte Sant'Angelo, where most Florentines and the most important banks in the city were located. This was closely linked to the construction of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, the church of the Florentine community, which had been planned at length and begun under Leo X. The article examines Raphael's contribution to the planning of the roads leading to the Villa Madama and to the Vatican, as well as the redesign of the area in front of Ponte Sant'Angelo on the basis of a variety of drawings and documents.