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**SINAN**  
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SINAN SYMPOSIUM  
27 - 28 NİSAN 2017 // APRIL 27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> 2017



**komsuluk**  
**neighbourhood**

**X. ULUSLARARASI SİNAN SEMPOZYUMU**  
*X. INTERNATIONAL SINAN SYMPOSIUM*

**27- 28 NİSAN 2017**  
*APRIL 27-28, 2017*

**"KOMŞULUK"**  
*NEIGHBOURHOOD*

**BİLDİRİ KİTABI**

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## MAHALLE ÖLÇEĞİNDE BİR YAPI OLARAK VIA LAURA'DA BİR MEDİCİ SARAYI PROJESİ

### A MEDICI PALACE IN VIA LAURA AS AT NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE

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#### ÖZET

Bu araştırma, Floransa'da Giuliano da Sangallo ve kardeşi Antonio da Sangallo tarafından tasarlanmış fakat hayata geçirilmemiş bir Medici Sarayı projesinin sırasıyla makro ölçeğe (kent ölçeğinde) ve mekânsal boyutta incelenmesini ele almaktadır. Hayata geçirilmemiş, yalnızca tasarı boyutunda kalmış bir proje olmasından dolayı araştırmamız, Uffizi Galerisi'ne ait Baskılar ve Çizimler Bölümü'nden (Envanter G.D.S.U. 282 A) elde edilen çizimler ve görseller üzerinden yürütülmüştür. Bu çizimler, Lorenzo de' Medici'nin bu projeye 1491-1492 yılları arasında Floransa kentinde Via Laura'da görkemli bir saray inşa etme fikri olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu görkemli saray, Vatikan'daki Belvedere'nin avlusundan bile daha büyük bir alana sahip, uzun bahçeleri de dahil olmak üzere bir kenarının üç yüz metreden daha uzun olduğu anıtsal, muazzam bir komplekstir.

Araştırma boyunca incelenen çizimlerden, kompleksin tasarımındaki pek çok unsurun mimarlar Giuliano ve Antonio da Sangallo'nun arasındaki işbirliği sonucu ortaya çıktığını göstermiştir. Buna ek olarak, projenin olgunlaşmasında Medici Ailesi mensubu, dönemin Floransa şehir devleti hükümdarı Lorenzo dei Medici'nin (Muhteşem Lorenzo) önerilerinin de katkıları olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu görkemli projenin temel fikrinin Poggio a Caiano'da inşa edilen Medici sarayına dayandığı, olgunlaşmasında da Napoli kralı I. Ferdinand için inşa edilen saray ve buna benzer projelerin rol oynadığı düşünülmektedir. Merkezi bir avlu etrafında içe kapalı plan şemasına sahip ve bütünüyle kesme taş kaplı cephelerle karakterize olmuş tipik Floransa Rönesans dönemi saraylarının aksine, Via Laura'da yer alması düşünülen bu yeni Medici sarayı tek bir eksenle simetrik bir plan şeması üzerinde gelişmiş ve bugüne kadar benzer saraylarda mevcut olmayan bir tasarım unsuruna, yani büyüyen kompozisyonun zirvesinde inşa edilecek bir tapınağa sahip olması ön görülerek tasarlanmıştır. Dahası, sarayın çevresini saran revaklı localar ve avlular sayesinde kompleksin yan ve ön sokaklarla ilişki kurması ve bu sayede tüm kentle bir diyalog yaratması düşünülmüştür.

Projenin karmaşıklığı, yapım maliyetinin yüksekliği ve buna bağlı olarak hükümdar Lorenzo dei Medici'nin projeye karşı duyduğu hevesinin günden güne azalması, projenin hayata geçme durumunu yavaşlatırken 1492'de hükümdarın vefatı ile proje tamamen rafa kalkmış ve kardeş mimarlar Giuliano ve Antonio da Sangallo'nun bu görkemli projesi unutulmaya mahkum olmuştur. Böylece, Via Laura'da yapılması planlanan büyük Medici Sarayı projesi, ütopik Rönesans dönemi çizimleri arasında yerini almış ve 17. ve 18. yüzyıllarda İtalya ve Avrupa'da pek çok kraliyet sarayının tasarımına ilham vermiştir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Giuliano da Sangallo, Lorenzo de' Medici, Rönesans sarayları, Floransa saray mimarisi

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This study starts from a drawing<sup>1</sup> of Giuliano da Sangallo (Figure 1), preserved in the "Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe del Museo degli Uffizi in Florence (Department of Prints and Drawings of the Uffizi Museum), inventoried at No. 282 A, most likely, in collaboration with his brother Antonio. This drawing represents a grandiose project of a palace for Lorenzo de' Medici, dated to the years 1491-1492 approximately. A grandiose project, an articulated monumental complex with a length of more than 300 meters per side including the gardens.

