3. Decree of the Florentine Priors freeing Riccomanni from the Stinche prison, 20th December 1507. (ASF, Signori e Collegi, Deliberazioni di ordinaria autorità 109, fols.111v–112). I wish to thank Michael Hirst for bringing this document to my attention, and Gino Corti for help with the transcription of the text.

[*In margin:*] Approbatio nominationis Raphaelis pictoris.
[. . .] Raphaelem Ioannis Antonii, pictorem, ad presens in carceribus Stincarum Comunis Florentie obtente sub die XX novembris 1503, seu alio veriori die, ut ab ipsis confinibus liberetur secundum formam et dispositionem dicte deliberationis et seu legis et dicte nominationis exinde secute et rogate etiam manu eiusdem ser Francisci hac eadem presenti suprascripta die presentis mensis decembris.

4. Don Innocenzo Riccialbani commissions Raffaello Riccomanni to paint the tabernacle of his mother's chapel in Cestello, 4th August 1508. (ASF, Notarile Antecosimiano, 9262 [Francesco Gini, 1490–1509], fols.255–256).

[*In margin:*] Locatio tabule Sancti Sebastiani cistersiensis per dompnum Innocentium de Ricc[i]albanis.
Item postea dictis anno, indictione et die quarta mensis Augusti. Actum Florentie, in populo Sancti Petri Maioris et in monasterio Sancte Marie Magdalene de Florentia, Ordinis Cisterciensis, et presentibus testibus, videlicet Tomaso Mariotti Bronchelli, laboratore terrarum, ad presens ortolano dicti monasterii, et Micaelle Martini Francisci, muratore, populi Sancti Laurentii de Florentia.
Pateat omnibus evidenter quod Venerandus ac religiosus vir Dompnus Innocentius olim Gualterocti de Ricc[i]albanis de Florentia, abbas ad presens abbatie Sancti Salvatoris de Septimo, non ut abbas sed eius nomine propio [sic], locavit et concessit ad pingendum etc., cum pactis, modis et conditionibus infra vulgari sermone expressis,
Raffaello olim Ioannis Richomanni, pictori populi Sancte Marie in Verzaia intra menia Florentie, presenti et conducenti etc.,
Unam tabulam Sancti Sebastiani di rilievo, que est in ecclesia Sancte Marie Magdalene cistersiensi predicta, et in cappella matris dicti dompni Innocentii, hoc modo vulgari sermone expresso:

Che el decto Raffaello abbia a dipignere la decta tavola alle sue spese d'ogni cosa, c[i]oè colori, oro et ogni altra cosa, in questo modo, c[i]oè che abbia a dipignere el decto Sancto Bastiano di rilievo a olio, in modo che stia bene, a uso di buono maestro. Et il nichio drieto nel muro abbia a essere dipinto d'azurro di Magna, stellato d'oro fine, in buona forma, con una cornice che seguiti quella della tavola. Col fregio che si farà nella tavola messa di gesso o di legname a spese del decto conductore.
V'è dua figure in piano dallato al decto Sancto Bastiano, c[i]oè Sancto Ignatio et Sancto Rocho, le quali abbia a dipignere in buona forma, a uso di buono maestro, et di buoni colori, in modo che quando saranno fornite stia a giudicio et arbitrio di decto allogatore se gli piaceranno o no. Et in caso che non gli piaccino quando saranno finite, che decto Raffaello se l'abbia a ripigliare per sé, senza averne alchuno pagamento o prezzo. E' quali dua sancti abbia avere perfetti prima che cominci a dipignere alchuna altra cosa di decta tavola. Et in tale caso che non gli piacessino, la presente allogagione s'intenda per non fatta, et non abbia a dipigniere alchuna altra cosa di decta tavola, a beneplacito di decto allocatore. Et in caso che gli piaccino, abbia il resto della tavola a seguitare et mettere d'oro fine tutte le cornic[i]ame et intagli da piè et da chapo et in mezzo et per tutta decta tavola. Et e' fregi et pilastri abbino a essere o fregi o candellieri o lucerne d'oro fine, in buona forma, a uso di buono maestro, et e' campi d'azurro di Magna perfetto et buono et e' dua agnoli che sono di rilievo in su decta tavola abbino a essere messe d'oro fine o di cholori, a piacimento del decto allochatore, et la corona che tiene in mano uno di decti agnioli sia dorata et dipinta di gioie, in buona forma. La quale tavola abbia avere finita et perfetta el decto conductore per di qui a tutto Novembre proximo futuro. Della quale tavola con tutte le spese che vi facessi drento ne abbia avere dal decto locatore fiorini dic[i]asette larghi d'oro in oro.
Et promisit etc. dictus locator, dictis nominibus, dicto conductori, presenti etc., dictam locationem servare et etiam habere etc., contra non facere etc., et dictum pretium solvere dicto conductori etc. Et e converso dictus conductor promisit etc. dicto locatori, dictis nominibus, presenti etc., dictam tabulam pingere et perficere in bona forma et ad usum boni magistri, infra dictum tempus, omnibus suis expensis ut supra. Que omnia etc. promiserunt etc. dicte partes, dictis nominibus etc., observare etc., pena dupli dicti suprascripti pretii etc. Que pena etc., pena predicta etc., pro quibus etc. Obligantes, renuntiantes etc. guarantigiam etc. Rogantes etc.

