

The Power of Place



A Festschrift for Janet Goodhue Smith

Edited by

Robert Timothy Chasson and
Thomas J. Sienkewicz

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Robert Timothy Chasson
Thomas J. Sienkewicz

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Foreword



“The world is a book that demands to be read like a book.”

– Umberto Eco

This book grew from a wellspring of admiration, appreciation, and affection among faculty of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest for Janet Smith, who taught students to read the world in the stunningly rich artistic and historic setting of Florence and its Tuscan neighbors. The contributors to this volume participate on behalf of their many colleagues who have collaborated with Janet Smith over the past three decades, and in recognition of her distinctive contribution to a pedagogy of place.

Faculty from the ACM colleges – primarily in the humanities and social sciences – sent their undergraduate students to the off-campus programs in Florence, owned and operated jointly by the ACM colleges, to study with Janet Smith. She taught in or led the program for 35 years, from 1974 to 2010. Charged with the onsite education of these students, Janet introduced some 2,500 students to the Palazzo Vecchio, the Duomo, the Renaissance streets of Florence and neighboring Tuscan towns during her years with the program. ACM faculty themselves came as well, spending a year or a semester as visiting faculty with the ACM’s Florence programs.

As anyone who has spent any time on site with Janet knows, she lives and breathes the art and history of this magnificent city and its environs, and this is the subtext to all her conversations. Walking through Florence with Janet Smith is an illuminating experience: a walk on the street from the ACM program office to a nearby *trattoria* always includes having one’s attention drawn to fifteenth-century legacies and hearing of their subsequent histories. Janet creates for her companions, whether students or colleagues, a narrative envelope that is both intellectual and affective, rich with the stories of the city’s treasures and with her reflections on their meanings and origins. To talk with Janet is to join the ongoing intellectual conversation she has carried forward in discussions with generations of students and faculty from the ACM colleges. It is a marvel and a joy to experience.

As any of Janet’s former students can tell you, her

intensely caring and boundless interest was not only intellectual. During the course of a semester, students typically experience misfortunes, both great and small – from family tragedies back home to changes in personal relationships – and they always received solace and comfort, as well as sensible guidance and encouragement, from Janet. Janet and her Florentine husband Giovanni – a fabulous cook, former restaurateur and dedicated supporter of his wife’s passionate care for students and scholarship – have been generous hosts to generations of students and the Florentine families with whom they lived.

The ACM faculty members who went to Florence each year to teach as visiting professors in their fields found in Janet an astute guide to the rich resources for teaching and research in Florence, as well as extensive wisdom on how to adapt their pedagogies from a campus classroom setting to teaching on site. They also found a savvy advisor on how to settle their families into the routines and details of an Italian apartment and daily life, a helpful source of information about schools for their children and, without doubt, a reliable guide to Tuscan culinary pleasures.

For nearly all of these years, beginning in 1985, Janet collaborated closely in these efforts with her colleague and fellow art historian, Gail Solberg. With complementary teaching and scholarly approaches, they shared passions for their subjects and their students.

In an era when education is turning increasingly to online instruction available to students who are located anywhere, it is particularly interesting to consider the pedagogy of place that emerged in the career of Janet Smith. Janet’s teaching showed that while one can now bring in knowledge from anywhere – and she was delighted, for example, to gain access to JSTOR for her students and faculty through the generosity of her colleagues at Monmouth College – discovery is most likely to occur *in situ*.

You might say that intellectual discovery “takes place” at a site. Places provide “teaching moments” or (teaching “sites”) where observation, information, and reflection are married with direct experience, producing the opportunity to understand things that

would otherwise not be evident. Janet took ample advantage of this to help students understand the revolutionary aesthetic developments of Renaissance art and architecture in Florence, as well as to discern the social, economic, technical, and political contexts that helped to foster the extraordinary creativity that is often in plain view in the bustling but hushed homes that are now museums - to those who learn to see.

Place will be increasingly important to liberal arts colleges, despite the tsunami of digital resources that is approaching higher education, after already upending such diverse sectors as journalism, retailing, or the music industry. Whether through engaging with a world-famous historic or artistic site, or offering students civic engagement opportunities with a local community in a college town, the *use* of place to learn will become a distinctive value afforded by

the best liberal arts colleges, on their campuses and their off-campus study programs, among many virtual opportunities for learning.

Janet's pedagogy and its grounding in place have not only endeared her to faculty and students. Her students have also gone on to become scholars in their own right and to see the art, architecture, cities and the world differently as a result. Janet won a passionately loyal following among faculty at ACM colleges who recommended that their students spend the time and resources to leave campus for a term and study on the program Janet led.

Janet has been an invariably stimulating colleague and a loyal friend and teacher. The authors of this book - both ACM faculty and former students - aim to live up to these virtues in this volume, and we trust the reader will find they've succeeded.

Christopher Welna



Preface

Botticelli, Bureaucrats and Bankers: A View of Florence from Chicago

Most people think of Botticelli and other great artists when they think of Florence. They visit Florence to view the striking architecture and glorious painting, while exploring the narrow streets of the largely intact Renaissance city. My reason for visiting Florence over the last decade was more prosaic. Although I looked at many examples of art and architecture, often with ACM students, my main focus was the sphere of bureaucrats and bankers, centered on the responsibility of administering the ACM programs in Florence. My guide to the world of the arts and the world of the bureaucrats was Janet Smith, the chief administrator for the ACM programs for over 35 years. I write here to honor Janet and her work, and to illustrate the context in which Janet strived to present the world of art and architecture to ACM students and faculty, while negotiating the demands imposed by the bureaucrats and bankers.

These comments are part of a *Festschrift* in honor of Janet, compiled by a group of ACM faculty and others who worked with Janet over the years. They envisioned a volume in the tradition of scholarly collections put together for the retirement of a mentor and inspirational figure for numbers of academics. As an administrator, I am not in a position to contribute a scholarly or creative work to reflect my debt to Janet, and my remarks are in the tradition of personal reminiscences developed for administrative colleagues. My perspective contrasts the cultural vitality that draws visitors to Florence with the obstacles impeding access to Florence by the bureaucrats and bankers protecting their interests. ACM staff in Chicago worked with Janet to surmount these obstacles and continue the program as a resource for faculty and students. Within ACM, we worked to serve the particular goals of ACM colleges, while also working within the expectations defining study abroad in American higher education.

The ACM Florence programs are among the oldest and most esteemed of the consortial off-campus

programs, successful in their appeal to both students and faculty and in their high academic quality. Janet Smith, guiding the programs since their creation in the early 1970s, was central to this success. The academic quality reflected her leadership as an accomplished art historian and a dedicated teacher. The stability and longevity of the program emerged from her administrative skills, and her determination to provide a rich experience for students while negotiating the maze of requirements: accounting for program expenses, explaining American undergraduates to Italian families, finding the best train schedules and fares for field trips and more.

The Florence programs embodied the organizational structure common to most American study abroad programs during the 1970s. Known as “island programs,” they brought a group of American students to live together in a foreign site, studying in their own classrooms, bringing American faculty with them, taking classes designed to fit their home college requirements. Janet took this framework and made sure that students focused on their academic goals and also engaged with Italian culture. The curriculum, designed and reviewed by the faculty advisors for the program from ACM campuses, focused on Renaissance Florence and Italy and required students to explore the city and learn about the art in the context of the artists and patrons who created it. Janet and her colleagues designed courses that moved around the city; while students might complain about standing in cold churches or beneath dripping umbrellas, they learned about individual buildings or frescoes in the setting where they were created. ACM faculty who came from their home campus to teach in the program were advised by colleagues in the States how to situate their courses in the world of Florence, and then were guided by Janet to identify sites and settings that informed and inspired their syllabus.

By the end of the twentieth century, professionals in study abroad were moving away from the “island program” model to find better ways to engage students in local cultures. Partly because of the consortial framework, ACM programs continued the traditional structure, and Janet worked to enable students to engage in Florence and Italy within that framework. Living with Italian families was a key element of that engagement, but it worked only because of Janet’s tireless effort to identify welcoming families, help those families understand the confusion of young students often abroad for the first time, and explain to the students why their families were sometimes dismayed by their behavior.

Another important aspect of engaging students in their new environment was the field trips to other centers of art and culture. Rome and Venice were regular destinations, and other shorter excursions were often arranged. Janet wanted students to travel like Italians, using the train and staying in modest *pensioni*. Once settled, Janet, along with the visiting ACM faculty and her long time associate Gail Solberg, guided these students to the great artistic sites, long days with lots of walking and lots of information to help the students integrate new material into the vision of Renaissance culture the program created. Everyone was tired when the field trips were finished, but Janet seemed to have an immense store of energy to sustain the high quality of this part of the program.

While ACM officers and faculty worked together to enrich the programs’ academic and personal value to students, they relied on Janet to implement their goals. Janet drew upon her insights as a long-term resident of Florence and an active member of the network of art historians that focused on Florence to make the necessary arrangements, building personal connections and avoiding entanglement with bureaucrats and officials that would only complicate program goals. By the middle of the 1980s and into the 1990s, Italian bureaucracy began to cast a larger shadow over program operations. American and other foreign students and their institutional representatives proliferated in Italy, and Italian government and fiscal authorities began to replace their traditional mode of operating through personal negotiations with clearer regulations that required more explicit categories of legal behavior and more insistent requirements to report to authorities.

Italian ministries adopted new regulations for foreign academic programs and established enforcement mechanisms and fines to ensure that they were followed. Bigger programs hired lawyers and

accountants to determine how to follow the new rules. Smaller programs like ACM didn’t have the resources to hire lawyers and accountants, and we relied on Janet to figure out what to do. Over the years Janet learned what fiscal regulations applied to ACM and what records needed to be kept. Relationships with families and *pensioni* that had been carried out in cash now required receipts and other documentation, a process that increased the workload for Janet in several ways, including the need to convince long-time colleagues that new procedures were necessary.

New regulations complicated program operations in Florence, and also complicated the process of getting students and faculty to Florence. Requirements that students have visas became more explicit, and students needed to provide information for visa applications. Staff in the Chicago office worked with students to get the proper forms filled out, and relied on Janet to explain to us exactly what the forms requested. Visas for faculty were even more complicated, since faculty were teaching, but not in an Italian university which could process a visa. Faculty had to apply for a visa through an Italian consulate in Chicago or other ACM cities, and this introduction to Italian bureaucracy, with visa offices open at seemingly arbitrary hours, applications consistently rejected and then eventually granted, provided a small taste of the bureaucratic hurdles that Janet negotiated throughout the year.

Changes in the structure of the ACM programs evolved in response to the bureaucratic demands. Janet and Gail had to adjust their employment status to follow Italian employment law. Once again Janet had to get accurate information about how the employment contracts needed to be reported and which taxes and fees applied. Janet became expert in identifying sources of information about employment law and how to choose among alternative approaches. She needed Italian experts who understood Italian law, as well as reliable American colleagues who understood how Italian law might or might not apply to American program.

ACM faculty who have worked with Janet will know that the core of the growing bureaucratic tangle was the question of the legal status of the program. Too many meetings of program advisors went over and over the question of program “legalization.” In order to exist within the bureaucratic world governing American programs, ACM needed a legal identity; the idiosyncratic structure of the ACM program made it difficult to meet the requirements for legal recognition. For years, Janet took ACM faculty and ACM officers to meetings with lawyers, government

officials, and staff of other programs to understand how to proceed. While those of us in the Chicago office met with consulate staff, notaries, and lawyers, Janet continued to manage program affairs successfully, meeting bureaucratic requirements when she could, providing required reports when possible, and always enhancing student learning in spite of all the bureaucratic confusion.

It should be said that ACM's ability to stay on the right side of the numerous and sometimes conflicting requirements was possible because of on-going guidance and assistance from our colleagues at Scuola Linguaviva, particularly Sandro Vidoni, the long-time Director. Janet worked relentlessly to maintain our productive relationship with Linguaviva, most importantly making sure that ACM students had good teachers and good schedules, supporting the language teachers and encouraging them to strengthen their curriculum over the years. She worked with the Director to deal with some of the legal and bureaucratic requirements, in effect enabling Linguaviva to sponsor the program operations we valued, including legally hiring our employees, sponsoring ACM faculty, or arranging reduced ticket costs for trains or museums.

Italian bureaucrats inspired much gnashing of teeth, followed only by Italian bankers. Although Florence was the city where modern banking developed, banking operations in the 1980s and '90s were complex and inefficient. Financial relationships had to be done in person and in cash. Working with bankers always required long waits and requests to return another day. Transfers of cash from the United States were slow and deposits sometimes vanished only reappearing after numerous investigations in both Chicago and Florence. Visiting ACM faculty were regularly assigned the task of obtaining bank statements and making withdrawals, but too often they had to call on Janet for assistance.

Several times over the years Janet encouraged ACM to change banks in hope of finding better service and reliability. Opening and closing bank accounts brought bankers and bureaucrats together in a long process of paperwork. Janet provided direction for us in Chicago, but still the process of maintaining international banking activities required extensive correspondence and follow-up. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, international banking regulations became more demanding, but also more predictable and perhaps more transparent. The many-layered process of banking and financial reporting for the Florence programs became a little smoother.

Janet had to guide the educational operations of the program while working within the many bureaucratic and banking complications of Florence, but she also had to deal with the complicated organization of the ACM office and the ACM colleges. Consortial practices had to be followed, and college requirements for transcripts had to be observed, even as the fourteen consortial members had diverse sets of requirements. ACM faculty were a vital part of the consortial program, and the opportunity for faculty to spend a year teaching and studying in Florence was a rich benefit for many individuals and for their home institutions.

Integrating visiting ACM faculty into Florence operations was another responsibility that Janet managed. An ACM committee selected visiting faculty after evaluating their proposed courses. Sometimes prospective faculty proposed courses similar to what they taught on their home campus, but more often they looked at teaching in Florence as a way to expand their expertise and develop new, Florence-related courses. Most visiting faculty had limited expertise in Florence-related material and coming to Florence was an opportunity to envision new courses and experiment with new pedagogies, as well as acquire new language skills. Each year Janet had the challenge of helping visiting ACM faculty get settled so they could contribute their skill and enthusiasm to the student experience. This might involve helping the faculty member and family move in and find schools, begin to function in Italian, learn to get around the city, and shape a course that provided students with a perspective on Italian culture or history, using both classroom and city resources. Each year Janet used her personal skill to judge what assistance visiting faculty needed, what responsibilities each faculty member could take on, and how she could support their professional development. Over the years, numerous faculty have developed new academic interests and expertise through Janet's support, and many warm and close friendships have resulted.

My experience highlights Janet's support for us in Chicago and faculty coming from ACM colleges, but I cannot fail to emphasize Janet's immense concern and affection for students that made their Florence experience so valuable. Janet could always describe student weaknesses, whether their inability to write clearly, their reluctance to practice their Italian, or confusion over Biblical or classical images in the art pervading Florence. But she never wavered in her patience or encouragement, and provided hospitality, support and inspiration to help them understand

the city she knew and loved. Students valued their time in this wonderful city and they appreciated the opportunity to learn about a rich culture and history, but Janet's warmth and enthusiasm were key to their academic achievements and their personal growth on the program.

Janet was the essential guide for faculty, students and ACM staff to function among the winding streets and bureaucratic mazes of living and working in Florence. She acquired her skills over decades of living in Florence. And she had her own essential native guide, her husband Giovanni. Giovanni grew up in a small village in the mountains, and worked most of his life in restaurants. He knew how to get things done in Italy, and operating restaurants brought him face to face with bureaucrats and expanding regulations. His experiences gave Janet a perspective for knowing when requirements could be postponed or ignored, and when they had to be followed. As Janet managed the paperwork and labor contracts for Giovanni's restaurant, she cultivated a sensitivity to bureaucratic requirements that served ACM well. Giovanni's help and encouragement were important in multiple

areas of managing ACM, whether moving furniture or packing up computers, whether finding medical assistance for students, or helping them to understand rivalries in Italian soccer leagues.

All of us benefitted from Janet's wisdom and judgment in leading the ACM Florence programs for so many years. Trying to describe and summarize the secret of her success in juggling so many tasks, I remember her comments one day when we were planning a complicated expedition: "Simple is boring!" Most of us try to minimize and avoid the hard work of re-thinking academic requirements, travel planning, and bureaucratic regulations. Janet never shrank from these tasks. She relished the challenges of taking an excellent program, evaluating the new demands from an Italian ministry or the Chicago consortial office, and making it even stronger. She worked with modest resources in a complex environment, and year after year offered students a rich opportunity to learn and grow. I treasure the twenty-five years I worked with Janet, salute her achievements, and cherish her friendship.

Elizabeth Hayford





Janet Goodhue Smith



Janet Smith was born in Washington D.C. on June 11, 1942, while her father was working for the War Production Board. In 1947 the family moved to the suburbs outside of Philadelphia. During her high school years she spent many Saturdays at the Philadelphia Museum of Fine Arts, which may have planted the seeds for her future career. She entered Radcliffe College in the fall of 1960 and started to major in architecture, but by the end of the sophomore year decided that it would be better to have a more liberal arts background before doing graduate work. She changed to English literature and graduated *cum laude* in 1964 with a thesis on D.H. Lawrence's paintings. It was the first year that Radcliffe women graduated under the name of Harvard and not as a separate college under Harvard's wing. Although an English major, she still found time to take and audit quite a few art history courses. For a Harvard summer school course on American architecture, she wrote a paper on the Boston Long Wharf and decided to pursue a career in the history of architecture, rather than becoming an architect. She went to Yale to work with Carroll Meeks on the Greek revival architect of Long Wharf, Isaiah Rogers, but when Meeks died, she turned to her English literature training and wrote a Master's thesis on George Romney's drawings for an

illustrated version of Coleridge's *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* and would have ended up in the nineteenth century if it had not been for George Hersey's course in Italian Renaissance architecture. She became a grader for him and started to work on late fifteenth-century, military architecture.

A fellowship from the Italian government allowed her to go to Italy for the first time in November, 1967. She arrived exactly a year after the devastating flood of 1966 and the city was still recuperating. She travelled around a good part of central Italy photographing fortresses and working in various libraries and archives. Her work eventually focused on the whole architectural career of one of the military architects, Antonio da San Gallo the Elder, and she did extensive research on him in Montepulciano, where most of his more important buildings are. She returned to Yale for the spring semester of 1969 and passed her oral exams for the Ph.D. A grant from the Committee to Rescue Italian Art (CRIA) brought her back to Italy, where she spent eighteen months up-dating the catalogue of architectural drawings in the Uffizi Drawing Cabinet. From 1972-73 she was a fellow of the newly instituted Robert Longhi Foundation.

In 1973 she started teaching for the Lake Forest College program in Florence and the next year went

to Bologna two days a week to teach for Dennison College. In the fall of 1974 she began to teach for the Associated Colleges of the Midwest program and she spent the rest of her career teaching for them and eventually administering the program. In the early years, when she did not have administrative responsibility, she found time to teach twice for an American Trust for Historical Preservation study program and in 1989 she taught one course each semester for the Georgetown University program in Fiesole. Two summers she taught art history courses for a group of Freudian psychoanalysts and for several years taught for the William and Mary program. In May of 1994 she went to Colorado College to team teach with Susan Ashley a course on the family. As she became more involved with running the program she also participated in the (AACUPI) Association of American College and University Programs in Italy, serving as the Florentine representative for one year.

In December of 1979 Janet married Giovanni Tonarelli, which involved her in his various entrepreneurial enterprises. These ranged from a

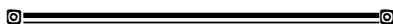
tile factory in Sicily to three different restaurants in Florence and an artisan business that produced hand-colored reproductions of antique prints. Both Janet and Giovanni are now retired and spend their time between Florence and a rustic farmhouse in the hills above the Tuscan coast south of Livorno.

Publications:

"A Peruzzi Drawing of the Villa Madama," *Architettura* 2 (1974).

"The Convent of Santa Umiltà in Florence." In *Festschrift in Honor of Charles Speel*. Edited by T. J. Sienkewicz and J. E. Betts. Monmouth College, Monmouth, IL, 1996).

A re-worked version was published in a collection of articles in connection with a symposium at the University of Georgia. "Santa Umiltà of Faenza: Her Florentine Convent and Its Art." In *Visions of Holiness: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Italy*, Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, 2001.



Courses Taught by Janet Goodhue Smith ACM Florence Programs – 1975-2009

1975	Creation and Preservation of Art	1987	Renaissance Art of Central Italy
1976	Art and Architecture of Renaissance Italy		Florentine Sculpture, 1250-1600
1977	The Art of Renaissance in Florence	1988	Renaissance Art of Central Italy
1978	The Art of the Renaissance in Florence		The History of Medieval and Renaissance Florence
	Italian Art: Renaissance to Early Baroque	1988	The History of Medieval and Renaissance Florence
1979	The Art of the Renaissance in Florence	1989	Florentine Sculpture, 1250-1600
	Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Art in Italy	1990	Renaissance Art of Central Italy
1980	Renaissance Art of Central Italy		<i>Amici, Vicini e Parenti: An Historical Perspective of</i>
	High Renaissance, Mannerism, and Early Baroque		Fifteenth Century Florence
	Art in Italy	1991	Renaissance Florence and Antiquity
1981	Renaissance Art of Central Italy		From Donatello to Michelangelo
	High Renaissance, Mannerism, and Early Baroque	1992	From Donatello to Michelangelo
	Art in Italy	1993	Antiquity and Renaissance Florence
1982	Renaissance Art of Central Italy		Seminar on Leonardo da Vinci
	High Renaissance, Mannerism, and Early Baroque		Convents and Monasteries
	Art in Italy	1994	Medieval and Renaissance Florence
1983	Renaissance Art of Central Italy		Women as Protagonists and Patrons of Italian Art
	Renaissance Architecture		Around Pontormo: Late Fifteenth & Early
1984	Renaissance Art of Central Italy		Sixteenth Century Art in Florence & Rome
	Renaissance Architectures	1995	Medieval and Renaissance Florence
1985	Renaissance Art of Central Italy		Brunelleschi
	Renaissance Sculpture and Architecture, 1250-1580		Florentine Sculpture: 1250-1550
1986	Renaissance Art of Central Italy	1996	Medieval and Renaissance Florence
1986	Tuscan Gothic and Early Renaissance Architecture		Florentine Mannerism
	and Sculpture, 1250-1500		The Italian Family

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| 1997 | Medieval and Renaissance Florence
The Relationship between Painting and Sculpture
in Italy: 1450-1550
An Urban and Architectural History of Florence | 2003 | The Arts of Florence: The Medici Family
and the Arts
Michelangelo's Florence
Women as Protagonists and Patrons of Italian Art |
| 1998 | The City of Florence
Art In Savonarola's Florence
An Urban and Architectural History of Florence | 2004 | The Arts of Florence: The Medici Family
and the Arts
Architecture as a Stage for Florentine Life
over the Centuries
The Sacred and the Profane in Renaissance
and Baroque Italian Sculpture |
| 1999 | Florence: the Arts in Context
Central Italian Art at the Turn of the
Half-Millennium
An Architectural History of Florence | 2005 | The Arts of Florence in Context
The Divine Michelangelo
Florentine Family Palaces and Funerary Chapels |
| 2000 | The Arts of Florence in Context
An Architectural History of Florence
Heaven, Hell or Purgatory: The Relationship
between Italian Art and
Christian Religion from 1250 to 1650 | 2006 | The Arts of Florence in Context
Florentine Family Palaces and Funerary Chapels
The Strange Art of 16-Century Italy |
| 2001 | The Arts of Florence in Context: Stages,
Actors and Spectators
An Architectural History of Florence
Ten Generations of Medici Patronage in Florence | 2007 | The Arts of Florence in Context
Florentine Architecture from Romanesque
to Baroque
The <i>Paragone</i> : Painting vs. Sculpture in 14 th to 17 th
Century Italy |
| 2002 | The Arts of Florence in Context: Stages, Actors
and Spectators
An Architectural History of Florence
The Sacred and Profane in Italian Renaissance
and Baroque Art | 2008 | The Arts of Florence in Context
Ten Generations of Medici Patronage
Heaven, Hell and Purgatory: The Relationship
Between Italian Art and the Christian Religion |
| | | 2009 | The Arts of Florence in Context |

Teaching in Florence for Thirty-Six Years



Janet Goodhue Smith

My colleague in the first years was Beverly Brown. We taught pretty straight-forward, Florentine Renaissance survey courses, which were usually about half in the classroom and half on-site. One comes to teaching abroad with an American classroom mentality and it seemed to us that you needed to prepare the students for what they would see by giving a lesson with slides before going on-site. This, obviously, cut down on the number of places one could go. Most of the reading was from Frederick Hartt's textbook *Italian Renaissance Art*, which has been criticized for being too Florentine-centric but, for that reason, it worked fairly well for us. We were still thinking in terms of our graduate school training and emphasized the development of individual artists. When Beverly went back to the States to start teaching there, William Levin took her place. His speciality was fourteenth-century painting, mine late fifteenth-century architecture, so we began to divide things up a bit, according to our interests, and we started to offer more specialized courses in the fall. In that period I did one on medieval palaces and tower houses, one on fifteenth-century architecture in general and twice I did a course on Brunelleschi. Once you start teaching something so specific, you can no longer use a textbook, and we started to adopt photocopies of chapters from books and from art history periodicals. The main research libraries in Florence are not open to American undergraduates, so this meant that we had to make the copies either at the Harvard Renaissance Center at I Tatti or at the German Kunsthistorisches Institut. Over the years we accumulated thousands of articles. The visiting professors also brought over photocopied material for their courses, which enriched the ACM library in history, classics, music history, literature and political science.

Sometimes my course choices were based on centennial celebrations. For example, in the fall of 1983 there was a big exhibition on Raphael at the Palazzo Pitti, for the 500th anniversary of his birth. I love Raphael but the students did not "get" him.

Students are too young to appreciate the classical perfection of Raphael and prefer the mystery of Leonardo or the angst of Michelangelo. In 1980 George Saunders taught a course on Millennialism and left a lot of material on Savonarola. To mark the 500th anniversary of Savonarola's death in 1998 there were various events, among them a reading of his sermons by an actor with a wonderful booming voice, which reverberated off the vaults of the Duomo. This was the occasion to teach "Savonarola and Art." I still think of that course with great affection and I recycled it later into "Central Italian Art at the Turn of the Millennium." I remember the year that I did a course on Leonardo da Vinci. In this case there was no real stimulus besides the desire to know more about him and to take advantage of Chiara Briganti's husband Paolo Dini, a physicist who gave presentations on the scientific aspects of Leonardo. The year after, 1994, I taught Pontormo, because it was 500 years after his birth and there was an exhibition.

In 1980 Bill Levin returned to the States and for several years my colleague was Arthur Iorio. When he went home in 1985, Gail Solberg started teaching and has been with ACM ever since. A few times the visiting faculty were art historians - Rick Ortner in 1988-89, Edith Kirsch in 1990-91 and Tim Chasson 1996-97. In order to have some variety in the course offerings, I taught straight Florentine history. This was not difficult, because over the years we art historians had been abandoning biography and stylistic development and were becoming more concerned with the historical context. A majority of the visiting faculty were historians, so I always tried to keep up the library, buying the latest books on medieval and Renaissance Florence. Their authors were often friends, who had spent a year at I Tatti writing them. Before putting the books on the library shelf, I always read them. One year I taught "Amici, Vicini and Parenti" (Friends, Neighbors and Relatives), a course based on a book by two friends, Dale and William Kent. Then I began to concentrate on the Medici

and started with a monographic course on Lorenzo il Magnifico and later did one called “Ten Generations of Medici Patronage.” I can’t remember whether I taught the course on the Italian Family before or after I went to Colorado College to team-teach a course on the family with Susan Ashley. Teaching history several times pushed me even further towards a contextual approach in art history. Sometimes one would be hard put to say whether my courses belonged in a history or an art history department.

In the fall of 1996 Tim Chasson taught a monographic course on Michelangelo, which inspired me to do the same – and take advantage of material he had brought over. I had done surveys of sculpture called “From Donatello to Michelangelo,” and a course just on Donatello, but had never attempted Michelangelo. Over the years I revamped that course. The last version was called “Divine Michelangelo.” Several times I devised courses comparing painting and sculpture. One was called “The Paragone: Painting and Sculpture in 14th to 17th Century Italy.” Both Gail and I did women oriented courses. One of mine was called “Women as Protagonists and Patrons of Italian Art.” Having a classicist here (Dan Taylor, Tom Sienkewicz, Steve and Brenda Fineberg, Pericles George) always inspired me to think about the influence of the ancient world on the Renaissance and several courses evolved, such as “Antiquity and the Italian Renaissance.”

Architecture was my real field of interest and it is the most difficult to teach in a classroom. You need to see a building in its urban context and be able to walk around it and through it. Therefore, because on-site is so essential for understanding it, I tried to offer architecture in some format almost every year. After the rather specific courses I did in the early years on Brunelleschi and medieval architecture, I developed a broad survey that went from Romanesque to contemporary Florence. There are some very interesting Art Deco buildings in Florence, as well as a Fascist stadium, railroad station and tobacco factory and an amazing church from the late 1950s, dedicated to the patron saint of Florence, San Giovanni, and to the workers who died building the autostrada that connects Milan to Naples. I taught versions of it many times over the years. In all my courses I had students

do on-site reports. Finding reading material for this course was a real challenge. There was practically no literature in English on Florentine architecture after about 1520. I spent a lot of time helping students with the reading for their projects.

“Monasteries and Convents” had one foot in architectural history and the other in religion. “Florentine Palaces and Funerary Chapels” and “The Sacred and Profane in Renaissance and Baroque Italian Sculpture” also straddled art history and history of religion. I had so much fun doing “Heaven, Hell and Purgatory,” that I resurrected it after a couple of years and did it again. The students really loved it both times.

By the early 90s we had almost eliminated classroom teaching and were out in the city most of the time. When you teach predominately on-site, the course can seem episodic to the students. The readings are fine-tuned to the specific things treated each day, usually one or two scholarly articles, often with different interpretations. Papers compare objects or monuments, which the students read about and go out to investigate on their own. I tended to resort to the classroom only at the end of the course, to review and pull things together. Most of the review was handled by the students’ last presentations. They each treated a section or aspect of the course. For example, when I taught Mannerism each student was in charge of an artist and had to present every time their artist’s works turned up in class. At the end of the semester they summarized the entire career of their protagonist. The last two times I taught the Medici course, each student was assigned a Medici. By then PowerPoint existed, which made preparing these reviews much easier. The students did not have to depend on my providing them with slides. I supplied them with a number of images on a pen drive and they scanned others or found them on the web. Turning over the course, as much as possible, to the students produces the best results. It takes a lot of organization and you need to have numerous meetings with the students to keep track of their progress. However, it means that they have investigated a piece of the course in depth, come to identify with it and take it home with them.



About the Contributors

Susan Ashley is Professor of History and Dean of the College/Dean of the Faculty at Colorado College. She has a B.A. from Carleton College, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Columbia University. She was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow in 1965-66. She directed the ACM Programs in Florence in 1984-85, in 1991-92 (with Robert Lee), and, again, in 1999-2000. She and Janet Smith team taught two other courses together, one in Florence and another at Colorado College. In addition to a number of articles and conference papers, Susan has published chapters in *Seeking Real Truths: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Machiavelli* (edited by Patricia Vilches and Gerald E. Seman, 2007) and *The Human Tradition in Modern France* (edited by K. Steven Vincent and Alison Klairmong-Lingo, 2000). She has also authored *Making Liberalism Work: The Italian Experience, 1860-1914* (2003). Having the time to do research in Florence, especially at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, made these publications possible.

Salvatore Bizzarro is Professor of Romance Languages at Colorado College. He has a B.A. from Fordham University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Stanford University. He was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow in 1964-1965. His research interests include Chilean literature, Chilean politics, Mexican literature, and Italian cinema. He was Visiting Professor in Florence in 1986-87 and 2001-02. He served as Director of Colorado College's Italian in Italy Program from 1990 to the present, and was the founder of the Colorado College Mexico Program, which he also directed on several occasions. Bizzarro has authored *Pablo Neruda: All Poets the Poet* (1979) and *Historical Dictionary of Chile* (3rd ed., 2005), as well as numerous articles for scholarly journals and encyclopedias, including "Debauchery, Mayhem, and Sex in Machiavelli's *Mandragola*" in *Seeking Real Truths: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Machiavelli* (edited by Patricia Vilches and Gerald E. Seman, 2007).

Edmund Burke has been the sole Classicist at Coe College for years. He earned an A.B. at Holy Cross College and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Tufts University. His scholarly work focuses on the economy of Athens of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. His semester in Florence in the fall of 2008 was a delight in every respect: a liberal arts experience enriched and nurtured uniquely by Janet Smith, who, by orchestrating visits, furnishing readings, and more, was responsible for much of his thinking about Lorenzo de' Medici and the villa at Poggio a Caiano. Consequently, she bears full responsibility for the presumption of his contribution to this *Festschrift*, but is, of course, in no way responsible either for its claims or its deficiencies.

Tim Chasson is Professor of Art History at Grinnell College where he has taught since 1980. He received an A.B. from Washington University in St. Louis, an M.A. from the University of Minnesota, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. Particular teaching interests have focused on medieval European architecture, as well as architecture and urbanism in Paris and Rome. Teaching on the Florence program in 1996-97 provided opportunities for research, especially at the Biblioteca Laurenziana. His studies on medieval illuminated manuscripts (particularly from Romanesque Italy) have appeared in *Gesta*, *Manuscripta*, *Pecia-Le livre et l'écrit*, *Rivista di Storia della Miniatura*, and *Source*.

Stephen Fineberg is the Szold Distinguished Service Professor and Co-Chair of Classics at Knox College. He has a B.A. from St. John's College-Annapolis, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. He spent the academic year 1969-70 at the American School for Classical Studies at Athens. His teaching interests are in Greek language, art and architecture and the Greek and Roman origins of western thought. Alongside other scholarly pursuits, he is working on a book project that focuses on the god Dionysos in Athens. His theoretical approach is psychoanalytic and anthropological, with evidence drawn from written and visual sources, including Dionysos in Homer, Attic comedy and tragedy, the Platonic Dialogues, and Attic painted pottery. With his wife, Brenda Fineberg, Stephen was the Visiting Professor for the ACM Florence programs in 1995-96.

Robert Grafsgaard is a 2010 graduate of Monmouth College where he earned a B.A. in Classics and Latin. He participated in the ACM Florence Program in the fall of 2008. In the spring of 2010 he spoke eloquently of his Italian experiences at the ACM Student Symposium on Off-Campus Study. His contribution to this Festschrift is based on this presentation. He is currently pursuing an M.F.A. in Poetry at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Elizabeth Hayford retired from ACM in 2006 after serving over twenty years as President of the consortium. As President, she oversaw the consortial off-campus programs, including Florence and London and Florence. In this capacity she worked closely with Janet Smith and came to appreciate her skill as an instructor and her aplomb in working through the administrative complexities of the programs. At ACM Hayford also managed a wide range of workshops and conferences supporting faculty and curriculum development. Since retirement she has been teaching in the Northwestern Master's Program in Higher Education Administration and Policy, as well as reforming local government in Evanston and Cook County with the League of Women Voters.