<sup>1</sup> The drawing (sheet 282 A in the Prints and Drawings Department of the Uffizi) is made in pen, *bistro* and pencil on a sheet of white paper that consists of four portions of different sizes glued together. The complex and the parcelling of area, drawn along the adjacent streets to the south, are contained entirely in the larger part of the paper. The area of the convent of Annunziata and the north empty area, designed to make *uno barco a selva*, are occupying the left of the paper. Finally the minor sector above has outlined a stretch of the wall and the projecting part of the Porta a Pinti.

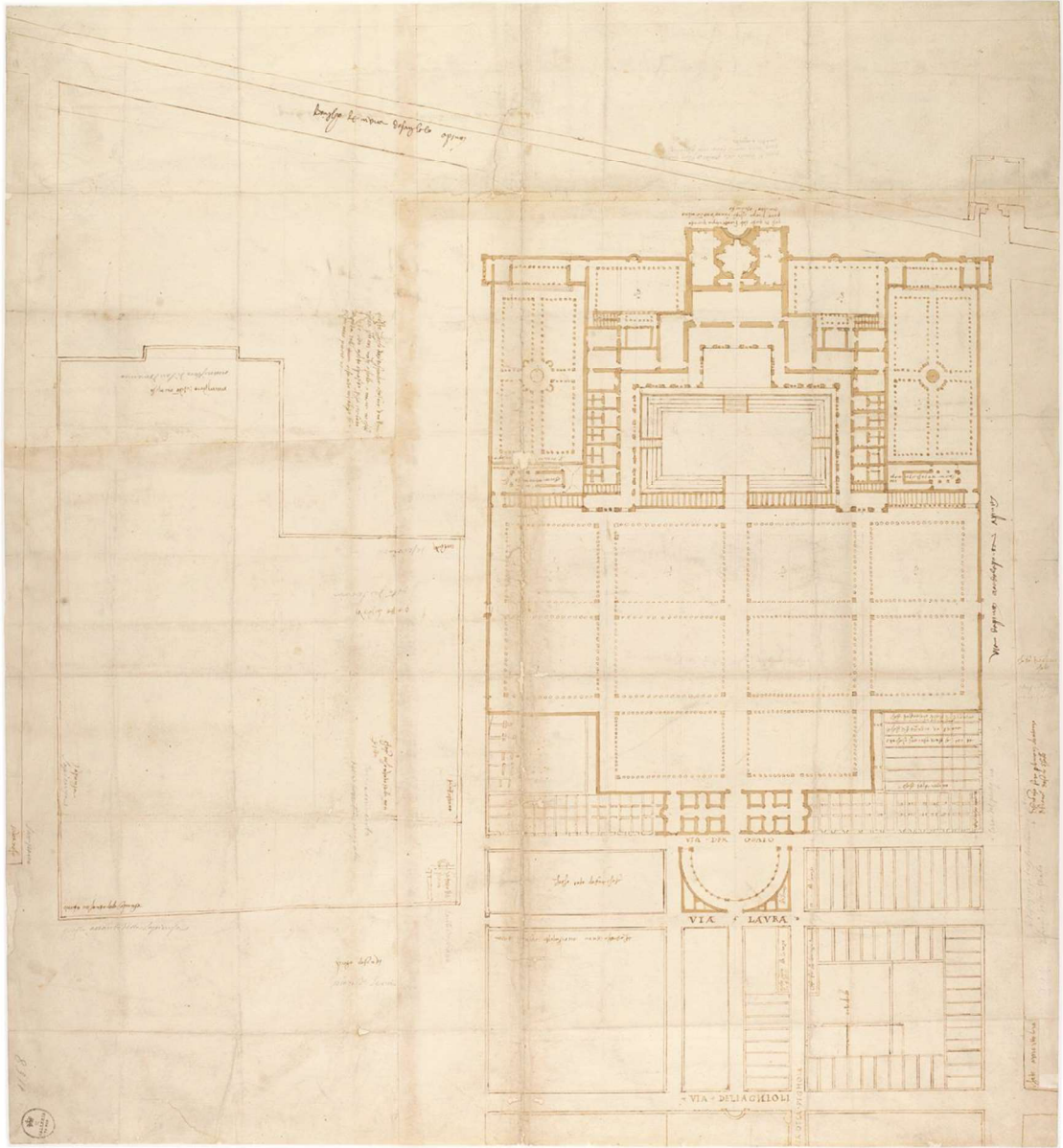


Figure 1. Giuliano da Sangallo, the drawing n°282 A stored in "Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe" in Uffizi Museum in Florence

The Medicean complex located in Laura Street, as seen in the design of Sangallo, encloses a large part of the city delimited on the west by the Via San Sebastiano, on the south from Via Laura, on the east from Borgo Pinti and on the north by a stretch of city walls (Figure 2). This plot has an area of over 13 hectares<sup>2</sup> and it is located in the north-western part of the city in the district of Santa Croce (Figure 3).