The altered background of Raphael's 'Portrait of Pope Julius II' in the National Gallery

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WHEN IN 1969 the version of Raphael's *Portrait of Pope Julius II* in the National Gallery, London (Fig.60), was X-rayed at the request of Konrad Oberhuber[1] and subsequently cleaned, the discovery of a Borghese inventory number and a radically altered background confirmed that this was Raphael's prime version of this portrait, and the source of many later copies. The arguments for this identification were presented in detail in a booklet by Cecil Gould accompanying a special exhibition at the National Gallery.[2]

During the course of cleaning in 1970 a number of paint samples, particularly from the background, were investigated as cross-sections. The detailed account by Joyce Plesters of the National Gallery's Scientific Department, presented at the Raphael symposium at Princeton in 1983,[3] concluded that the first background created by Raphael for his sitter consisted of a hanging textile patterned with golden-yellow papal tiaras and crossed keys set

60. *Portrait of Pope Julius II*, by Raphael. 1511. Panel, 108 by 80.7 cm. (National Gallery, London).

61. X-radiograph of Fig.60.

62. Top to bottom: a. Paint cross-section from Julius II's red *mozzetta* consisting of two layers of orange-red and orange-brown opaque paint, with a thick layer of red lake glaze on top. The lowest mid-brownish grey layer is the *imprimitura* over the gesso ground and is therefore not part of the design layers. No gesso is present in this sample. Original magnification, 400x. b. Paint cross-section from the light ovoid shape visible in the X-radiograph (Fig.61) at the right edge. The sequence of layers is: gesso ground; mid-brownish grey *imprimitura*; pale blue consisting of lead white and a little azurite (this layer registers most strongly in the X-ray image); sequence of green layers of the present green background. Original magnification, 250x. c. Paint cross-section from the background right-hand edge, from a point between the motifs in the earlier version of the blue and yellow design. The sequence of layers is: gesso ground; mid-brownish grey *imprimitura*; mid-blue layer of background between motifs, consisting of azurite with lead white, in which a higher proportion of azurite is present than illustrated at Fig.62b above; sequence of green layers of the present green background. Original magnification, 275x. d. Paint cross-section from concealed papal tiara, upper-right corner. The sequence of layers is: gesso ground; mid-brownish grey *imprimitura*; golden-yellow paint of the crown of the tiara (largely yellow ochre, with small proportions of lead white and red lake); sequence of green layers of the present green background. Original magnification, 320x.
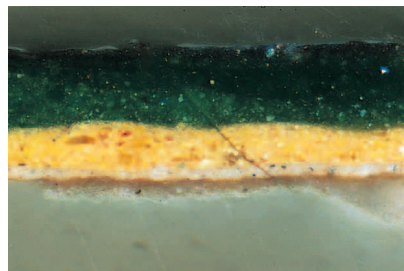
against a field of off-white, described as 'ivory-coloured' in tone. Neither Plesters nor Gould was able to provide a convincing explanation for the semicircular shape clearly visible in the X-radiograph, and to some degree on the surface of the picture, at the centre of the right edge (Fig.61). A cross-section had shown that this feature beneath the surface was painted a pale blue colour (with azurite and white), which led to the suggestion that it might represent a glimpse of sky revealed by a drawn-back curtain.
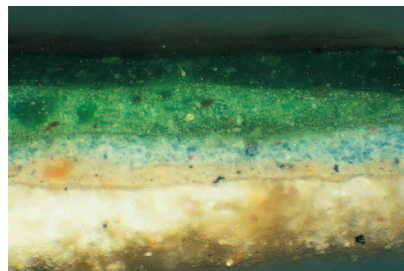
In the course of preparation for the current exhibition on Raphael at the National Gallery, the opportunity arose to re-examine the artist's works in the collection, including the *Portrait of Pope Julius II*. Additional cross-sections were made from samples taken at the edges of the composition in order to clarify the stages of development of the background. These new samples, examined in conjunction with the first series and the X-ray image, have allowed us to extend the earlier visualisation of the textile pattern, its colour scheme and the logic of its repeats.

