



The Loggia of Raphael: A Vatican Art Treasure

Nicole Dacos

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The loggia, or colonnaded porch, on the second story of the Apostolic Palace is one of the Vatican's most remarkable art treasures; its decoration, designed by Raphael (1483-1520) and executed by his workshop in 1517-19, epitomizes the spirit of the Italian Renaissance in its synthesis of Christian and classical themes. The thirteen square vaults of Raphael's loggia each contain four frescoes of scenes from the Bible, from the Creation to the Last Supper. Meanwhile, the plasterwork of the other architectural elements is decorated with grotesques and fanciful arabesques enlivened with a wide variety of human and animal figures modeled after ancient Roman wall paintings. This groundbreaking study of Raphael's loggia, the first to be published in English, has four parts. The first and second concern the grotesques and the scenes from the Bible, respectively, while the third examines the lives and artistic styles of the members of Raphael's workshop who worked with him on the loggia. The fourth part traces the loggia's enduring influence: the grotesque ornamental style elaborated by Raphael has been imitated as far afield as the corridors of the United States Capitol, and the Bible scenes served as influential models for popular prints. Illustrated throughout with newly commissioned color photographs, this book reaffirms the central importance of Raphael's loggia to the history of art.

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