MAKING SENSE OF THE ROME WE SEE TODAY
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LECTURE 3: THE ROME OF THE POPES:
COLLAPSE IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND
RECONSTRUCTION IN THE RENAISSANCE

Yesterday I spoke about some of the relics of classical Roman architecture and city-making that we can still find and see... and I showed you some of the most interesting of those relics... some still ruins (if now carefully consolidated as such), and some still or again in use...

And I talked about their re-use, repair, conservation, restoration... and why they look like they do and appear as they do... and, of course, I referred to their use as quarries of useful materials and to their mining during the Middle Ages and during the early part of the Renaissance...

And, of course, some of the images that I showed you were illustrations of the consequences of the collapse of Rome during the Middle Ages...

So, I must touch, however briefly, on that collapse and, then, of its gradual recovery... and for all of this period in its history, Rome was Rome of the Popes... indeed, this pertains from, let us say, about 500 to 1870... but today I'm going to show you examples of the kind of buildings that were built between about 500 and 1600 although, because their making and remaking continues, two of the examples do overlap considerably into the Baroque and to the mid-17th century...

Very briefly, the Roman empire collapsed gradually after it had split into two, the eastern and western empires, both before but, in particular, after Constantine established a second 'court' in the east and renamed Byzantyon as Constantinople in 330 ... and Rome reduced in population from perhaps as much as two million in 200 CE, to less than 800 000 in 400CE, and to less than 200 000 by 500 CE... and then decreasing over the next several centuries ... and, remembering that the popes were obliged to move to Avignon in France for much of the 14th century and finally only returned to Rome in 1414... then with a probable population of only 20 000 then... gradually climbing again after that...

During the 3rd and 4th CE centuries the Goths, Visigoths and Huns eroded the empire increasingly... and in 410 CE the Visigoths sacked Rome... and over time malaria, plagues, famines decimated the population, economic collapse... and in 537 the Ostrogoths sacked Rome again... by now with a population significantly less than 100 000...

But even in this decay and collapse, churches were being built... Constantine had built the first Christian church at the Lateran and had begun with a church at the legendary site of St Peter's burial... which we'll return to later... but in the 5th century S Maria Maggiore and S Sabina were built (both completed about 430 CE)... and in later in the same century S Stefano Rotondo was built (completed about 470 CE)...

though S Maria in Trastevere, which we're going to start with, was probably built earlier.... though rebuilt later in a new, and still current, form...

So let's start by reminding ourselves of the extent of Rome during these times.... and while I pointed out that some of the classical buildings we looked at yesterday had been converted to churches during the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance (the Pantheon, the Baths of Diocletian, the Mausoleum of Constantina), none had been built in the first instance as churches ... but today we are going to look at several churches... and at their cloisters... it is the Rome of the Popes (and of the Church), after all...

Illustration 1: Rome in the Middle Ages: V – XV centuries [Lugli p85]
- this is one of the maps I showed you on Monday
- the Aurelian wall encloses the city...
- but the occupied parts of Rome have shrunk considerably... and shifted geographically... only 20 000 residents in 1400 CE
- see the **Lateran** and **St Peters** just mentioned... within the city wall but outside the occupied areas
- also both the churches just mentioned, S Maria Maggiore and S Sabina
- note that all of these churches were **outside of the inhabited areas**...
- **and here is S Maria in Trastevere... a very early church... probably the first devoted to Mary**...

Illustrations 2-3: S Maria di Trastevere, Nolli map of 1748

Illustrations 4: S Maria di Trastevere, Falda engraving of circa 1670
- see this engraving of about 1670: the building to the right would have been brand new then ... in the second half of the 1600s...
- the fountain of 1470s... restored in about 1700 by Carlo Fonana
- but S Maria in Trastevere is one of the major basilicas, apparently the first church dedicated to Mary (though that might be S Maria Maggiore) from 220 CE
- basic plan from 340 CE
- apparently reconstructed on the old foundations in 1140-43... and the columns, capitals, bases were mined from the Baths of Caracalla and the closer Temple of Isis on the nearby Janiculum hill

Illustrations 5-13: S Maria in Trastevere, Photographs (SST, 2016/2017)
- remade porch by Fontana, 1702
- mosaics from 12th century... Madonna suckling Jesus flanked by ten women with lamps
- the mosaics in the apse are from the 12th and 13th centuries, campanile also 12th C
- the richness of the colonnade... every column, every capital, every base is different...
- note the damaged central parts of the capitals... faces of Isis, Serapis and other pagan gods chopped off in 1870...

