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## **Letter from Celio Calcagnini in Rome to Jacob Ziegler in Ferrara, c 1530s–40s]**

*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. 548, translation by J. Shearman.

## Letter from Celio Calcagnini in Rome to Jacob Ziegler in Ferrara, c.1530s–40s

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[Composed before 1544, describing Raphael at the end of his life, c.1519–20.]

Calcagnini describes his acquaintances in Rome, including ‘a man who is quite rich and very pleasing to the Pope, Raphael of Urbino, a man in the prime of his life, possessing the highest goodness but wondrous talent. He excels in the great virtues, being easily the prince of all painters, whether one looks to theory or practice, and also such an assiduous architect that he discovers and perfects those things which the cleverest talents considered simply impossible. [...] Now indeed he is carrying out a work to be marvelled at, one posterity can scarcely credit – I don’t think I need speak now about the Vatican basilica, the construction of which he directs – but he clearly demonstrates the City [of Rome] itself restored to its ancient appearance, greatness, and symmetry. For having carved out the highest mountains and deepest foundations, and referred the matter to the description and plan of the ancient writers, he has so roused Pope Leo and all the citizens of Rome to amazement, that all men suspect a godhead has been sent down, as it were, from on high to repair the ancient City in its pristine majesty. He is so far from preening because of it that, to the contrary, he spontaneously makes himself accessible and friendly to all, shunning no one’s admonition or discussion, since no one rejoices more readily than he that his plans are called into doubt or dispute, and thinks that the reward of life is to be taught and to teach.