Robert Hellenga is George Appleton Lawrence Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of English and Distinguished Writer-in-Residence at Knox College, where he has taught since 1968. He has a B.A. in English from the University of Michigan and a Ph.D. in English from Princeton University. He was Visiting Professor for the ACM Florence Programs in 1982-83 and has visited or lived in Italy several times since then. He is the author of several best selling novels based on his time in Florence, including *Sixteen Pleasures* (1994), *The Fall of a Sparrow* (1998) and *The Italian Lover* (2007).

Virginia K. Hellenga taught Latin at Monmouth College from 1994 until 2010. Her retirement from Monmouth College marked the culmination of forty two years of teaching. She is now a substitute teacher in the public schools, and continues reading Italian. She has a B.A. in Latin from the University of North Carolina, and an M.A. in Latin from Loyola University of Chicago. She lived in Florence in 1982-83, studying Italian at LinguaViva, while her husband Robert was visiting professor for the ACM Programs.

Jeffrey Hoover is Professor of Philosophy at Coe College and was Visiting Professor in Florence in 2004-2005. He earned a B.A. at Eastern Mennonite College and an M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Notre Dame. His principal areas of teaching and scholarly work are in modern philosophy and political theory, especially the continental European tradition. Serving as visiting faculty in the ACM Florence program from 2004-05 allowed him to deepen his familiarity with the earlier portion of the modern European intellectual tradition. The year in Florence was an immensely enriching and stimulating one, enabled greatly through Janet Smith's generous spirit and her passion for the art and architecture of the Renaissance. His interest in Alberti's work was first ignited in those months teaching alongside Janet.

Robert Lee earned a B.A. from Carleton College in 1963 and an M.S. in Journalism from Columbia University in 1965. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University in 1972 and has taught at Colorado College since 1971 in the Political Science Department. His specialty is comparative politics, especially the politics of the Middle East, but he also teaches a course on international relations. He taught in the ACM programs in Florence in 1984-85, in 1991-92 and, again, in 1999-2000. He has translated and edited a book by the Algerian author, Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers* (1994), and is the author of *Overcoming Tradition and Modernity: The Search for Islamic Authenticity* (1997). His latest book is *Religion and Politics in the Middle East* (2009).

Diane L. Mockridge is a Professor of History at Ripon College. She has a B.A. in Medieval Studies from The City College, New York City, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in History from Duke University. For the last fifteen years she has served as the faculty advisor for the ACM Florence and London/Florence programs, and had the privilege of teaching and working with Janet on these programs in 1997-98 and again in the spring of 2010. She has published articles on medieval hagiography, and, with Janet's encouragement, has developed an interest in using pictorial narrative cycles of the lives of saints to supplement literary texts.

Nicholas Regiacorte received his M.F.A. in Poetry from the University of Iowa. His poems have appeared in *Denver Quarterly*, *Phoebe*, *Third Coast*, *14 Hills*, and *New Orleans Review*. He has twice lived in Italy, first as a Fulbright Scholar, south of Naples, the second time as Visiting Professor in the ACM Florence programs in 2008-09. Currently, he teaches in the English Department at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, where he lives with his wife and son.

Anne Jacobson Schutte earned her B.A. from Pembroke College in Brown University and her A.M. and Ph.D. from Stanford University. From 1966 to 2001 she taught early modern European history at Lawrence University. Then she moved to the University of Virginia, from which she retired in 2006. She and Janet met in Florence in the late 1970s and worked together in the ACM Florence Program in 1983-84; they have remained good friends ever since. Schutte's research focuses on religion, printing, and gender in Italy from the late fifteenth to the end of the eighteenth century. Her latest book is *By Force and Fear: Taking and Breaking Monastic Vows in Early Modern Europe* (2011).

Mary B. Shepard received an A.B. from Grinnell College, an M.A. from the University of Virginia, and a Ph.D. from Columbia University. She served as the Museum Educator at The Cloisters, the branch museum of The Metropolitan Museum of Art dedicated to the art of medieval Europe, for fourteen years, and is currently Adjunct Professor of Art History at Friends University in Wichita. A specialist in stained glass, she has published numerous studies, including articles in *Gesta*, *Romance Studies*, and the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Most recently, she was lead editor for *The Art of Collaboration: Stained-Glass Conservation in the 21st Century* (2010). She is currently writing a book about Alexandre Lenoir's interpretation of medieval art at the short-lived Musée des monuments français (1790–1816). A student on the Florence program in Janet Smith's first year on the program in 1974, Shepard writes that Janet Smith "has been a major force for change (and for good!) in my life, and the bottom line is that without Janet, I wouldn't be an art historian today."

Sylvia Zethmayr Shults graduated from Monmouth College in 1990 with a degree in Classics. It was in preparation for this degree that she attended the ACM London-Florence Program in the spring semester of 1989. She has gone on to become a writer of both fiction and nonfiction, and the Publicity Director for Dark Continents Publishing. She draws upon her European experience in her supernatural romance, *Price of Admission* (2011), from which her contribution to this *Festschrift* is borrowed. She is currently working on her next nonfiction book, *Fractured Spirits: Hauntings at the Peoria State Hospital*. She lives in Illinois with her husband and two furry German shepherd-mix daughters, who are trained in Latin. She can be visited on the web at www.sylviashults.com or on Facebook.

Julia A. Sienkewicz is Assistant Professor of Art History at Duquesne University. She holds a B.A. from Mt. Holyoke College, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Art and Architectural History of the United States from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She was first introduced to art history by Janet Smith herself, while tagging along as a faculty child with the ACM Program in Florence. In 2010 Sienkewicz gave the first public lecture sponsored by the ACM in Florence entitled "Transatlantic Visions: the Role of Florence in Horatio Greenough and Thomas Cole's View on American Art." Her research has been supported by the American Council of Learned Societies with the Henry Luce Foundation, the Winterthur Museum and Country Estates, the Smithsonian American Art Museum with the National Portrait Gallery, and the United States Capitol Historical Society.

Thomas J. Sienkewicz has been Minnie Billings Capron Professor of Classics at Monmouth College since 1984. He has a B.A. from the College of the Holy Cross and an M.A. and Ph.D. from The Johns Hopkins University. He was Visiting Professor on the ACM Florence Programs in 1992-93 and again in 2010. He has also led several student academic trips back to *la bella Italia*, especially to Florence. For more than twenty years, until 2011, he was coordinator of Off-Campus Study at Monmouth College. With Kenneth Kitchell he is the author of *Disce! An Introductory Latin Course* (2010). It was Janet who first introduced him to the importance of Hercules in Florence.

W. Rand Smith is the Irvin L. and Fern D. Young Presidential Professor of Politics and Associate Dean of the Faculty at Lake Forest. In 2005-06, he was the ACM Visiting Professor in the Florence and London/Florence programs. For Rand, Janet Smith was not only a great teaching colleague, who provided many tips on teaching students in Florence, she was also a trusty guide to the complexities of Italian politics. Rand used the Florence year to lay the groundwork for future research on the Italian Left, which he has incorporated into a book manuscript, currently under publisher's review, titled "Enemy Brothers: Socialists and Communists in France, Italy, and Spain."

Katherine Smith Abbott is Assistant Professor of the History of Art and Architecture and Dean of Students at Middlebury College. She received her B.A. in Art History and English from St. Olaf College, and her Ph.D. in Art History from Indiana University. As a student enrolled in the ACM Florence program during the fall of 1986, Smith Abbott became enamored of on-site learning, gelato from Vivoli, and numerous Italian cities, notably Venice. These passions have served her well in many subsequent teaching stints in Italy, most recently during the fall of 2010, when she led a two-week program in Italy for Middlebury College alumni. While not as apparent in these pages, Florence has remained a constant source of inspiration, and was the focus of a recent curatorial project, the 2009 exhibition *The Art of Devotion: Panel Painting in Early Renaissance Italy*, for the Middlebury College Museum of Art.

Gail E. Solberg has taught the art and culture of medieval and Renaissance to ACM students for more than twenty-five years, most of them as Janet Smith's colleague in Florence. She holds BA degrees in History and Art History from Stanford University and an M.A. and a Ph.D. from the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University. She was an intern at the National Gallery of Art in Washington and a research assistant in the Department of European Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In New York she has taught at Hunter College and at the undergraduate college of New York University. In Italy she has taught for Syracuse University, St Mary's College, DePaul University, the College of William and Mary, and Florida State University. She has been a consultant to the BBC for their Open University course on medieval Italy. Her numerous articles and public lectures regard in large part the Sienese painter Taddeo di Bartolo, on whom she is completing a book tentatively titled "Geography and Politics in a Medieval Painter's Career." She also is working on the manuscript of another book, "The Coronation of the Virgin in Florentine Painting from Giotto to Filippo Lippi."

Daniel J. Taylor is the Jones Professor Emeritus of Classics and Linguistics at Lawrence University (Appleton, Wisconsin). Author of more than two dozen articles and two books on Varro—*Varro De Lingua Latina X* (1996) and *Declinatio: A Study of the Linguistic Theory of Marcus Terentius Varro* (2000)—he has been acknowledged as the leading Varro scholar of his time. He has also edited *The History of Linguistics in the Classical Period* (2000) and has published widely on Greek and Latin grammar, linguistics, and even baseball. He received two year-long NEH fellowships for research in Florence, where he first met Janet Smith and her husband Giovanni Tonarelli, directed the ACM Florence program, and served as the first Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Linguistics at the Università di Trieste. Taylor has been honored for his teaching and scholarship by Lawrence University, the Wisconsin Association of Foreign Language Teachers, and the American Philological Association.

William L. Urban is the Lee L. Morgan Professor of History and International Studies at Monmouth College. He has a B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. His research interests are in medieval history, the American West, genealogies and local history. His publications include *The Teutonic Knights: a military history* (2003) which has been widely translated, the series of murder mysteries that began with *The Dead is Dead* (2007) and *Matchlocks to Flintlocks. Mercenaries in Europe and Beyond, 1500-1700* (2011). He was visiting ACM professor in 1974-75, the year Janet Goodhue Smith began teaching for the ACM.

Patricia Vilches is Associate Professor of Spanish and Italian at Lawrence University and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. She was Visiting Professor in Florence in 2007-08. Her research focuses on Machiavelli and Cervantes' transatlantic connections to 19th-century theories of nationhood in Latin America.

Her publications include: *Seeking Real Truths: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Machiavelli* (co-edited with Gerald E. Seman, 2007); “The Mask in the Mirror: Nicomaco as an Imprudent Ruler-Prince in the *Clizia*” in *Seeking Real Truths*, 2007); “Rocín-Antes: Dressing up as Social Ascendancy and Economic Space in the Spritual Nobility of Don Quijote and Martín Rivas” in *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes* (2010); and “Martín Rivas: Machiavelli and 19th-Century Chilean Masculinity” in *Anales de Literatura Chilena* (2010).

Robert Warde is Professor of English at Macalaster College. He has a B.A. from Princeton University and a Ph.D. from Harvard University. His areas of study include 19th-Century British and European literature and art history, the novel as genre, memoirs and personal essays, the literature of World War I and the Vietnam War and baseball literature. Warde has published a book on Lawrence of Arabia, *T.E. Lawrence* (1987) and is presently writing a memoir of his Los Angeles childhood. He was the first recipient of Macalester’s annual “Excellence in Teaching” award, and has directed or co-directed study-away programs for the Associated Colleges of the Midwest in Chicago, London, and Florence, where he was Visiting Professor for the ACM Programs in 2002-03.

Susan Warde spent the academic year 2002-03 in Florence while her husband Robert was Visiting Professor. She and Janet Smith became very good friends during that period and she has returned to Italy frequently since that initial sojourn.

Christopher Welna has been President of the ACM since 2006. Prior to leading the ACM, Welna served as executive director of the Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame, directed the Latin American Studies Program and taught Latin American politics. He previously taught public policy at Duke University’s Sanford Institute for Public Policy and was program officer in the fields of international economics and development, human rights and social justice, and governance and public policy, in the Mexico City and Rio de Janeiro offices of The Ford Foundation. Welna earned a B.A. in History from Carleton College, a Master’s in Public and International Affairs and Urban and Regional Planning from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, and his Ph.D. in Political Science from Duke University. His publications include *Democratic Accountability in Latin America* (2003) and *Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in Colombia* (2007).



Part I – Art History

Lorenzo de' Medici and Poggio a Caiano: an Augustan Ambiguity of Purpose in Building



Edmund M. Burke

Caesar Augustus died in August CE 14, at the age of seventy-six. When it next convened, the Senate, honoring his will, authorized the installation of bronze tablets near his mausoleum on the Campus Martius on which were inscribed the *Res Gestae* – Augustus' political autobiography.¹ In that document, Augustus claims that after he had brought an end to the civil wars (in 27 BCE), he restored control of the Republic to the Roman people and the Senate, in recognition of which the Senate named him Augustus. He further observes that subsequently – until the end of his life – his official power had been no greater than that of any other magistrate of state, though he acknowledges that he had surpassed all in *auctoritas*, i.e. he had been preeminent in prestige and influence.² By historical convention we acknowledge the fiction of certain of Augustus' claims in the *Res Gestae*, regarding him not as restorer of the Republic, but first Emperor of Rome. Historical convention, however, and living political circumstance are not always the same, and the fiction we create when we square the past into neat periods was not obviously the reality for most of Augustus' contemporaries.³ Throughout his long career Augustus eschewed the title of king or any imperial equivalency. Beyond his claim to greater *auctoritas*, he was to be recognized as *Princeps*, but like *auctoritas*, *Princeps* was a designation steeped in Roman Republican tradition, the title long borne by the leading member of the Senate.⁴

Like most elite Florentines of the *quattrocento*, Lorenzo de' Medici had a keen interest in Roman antiquity. We know that he was an avid collector of things Roman,⁵ and that Rome had an influence on his ideas about architectural style and poetic subject matter.⁶ He was in addition fully familiar with tenets of civic humanism as extrapolated from the ancients and reshaped in the context of the Florentine *quattrocento*, as he was with the ideas of a number of ancient philosophers and thinkers.⁷ But distinguishing Lorenzo from all other Florentines was his political

status. By the 1480s, certainly, he had become *de facto* Prince of the Florentine Republic, occupying a position ambiguous of precise political definition, neither Duke nor ordinary citizen.

In a recent study, F. W. Kent has demonstrated that in the later troublous years of his life Lorenzo developed a special fascination with Caesar Augustus.⁸ Of particular note to us are the ways in which the Roman *Princeps* had deftly employed art and architecture to define his status publicly.⁹ Through the manipulation of a carefully selected set of themes and images, Augustus, though explicit in acknowledging the uniqueness of his political status, had looked to mediate the contradictions his status actually entailed, transcending through an aesthetic coherence the incompatibility in fact between *Princeps* and Republic. Augustus had succeeded in his high wire act – for nearly half a century the *Princeps* of the restored Roman *res publica* – and Lorenzo, it appears, came to appreciate the precedents set by Augustus, both political and in the use of images.

The 'images' to be examined here are the Ara Pacis – the Altar of Peace – a monument that Karl Galinsky has observed to be "the most representative work of Augustan art", and the Medici country villa at Poggio a Caiano, left unfinished at the time of Lorenzo's death, but a project to which he had devoted feverish energy in the last years of his life.¹⁰ **Figs. 1, 2** Despite the core functional differences between the two edifices – an enclosed altar, ceremonial and sacrificial in purpose, and a rural residence, overseeing a working farm – both were intended to articulate themes central to the role played by their builders in their respective Republics. As we shall see, various images and themes at work in the Medici villa earlier had been employed by Augustus both in the altar complex and elsewhere. That is, in his fascination with Augustus, Lorenzo appears to have attempted not only to mimic something of the achievement of the Roman

Princeps, but he did so with a language of images that was itself Augustan.

I.

After the defeat and suicide of Marc Anthony and Cleopatra in 31 BCE, Octavian was without significant rival, heir to a Republican political edifice that had been nearly overturned by two decades of civil war. Cautioned by the Ides of March 44 BCE, he moved deliberately and incrementally, to govern Rome by Republican office and precedent, relying on significant gesture, and manipulating all as circumstance and need required. Thus, in 29 BCE, he had the doors to the temple of Janus shut, a ceremonial act grounded in tradition, signifying a restored universal peace.¹¹ As dramatically, in the following year, he issued an edict declaring void all earlier acts he had committed in contravention of the Republican constitution, officially repudiating his past and affirming by simple wave of the hand his own Republicanism.¹² As well, as Walter Eder observes, the bestowal of the title Augustus in 27 BCE “moved his person, through its connection with *augurium*, into the company of Romulus, the founder of the city.”¹³

Beyond these gestures of restoration, reaffirmation and renewal, Augustus until 23 BCE served as one of the city’s two consuls, the chief magistracy of the state, his repeated election anomalous but not without Republican precedent. In that year, falling gravely ill, he again made dramatic gesture in evident reaffirmation of his Republicanism, as on the verge of death he entrusted his official documents to his fellow consul, Calpurnius Piso, and his seal ring to his closest friend and confidant, Marcus Agrippa, deliberately electing not to designate a political heir.¹⁴ Later in that year, after his recovery and partly in response to elite discontent at their exclusion from one of the two consular prizes, he resigned the office of consul, permanently, assuming instead the prerogatives of a tribune (*tribunicia potestas*), technically a lesser magisterial position, but one that beyond making him formally a protector of the people, continued to provide him with the authority to convene assemblies and introduce legislation.¹⁵ Yet in assuming the prerogatives and not the office of tribune, Augustus was formally without colleague and thus technically beyond collegial veto; and different from the tribunes themselves his *tribunicia potestas* was not annual, but permanent.¹⁶ Still, despite their novelty, the gestures, along with the offices held and the prerogatives exercised, were essentially Republican in character, not imperial, as were Augustus’ manner

of dress, his residence on the Palatine, and his mode of living otherwise.¹⁷

A key to Augustus’ security, of course – as well as the stability of the state – was control of the military. And so, from 27 BCE onward, Augustus exercised a *maius imperium*, granted by the Senate, providing him with an authority to command armies that formally superseded that of any commander in the field. Unique to this grant was the regular, indeed *de facto* permanent, renewal of the power by the Senate in five or ten year intervals. Yet the exercise of *maius imperium* also had Republican precedent.¹⁸ So here, as with *tribunicia potestas*, Augustus was able to blur a line, functioning nominally within Republican practice, though in ways transcendent of strict conformity to that practice. By this and other means, as Eric Gruen has concluded, “Augustus [became] *princeps*. But he did not hold a *principatus*,” i.e. imperial sovereignty.¹⁹

II.

It was in 13 BCE that Augustus returned triumphantly to Rome after three years of military campaigning abroad. He observes in *Res Gestae* 12.2:

When I returned from Spain and Gaul, after successfully having taken care of affairs in these provinces, the Senate decreed...that an altar of Augustan Peace (*aram Pacis Augustae*) should be constructed next to the Field of Mars in honor of my return and ordered that the magistrates and priests and Vestal Virgins should perform annual sacrifices there.

The walls of the altar precinct are 6.1 meters in height, in arrangement they form a near square, 10.52 meters on the north and south sides, 11.62 meters on the west and east.²⁰ **Fig. 1** The two entrances to the altar are located in the center of the west and east walls, with the western access, facing the Campus Martius, the main entrance. The altar sits atop a U-shaped base, fronted by four steps; the entire precinct is open to the sky. In its physical scale certainly there is nothing grandly monumental about the complex.

This sense of restraint is reinforced by an initial summary assessment of the relief sculpture on the outer walls of the complex, themselves divided into roughly equally sized horizontal bands.²¹ The sculpture on the bottom band is vegetal, swirling and rhythmic. On the upper band along the north and south sides, there are depicted two groups in continuous friezes: Roman Senators on the north, and priests, officials and Augustus, including the men, women and children

of his family, on the south. Augustus himself is distinguished only by the fact that he is sacrificing, head veiled, wearing a laurel wreath, engaged comfortably if attentively with surrounding priests and officials.

On the upper portions of the east and west walls, divided by the entrances, there are four sculpted panels in place of the friezes, the subject matter of which is mythological and religious: gods and mythical heroes associated with Rome's discovery and founding. On the northeast panel, the goddess Roma, attired in battle gear, sits atop a pile of weapons. Juxtaposed on the opposite panel, on the southeast, is a female goddess of fecundity, Tellus or Ceres or Venus, or some combination of the three, surrounded by emblems of her powers and bounty.²² On the entrance side of the complex, on the northwest panel, Mars attends the birth of Romulus and Remus, the future founders of Rome. And opposite, on the southwest panel, engaged in sacrifice, are Aeneas, the son of Venus, the mythical discoverer of the site of Rome, and his son Iulus, the traditional eponymous founder of the *gens Iulia* – Augustus' clan.

Thus, there is nothing in the scale or the subject matter of the Ara – with traditionally garbed Senators, priests, and officials, along with Augustus and his family – that overtly affirms an imperial ideology. Yet when dedicated in 9 BCE, the Ara became part of a much larger architectural program on the Campus Martius, features of which manifestly transcended Republican sentiment.

Erected immediately to the west of the Ara was an obelisk approximately 30 meters in height that Augustus had brought back from Egypt in commemoration of his victory over Cleopatra and Marc Anthony. Beyond its commemorative function, the obelisk also served evidently as a meridian marker indicating the annual cycle of shadow cast by the sun at midday.²³ In various ways, the obelisk stood as a complement to the Ara, its eastern side directly facing the western entrance of the altar complex, and on its base, commissioned by Augustus, there was a new inscription re-dedicating the obelisk to the Sun god – Apollo – who was in fact Augustus' patron divinity.²⁴

About 300 meters to the northwest of Ara and obelisk stood the Mausoleum of Augustus, built in 28 BCE, but with the dedication of 9 BCE integrated within the overall plan, as the northern side of the obelisk directly faced the tumulus, so that the three monuments effectively formed an elongated, near isoscelean triangle, with the Mausoleum at the apex.²⁵ In contrast to the Ara, the Mausoleum was enormous, in the shape of a walled circular mound, approximately

90 meters in diameter and 42 meters in height.²⁶ A radial intersecting corridor ran from the entrance to the center of the tomb where niches were cut, receptacles for the ashes of the deceased. Distinguishing the entranceway were two obelisks, one on each side, further linking the tomb to the Ara and its adjacent obelisk.²⁷ In the niches in the inner circle were to be placed not only the ashes of Augustus, but those of his family, including in fact the first three successors of the Princeps, the Julio-Claudian emperors – Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius – as well as other members of the extended family.²⁸ Much scholarship has been devoted to the Mausoleum, particularly to its enormous size and shape that find possible precedent in native Etruscan tumuli, but certain precedent in the dynastic tombs of the monarchs of the Hellenistic East.²⁹ There is in this latter precedent nothing affirming of Roman Republican ideology. Rather, in scale and function the tomb was unambiguously dynastic and so stands variously in juxtaposition to the Ara. It was in mediating the stark conceptual tension created by the juxtaposition of the monuments that Augustus looked to redefine his status, with the Ara itself, in its complex of themes and images, serving as the principal medium of reconciliation.

The Field of Mars, where all three monuments stood, was itself a liminal space bordering the perimeter of the city, beyond the sacred boundary that formally separated the city's military and domestic spheres. The transitional character of the space finds resonance in the altar, in that through war Rome had made passage to peace. And so, in approaching the western steps leading to the inner altar, one literally turned one's back on the realm of war, to engage in sacrificial thanksgiving for the peace that was at hand.³⁰ But this sacrifice was to be a commemorative act, repeated annually, thereby transcending the specifics of the campaigns in Gaul and Spain. It was in part by means of this greater peace that Augustus had restored Rome, inaugurating a rebirth of the *res publica*.

Appropriately, then, at the entrance to the Ara, on the exterior western wall, Romulus and Aeneas preside, on the north and south panels, the mythological 'founders' of Rome. By his action Augustus is to be linked with the two heroes, and suggestively is himself now elevated to the level of the mythic and sacred, something more than, a traditional Republican magistrate. As well, and as is regularly noted, the visual link between Augustus and Aeneas is made even more explicit, as both are sculpted in the act of sacrificing, proximate physically on the flanks of the southwest corner of the complex. The presence of the boy Iulus with his father enriches

the implications. Through Iulus, Augustus and the *gens Iulia* are heirs to the divinely parented Aeneas, and as Aeneas makes sacrifice with his son, so Augustus surrounded by his family – wife, daughter, son-in-law, grandsons, and others – makes sacrifice. The *gens Iulia*, from Iulus to Augustus, is uniquely distinguished, divinely parented, as old as Rome itself, and forever the city's founders and restorers.

This theme of restoration extends beyond the mytho-political. As he notes in *Res Gestae* 8.5, Augustus looked also to restore the ancient *mores* of Rome, its traditional Republican moral values, including the encouragement of marriage and childbirth. Thus, the family tableau on the north frieze of the Ara serves as exemplum of Augustus' own commitment to this restored moral order, as his *familia* – husbands, wives and children – converse and interact, engaging one another casually and intimately. Yet for all its Republican sentiment, the family tableau also presents the viewer with a dynasty – three contemporary generations on display, and of an extraordinary lineage, distinguished both by achievement and ultimately by mythic association. In this complex of allusions and images, the Ara – for all its Republicanism – is a mirroring of the dynastic assertions of the Mausoleum.

Again, if differently, the ideology of restoration is affirmed on the east side of the Ara, as here the goddess Roma, helmeted and with sword, commands a pile of captured weapons. Rome, embodied as goddess, it is reiterated, has brought an end to war, and Augustus, as the altar complex itself signifies, has been her agent. On the parallel panel sits the bounteous consequence of this achievement, the goddess of fecundity – whoever she is, Tellus, Venus, Ceres – infants in her lap, flora and fauna at her feet and side, and emblems of the winds framing the whole.

The specific image of fecundity seen in this panel is an echo of the entire lower vegetal frieze, whose size, running the whole exterior base of the Ara, is unique in Greek and Roman decorative sculpture, and whose placement quite literally becomes the basis on which all other images of the exterior frieze and panels stand.³¹ Branching elegantly if incongruously from the scrolls of regularly repeating acanthus are shoots of ivy, laurel and grape, flowers of every type among which are nestled fauna of various sorts: lizards, frogs, butterflies, birds and snakes. It is to be emphasized, however, that the undulating flow of the vegetation, dominated by the acanthus, is not natural, but rather rhythmically recurring, ordered, and patterned. The bounty, promise and character of nature here are Virgilian. With its patterning repeated, the vegetal

frieze celebrates the regular renewal implicit in the cycles of the seasons, the rhythms dictated over time by the natural order. As we reflect on this depiction of nature in the lower frieze, then, we see at work a larger principle, ever recurring, ever renewing, ordained in time.³² As Virgil suggests in *Georgics* 4. 315-558, such renewal in the natural world serves as paradigm for both man and political society. Nature in its cycles makes clear the potential for the individual spiritually to be reborn and for society politically to be restored.³³ In this imagery, suggestive of the grand order of nature and time, Augustus' efforts to restore the *mores* of Rome and the political order of the Roman *res publica* find sanction. The acanthus, the centerpiece of this recurring imagery, is in various ways to be associated with Apollo. In this we once more find allusion to Augustus.³⁴

Thus, in diverse ways, the uniqueness of Augustus' political status is affirmed by the Ara Pacis. Augustus is the *Princeps* of the *res publica* and his ambition is dynastic. The incongruity of the notion of a Republican *Princeps*, however, is mediated by the very themes and images that at one level affirm Augustus' unique status. As we noted, the scale of the Ara complex is reassuring. So, too, there is no hierarchy of scale in the depiction or placement of the person of Augustus on the north frieze. He mingles with citizens, priests, members of the Senate, and family, engaged in an act of traditional religion, not aloof, but a man of *gravitas* and *pietas*: prized Republican virtues. The Ara commemorates that the *res publica* has been made safe from war, and Augustus as citizen-priest, not *imperator*, is depicted celebrating this achievement. Nor is the dynasty menacing, rather a family, with women and children uniquely prominent. As well, and reassuringly, the dynasty has been present from the start of Rome's history – Aeneas and Iulus – always in service to the *res publica*, always pious. Augustus' stature, so the Ara suggests, is part of the natural order, ordained by nature and time. It is, then, not simply of the *res publica* that Augustus is *Princeps*, but of the *res publica restituta* – the Republic restored, but now differently.³⁵ While the altar complex gives unique articulation to these varied and complex themes, the Ara, as Paul Zanker and Karl Galinsky have demonstrated, was but one of a number of documents that promulgated the Augustan 'image'.

III.

Different from Augustus, Lorenzo de' Medici from boyhood had been groomed to assume the role of first citizen of Florence, though his marriage at the early

age of twenty outside the circle of Florentine elite to Clarice Orsini, of a family most distinguished among Roman nobility, was likely a truer signal of Medici ambition. Lorenzo's status was to be something more than had been his grandfather Cosimo's or his father Piero's.³⁶ Also different from Augustus, Lorenzo never held any executive office of government nor was he formally invested with any constitutional authority that allowed him officially to act as head of state. Rather the exercise of his political authority was predicated more tenuously, on loyalty, notably early on that of the *Centro*, an elected body created in 1458 under Cosimo and comprised of inner elite.³⁷ And so beginning as early as July 1470, within months of his father's death, Lorenzo initiated efforts both to tighten his control over the *Centro* and to make that body more completely the central organ of government. In the reconfiguration that finally was enacted, forty of the members of the *Centro* were to be hand picked by Lorenzo, and these loyalists likely played a significant role in the selection of the other members. As well, the *Centro* now acquired exclusive control over tax laws, over the state's military matters and elections.³⁸

Yet both immediately and over time, the tightening of control by Lorenzo, while providing him with near princely authority and autonomy, served both to harden opposition among some of the city's elite, now excluded from the inner circle, and to make foreign policy more a matter of personal predilection.³⁹ The Pazzi conspiracy, culminating in the events of April 26, 1478, is certainly the most stunning illustration of pent-up reaction to Lorenzo's tightened control. Leading members of the old elite Pazzi family conspired with the acquiescence of Pope Sixtus IV and others to assassinate Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano in the Duomo.⁴⁰ Thus, one locus of the conspiracy was domestic, fueled by wounded Pazzi pride and thwarted ambition, and the other was abroad, in foreign policy, in large measure a function of the Pope's alienation from Lorenzo over matters of territorial control and papal authority. Lorenzo escaped with his life on the 26th, though wounded in the neck, whereas his brother Giuliano was killed on the spot.

In the aftermath of the Pazzi conspiracy and the ensuing war, Lorenzo's impulse was to look again to cinch more securely his control over governance, tightening further the reins of effective power, but now buttressing the edifice with new forms of princely display. In April 1480 there was created the Committee of the Seventy, which became the principal instrument of political control in the city, replacing the *Centro* as the city's chief administrative body. As well, through

subcommittees of its own members, the Seventy took control of the city's foreign policy along with the management of its finances. Additionally, the Seventy were to preside over the appointment of the city's security and police magistracies.⁴¹ As John Najemy concludes: "Never before had the different functions of government been so exclusively concentrated in one body."⁴² Until the end of Lorenzo's life, the Seventy was supreme, serving for repeated terms of five years; and of the members of the original Seventy, at least sixty-five appear to have been Medici loyalists.

Beyond new governmental apparatus, Lorenzo looked to buttress his position in other ways. Among the keys here was the extension of patronage networks outside the city, with an assiduous engagement by Lorenzo in the details of local affairs, political and family.⁴³ Within the city, there were the rituals of display, as Lorenzo made himself the central presence, regularly visiting monasteries, churches and convents, cultivating confraternities along with working class associations, converting what once had been communal to the personal: princely displays of power and status.⁴⁴ Perhaps the most explicit illustration of princely power came in Lorenzo's consenting to be attended by a force of armed guards wherever he went.⁴⁵ Finally, there was the restoration of good relations with the papacy upon the election of Innocent VIII in 1484. Within three years, the alliance was secured further, as Lorenzo gave his thirteen year old daughter Maddalena in marriage to the Pope's bastard son, Franceschetto Cibò, a man nearly a quarter century her elder. Whatever Maddalena's distress, for Lorenzo the marriage brought benefits beyond alliance, as soon the Medici were restored as papal bankers, an important asset at a time when the family's banking interests generally were in decline.⁴⁶ Yet for Lorenzo, the crowning benefit derived from restored papal relations was Innocent's consenting in 1489 to elevate Lorenzo's son, Giovanni, to the rank of cardinal, a boy of thirteen, an event that Lorenzo regarded as the greatest achievement of the Medici family.⁴⁷

Thus, the years after the assassination attempt and following the end of the Pazzi War were transformative, both of Lorenzo and Florentine governance. Writing some twenty years after the death of Lorenzo, Francesco Guicciardini observed:

His brother Giuliano, with whom he would have had to divide his property and contend for power, was now dead. His enemies were removed gloriously, and by the public arm... The people had taken

up arms on his behalf... they recognized him as master of the city... In sum, his power became such that from then on he acted as free and complete arbiter, indeed almost as lord of the city (*quasi signore della città*). His power, which until that day had been great but suspect, was now supreme and safe.⁴⁸

But while Lorenzo's power and status within the Florentine Republic during these years rivaled those of the *Princeps* Augustus, his demeanor was not always such, as at moments he appeared driven as much by insecurity and impatience as princely design. Thus, having become the great *patronus*, he often found himself beleaguered, at times in complaint at the constancy of clients, his house ever filled with men looking to do business or looking for favors.⁴⁹ In addition, as the decade wore on, his health began to deteriorate, doubtless shortening further the patience of a man once vigorous and athletic, now only in his 30s, crippled periodically by acute gout and various other ailments.⁵⁰ And so there were moments when his actions were other than Augustan, as in 1488, when a crowd looked to intercede in behalf of a man sentenced to death by the *Otto di Guardia*. Lorenzo, in a stunning exercise of imperiousness, personally intervened, commanded that the man be hanged summarily, and ordered the arrest, torture and exile of four in the crowd who had shouted for the condemned man to escape.⁵¹ Inevitably, such autocratic behavior only heightened levels of dissatisfaction and alienation. And so for Lorenzo the decade of his greatest political triumph provided no easy solution to the paradox of the exercise of princely power in a republic.⁵²

IV.

It is, then, perhaps not surprising, as F. W. Kent has argued, that Caesar Augustus came to preoccupy Lorenzo's thinking during these years: the *Princeps* who for most of a half century had governed the restored Roman *res publica*, who had in fact succeeded in establishing a family dynasty, and who had died in old age. It was to Augustan precedent that Lorenzo appears to have turned in the last years of his life, to redefine his own public 'image' and to express as well his dynastic ambitions.