So, S Maria in Trastevere is perhaps a church typical of the middle ages, at first a small church, living through various vicissitudes, collapse and reconstruction in the

deepest years of despondency, using the relics of collapsed pagan ruins creating a wondrous thing to the glory of god, the saviour and, of course, within the embrace of Mary, the mother of Jesus...

Another early church, built when the Holy Roman Empire had not yet collapsed quite so completely... but, as a consequence of the disintegration of the empire, was to suffer collapse itself... and so it is a relic of its original concept... S Stefan Rotondo....

Illustration 14: Rome in the Middle Ages: V – XV centuries [Lugli p85]

Illustration 15: S Stefano Rotondo, Detail of Nolli plan, 1748

Illustration 16: S Stefano Rotondo, ideogram of 470 CE [Borsi, p35]
- constructed circa **470 CE**
- the idea of S Stefano: the circle for the world, the universe; and the cross for the crucifixion
- a centralised circular 'nave', encircled by the aisle, enclosed by a series of gardens (paradise) and chapels created by the crossing of the Greek cross

Illustration 17: S Stefano Rotondo, 1640 [Lanciani Coll. Israel **Silvestre**]
- note the ruined acquaduct

Illustration 18: S Stefano Rotondo, circa 1750 [**Piranesi**, p]
- note the ruined acquaduct

Illustration 19: S Stefano Rotondo, 19th C [Lanciani Coll. Rivelanti]
- includes both actual measured fabric and hypothetical reconstruction

Illustrations 20-32: S Stefano Rotondo, Photographs [ST,]
- the aisle, the nave, the altar, the roof repair and restorations in circa 1450 by Rosselino and Alberti
- the murals, 34 scenes of martyrdoms, by Tempesta around 1580...

So, as life got harder during the Middle Ages, the Church became increasingly both an agency and a place of refuge... and each church was built by an order and attached to a monastery or abbey... which was always closed off from the outside... for protection as much as for any other reason... and almost inevitably around a cloister... this is the natural 'architectural expression', if we can call it that, of the rise of monasticism... so I'm going to show you a number of churches and their cloisters... because they were both the buildings most typical or expressive of the Middle Ages **and** because they are what has remained of those centuries of Roman life and are still visible to us...

I should, perhaps, add here something about what one might expect of the architecture of the Middle Ages: the Gothic... but Gothic is an essentially northern European building development which did not really penetrate Italy ... even though there are echoes in Venice and in various unusual cases like the facade of the cathedral or duomo of Orvieto... and Milan's duomo was built over five centuries and, in the main, in the 19th century... and Rome's S Maria sopra Minerva is the only

Gothic church in the city... but it has an early Renaissance facade and its interior was much decorated in a Neo-Gothic manner in the mid-19th century...

And also, especially in the case of Rome, the period of the Gothic, the 12th to 14th centuries, was the lengthy period of Rome's nadir...

So, in Rome we have only these relatively modest buildings medieval buildings often assembled at least in part from materials and architectural elements mined or salvaged from Roman ruins...

That said, let's see what there is... and I do want to show both the great and grand and some things more modest... in the spirit of the poverty of the Middle Ages in Rome... so we're going to start off with the church and cloister of the Santi Quattro Coronati...

Illustration 33: Santi Quattro Coronati, detail of Nolli plan of 1748
- not far from S Stefano... on the road from the Vatican to the Lateran...
- the four crowned ones are, of course, martyrs...