Certainly that of Lorenzo the Magnificent was not a policy that has left an original mark in the city as occurred elsewhere in that same period. However, this was not only due to him but to many other reasons. One of these reasons is the particular form of government, which in many respects was ambiguous. Additionally, the conservative character of the Medici policy, which, moreover, reflected on time the interests of the aristocracy and the merchants of which was expression. Other reasons lie in peculiar individualistic character of the Florentines which was more interested in special problems, ie private buildings, more than general ones like urban

<sup>2</sup> The idea to bind such a large lot for a building that is more suited to a rural context as opposed to any citizen, probably derives from the purpose of Lorenzo, completed after starting the experience of Poggio a Caiano, to transfer the lifestyle of the rural villa in the town.



projects. Regarding urban design in the period of Lorenzo, it should be noted that it was already heavily determined by the grandiose operation conducted between the 1200 and 1300 with the construction of the third set of city walls, which had incorporated a number of areas more than sufficient to the needs of the city until the nineteenth century.

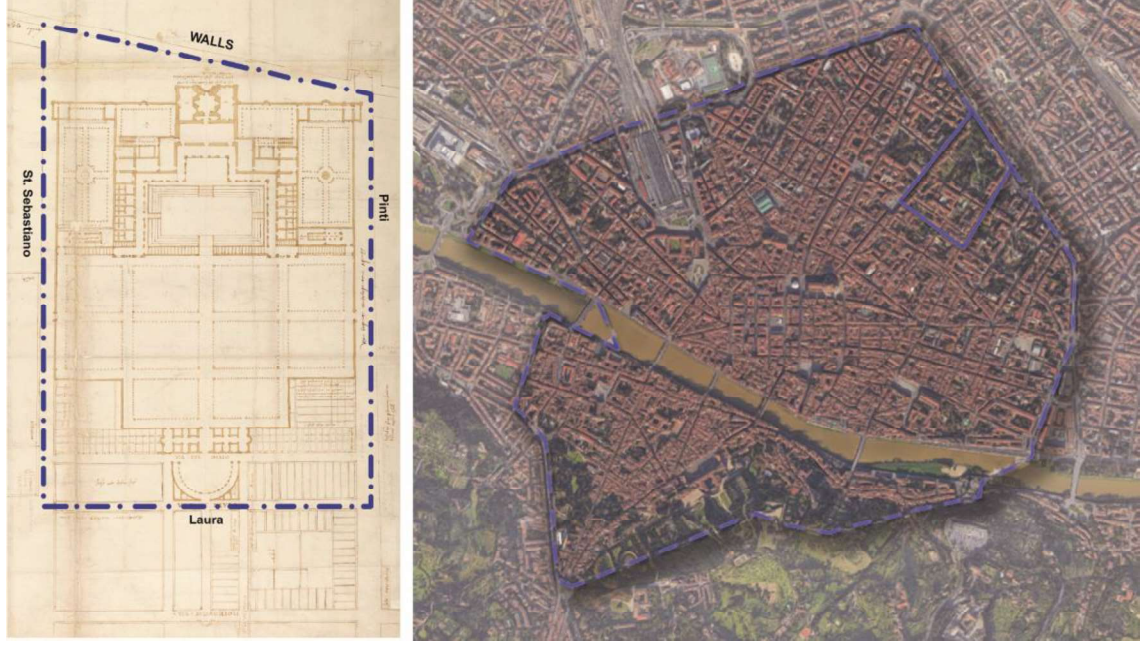


Figure 2. Detail of the drawing no: 282 A with the perimeter of the affected area by the project

