Outline

Raphael Workshop, Donation of Constantine, Sala Costantina, Vatican, 1520-1524
Raphael, Alba Madonna, 1510, National Gallery Washington

1277 election of Giovanni Gaetano Orsini as Pope Nicholas III: new focus of papal patronage; emphasis on quasi-imperial Romanitas of Nicholas himself – personal power and authority – prefigures papal patronage of Julius II and Leo X.

Babylonian Captivity: 1309-77, papacy in Avignon, France; popes all French

Great Schism: 1378-1417, total of 12 popes, two or three reigning at the same time in different cities, mostly not in Rome

Council of Constance: 1414-18, ended the Great Schism with election of Pope Martin V

1417-31: reign of Pope Martin V
“He found it so dilapidated and deserted that it bore hardly any resemblance to a city. Houses had fallen into ruins, churches had collapsed, whole quarters were abandoned; and the town was neglected and oppressed by famine and poverty.” Platina, Lives of the Popes.

1431-47: reign of Pope Eugenius IV

1447-1455: reign of Nicholas V, the first humanist pope.

Papal Chapel or cappella papalis: the papal court of about 200 ecclesiastical and secular officials; they were required to attend in the Sistine Chapel 27 major feast day Masses, and at least 42 weekly business meetings and papal audience

Ambrogio Brambilla (attributed), The Seven Churches of Rome from Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae, 1575.

Sancta Sanctorum, Lateran Palace, c. 1278-80; commissioned by Nicholas III. The frescoes of the upper register were painted in the 13th century, while the saints above the altar were repainted in a later renovation.

Acheiropoieta Icon, 5th-6th centuries, believed to have been begun by St Luke and finished by angels; Christ in Majesty – pose of teacher with the scroll of the law in His left hand while His right is raised in blessing. Carried in annual processions, especially that of the Assumption.

Frescoes: anonymous artists, circle of Cavallino and Cimabue, c. 1278-9. Nicholas III, flanked by Sts Peter and Paul, presenting chapel to Christ Enthroned; Martyrdom of Sts Peter and Paul; St Nicholas providing a Dowry and Stoning of St Stephen; Martyrdom of St Lawrence and of St Agnes.

Peter as church founder/rock” Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Cephas (Peter) (Petros), and on this rock (petra) I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:13-19
Vatican renovations: “In the year of our Lord 1277 the most Holy Father Lord Nicholas III the pope built (these) palaces and the rest hall and the chapel. Other ancient houses were also enlarged during the first year of his pontificate. And in the second year of his pontificate he built this perimeter wall, circuit murorum pomerii. Such was done by the aforesaid pontiff of Roman birth, son of the father Lord Matteo Rosso, of the house of Orsini.”

Giotto, Stefaneschi Altar, double-sided triptych, c. 1310-15, Vatican; commissioned by Cardinal Jacopo Stefaneschi. Facing the congregation: Enthroned St Peter with Stefaneschi kneeling before him presenting him with the triptych, opposite Pope Celestine V who was canonized in 1313. Rear, facing the canons: Christ enthroned flanked by angels and Stefaneschi kneeling below, leaning in to kiss X’s feet. On either side, Crucifixion of St Peter and Death of St Paul – images that derive from the Sancta Sanctorum.


Masolino, Lives of St Catherine of Alexandria and St Ambrose, Chapel of the Sacrament, San Clemente, 1428-32; commissioned by Cardinal Branda Castiglione whose titular church was San Clemente. First important chapel decorated after return of Martin V to Rome.

Filarete, Doors of Old St Peter’s, c. 1433-45, bronze, inscribed AD MCCXXLV DIES VLTIMUS IVLII (AD 1445, the last day of July); traditionally identified as the Porta Argentea because they were originally silver-gilt, commissioned by Eugenius IV, inspired Bronze doors of the Pantheon as well as early Christian basilicas in Rome in Byzantine style. Rome = new Jerusalem, new Constantinople. Panels: Jesus Enthroned, Mary Enthroned, St Paul with sword, St Peter giving the keys to Eugenius IV; Paul sentenced by Nero and Paul’s martyrdom; and the martyrdom of St Peter. Scenes from the pontificate of Eugenius and representatives at the 1438 Council of Ferrara/Florence, summoned to reunite the eastern and western churches. Vertical segments run around the whole door decorated with garlands and flowers; episodes for Aesop’s fables, Ovid’s Metamophoses and Horace’s Eclogues are inserted amongst the plant life. Roman portrait medallions are also included. On lower back of door, relief of Filarete and his workshop.

Renovations to Capitoline Hill in 1447: Nicholas V restored the Senator’s Palace and built the Palazzo dei Conservatori.