Lorenzo came into possession of the old villa and the land that would be the Medici estate at Poggio a Caiano in the mid-1470s, buying the majority of the property from Giovanni Rucellai.⁵³ Lorenzo's early ambitions for the property evidently were

chiefly economic, consistent with the ideology of his contemporary elite land owners.⁵⁴ Thus, by as early as 1477 construction of the *cascina* had begun, the dairy farm, designed perhaps by Lorenzo himself and laid out symmetrically according to classical principles of design.⁵⁵ In addition to the cattle, the *cascina* was given over to the manufacture of silk, the production of cheese, butter, and cottage cheese as well as grain.⁵⁶

There is some speculation that Lorenzo had begun to contemplate the construction of a new villa on the site as early as the mid-1470s, with the classical symmetry of the *cascina* a foreshadowing of his architectural thinking. That classical precedents were on his mind in mid-decade is likely, as he had had occasion to inspect the ruins of Rome in 1471, with no less a guide than Leon Battista Alberti.⁵⁷ But even so, these architectural ruminations surely were, as F. W. Kent has suggested "villas in the air," for it was not until the mid or later 1480s that work on the foundation was begun, and not until 1490, it seems, that construction was under way on the new villa itself.⁵⁸ Giuliano da Sangallo was the architect with whom Lorenzo worked in close cooperation, though in key respects Sangallo, like Lorenzo, was much influenced by Alberti, though now it was the *De re aedificatoria* that informed their thinking.⁵⁹ Once begun, the work went furiously, with Lorenzo himself, despite his health, regularly inspecting the site. Still, by April 1492, when Lorenzo died, only the front third of the villa was standing.⁶⁰

As one approaches the villa from the south, the visual effect created by its situation in combination with the majesty of the façade is simultaneously authoritative and reassuring.⁶¹ **Fig. 2** Consistent with Alberti's recommendation, the whole edifice is set atop an eminence, a hillock – *un poggio* – with commanding views in all directions.⁶² At the ground level, there is a single-story arcaded basement that is distinguished visually from the residence by red brick piers. The four sides of the arcaded basement extend symmetrically beyond the perimeter of the residence proper, so that the villa effectively rises from a broad terrace, with the height of the residence originally made more dramatic by the whiteness of its stucco against the grey of the loggia and trim.⁶³ Originally one ascended to the terrace by way of twin stairways whose climb began, in Philip Foster's reconstruction, "perpendicular to the villa front, then rose parallel to the front, and finally, moving up two shorter flights, met directly opposite the entrance loggia." As Foster concludes: "Not only direction, but pace of movement was carefully controlled – slowed and elevated as one approached the entrance."⁶⁴

Thus the situation of the villa and its tiered elevation were magisterial. The authority of the façade was reinforced by the entrance loggia, in the form of an ancient temple front, with four Ionic columns set between two Ionic pilasters. The frieze running atop the columns and pilasters was distinguished by its polychrome glazed narrative, white figures against blue background. The surmounting triangular pediment was adorned with the Medici coat of arms. Like a number of villas owned by the Medici, Poggio a Caiano made visible the commanding presence of its owners, as the villa was located strategically in something of a liminal space, on a north-south axis between Prato and the hills of Monte Ginestre, and between Florence and Pistoia on an east-west axis, with the skyline of Florence, marked by the Duomo, clearly visible to the north-east.⁶⁵ This was a perch from which to see and be seen. In his typology of villas, James Ackerman argues that, in its size, shape, color and location, the villa at Poggio was intended to assure that the relationship between its residents and the world around was “not intimate, but removed and in perspective,” so that in “look[ing] back on the city from a high and distant promontory...” the owner exercised a visual command of the city, which in the case of Lorenzo, paralleled his political command.⁶⁶

Yet in juxtaposition to its magisterial presence, and equally noteworthy, Poggio a Caiano stood in clear violation of an aesthetic that had defined Tuscan country villas of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Typically these villas were marked by “towers, silhouettes with military crenellations, defensive perimeter walls and moats.”⁶⁷ The ideology of such aggressive architectural posturing, a carryover from the medieval fortress, had also penetrated the city center of Florence earlier in the century, with the Medici palazzo on the Via Larga constructed by Cosimo serving as paradigm. In fact, even as Lorenzo’s villa at Poggio a Caiano was under construction, the model of the urban palazzo as fortress was being refined in the city by Filippo Strozzi with his great palazzo.⁶⁸

But there was nothing of the fortress in the appearance of the villa at Poggio. There are no towers or crenellations, nor is the facade the massive rusticated stone that we see in either the palazzo Medici or Strozzi in the city. The surface of the villa at Poggio is stuccoed, simple and plain, with ample windows and doors arranged symmetrically, allowing those within ready access to the terrace, visually and physically to take in the surrounding vista. Nor was the villa walled, protected by defense works.⁶⁹ Thus, set apart, sitting atop a rise, the new villa at Poggio a Caiano was open,

easy of access, undefended, confident in its bearing, but reassuring in its clarity and simplicity. In all of this, there was a deliberate assertion of ideology at odds with prevailing norms, and this despite the Pazzi conspiracy and ensuing war, and despite the more recent heightening of political tensions in the city.⁷⁰ For Lorenzo, the villa at Poggio a Caiano was not to be viewed as the fortress of a usurping tyrant, a bastion of ducal might, but the country residence of an elite citizen, a man of landed means, a working agriculturist, in the model of the Roman husbandman so idealized by Renaissance humanists.⁷¹

Thus, in its dramatic situation, on the one hand, and its unthreatening appearance and openness on the other, there was in the villa at Poggio an ambiguity of architectural intent that was Augustan. There was princely majesty here in scale and location, but it was a majesty contextualized by Republican ideology—the working farm, the simplicity and clarity of design, the unguarded accessibility. Beyond the Augustan ambiguity in juxtaposing such values, the appeal of the villa to Roman precedent, both actual and as interpreted within the humanist tradition, was pervasive. Both in its unity and in its component parts, Poggio is marked throughout by the balance, proportion and symmetry demanded by Alberti.⁷² The villa is a harmony of form, rational and measured. The façade, ordered into a coherent rhythm, foreshadows the whole, again consistent with Alberti’s explicit recommendations.⁷³ But beyond the informing ideology of the new classical canon of balance, geometric proportion, and harmony, there were ornamental features explicitly echoing antiquity, as Philip Foster details, and of which the most conspicuous is the loggia of the façade, the entrance to the villa, set as an ancient temple, with its Ionic columns, the architrave and continuous frieze, the pediment above.⁷⁴

Yet here too there is ambiguity, a manipulation of images and their ideologies that affirms Lorenzo’s attempt to redefine established norms, to transcend simple categorization, and by implication to present himself as occupying a status unique in the Florentine Republic. For much of the fifteenth century the appeal to antiquity, to Rome, had served to buttress the political ideology of Florentine elite.⁷⁵ The degree to which Poggio embraces such appeal is unambiguous, whether in ornamental detail or informing principle of harmony and balance. There is here an evocation of tradition, Roman and Florentine, and at its core that tradition is Republican. At the same time, the implications of the entrance loggia are arresting. To be sure, as James Ackerman observes, Lorenzo in

designing the façade of Poggio may again have been drawn by Alberti's suggestion that a tympanum, i.e. a pediment, would lend dignity to an entranceway, providing a magnificence and solemnity to the residence of the important citizen.⁷⁶ But in the same passage, Alberti is explicit in warning that "the pediment to a private house should not emulate the majesty of a temple in any way."⁷⁷ Yet in all its key components, the entrance loggia at Poggio is the façade of a temple – Ionic columns, architrave, frieze, and adorning the pediment itself, atop all, there is the Medici coat of arms. Clearly Alberti's cautioning has been violated. As Pers Hamberg has observed, the religious implications would have been evident, the impression on contemporary beholders stunning.⁷⁸ The pedimental image is dynastic and its placement suggestive of a divine sanctioning.

But it is in the imagery of the majolica frieze that Lorenzo most closely approximates Augustan aspiration. It is generally acknowledged that the thematic principle uniting the five panels of the frieze is Time in its various manifestations, with an iconography drawn from diverse ancient sources.⁷⁹ As we read the frieze from left to right, the units of time become ever more focused, acquiring greater order and definition. We begin with the Eternal Void, an unregulated Chaos, then move in the second panel to the Birth of the Age of Jupiter. At the center, in the third panel, we encounter the Birth of the Year presided over by the Roman god Janus; then onto the Seasons of the Year in the fourth panel, cyclically renewing, and in the fifth panel we end with the Birth of the Day, as Apollo, the Sun-god, sets out at the hour of Dawn.

Appropriately, it is in the central panel, directly above the entrance to the house, that the twin-faced god Janus is depicted, presiding over all. Janus is the god of entrances and beginnings, physical and temporal, who, as his name makes clear, attends the birth of each year. Immediately to the right of Janus in the same panel, and reinforcing the point of annual renewal, the god Mars emerges from a small temple. As Janet Cox-Rearick rightly argues, this Mars is not the war-god, but the Mars of the old Roman calendar who presided over the start of the agricultural year, the god of vegetation and spring, of renewal and rebirth.⁸⁰ In the fourth panel we find personifications of the Seasons of the Year, beginning with youthful Spring and ending with aged Winter, and to their right, in the same panel, are the labors of the agricultural year, again sequenced beginning with Spring. Thus the personifications and labors of the Seasons combine

to make explicit the repeated order of annual cycles. As we suggested earlier and as Cox-Rearick observes, the celebration of the regular order of the agricultural year had been since the time of Augustus a metaphor for peace, and by extension civic harmony. Thus, the types of order sanctioned by Time extend beyond the measuring of ages, years and seasons to include the enterprises of man: agricultural, civic and political.

We know that the Classical scholar Angelo Poliziano was a member of the Medici household, an intimate of Lorenzo, serving as well as tutor to his patron's children. More to the point, Poliziano had speculated that Florence had been founded not by Julius Caesar, as tradition held, but rather Augustus. The degree to which Lorenzo subscribed to this view is unknown, though F. W. Kent argues that the scholar's influence on his patron was considerable, especially on the matter of Augustus.⁸¹ And for Cox-Rearick that influence extended to Lorenzo's thinking about the subject matter of the majolica frieze itself, though the actual design of the frieze evidently was the work of Bertoldo di Giovanni.⁸² Whatever the extent of Poliziano's influence here, it is unquestionably the case that the themes of regeneration and renewal, the sanctioning imperative of Time, of cyclical rebirth, of the bounty of Nature, and with Nature's bounty, peace and civic harmony, are Augustan, common denominators of the cultural program of the Roman *Princeps*, variously repeated during the period of his Principate, as Zanker and Galinsky have shown, and most vividly executed, as we saw, in the Ara Pacis.

It is equally the case, as discussed earlier, that by appeal to such themes and related images Augustus sought to be linked to the mythic and sacred. So, too, Lorenzo, as the last panel of the frieze is an allusion to Apollo-Lorenzo, the equation a commonplace among Lorenzo's friends, reinforced by association with the laurel, sacred to Apollo and a punning reference to Lorenzo's own name.⁸³ And Apollo, as we have observed, was the divinity especially sacred to Augustus. Nor were such associations limited to the persons of Lorenzo and Augustus, the Princes of their respective Republics, but were extended in Time to the family dynasty of each, past and to come, and boldly punctuated at Poggio a Caiano in the Medici *palle* of the pediment atop the frieze. In all of this, I would argue, the villa is evocative of Lorenzo as heir to Augustus; his status, his rule, and the dynasty, rooted in the precedent of the Roman past, and made legitimate by history and sanctioned by Time.

We cannot for certain know Lorenzo's intent in the last years of his life, but the frantic pace of construction

at Poggio a Caiano between 1490 and 1492, and the degree of Lorenzo's personal engagement with the project, at a time of failing health, are suggestive of a pressing personal need. In the city, his manner of governance increasingly had become both more imperious and more febrile: impatiently autocratic. And yet by any rational calculation he had achieved what had been intended for him since boyhood, and more, as is clear in the pride he expressed in the elevation to Cardinal of his son, Giovanni, one day

to be Pope Leo X. The thesis tendered here is that in the last years of his life Lorenzo de' Medici attempted to look beyond the inexorable fragility of his own mortality to construct an 'image' by which to define himself and his ambition historically. His model was Caesar Augustus, and the villa at Poggio a Caiano was the image by which he attempted both to affirm his own unique status as the "Princeps" of the Florentine Republic and his aspirations for the Medici dynasty.



NOTES

1, 2. *Res Gestae* 34.1. For full text, see A. E. Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti. Text, Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). On the significance of *auctoritas*, see Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 10-41.

3. What Augustus was to become was a matter of hindsight; see Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, trans. Michael Grant (New York: Penguin Classics, 1956), 1.1.1-2. The scholarship on the Principate of Augustus is enormous, but note especially the more recent work of Walter Eder, "Augustus and the Power of Tradition: The Augustan Principate as Binding Link between Republic and Empire," in *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*, edd. Kurt Raaflaub and Mark Toher (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 71-122; and Erich Gruen, "Augustus and the Making of the Principate," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, ed. Karl Galinsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 33-51.

4. *Res Gestae* 7.2; Cassius Dio, *The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (New York: Penguin Classics 1987), 53.1.3. On the use of the title by Augustus, see Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Civilis Princeps: Between Citizen and King," *JRS* 72 (1982), 32-48.

5. Going so far in fact as to stamp some objects in his collection with "LAUR.MED"; see F. W. Kent, *Lorenzo de' Medici and the Art of Magnificence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 146-147.

6. As for architecture, see, e.g., Philip Foster, *A Study of Lorenzo de' Medici's Villa at Poggio a Caiano*, 2 vols. (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1978), I. 168-228. On his poetry, see, e.g., David Marsh's review of *The Autobiography of Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent: A Commentary on My Sonnets*, trans. and intro. James Wyatt Cook (Binghamton 1995) in *Italica* 75 (1998), 118-120.

7. On civic humanism, see John Najemy, "Civic humanism and Florentine politics," and on Lorenzo's manipulation of the ideology, see Alison Brown, "De-masking Renaissance republicanism," in *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 75-104 and 179-199 respectively. On Lorenzo and ancient thinkers, see Jill Kraye, "Lorenzo and the Philosophers," in *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics*, edd. Michael Mallett and Nicholas Mann (London: The Warburg Institute, 1996), 151-166.

8. See Kent, *Art of Magnificence*, 112-151.

9. See, e.g., the studies by Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988); and Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*.

10. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 141. Lorenzo never saw the altar complex itself, but he was, as F. W. Kent, *Art of Magnificence*, 112-151 argues, well acquainted with Augustan ideology.

11. *Res Gestae* 13; Livy, *The Early History of Rome, Books I-V*, trans. Aubrey De Selincourt (New York: Penguin Classics, 2002), 1.19.2; Dio Cassius 51.20.4-5.

12. Tacitus, *Annals*, 3.28.2; Dio Cassius 53.2.5.

13. See Eder, "Power of Tradition," 105; and Suetonius, *Augustus*, 7.2 for the link between Romulus and Augustus.

14. Suetonius *Augustus*, 28.1; Dio Cassius 53.20.2.

15. *Res Gestae* 10.1; Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.9.2; Dio Cassius 53.32.6; and Eder, "Power of Tradition," 108-111.

16. On Augustus' *tribunicia potestas*, see Gruen, "Making of the Principate," 39-42.

17. See, e.g., Suetonius, *Augustus* 72-77; and A. H. M. Jones, *Augustus* (New York: Norton, 1970), 163-167.

18. For the *maius imperium* of Augustus, see Gruen, "Making of the Principate," 41; on an earlier precedent, see, e.g., Robin Seager, *Pompey: A Political Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 28-43.

19. Gruen, "Making of the Principate," 35.

20. For physical description of the Ara complex, see D. A. Conlin, *The Artists of the Ara Pacis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 1-10.

21. For a detailed description, as well as excellent and detailed images of the whole complex, see Orietta Rossini, *Ara Pacis* (Rome: Mondadori Electa, 2007), 6-21.

22. On the ambiguity of this figure, see Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 148-149.

23. See Peter Heslin, "Augustus, Domitian and the So-called Horologium Augusti," *JRS* 97 (2007), 1-20.

24. On Augustus and Apollo, see Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 213-224.

25. See Heslin, "Horologium Augusti," 7, 15-16.

26. For a detailed description, see Jane Clark Reeder, "Typology and Ideology in the Mausoleum of Augustus: Tumulus and Tholos," *Classical Antiquity* 11 (1992), 265-307, esp. 269.

27. Ammianus Marcellinus, *The Later Roman Empire: A.D. 354-378*, trans. Walter Hamilton (New York: Penguin Classics, 1986), 17.4.16; see Zanker, *Power of Images*, 72-77.

28. The Mausoleum was the *tumulus Iuliorum*, so Tacitus, *Annals*, 16.62. For those buried in the Mausoleum, see Penelope Davies, *Death and the Emperor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13-19.
29. See, e.g., Reeder, "Typology and Ideology," 265-307; and Davies, "Death," 14-15.
30. On the orientation of the complex, see Rossini, *Ara Pacis*, 22-29.
31. On the vegetal frieze, see John Pollini, "The Acanthus of the Ara Pacis as Apolline and Dionysiac Symbol of *Anamorphosis*, *Anakyklosis* and *Numen Mixtum*," in *Von der Bauforschung zur Denkmalpflege, Festschrift für Alois Machatschek zum 65. Geburtstag*, edd. Martin Kubelik and Mario Schwarz (Vienna: Phoibos-Verlag, 1993), 181-217.
32. See Rossini, *Ara Pacis*, 80-93.
33. For analysis, see, e.g., Michael Putnam, *Virgil's Poem of the Earth: Studies in the Georgics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 266-323.
34. Pollini, "Acanthus of the Ara Pacis," 181-217.
35. For *res publica restituta*, see Zanker, *Power of Images*, 89-98; and Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 42-79.
36. See F.W. Kent, "The Young Lorenzo, 1449-69," in *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1996), 1-22. On Lorenzo's marriage to Clarice Orsini, see Lauro Martines, *April Blood: Florence and the Plot against the Medici* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 26-29.
37. On the creation of the *Centro*, see John Najemy, *A History of Florence, 1200-1575* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell 2006), 295-296.
38. For these developments, based largely on the correspondence between Sacromoro Mengozzi and Galeazzo Maria Sforza, see Nicolai Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 204-212.
39. E.g., the siege and massacre at Volterra in 1472 seem to have been driven more by Lorenzo's anxieties than deliberate state policy; for analysis of the revolt, see Najemy, *History of Florence*, 348-352.
40. See Francesco Guicciardini, *The History of Florence*, trans. Mario Domandi (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 29-36; for analysis, see Martines, *April Blood*, esp. 111-137.
41. For analysis, see N. Rubinstein, *Government of Florence*, 226-232, 359-360, 373-375.
42. Najemy, *History of Florence*, 361-362.
43. See Najemy, *History of Florence*, 366-369.
44. For detail, see Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 428-462, esp. 444-462; and Kate Lowe, "Lorenzo's 'Presence' at Churches, Convents and Shrines in and outside Florence," in *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics*, edd. Michael Mallett and Nicholas Mann (London: The Warburg Institute, 1996), 23-36.
45. See Guicciardini, *Florence*, 36.
46. On the marriage, see Melissa Bullard, *Lorenzo il Magnifico: Image and Anxiety, Politics and Finance* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1994), 133-151. For Medici banking difficulties, see Richard Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 243-244.
47. For the text of the letter, dated to March 1492, see Janet Ross, trans. and ed., *Lives of the Early Medici, as told in their correspondence* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1911), 332-335.
48. Guicciardini, *Florence*, 36.
49. See Najemy, *History of Florence*, 361-369; on complaints about politics and the constancy of visitors, see Lorenzo de' Medici, *Lettere*, Vol. VII (1482-1484), ed. Michael Mallett (Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 1998), 36; and Kent, *Art of Magnificence*, 122-123, 136.
50. For his various ailments and their affect on his temper see Mario Martelli, *Studi Laurenziani* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1965), 190-223.
51. See Antonio Cappelli, ed., *Lettere di Lorenzo* (Modena: Carlo Vincenzi, 1863), 77 (19 gennaio 1489).
52. For political friction and unrest, see F. W. Kent, "Lorenzo..., Amico degli Uomini da Bene: Lorenzo de' Medici and Oligarchy," and Alison Brown, "Lorenzo and Public Opinion in Florence: The Problem of Opposition," in *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il suo Mondo*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1994), 43-60 and 61-85 respectively.
53. See F. W. Kent, "Lorenzo de' Medici's Acquisition of Poggio a Caiano in 1474 and an Early Reference to his Architectural Expertise," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42 (1979), 250-257.
54. On ideology, see Amanda Lillie, *Florentine Villas in the Fifteenth Century: An Architectural and Social History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), esp. 147-154.
55. Philip Foster, "Lorenzo de' Medici's Cascina at Poggio a Caiano," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 14 (1969), 47-56.
56. On the size of the agricultural operation, see Foster, *Villa at Poggio*, 57-63.
57. So F. W. Kent, "Acquisition of Poggio," 255-257.
58. See Foster, *Villa at Poggio*, 108-167; and Kent, *Art of Magnificence*, 138.
59. On Alberti's influence, see, e.g., Per Gustaf Hamberg, "The Villa of Lorenzo il Magnifico at Poggio a Caiano and the Origin of Palladianism," in *Idea and Form, Studies in the History of Art*, edd. Ake Bengtsson et al. (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wilsell, 1959), 76-87.
60. On Lorenzo's involvement, see Beverly Brown, "An Enthusiastic Amateur: Lorenzo de' Medici as Architect," *Renaissance Quarterly* 46 (1993), 1-22. On construction in April 1492, see Foster, *Villa at Poggio*, 108-111; and Kent, *Art of Magnificence*, 138-140.
61. See the exceptional illustrations in Silvestro Bardazzi and Eugenio Castellani, *La Villa Medicea di Poggio a Caiano*, illustrated by Paolo Brandinelli, Vol. I (Prato: Casa di Risparmi e Depositi, 1981).
62. Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach and Robert Travenor (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), Bk. IX, ch. 2.
63. See James Ackerman, *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 79-82.
64. Foster, *Villa at Poggio*, 122-123.
65. For location, see Foster, *Villa at Poggio*, 35.
66. James Ackerman, "The Villa as Paradigm," *Perspecta* 22 (1986), 10-31.
67. See Ackerman *Country Houses*, 64-65; and Lillie, *Florentine Villas*, 58-79.

68. On the Medici palace, see Dale Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 217-238; on the relationship between the Strozzi palace and the villa at Poggio a Caiano, see Kent, *Art of Magnificence*, 139-140.
69. On the lack of defenses, see Ackerman, *Country Houses*, 84-85.
70. On the lack of precedent, see, e.g., Foster, *Villa at Poggio*, 212-213.
71. See, e.g., Brown, "Enthusiastic Amateur," 7-9.
72. For discussion of classical elements, see, e.g., Hamberg, "Villa of Lorenzo," 76-87; Foster, *Villa at Poggio*, 127-133; Ackerman, "Villa as Paradigm," 10-31.
73. Alberti, *Art of Building*, Bk. IX, ch. 9.
74. On ornamental features, see Foster, *Villa at Poggio*, 117-167, esp. 151-155, 213-228.
75. So, e.g., Najemy, "Civic Humanism," 75-104.
76. Ackerman, *Form and Ideology*, 79.
77. Alberti, *Art of Building*, Bk. IX, ch. 4.
78. Hamberg, "Villa of Lorenzo," 82-83.
79. See, e.g., Foster, *Villa at Poggio*, 154-155; Ackerman, *Form and Ideology*, 82; Kent, *Art of Magnificence*, 144; and most extensively Janet Cox-Rearick, "Themes of Time and Rule at Poggio a Caiano: The Portico Frieze of Lorenzo il Magnifico," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 26 (1982), 167-210.
80. On Mars as agricultural deity, see, e.g., Mary Beard, J. A. North, and S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome: Volume I: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 47-48; on March as the first month of the old Roman calendar, see A. K. Michels, *The Calendar of the Roman Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968) 97.
81. On Poliziano and Lorenzo, see Peter Godman, *From Poliziano to Machiavelli: Florentine Humanism in the High Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 37-56; on Poliziano and Augustus, see Nicolai Rubinstein, "Vassari's Painting of *The Foundation of Florence* in Palazzo Vecchio," in *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Giovanni Ciapelli (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2004), 131-150; for the traditional view about Julius Caesar, see Nicolai Rubinstein, "The Beginnings of Political Thought in Florence: A Study in Medieval Historiography," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942), 198-227.
82. Cox-Rearick, "Themes of Time and Rule," 180, and her note 58; on Bertoldo di Giovanni, see Kent, *Art of Magnificence*, 144.
83. Foster, *Villa at Poggio*, 76; Cox-Rearick, "Themes of Time and Rule," 181.

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FIGURE 1. Western façade of the enclosure to the Ara Pacis from the SW, with entrance. Photograph by Manfred Heyde.



FIGURE 2. The façade of the Medici Villa at Poggio a Caiano, with loggia in the manner of a temple, including frieze and pediment with the Medici coat of arms. Photograph by Niccolò Rigacci.

Theseus' Lyre



Stephen Fineberg

For Janet Smith¹

During the sixth century B.C.E. Athens adopted Theseus as its local hero, and accordingly his heroic deeds soon became popular on the Attic black figure vases.² He first appears in Athens on a volute crater signed both by the potter Ergotimos and the painter Kleitias. **Figs. 1-2** The crater, known as the François Vase, has been dated to about 570 B.C.E. It was discovered on the Etruscan site of Chiusi and now resides in the Archaeological Museum in Florence.³ In one of the several myths represented on Kleitias' crater, Theseus leads a line of dancers from a ship (at the left of the scene) toward the Cretan princess Ariadne, who awaits him (at the right). **Fig. 8** In his left hand, he holds a lyre, and with his right he plucks its strings. This meeting of Theseus and Ariadne is the subject of a myth that is told in the literary sources.

In penance for an ancient crime, Athens was compelled to send fourteen young Athenians to Crete each year as a human sacrifice to the monstrous Minotaur who dwelt in the dark recesses of the famous labyrinth. That obligation ended at last when Theseus joined the intended victims and slew the monster, but he did not carry out his task unaided. Ariadne, the daughter of the Cretan King, provided Theseus with a ball of twine. As Theseus entered the labyrinth, he unraveled the twine and then, when he had killed the monster, he followed the twine back out of the maze.

Kleitias' representation of the myth, however, is unique. Rather than the battle between Theseus and the Minotaur, that was to become canonical later in the sixth century,⁴ Kleitias chose to represent a moment of celebration. There is some scholarly debate about just when this celebration took place, some arguing that it is a victory dance following the slaying of the Minotaur, while others arguing that the dance took place at the moment of Theseus' first landing on Crete. For the present purposes, however, it is the dance *per se* that is important and the fact that Theseus leads the youthful line of dancers playing a lyre.

The meeting of Theseus and Ariadne, however, is but one of at least eight distinct mythic narratives appearing on the vase. Several attempts have been

made to find thematic unity among them, but none has to date won a scholarly consensus, and indeed some scholars deny that such thematic unity exists.⁵ In the present paper I join those who find thematic unity on the vase and, building on their work, I focus here on the images of music and dance that appear on the vase – and particularly on Theseus' lyre.

I. Images in Words and Images in Clay

The François Vase was made no more than twenty years after Solon's poems appeared in Athens. Solon is the only Attic writer whose work survives from the early sixth century, and so he is the sole literary contemporary of the painter Kleitias. The case has been made that Solon's ideas may be recognized in Kleitias' work,⁶ and most scholars find that Hesiod's influence is more directly discernable in Kleitias' work (and in Solon's) than are the Homeric epics.⁷ What is more, few scholars now believe that Kleitias worked with the *Iliad*, or any other written text, in hand, but that sixth century artists, poets and vase painters alike, drew upon a common mythic tradition.⁸ This tradition, however, conveyed not only a canon of mythic narratives (in variant versions), but it also handed down a well developed form of story-telling in which separate elements of the narrative are arrayed seriatim while the explicit logic of their relationship to one another is left unstated. Literary parataxis, as this practice is termed in the epic texts of Homer,⁹ lends an action a sense of immediacy and movement. Commenting on three successive, paratactic sentences that describe the flight of Ajax's spear in *Iliad* 6 (9-11), Graziosi et al (23) say that the three sentences "like camera shots, track the movement of the spear." As Stansbury-O'Donnell has argued,¹⁰ visual images in a single work, apparently united only by their proximity, may also describe separate moments of a single action.

In this section, I examine an extended Homeric simile which in the sections to follow I will set side by side with the François Vase to argue that both present a sequence of images that may be read as parts of a thematically coherent whole, and the overarching

themes that unite each are strikingly resonant – and this does not seem surprising, for while Solon and Kleitias lived and worked in the early sixth century, nonetheless they were the immediate heirs of a tradition earlier articulated by the Homeric (and Hesiodic) epics.

The focus of this section is Homer's description of Achilles' Shield in *Iliad* 18 (478-608), a description seen by several scholars as an extended simile and a thematic microcosm of the poem as a whole. The *Iliad* states its theme in the opening lines: the rage of Achilles that will bring countless sufferings upon the Achaeans and send the souls of many brave heroes to Hades. Achilles' rage, however, is not at first directed at the Trojan enemy but at Agamemnon. They quarrel and Achilles withdraws from the battle, which in turn leads to the loss of many Greek lives and in particular the death of Patroclus. Internal strife and personal loss are as central to the poem as the battle between Greeks and Trojans. Indeed it is not until verse 19 that any reference to Troy occurs. The central theme is Achilles' anger and, as several scholars have argued, that is the theme that finds expression on Achilles' shield.

Achilles' anger leads him to an early death which is foretold by his mother, Thetis, early in the poem, but significantly Achilles' premature death is formulated in terms of a contrast between two ways of life, a long and peaceful life that has been left behind as opposed to a short but glorious life of heroic action (*Il*.9.410-15).¹¹ On the shield, situated beneath the unchanging constancies of the heavens (at the shield's center) and bounded by the eternally flowing river of Ocean (circling the rim),¹² scenes of mortal life are shown.¹³ The first of these (closest to the center) includes two cities, the first a city of peace and the second a city at war – the life that Achilles left behind and the life that will bring him glory. In the city of peace marriages and feasting are shown. A bridal procession winds its way through the streets, singing and dancing to the sound of lyres and flutes, but along with these festivities there is a case at law. It is about a murder and the aggrieved party will not accept a settlement until at last all agree to peaceful arbitration. This is a city of law. In the city of war, an army has laid siege to a city and a quarrel has broken out within the besieging army. Again, there is an analogue to larger themes: the besieged city is Troy and the army outside its walls the army of Greeks; the division among those outside the walls mirrors the internal division between Achilles and Agamemnon.¹⁴

In the city at war, as the army about the walls stands divided, the defenders carry out an ambush against the herdsmen tending the cattle of the enemy. The

herdsmen are slain, the pipes they were playing are silenced,¹⁵ and the two sides immediately engage in a bloody battle. In the city of peace blood was spilled, and the aggrieved survivors will accept no compensation until the matter is settled at law. By contrast, in the city of war, the blood spilled in the ambush leads to more blood spilled, not with promise of resolution. Analogously, Achilles has been wronged and will accept no gestures of compensation (*Il*.9.379-92). A parallel becomes even more forceful when Ajax, commenting on Achilles' refusal to accept Agamemnon's peace offering, says:

A man accepts recompense even from the slayer of his brother, or for his dead son; and the slayer remains in his own land if he pays a great price, and the kinsman's heart and proud spirit are restrained by the taking of compensation. (*Il*.9.628-36).

Ajax might be describing the peaceful resolution in the case at law in the city of peace, but Achilles' anger is not to be assuaged. Rather Patroclus' death reignites it and, with Hephaistos' new armor, Achilles reenters the fray with renewed savagery. The description of Achilles, when he first sees the armor is telling. His companions stare at it with terror, "but when Achilles saw the arms, then wrath came on him still more, and his eyes showed forth terribly from beneath their lids." He makes his peace with Agamemnon – his life is no longer a matter of honor (*Il*.19.146-8), but of revenge.¹⁶ He rejects Odysseus' caution that the army cannot fight on an empty stomach, because his mind is consumed with "slaying, and blood, and the grievous groans of men" (19.214), and indeed this vision is realized when Achilles takes the field against Trojans. On the shield, the quarrel within the ranks of the army beneath the walls of the City at War gives way to a battle in which the factions are united in a common effort against the defenders of the city – an analogue to the resolution of the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon and the bloody battle that ensues on the Trojan plain. Both are notable for the graphic terms in which the carnage is described.

In the next ring, beyond the two cities, three agricultural scenes are depicted. In the first, farmers plough a field, stopping at the end of each row for a refreshing drink of sweet wine; in the second a king surveys his fields where men harvest the crops and an ox is slaughtered for a sacrificial feast; and in the third an orchard is shown, heavy with fruit. In the orchard maids and youths, their minds untroubled, carry the fruit. They dance as a boy sings and plays the lyre in

their midst. Like the city of peace, order prevails in all three of these rural scenes. It is an untroubled world of music and dance.

The next ring, beyond the peaceful agricultural scenes, depicts herdsmen leading cattle to a pasture that lies by a sounding river, and there two lions attack a bull from the herd. Despite the vigorous efforts of the young herdsmen and their dogs, the lions succeed in dragging away a struggling bull. This lion attack ends as brutally as the battle between the two armies before the city at war, a parallel that is reinforced by the description of spilled blood in both scenes and by the way that both men and lions drag away their victims. The bull, bellowing loudly, is dragged off (ἔλκετο, 581) by the lions who proceed to tear away the bull's hide and devour its "innards and dark blood" (ἔγκατα καὶ μέλαν αἷμα, 583) – an echo of the battle around the city at war, where ruinous fate dragged (ἔλκε, 537) a corpse along by its feet, her garments red with the blood of men (δαφονεὸν αἵματι φωτῶν, 538);¹⁷ and warriors on both sides drag off (ἔρουν, 540) the enemy corpses. In addition, the ambush, the ensuing battle, and the lion attack all take place by a river, perhaps the same river – the ambush "at the river" (ἐν ποταμῷ, 521); the ensuing battle "near the banks" (ποταμοῖο παρ' ὄχθος, 533); and the lion attack simply "beside the river" (παρ ποταμόν, 576). Structural parallels and verbal echoes associate the lion attack and the ambush that ends in an equally bloody conflict. The symmetry, then is: agrarian landscape : lion attack :: city of peace : city at war. Warriors at their most ferocious are compared to lions in the *Iliad*, and so especially is Achilles when he is most filled with rage.¹⁸ As the lions turn a bucolic landscape into a scene of bloody carnage, so Achilles' rage defies any impulse toward peace. When Hector urges Achilles to swear an oath that whoever kills the other will return the body of the vanquished, Achilles replies that there can be no oaths between men and lions ((22.260-67).¹⁹

Finally, in the ring furthest from the center and just within the steam of Ocean, Homer says that Hephaistos made the image of a dance floor, like the one that Daedalos made for Ariadne. There young men and maidens dance, the young men wearing golden daggers, the maidens worth many cattle. The dancers move first in two opposing lines and then in a circle, "as when a potter tests his wheel (600-601). Spectators watch and tumblers lead the line of dancers. The name, Daedalos (Δαίδαλος, 592), recalls the description of Hephaistos himself who was initially said to have made the shield, "adorning it in every part" (πάντοσε δαιδάλων, 479), and then again,

when the shield was complete, Hephaistos fashioned a "helmet beautifully fashioned" (κόρυθα . . . καλὴν δαιδαλέην, 611-12).²⁰ Again and again, throughout the description of the shield, the work is characterized as "beautiful" (καλός)²¹ while Hephaistos himself is repeatedly described as deformed – he is "lame" (ἀμφιγυῖς, 462, 587, 590). Nowhere is the contrast so immediate as in the final description of mortal life on the shield:

On (the shield) the famed god of the two lame legs (περικλυτὸς ἀμφιγυῖς) cunningly inlaid a dancing floor like the one which in wide Cnossus Daedalus fashioned of old for the fair-tressed Ariadne (*Il.* 18.590-92).

The god who can walk only with the support of his mechanical maidens fashions a dance floor for youths and maidens to dance.