Figure 3. Aerial view of Florence today. Dotted the city walls at the time of execution of the design; the solid line indicates the project area

By time, the main interest of The Medici family since the first generation have been transferred from the inner part towards the northern part of the city. This is demonstrated by the construction companies that have seen the family being involved directly in the renewal of the Basilica of San Lorenzo, the residence on Via Larga, from the reconstruction of the whole library marciana and in the arrangement of the garden of San Marco<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, in the Cafaggio area, the Medici owned land along the Via Laura on which, as it turns out, Lorenzo had build a small leisure house for his personal use. It is therefore natural that for the construction of his new residence, the Magnificent choose the northern part of the city next to this property which has more than thirteen hectares that the Uffizi drawings commit to the implementation of the new enterprise. This fact is proven by numerous elements and, in particular, by the existence, within the area chosen for the construction of the complex, the quite conspicuous property of Bartolomeo Scala.

Many elements of the design are definitely the result of a collaboration of the two architect brothers, and probably derive from some hints of Lorenzo the Magnificent, debated in the period (1480-1490) in which Giuliano was his favorite architect. It is evident that the main design ideas of the project of this grand palace are developed after the experiences from the project the Sangallo for the Villa Medici at Poggio a Caiano, and continued in other experiences like that of the design for the palace for King Ferdinand I of Naples (Figure 4). Unlike traditional residence of Florentine Renaissance which is characterised by an introvert form closed around a central courtyard and identified by a coating ashlar sloping down to the floor, in the building in Via Laura the complex is spread along an axis of symmetry towards the activities, involving the project summit, in this case a “temple”. This element is new, previously never so clearly characterized in a building whose outer profile is the culmination of the growing composition of the complex.

<sup>3</sup> This trend was reversed since 1540 when the Grand Dukes leave the Michelozzo palace on Via Larga and transfer their residence first in the Palazzo dei Priori, and then in the Pitti Palace.



