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Session 4: Domes in Renaissance Art: Architectural and Conceptual, 2

Brunelleschi's dome for Florence cathedral inaugurated a new phase of European architectural history, drawing nevertheless on multifarious cultural models and religious and symbolic connotations. The session will explore this key motif of architectural classicism, though with a view to expressions of inventiveness and departures from orthodoxy.

Chair: Charles Burroughs, Independent Scholar
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Bio: Charles Burroughs is an art and architectural historian of late medieval and early modern Europe, especially Italy, though recently he has turned his attention to landscape design and urban planning in America before the First World War. After the BA in Classics at Oxford he took graduate degrees at the Warburg Institute of London University. In the US he taught mainly at Binghamton University of SUNY and at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, from which he retired in 2014. Subsequently he relocated to Rochester and joined the Department of Art History at SUNY Geneseo as an adjunct. He is currently working on Botticelli's "political *Primavera*," on Raphael's *School of Athens* as a tragic yet comic image in the spirit of Plato's Speaker 1. Tina Waldeier Bizzarro, Villanova University

Speakers:

Speaker 1: Tina Waldeier Bizzarro, Villanova University
Tina Waldeier Bizzarro la.basquaise@gmail.com

Title: Domes of Heavenly Bread: The Easter Arches of San Biagio Platani, Sicily.

Abstract: Constructed by the *Fraternità* of the *comune* of San Biagio for Easter celebration, the arches, domes, and bell towers of San Biagio, fabricated of bread, reeds, willows, bay leaf, cereals, dates, and asparagus, create the fictive body of a church. Certainly, a part of a tradition of civic competition for salvation, this fictive architecture transfigures, on Easter Sunday, into the sacred locus of the encounter of the risen Christ and his Mother--under the most important and decorated of these central

domes. The story of this architectural simulacrum will reveal to us the Sicilian ritual of food in the service of faith.

Bio: Tina Waldeier Bizzarro is an emerita Professor of History of Art and former Chair of the Department of History of Art at Rosemont College in Pennsylvania. She presently teaches at Villanova University in the Irish Studies Program and in the Studio Art Department as an Iconographer. She is a medievalist by training, having earned her PhD at Bryn Mawr College researching attitudes toward the medieval from the twelfth century through the nineteenth. Her publications are on the history of the reception of medieval architecture throughout Western Europe (*Romanesque Architectural Criticism: A Prehistory*, Cambridge University Press, 1992) and the revival of the Romanesque in the nineteenth century (“‘The Scattered Limbs of the Giant:’ Recollecting Medieval Architectural Revivals,” in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, (Blackwell, 2020).

Speaker 2 John Alexander, University of Texas at San Antonio
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Title: Avoiding Domes: Valuing Vaults in the Oeuvres of Michelangelo and Pellegrino Tibaldi

Abstract: This paper will investigate dome-less churches and chapels in the work of two architects who intentionally courted creativity, Michelangelo Buonarroti (1474 - 1564) and Pellegrino Tibaldi (1527 - 1596). Tibaldi drew inspiration from Michelangelo's architecture, in form, composition and presumably design process, and so there may be endeavors common to their oeuvres. Both men created unusual designs for religious purposes, and the buildings that lack domes may have done so intentionally. Examples include Michelangelo's "transept" and chancel in Sta. Maria degli Angeli and the Sforza Chapel (both in Rome), and Tibaldi's chapel for the Collegio Borromeo (Pavia) and the cathedral of Tortona. Some of the examples have been the subject of debate (for example, priests, architects, and townspeople argued in the 1850's about the original intentions for the Tortonese cathedral); these debates reveal underlying assumptions about the superiority of dome over vault. By examining the vaulting of these sacred spaces in a positive light, this paper will contribute to our understanding of these specific examples, and of the architecture of the mid- to late-sixteenth century.

Bio: John Alexander is an architectural historian who studies ecclesiastical patronage in the Duchy of Milan during the era of the Tridentine Reforms. Research early in his career focused on the reforming cardinal-archbishop of Milan, Carlo Borromeo (1538 - 1584), during an early, formative period of his life. Contributions included his dissertation on the Collegio Borromeo (Pavia), and a book on Borromeo's architectural patronage during the reign of his maternal uncle, Pope Pius IV (reigned 1559 - 1565). More recently his research focuses on Gian Paolo Della Chiesa (1521 - 1575), cardinal of the Catholic Church and patron of the new cathedral in Tortona. While conducting extensive archival research to investigate Della Chiesa's biography and the cathedral's commission, Dr. Alexander hopes to shed light on the ways in which patrons harnessed Renaissance architecture to serve the goals of the church, as redefined by the Council of Trent (1545 - 1563).

Spearer 3: Liana De Girolami Cheney, President of ATSAH
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Title: Giorgio Vasari's Beatitudes in Brunelleschi's Dome

Abstract: In the interior of Brunelleschi's Dome for Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, Giorgio Vasari visualized the celestial roles of the Beatitudes, revealing the splendor and beauty of God's grace. Through these angelic images, the Beatitudes, Vasari also incorporated intellectual, philosophical, and religious significations, and Renaissance Neoplatonic conceits about eternity, judgment, salvation, and the splendor of divine light. In these fresco paintings (1571–72), Vasari fused two conceits: the Christian physical and metaphysical symbolisms of the cupola, as the dome of the Florentine cathedral and the dome of heaven, and the Neoplatonic physical and metaphysical meaning of the copula mundi, the divine mediation between the microcosm and macrocosm through God's grace.

Bio: Liana De Girolami Cheney, PhD, Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award, Professor of Art History emerita from UMASS Lowell, and presently a Visiting Scholar in Art History at the Università di Aldo Moro in Bari, Italy, and Investigadora de Historia de Arte, SIELAE, Universidad de Coruña, Spain. Prof. Cheney is a Renaissance and Mannerist scholar, author, and coauthor of numerous articles and books, including: *Botticelli's Neoplatonism in his Mythological Painting*, *The Homes of Giorgio Vasari* *Giorgio Vasari's Teachers: Sacred and Profane Love, Neoplatonism and the Arts*; *Giuseppe Arcimboldo Readings in Italian Mannerism I and II*; *Giorgio Vasari's Art and Art Theory*; *Giorgio Vasari's Artistic and Emblematic Manifestations*; *Agnolo Bronzino: The Florentine Muse*; *Lavinia Fontana's Mythological Paintings: Art, Beauty, and Wisdom* and *Barbara Longhi of Ravenna: Art, Grace, and Piety*.