This theme of beauty linked to vulnerability finds its context in the exchange between Hephaistos and Thetis which leads up to the description of the shield. Hephaistos responds readily to Thetis' request that he fashion new armor for Achilles, because, he reminds her, it was she who came to his aid on that occasion when Hera hurled him from Olympus.²² He owes her, he says, a return for saving his life (ζωάγρια τίειν, *Il.* 18.407; cf. 417). Hera cast him from Olympus in disappointment at his lameness and that lameness is emphasized more than once as he makes his way from the forge to greet Thetis. He makes his way from the forge limping (χωλεύων, 411, 417; cf. χολὼν, 397)), he requires the support to walk, and throughout he bears the epithet "lame" (ἀμφιγυῖς, 462, 587, 590). A god, of course, cannot lose his life, but Hephaistos speaks of his injury as if it were a mortal wound. In her appeal to Hephaistos, Thetis rehearses her own suffering. She was compelled against her will to wed a mortal, who now lives feeble with old age in her halls, now she faces the imminent loss of her son, and divine armor cannot prevent it. The bond between Hephaistos and Thetis, the pain that each suffers and the aid that each brings the other, sets the stage for the extended narrative of the shield where order is juxtaposed with chaos.

Finally, the image of the potter at his wheel that closes the description of the dance floor, adds one more figure of the artisan at work in *Iliad* 18. His wheel spins like the circling dancers on the shield. The vase he will make and the images that will adorn it remain, of course, a mystery, but I suggest that the images that decorate Kleitias' crater may provide some

idea. I will argue that like the scenes on Achilles' shield, and indeed like Hephaistos himself, the crater presents a contrast between a dark epic world leading to the tragic death of Achilles (side A), and the brighter world of sixth century Athens, where the heroic actions of Theseus are set in a context of communal celebration.

In sum, the images on the Shield of Achilles contrast with scenes that find their analogue in angry and violent actions that separate Greek from Greek and finally Greek from Trojan, in the poem at large from scenes of peaceful and orderly life in both cities and in the rural farmlands beyond. In both the peaceful city as well as the agrarian landscape, life is characterized by song and dance, which appear to attend weddings and communal labor – both occasion, as they are depicted on the shield, where young men and women meet. On the battlefield and in the lion attack on the peaceful herds, the scene is only bloodshed and death. Homer is explicit in his description of the lion attack in saying that it brought the music to an abrupt halt.

Stepping back from the mortal world, however, the shield portrays the unchanging heavens and the timeless flow of Ocean, and beyond even these the craftsman, Hephaistos who fashions the shield. Despite his divinity, Hephaistos is defined by his vulnerability; he was born lame and speaks of his fall from Olympus as life-threatening. He makes beautiful objects, like the shield, and yet they offer Achilles no protection against death. All that the widely famed (περικλυτός, 18.383 *et passim*) craftsman can do is to provide armor that will bring honor (κλέος, 18.121) to Achilles. At the same time Hephaistos' art can fashion the likeness of a dance floor where, in the image at least, young men and women dance and sing. This dance is compared to the spinning of a potter's wheel and this has led me to consider that the images on Kleitias' vase may be seen in the same way as the images on the shield – unified around a theme of tragic heroic action set side by side with the peaceful order of communal song and dance. I do not claim, of course, that Kleitias took his theme from a reading of the *Iliad*, but that he worked in a tradition of which the *Iliad* was an earlier literary expression.

II. Peleus and Achilles on the François Vase: Side A

Achilles' story begins with the heroic boar hunt depicted in the uppermost frieze on side A. **Fig. 3** A youthful Peleus, unbearded and spear in hand, is shown in the front ranks side by side with the bearded figure of the hero Meleager. Both are identified by an

inscription.²³ The myth of the Calydonian boar hunt appears in the literary sources as early as Homer (*Il.* 9.524-605), where Phoenix, attempting to persuade Achilles to rejoin his fellow Greeks in battle, recounts the tale of Meleager. Meleager assembled a diverse company of heroes to kill a vicious boar bent on the destruction of vineyards near the city of Calydon. They slew the boar but a dispute ensued among the victors over the boar's hide, and the brother of Meleager's mother, Althaia, was killed. In anger she cursed her son, and he in turn withdrew from combat. Meleager resisted all pleas to rejoin the battle, until at last he yielded to the persuasion of his wife, Kleopatra,²⁴ and so, Phoenix urges, should Achilles yield to the pleas of his friends and return to the fight.

What Phoenix fails to mention is that Althaia's curse will result in her son's premature death,²⁵ even as Achilles' return to battle will mean the fulfillment of the prophecy of his own premature death. For the present argument, however, Homer's explicit mention of Althaia's curse is some assurance that a sixth century vase painter, like Kleitias, and his audience would have known that Meleager's glorious victory over the boar was to be short lived.²⁶ With that knowledge, a dark cloud would have hung over Kleitias' image of the hunt. Not only will the hunt lead to Meleager's death, but Peleus himself faces an as yet unseen tragedy, the premature death of his own son.

The frieze immediately below the boar-hunt depicts the funeral games of Patroklos. Five chariots race toward Achilles who stands at the finish line to the far right. **Fig. 4** The death of Patroklos will prompt Achilles' fateful return to battle where death awaits him. Like the boar hunt, Patroklos' funeral games scene are overshadowed by imminent tragedy. Achilles on the vase is a youthful figure (beardless), holding a staff, and facing the on-coming chariots. His legs and right arm have been lost (a large fragment of the vase is missing). Behind Achilles on the François Vase stands a large, prize tripod, a prize for the winning chariot.²⁷ Achilles' identity is assured by an inscription, and the event itself is easily enough identified from Homer's account.²⁸ The funeral games for Patroklos are described in loving detail by Homer in the second half of *Iliad* 23, but as Beazley pointed out long ago, Kleitias does not seem to have followed Homer's account. Of the contestants in the chariot race named by Homer, only Diomedes appears in Kleitias' portrayal, and, if the order of the charioteers on the vase indicates the order in which they crossed the finish line, there is a further discrepancy. According to Homer, Diomedes was the winner, but on the vase

his is third in the line of chariots. In addition, figures explicitly named by Kleitias in the race are not named by Homer in his account.²⁹ Although Kleitias did not follow Homer in depicting the scene, it may be safely assumed that the games were part of a tradition known to both the painter and the epic poet. In Homer's account, Patroklos' death prompts Achilles to return to the battle field where he knows he must die. That connection is less explicit on Kleitias' vase, and yet some continuity between the figure of Achilles at the games (on the body of the vase) and the image of Achilles' body being carried from the field (on the handle) suggest the two events are at last part of a unified narrative.

As in the funeral games, Achilles on the handles of the vase is unbearded. Early black figure painters, roughly contemporary with Kleitias, show Achilles both bearded and unbearded,³⁰ but for Kleitias, at least, Achilles was a young man in life and in death. In Homer's account of the funeral games, this youthful identity is associated with the tragedy that lies ahead. On the eve of the games in the *Iliad*, the shade of Patroklos visits Achilles and urges Achilles not to delay the burial. Even more emphatically, however, the shade reminds Achilles that they share a common fate (*Il.*23.69-92). Hearing this, Homer's Achilles mourned his companion as a father might mourn a son who was newly married, a life cut off in its prime (*Il.*23.222-25). Patroklos' death meant that Achilles' death was near, and Homer's image reminds us that Achilles' death is to be an untimely one. Kleitias' portrayal of Achilles as a youthful figure both in life and in death links the two images iconographically and so perhaps thematically (as they are thematically linked for Homer).

Finally on side A, just beneath the main frieze that runs the full circumference of the vase, Kleitias shows Achilles in pursuit of Troilos. **Figs. 5-6** Prompted by an oracle stipulating that Troy will not fall if Troilos, the young son of Priam, should reach his twentieth year, Achilles resolved to kill him. Although the story is barely mentioned in the literary sources until after the classical period,³¹ it was popular and fully illustrated on the sixth century Attic vases.³² On the François Vase, the scene not only depicts the pursuit of Troilos, but implies that his killing was an act of impiety. That portion of the vase showing Achilles' head has been lost; what remains of him are only his right leg, a hint of his left, and the lower end of a scabbard behind his left flank.³³ Troilos flees on horse-back before his pursuer, an overturned hydria beneath the horse, and his sister, Polyxena (preserved only from her waist to the hem of her skirt), runs ahead.

Troilos and Polyxena had gone to fill her hydria at the fountain house where Achilles lay in wait. The fountain house is shown by Kleitias at the left of the frame. **Fig. 1a** Apollo stands behind it, a young man fills a hydria within, and in front stand four figures (all labeled): Rhodia, Thetis, Hermes, and Athena, all facing the scene of the pursuit. Hermes, his head turned back toward Themis, extends his arm toward her, a gesture that suggests that he is addressing her. Framing the scene at the right is the place of Priam; he is seated before it. Antenor faces the king, his hand outstretched toward him in token of speech. Within the palace two armed warriors (Hector and Polites) stride forward. On other early sixth century Attic vases, the murder of Troilos is located at the altar of Apollo³⁴ (a detail included the late literary sources as well³⁵). Although Kleitias depicts the pursuit, and not the killing, the figure of Apollo on the François Vase anticipates Achilles' sacrilege.³⁶

We cannot know what Hermes said to Themis, nor what Antenor said to Priam in Kleitias' version of the myth, but the two groups in conversation invite comparison, gods in conversation to the left and mortals on the right. The pursuit of Troilos was a popular theme among the early black figure painters, but only in this one does Themis appear. Themis embodies the laws of heaven, perhaps her presence in this scene represents the standard against which Achilles' actions are to be judged. In any case, both gods (Hermes and Themis) and mortals (Antenor and Priam) are moved to comment.

Thus the pursuit of Troilos reveals finally that Achilles' fate was not simply an arbitrary one, but the result of a moral failing: Achilles committed an act of outrage against the god and he will pay with his life. Accordingly, Ajax carries his body from the field on the outside of both volute handles.³⁷ **Fig. 7**

In sum, the "Achilles" side of the vase represents a narrative that begins with the heroic action of the young Peleus and ends with the flawed heroism of his son, Achilles, who pursues the helpless Troilos to the altar of Apollo where Troilos will die. By pairing of Peleus with the tragic Meleager (and on the reasonable assumption that Kleitias and his audience knew the story), Kleitias foreshadows tragic events yet to befall the house of Peleus. In the funeral games of Patroklos, the loss is commemorated that will lead Achilles back into combat where he will die, and finally in Achilles' pursuit of Troilos the scene anticipates a sacrilege that transforms heroic action into excessive rage. As Thetis first formatted Achilles' destiny, it seemed a choice between a long and peaceful life at

home, or a short and tragic life in the pursuit of glory. In both the *Iliad* and on Kleitias' crater, however, that pursuit is portrayed as excessive. Homer's Achilles, in his rage toward Hector, forfeits his humanity. In his memorable words to Hector, Achilles with a dark look taunts his enemy: "As between lions and men there are no oaths of faith (*Il.*22.262). This savagery offends the gods, who step in to prevent Achilles from desecrating the corpse (*Il.*23.184-91).³⁸ Achilles, for both the artist and the epic poet, is a figure of tragic excess.

III. Theseus and Athens on the François Vase: Side B

On the "Theseus" side (B) of the vase Kleitias depicts a very different hero, and excess, where it appears, is diminished. Below the rim of the vase Theseus leads a line of fourteen youths, alternating male and female. They move from a ship on the left toward Ariadne and her nurse who stand to welcome them on the right.³⁹ **Fig. 8** She holds the ball of thread that Theseus will use to find his way out of the Minotaur's labyrinth. The number, fourteen, suggests that these are the youths who set sail from Athens as the annual sacrifice to the Minotaur. A long scholarly debate surrounds this image, some arguing that it shows Theseus' arrival on Crete and the first meeting between himself and Ariadne. Plutarch, however, says that on the return voyage a victory dance was celebrated on the Island of Delos,⁴⁰ and some scholars have identified the scene on the vase with that dance. It seems more likely, however, that more than one moment is shown in the same scene: the line of young Athenians behind Theseus could thus be celebrating Theseus' victory over the Minotaur even as Ariadne welcomes them to Crete, the ball of thread as yet unused in her hand. Following that logic, Guy Hedreen⁴¹ argues that the scene represents a dance performed upon Theseus' arrival on Crete,⁴² that it anticipates the victory over the Minotaur which is still to come,⁴³ and at the same time that it recalls a moment, defined by similar scenes in other contexts, where young men and women first meet in a coming of age ceremony and a prelude to marriage.⁴⁴ On Hedreen's analysis, the association of the line of dancers, as well as the meeting of Theseus and Ariadne, adds weight to the long held view that vase was made for a wedding – a crater where wine and water were mixed is a standard feature of both symposia and weddings. I shall return to this point.

Theseus and the Minotaur appeared outside of Attica prior to the sixth century, and in the years following the painting of the François Vase, the

Minotauromachy was a popular theme among the Attic black figure vase painters.⁴⁵ In some of those scenes, as on the François Vase, the lyre appears. On a band-cup in Munich,⁴⁶ the painter has represented the killing of the Minotaur and the boar hunt, just as Kleitias has, on opposite sides of his vase. On the cup, standing to the left of Theseus and the monster, Athena holds the lyre, which in the spirit of Kleitias (who labels a hydria and Priam's throne on the François Vase) is labeled "lyre." To the right of the combatants on the cup, Ariadne appears with a wreath in one hand and the ball of thread in the other. As Hedreen points out, Theseus will have already rolled out Ariadne's thread by this point in the narrative, and so the ball that Ariadne holds can only allude to an earlier moment in the story. Similarly the lyre can be of no use, as Shapiro argues, to a man fighting a monster and so must perform another function.⁴⁷ As on the François Vase, so on the cup, Ariadne is accompanied by her nurse. On the band-cup she stands behind Ariadne and, rather than calmly awaiting Theseus' arrival, as she does in Kleitias' version, she is engaged in a lively dance (all of the other figures stand calmly waiting). On both vases Theseus' youth is marked by his lack of a beard, Ariadne's is signaled by the presence of her nurse, whose lively dance on the Munich band-cup appears to celebrate the arrival of a suitor – a further argument in favor of Hedreen's proposal that Theseus' arrival on Crete was as much about his arrival at a marriageable age as it was about freeing Athens from its annual tribute to the Minotaur.

The lyre reappears on a handful of additional black figure Minotauromachies, but by no means on all. The four black figure examples known to me range in date from early to late in the 6th century; the red figure examples are also few and span the years from the late 6th century to the late 5th.⁴⁸ Given the wide popularity of Theseus' battle with the Minotaur – at least 200 examples survive in the corpus of Attic black figure vases – it would seem that Theseus' association with the lyre was a long lived tradition, but one that captured the Athenian imagination less forcefully than his heroic combat. If, as Hedreen argues, Theseus' lyre marks his identity as young man of marriageable age and the dance is the occasion where such young men meet eligible young women, the explanation for the rarity of representations of Theseus and the lyre is perhaps understandable. His courtship of Ariadne, if indeed that is what it was,⁴⁹ ended in his abandoning her en route to Athens, and he would have been better off if his later amorous encounters had ended prematurely as well. He abducted the Amazon Antiope, which

brought a hostile Amazon army to Athens; she bore him Hippolytus for whom Phaedra, then Theseus' wife, developed a fatal attraction; and finally he abducted Helen which, according to some sources, led her brothers, the Dioscuri, to take Athens. Theseus seems to have a taste for dangerous liaisons and thus seems a poor model of idyllic marriage, and yet that seems exactly what he was on Kleitias' vase. Scholars idealize his meeting with Ariadne on François Vase, and curiously dismiss the fact that he abandoned her on Naxos before they ever reached Athens.⁵⁰ Homer reports two version of the story; in one Theseus leaves her behind on the island, in another Dionysos prompts Artemis to kill her there.⁵¹ In either case, it was a union that was not to be and Kleitias must certainly have known it. I will return to that problem.

Below the meeting of Theseus and Ariadne on side B of the crater, Theseus makes a second appearance in a battle against the centaurs – alas, only part of his shield and the better part of an inscription naming him survive. **Fig. 9** Homer refers to the centaurs only in passing, but what he does say suggests that the battle between the Lapiths and centaurs was well known to him.⁵² At *Odyssey* 21.295-303 in particular, the suitor Antinoos (ironically) reports that wine was the undoing of the Centaur Eurytion in the halls of the Lapith Peirithoos. In this epic passage there is no explicit mention of the wedding, but only that Eurytion was a guest in Peirithoos' halls where he committed an unspecified outrage. Scholars often identify the Centauromachy on the François Vase with the wedding of Perithoos, but in fact the battle is only later, during the fifth century, associated explicitly with a wedding.⁵³ At the center of Kleitias' Centauromachy are two centaurs pounding the Lapith, Kaineus, into the ground, a tale that Kleitias' inherited from earlier sources. **Fig. 10** Interpretation of the scene as a whole, whether the scene is Perithoos' wedding or simply a brawl, seems straightforward: Theseus and others, wearing the civilized armor of hoplite warriors, combat the tribe of centaurs whose reputation, no less than the rocks and branches with which they fight, marks them as a threat to the civilized order.

The depiction of Kaineus, however, seems less simple. Kaineus is the embodiment of invulnerability; his very name derives from the word for surpassing strength (καίνυμι, “surpass” or “be superior”).⁵⁴ According to Hesiod, Kaineus began life as a maiden who was granted her wish to become a man (ἄνδρα) and invulnerable (ἄτρωτον).⁵⁵ Because Kaineus could not be wounded, the centaurs were compelled to hammer him into the earth. It is uncertain

whether Kleitias knew of Kaineus' gender change, but the image of the centaurs pounding him into the ground makes it certain that Kleitias did know of his invulnerability. Kaineus thus embodies the seemingly invincible strength of the hoplite warrior. According to the literary sources, Theseus and the Lapiths, hoplite warriors in this scene, invariably prevail over the centaurs, while Kaineus for all his surpassing strength is overcome in this scene. The scene, read in this way, valorizes heroic action even as it sounds a note of caution over excess – a reading that finds its analogue in Homer's account of Achilles and the Greeks at Troy.

Immediately below the Centauromachy, the Wedding of Peleus is depicted, and just below the wedding procession, the myth that has become known as the Return of Hephaistos). **Figs. 11-13** That tale may be briefly told. In rivalry with Zeus who had born Athena in a seeming act of male self-sufficiency, Hera managed to bear Hephaistos in a seeming act of parthenogenesis.⁵⁶ Discovering that her son was born lame, Hera in disappointment cast Hephaistos from Olympos. He in anger, pretending to appease her, sent her a beautifully crafted throne. Once she was seated in her son's throne, however, she was unable to rise. She promptly sent Ares to force Hephaistos to release her, but the war god could not prevail over the master craftsman. Finally Dionysos intervened. Inebriated on Dionysos' wine Hephaistos relented and at last agreed to release Hera. He is shown on the François Vase, led by Dionysos and riding a mule, on his way to Olympos where his mother awaits him. **Fig. 11**

The myth appears in its fullest form on the François Vase with Hera and Zeus on their thrones awaiting Hephaistos' arrival, Ares crouching behind the royal thrones, his spear point toward the ground in defeat, and Dionysos with his full entourage on satyrs and nymphs leading the procession. **Figs. 11-12** This scheme in more or less abbreviated form will become a popular one among the Attic vase painters. Only in Kleitias' version is Hephaistos' foot turned backward in token of his lameness – presumably because of an aversion to shown deformity subsequent painters do not include this detail, relying only on the fact that Hephaistos rides instead of walks to convey the essential detail of his lameness. Also unique to Kleitias' version is the figure of Aphrodite, who stands, face to face with Dionysos at the center of the composition. **Fig. 13** On the François Vase and in every version, however, Hephaistos is shown *en route* to Olympos, never at the moment of arrival. Hera's release is never explicitly represented, and in this way Hephaistos can

have it both ways. He can restore relations with his mother by promising to free her and at the same time sustain his anger by never fulfilling his promise. In this way scenes of the Return become an expression of mythic conflict. Accordingly Dionysos, who accommodates contradiction, attends the procession. I have argued this case more fully elsewhere.⁵⁷ For the present argument, however, it is sufficient to observe that force alone, in the person of Ares, cannot resolve the quarrel. Dionysos with his wine and his entourage of revelers can succeed where Ares failed. Order is restored on Olympos, but as in the Centauromachy, a note of caution seems to be felt about excessive force.

Seeking a unified theme, some scholars have identified marriage as the common thread that links the three myths on side B of Kleitias' crater. In the meeting of Theseus and Ariadne some scholars have found a scene of courtship, in the Centauromachy they imagine the brawl that erupted at the wedding of Perithoos, and finally in the Return, where Aphrodite stands before the throne of Zeus and Hera to greet the arrival of Hephaistos, they think of Aphrodite and Hephaistos in *Odyssey* 8, where the two are a wedded couple, and imagine that Hephaistos was awarded her in exchange for freeing Hera. **Fig. 13** If Theseus and Ariadne were ever married, the marriage was famously short lived; the Centauromachy on Kleitias' vase cannot be identified with any certainty as a wedding; and the notion that Hera used Aphrodite to compensate Hephaistos for her release lacks any supporting evidence.⁵⁸ Other scholars have identified Theseus as the focus on side B, but they are unable to explain the myth of the Return which has no obvious connection to Theseus. I propose instead that the theme represented on side B is Athens itself, and that side A and B are thematically posed in contrast: the epic world where dark prophecy and violent actions lead to Achilles' tragic death in contrast to Theseus' Athens where choral dance initiates the union of the city's youth, the heroic actions of the king subdue the excesses of nature, and finally where Dionysos accommodates (if not resolves) differences. Achilles' impious murder of Troilos embodies the one, Theseus with his lyre the other.

IV. Gods and Mortals, Predators and Pygmies The Friezes Circle the Circumference of the Vase

Running the full circumference of the crater in a frieze wider than the rest, is a procession of deities

celebrating the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis.⁵⁹ At the head of the procession, on side A of the vase, Peleus stands before his palace to greet his guests; Thetis is visible within **Fig. 15** At the head of the procession the centaur, Chiron, in the company of Iris, the gods' messenger, grasps Peleus' hand in a gesture of congratulation. Chiron carries a branch over his shoulder where three small animals, prizes of the hunt, are tied. As Beazley recalls, Chiron, the most just of the centaurs (δικαιότατος Κενταύρων, *Il*.11.832) taught Achilles the healing arts.⁶⁰ The presence of Chiron at the head of the procession, his hand clasping the hand of the groom, presents a contrast to the wild centaurs who do combat on the opposite side of the vase. On the occasion of Peleus' wedding, centaurs do not display the wildness of nature but a civilized mastery over it (hunting and, if we recall Homer's words, the healing arts). Iris, her messenger's staff in hand, leads the procession of deities to the house of a mortal – as she does in the Homeric poems, she facilitates commerce between gods and mortals. Following Chiron and Iris in a close grouping come Demeter, Chariklo, and Hestia, all stately matrons – Demeter presides over the crops, Chariklo is Chiron's wedded wife, and Hestia is the goddess of the hearth. At this divine wedding, even the centaurs appear as a wedded pair.

Walking behind Demeter, Chariklo, and Hestia, Dionysos shoulders a large amphora, his face turned out of the picture plane to stare directly at the viewer. **Fig. 14** As has often been pointed out, Kleitias has placed Dionysos at the center of the composition (he stands midway between the handles on side A of the vase). All the others, gods and horses, proceed at a stately gait, but Dionysos appears stooped under the weight of his amphora, or as some have suggested, his pose suggests a dance step.⁶¹ He is the undoubted focus of the composition. In the scene of the Return on the opposite side of the vase, Dionysos faces Aphrodite, where the wine god and the goddess of erotic desire both assume a similar pose. They are a pair. **Figs. 11 and 13**

In the Wedding Procession, Aphrodite, Dionysos, and the Muses form a triad as the personification of eros, wine, and music. Solon in the early sixth century speaks of Dionysos and Aphrodite together.⁶² Again later Euripides' chorus of bacchantes sing of Dionysos who, they say, unites them in dance, in laughter, and the sound of the pipes – his wine leads them to vanquish their cares (ἀποπαύσαι τε μερίμνας) (*Bacchae* 378-85), and in the following strophe they praise Aphrodite's Cyprus "where the Erotes charm

mortal hearts” and Pieria, the home of the Muses and of the Graces (*Bacchae* 402-416). The thematic focus of the Return is the power of eros, of wine, and of music, and so I suggest is the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis. While the Return is a comic tale of excess and reunion – a comic ending is the luxury of the gods –, the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis is a unique occasion where mortal and immortal are joined. The wedding procession on Kleitias’ vase idealizes that moment.

Following Dionysos come the Hours, and the first of the chariots in which the greater of the gods ride. Calliope stands in the background, behind the horses of the first chariot, and like Dionysos she faces outward, face to face with the viewer of the vase. The arms of the Hours are raised in animated gestures, and Calliope plays the pipes. Dionysos brings the wine and Calliope provides the music. A second chariot follows with four Muses attending, and a third chariot with three more Muses in attendance. These are the chariots of Poseidon and Amphitrite and of Ares and Aphrodite – both pairs appear hidden behind the handle which has been attached to the body of the crater here.

Following the procession to side B, a fourth chariot,⁶³ and then a fifth which carries Athena and another goddess. Walking with the fifth chariot are Nereus and his wife Doris, the parents of the bride; both look backward toward Athena. Then comes the chariot of Hermes and Maia attended by four Moirai, and next the chariot of Ocean. Little remains of Ocean himself, beyond what appears to be the ear and neck of a bull, a scaly body, and a fish’s tail. A second handle separates Ocean’s head from his body and tail which appear under the arch of the handle along with Hephaistos who rides side-saddle on a mule at the end of the procession.

The horses in this divine procession have their mains gathered in top-knots, and the tail of Hephaistos’ mount has been carefully braided (contrast the donkey’s tail in the scene of the Return), and the animal’s phallus is no longer the comic hypertrophic member of Hephaistos’ mule (and on the satyrs) in the scene of the Return. This is no ordinary gathering, but the solemn union of a mortal and an immortal. The Muses are in attendance (like the Hours, they gesture expressively with their hands, but the significance of their gesture is difficult to interpret). Calliope provides music and Dionysos brings wine – they both look full face at the viewer and in this way the music and the wine become visually prominent in the scene – and yet Calliope’s pan-pipes are not the shrill flutes of Dionysos’ satyrs, nor is the wine contained in crude

animal skins as it is in the scene of the Return. The kantharos that stands on the altar at Peleus’ feet in the Wedding scene suggests that wine was to play a part in the events to come,⁶⁴ but there is some assurance that the drinking will not become excessive – that the solemnity of the event will be maintained. Chiron leads the procession. He is shown in a gesture of close friendship with the groom, and he attends with his wife, and in these ways he is a very different centaur from the ones against whom Theseus and the Lapith battle in the Centauromachy of side B of the crater.

Marriage broadly defined is among the most important of socializing events, a sort of social contract that regulates untamed erotic impulses,⁶⁵ and this marriage between a mortal and an immortal is not different. Thetis is a force of nature itself. She is an Oceanid whose home is beneath the sea and, as Homer attests, she wed Peleus only under protest. Zeus made her subject to (δάμασσεν) a mortal man, Peleus’ son of Aeacus. She says that she endured the bed of this mortal man against her will (οὐκ ἐθέλουσα), a mortal man who now lies about the house decrepit with age (*Il.* 18.432-36).⁶⁶ Sixth century Attic vases show Peleus subduing his bride; her untamed nature is conveyed by her ability to transform herself in various wild beasts – a dramatic example may be found on a late 6th century vase where a panther rides Peleus’ back and a snake-headed dog emerges from Thetis’ shoulder, just behind her head.⁶⁷ In Kleitias’ scene, she sits demurely obedient within the house.

Ocean has the head of a bull and the tail of a snake. He dwells at the margins of the known world; when Zeus assembled the company of immortals, all heeded his summons, even the smallest river nymphs, with the sole exception of Ocean (*Il.* 20.7-9). He appears in the procession, however, because he is a member of the bride’s family, and yet he appears toward the end of the line, ahead only of Hephaistos whose place among the Olympians is even more marginal. In the Wedding scene, Hephaistos rides a donkey, a lowly beast whose comic excesses moved even Apollo to laughter⁶⁸; he rides because he is lame and his disability makes him the subject of ridicule on Olympos (*Il.* 1. 591-600). **Fig. 16** In the Wedding procession, Hephaistos not only rides in token of his lameness, but he rides side-saddle, a pose that is assumed on the vases only by women.⁶⁹ The end of the procession is reserved for the lowest in the social order.

In sum Kleitias’ procession of deities at the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis commemorate the solemn union of a god and a mortal, a tenuous enough moment made even more tenuous by the inclusion of guests

like Chiron whose near relatives drink to excess and prove more animal than man, like Ocean whose bestial form serves as a reminder of his daughter's resistance to the civilized institution of marriage, and finally of Hephaistos, who conspired to resist the authority of Zeus. Absent from this wedding procession is any hint of the tragic fate of the couple's only son, Achilles, and yet the viewer need only look to side A of the crater to see it fully expressed. To find the excesses of the centaurs or a reminder of the conspiracy between Hera and Hephaistos against Zeus, side B shows both, but there Dionysos restores order among the Olympians, Theseus and the Lapith hoplites subdue the centaurs, and the chorus who follow Theseus, lyre in hand, seem to affirm a conjugal union between Theseus and Ariadne.

Beneath the lowest mythological scenes, a smaller frieze also girdles the circumference of the vase. It depicts savage animals attacking their prey as well as sphinxes and griffins posed in heraldic symmetry on opposite sides of a complex floral design. **Figs. 17-18** The lions no less than the fantastic monsters were derived from earlier Corinthian vases and ultimately from works imported from the east, where the lion is emblem of royal power. Markoe has traced the origins of lion attacks and applies his findings to images of lions in Greek art. He argues that in the Homeric epics images of lions describe divinely inspired warriors; their victims are compared to bulls, deer, and other non-predatory animals. Achilles is more than once a lion (his shield on the black figure vases sometimes carries the image of a lion).⁷⁰ On the famous depiction of the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis by Sophilos, several animal friezes adorn both the body of the vase (a dinos) and its stand, but there the animals all stand peacefully in what seems little more than a decorative pattern. They do not interact.⁷¹ By contrast, on the François Vase lions take down a bull and a boar, panthers attack a bull and a stag.⁷²

In the *Iliad* Achilles is a lion not only in battle, but when his barely suppressed rage threatens to break his fragile accord with Priam in book 24.⁷³ Refusing to take a seat before Achilles returns Hector's body, Priam provokes Achilles' anger: "So now stir my heart no more among my sorrows, lest, old sir, I spare not even you inside the huts, my suppliant though you are, and so transgress the chare of Zeus. So he spoke, and the old man was seized with fear, and obeyed his word. but like a lion the son of Peleus spring out of the house ..." to receive the Trojan ransom. (*Il.* 24.560-72).⁷⁴ Here the rage is neither one inspired by a god nor directed at an enemy on the battlefield, but

a force from within that casts Achilles in the image of a lion, and so I suggest that the lion attacks on the François Vase not only resonate with the violent actions depicted on the vase but, for a sixth century audience schooled on the Homeric epics, Kleitias' lions would have been understood as the inner forces that informed heroic action. If that is so, then the François Vase depicts not simply mythic narrative but a reflection on the invisible powers that animate it. That is a great deal to attribute to an animal frieze, but it is consistent with the argument I have been making, that the prevailing state of mind on side B stands in contrast to that found on side A – Theseus' Athens where peaceful order is affirmed in contrast to Achilles' epic world where heroic action becomes heroic excess and ends in tragedy. Tragedy, however, may be a misleading choice of words, since it is not so much a matter of moderation and excess, but of an individual seeking honor in victory, and willing to sacrifice all for it, in contrast to community acting in concert – hoplites battling the excesses of the centaurs, the music and dance that ceremonially unite young men and maidens ultimately in marriage, and a divine procession that restores order among the gods.

The scene of the Return, however, does more than restore order on Olympos, and so too, I suggest, does the contrast between the two sides of the François Vase in general. Like Theseus himself, the myth of the Return had been shown outside of Athens before it appears on the Attic vases, but in the end it became an Athenian story. As I have argued elsewhere, the Return was popular in Athens because it embodies a conflict that defines family relations in the city itself and because that conflict is not one that can be resolved. Even as the Return promises renewed relations between Hera and Hephaistos, it sustains the memory of the cause of their quarrel (Hephaistos' lameness) as well as Hephaistos' resistance to actually resolving it (the procession is always shown in progress, and the moment of Hera's release is never portrayed). If tensions could not be resolved, they could find expression in myth and in the case of this particular myth in comic relief. Hephaistos' lameness in *Iliad* 1 brought laughter to the gods, and in the scenes of the Return a mortal audience would certainly laughed to see him riding to Olympos on an ithyphallic donkey in the drunken company of Dionysos and his hyperphallic satyrs. Athens is not only a place where hoplite forces combat the excesses of drunken centaurs, and youths and maidens commemorate the city's freedom with music and dance, but it is a city of humor – and so perhaps we must understand the battle of Pygmies

and Cranes that runs around the full circumference of the foot of the vase.⁷⁵ In any case, I have argued that the François Vase, like Homer's account of Achilles' Shield, is a thematically unified composition, and that the two sides are set in thematic contrast. Other vases, geometric through classical, show scenes in

juxtaposition (on the same side or on opposite side of the vase) that may be read as a continuous narrative. The François Vase, an extraordinary achievement by an extraordinary artist, can hardly be expected to do less.



NOTES

The following abbreviations are used for works cited frequently:

- ABV. Beazley, J. D. *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956.
 ARV². Beazley, J. D. *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*. 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.
 ASH. Arias, P.E., B. Shefton, and M. Hirmer. *A History of 1000 Years of Greek Vase Painting*. New York: Abrams, 1961.
 DBV. Beazley, J. D. *The Development of Attic Black-Figure*, 2nd ed. Berkeley & Cambridge: University of California Press, 1964.
 Boardman. Boardman, J. *Athenian Black Figure Vases*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1974.
 Cristofani. Cristofani, M., M. Grazia Marzi, R. Giachetti, M. Bini, and A. Parissinotto. *Materiali per Servire alla Storia del Vaso François (Bollettino d'Arte: serie special 1)* Rome, 1980.
 Gantz. Gantz, T. *Early Greek Myth: A guide to Literary and Artistic Sources*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.
 LIMC. *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. 20 vols. Zurich: Artemis & Winkler, 1981-2009.
 MW. Merkelbach, R. and West, M. L. *Fragmenta Hesiodica*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.
 Para. Beazley, J. D. *Paralipomena*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

All translations of Homer, except where noted, are those of Murray (revised by Most) in the Loeb Classical Library edition.

1. My friendship with Janet Smith began in 1995-96 on the ACM Florence program. Janet made that year far more than it might otherwise have been for me and my family, and I offer this work to her in token of our friendship.

2. Theseus appeared earlier outside of Athens; see Neils, *The Youthful Deeds of Theseus*, 1-20; cf. LIMC VII, "Theseus," *passim*.