Illustration 34: Santi Quattro Coronati, Photograph, 1879, Munoz [Barelli, p6]
- the monastery complex surrounded by walled small holdings
- the first construction of IV C... probably a pagan hall
- church use probably from 620 CE
- probably 850s, Leo IV, great tower and S Barbara chapel
- 1084 destroyed in sacking by the Normans; restored by 1120 CE
- cloister in 13th century
- much restored by Munoz 1912-1914

Illustration 35: Santi Quattro Coronati, Watercolour 1884, Roesler Frans [p137]
- interesting that this watercolour, five years **later** than the photograph just looked at, shows an even **more rural character** of the environs... the intention of the artist was expressly to establish a romanticised idea of 'disappearing' Rome

Illustrations 36-37: SS Quattro Coronati, Photographs from below [SST, 2017]
- see the late-19th and early 20th century apartment buildings
- the very ancient classical Roman structures
- the several medieval elements which suggest its several medieval configurations

Illustration 38: SS Quattro Coronati, Watercolour 1833, Pinelli [Barelli, p29]
- part of the building complex was occupied by orphans, boys and girls, in 19th century

Illustration 39-40: SS Quattro Coronati, Photographs from street, 1999 [SST,1999]

Illustration 41: Santi Quattro Coronati, Plan of complex [Barelli, p4]
- plan showing the isolating and protective courts through which you must pass... and the cloister and garden

Illustration 42: Santi Quattro Coronati, Plan of Cloister showing phases of construction [on-site poster]
- plan showing the phases of construction and their periods of construction: the cloister being of the 13t century

Illustrations 43-48: Santi Quattro Coronati, Entering the church, Photographs [SST, 2015]
- moving through the protective courts
- entering the church... with its 1630s Baroque-d apse by Giovanni da S Giovanni.
- its upper isolated level or gallery for the nuns

Illustrations 49-52: Santi Quattro Coronati, Cloister, Photographs [SST, 1990]
- the cloister in 1990 before the recent archaeological excavation
- which has stripped its charm... but which will I am sure recover...

Illustration 53: Santi Quattro Coronati, Photograph of Cloister in 1913 before restorations [by Munoz, Barrelli, 60]
- there was obviously a considerable amount of remaking and restoration carried out in 1913... all carefully in style...

Illustration 54: Santi Quattro Coronati, Photograph of Cloister today [SST, 2017]
- still showing the faint marks of the restoration in the plaster...
- recent archaeological explorations... no trees, no roses... and the loss of the sense of quiet... which will, one, be recovered in time...
- and note the corner... very heavy.... the sides of the cloister, although clearly enclosing a space, are conceptually four facades facing onto that space...

That noted just in passing, now back to Trastevere... to another very old church and its cloisters... but particularly interesting for its non-ecclesiastical uses since the 1870s...

Illustrations 55-56: S Cosimato, Nolli map and detail
- just outside of Trastevere...
- no saint by this name... abbreviation of Cosma and Damiano
- built in 10th century, circa 950 CE... as a Benedictine monastery
- with medieval cloister of circa 1240 CE
- 12th century gatehouse
- rebuilt the church in 1475... Bregno... unprepossessing but with very refined decorative details... and a second cloister
- 1873 ownership to the state... used as an almshouse for the poor... and who were being dislocated by the new government building programmes...
- converted into hospital in 1970
- and into a hospice in 2008
- extraordinary history of uses, ejections, returns of the nuns, etc and the secular uses since 1873...

Illustrations 57-61: S Cosimato, the entrance court, Photographs (SST, 2018/2019)
- the medieval gatehouse, probably of
- the entrance court in front of the church
- the church facade... 1475... almost Tuscan or Umbrian... very flat decoration... and the ceramic details...

Illustrations 62-67: S Cosimato, the Medieval Cloister, Photographs (SST, 2017/2018/2019)
- the medieval cloister... circa 1240...
- with its typical paired marble columnettes carrying small arches

Illustrations 68-74: S Cosimato, the Renaissance Cloister, Photographs (SST, 2018/2019)
- the Renaissance cloister of the 1480s.. with bigger, grander columns carrying bigger arches.. even if these columns are made of travertine and made of pieces...
- the corners are a little more elegant... but the columns are still joined... as a giant pilaster, but quite elegant, rather than columns
- what I find so interesting about S Cosimato is its use, which has protected its charm, its unprettyfied picturequeness.... which is the result of its everyday use as hospital and hospice....

But that said and leaving the Middle Ages and moving into the Renaissance, we are now going to cross the river back to the Rome itself... just off Piazza Navona... and staying with cloisters and courtyards, to the cloister at S Maria della Pace... Bramante's first work in Rome... 1500-1504...