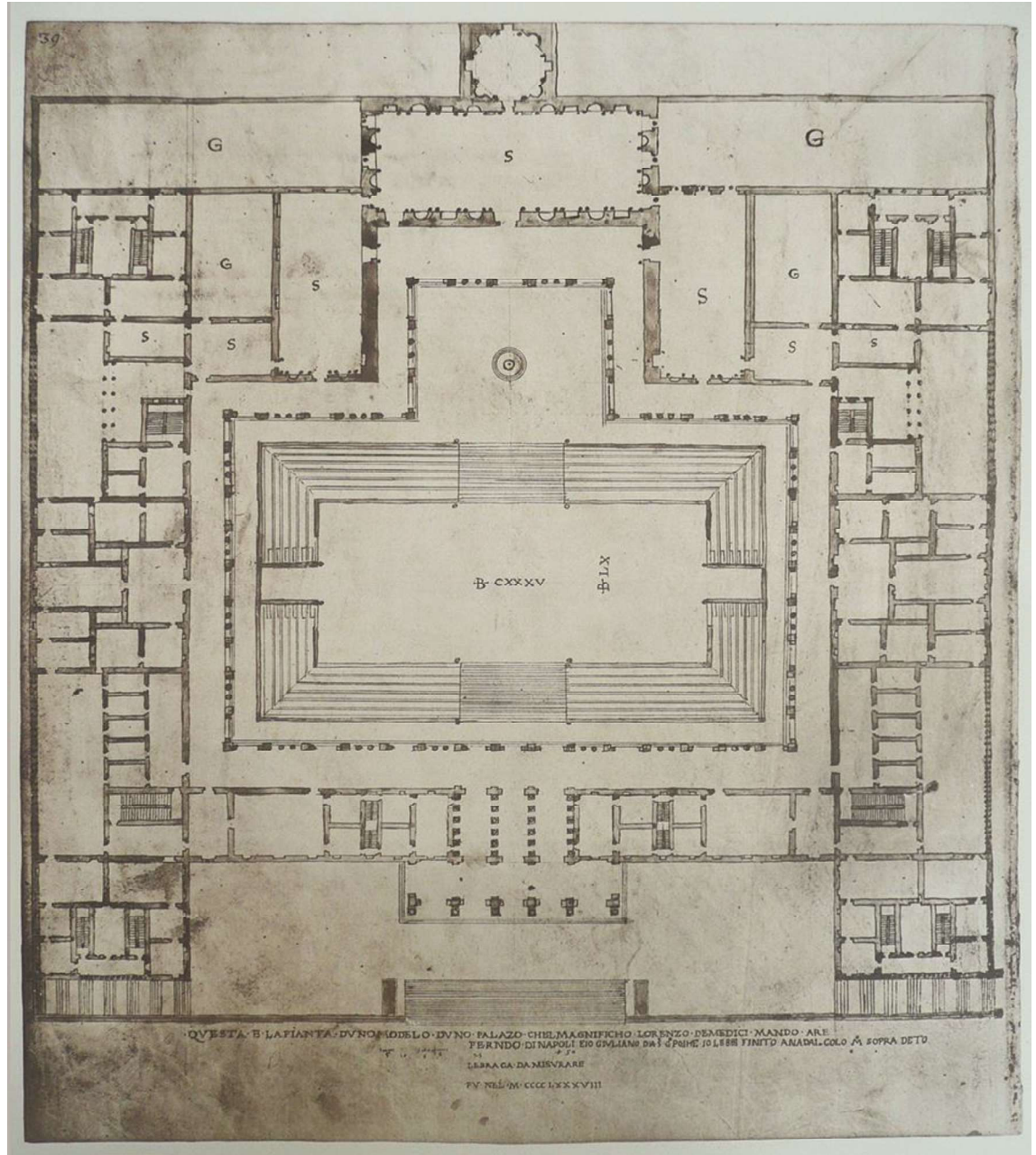


Figure 4. Giuliano da Sangallo, drawing of the palace for the king of Naples in 1488

In the design of Giuliano da Sangallo there are other novelties. Among these, the first one is a tightly integrated complex to the urban structure rather than a detached complex in the urban fabric, as is typical of the Renaissance palace, which generally stands as massive and autonomous presence. The Medicean complex would take into account a much wider area than that required for the actual residence. Inside, the location of the real residence is proposed to the northern side of the area next to the city walls, while the most southern part of the complex provides a reorganization of urban blocks through the rationalization of housing development and the opening of new roads. Between the royal palace and the residential fabric there is a large garden as a filter area which relates the lots intended for private homes, but at the same time, as an element of union between the two different complementary aspects in the same urban reality. In addition, if the surrounding wall, which is still relatively low, wouldn't be considered, it could be argued that the palace opens to the garden in the vast area in the front by virtue of its open galleries, courtyards and arcades that break the composition. It seems that a dialogue with the nature is created through these perforated elements and partially occluded

as seen in the typical buildings of antiquity<sup>4</sup>. The problem that arises at this point is whether the subdivision of the lots marked on the project depends on a state of fact or a planning expectation.