A significant element in the reinterpretation of the cross-sections is the fact that the paint layer immediately on top of the gesso ground, a warm light- to mid-grey, previously thought to be the base colour of the textile, proves to be present in all paint samples,
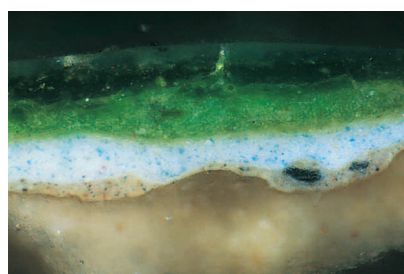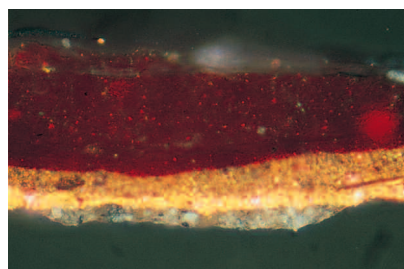
including one from Julius's red *mozzetta* (Fig.62a). As a result of increased understanding of the use of *imprimitura* layers over gesso grounds in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century paintings, this can now be identified as a priming, and not a design layer.[4]

Moreover, examination of the new cross-sections has established that the azurite and white paint (lying immediately over the *imprimitura*) of the mysterious shape at the right edge is in fact the base colour of the entire textile in the background (Fig.62b). The essential pattern consists of pale blue teardrop shapes, of which the feature at the right edge is one, set against a rather darker blue, also consisting of azurite and lead white (Fig.62c). The higher propor-

[4] See J. Dunkerton and M. Spring: 'The Development of Painting on Coloured Surfaces in Sixteenth-Century Italy', in A. Roy and P. Smith, eds.: *Painting Techniques, History, Materials and Studio Practice*, Contributions to the Dublin Congress of the International Institute for Conservation, London 1998, pp.120–30. The use of a coloured priming by Raphael is unusual and may have been influenced by contact with north Italian artists. In earlier paintings he consistently used an off-white priming containing lead white, lead-tin and powdered colourless glass; see A. Roy, M. Spring and C. Plazzotta: 'Raphael's Early Work in the National Gallery: Paintings before Rome', *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 25 (2004), pp.4–35.

[5] This suggestion that the unknown third emblem was a della Rovere oak, or, perhaps less plausibly, a papal umbrella, was first made in a letter dated 10th August 1970, preserved in the National Gallery 'History File', from Donald King, then Deputy Keeper, Department of Textiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, to Cecil Gould. As well as observing that 'it looks a perfectly reasonable textile pattern, perhaps woven rather than embroidered (a lot of silk textiles with papal emblems were woven in Italy from the 13th century onwards)', King pointed out that the blue paint at the right edge that had puzzled Gould and Plesters was likely to be part of the textile. For further discussion of the use of papal and family symbols in the por-

tion of lead white accounts for the visibility of these shapes in the X-radiograph, where they register as lighter areas. Within each teardrop, three motifs alternate horizontally across the design and, since neighbouring rows are offset, the motifs repeat diagonally. Two of the motifs are clearly visible both in the X-radiograph and to some degree on the picture itself. The first two, the crossed keys of St Peter and the tiara with fluttering ribbons beneath, are obvious papal symbols. Both are painted with a golden-yellow colour consisting mainly of yellow ochre enriched with a little red lake pigment (Fig.62d). These motifs were painted directly on to the *imprimitura* and the azurite and white of the teardrops was painted around them.