1450 Jubilee Year: December 17, 1450 Nicholas planned to display the relic of the sudarium of St Veronica; pilgrims gathered in the piazza in front of St Peter’s. It was so crowded that a contemporary chronicler claimed that grains of millet scattered over it would not have reached the ground. However, the Pope was indisposed and the ceremony was cancelled. The crowd dispersed and headed back across the Ponte S. Angelo; suddenly a mule bucked and the crowd panicked. So many crowded onto the bridge that it collapsed. Over 200 pilgrims drowned. Nicholas immediately rebuilt the bridge and erected 2 small octagonal chapels at the southern approach to the bridge, dedicated to the Holy Innocents and Magdalene.
1452: Emperor Frederick III came to Rome to be crowned by Nicholas V

**Vatican renewal and transformation under Bernardo Rossellino:** new fortifications, new wing and decorations of Vatican Palace, enlargements and repairs to Old St Peter’s, new piazza to accommodate pilgrims and papal ceremonies.

**Giannozzo Manetti, Biography of Nicholas V, c. 1455:** presents urban plan of Nicholas V as coherent plan and restoration intended to revive the city

**Fra Angelico, Chapel of Nicholas V, 1448-c. 1455:** private papal chapel. Lives of Sts Lawrence (Roman deacon, martyr and patron saint of Rome) and Stephen (1st deacon and Christian martyr, died outside Jerusalem). Themes: ordination and charity; Christian universality, Rome as new Jerusalem; modeled after Sancta Sanctorum.

“My longing to see Rome, even now when the city is deserted and a mere shadow of its former self, is scarcely to be believed...Seneca rejoiced in his fortune at having seen it. And if a Spaniard was capable of these feelings, what do you think I, an Italian, feel? Rome has never had, and never will have an equal.”

Petrarch, letter to a Friend, December 1334

“Although when I first...went to Rome almost nothing was left of old Rome but an outline or an image. And only the ruins bore witness to its bygone greatness, nonetheless, among those ashes there were still some noble sparks; but now the ash is long extinguished and grown cold.”

Petrarch, Ides of March on the Capitoline, *Familiares* II.14

“In truth Rome was greater, and greater art its ruins than I imagined. I no longer wonder that the whole world was conquered by this city but that I was conquered so late. Farewell.”

Petrarch, Ides of March on the Capitoline, *Familiares* II.14

“Rarely has a pontificate brought such great devastation to the lands of the Church and ruin to men...Some found the cause of such great evils in the pope’s love of war, others in his advisers, for they say that he himself wanted peace, but that he was driven to war by the persuasion of others. For my part, I saw many virtues in him, whether they were true or, as some contend, false. But whether you attribute the failing to the men or to the times, it is a fact that the subjects of the Roman Church never experienced such misfortune during any earlier pontificate.”

Poggio Bracciolini, 1447

“It appears that soon Rome, the parent of genius, the nurse of virtues, the model of fame, the summit of praise and glory, and the school of all good things which the earth possesses, will suffer a great diminution of her fame and glory. Her buildings have become unknown, just as her affairs and power were obscured long ago. Your return of the papacy to this seat, an act so useful and necessary to Rome’s conservation, confirmed my plan to describe the city. She was so worn out with troubles and calamities that if you had been absent another ten years, she would have been completely destroyed. And you are helping the Romans not only by the presence of the Curia, which always contributed greatly to the wealth of the city, but thoughout the city you are also restoring and rebuilding collapsed and ruined buildings at great expense.”

Flavio Biondo, dedication of *Roma restaurata* to Eugenius IV
List of Popes:

**Nicholas III (1277-80)**
- Martin IV (1281-85)
- Honorius IV (1285-87)
- Nicholas IV (1288-92)
- St. Celestine V (1294)
- Boniface VIII (1294-1303)
- Bl. Benedict XI (1303-04)
- Clement V (1305-14)
- John XXII (1316-34)
- Benedict XII (1334-42)
- Clement VI (1342-52)
- Innocent VI (1352-62)
- Blessed Urban V (1362-70)
- Gregory XI (1370-78)
- Urban VI (1378-89)
- Boniface IX (1389-1404)
- Innocent VII (1406-06)
- Gregory XII (1406-15)

**Martin V (1417-31)**
- Eugene IV (1431-47)
- Nicholas V (1447-55)
- Callistus III (1455-58)

**Pius II (1458-64)**
- Paul II (1464-71)
- Sixtus IV (1471-84)
- Innocent VIII (1484-92)
- Alexander VI (1492-1503)
- Pius III (1503)
- Julius II (1503-13)
- Leo X (1513-21)
- Adrian VI (1522-23)

**Clement VII (1523-34)**