

Document name: Letter from Pandolfo Pico in Rome to Isabella d'Este in Mantua  
Document date: 2003  
Copyright information: Proprietary and used under license  
OpenLearn Study Unit: Artists and authorship: the case of Raphael  
OpenLearn url: <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/artists-and-authorship-the-case-raphael/content-section-0>

---

## Letter from Pandolfo Pico in Rome to Isabella d'Este in Mantua, 7 April 1520

*Shearman, J.*

Shearman, J. (2003) *Raphael in Early Modern Sources 1483–1602*, 2 vols, New Haven, CT and London, Yale University Press, vol. 1, p. 575, translation by K. Christian.

# Letter from Pandolfo Pico in Rome to Isabella d'Este in Mantua, 7 April 1520

**Shearman, J. (2003) *Raphael in Early Modern Sources 1483–1602*, 2 vols, New Haven, CT and London, Yale University Press, vol. 1, p. 575, translation by K. Christian.**

[An ambassador of the Court of Mantua in Rome, Pico is writing to the Duchess of Mantua Isabella D'Este, a major art patron in her own right.]

For now you need learn about nothing else other than the death of Raphael of Urbino, who died last night, on Good Friday, leaving this court in great and universal mourning over his loss, and over the hopes of all the great things that were expected of him, which would have brought honour to his age [...] The heavens sent warnings of this death, one of them the same that forebode the death of Christ when 'the stones split',<sup>1</sup> that is when the palace of the pope opened up and threatened ruination, and His Holiness out of fear fled from his apartments and went to those that Pope Innocent had built.

Here no one is speaking of anything other than the death of this good man, who at the end of his 33 years has finished his first life, but his second life, that of his Fame, which is not subject to time or death, will be eternal, both for his works and for the efforts of the learned men who write in his praise, and for this they do not lack inspiration.

[...] The aforementioned Raphael was honourably buried in the Pantheon where he has ordered that a tomb costing 1,000 ducats be constructed to his memory.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matthew 27: 50–2 describing Christ's Crucifixion: 'And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.'