One can only guess at the design of the third motif (Fig.63). In the X-radiograph the relevant teardrops appear blank, which suggests that in these areas it was always Raphael's intention to paint this element of the design over the azurite and white base. This might suggest that this was to be a motif with a more complex contour. An appropriate one would be the golden oak tree, the symbol of the della Rovere family.[5] The only reason that the tiaras and crossed keys show in the X-radiograph is that the blue of their teardrop backgrounds is painted around them; therefore, if golden-yellow oak trees had been painted with the same pigment mixture over their blue teardrops, then they would not be expected to register radiographically. Alternatively, perhaps Raphael never got as far as painting the third motif before the background was altered to its present state.

The impression that the first background was abandoned before completion is supported by the fact that in all the paint samples only a single layer of colour is present that can be related to this first design. For the representation of a complex and sumptuous woven or embroidered textile one might expect to find superimposed applications of paint for details such as threads of gold along the rippling borders. Had it been completed, the wall-hanging in the portrait is likely to have been similar in its blue and gold colour scheme and richness of effect to the pluvial depicted in the representation of Julius II as *Gregory IX approving the Decretals* in Raphael's decoration of the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican.

It is not difficult to understand why the decision was taken to abandon such an elaborate and distracting backdrop. Indeed, it is tempting to suggest that Raphael may never have been happy with the idea, for the execution of the first textile as it appears in the X-radiograph is notably rough and coarse in execution, even taking into account the greater freedom of paint handling that is so strikingly evident in the depiction of the figure and throne.

Raphael applied the background we now see directly over the blue and gold design, which must have been obliterated by the solid, opaque light-green underpainting consisting of lead white and verdigris. The background was completed with glazes of verdigris in walnut oil. In the cast shadow and the vertical division indicating the corner of the room, glazes of red lake were superimposed over the green glazes to darken and intensify the shadows, a technique used in other paintings by Raphael.[6] Where these red lake glazes are present, the background paint is well preserved; in the lighter areas, where only a green glaze forms the surface paint, the final

63. Diagrammatic reconstruction of the first patterned background (drawn digitally by Rachel Billinge, Rausing Research Fellow at the National Gallery, London).

layers have, unfortunately, been damaged by an earlier cleaning. Presumably, this was why the background had been overpainted at some time before 1824, when the National Gallery acquired the picture. The removal of this overpaint in 1970 revealed that the green glaze had survived in better condition where it lay in depressions in the paint caused by the lesser thickness of the golden motifs, that is the crossed keys and tiaras, which are almost embedded in the thicker azurite and lead white paint that surrounds them. A consequence of the condition of the green glazes is that we now again see elements of the original design.[7] The background, however, should be imagined as a much darker green, particularly at the right, where it must have been as dark as the glaze that survives trapped in the crossed keys motif just to the right of the sitter's left shoulder, and with the colour evenly blended into the corner of the room, defined by the red lake glaze.[8] The best idea of its original appearance can be gained from a copy, perhaps of the later sixteenth century, which is now on display in the Sala degli Angiolini at the Palazzo Pitti in Florence.[9]

trait, see the catalogue entry by C. Plazzotta in H. Chapman, T. Henry and C. Plazzotta: exh. cat. *Raphael: From Urbino to Rome*, London (National Gallery) 2004, pp.272–75, no.99.

[6] See Roy, Spring and Plazzotta, *op. cit.* (note 4), esp. p.15.

[7] Some of the background motifs were already visible in July 1811 when a careful drawing was made by Henry Bone after the painting, then in the Angerstein collection (National Portrait Gallery Archive, Henry Bone Album, vol.II, 30b). Therefore, the background of the painting must have been damaged by cleaning before that date, and probably before it had entered the Angerstein collection. Since the present appearance of the background is the result of overcleaning, this invalidates James

Beck's argument that the symbols were never completely concealed and were intended as 'raised decorations on a green (velvet?) drapery'; see J. Beck: 'The Portrait of Julius II in London's National Gallery. The Goose that Turned into a Gander', *Artibus et historiae* 33 (1996), pp.69–95, esp. p.79.

[8] Beck, *ibid.*, p.83, observes the disturbing effect of the strong contrast between the well-preserved glazes that define the corner of the room and the now over-light area to the right.

[9] We are grateful to Serena Padovani of the Galleria Palatina, Florence, for arranging access to this version.