3. Florence 4209 (ABV 76, 1). The vase is fully illustrated in Cristofani *passim*. Cf. ASH, plates 40-46.

My interest in the vase began with a lecture delivered many years ago at the kind invitation of Tom Sienkewicz at Monmouth College, and I was prompted to consider the subject again more closely during the year I spent on the ACM Program in Florence where I was able to examine vase itself for the first time. For the photographs of the vase reproduced here and for a valuable exchange of ideas by correspondence, I welcome this

opportunity to thank Dr. Mario Iozzo at the Museo Archeologico in Florence.

4. Neils, *Youthful Deeds of Theseus*, 24-30.

5. For the bibliography, see most recently Scully "Reading the Shield of Achilles," *passim*.

6. Kreuzer, "Zurück in die Zukunft?," *passim* is the most recent to view the images on Kleitias' vase through the lens of Solon's poetry. Kreuzer argues that both share a common political agenda that addresses the excesses of the early sixth century aristocracy. My own reading, while it is not so explicitly bound to the historical moment, takes a similar direction.

7. See, e.g. Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery* (1986), 6; cf. 7, n. 34). For a standard account of Hesiod's influence on Solon, see Lesky, *A History*, 121-28; for a convenient discussion of the difference between Solon and Homer in respect to word usage and meter, see Campbell, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (1967), 231-33.

8. Snodgrass, *passim*.

9. Leaf and Bayfield, *The Iliad of Homer*, lxi, give the example: φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἄνεμος χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δέ θ' ὕλη/τηλεθόωσα φύει, ἔαρος δ' ἐπ' ὑγίγνεται ὥρη, "The wind scatters some leaves upon the earth, but the trees grow, (once again) in flower, and the season of spring comes again (*Il*.6.147-8)." The final δ' (literally "and") links third clause "paratactically" leaving the implicit "when" unspoken. Successive sentences in parataxis can convey emotional effect (Edwards on *Iliad* 6. 407-13), or it may mark a clear distinction between, e.g., an archer and his victim (Edwards on *Iliad* 8.267-72).

10. Stansbury-O'Donnell, "Reading Pictorial Narrative," *passim*, has argued that scenes on late geometric vases, arranged paratactically all serve a common narrative. In his 1999 book, *Pictorial Narrative in Ancient Greek Art*, he develops his thesis in fuller detail and extends it to the pictorial narratives of the Archaic and Classical periods. Cf. the still valuable earlier work of Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition*, 249-84; and Starr, *The Origins of Greek Civilization*, *passim*.

11. For Achilles the battle was never about the Trojans, but for the sake of Agamemnon (*Il*.1.152-60), but when he felt that Agamemnon dishonored him, Achilles actively imagines returning home to lead a long and inglorious life (*Il*.9.356-429) – as though the certainty of a premature death were not a certainty.

12. For the divisions between these scenes, see Wilcock, *The Iliad of Homer*, 269-72.

13. I follow Taplin, "The Shield of Achilles," 11-12, and others who argue that the microcosm portrayed on the shield reflects not the world at large, but the specific world of the *Iliad*.

14. Andersen, "Some Thoughts," 15; cf. 9).

15. Lynn-George, *Epos*, 185.
16. Scully, "Reading the Shield of Achilles," 31-32 *et passim*.
17. Lines 535-38 are viewed by some scholars as a late interpolation; see Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, 220-21.
18. See Wilson's valuable study, "Lion Kings," 231-44, where she discusses similes comparing Achilles to a lion; especially interesting is her discussion of those lion-similes that "mark each turning point" from the moment when Achilles first learns of Patroclus' death to the final scene in which he returns Hector's body to Priam 239-44.
19. Achilles is once more compared to a lion at *Iliad* 24.272, when Priam provokes him to anger, but in this instance Achilles restrains his anger. Wilson argues that at last Achilles' anger has been domesticated. "In the final analysis, the Iliadic lion, Achilles, embodies heroic βίη (raw force) tempered by heroic self-restraint (244). I take a less optimistic view. The lion simile may mean only that the Achilles' violent nature threatens to erupt again at any moment. He may have come to realize the cost of his rage, but he remains nonetheless a man defined by his anger. Achilles' ambivalence is palpable in the scene; one moving example occurs when, even as he grasps Priam's hand, at the same time he gently pushes it away – a prelude to the fragile accord they are about to achieve in shared grief (see Richardson on line 208).
20. Hephaistos refers to the shield's adornment overall as "adornments" (δαίδαλα, 482); earlier, during the years he dwelt recuperating among the Oceanids, after his fall from Olympus, Hephaistos fashioned "many ornamented objects" (δαίδαλα, 400). Indeed words on the δαίδαλ- stem (including Daedalus' name) occur repeatedly in *Iliad* 18 (379, 390, 400, 479, 482, 592, and 612).
21. The two cities in the first ring are "beautiful" (καλᾶς, 491); "beautiful" (καλῶ, 518) are the two gods that lead the warriors from the city to the place where they will lay in ambush; the king's orchard is "fair and golden" (καλὴν χρυσεῖην, 562); sheep graze in a pasture that lies "within a fair dell" (ἐν καλῇ βήσση, 588), and finally on the dance floor, the young maidens wear "beautiful crowns" (καλὰς στεφάνας, 597). Cf. 18. 570, where a boy "sings beautifully" (καλὸν ᾄδει, 570) to those who work in the king's orchard.
22. Lynn-George, *Epos*, 189.
23. Cristofani has detailed photos of the inscriptions; for a definitive discussion of the inscriptions, see now Wachter, "The Inscriptions on the *François Vase*," *passim*.
24. As several scholars have noticed, the parallel between Achilles and Meleager is strengthened by the fact that that Kleopatra is an anagram of Patroclus whose death prompted Achilles to overcome his resistance and return to the fray.
25. The tale is told in full toward the end of the 5th century in Bacchylides' Ode 5. 93-154 (Campbell *Greek Lyric* [1992]).
26. Immediately behind Peleus and Meleager on the François Vase are Atalanta and Melanion. In later versions of the Calydonian boar-hunt, a battle ensues after the slaying of the boar because Peleus gave Atalanta the hide without the consent of the others. He may have done so because Atalanta's was the first spear to strike the boar, or simply because he had fallen in love with her (both reasons are attested in the later sources – see Gantz. 335-39), but there is no reason to believe that this element of the story was known during the 6th century. Atalanta appears on several Attic vases during the 2nd quarter of the 6th century – the François Vase is the earliest – but, as Judith Barringer, "Skythian Hunters," *passim* argues, Atalanta's presence may have served no other purpose than to underscore the diversity of the hunting party. Barringer provides a list of the vases showing Atalanta at the hunt as well as several illustrations. Atalanta appears to have been among the *dramatis personae* of Euripides' *Meleager*, where she seems to have attracted the amorous attentions of Meleager. The surviving fragments, however, provide no explicit evidence that he awarded her the boar's hide or that this action provoked a battle in which Althaea's brother died. For the surviving text and discussion, see Collard et al., 613-31. Cf. Gantz 331-32.
27. Cristofani, plates 70-73.
28. A contemporary vase-fragment by Sophilos (Athens, Nat. Mus. 15499; ASH, plate 39) shows a similar scene with the explicit inscription: "The games of Patroclus." On Sophilos' vase-fragment the lead horses rush toward a grandstand full of cheering spectators. Behind the grandstand stands Achilles (alas, only his name survives).
29. DVB, 34-35.
30. The KX Painter shows a bearded Achilles receiving his new armor (ABV 24,1; Boardman, fig. 20; Nearchos shows a bearded Achilles standing before his horses (ABV 82, 1; Boardman, fig. 49); and the Phrynos Painter shows Ajax carrying a bearded Achilles from the field (ABV 169, 4; DVB, plate 22,1). Equally an unbearded Achilles appears receiving his new armor on a vase by the Camptar Painter (ABV 84, 3; Boardman, fig. 53) and somewhat later on a vase by the Amasis Painter, where he also receives his new armor (ABV 152, 27; Boardman, fig. 86).
31. The killing of Troilos is mentioned briefly in the *Cypria* (late 6th century) and in a play by Sophocles (5th century), but the details come out only much later – the first source to mention Achilles' motive for killing Troilos, e.g., is a manuscript known as the First Vatican Mythographer which is dated no earlier than the 9th century C.E. (Zorzetti et al., *passim*; Cf. Gantz 597, 601-602).
32. Gantz, 598-600.
33. Cristofani, fig 86.
34. For a discussion and a list of vases, see Hedreen, *Capturing Troy*, 120-122.
35. Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.32, says that the killing took place in the sanctuary of Apollo, but it may be that Sophocles mentioned it earlier in his "Troilos," which was probably produced in 418 B.C.E. (Radt, *TrGF*, 453). For the text of Apollodorus and a list of other sources, see Frazer, *Apollodorus*, 201-203; cf. Hedreen, *Capturing Troy*, 120-121 with note 3.
36. Beazley, DVB 30, says of the figure of Apollo that he was "incensed," adding that the god "has seen Troilos heading for sanctuary, and suspects that Achilles will not hesitate to trespass." Cf. Hedreen, *Capturing Troy*, 140-41 (with note 65).
37. Cristofani, plates 106-107.
38. See Wilson, "Lion Kings," 242.
39. Fourteen figures behind Theseus are distinguished from those still on the ship (or in the water) for the fact that all fourteen are named.
40. Plutarch, *Theseus* 21.

41. Hedreen, "Bild, Mythos, and Ritual," *passim*.
42. On this point Hedreen, "Bild, Mythos, and Ritual," cites Giuliani (Giuliani, *Bild und Mythos*, 153-57, 294-96). Hedreen, in the same article, 494 (with note 8) persuasively responds to Shapiro, "Theseus (1991), *passim*," who joins those who locate the scene on Crete, but proceeds to make the novel suggestion that the line of young Athenians are not in fact dancing.
43. Hedreen, "Bild, Mythos, and Ritual," 501-503 makes the case that the dancing figures on Kleitias' vase as prolepsis, an anticipation of the victory ahead; Hedreen (503, n. 41) cites other scholars who also see the dance as proleptic (see esp. Himmilmann, *passim*). Hedreen, in the same article, argues further, however, that the promise of Theseus' victory is suggested by the fact that the line of dancers resembles the triumphal procession of Dionysos' arrival in Athens. While this is an interesting suggestion, it seems a speculative one.
44. Hedreen, "Bild, Mythos, and Ritual," 500-501.
45. The earliest Minotauromachy appears in about 560 B.C.E. (LIMC *Theseus* 230-235).
46. Munich 2243 (ABV 163, 2; ASH, pl. 50); it dates to about 550-40 B.C.E.
47. Shapiro "Theseus (1991)," *passim*. Shapiro proceeds to argue, however, that the lyre, both on Kleitias' vase and on the band-cup in Munich, has no connection to the celebration that will follow the victory over the Minotaur, but that it is merely an attribute of Theseus that advances the appeal of his romantic suit for Ariadne (and the many other women he notoriously courts). Shapiro's Theseus is a "love-hero," a phrase whimsically borrowed from Beye, "Jason as Love-Hero," *passim*, who coined it to describe Jason in Apollonius' *Argonautika*. Such a comparison between Apollonius' 3rd century romantic hero and the 6th century Theseus seems to me highly improbable.
48. Black figure Minotauromachies in which the lyre appears include: a hydria in Copenhagen (13536; ABV, 714; Para 32; CVA Copenhagen 8, pl. 320, 1a) that is close in date to the François Vase; a neck-amphora in Taranto (117234; Mommsen, *Der Affekter*, pl. 58 A) painted during the 2nd half of the 6th century; and a neck amphora from the late 6th century in Athens (Nat. Mus., Couve-Colignon Cat. # 742; Johansen., *Thésée*, fig. 23). Theseus is also associated with the lyre on a few Attic red-figure vases (see, e.g. Euphronios' kylix in London (E 41; Hedreen, "Bild, Mythos, and Ritual," fig. 5); a crater frag. in Athens (P 1829; Moore, *The Athenian Agora*, pl. 37, #273), and a calyx crater in Syracuse (17427; ARV² 1184; Shapiro, "Theseus (2003)," figs. 13-14).
49. Plutarch (*Theseus*, 19.1) reports that it was she who fell in love with him.
50. Shapiro, "Theseus (1991)," 129, dismisses the unsavory transgressions of Theseus' mature years with the argument that in his courtship of Ariadne he was still a youthful romantic.
51. Gantz, 282-89.
52. Gantz, 143-44; cf. 278-82,
53. Gantz, 278-79.
54. Several instances of the verb *καίнуμι*, "surpass, overcome" occur in the *Odyssey* (the present stem, *καίν-*, at 3.282; 8.127; and 8.219; the aorist stem, *καῖν-*, *passim*); *καίνός*, "new", occurs first in Aesclylus and indeed may betymologically unrelated to *καίнуμι*.
55. Frag. 165 Most (= 87 MW).
56. In fact, Zeus swallowed Metis who was Athena's biological mother, and in seemingly contradictory accounts Hephaistos is sometimes the son of Hera alone, and at other times Zeus is named as his father. On this difficulty, see Fineberg, "Hephaestus," *passim*.
57. Fineberg, "Hephaestus," *passim*.
58. Wilamowitz was the first to propose this idea (see Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery* (1986), 20).
59. The Wedding of Peleus and Thetis was the subject of a second vase by Kleitias of which only fragments survive (Athens, Acropolis Mus. 587; ABV 39, 15; Boardman, fig. 25). In addition the same scene is shown on two other large vases by painters closely contemporary with Kleitias. One is the famous dinos by Sophilos in London (London 1971.11-1.1; Para. 19, 16 bis; Boardman, fig. 24). The other is a dinos by the Painter of London B 76 recently published in a careful study by Mario Iozzo, "Un nuovo *dinos* da Chiusi con le nozze di Peleus e Thetis." In Moorman, E. M. and V. Stissi (eds.), *Shapes and Images. Studies on Attic Black Figure and Related Topics in Honour of Herman A.G. Brijder*, Leuven-Paris-Walpole (2009) 63-85.
60. Beazley, DVB, 28.
61. Haslam, "Kleitias," *passim*, has made the suggestion that the amphora is the one that will one day contain Achilles' ashes.
62. For the references, see Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery* (1986), 19-29, and esp. page 20 where Carpenter cites Anacreon who invokes Eros, the nymphs, and Aphrodite, whom he terms the companions of Dionysos.
63. Beazley, DVB 29, confidently identified Apollo "and perhaps his mother Leto" as the occupants of this chariot, but I can see nothing to support this identification.
64. There is no evidence to suggest that the kantharos becomes associated with Dionysos, however, until after 550 B.C.E. See Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery* (1986), 118-23.
65. Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place," *passim*.
66. Pindar appears to be the first to say explicitly that Zeus abandoned his own suit of Thetis because he feared a prophecy that she would bear a son mightier than his father. See Edwards, 196-97.
67. London B 215 (Circle of Antimenes Painter) ABV 286, 1; Boardman, fig. 195); this vase dates to about 515-500 B.C.E. but the theme appears much earlier (see Gantz, 229).
68. Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery* (1997), 43, cites Pindar *Pyth.* 10.36; cf. Hoffmann, "Notizen," *passim*. The idealized images of young men on the Attic vases are regularly represented with *phalloi* of modest proportion, a seeming form of restraint.
69. Fineberg 295, note 38.
70. Markoe, "The 'Lion Attack'," *passim*.
71. London 1971.11-1.1 (Para. 19, 16 bis); Boardman, fig. 24.
72. Cristofori, plates 94-101; 143-146.
73. Wilson, "Lion Kings," *passim*.
74. The translation is Murray's.
75. Muellner, "The Simile of the Cranes and Pygmies," *passim*, examines the reference to the battle at *Iliad* 3.1-9. He makes a compelling case that the aggressive cranes defy audience expectations because cranes in every other context are consistently cast as victims; when Hector urges the Greeks

against the Trojans, e.g., he is compared to an eagle, while they are like a noisy group of geese, cranes, or swans feeding by a river (*Il.* 15.688-95). For Meullner's explanation of the aggressive cranes of *Iliad* 3, see Meullner 77-101.

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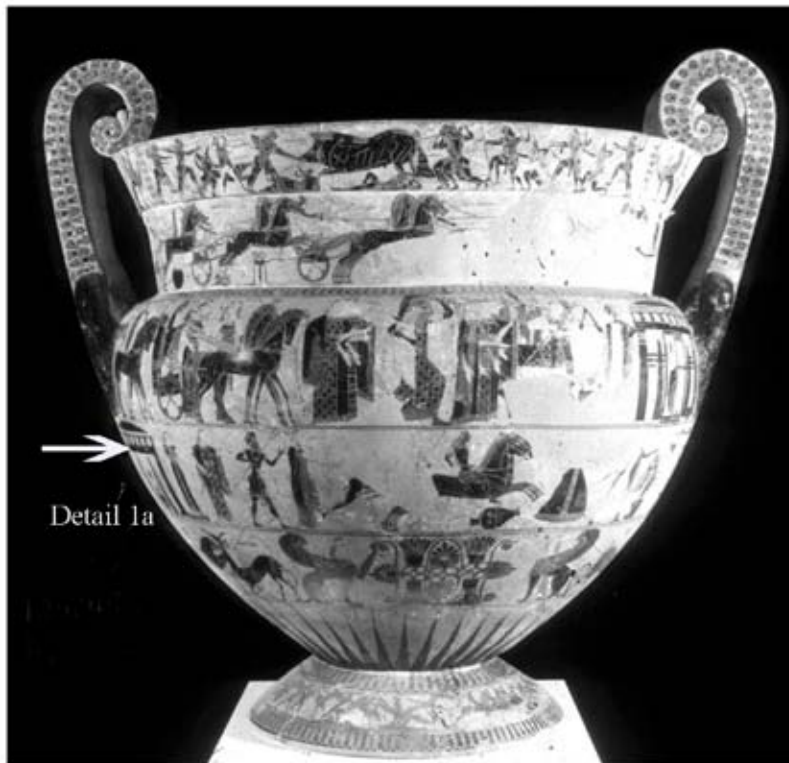


Figure 1
Fig. 1a (detail)
Apollo behind the
fountain house
(Furtwangler)



Figure 2

Florence 4209.
Photos courtesy of
Soprintendenza
archeologica per la
Toscana-Firenze



Figure 3 (above)

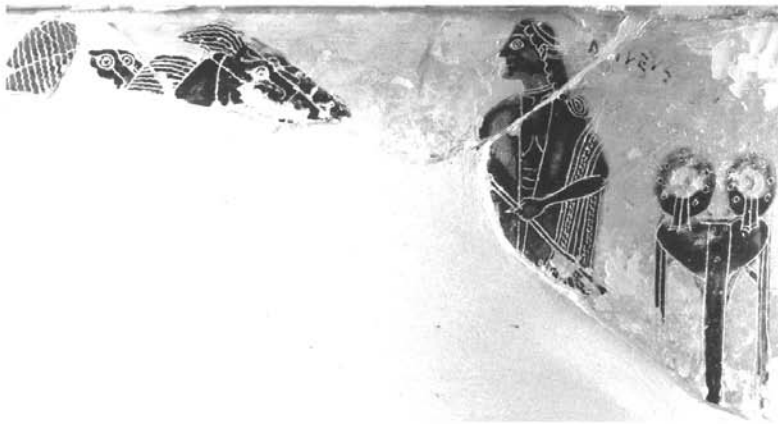


Figure 4 (above, left)
Figure 5 (below, left))

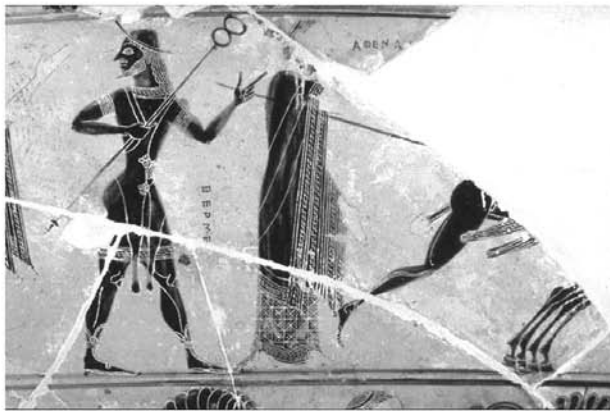


Figure 7 (above)

Figure 6 (below, right)



Florence 4209. Photos courtesy of Soprintendenza archeologica per la Toscana-Firenze.



Figure 8 (above)
Figure 9 (below, left)

Figure 10 (below, right)



Figure 11 (below, left)



Figure 12 (below, right)



Figure 13 (left)



Florence 4209. Photos (figs 8, 10-13) courtesy of Soprintendenza archeologica per la Toscana-Firenze. Photo (fig. 9) from Furtwangler-Reichhold.



Figure 14 (above, left)

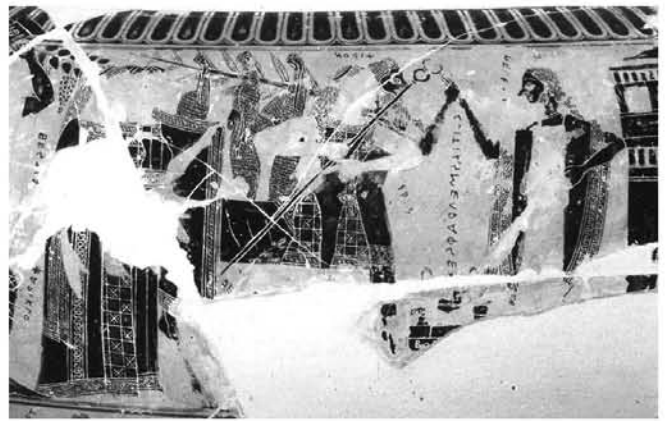


Figure 15 (above, right)



Figure 16 (right)

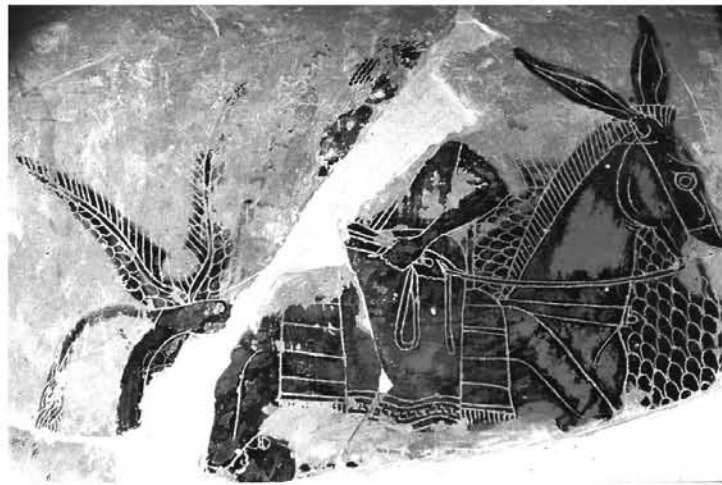


Figure 17 (below, left)

Figure 18 (below, right)



Photos courtesy of Soprintendenza
archeologica per la Toscana-Firenze.

A Revealing Omission in Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*



Jeffrey Hoover

In a 1953 essay Rudolf Wittkower remarks, somewhat in passing, on a curious lacuna in Alberti's writing on architecture:

In his *De re aedificatoria*, Alberti never discussed at length the optical appearance of architecture, although more than once he seems to have written with the observer in mind. When talking about the preparation of buildings in models and drawings, however, he states explicitly that the architects should not draw perspective views, but absolute measurements.¹

In this brief note Wittkower draws attention to the absence of any discussion in Alberti's text of the "optical" experience of architecture, by which he means those illusionistic effects that the ancients were already familiar with particularly in the case of monumental structures. He finds this remarkable given Alberti's sensitivity to the experience of a building's harmony and decoration. Wittkower here also notes Alberti's eschewal of the use of perspective drawings by architects, which we might find doubly remarkable since it was Alberti himself in his earlier *De pictura* who became the principle explicator of the illusionistic technique of linear perspective.

If Wittkower's brief aside were the extent of the matter, then Alberti's choice not to discuss illusionistic elements in the experience of architecture might only be what Wittkower suggests it is—a curious silence in Alberti's writings. Wittkower himself does not go beyond these stated observations and seems to be content to leave it as an interesting omission on Alberti's part. Yet, Wittkower is here on the verge of identifying a fundamental tension within Alberti's work, one that can be expressed as a disjunction between Alberti's own profound engagement with how things appear to the eyes of observers in his writings on two-dimensional art in *De pictura*, even while he disavows such considerations in his architectural

writings. The primary target of Alberti's renunciation of illusionistic elements in his *De re aedificatoria* is not architects' drawings, but the practice that was common among the ancients of making adjustments to ideal geometrical form or fixed dimensions of the structures themselves in order to engage certain "optical effects" in viewers. This disavowal of optical considerations in his *De re aedificatoria*, I contend, is not an oversight on Alberti's part but is an expression of his overriding philosophical commitment to a pure pythagoreanism of proportionality.

The optical refinements employed in both Greek and Roman architecture are now well-known and continue to be carefully documented, but we know that they were also well-known to Alberti, given Vitruvius' comprehensive discussion of them in the very text that Alberti's seeks to emulate in good humanist fashion when he writes *De re aedificatoria*. In the Vitruvian text *De architectura*, at least seven such "subtractions and additions" to the structures of classical buildings are discussed and defended in significant detail including: entasis, diminution, and inward inclination of columns and other vertical elements; the thickening of corner columns; the enlargement and outward inclination of upper elements; and the curvature of the stylobate and other horizontal elements. When Alberti pays homage to Vitruvius and the ancients' knowledge of building construction and decoration by producing his own "Ten Books" on architecture, it is striking that these optical refinements find virtually no expression.²

While Alberti does not explicitly discuss his exclusion of optical refinements, he does state that the architect, in contrast to the painter, is "one who desires his work to be judged not by deceptive appearances but according to certain calculated standards."³ In the context of this quotation he is decrying the use of linear perspectival drawings by architects, which might be seen as motivated by the practical concern that all elements be rendered in exact proportion to each other, so that they could be an exact guide and

measure in the construction of buildings. However, this sentiment of working “according to certain calculated standards” and not seeking to be judged by “deceptive appearances” applies also to Alberti’s expectation for the building itself. Optical considerations do not merely render the architects’ drawings unreliable as measured plans; indeed, in Alberti’s view, if optical adjustments are made to the structures themselves in the method of the ancients, they render the buildings imperfect. In describing building construction in general Alberti asserts that “everything should be so defined, so exact in its order, number, size, arrangement, and form, that every single part of the work will be considered necessary, of great comfort, and in pleasing harmony (*concinntas*) with the rest.”⁴ Here Alberti links the exactness of the order and size of the parts of a building to his “organic” ideal of beauty wherein all the parts complement and require each other in order to form a pleasing whole. “Beauty,” according to Alberti, “is that reasoned harmony of all parts within a body, so that nothing may be added or taken away, or altered, but for the worse.”⁵ This ideal of beauty for Alberti is exhibited most perfectly in bodies in nature.

Neither in the whole body nor in its parts does *concinntas* flourish as much as it does in Nature herself...it molds the whole of Nature. Everything that Nature produces is regulated by the law of *concinntas*, and her chief concern is that whatever she produces should be absolutely perfect. ...Beauty is a form of sympathy and consonance of the parts within a body, according to a definite number (*numerus*), dimension (*finitio*), and placement of parts (*collocatio*) as dictated by harmony (*concinntas*), the absolute and fundamental rule in nature.⁶

Alberti understands *concinntas* as an harmonic order that while exquisitely present in nature is nonetheless thoroughly rational and even reveals itself to be of a mathematical form. In this respect Alberti affirms Pythagoras’ ancient and alleged view that certain ideal mathematical proportions provide nature with its very structure. In key passages of *De re aedificatoria* Alberti directly references Pythagoras to provide justification for his architectural aesthetic. He explains *concinntas* or harmonic beauty using the example of Pythagorean musical intervals of the octave (2:1), the fifth (3:2), and the fourth (4:3) as sounds that the mind experiences as ideal and harmonious. Applying this principle of *concinntas* to architecture, then, Alberti endorses certain dimensions of buildings that are determined

by privileged arithmetical ratios. In this manner, the structural elements of the building come to relate to each other in the same whole number ratios that produce musical harmony. “The very same numbers that cause sounds to have that *concinntas*, pleasing to the ears, can also fill the eyes and mind with wondrous delight.”⁷ So just as he believes nature reveals within its structure certain ideal harmonious sound intervals (octaves, fifths, etc.), he also believes that buildings should likewise be structured according to ideal, objective spatial proportions. The linear dimensions of rooms and open spaces should be based on the perfect square (1:1) and pythagorean modulations thereof (2:1, 3:2, 4:3, etc.) Similarly, the volumetric dimensions of spaces within buildings should be based on the perfect cube (1:1:1) and the triplet progressions that express pythagorean modulations of it (2:4:6, 2:3:6, etc.).⁸

This pythagorean architectural aesthetic appears in contradistinction to his earlier writings on linear perspective in *De pictura* where it is suggested that the artist’s task is to produce an illusionistic three-dimensional experience within the perceptual and imaginative faculties of the viewer. The beauty of such works is therefore apprehended optically, whereas the primary aesthetic aim of the properly-designed building as indicated in *De re aedificatoria* is not revealed in its optical impact on viewers, but is realized in the building itself in its unadulterated mathematical proportions. If the aim of Alberti’s architectural aesthetic was that these ideal proportions be available optically for the viewer, then he would need to account for the frailties and illusionistic elements of human perception. He would not be able to assume that viewers could experience these ideal proportions, nor recognize when a building exhibited them. Indeed, it is on account of the known illusionistic qualities of human perception that the ancients made optical adjustments to structures so as to produce the experience of perfect proportions in the viewer. The ancients’ optical adjustments in many cases seem to be aimed at countering these distorting effects in order to stimulate an optical encounter that would be perceptually experienced as having perfect proportionality. Alberti’s commitment to absolute proportions in the structures themselves, on the other hand, would allow these buildings to be experienced through the lens of the natural optical distortions.

Here one might be tempted to again consider the work of Rudolf Wittkower, who recognized in the architectural writings not just of Alberti but of other key Renaissance figures as well, principally Palladio and Giorgi, the commitment to absolute proportions. He sees this commitment to absolute form as an

artifact of philosophical ideology, and not impacted by its potential to be discerned precisely by the viewer:

It is obvious that such mathematical relations between plan and section cannot be correctly perceived when one walks about in a building. Alberti knew that, of course, quite as well as we do. We must therefore conclude that the harmonic perfection of the geometrical scheme represents an absolute value, independent of our subjective and transitory perception... his man-made harmony was a visible echo of a celestial and universally valid harmony.⁹

Here Wittkower suggests that Alberti's commitment to unadulterated form, to true mathematical proportions, is distinct from whether these absolute proportions and the resulting harmony are perceived, since what is important is that they aspire to be copies of an ideal harmony. In particular, Wittkower sees Alberti's thought along with other later architectural writings of the Italian Renaissance as under the influence of a philosophical current that becomes prominent in Florence especially from the middle of the *quattrocento* onward, namely, neoplatonism. For neoplatonists, artistic production was not a matter of mere imitation of nature's imitations of the real as the Plato of the *Republic* asserts, whereby the artist copies the forms found in nature that are themselves mere reflections of the true Forms. Artistic inspiration was instead seen by neoplatonists as resulting from the artist's own grasp of the transcendent idea of beauty itself, a vision not mediated by sense experience, but a direct apprehension of the ideal intelligible form. Cicero, for example, expresses this view:

This ideal cannot be perceived by the eye or ear, nor by any of the senses, but we can nevertheless grasp it by the mind and the imagination. For example, in the case of the statues of Phidias... that great sculptor, while making the image of Jupiter or Minerva, did not look at any person whom he was using as a model, but in his own mind there dwelt a surpassing vision of beauty; at this he gazed and all intent on this he guided his artist's hand to produce the likeness of the god.¹⁰

On this Ciceronian version of neoplatonism, then, beauty in architecture would be understood as an embodied expression of the form of beauty that exists in a more pure (intelligible) state in the mind of the

architect. The experience of artistic or architectural beauty in an observer moreover would be a function of the embodied form having led the observer to apprehend the intelligible form mentally and directly. According to this neoplatonist view, art could be seen as functioning symbolically in that the artist gives a representation in a sensible medium of that which is suprasensible, the intelligible forms.¹¹ In the case of architectural creation, this neoplatonic approach would view the structure as symbolizing intelligible forms. Alberti's commitment to absolute proportions, on this interpretation, could be seen as the result of his view that buildings should function symbolically, that is, their form should physically signify an ideally rational and mathematically perfect order. On this reading, those who might encounter Alberti's ideally-proportioned structures could be led to contemplate the ideal mathematical form, though not immediately in the imperfect perceptual experience of the artifact, but through a perceptual encounter with the well-tuned building individuals might be caused to apprehend the purely intelligible form that the sensible structure symbolizes.

The interpretation of Alberti's thinking as substantively informed by neoplatonism has much to recommend it and is an interpretive framework often applied to his work. This reading has the attraction of situating Alberti intellectually at the leading edge of a current of thought within Florentine humanism that would become progressively influential as the Italian Renaissance matured.¹² Moreover, this interpretation, when brought to bear specifically on Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*, as we have just done, has the explanatory advantage of making some sense of Alberti's adherence to absolute and unadulterated mathematical measure in buildings by reference to a building's perceived symbolic function.

This neoplatonic view of Alberti, however, is not entirely satisfying as an interpretation of Alberti's work as a whole. The emphasis that one finds in Alberti's writings, whether on painting, architecture, or sculpture on the need for artists and architects to learn from nature cannot be overlooked. Nature, according to Alberti, is to be studied not just to know how to direct our attention away from the sensible to the higher intelligible reality. On the contrary, for Alberti, there is a real presence of the ideally rational form in the particulars of nature itself. Moreover, according to Alberti, the artist grasps the rational forms from an examination of nature, and not indirectly as a result of a symbolic function, as neoplatonism would suggest.

In his treatise on sculpture, *De statua*, one finds Alberti's most explicit account of how the artist is to study and learn from nature. The artist is instructed how to grasp the intrinsic presence of the ideally rational form, not merely to copy the particular appearances of nature. Alberti approaches the discovery of the beauty inherent in natural objects in a rather statistical manner, instructing the sculptor to take the measure of many bodies that are judged to be beautiful, eliminate the outliers, and then average them. "So we too chose many bodies, considered to be the most beautiful by those who know, and took from each and all their dimensions, which we then compared one with another, and leaving out of the account the extremes on both sides, we took the mean figures."¹³ This statistical approach to discovering the ideal in nature reveals that Alberti does not see nature as transparently expressing the ideal proportions, rather, the intrinsic natural form is arrived at by rational inspection and deduction from the appearances. For Alberti every human body has the same set of ideal proportions that hold among its relative parts, regardless of its size. For example, a foot is one-sixth the person's height, and the arm is the length of one-third of the person's height, or the length of two feet, and so on. However, given Alberti's commitment to his pythagorean view of the mathematical order in nature, he seeks to quantify these ideal proportions in an exacting manner. "I ask you: shall carpenters have set-square, plumb-line, level, and circle...while on the other hand the sculptor is expected to execute his excellent and admirable works by rule of thumb rather than with the constant and reliable guide of rational principle?"¹⁴ Alberti's response to this concern is to invent an instrument, the *finitorium* (the "definer") for taking precise measurements of the relative proportions of many bodies.¹⁵ Every contour of the body could be precisely measured and, if desired, the measured figure could be exactly duplicated and scaled up or down. But the function of the *finitorium* in Alberti's hands is not for copying—it is for discerning nature's ideals. Alberti uses the *finitorium* to take scores of measurements of nature's bodies, allowing him to calculate the statistical ideal. He ends *De statua*, then, with a table listing the dimensions for sixty distinct points on the ideal body resulting from the statistical averages of real bodies. There is no mistaking Alberti's conviction that the purpose of these measurements is not merely to arrive at an intellectual ideal, but to disclose the rational structures that are immanent in nature. "I proceeded accordingly to measure and record in writing, not simply the beauty found in this

or that body, but, as far as possible the perfect beauty distributed by Nature, as it were in fixed proportions, among many bodies."¹⁶ Nor is this a view that Alberti arrived at late in life and found only in an isolated text. This same conviction motivates his explicit instructions already in *De pictura*:

It is useful to take from every beautiful body each one of the praised parts and always strive by your diligence and study to understand and express much loveliness. This is very difficult, because complete beauties are never found in a single body, but are rare and dispersed in many bodies. Therefore we ought to give our every care to discovering and learning beauty.¹⁷

For Alberti, like Pythagoras, beauty inheres within the natural world not as mere signs or copies of intelligible forms in the manner of neoplatonism, but as intrinsic rational structures.