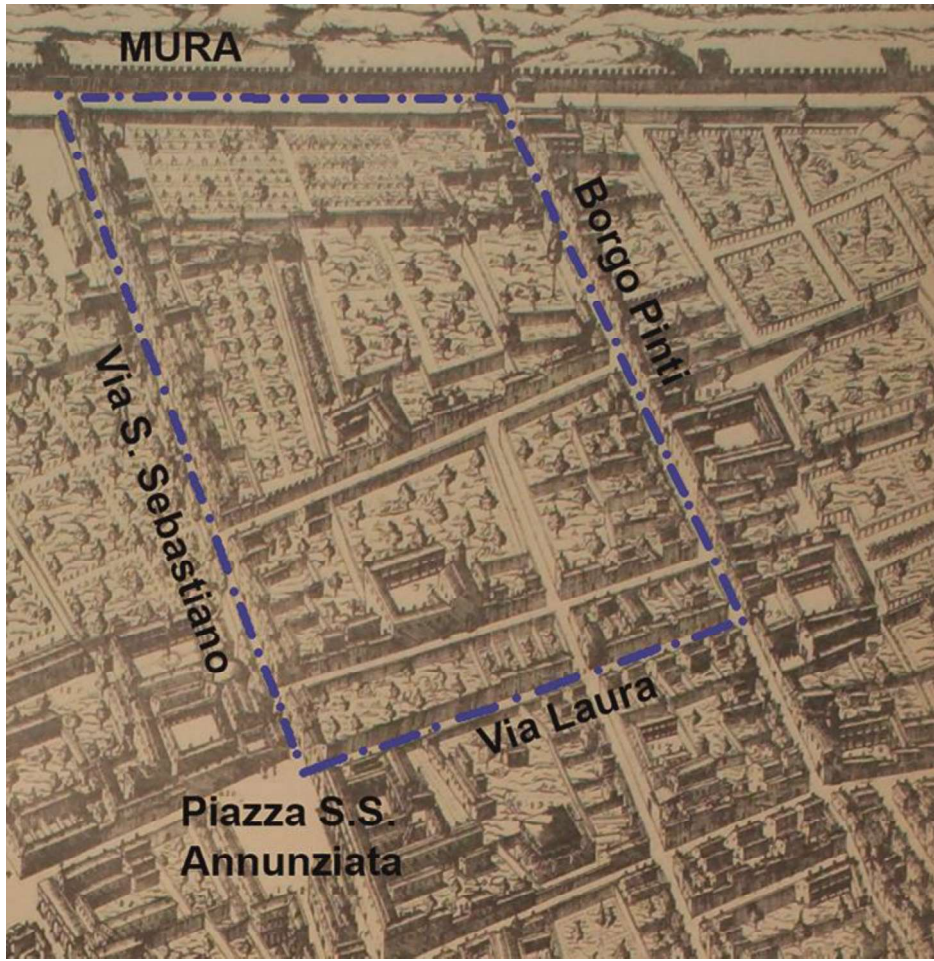


Figure 5. Detail of the plan of Florence developed by Buonsignori in 1584

We know with certainty that some areas, among those included in the drawing, are still not built in the late fifteenth century, but there is not sufficient information to determine the status of the subdivision of the lots on the date of the drawing. In fact on this area not divided into lots, bordered by the streets San Sebastian, Via Laura and Via del Rosaio, appears the notation "*loco voto per fare chase*", which prompts us to assume that other more defined areas in the drawing are already, if undeveloped, at least divided up. The plan of the Buonsignori of 1584 confirms this assumption because in it (Figure 5), in addition to the area on which shows the aforementioned record, only the band around the Ospedale degli Innocenti (between the streets Via Laura and Via degli Agnoli) appears unbuilt like the other which appears on the drawing without subdivision of the lots.

Therefore, the subdivisions shown on the drawing of the Sangallo probably refer to an existing situation and that his predictions, which is necessary to connect the existing residential structure through the parcelling of the area with the Medici complex, are limited with the regularization of the zone and its symmetrical arrangement. This is proved by the design of a secondary road network that was planned but, of course, was never built and the exedra placed along the Via degli Agnoli, in correspondence of the main entrance of the residence which had evidently be the backdrop. The drawings of Uffizi based on an accurate census of the existing situation of that time are shown by the surprising affinity of parcelling that still appears unchanged in the modern cadastral plans. This affinity is also observed in how local land structure has remained substantially unchanged in the course of a half millennium.

<sup>4</sup> For example in the Temple of Jupiter Anxur in Terracina and the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia in Palestrina.