But first, before we do that, I'd like to show you, very briefly, a couple of earlier and influential Renaissance courtyards emphasising the corners and how these internal faces or facades of an enclosed space were considered over perhaps just twenty or thirty years... starting with:

Illustrations 75-76: Ducal Palaces in Gubbio and Urbino of 1470s, same architect and same duke... of Montefeltro
- here the facades are independent of each other ... and don't really meet at the corner... it's as if these are two buildings standing at right angles to each other...
- and the same thing here... just grander... certainly the Urbino palace is very very grand... and is the parent of all Renaissance courts and cloisters...

Illustrations 77-79: The Courtyard of the Cancellaria in Rome of the 1480s
- this design has moved on from the Urbino parent... the corner is composite... a composite of pilasters... rather than columns...
- this is probably the arrangement of the corner pilasters that the S Cosimato Renaissance cloister was based on... here with beautiful stone pilasters and columns and travertine arches

And now on to Bramante's **1500** cloister at S Maria della Pace...

Illustration 80: S Maria della Pace Cloister by Bramante, Detail of Nolli
- today we're going to look at the cloister only... and tomorrow we'll come back to the front of the church...

Illustrations 81-82: S Maria della Pace Cloister by Bramante, Letarouilly's drawings of 1820s
- plan and section...
- the current church , a curious short nave leading to a centralised octagon with a segmental dome, was built in the 1480s... perhaps by Pontelli , perhaps even advised by Michelangelo... and it also has works by Raphael...
- the church is very interesting and we will come back to it tomorrow to look at da Cortona's new facade of 1656-57 and the rearrangement of the space around it... but today it's what is an entrance court-cum-cloister...

Illustrations 83-90: S Maria della Pace Cloister, Photographs (SST, 2016/2019)
- this court-cum-cloister was built from about 1500, Bramante's first work in Rome... very much reliant on the classical relics that he was measuring and drawing... but made current through his inventions...
- a small cloister, barely bigger than the very delicate one of the SS Quattro Coronati
- at the lower public entrance level with relatively delicate travertine pilasters carrying trabeation imposed onto pilasters carrying masonry arches
- and almost medieval little columns in between the pilasters at the upper level suggesting a smaller scale at the upper residential level
- but the corners are the most delicate and inventive... with the taller main pilasters barely visible at the corner... the corners more slender than the rest of the colonnade...
- the Cloister is regarded as a signal moment in courtyard design

Then we have Bramante's colonnaded courtyard at the much older Palazzo Venezia

Illustrations 91-93: Palazzo Venezia
- a much grander courtyard... in the centre of Rome... Palazzo Venezia had been given to the Venetian state for their ambassodor in 14
- a very grand entrance court
- but the same combination of pilasters and 'buried' columns as at the little cloister we've just seen...
- and here it's the columns which emerge from the pilasters at the corners...

But now having looked at several cloisters and courts, we turn to something very different... a tiny little mausoleum near the top of the Janiculum hill above Trastevere...the legendary site of St Peter's crucifixion....

Illustrations 94-97: S Pietro in Montorio and Bramante's Tempietto, Nolli Plan and Photographs showing its position outside the city-wall
- S Pietro in Montorio seems close to S Maria in Trastevere but is up the very steep side of the Janiculum above Trastevere...
- it is the legendary site of S Peter's crucifiction

- an earlier church was built in 9th century
- in ruins in 15th C, given to Iberian Franciscans... and the church was then commissioned by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1490s.. very simple facade... but with very interesting chapels, paintings, etc

Illustrations 98-104: S Pietro in Montorio and Bramante's Tempietto
- but the real gem is hidden... in a tiny courtyard next to the church...
- a tiny peripteral rotunda, a circular cella surrounded by a colonnade.. echoing the (pagan) Temples of Vesta at Tivoli and just across the Tiber..
- this Tempietto or martyrium (tomb) over the crucifiction site, designed by Bramante ... possibly as early as 1502
- perhaps *the* masterpiece of the High Renaissance... no architectural history has been or could be written without mentioning it...
- its plasticity (without skeleton), its perfection/completeness... following Alberti's maximum: "nothing might be added, taken away or altered, but for the worse"... the High Renaissance idea of the 'closed' art-work...
- attempt to reconcile pagan and Christian and humanist ideals... and the recreation/restoration of the Holy Roman Empire...
- with the ribs of its 'Gothic' and, therefore, Christian dome over-riding its circular or universal form...
- "a monument of exceptional artistic gravity with no practical function, yet charged with profound Christian significance" (David Watkins, p190)... echoing the intentions and contents of the paintings of Raphael and Michelangelo

So, now, **from the site of St Peter's crucifixion to the site of his burial**, that is the basilica and piazza of St Peters in the Vatican city... in a way St Peters is the signal building of the Renaissance because of its symbolism... as its remaking of was intended to signal the remaking of the Holy Roman Empire... so from the late 1400s, the works on the church, on the popes apartment buildings, and until the formalising of its grand public entrance space in the 1660s it was the most import work in Rome...