Let us consider again Alberti's rejection of optical corrections in architectural forms. This surprising departure from the ancients and Vitruvius in particular, as well as from what we might expect of the prime proponent of linear perspective, is best explained by Alberti's pythagorean conviction that beauty is a rational, specifically mathematical, order revealed in harmonies or proportions that are present inherently within nature. If we think of the inherent beauty that is "suffused all through the building" as its mathematical structure expressed in its planar and volumetric dimensions, then a building's beauty does not rely on whether these mathematical proportions are sensibly detectable, as is the case with the beauty of ornament. It has a value independent of that which is recognized by the perceiver. Beauty is not to be discovered in optical appearances, but is an objective feature of things that belong to the natural world that are beautiful; beauty inheres in the material world itself—"suffused all through the body of that which is called beautiful." Alberti underscores the objective status of this inherent beauty:

Yet some would disagree who maintain that beauty, and indeed, every aspect of building, is judged by relative and variable criteria, and that the forms of buildings should vary according to individual taste, and must not be bound by any rules of art. A common fault, this, among the ignorant—to deny the existence of anything they do not understand.¹⁸

The aim for Alberti is to produce structures that are in themselves rationally ordered, exhibiting a *concinntas* that is not primarily present in the viewer, but is present objectively. For Alberti the objective beauty that is inherent in the material bodies is revealed in the perfect proportions of ‘mathematically-tuned’ structures. The ideally proportionate order that the artist or architect discerns by means of exacting observations or measurements of the many particulars of nature is the ideal order that should inform the artist’s statue or the architect’s building. By presenting an ideal rational structure, the architecturally-inspired building does not *signify* a divine order or an intelligible form, but *extends* and ennobles nature using the same structuring principles, the same mathematical order, that in pythagorean fashion Alberti sees as immanent within nature. Accordingly, for Alberti architecture is not symbolic of an ideal order as the neoplatonic interpretation would have it, nor is it simply copying things of nature as Plato would have it, but it is the creation of a “second world of nature”—a human extension of nature.¹⁹

This pythagorean interpretation of Alberti’s aesthetic aims in *De re aedificatoria*, disarms the concern raised earlier that observers would not be able to recognize the perfect proportions of the ideally-structured building, especially given our susceptibility to optical illusion. According to Alberti’s pythagorean conception of beauty, he would view the objectively-present and mathematically-proportioned order as an object of cognition even though it is perhaps not immediately discerned perceptually. The form that is present in these structures could be known to us in the way that mathematical order in nature is experienced. Such knowledge isn’t immediately given to us visually, but often requires the analytical tools of natural science to discern the mathematical laws and structures that underlie the appearances of the natural world. Such an approach to knowing the mathematical order within the natural world is consistent with Alberti’s statistical approach in *De statua* where the artist is instructed to take multiple measurements of many bodies in order to learn the true mathematical proportions of the human form.

Nonetheless, this scientific approach to discerning ideal form does not do full justice to the epistemology of Alberti’s pythagorean approach to ideal architectural beauty. Alberti allows that we can also recognize the presence of this ideal order in a more immediate manner. “When the mind is reached by way of sight or sound, or any other means, *concinntas*, is instantly recognized.”²⁰ This statement raises the prospect of

an observer being able to discern in some manner within the delivery of the senses, the presence of an harmonic order in the properly-proportioned building. But what faculty does Alberti think is involved in this recognition and what cognitive status does he assign to the recognition? It is clear from the full text that for Alberti the senses themselves are not the seat of our encounter with beauty, but some cognitive faculty.

When you make judgments on beauty, you do not follow mere fancy, but the working of a reasoning faculty that is inborn in the mind...For within the form and figure of a building there resides some natural excellence and perfection that excites the mind and is immediately recognized by it.²¹

Here Alberti clearly asserts the role of a rational or cognitive ability to discern ideal orders in the content delivered by the senses. Beauty does not need to be optically rendered to us perceptually for it to be cognitively appreciated. This rational beauty must be cognitively apprehended from the content of sense. On this view, beauty is apprehended by means of a rational faculty other than the senses, one which performs its operation on, and makes its judgment about, what is perceptually-present (whether visually, auditorily, etc.). Alberti’s claim of an immediate cognitive apprehension of mathematical order in the content of sense should be seen as analogous to the experience of pythagorean harmonies in music. When presented with examples of tonal intervals, we can recognize immediately within some of them an order or harmony that is not present in the others. So, just as we need not know the mathematical ratios that structure the vibrating cord in order to be able to judge when musical harmony is present, we need not know conceptually that, say, the height of the nave of the church relative to its width is 3:2, to recognize the harmonious quality of its form. The ability to recognize *concinntas* would seem, then, to rely on Alberti’s view that there is an innate ability in humans generally to apprehend these spatial orders.²² Of course, not everyone will necessarily be prepared to identify the harmony that is present in the ideal, rationalized architecture, just as many of us, not being natural scientists, are unable to identify the mathematical order in nature. Some of us may not even be able to discern if ideal architectural proportions are present, since not everyone is equally acutely endowed with the requisite cognitive faculty, nor has actively cultivated this cognitive ability.

We consequently have arrived at an explanation for Alberti’s departure from the ancients, and Vitruvius

in particular, when he rejects the use of optical adjustments in architecture and insists that buildings be built according to true proportions. It is an explanation rooted in philosophical commitments, though not the neoplatonic ones often indicated, but in a pythagorean view of nature and of our apprehension of it. There is a beauty in ideal proportions that exists objectively in nature and potentially within artifacts, and this beauty is to be distinguished from the optical beauty associated with the appearances of objects within the sensory experience. For Alberti there would appear in the end to be no tension between the rejection of

optical accommodations in the case of architectural forms and the advocacy of illusionistic techniques in the production of linear perspective in art. Both are motivated by the conviction that nature, in its spatial ordering, embodies a rational mathematical order that could be cognitively discerned by the artist or architect, which can then be given expression in the respective media in the most perfect way possible through the creation of “ideal” spaces—one resulting in structures within three dimensions, the other in creations of virtual space.



NOTES

1. Rudolf Wittkower, “Brunelleschi and ‘Proportion in Perspective,’” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16:3/4 (1953): 281.

2. The one significant exception to the exclusion in Alberti’s *De re aedificatoria* of these optical refinements occurs in a section where he gives instructions for the ideal profile of columns. These instructions result in columns that remind us of the adjustments of entasis and diminution. However, on closer inspection, columns constructed according to his instructions do not actually swell in the middle, and while the top of the column is tapered, it does so without the curvature that is found in ancient columns. Alberti’s specific instructions are to make the lower 3/7ths of the column vertical and then taper the top 4/7ths of the column to a diameter that is one-ninth less than the bottom of the column. Alberti explicitly states in *De re aedificatoria*, 6.13 that he did not take these rules over from ancient writings, but discovered it by studying the actual work of the best architects. He provides no justification for this angled profile at this point in the text. However, later (7.6) when discussing the ancient orders of columns he points out that the Ionians, Dorians, and Corinthians all followed nature’s example in that the top of the tree trunks is always narrower than the bottom. Moreover, he earlier (1.10) indicates that tree trunks were the original source of round columns for the ancients. The justification, then, that Alberti provides for this columnar shape that approximates entasis and diminution is not an optical one, but one based on nature’s precedence. (See: David Vila Domini, “The Diminution of the Classical Column: Visual Sensibility in Antiquity and the Renaissance,” *Nexus Network Journal* 5:1 [2003]: 104.)

3. Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, 2.2. (All translations of *De re aedificatoria* will follow the text of Alberti, *On the Art of Building In Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988.)

4. Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, 6.5.

5. Ibid., 6.2. This “organic” notion of beauty led Alberti, and Leonardo after him, to embrace the circular floor-plan as the most ideal form for religious buildings since all parts of the circles are absolutely essential and mutually dependent. This, interestingly, is a rejection of the more traditional Christian basilica form in favor of a classical, pagan precedent. See Alberti, *ibid.*, 7.4.

6. Ibid., 9.5.

7. Ibid. There is a European architectural tradition that is likewise of ancient origin and quite influential during the middle ages, but which privileges certain volumetric or dimensional ratios that cannot be expressed as ratios of integers or even by rational numbers. These are geometrical ratios—the so-called “golden ratio” being an example of such a privileged proportion. Alberti is aware of both proportional systems and references the geometrical ratios in *De re aedificatoria*, 9.6. There has been a protracted debate however as to which of these mathematically proportional systems Alberti himself privileges. See: R. Wittkower, *Idea and Image: Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 116; Lionel March, “Renaissance Mathematics and Architectural Proportion in Alberti’s *De re Aedificatoria*,” *Architectural Research Quarterly* 2 (1996): 54-65; L. March, “Proportional Design in L. B. Alberti’s Tempio Malatestiano,” *Architectural Research Quarterly* 3:3 (1999): 259-270; Richard Padovan, *Proportion: Science, Philosophy, Architecture* (London: E & FN Spon, 1999), 183f; and Nicholas Temple, *Disclosing Horizons: Architecture, Perspective, and Redemptive Spaces* (Florence, KY: Routledge, 2006), 42ff.

8. Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, 9.5-6. For a fuller discussion of the ideal pythagorean dimensions in Alberti’s text, see J. Gadol, *Leon Battista Alberti: Universal Man of the Early Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 108-117.

9. R. Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (New York: Norton, 1971), 8. Given this passage, it is surprising that Wittkower never examines the connection between Alberti’s commitment to absolute form and his silence (n. 1 above) on the optical appearance of architecture.

10. Cicero, *Orator* ii.8ff. From: Cicero, *Brutus/Orator*, The Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 319.

11. This is the influential reading of *quattrocento* art that Panofsky developed in the early 1900’s. See esp. Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*. (New York: Zone Books, 1997). German original appeared in 1927. Joan Gadol (*Leon Battista Alberti*) also interprets Alberti’s work using a neoplatonistic framework in which art is seen as functioning symbolically.

12. The neoplatonist view of art as performing a symbolic function in cultivating intellectual apprehension of beauty continues to evolve during the *quattrocento* and becomes more explicit in the works of many Renaissance artists. Indeed, it is witnessed in later Renaissance and Mannerist art as exerting an increasing tendency toward more allegorical and less naturalistic elements. The progressive influence and development of neoplatonism beginning in the last half of the *quattrocento* owes much to Marsilio Ficino and the so-called “Platonic Academy” at Florence.

13. L. B. Alberti, *On Painting and On Sculpture: The Latin Texts of De Pictura and De Statua*, trans. Cecil Grayson, (London: Phaidon Press), 1972, 135.

14. *Ibid.*, 121.

15. This tool consists of a large disk marked in degrees and minutes along its perimeter, which was centered on the top of the model’s head. An arm was fastened at the center of this disk so that it could pivot around like a hand on a clock extending beyond its edges from which plumb lines could be hung to measure where certain body parts intersected the plumb line.

16. L. B. Alberti, *On Painting and On Sculpture*, 134-135.

17. L. B. Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. John Spencer, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 92-93.

18. Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, 6.2.

19. The “second world of nature” is Leonardo’s locution for describing the task of the inventor, who in analogous fashion to Alberti’s architect, is to create machines that followed the same natural laws and forms found in nature, in particular, those governing biological anatomy. See Martin Kemp, “The Inventions of Nature and the Nature of Invention,” in *Leonardo da Vinci, Engineer and Architect*, ed. Paul Galluzzi (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts, 1988), 131.

20. Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, 9.5.

21. *Ibid.*

22. There still seems to be the question of how Alberti would explain the power of optically illusionary effects to produce false judgments if he also believes in an innate cognitive faculty that could override these effects and recognize spatial harmony. He could perhaps resort to an explanation that relied on similar cognitive processes as when, for example, the upper stories of a building appear to us shorter than lower stories, but which we nonetheless judge to be the same height as the lower stories.

Alexandre Lenoir's Tomb for Blanche of Castile*



Mary B. Shepard

*"At Sajetta the King got the news that his mother was dead. He made such mourning over it, that for two days one could not get a word with him. At the end of that time, he sent a groom of his chamber to fetch me. When I came before him in his chamber where he was quite alone, as soon as he saw me, he stretched out his arms, and said to me: "Oh! Seneschal! I have lost my mother!" "Sir," said I, "I am not surprised at that; for she was bound to die; but I am surprised that a wise man like you, should make such great mourning. For you know, the sage says: that whatever trouble a man may have at heart, it should not show in his face; for thereby he rejoices his foes and grieves his friends." "*¹

So Jean de Joinville recounted King Louis IX's reaction to learning that his mother, Blanche of Castile, had died. The year was 1252; Blanche was sixty-four years old. Her body was buried at the Cistercian abbey of Maubuisson of which she was the foundress; her heart was separately interred at another of her foundations, Notre-Dame-du-Lys. Both burials were marked by figural tomb monuments which, in turn, perished over five-hundred years later in the French Revolution. Yet, in 1809, Alexandre Lenoir—director of the short-lived Musée des monuments français in Paris—unveiled a tomb for Blanche of Castile in the Introductory Gallery of his museum. The story of Lenoir's sepulcher for the mother of Louis IX and its unique function as an expression for Lenoir's theory of the origin of the pointed arch is the subject of this study.

What do we know about the historical tombs of Blanche of Castile? While her monument at

Maubuisson was unceremoniously melted down at the Revolution and extant records are silent regarding the exact fate of the tomb at Le Lys, the efforts of contemporary scholars like Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, Alexandra Gajewski-Kennedy, and most recently Kathleen Nolan, have given us a basic command of what these tombs looked like.² Pre-Revolutionary documents, including a description by Roger de Gaignières, recorded that the tomb at Maubuisson included an effigy in copper.³ In 1790, the *gisant* was inventoried as being made out of "solid copper ... supported on a copper base with columns," while later nineteenth-century sources (post-dating the tomb's destruction) claimed that the queen's effigy was shown crowned, dressed like a nun, and holding a book.⁴ As a visual comparison, Nolan speculates that Blanche of Castile's effigy may have resembled the *gisant* in copper repoussé created for Blanche of Champagne (d. 1283), now at the Louvre.⁵ Like Blanche of Castile, Blanche of Champagne was buried in the monastic house that she had founded and was shown wearing the habit of a Cistercian nun. Certainly, Blanche of Castile was no stranger to such metalwork tombs—as the charming Limoges enamel ensembles created for her grandchildren, Jean and Blanche de France (c. 1250), and installed at Blanche's foundation at Royaumont testify.⁶ According to Nolan, Blanche's sepulcher was the "first queen's monument to include a large-scale metalwork tomb," and, accordingly, it must have been impressive both in scale and appearance.⁷ Less is known about the monument marking the burial of her heart at Le Lys. A seventeenth-century account stipulates that the tomb was made of marble, with four pillars supporting the queen's effigy.⁸ Further documentation suggests that the *gisant* was carved from dark Tournai marble (actually a type of carboniferous limestone)—perhaps referenced over thirty years later by the tomb (now at Saint-Denis) that has recently been suggested represents her grand-niece Marie de Brienne, wife of Baldwin II, the last Latin emperor of Constantinople.⁹

In 1804, fourteen years after they were destroyed, the tombs of Blanche of Castile were reborn as a single monument created by Alexandre Lenoir at the Musée des monuments français.¹⁰ **Fig. 1** The museum was originally set up in Paris, on the Left Bank, as a provisional depot in the suppressed convent of the Petits-Augustins; its purpose was to store works of art seized during the French Revolution from ecclesiastical and aristocratic holdings.¹¹ With the nationalization of church property and vast destruction of its artistic heritage in the early years of the Revolution, Lenoir played a singular role not only in saving medieval works of art, but in re-shaping French sensibilities towards the medieval past. He was not content to simply inventory the art stored under his care and periodically open the depot to the public, as stipulated by the new government. Instead, he transformed the Petits-Augustins into a series of installations that recounted the history of French art from its beginnings—or, at least from what Lenoir argued were its beginnings (an important distinction, as we will see). Accordingly, different rooms in the monastery were converted into galleries, each dedicated to an individual century of French art extending, as one contemporary touted, from “its origin up to its perfection.”¹²

The so-called “Sepulchral chapel of Queen Blanche, mother of Louis IX—called the saint” was installed on the eastern wall of the Introductory Gallery of the museum—an exhibition space reconstituted from the former convent church of the Petits-Augustins.¹³ **Fig. 2** Tucked away in a niche near the church/museum entrance, nearly hidden when its doors were opened, Lenoir’s tomb for Blanche of Castile was anything but insignificant. Like the gateway in the so-called “Arab Courtyard,” designed as part of a series of garden complexes to the west of the museum proper, the tomb’s function was to usher museum visitors into the genesis of French artistic achievement.¹⁴

The Introductory Gallery was organized by Lenoir starting in 1799 as a kind of prelude to the subsequent galleries of his museum.¹⁵ As visitors entered this, the first room, they were presented with a chronological overview of objects representing the artistic styles assembled within the succeeding galleries.¹⁶ Writers praised the span of works gathered within the Introductory Gallery as encompassing everything a visitor needed in order to grasp “the principal characteristics of the different periods of the art of design in France.”¹⁷ Yet, despite such broad-reaching claims, it was the art of the sixteenth century that dominated the installation. Seemingly left out of this emphasis, the tomb of Blanche of Castile was installed

à côté—to the museum visitors’ immediate right as they walked through the entry doors.

An engraving published by Lenoir shows the monument like a wall tomb, with an effigy of the queen installed upon an arcaded sarcophagus.¹⁸ Above the gisant was a canopy containing a large mosaic plaque crowned with what Lenoir called “a frieze representing griffins and roosters,” which, in turn, was surmounted by a tympanum inscribed with an elongated trefoil framing an abundant foliate mask.¹⁹ An inscription carved into the tympanum rim completed the ensemble: “Madame la Roïne Blanche mere de Monsieur Saint Louys.”²⁰ Framing this arrangement was a steeply sloping gable rimmed with a gently curving molding of rosettes, ornamented with crockets and an expansively leafy finial at the apex. Two outward piers—like wall buttresses—both flanked the ensemble and supported sculptures Lenoir identified as Sts. Mark and John the Evangelist; the gable housed a statue of a standing Virgin and Child.²¹

In truth, Lenoir took advantage of a pre-existing niche in the former abbey church to build Blanche’s memorial as a true niche, or *enfeu*, tomb.²² He certainly was familiar with this type of memorial, having transported the elaborate *enfeu* tomb of the Merovingian ruler Dagobert **Fig. 3** from the former abbey church of Saint-Denis to the Museum in 1795.²³ At the outset, Lenoir linked the two monuments stylistically. Blanche’s tomb, he wrote, “was in the form of an ogive, composed in the taste of (the tomb of) Dagobert.”²⁴ Yet, the connection Lenoir wished to make was much more nuanced than a mere formal resemblance. Lenoir knew the tomb of Dagobert was not coeval with the Merovingian king himself, but rather, dated to the time of Louis IX. Indeed, Lenoir asserted that the king not only had commissioned the monument, but that he had acted on the explicit wishes of his mother, Blanche of Castile.²⁵ In this way, following Lenoir’s remarkably circular way of thinking, the tomb of Dagobert could function as a kind of cipher for Louis IX—its patron via the exhortation of Blanche. And because the tomb for the queen was visually patterned after Dagobert’s monument—with a sarcophagus, gisant, and pointed-arch canopy, it likewise signaled the identity of the king.

Following a method he had already established with his sepulcher for the heartrending medieval lovers, Abelard and Heloise, the tomb for Blanche of Castile was a *bricolage* of original medieval works mixed with medievalizing elements.²⁶ Erlande-Brandenburg and Françoise Baron, in fact, have identified many of its surviving medieval components. The fourteenth-

century sculptures of an Apostle (Lenoir's St. Mark, 1319-24) and John the Evangelist (c. 1370-80), both now in the collection of the Cluny Museum in Paris, came from the church of the Hôpital Saint-Jacques-aux-Pélerins and the Abbaye des Dames at Longchamp, respectively.²⁷ The early fourteenth-century Virgin and Child, originally from Saint-Denis, was transferred to the church at Saint-Mandé, just outside Paris, when Lenoir's museum was closed in 1816.²⁸ The crowned gisant in Tournai marble, mentioned earlier, is now at Saint-Denis.²⁹ The fragment forming the front of the sarcophagus came from the Chapelle de Saint-Eugène at Saint-Denis.³⁰ A wall bracket, carved in the shape of a young man's head and which served as a terminus for the inner tracery arch, probably came from the abbey of Saint-Denis. A companion bracket may well have been carved in a sympathetic thirteenth-century style to balance the composition.³¹ A portion of the mosaic (1250-1300), originally from the chapel of Saint-Eugène at the abbey church of Saint-Denis, also survives at the Louvre.³² Baron also suggests that a fragmented, incised relief showing two griffins with their necks entwined, originally from Saint-Denis (1275-1300), is a remnant of the tomb's "frieze representing griffins and roosters."³³ Other elements, like the luxuriant thirteenth-century foliate mask at the Louvre, have simply lost their provenance.³⁴

But the tomb for Blanche of Castile, as created by Lenoir, was more than the sum of these disparate parts. Why did the tomb look the way it did? Was its installation in the Introductory Gallery significant? Why create a tomb for the queen in the first place? Was it, in the stinging words of Erlande-Brandenburg, nothing but a hoax?³⁵

Certainly Erlande-Brandenburg is correct if one acknowledges that from the time it went on view in 1804, the cenotaph was presented by Lenoir as if it was the historical tomb of Blanche of Castile. Lenoir's guidebook from 1806 states: "One sees the statue of the queen laid out and sculpted in black marble, positioned on a sarcophagus ornamented on the front with a colonnade of seven columns forming little arcs..."³⁶ In a slightly different venue, he claimed that he had "restored" the tomb from "rubble of the abbey of Maubuisson, sold as simple (building) materials."³⁷ That identification changed in 1816 as the museum was being shut down with the Restoration of the Monarchy, during which time Lenoir was required to draw up a list of all "the tombs and statues of the kings and queens, princes, and princesses" at the Museum. The queen's tomb was listed as No. 31: a "gothic chapel where she (Blanche) is represented"

of which, Lenoir stipulated, "all the details and ornaments of this chapel come from Saint-Denis."³⁸ Yet, later that year he relinquished any posturing as to its origin. The tomb, he wrote, "was entirely remade according to my designs. The sarcophagus, shaped from a small architectural monument from Saint-Denis was originally ornamented with many painted subjects. The type of mosaic which (was placed behind the gisant) also came from Saint-Denis, as did the arabesque head ornamented with leaves, sculpted in stone, and many other small statues in marble."³⁹ Indeed, writers at this time recognized that the tomb "is composed from diverse morsels of architecture from the twelfth century. We note the successful outcome of this gathering of debris. The ensemble has grace and all the parts are in harmony."⁴⁰

If Lenoir had no fervent pretence to the tomb's authenticity, what was the point? Was it a work created simply to deceive? Was it an instance, as Francis Haskell observed, of a new memorial "run up" for a "famous character missing from (Lenoir's) survey of French history"?⁴¹

Lenoir had trained in the Academy as a history painter. And just because he was thrust, at the Revolution, into an administrative job supervising the art depot for Paris that does not mean he adopted the mindset of a functionary. His sensibility remained one of an artist; he never stopped creating—in the sense an artist creates. Rather than painting history, Lenoir set to depicting the historical eras of French art history within the gallery installations of his museum. Each installation was a carefully conceived tableau. No matter that Blanche of Castile's tomb was not the queen's historical tomb. The point of the monument Lenoir created for Blanche of Castile was to evoke a particular, and pivotal, point in the history of French art: the association of her son, Louis IX, with the transfer of the pointed arch to France, which Lenoir believed was responsible for stimulating the very development of French art. In short (and as I have discussed elsewhere), Lenoir believed that the pointed arch originated in the Levant, where mid-thirteenth century artists traveling with Louis IX and his crusaders in Greater Syria studied the ogive in the field and brought the design back with them to France.⁴² Lenoir certainly was not alone at this time in advocating for an "Arab" origin for the pointed arch (as opposed to those contemporaries who believed the pointed arch was created by the ancient Goths in imitation of crisscrossing tree branches).⁴³ Indeed, Lenoir saw Louis IX as a kind of patron for the pointed arch. He argued that under the king's benefaction, a completely

new style of art was introduced to France following his return from crusade. For example, Lenoir pejoratively contrasted the massiveness of the cathedral of Paris and its lack of interior ornamentation to the “lightness” as well as bold and forward-thinking design of Louis IX’s Sainte-Chapelle—which he posited was built after the king’s return from the East.⁴⁴ And here, one must bear in mind that Lenoir’s understanding of building chronology versus our knowledge that the Sainte-Chapelle was dedicated *before* Louis IX left on crusade in 1248 was at best in error. Lenoir had an enormous capacity to construct and collapse time to suit his artistic theories.

The inscription “Madame la Royne Blanche mere de Monsieur Saint Louys,” which emphasizes the pointed nature of the arching tympanum of Lenoir’s tomb for Blanche of Castile, **Fig. 4** signaled to viewers that Lenoir wished them to make the direct link between Louis IX and the Gothic arch. Not only did the ogive itself make this connection clear, but the ornament did as well. The deliberate echo between the lancet-like tracery applied to the outward pillars and window tracery of the Sainte-Chapelle was evident. **Fig. 5** So too, the foliate mask in the tympanum was integral to what Lenoir called the “Arab style.” He argued that such grotesques and lush floral ornament evoked the Eastern textiles brought to France by the crusaders. (Lenoir similarly made this point—the association between the pointed arch and “grotesques”—in a design he made for his “Arab Courtyard,” which was never actually finished.)⁴⁵ But besides sculpted detail, Lenoir’s inclusion of mosaic panels was also a critical element to demonstrate the hallmarks of the “Arab style.” He believed that colored geometric patterning was one of its most essential characteristics. In Lenoir’s mind, mosaic was to genus as stained glass was to species. It was the impression made by the “mystical colors” produced by light streaming through stained-glass windows (as exemplified by the Sainte-Chapelle) that Lenoir saw something completely new in French art—what he called a “foreign physiognomy.”⁴⁶ He believed the assemblage of varied and vivid colors in windows, appearing like “a *parterre* enameled with flowers,” suggested its derivation from mosaic: “I also think,” he wrote, “that the fortunate use of mosaic in interior decoration instigated the invention of painting on glass.”⁴⁷ Besides their analogous palettes, stained glass and mosaics were, according to Lenoir, distinguished by a similar technique of joining colored glass together by means of metal cells: “It is justified,” Lenoir asserted, “that I have given the name of *transparent mosaics* to these paintings.”⁴⁸

In this way, the tomb’s overall form of a grandiose pointed arch, with corresponding ornament, functioned as a visual introduction to the components Lenoir believed defined the “Arab style.” Moreover, the positioning of Blanche of Castile’s tomb in the Introductory Gallery made this concept physically manifest from the outset of a visitor’s experience. To this end, her tomb was deliberately contrasted with a syncopated grouping on the back (south) wall showing two jamb sculptures from Notre-Dame at Corbeil (1140–50) which flanked the large Virgin and Child in Majesty from the abbey of Saint-Martin-des-Champs (c. 1160).⁴⁹ Augmented by excavated elements from ancient Gaul, these twelfth-century sculptures were claimed by Lenoir to be of Merovingian origin.⁵⁰ Indeed, Lenoir identified the two column statues from Corbeil as showing the founders of the Christian Merovingian line—Clovis I and Clotilde.⁵¹ This art, “still in its cradle” according to Lenoir, was characterized by “imperfect forms” and “undecided . . . execution.”⁵² Thus, these assembled works functioned as an artistic foil for the innovations brought by the pointed arch—embodied by Blanche of Castile’s tomb. Their juxtaposition, a “turning the corner” if you will, was to make clear that with the style of the pointed arch, barbarian rudeness was over and French art had begun. Lenoir emphasized this exact point in his 1810 museum guidebook: “Continuous war and ignorance had left a long interval in the arts, passing until the thirteenth century . . . where one finds in the decoration of this century the origin of Arab architecture in France, introduced as a result of the first Crusades.”⁵³ The “Merovingian” sculpture was literally placed against the entrance wall, to the back of the entering visitor. One had to turn around to see it. The tomb of Blanche of Castile and its emblematic pointed arch was more in line with the viewer’s perspective, ushering them into an environment of French artistic richness.

But why not a tomb for Louis IX? Why Blanche of Castile? Partly, it was practical. Contrary to his usual practice, Lenoir made no pretence of evoking the historical tomb for Louis IX. His writings, journals, and diaries make no mention of the king’s sepulcher. (Of course, Louis’ tomb had been destroyed in the fifteenth century, so this lacuna for Lenoir perhaps is not so surprising.⁵⁴) But I think there was also a conscious decision on Lenoir’s part to represent the mother of Louis IX as a kind of surrogate. He did not pursue the kind of portrayal, current in the aftermath of the Revolution, which depicted Blanche of Castile as a manipulative, domineering harpy. A Revolutionary

writer, for example, highlighted Jean de Joinville's story of Blanche's hard-hearted ouster of Louis IX from his wife's bedside following a dangerously difficult childbirth, despite his wife's plaintive appeals. "One can judge by this single act," declared the Revolutionary pamphlet, "just how far the imperious Blanche would impose her tyranny upon both spouses."⁵⁵

In contrast, Lenoir chose to image Blanche of Castile in an inherently conservative way, recalling the *ancien régime* that valued the queen first and foremost as the mother of St. Louis. Lenoir's approach recalled the seventeenth-century engraving showing Blanche of Castile as regent, with her arm wrapped protectively around the shoulders of the young king seated beside her. Labeled in the caption as "Blanche of Castile, Queen of France, mother of St. Louis, wife of Louis VIII," the queen is depicted here both as mother and mentor. Not only did the caption extol her for "instruct(ing) the young king, her son, in piety," but hailed her as saintly, wise, and as an adroit ruler.⁵⁶ This defining role—as Louis IX's teacher, counselor, and moral compass—was recapitulated for Lenoir's museum visitor through the titulus on the tomb's canopy: "Madame, Queen Blanche, Mother of Monsieur St. Louis." Why?

In 1800, standing amidst a vast array of pointed arches in the museum's Gallery of the Thirteenth Century, Napoleon—then First Counsel—reportedly exclaimed: "Lenoir, you transport me to Syria!"⁵⁷ On the one hand, Lenoir may have repeated Napoleon's remark in the Museum's guidebook to imply an official validation for Lenoir's contention that the pointed arch had originated in Syria, but I suspect it also had wider Bonapartist overtones. Even in 1793—during the Terror—Lenoir never expressed a written opinion about Madame Guillotine, but he wrote with passion and directness about how the character of a government is revealed by the efficacy of its arts policy.⁵⁸ And, incredible as it may seem, Lenoir never lost this early idealism. He found his hero in Napoleon Bonaparte. And he expressed his political leanings artistically.

For example, the stained glass installed in the Gallery of the Thirteenth Century **Fig. 6** was originally read by Lenoir as showing "moral subjects taken from domestic life."⁵⁹ Once Napoleon was firmly in power, the glass was reinterpreted to depict episodes from the life of Blanche of Castile and Louis IX—recalling a medieval model of good government and beneficial rule, with obvious analogies to Bonaparte.⁶⁰ At this time, Lenoir was also beginning to serve as an art consultant for Napoleon's wife Josephine, helping

her to acquire sculpture and architectural salvage for her house and garden at Malmaison. And by 1808, there was a kind of convergence: the melodramatic painting *St. Louis's Deference to his Mother* (1808) by the Troubadour painter François Fleury-Richard was directly inspired by Lenoir's medieval galleries at the Musée des monuments français, including the Virgin and Child sculpture from Saint-Martin-des-Champs, which Lenoir had positioned as a "Merovingian" antithesis to the progressive nature of Queen Blanche's tomb.⁶¹ In turn, Fleury-Richard appropriated the Saint-Martin-des-Champs sculpture as a counterpoint to his depiction of Queen Blanche and her son. Josephine purchased the painting directly out of the 1808 Salon, installing it over the mantel of her drawing room at Malmaison.⁶² So, perhaps it is not merely a coincidence that four years earlier (in 1804) Lenoir had installed his tomb for Blanche of Castile at the Musée des monuments français—in the very same year that Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself emperor. This kind of artistic flattery would have been right in line with Lenoir's thinking, as he also was planning a gallery exclusively dedicated to Napoleon, albeit one that was never realized.⁶³

Yet, despite these kinds of politically pragmatic allusions, the tomb for Blanche of Castile remained first and foremost Lenoir's creative declaration linking the arrival, with Louis IX, of the pointed arch in France. The Troubadour painter Charles-Marie Bouton was clearly influenced by this association in conceiving his painting of *St. Louis in Meditation at the Tomb of his Mother* commissioned for the Chateau of Fontainebleau and exhibited in the 1819 Salon.⁶⁴ Elegiac and potent, the twinning of the pointed arch with the figure of St. Louis recalls Bouton's earlier painting of a "*philosophe*" in the Gallery of the Thirteenth Century, shown in the 1812 Salon and purchased the same year by Josephine.⁶⁵ In both works, architecture functioned as more than a framework to create historically evocative settings. The massive coursed column, so prominent in Bouton's view of the Gallery of the Thirteenth Century, was brought to the foreground in the St. Louis scene. Indeed, the central prominence given to the pointed arch, echoed by the arching stream of sunlight from the clerestory window, signaled the very identity of the mourner. Figures could not, as the critics charged when the painting was first exhibited, have been randomly substituted into this scene.⁶⁶ Rather, Bouton, through his familiarity with the Musée des monuments français understood that the pointed arch could function as an emblem unique to Louis IX.

Thus, Lenoir's monument to Blanche of Castile was

never intended as a facsimile of either of her historical tombs. Rather, it functioned as a kind of cipher. By assembling original medieval elements within the literal framework of a pointed arch and by associating it with Louis IX through his mother (by means of an inscription, just to make sure viewers got the point), Lenoir argued relevancy for a medieval past. At a time when Gothic buildings in Paris were succumbing to the metaphorical wrecking ball, including Pierre de Montreuil's Grande Chapelle de la Vierge from Saint-

Germain-des-Prés, as well as the abbey churches of Saint-Victor, the Cordeliers, and the Carmes, Lenoir's creation of a tomb for Blanche of Castile positioned the pointed arch and the so-called Gothic style as having worth.⁶⁷ Purposely positioned to the right of the entryway to the Musée des monuments français, the tomb functioned like the time-honored paintings of the queen teaching the young Louis IX;⁶⁸ it instructed the museum visitor in the foundation of French artistic greatness.