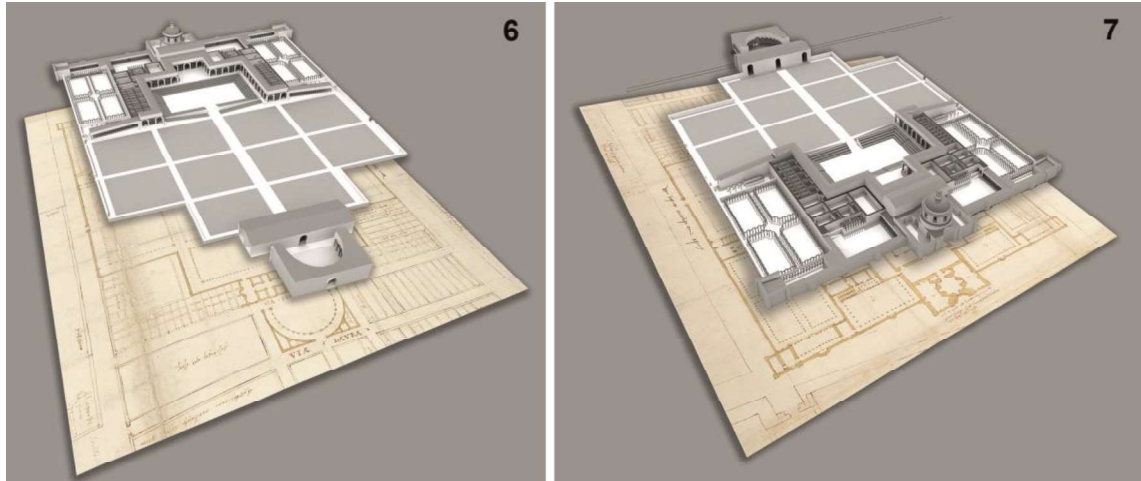
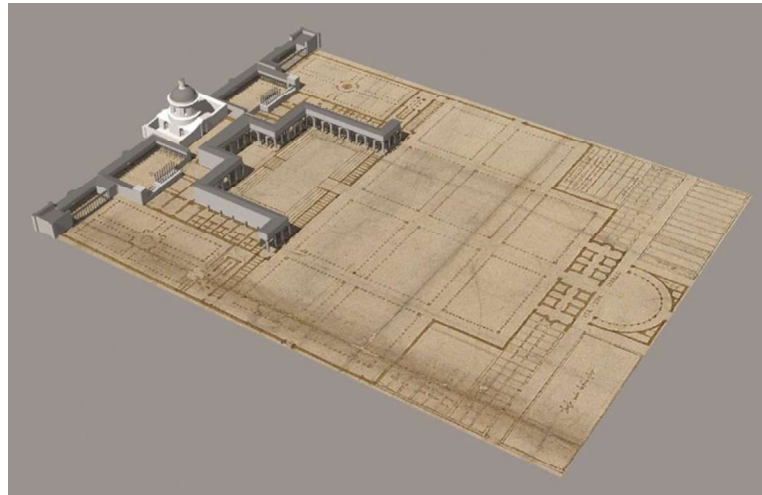


Figure 6,7 (up),8 (down). Some developing hypotheses derived from the thesis of Giuseppe Crisopulli in the Academic Year 2003-2004 through 3D digital models. Here we tried to show some hypotheses for understanding the volume of the Medici palace

Recognizing that the design is basing on actual state also means to notice that it does not refer to one of those ideal projects which architects used to draw to express their own ideal world during the Renaissance, or more specifically, to offer their patron for exchanging favors. On the contrary, the design of the Medici palace in Via Laura refers to a precise design operation directly connected to an operational program, even if still largely undefined.

An annotation that supports this conclusion appears on the drawing at the rear part of the complex. This wording suggests a possible variant to bring to the termination that the proposal was deemed too expensive<sup>5</sup>. Since an economic problem hardly relates to an ideal project, this wording is an argument that confirms the reality of the circumstances that gave rise to the drawing.

The period of Lorenzo the Magnificent coincided with the decline of the economic power of the Medici family<sup>6</sup> and was characterized by both extremely precarious financial conditions and a contradictory and unstable political situation which didn't agree with the creation of such an ambitious project.



<sup>5</sup> The writing that appears on the drawing is the following: “Posi di queste sale grande e te[m]pio quando / pare troppa ispessa farne uno giardino quadro / o segreto”. HEYDENREICH L. H., 1969, “La villa; genesi e sviluppi fino al Palladio” in *Bollettino del Centro Internazionale di Studi A. Palladio*, XI.

<sup>6</sup> Lorenzo was not interested in the family business that worsen: the branches of the Medici bank those in London and Bruges failed in 1478, afterwards that of Lyon had economic crisis in 1488. The downfall of the Medici companies ends in 1494, two years after the death of Lorenzo, with their complete failure which completely leaves despairing the holder of power, the unfortunate Pietro, the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who was expelled from Florence at the end of that year.

The heavy expenses of the construction of the building, which is called "palace" by many authors, the euphoria of Lorenzo that increasingly weakened due to the extended time of study according to the complexity of the project, the Prince's death occurred in 1492, left this work of Giuliano da Sangallo in oblivion. The same Sangallo, according to Marchini, tried several times to draw cheaper variants in the project, by abolishing or modifying elements or entire portions of the building to keep costs lower, but obviously the work, nonetheless, fell into that group of projects considered "utopian".