Illustration 105: St Peter's, bird's eye view in late 1400s, hypothetical reconstruction [Lanciani,]

Illustration 106: St Peter's, print of a painting of circa 1550s [Bacon, p130]

Illustration 107: Rome, 1575 [Cartaro, cropped to show S Peters and Borgo only]

Illustration 108: St Peter's, etching of circa 1640, Israel Silvestre [Lanciani]
- Maderno's facade and Bramante/Michelangelo's dome are complete
- Bernini's campanile is complete... though soon to be demolished...
- Bernini's colonnades are not yet in place (1656)

Illustration 109: Nolli's 1748 plan showing Bernini's 1650s colonnade
- Bernini's extraordinary creation/invention of the late 1650s...
- note the Borgo before the demolitions of 1935

Illustration 110: St Peter's, etching of circa 1750s [Piranesi, p741]
- Piranesi's view shows the dome, facade, colonnade and piazza as it is today
- Bernini's arms of the Church spread wide to embrace and accept the world are an extraordinary spatial concept realized with wonderful power and persuasiveness... their presence is powerful as you approach them and pass through them...
- and their scale, making the place of meeting, the place to hear the head of the Church makes for an enormously powerful experience...

Illustration 111: St Peter's, painting, Panini, 1756 [Kerber, p50]
- a view very similar to Piranesi's...
- though the cavalcade is of the departure of the French ambassador, the Duc de Choiseul **on 5 April 1756**... and here he is at the right bottom facing us...

Illustration 112: Aerial photograph showing Bernini's 1650s colonnade before 1935 [Benevolo, p585]
- the Borgo before the demolitions of 1935

Illustrations 113-120: St Peters, Photographs [SST, 1985, 1999 (inauguration of the cleaning for 2000), 2011; RIBA, 1960 and 1961]

And now we turn to the Capitoline... and Michelangelo's wonderful creation... even if it took another hundred years to achieve it...

Illustrations 121-122: Capitoline/Campidoglio, 1748, Nolli whole and detail

Illustration 123: Campidoglio, 1534, Heemskirk sketch [Bacon, p115]
- view from S Maria in Aracoeli to the Senate and the Palazzo dei Conservatori
- before Michelangelo... who only got involved from 1538

Illustration 124: Campidoglio, 1562, Etching, Cock, 1562 [Bacon, p116]
- Marcus Aurelius now placed in position in 1538... worth noting that hte statute was only retained through the Middle Ages because it was believed to be the Chritian Constantine...
- otherwise, only the centralising of the Senate has begun

Illustration 125: Campidoglio, post 1562, Sketch, Anonymous [Bacon, p117]
- central stairs to Senate now completed and more done to it

Illustration 126: Campidoglio, post 1578, Engraving [Bacon, p118]
- Senate Chamber now complete, tower rebuilt central (as per Michelangelo's design... Palazzo dei Conservatori complete... by Giacomo della Porta... oval paving, the completion of the piazza and the positioning of the sculptural pieces

Illustration 127: Campidoglio, 1750, Vasi engraving []

- the design is now complete

Illustrations 128-129: Campidoglio, Aronson's constructions of 1534 and post 1600 [Bacon, p115 and p118]

Illustration 130-135: Campidoglio, Photographs of the copy [SST, 1984/1999/2009]

Illustration 136-138: Capitoline Museum, Marcus Aurelius of 180 CE, the real thing, Photographs [SST, 2009/2019]
- Marcus Aurelius in Aymonino's not very successful space.... but it is, at least given the space and, therefore, the importance that it deserves...

Illustration 139-140: Capitoline Museum, Lion and horse, Photographs [SST, 2009/2019]

Illustrations 141-143: Cat on the move [SST,]