NOTES

* This paper was originally presented at the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Medieval Academy of America, held in Chicago. It is part of a larger project on Alexandre Lenoir's interpretation of the Middle Ages at the Musée des monuments français. I am grateful to Kathleen Nolan for our many discussions on the historical tombs of Blanche of Castile as well as to the American Council of Learned Societies for their support of my research on Lenoir. But in citing my current indebtedness, I would be remiss in not acknowledging that Janet Smith is where it all began. I am particularly pleased to publish this work in honor of Janet, who first set me on the road to become an art historian. She opened my eyes to the wonders of Italian art, but more importantly, she affirmed my elementary insights about art as an enthusiastic (but naïve) nineteen-year old studying in Florence. She took my questions seriously. She pushed me to look and to learn independently. And she kept the bar high. I have never forgotten it. I only hope Janet has forgiven my migration northward to the art of medieval France. Grazie mille Janet!

1. Jean of Joinville, *The Memoirs of the Lord of Joinville*, trans. Ethel Wedgewood (New York, E.P. Dutton, 1906), 310; <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/WedLord.html>. (accessed 12 January 2012).

2. Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le Roi est mort: Étude sur les funérailles, les sépultures et les tombeaux des rois de France jusqu'à la fin du XIIe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1975), 165; idem, "Le Tombeau de cœur de Blanche de Castille à l'abbaye de Lys," in *Art et architecture à Melun au Moyen Age*, ed. Yves Gallet (Paris: Picard, 2000), 255-57; Kathleen Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver: The Creation of a Visual Imagery of Queenship in Capetian France* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 141-51. See also Alexandra Gajewski-Kennedy, "Recherches sur l'architecture cistercienne et le pouvoir royal: Blanche de Castille et la construction de l'abbaye du Lys," in *Art et architecture à Melun au Moyen Age*, 248-50.

3. See Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 141.

4. Ibid., 141.

5. Ibid., 142. See also Paris, Musée du Louvre, *Statue gisante de Blanche de Champagne*, Limoges, c. 1306 (O. A. 2082) discussed by Françoise Baron in *L'Œuvre de Limoges: Émaux limousins du moyen âge* (Paris and New York: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1995), 417-19.

6. Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 136-38, and Béatrice de Chancel-Bardelot in *L'Œuvre de Limoges: Émaux limousins du*

moyen âge, 402-405.

7. Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 144.

8. Ibid., 147.

9. Ibid., 147-50; Erlande-Brandenburg, "Le Tombeau de Cœur," 255-57; and Pierre Bony, "Le gisant en marbre noir de Saint-Denis," *Revue française d'héraldique et de sigillographie* 54-59 (1984-89): 91-110.

10. *Inventaire général des richesses d'art de la France: Archives du Musée des monuments français*, 3 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1883-97), I: 317 (hereafter cited as *Archives du Musée*) records the monies used to fund "placement et restauration complète des bas-reliefs, sarcophage, figures et ornements qui composent la totalité du Mausolée de la reine Blanche."

11. See Alexandre Lenoir, *Notice succincte des objets de sculpture et architecture réunis au dépôt provisoire national* (Paris: Desenne, 1793), 28. For an overview in English of the history of Lenoir's museum, see Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 155-97.

12. J. E. Biet and J. P. Brès, *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments français* (Paris, 1821), n.p.

13. Alexandre Lenoir, *Description historique et chronologique des monumens de sculpture, réunis au Musée des monumens français*, 8th ed. (Paris: chez Guyot et al., 1806), 110.

14. For the "Arab Courtyard," see Mary B. Shepard, "L'oeuf sacré: Alexandre Lenoir's Cour Arabe and the Pointed Arch," in Janet T. Marquardt and Alyce Jordan, *Medieval Art and Architecture after the Middle Ages* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 149-70.

15. *Archives du Musée*, I: 151-52.

16. See Biet and Brès, *Souvenirs*, 12 and pl. XII.

17. Ibid., 2.

18. Alexandre Lenoir, *Musée des monumens français, ou Description Historique et chronologique des Statues en marbre et en bronze, Bas-reliefs et Tombeaux des Hommes et des Femmes célèbres, pour servir à l'Histoire de France et à celle de l'Art*, 8 vols. (Paris: Guilleminet-Nepreu, an IX-1821), 5 (1806): pl. 211.

19. Lenoir, *Description historique*, 8th ed. (1806), 111.

20. "Madame, the Queen, Blanche, mother of Monsieur Saint Louis." Paris, Musée du Louvre, *Tympan décoré d'un masque feuillu*, Île-de-France, 1275-1300 (RF 1023). See Françoise

- Baron et al., *Musée du Louvre: Sculpture française I moyen âge* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1996), 99.
21. Alexandre Lenoir, *Musée impérial des monumens français* (Paris: Hacquart, 1810), 195.
22. For a view of the gallery prior to Lenoir's installation of the tomb of Blanche of Castile, see Jean-Lubin Vauzelle's drawing now in Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des arts graphiques, RF 5279.33, recto.
23. Alexandre Lenoir, "Architecture, Monuments de Saint-Denis: Notice historique sur le tombeau de Dagobert, premier fondateur de l'église royale de Saint-Denis" (1819) in Paris, Bnf, Estampes, Recueil factice de coupures de presse, articles d'Alexandre Lenoir, Ya²151 8^o, vol. IV: 305.
24. Lenoir, *Musée impérial*, 195.
25. Alexandre Lenoir, *Description historique et chronologique des monumens de sculpture, réunis au Musée des monumens français*, 6th. ed. (Paris: Chez l'auteur et al., an IX de la République, [1800–1801]), 149.
26. For Lenoir's tomb for Abelard and Heloise, see Mary B. Shepard, "A Tomb for Abelard and Heloise," *Romance Studies* 25/1 (2007): 34–43.
27. Paris, Musée national du moyen âge (Musée de Cluny), *Un Apôtre*, Paris, c. 1319–24 (Cl. 18759) and St. Jean le Évangéliste, Paris, c. 1370–80 (Cl. 14362). See Xavier Dectot, *Musée de Cluny, Musée National du Moyen Âge: A Guide* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2009), 96–97.
28. The sculpture now at Saint-Mandé was classified by the Monuments Historiques in 1944. See <http://www.patrimoine-de-france.org/oeuvres/richesses-49-14488-104304-P167646-255662.html> (accessed May 26, 2011).
29. See note 9.
30. Françoise Baron, "Sculptures françaises du XIV^e siècle," *Cahiers Musée d'art et d'essai Palais de Tokyo*, n. 19 (1985), 4.
31. Baron et al., *Sculpture française I moyen âge*, 86, and 215.
32. *Ibid.*, 103.
33. *Ibid.*, 98.
34. *Ibid.*, 99.
35. Erlande-Brandenburg, "Le Tombeau de cœur," 255.
36. Lenoir, *Description historique*, 8th ed. (1806), 110–11.
37. Lenoir, *Musée des monumens français*, 5 (1806): 230.
38. *Archives du Musée*, III: 158.
39. *Ibid.*, 199.
40. Biet and Brès, *Souvenirs*, 2.
41. Francis Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 246.
42. Shepard, "L'oeuf sacré," 149–70.
43. *Ibid.*, 150–52.
44. *Ibid.*, 152.
45. Lenoir, *Description historique*, 6th ed., 146, and Shepard, "L'oeuf sacré," 161.
46. Lenoir, *Musée des monumens français*, 3 (1802): 8.
47. Alexandre Lenoir, "Sur l'ancienne peinture sur verre . . . depuis l'époque de son invention jusqu'à nos jours," *Mémoires de l'académie celtique* 3 (1809): 239.
48. Alexandre Lenoir, "Observations sur une nouvelle exposition de peintures sur verre," *Journal des artistes* 1 (1827): 252.
49. Paris, Musée du Louvre, *Un Roi and Une Reine*, 1175–1200, Notre-Dame à Corbeil; see Baron et al., *Sculpture française I moyen âge*, 74–75. Saint-Denis, Basilique de Saint-Denis, *La Vierge et l'Enfant assise*, c. 1160; see Willibald Sauerländer, *Gothic Sculpture in France 1140–1270*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (New York: Abrams, 1972), 387, and pl. 19.
50. Lenoir, *Musée impérial*, 184.
51. *Ibid.*, vij.
52. *Ibid.*, v.
53. *Ibid.*, vij.
54. Georgia Sommers Wright, "The Tomb of Saint Louis," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 34 (1971): 65.
55. n.a., *Histoire des princes du sang françois [sic] et des reines de France* (Paris: n.p., 1790), 36–37.
56. Cambridge, Harvard Art Museums, Stefano Della Bella, from the series *Le jeu de reines renommées*, S7.14.1. See also Paris, Bnf, Estampes, Kh 34b Réserve, pet. fol.
57. Lenoir, *Description historique*, 6th ed., 124.
58. Lenoir, *Notice succincte*, 10–11.
59. Alexandre Lenoir, *Description historique et chronologique des monumens de sculpture, réunis au Musée des monumens français*, 5th ed. (Paris: Chez l'auteur et al., an VIII de la République [1799]), 368.
60. Lenoir, *Description historique*, 8th ed., 46.
61. Arenenberg, Switzerland, Musée Napoléon, Fleury-François Richard, *Le Déférence de Saint Louis pour sa mère*, 1808. Illustrated in Marie-Claude Chaudonneret, *Fleury Richard et Pierre Révoil: La peinture Troubadour* (Paris: Arthena, 1980), 72–73.
62. Serge Grandjean, *Inventaire après décès de l'Impératrice Joséphine à Malmaison* (Paris: Réunion des Musées nationaux, 1964), 156, no. 1122.
63. Lenoir, *Musée impérial*, x–xj.
64. Fontainebleau, Musée national du château de Fontainebleau, Charles-Marie Bouton, *Saint Louis au tombeau de sa mere*, 1818. Illustrated in Beth S. Wright, *Painting and History During the French Restoration: Abandoned by the Past* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 41 and fig. 11.
65. Arenenberg, Switzerland, Musée Napoléon, Charles-Marie Bouton, *Philosophe au Salle du XIII^e Siècle*, 1812. Illustrated in Jacques Vanuxem, "Aperçus sur quelques tableaux représentant le Musée des monumens français de Lenoir," *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire de l'art français* (1971): 147. The influence of Lenoir's gallery installations upon Bouton had already been noted by the middle of the nineteenth century. See M. Allou, "Notice sur la vie et les travaux d'Alexandre Lenoir," *Mémoires de la société royale des antiquaires de France*, n.s. 6 (1842): xij.
66. See Wright, *Painting and History*, 192–93, n. 20.
67. For the destruction of Gothic monuments in Paris in the first decade of the nineteenth century, see Louis Réau, *Histoire du Vandalisme: Les monuments détruits de l'art français*, ed. and augmented by Michel Fleury and Guy-Michel Leproux (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1994), 562–71.
68. See, for example, the painting of *Blanche de Castille montrant à Saint Louis la Religion, la Foi et la Piété*, by the studio of Jean Jouvenet, first half of the eighteenth century, now in Dole, Musée des Beaux-Arts (CH 97).

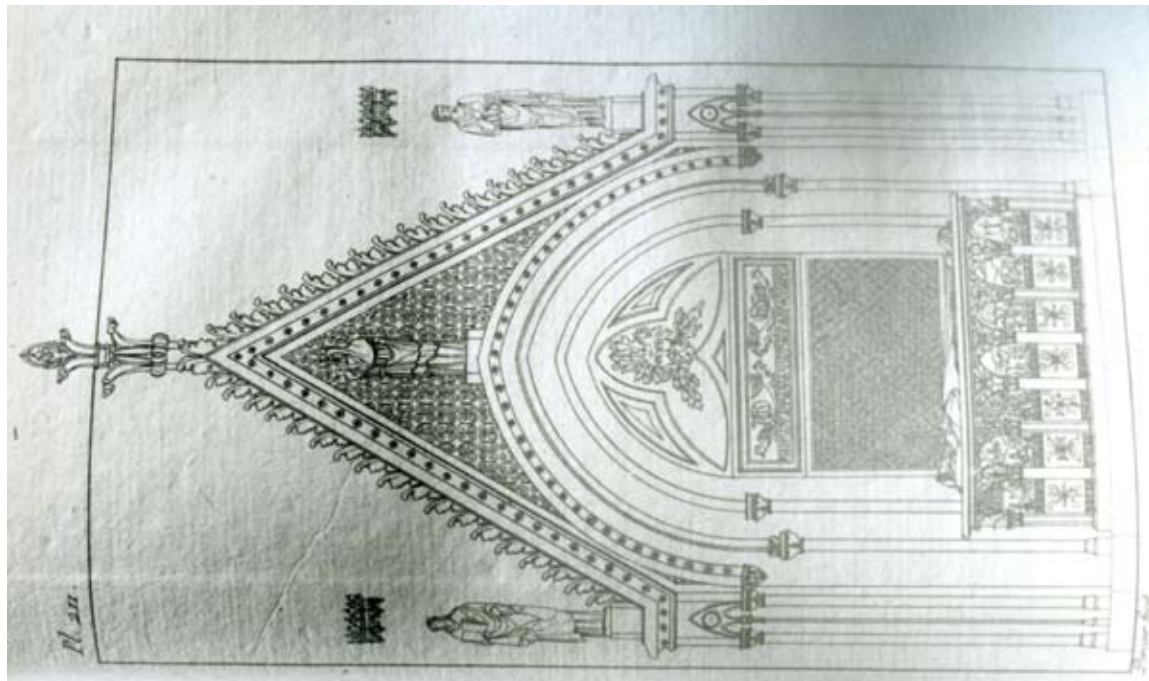


FIGURE 1. Charles Percier, *Tomb of Blanche of Castile*, from Alexandre Lenoir, *Musée des monuments français*, vol. 5, pl. 211.

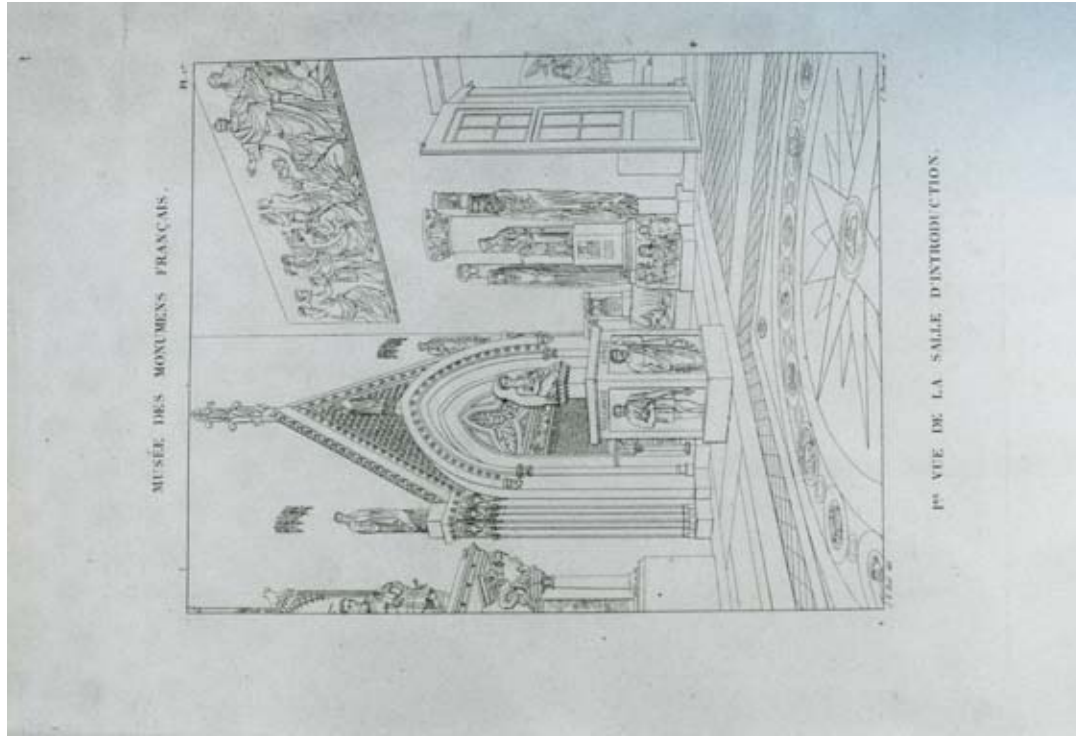


FIGURE 2. View of Tomb of Blanche of Castile in the Introductory Gallery of the Musée des monuments français, from Biet and Brès, *Souvenirs*, pl. 1.

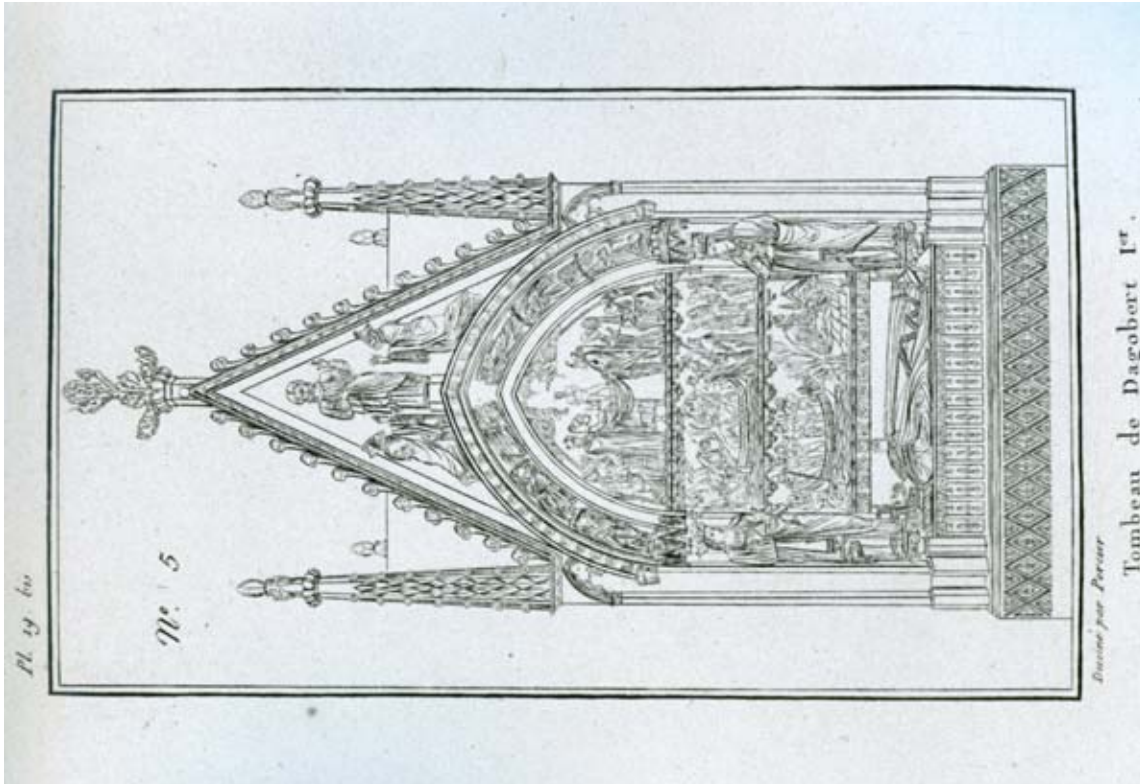


FIGURE 3. Charles Percier, *Tomb of Dagobert I*, from Alexandre Lenoir, *Museum of French Monuments; or, an Historical and Chronological Description of the Monuments, in Marble, Bronze, and Bas-Relief collected in the Museum at Paris*, trans. from the original French by J. Griffiths (Paris: English Press, 1803), pl. 19.



FIGURE 4. Paris, Louvre Museum, *Tympanum with a Foliate Mask*, 1275-1300 (photo: author)



FIGURE 5. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, 1248 (photo: Chad Droegemeier)

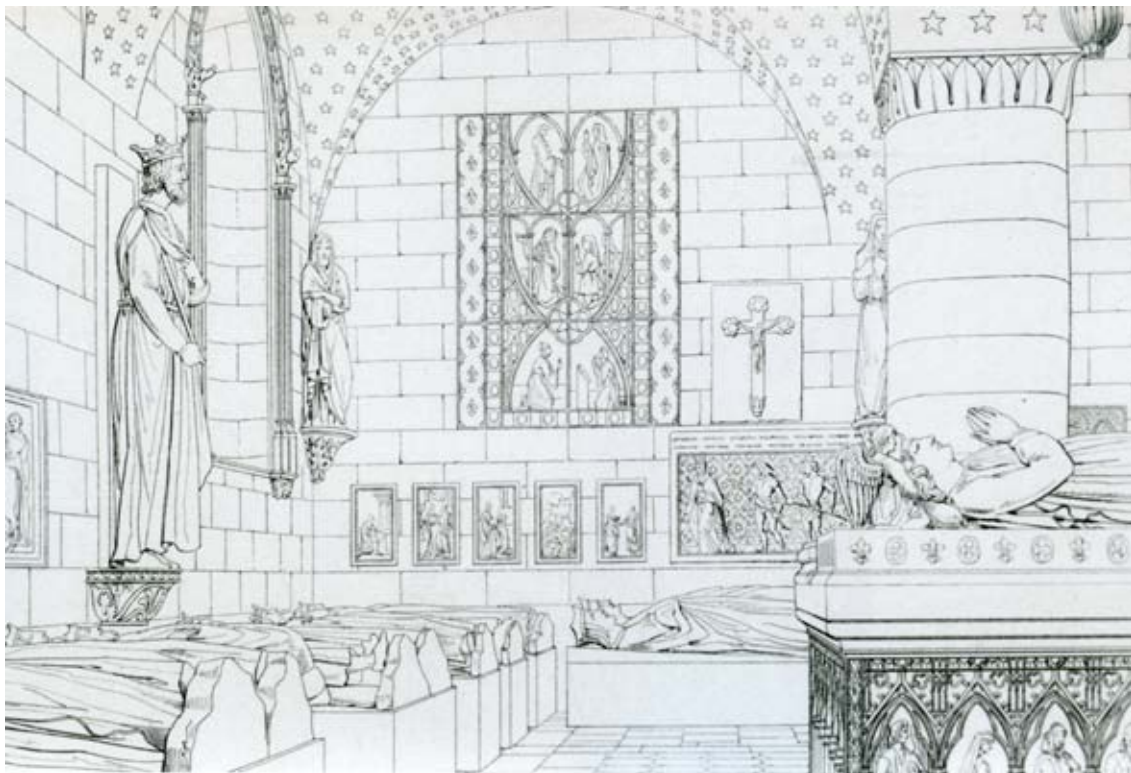


FIGURE 6. Gallery of the Thirteenth Century in the Musée des monuments français, from Biet and Brès, *Souvenirs*, pl. 13.

“Yankee Stonecutter” / Florentine Sculptor

Thoughts on Revising our Model for Studying Expatriot Artists



Julia A. Sienkewicz

In 1851, Horatio Greenough (1805-1852), an internationally acclaimed sculptor, left Florence, Italy for the final time after a residence of more than two decades in the city. The upheaval of the Risorgimento, combined with family concerns and his desire to oversee the installation of his second federal commission on the East Front of the United States Capitol, persuaded the artist to leave his home in Bellosquardo (in the hills of Florence) and his sculpture studio on the Piazza Maria Antonia (now the Piazza dell'Indipendenza) and to return for an extended visit, and possible repatriation, to his childhood homeland. **Figs. 1-3** Though he had been born in Boston and educated at Harvard University, Greenough's homecoming after such a long absence was jarring. The artist had visited the United States on several occasions, and maintained regular correspondence with friends and family across the eastern seaboard, but these experiences were not the same as living and working in the country. Indeed, by the time that he returned “home” to the United States, Greenough would have been easily able to claim either Tuscany or the United States as his homeland.

In reaction to his stressful repatriation, Greenough penned what would be his first and only book, *The Travels, Observations, and Experience of a Yankee Stonecutter* (1852), the title of which would seem to suggest that the sculptor acknowledged no such hybrid identity. Greenough wrote most of the book during a fallow period as he sat listlessly in Washington, D.C. waiting in vain for the arrival of his second federal commission, a colossal sculpture group that was supposed to be shipped to Washington, D.C. from Livorno, Italy.¹ The text offers a somewhat disjointed social and artistic commentary which is, ultimately, a plea for the development of a unified artistic aesthetic in the United States, which Greenough believed would help to counter the nation's cultural disunity.² Indeed, it is probably because of the national stakes of his argument that Greenough chose to refer to himself as a “Yankee Stonecutter” in the book. In his preface,

by contrast, Greenough described his multilayered identity as tingeing his thought with heterodoxy, making him into a hybrid conglomerate, formed from the influence of travel on his inborn constitution:

In thus stopping here and there among men of different races, creeds and forms of civilization, I have become inoculated, to some extent, with the various ways of thinking of those about me, always retaining nearly the same proportion of original Yankee conviction to afterthought, that you will find of matrix to pebbles in the pudding-stone of Roxbury, Mass.³

Although Greenough carefully elected to liken himself to a characteristic New England stone, it is significant that he did so in the context of a passage clearly asserting his differences from other citizens of the United States who had chosen never to travel at length abroad. If he assumed the guise of a New England author for the purposes of gaining an audience for his book, Greenough turned to his international persona in order to assert the authority of his judgment regarding the unconventional observations that he made about the United States in the text.⁴ Surely, he argued, only someone who was both American and European could muster sufficiently balanced judgment in order to solve the problems with which the young nation was struggling in the Mason-Dixon era.

Despite such a clear message of hybrid (or to use his own concept, *conglomerate* identity) from the artist, scholarship has neglected to approach his identity with any nuance, and Greenough has long been remembered in nationalistic terms. He is typically credited as being the *primogenitor* of academic sculpture in the United States, a role in which he has been variously praised or reviled for his dedication to, and prominent introduction of, the neoclassical style of sculpture to the United States. With few exceptions, scholars have resolutely claimed Greenough for the

“American” camp and discounted the intellectual and artistic influence that Florence had on his work, as, for example, when one author argued that Greenough’s residence abroad had left the New England character of his mind unaltered: “Greenough was not by temperament an expatriate. In many ways his functional theories of art and architecture gave him a place in cultural history similar to that of his friend Emerson. Both emphasized the American vernacular tradition.”⁵ Further, Nathalia Wright, Greenough’s biographer and the scholar who single-handedly rediscovered the artist in the twentieth century, asserted that by the time Greenough left for Italy at age nineteen “the broad outlines of Greenough’s character as a man and an artist were drawn. His idealism, nationalism, and classicism, his ambition and diligence, his interest in architecture and esthetic theory as well as sculpture, his sociability and his sensitivity—all were there,” an assertion suggesting that in Europe Greenough found only the polishing, finishing touches for an already, fully-formed Yankee character.⁶

Recognizing that Greenough was a voluntary, long-term resident of Florence, with complex and substantive ties to his adoptive city certainly complicates this narrative. Central to this essay, then, is the challenge of considering what can be gained by rediscovering Greenough as both an American and an Italian artist. Naturally, in considering the theme of living between Florence and the United States, I find a contemporary parallel between Greenough’s biography and that of Janet Smith. Both came from the eastern seaboard to Florence and learned to call the city home. Likewise both, over the passage of many years in Italy, played the role of cicerone to numerous American students and friends throughout the storied hillsides. Through Janet’s example, I have learned of the passionate investment an individual can have in two homelands and of how extended life between two places can cause the fusion of two identities that would seem to be incompatible. Accordingly, I will suggest in this essay that it is not only *possible* to study the Yankee Stonecutter as a Florentine sculptor, but it is also *necessary* to do so in order to gain a more thorough understanding of his work.

The manner in which Greenough’s identity has been treated to date is not unique within the larger historiography of the field of American Art. It has long been commonplace to acknowledge that artists from the United States have been influenced by the art of Europe and, perhaps most profoundly, by the classical and Renaissance art on display in Italy. Beginning in the late eighteenth century and continuing

to the present day, American artists have travelled to Italy and their work has changed as a result of their residence in the country, no matter the duration.

Yet, despite the frequent reference to the European sojourns of artists, scholars have moved slowly to offer complex interpretations of the influence of these travels on the artists’ mentalities and subsequent work. A significant cause for this lacuna may be the relatively firm boundaries between the various fields of art history—scholars of the art of the United States are rarely asked to gain comprehensive knowledge of European art and artists of their period of specialization and the opposite is likewise true. If an artist is considered to be “American” s/he is rarely considered within the European art and social scenes, and *viceversa*. The situation becomes particularly vexed in the case of artists who lived for extended periods in different countries, and especially so for expatriate artists, who often truly developed two homelands. In addition, much of the early generations of scholarship in American art has been recuperative. Scholars have sought to uncover information about figures who have been ignored by art history—as Wright so masterfully did for Greenough. In these early recuperative histories, nationalism was important in order to create a worthy canon of American artists. In many cases, and this problem is particularly acute with regard to the literature on American sculptors, a second generation of scholarship has yet to be written that considers further dimensions of these artists.

In the exhibition catalog, *The Lure of Italy*, Theodore Stebbins characterized the relationship of American artists to Italy as a significant experience allowing artists to explore a place that was the polar opposite of their native land. According to Stebbins:

American art was formed in the crucible between two major protagonists, American memory of the European experience, on one hand, and the American land, the vast wilderness, the ever-moving western frontier, on the other. ... The American painter and sculptor going to Italy stepped into a haloed, time-honored international arena, unique unto itself; the artist’s trip there was more than an adventure, but ... a cognitive act. The artist went to Italy to discover himself, and to find out what it would mean and what it would take to create an American art.⁷

Stebbins is certainly right in stating that American artists spent much of their time in Italy considering the

future of their craft in their native nation. However, his characterization of the Italian experience existing in an opposite pole to the artistic wilderness of the United States is, as we will see below, misleading. William Gerdtz, writing in the same volume, characterized the American sculptor's relationship to Italy as being based on a series of pragmatic concerns. Gerdtz asserts that:

American sculptors expatriated to Italy for many reasons, though a cosmopolitan environment within which national groups could still band together was certainly one. The accessibility of the esteemed Italian marble was another. But perhaps most important was the availability of trained and talented Italian workmen who would actually carve the sculptures. ... Once in Florence and Rome, [American sculptors] might still be involved, tangentially at least, in working the marble, but usually this practice was minimal...they felt that such work would waste valuable time that could be better spent devoted to the conception of a work of art (or in entertaining prospective clients).⁸

This characterization suggests that American sculptors inhabited a rather isolated bubble within the larger cultures of Rome or Florence. Although they may have taken advantage of Italian marble and Italian laborers, Gerdtz posits that these sculptors focused most of their energies on the expatriate American communities of sculptors and patrons. In other words, despite living in Italy, American ties and values remained intact.

The remainder of this essay, which takes the form of both a case study and a thought piece, attempts to lay out an intellectual framework that places American artists in a more complex nexus within the international sphere. The work of Greenough—the self-titled “Yankee Stonecutter”—has much to offer to this question. Through Greenough, this essay develops a series of lenses through which to explore the complex impact of expatriate identity on artistic theory and practice. My study is limited to considering the specific concerns of the long-term expatriate artist and, further, my observations consider only particular characteristics relevant to my Greenough case-study.

In selecting the case-study of Florence, this article is also limited by the particular concerns of this Italian city. The artistic and cultural context of Florence in the first-half of the nineteenth century frames all aspects of this narrative. As a long-term inhabitant of Florence, Greenough experienced the city in a much more complex way than other foreign artists who visited the city for more discrete periods. He was a skilled linguist and was comfortable conversing with Florentine neighbors and colleagues. He was trained

by a Tuscan sculptor, Lorenzo Bartolini (1777-1850) and, subsequently, he himself mentored aspiring sculptors from both Italy and the United States.⁹ Greenough's children were born in Florence, and three of his brothers (Henry, John, and Richard Saltonstall) likewise spent long periods of time in the city, giving Greenough the opportunity to enjoy the pleasure of a family network within the Italian city.

Residence in Florence, likewise, had particular characteristics that were different from relocation in other European capitals. In the Tuscan capital, Greenough was able to study Renaissance masters, while participating in a rich contemporary art culture, celebrating the birthplace of modern humanism, and remembering the history of the Florentine Republic. Such experiences were particular to Florence and countered the ancient and papal history of Rome, the regal histories that dominated London and Paris, as well as the specter of the French Revolution's bloody failure that marred the latter city from the perspective of many early nineteenth century American artists. Furthermore, Florence was also a crucial node in the developing movement toward Italian unification. The great Tuscan thinkers and leaders of the period surely interested the young American artist who was deeply invested in social ideals such as democracy and union. Just as the art of the Florentine Republic influenced Greenough, so the ideas and excitement of the Risorgimento may well have sparked him to create work aligned with this movement.

Here I offer several categories of consideration for revising our research into the work of expatriate artists, each treated through the lens of Greenough's life and work. Of the many possible angles through which expatriate artists could, and should, be reinterpreted, I consider the following three categories: artistic education; artistic inspiration; and social networks.

Artistic Education

Pursuing an artistic education has long been considered the primary motivation for American artists to travel to Europe (at least prior to the expansion of art schools in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). It is certainly true that an aspiring artist did need to study in Europe if he or she wanted to participate in the largest and most firmly established artistic communities. However, in considering the role of education on the expatriate artist, it is first necessary to correct the misperception that it was impossible for an individual to learn to be an artist in the academic tradition without studying in

Europe. In actuality, travelling to Europe to advance one's artistic education was a choice rather than an obligation, even in the early nineteenth century.

The context of, and options for, Greenough's sculptural education in the United States will help to give further weight to this point. A youthful friend remembered that Horatio Greenough was "born a sculptor; that is, he was born with a temperament and disposition to nourish some noble design, some definite purpose for the benefit of his age ... this was the single object before his mind—it absorbed his whole heart."¹⁰ Whether or not his desired profession was predetermined by his character, Greenough certainly did begin to study sculpture as a young man in the United States. As Wright narrated in her biography of the artist, Greenough began to study sculptural casts at the Boston Athenaeum around 1818 (when the artist was thirteen years old). By the time Greenough was seventeen, the collection at the Athenaeum included casts of the *Laocöon*, *Apollo Belvedere*, *Venus dei Medici*, and at least five or six other major ancient works.¹¹

In addition to studying these ancient statues, Greenough received practical instruction from a range of mentors in the local community. His lessons in three-dimensional design began with guidance from two local sculptors: Solomon Willard and Alpheus Cary. The former instructed Greenough in modeling from clay and the later gave the aspiring sculptor his first lessons in carving marble, though little else is known about their influence on his work.¹²

Although concrete details have not yet been discovered regarding their relationship, it is also known that the French sculptor John B. Binon (life dates uncertain, active in Boston by 1818), played some role in mentoring the aspiring sculptor. Binon is said to have been a student of Joseph Chinard (1756-1813). If this relationship is accurate, then Binon's arrival in Boston by ca. 1818 was likely related to the upheaval in France during the final years of Napoleon Bonaparte's reign. Chinard was known to have close ties to Bonaparte and his pupils would likely have had similar affiliations. Likewise important was the fact that Chinard divided his life between France and Italy, and his student Binon had also studied in Italy. Wright credits Binon with teaching Greenough "the rudiments of modeling," and with conversations in which he introduced Greenough to "the art and artists of Italy" as well as "some of the problems which he [Binon] had discovered confronted an artist in America."¹³ While these lessons may have been important to Greenough's subsequent actions, it is surely more important that through his acquaintance

with Binon (and his opportunity to study Binon's portrait bust of John Adams, now in the Boston Athenaeum), Greenough came into contact with a practitioner of the highest contemporary sculpture circles in Europe. Chinard was a neoclassical sculptor whose work was influenced by an interest in emotion and naturalism. Binon presumably adopted some of the same principles in his work and conveyed them to Greenough. Once arrived in Florence, Greenough would find these same ideas reiterated by Bartolini.