## **2. ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPLE DESIGN ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT**

### **2. 1. The Columns**

In the design of the Medici complex we find a vertiginous repetition of columns. The impression is that the architect has not spared the least neither in the number nor the diameter of the stems, or to the wheelbase; the architect has given no indications about why he added the circles, for example next to the ones that probably should have been the stables near the "secret garden", or in the large space that heralds the entrance to the real palace. In particular, it is unthinkable, according to the design that Giuliano would intend to create porches covered with hundreds and hundreds of columns, but it is equally unlikely that the signs represent isolated columns without coverage. This would suggest that it is not of columns, but the tabernacles, memorial stones or bases of statues.

### **2. 2. The Secret Gardens**

The attempt to identify the architectural elements of the two side secret gardens is surely arduous. The reference for the canopic of Hadrian's villa in Tivoli can be a plausible hypothesis for the steady succession of free-standing columns in the development of the plan and for the circular area at the center of the composition reminiscent of a reflection of water. The reference in Tivoli, beyond the evident similarities observed in its typology, also finds a correspondence from the functional point of view: the non-directly accessible space, therefore "secret" and "safe", a space of peace in which to walk and contemplate without being disturbed.

### **2. 3. The Courtyards and Peristyles**

The present circular marks in the parts alongside the temple and the outer parts toward the wall that get connected with angular buttresses are more easy to interpret. The first group, they certainly represent covered porches, arranged symmetrically respect to the longitudinal axis of the complex and adjacent to the temple. These porches are probably accessed through the staircase that separates them from a series of large rooms of for representation. For the second group placed at the corners of the building it is reasonable to think that these were used for sighting the courtyard-garden that shares the canopy, ie a kind of scenic brow that beautifies all and completes it at the same time.

### **2. 4. Exedra**

The indications relating to the entrance area assume a part of the building of remarkable sizes, formed by a series of columns arranged in a semicircle to suggest the exedra setting, reminiscent of old spa buildings or a Plinian porch. In the facade there should be certainly present a great entrance arch involving the sight of the dome of the temple according to the axial path as mentioned many times. It is also likely that the barrel cover follows the progress of the building.

### **2. 5. The Arcade and The Staircase on the Front**

The arcade has proved to be one of the most difficult and incomprehensible parts of the whole design. It represents a repetition of the score composed by columns with alternated entablature with arches on pillars, whereby it is critical to evaluate the distance between the posts, the size of the vertical elements, the number of spans and then the height. In the drawing, unfortunately, the traits and the diameters of the columns, which at that scale would have to be dots, don't help to assess the size of the columns. If the scale of the drawing is restored, alternating pillars-columns become distorted by creating an arcade that in its vertical elements doesn't represent consistency with the architectural vocabulary.

## 2. 6. The Columns of The Temple

For the pillars of the temple the only problem is the excessive size of the diameter which in that scale would be nearly two meters. The number of columns and their positions are directly obtainable from the drawing. Their proportion is determined through the evaluation of the height of the temple after being compared with similar buildings.

## 2. 7. The Thickness of The Walls

It can visibly be noticed the thickness of the walls being oversized, whereby they would reach the measure of a depth of three meters and, in some cases, would exceed this. Besides the difficulty lies not only in the disproportionate thickness, but also in the fact that the walls with the same function, for example walls that support the roof of the same compartment, have different thickness. It is worrisome that the walls, which in Giuliano's opinion had to be parallel or perpendicular, have curves on paper; this is because both for the author's attention to draw straight lines, and for mechanical reasons due to the action of the time that has worn down the sheet into several parts.

## 2. 8. The Symmetry

There is also the problem of symmetry, not so much for the failure due to the consummation of the sheet during the time. The symmetry related to the elements that are present in a symmetrical part of the drawing does not recur in the other part of the drawing, or their shape and size have been changed. This regards particularly the surrounding walls and of those dividing the various environments which change in thickness continuously. In addition, the design of the central part of the secret garden, while in one side is located at the center of the track with a columned niches, on the other side the niches are absent. Can it be a stylistic evidence of oversights of real asymmetries or later additions?

In the prospective part immediately following the grand entrance garden it is noticed that, just above the ramp, the signs about a colonnade (probably a covered walkway) are missing, which instead are present in the right side. Even in certain niches of the bottom of the drawing area, towards the avenues, they are present in the right side but not on the left side.

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