In addition to this sculptural instruction, Greenough also had direct access to Washington Allston (1779-1843), who by 1818 was well established in the international art world. Greenough's acquaintance with Allston played a significant role in the younger artist's early years, and the two maintained a correspondence long after Greenough had departed for Italy. Allston had studied in both Italy and England and developed a network of friends and patrons on both sides of the Atlantic. Allston certainly presented the model of international artistic study to Greenough. Likewise, however, as a great thinker in aesthetic theory and an artist of international acclaim, Allston would have been capable of continuing to mentor and inspire Greenough. Furthermore, Allston's network of friends in the art world of the young United States was significant. Allston had a particularly close relationship with Samuel F. B. Morse, who had been apprenticed with him to learn academic painting and with whom he had travelled to London between 1811 and 1814 in order to introduce Morse to the European art world. In 1826, one year after Greenough left on his first trip to Italy, Morse became the first president of the National Academy of Design, which he had also helped to found. Shortly thereafter, he would invite Greenough to serve on their faculty of sculpture, even though the latter had less than one year's Italian training.¹⁴ Clearly Greenough's prior training with Binon and his friendship with Allston were sufficient for him to gain the highest artistic standing in the United States. This narrative further underlines the fact that Greenough could easily have attained skill, stature, and recognition, had he remained in the United States.

Of the metropolitan centers in the United States, however, Boston did not have the largest network for an aspiring sculptor. If Greenough had not set off to study in Rome, the next logical destination for him would have been Washington, D.C. In the young nation's capital, an international group of sculptors and carvers had assembled to rebuild the United States Capitol after its damage sustained in the War of 1812.

Most notable among the sculptors active at the Capitol around the time that Greenough headed to Italy was Antonio Capellano (active in Washington, D.C. 1815-1827). Capellano, who was said to have been a student of Canova, completed major works both in Baltimore and at the U. S. Capitol, and would have made a fitting mentor in the neoclassical style for an interested apprentice. Furthermore, Charles Bullfinch (1763-1844), the eminent Boston architect, served as the Architect of the United States Capitol between 1818 and 1829, a regional connection that would likely have allowed Greenough an entrée into Washington society.

That Greenough could have developed a successful sculptural career in the United States is suggested by the success that he met with upon his return from his first, brief trip to Italy. Having departed for Italy in 1825 and returned in May of 1827, Greenough immediately received a commission for an idealized bust from a neighbor and was also commissioned by Boston Mayor Josiah Quincy to carve a portrait bust of him.¹⁵ During his year in the United States, Greenough also travelled to New York City (where he made the acquaintance of Samuel F. B. Morse), Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Armed with letters of introduction to a range of prominent artists, politicians, and intellectuals, Greenough was immediately welcomed into the highest circles in each of these cities. In Washington, for example, he “attended a Presidential levee and a White House dinner,” and, “called by request on the aged architect William Thornton, who entertained him with recollections of Washington.”¹⁶ While in Washington, he also carved the portrait bust of President John Quincy Adams, who also commissioned the young artist to carve a portrait bust of his father, as part of a funerary marker for the latter.¹⁷ Admittedly, the course to building a career from such modest individual commissions would have been long, but Greenough’s promising progress in only a single year of working as a professional sculptor in the United States suggests that he could have had reasonable expectations of success.¹⁸

Ultimately, Wright recognized that Greenough made a choice when he set out to study sculpture in Italy. According to her, his decision was based on his ambitions:

Had he been more provincial, like Frazee, or like Rimmer essentially naturalistic, had his aspirations been either less or greater, Greenough might never have left America. It was not necessary to do so in order to become a sculptor, but only to become the kind of sculptor he

wanted to be. He aspired from the first to the creation of monumental works in the classical tradition...and at the same time to eminence in an international and historical sense. Only in Italy, best of all in Rome, could such a career be prepared for...that city, on account of the presence there of the two leading contemporary sculptors, Canova and Thorvaldsen—was the capital of the contemporary world of sculptors.¹⁹

When he first departed for Italy in 1825, Greenough sought a sculptural education that would be well received by an international audience. He thought about creating work that would be in dialogue with both ancient and modern masterpieces. In doing so, clearly his anticipated audience was much larger than the artistic patrons of Boston, or even the whole United States, in the Early Republic. Rather, Greenough left the United States in order to become a sculptor for a world audience.

If making the decision to continue his study of sculpture in Europe rather than in the United States was a conscious choice, the selection of an instructor/mentor in the new homeland was equally important. Relationships between instructors and students constitute some of the most crucial intellectual and artistic bonds throughout the history of art, though the rapport between artists and pupils of different nationalities has not received sufficient attention. As may already be readily evident from the narrative thus far, the sculptural community was fluid and international. The “greatest” sculptor in Rome when Greenough arrived in the city was the Danish artist Bertel Thorvaldsen. Within his commodious Roman studio, Thorvaldsen mentored young artists from across Europe. Greenough briefly joined this community during his first visit to Italy, which was cut short by an onslaught of illness that culminated in a short period of insanity.²⁰ In Thorvaldsen’s studio, Greenough likely encountered many young French, German and Italian artists, with whom he probably communicated in French.²¹

Thorvaldsen’s influence on Greenough was significant, but not as profound as his subsequent study with the Tuscan sculptor Lorenzo Bartolini. Bartolini was himself a cosmopolitan artist, having studied art in France, and having worked for a number of years, both directly and indirectly, for Napoleon Bonaparte.²² Although Greenough had a close relationship with Bartolini—which included living in the latter’s studio on Borgo San Frediano from the end of 1828 until

the following summer—relatively little, as yet, has been identified about the on-going scope of their relationship.²³ **Fig. 4** Wright asserted that Bartolini's mentorship of Greenough lasted at most for ten years and blamed the Italian artist for their parting of the ways: "Bartolini...was notoriously difficult to get along with, chiefly because of his jealous disposition. By the late 1830s all relations between him and Greenough had apparently been severed."²⁴ Even if the two did not maintain a friendship after 1840, their work was still inter-related, as can be seen by the relationships that have been asserted between several of Greenough's later works and the sculpture of Bartolini.²⁵ In any case, an ongoing rapport between Greenough and Bartolini over the course of ten years was certainly sufficient to introduce Greenough to the driving principles of Bartolini's art, and to provide the younger artist with access to the wider artistic circles in Florence. After a decade of study and friendship, the younger artist would surely have learned everything that he needed to know. Indeed, Greenough could not have become an artist of independent stature had he remained under Bartolini's tutelage indefinitely.

It is interesting that Greenough began his sculptural education with Binon in Boston and ended with Bartolini in Florence, since both artists were attempting to create a naturalistic adaptation of neoclassical form. Both, likewise, found their sculptural practice to be intertwined with the complex politics of the first half of the nineteenth century in France and Italy. Bartolini had been a leading sculptor for Napoleon Bonaparte during his Italian Campaign. After the collapse of the French rule, Bartolini moved from Carrara to Florence and remade his career. His work was no longer overtly political, but he likely encouraged his American pupil's enthusiasm for political *praxis* in sculpture.

Greenough had a clear investment in the notion that sculpture was closely aligned to politics and national identity. His educational pedigree on both sides of the Atlantic served to further this artistic agenda. The American national politics of Greenough's art was amply evident in his two federal commissions (the *George Washington* and his second group, commonly known as *The Rescue*). **Figs. 5-6** In both *Washington* and *The Rescue*, Greenough fused his own adaptation of the naturalized aesthetic with principles of ancient sculpture, in order to create works that he felt worked in accordance with his goals for the politics of American sculpture.

The full breadth of Greenough's integration of his European educational milieu with his political inclinations can only be understood, however, by

realizing that Greenough also engaged in sculpture that reflected his investment in current Italian politics. Not surprisingly, the most attractive possibility for Greenough was to create sculpture that reflected the exciting foment of the Risorgimento. Between 1847 and 1850, Greenough worked of his own initiative on designing a monument to Giuseppe Giusti, the acclaimed satirical poet whose work helped push forward the Italian Risorgimento. Sadly, the monument was probably never constructed and although he completed several of the planned *bas reliefs*, they were left in his studio in 1851 and their current whereabouts are unknown.²⁶ Giusti, who was active in Florence during these years (prior to his premature death in 1850) may well have been an acquaintance of Greenough's. The two were nearly the same age and their social circles may have overlapped. Although Wright did not offer many details about Greenough's involvement in the Risorgimento, she did state:

Though Greenough did not associate himself with this Tuscan movement until the Revolution of 1848—and then only briefly, he knew personally many of its most prominent leaders in Florence. The particular intellectual milieu generated by it, moreover, was especially congenial to him. In many respects it was like that which he had known in America.²⁷

More accurately, Greenough may have likened the social and intellectual unrest of the Risorgimento to the condition of the United States immediately prior to the Revolution. Buoyed by the vision of supporting a just reorganization of Italian society, Greenough surely hoped that creating a monument to Giusti would help to support this cause. A photograph of one of the completed *bas reliefs* shows a lunette with a nude young man—representing the "Genius of Italy"—taking his first steps forward from a throne (which resembles the classicized throne upon which Greenough's Washington sits). The youth holds a laurel wreath in his left hand, presumably preparing to raise it to his head in victory. To his left sits a pensive elderly man—representing a priest—to his right is a robust, seated nude man, shown in profile, who is a soldier. The two accompanying figures presumably underlined the need for both military force and a strong dose of faith in the attempt to unite a new Italy.²⁸ In Greenough's vision the peaceful and socially-balanced future of Italy builds on the promise of the Risorgimento.

This rehearsal of Greenough's education shows the importance of a melded genetic and artistic pedigree for the artist's practice. His monumental works for

the United States Government were informed by the social and aesthetic tastes that he had developed in Italy, just as his own enthusiasm for the promise of Giusti's political cause may have come from his American sympathies. As discussed above, Greenough's understanding of the aesthetic principles of sculpture came first in Boston by way of a French sculptor who had studied in Italy and, later, in Florence, via an Italian sculptor who had worked in France and subsequently in Italy for Bonaparte. As this series of inspirations and influences makes apparent, the ideas of national schools of "art" writ large and of a purely "American" pedigree for Greenough specifically should be regarded with skepticism.

Artistic Inspiration

When American artists travelled to Italy in the nineteenth-century, most scholarship insists that they were interested in studying two periods of art: the ancient and the Renaissance. Indeed, the common art historical narrative posits that there was little-to-no-interest in any other European art, whether Medieval, Baroque, or Modern. Such a mentality, however, neglects the cumulative effect of a city like Florence, in which art from all historical periods is readily visible. Surely the juxtaposition of work from different periods has an impact on viewers that is more profound than the exclusive pursuit of ancient or Renaissance ideals. Furthermore, in addition to the works on display in collections throughout the city, artists presented their current works and works-in-progress within an open studio setting. When creating a new sculpture in a European city, then, an artist could draw on an array of inspirations from historic art, but also from the work of peers. In fact, since American cities had begun assembling collections of prints and casts, perhaps the most significant difference between a European and an American art education at this time lay in the rich variety of options available for study and inspiration, as well as the sense of place evident in a European city, in which historic architecture is juxtaposed with the art and broader material culture exhibited within it.

Artists' studios were an important resource for artists and tourists alike. Benjamin West's London studio was a known attraction for painters and American tourists. In the first half of the nineteenth century both Greenough and Hiram Powers' studios would become crucial destinations for American tourists in Florence. Gerdtz has asserted that the importance of contemporary sculpture was of particular interest to American tourists in Italy, who visited the studios of

famed sculptors like Thorvaldsen, as well as lesser-known sculptors whose studios were located in the same area of the city. According to Gerdtz, touring studios was "among the major tourist attractions" in Rome and Florence, and this practice also enabled the international audience to gain an understanding of the relative merits of individual sculptors within the international art market.²⁹ If such experiences were crucial to casual aesthetes, they were even more so to artists. For Greenough, visiting the studios of his peers was a routine experience and was certainly a major influence on his art.

In addition to the well-known practice of touring sculptors' studios, we should not discount the other venues in which contemporary art was encountered and assessed by Greenough and other expatriot artists. Within the space of the urban art academy—which for Greenough was the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence—young expatriate American artists worked alongside their Italian peers. They competed for professors' recognition of their work and they submitted pieces to the annual shows. Through this education, aspiring artists certainly learned how to value the past in specific, carefully dictated, ways. They also, however, came into contact with many of the most significant artists of their generation. For Bartolini, this experience in the Parisian studio of Jacques-Louis David had led to a lasting friendship with Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, which in addition to its personal pleasure, certainly influenced the sculptor's artistic development. The available research has not yet established the range of artists with whom Greenough interacted at the Academy (though there are clear records of his interaction at this time with Giuseppe Bezzuoli, discussed below); however, it is certain that he would have been exposed to a range of pieces that experimented with a variety of "modern" and "Italian" aesthetic forms.

Museums in Florence (and elsewhere in Italy) also allowed an artist to study contemporary works even within famed tourist destinations for Renaissance art. Greenough seems to have been particularly fond of the Palazzo Pitti. Though we know he gained inspiration from a work by Raphael in this museum, is it not also possible that he was interested in the ceiling and wall paintings that were being completed at this time in a number of the rooms? The Classicized style of the Italian artists in these spaces (which represented a wide range of classical mythology), would have been sympathetic to the artist, who might also have been interested in the ways in which this iconography was being utilized to further the interests of the current

rulers of the city. Greenough certainly would have derided the aristocratic system within which these artists were working, but we should not be so quick to assume that he did not, likewise, pay close attention to their representations of the human form and their adaptation of classical mythology, when working on his own sculptures.

In addition to the Academy and the museums, the churches of Florence also offered Greenough and his contemporaries the opportunity for studying contemporary art *in situ*. While tourists in the nineteenth century, as today, were primarily attracted to the Renaissance sights of the city, Greenough certainly also would have paid attention to art that was recently completed and installed. The church of Santa Croce is a prime example of a space which, though it is known especially for its fresco cycles by Giotto in the Bardi and Peruzzi chapels, was also a center for nineteenth century sculpture. Many of the funerary statues now in the church post-date Greenough's life, however, the masterful Bartolini funerary monument for Princess Sofia Zamoyski Czartoriski, as well as his monuments respectively to Leon Battista Alberti and to Carlotta Buonaparte, were all works of the late 1830s. Likewise, the cenotaph memorial to Dante Alighieri (designed by Luigi Cambray Digny and with sculptures by Stefano Ricci) dates to 1829. As yet, limited research has been completed into the art history of Florence in the nineteenth century (at least prior to the Risorgimento, since scholars have been intrigued by the political ramifications of art during and after Italian unification), so an in-depth discussion of the full range of works that Greenough might have found both *au courant* and exciting is difficult to assess.

As this brief discussion has suggested, our consideration of the artistic practice of expatriate artists in the early nineteenth century *must* include a more thorough assessment of the range of works that they were studying and the breadth of sources available to them. This is especially important for those artists practicing in the neoclassical tradition, which was somewhat of an artistic lingua franca in the first half of the nineteenth century. Adaptation of neoclassical form allowed German, French, British, Italian and American sculptors (to name a few of the key nationalities involved) to utilize and reinterpret the human form to their individual social, political, or biographical ends. In doing this, however, such artists certainly made use of recent sculptural examples that are now obscure after a more than a century of having been categorized as "bad" sculpture.

Artistic Community

The final topic that I would like to explore here with regard to reconsidering the attachments of expatriate artists is the question of the artistic community in which they participated. Since much of this relates to the themes of artistic education and artistic inspiration already discussed, this section will build on the points already elucidated. Both in the United States and in their foreign travels, artists came into contact with other artists, intellectuals, and patrons from a range of backgrounds. These friendships have generally been considered along boundaries of nationality, but relatively little notice has been paid to the question of community with regard to locality. It is this latter point that I will consider here, although much more surely remains to be written about the particular significance of friendships forged during foreign residencies (such as the long-term one formed in Florence by Greenough and Thomas Cole).

Assuming that artists interacted exclusively, or even primarily, with other individuals from their homeland is dangerous. It is particularly problematic in the case of Florence prior to the Risorgimento, because the American expatriate community was relatively small at all times. It seems only natural that a figure like Greenough, whose linguistic abilities would have prepared him readily to speak to individuals from a number of countries, and whose social charms were often noted, would have interacted with as many intellectual and artistic individuals as possible. In the studio of Thorvaldsen, for example, Greenough would have met young artists from throughout Europe. Although his acquaintance with Ferdinand Pettrich has been documented, the relationship has barely been researched, and few other ties have been highlighted between Greenough and the large studio of sculptors and stone carvers working with Thorvaldsen. Despite this scholarly lacuna, there surely were many. Likewise, although scholars have paid some attention to the relationship of Bartolini and Greenough, little thought has been given to what friendships might have arisen between Greenough and other Bartolini students. Indeed, because Bartolini himself has received relatively limited attention, a full list of his own pupils has not yet been generated. In order, therefore, to gain a more holistic understanding of the community in which an expatriate artist participated, a first type of research that needs to happen is a focus on the micro-locality of the artist's studio, in which individuals from many countries, all studying the same medium, gathered and bonded. Naturally, though, interactions

were also not limited to artists practicing in the same medium. Within the urban level of artistic interaction, artists gathered at the local academies, again forming friendships that transcended national boundaries and were generated by mutual activity in the same professional organization. In Florence, artists relied on the Academy for artistic training, but also for professional bonding. Greenough attended drawing lessons at the Academy, and he did so alongside his compatriots Thomas Cole, John Cranch, and Samuel F. B. Morse (presumably among others).³⁰ Further, Greenough would also have studied with Italian artists in this same setting. Although much of the archival material related to Greenough's networks has been lost, a few documents underline the tantalizing connections that he presumably made in the Florentine artistic community. A series of anatomical sketches made by Greenough in 1831 document his study of anatomy at the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova. While performing dissection there in order to study the human body, Greenough must have been working alongside the aspiring Florentine painter Gisueppe Bezzuoli (later best known for his history paintings exploring the city's past), since Greenough noted on one of his studies of leg muscles that it had been "copied from a study at the Hospital of S. M. Nuova by Giuseppe Bezzuoli—1832."³¹ It is also known that Greenough relied on a network of Florentine artists at later points in his life, such as when he was considering the subject matter for his second federal commission. Although Greenough wanted to complete a group commemorating "the dangers & difficulty of peopling our continent," the other artists with whom he talked in Florence thought that the historical specificity of such a subject was too vague and suggested, instead, that he represent "Washington raising from the ground a figure representing America," a theme that he subsequently explored in his sketchbook.³² As Wright narrated the story, although Greenough "felt that this allegory bordered on the 'commonplace,'" he left the final decision up to the federal commissioners whom "he asked for advising in choosing between it and the other subject."³³ This sequence of events underlines how much credence Greenough gave to the opinions of contemporary Italian artists. Likewise, a drawing in the collection of the Uffizi, recently published for the first time in the catalog *Lorenzo Bartolini: il Bello e il Vero*, reveals that Greenough continued to work with local Italian artists on his conception for the federal commission.³⁴

Finally, of course, artists made friendships outside of the artistic community. Greenough surely had a wide range of Italian friends (as well as individuals of other nationalities who lived alongside him for many years in Florence). Such friendships are more difficult to identify in the extant archival record. While Greenough and other expatriate artists maintained a regular correspondence with family and friends outside of their new homes, everyday conversations remained unrecorded. Likewise, although it was natural to discuss mutual American friends when conducting long-distance correspondence, there would have been little value in detailed discussions of European acquaintances unknown to American correspondents. Although it would be dubious to stake too much on individual undocumented friendships, it is still reasonable to attempt to consider influences, relationships, or networks that would have connected individuals. The earlier discussion of Greenough's clear admiration for Giusti, and the logical possibility that the two might have known each other beyond reputation, presents an example of this type of exploration.

Conclusions: Reassessing Expatriate Artists

This exploration of the contexts and contacts within which Greenough operated in Florence has introduced some of the key problems, challenges, and potentials attached to studying the expatriate artist. Although our modern system of scholarship categorizes artists in clear-cut ways by nationality, this study has suggested that we need to begin to consider them more subtly. Greenough described himself as a conglomerate stone, and this is a fitting image with which to close this paper. Just as conglomerate rocks are composed of many parts that have been fused into one, so an expatriate artist cannot rightly be discussed without a deep exploration into the international communities within which s/he operated, as well as the intricacies of the local networks influencing him or her on both sides of the Atlantic. Although the field of American art will need to discard any notions of pure American-ness in order to consistently pursue such a route of analysis, it is necessary in order to bring poorly-understood figures like Greenough into clearer focus. Caught between two worlds, and operating always in both, Greenough's sculpture is rightly considered both as American and Florentine.

Like that of other expatriate artists, his hybrid conglomeration of Yankee and Tuscan traits is distinct. Greenough's work has always been seen as somewhat incongruous in the American scene—never fully fitting the desires of his contemporaries and never seeming

to embody the expectations placed on the American artist. Reinterpreted as the work of a Yankee-Tuscan sculptor, however, perhaps we can begin, at long last, to place his work within a more fitting context.



NOTES

1. Published under the pseudonym of Horace Bender], *Travels, Observations and Experience of a Yankee Stonecutter*, 1852. [Facsimile Reproduction, Nathalia Wright, editor. Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1958.] Unfortunately for the sculptor, the group had never, in fact, left Italy because of a series of problems with the arrangements that had been made for its shipment. When the sculpture did finally arrive in Washington, D.C., Greenough was already dead and Benjamin B. French was appointed with the task of supervising its placement on the Capitol steps. See Nathalia Wright, *Horatio Greenough: The First American Sculptor* (Philadelphia, PA: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963), 172-173. Although the book was written in a period when the sculptor had little else to occupy his mind, it should not be seen as an unimportant afterthought to his career. *The Travels* has received little critical attention in large part because it is a very difficult text, which is at times contradictory and often belligerent. Despite its structural flaws (and its ideology which is difficult for a twenty-first century reader to tolerate) it is also poignant, complex, and cosmopolitan, and dotted with myriad literary, social and artistic references that demonstrate the breadth of the sculptor's intelligence.

2. For more on the book see: Julia A. Sienkewicz, "Citizenship by Design: Art and Identity in the Early Republic," Ph.D. Dissertation (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2009); Nathalia Wright, *Horatio Greenough*. In *Horatio Greenough: An American Sculptor's Drawings*, Richard Saunders gave the book perhaps its most melancholy interpretation, asserting "this slim volume serves in many ways as an apologia for a career that failed to achieve the national acclaim that so many of America's cultural elite expected" (Middlebury, VT: Middlebury College Museum of Art, 1999), 15.

3. *Travels*, viii.

4. William Gerdts has noted that such American posturing was key to the careers of American sculptors: "Given their long, often permanent expatriation, the sculptors needed to remind their compatriots back home of their American allegiance, in order to generate sales, to ensure their place among the studio visits of the Grand Tourists, and to be considered eligible for often lucrative public commissions," "Celebrities of the Grand Tour: The American Sculptors in Florence and Rome," 66-93 in *The Lure of Italy: American Artists and the Italian Experience, 1760-1914*, Theodore Stebbins et al. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1992): 74. Greenough, therefore, may just have been operating in his standard habit here in order to remind his audience of his American loyalties.

5. Ernest Earnest, *Expatriates and Patriots: American artists, scholars, and writers in Europe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1968), 105.

6. *Horatio Greenough*: 37.

7. Theodore J. Stebbins, preface to *The Lure of Italy*, 20.

8. Gerdts, "Celebrities of the Grand Tour," 69-70.

9. Greenough's most well-known artistic relationship was with the American artist Hiram Powers. Although Powers was already an active sculptor when he came to Florence, Greenough mentored him, introduced him to the Florentine community, and certainly shared a great deal of his own knowledge of sculpture. Horatio may also have taught his younger brother. Most interesting is the casual reference made by Wright to a letter in which Horatio mentioned his tutelage of a young Florentine sculptor: "That fall [1850] a young Italian, one of the Falcinis, was working with Horatio as a pupil, 'solely for the *vendaggio* ... of being a son of mine in art,' [Greenough] wrote," 262.

10. J. N. Bellows, "Horatio Greenough," *The Knickerbocker* VII (April 1836): 346.

11. Wright, *Horatio Greenough*, 23.

12. *Ibid.*, 23-24. It should be noted that Wright calls Willard a "carver and architect" and Cary a "tombstone maker". Here I call them both sculptors in order to recognize the fact that their techniques and realms of knowledge were of direct practical use to the young Greenough.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Greenough was elected an "honorary member" of the National Academy in May 1828 and from 1829 until 1838 he was "Professor of Sculpture" there.

15. See Wright, *Horatio Greenough*, 49.

16. *Ibid.*, 51.

17. *Ibid.*, 52.

18. Indeed, other sculptors certainly gained significant commissions from the advantage of maintaining a presence in a city. Luigi Persico, for example, is one such artist who, after immigrating to the United States and becoming a naturalized citizen, found a great deal of success by maintaining a constant presence in Washington, D.C. where he could interact with public officials. Other artists, however, were not so fortunate in this approach, as in the German sculptor Ferdinand Pettrich, who came to Washington, D.C. after studying under Thorvaldsen, but who met with one disappointment after another and eventually left the United States to build a career in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

19. Wright, *Horatio Greenough*, 25-26.

20. *Ibid.*, 45-48.

21. Greenough was a skilled linguist, whose writings are dotted with French, Latin, Italian, and Ancient Greek commentary. There is little to no evidence, however, that he knew German,

which was the other dominant language in Thorvaldsen's studio, until later in his life.

22. He had studied art in the studio of Jacques-Louis David and was famously friends with Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, who followed up on their years together in David's studio by coming to Florence and living for some time with Bartolini.

23. The most thorough discussion to date of Bartolini's tutelage of Greenough can be found in Douglas Hyland, *Lorenzo Bartolini and Italian Influence on American Sculptors in Florence, 1825-1830* (New York: Garland, 1985).

24. Wright, 63.

25. See especially Saunders, *Horatio Greenough*, 87 and the recent catalog *Lorenzo Bartolini: Scultore del Bello Naturale*, Edited by Franca Falletti, Silvestra Bietoletti, and Annarita Caputo, Florence, Italy: Giunti, 2011.

26. Although Henry Tuckerman asserted that the monument was completed in 1853 in Pescia (Giusti's hometown), Wright's research concluded that it was probably never completed, noting: "No record of it, however, seems to exist. Possibly the project was abandoned when the revolutionary movement of these years, in which Giusti was active, was put down." Wright, *Horatio Greenough*, 251

27. Ibid., 64.

28. This promising vision of the nation of Italy is in strong contrast to Greenough's observations about the country fifteen

years earlier in which he characterized Italy as "this beautiful but unhappy country" in which "three centuries of 'regular government' have ended in a dwindled population, political nullity and social corruption. The churches were filled on holidays—yet there was not much of what we call religion. Hospitals of all kinds seemed to forbid the poorest man to suffer unaided—labor in request, yet provisions cheap, and yet much misery, much sullen dying alone in dark corners, much distrust of man, much disbelief in God himself," [1831] as quoted in Wright, 65.

29. Gerdtz, *The Lure of Italy*, 67.

30. Wright, *Horatio Greenough*, 80. These artists also shared lodging on the Via Valfonda in 1831.

31. See *Horatio Greenough: an American Sculptor's Drawings*, 49. This drawing is in the Petit Sully Collection of Greenough's works (formerly in the possession of Nathalia Wright).

32. Wright, *Horatio Greenough*, 160. For a representation of Greenough's sketch see *Horatio Greenough: An American Sculptor's Drawings*, 101.

33. Ibid.

34. Bartolini, *Scultore del Bello Naturale*, 116.



Fig. 1: Horatio Greenough's Studio on Piazza dell'Indipendenza, as it exists today after subsequent renovations and additions to the building. Photo: author.



Fig. 2: Horatio Greenough's home in Bellosguardo. Photo: author.



Fig. 3: The view of the Florentine skyline from in front of Horatio Greenough's home in Bellosguardo. Photo: author.



Fig. 4: Lorenzo Bartolini's studio on Borgo San Frediano. Now the sculpture studio of Raffaele Romanelli and drawing school and studio of Charles Cecil where ACM students study life drawing
Photo: author.



Fig. 5: Horatio Greenough, George Washington, 1835-1841. Collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Photo: author.



Fig. 6: Horatio Greenough, The Rescue, 1836-1851. Shown as installed on the East front of the United States Capitol. Photograph from the collection of the Architect of the Capitol, as available through wikimediacommons.

Teaching Hercules in Florence

Thomas J. Sienkewicz

Throughout her many years of service to the ACM programs in Florence, Janet Smith has accomplished countless difficult, sometimes unheralded, tasks. It seems fitting to celebrate these years of tireless work with a study of the Greco-Roman hero Hercules and his associations with Janet's adopted city. After all, in his efforts to clean stables and tame savage beasts, Hercules was no one-hit wonder but a persistent and determined champion of virtue, especially fortitude. He has been woven into the fabric of Florence in a unique way, just as Janet Smith occupies a special place in the history of the ACM Florence programs.

My intention here is not to offer new theories or interpretations regarding Hercules in Florence. Rather I provide some resources for teaching about Hercules on site in Florence. These pedagogical observations, information and suggestions are based, in large part, on my two tenures teaching on the ACM Florence Program.

First, I provide a chronological overview of selected literary texts from Late Antiquity and the Renaissance which helped to mold or to articulate Renaissance attitudes towards the hero. Since many of these are currently not available in English, I include my own translations for cited passages. I then discuss some specific public representations of the hero in Florentine art. These art objects are also discussed chronologically. Attached at the end of the study is a fairly comprehensive list of art in Florence in which Hercules appears, organized by location, as well as bibliographies of primary and secondary resources on the hero.

Hercules in Literary Texts

The late fourth-century AD grammarian and Neoplatonic philosopher Macrobius (Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius) was widely read during the medieval period and Renaissance. Hercules is mentioned by Macrobius especially in the context of the cardinal virtue of fortitude. In his *Commentary on*

the Dream of Scipio (especially Book 1, section eight) Macrobius provides the following description of fortitude:

[est politici] fortitudinis animum supra periculi metum agere nihilque nisi turpia timere, tolerare fortiter uel aduersa uel prospera: fortitudo praestat magnanimitatem fiduciam securitatem magnificentiam constantiam tolerantiam firmitatem.

It is a characteristic of political fortitude to keep the mind above fear of danger except for the fear of base things and the brave endurance of either adverse or favorable situations: fortitude displays confidence, freedom from care, nobleness, steadfastness, endurance and strength.

It is no surprise that Macrobius defines fortitude here especially in the context of the good statesman, since he is commenting on Cicero's so-called *Dream of Scipio*, from the sixth book of a philosophical dialogue (mostly lost) entitled *De Re Publica* (*On the Republic*, 54-51 B.C.). Macrobius' focus on political fortitude will prove to have significant influence on political thinking during the Italian Renaissance, when rulers like the Medici sought to be associated with this virtue, and, implicitly, with Hercules.

Macrobius was interested especially in the astronomical features of the *Dream of Scipio* in which Cicero describes his philosophical views in terms of a cosmic vision. Indeed, astronomy influences Macrobius' view of the hero Hercules, whom he associated with the sun in his *Saturnalia*, a literary conversation on a variety of topics during the Roman feast of Saturnalia. Macrobius specifically links the sun with the virtue of fortitude in this reference to Hercules at *Saturnalia* 1.20.6:

Sed nec Hercules a substantia solis alienus est: quippe Hercules ea est solis potestas quae humano generi virtutem ad similitudinem

*praestat deorum. Nec aestimes Alcmena apud
Thebas Boeotias natum solum vel primum
Herculem nuncupatum: immo post multos
atque postremus ille hac appellatione dignatus
est honoratusque hoc nomine, quia nimia
fortitudine meruit nomen dei virtutem regentis.*

But Hercules is not foreign to the substance of the sun: certainly Hercules is that power of the sun which offers to the human race a virtue similar to that of the gods. You should not think that the child born of Alcmena in Boeotian Thebes was the first or only one called Hercules: indeed after many, and last of all, he is worthy of this appellation and honored by this name since, because of his excessive fortitude, he deserves the name of the god who rules over virtue.

Here Macrobius makes reference to the ancient belief that the Greco-Roman hero called Hercules was only the last of a long series of ancient heroes by the same name. His association of *nimia fortitudine* ("excessive fortitude") with the hero is significant. By combining Macrobius' description of this virtue in his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* with his description of Hercules in the *Saturnalia*, we get a picture of the demigod as a strong, noble and confident hero who steadfastly endures hardships in his pursuit of virtue, a portrait which will be associated with Hercules into the Renaissance and beyond.

While Macrobius' statement about Hercules is based entirely on Greek and Roman philosophy and values, Dante (Durante degli Alighieri, c.1265–1321) specifically identifies the Greco-Roman hero with Jesus Christ (Miller, 1982). In particular, in the *Inferno* the Italian poet makes frequent reference to the hero and, especially to the monsters he encountered, including Cerberus (*Inferno* 6), Geryon (*Inferno* 17), Cacus (*Inferno* 25) and Antaeus (*Inferno* 31), all of whom are represented by Dante as violent monsters defeated by a powerful and just hero.

In *Inferno* 9 Dante has a divine messenger link divine punishment of the demons with Hercules' treatment of Cerberus:

90 "O cacciati del ciel, gente dispetta,"
comincio' elli in su l'orribil soglia,
"ond'esta oltracotanza in voi s'alletta?"

"Perche' recalcitrate a quella voglia
a cui non puote il fin mai esser mozzato,
e che piu' volte v'ha cresciuta doglia?"

95

*"Che giova ne le fata dar di cozzato?
Cerbero vostro, se ben vi ricorda,
ne porta ancor pelato il mento e 'l gozzato."*

"O you hunted out of heaven, a
despised race,"
he began at the horrible threshold,
"From where comes this arrogance
imbedded in you?"

"Why are you recalcitrant against
that will
From which an end can never be
severed
And which has increased your pain
many times?"

"What good is it to butt against
fate?
Your Cerberus, if you recall well,
For that reason bears a peeled chin
and neck."

Just as Hercules leashed Cerberus and thus peeled the fur from the beast's chin and neck, so the devils should fear similar treatment from God. While Christ and his harrowing of hell following his death on Good Friday are not mentioned directly in the *Inferno*, Hercules, in a very real sense, serves here as a type of Christ and takes up a similar role, journeying to the Underworld to capture Cerberus.

Dante's association of Hercules with Christ is not original, but goes back to early Christian identifications of the hero with the Christian savior. One example of such an association is a fourth-century painting of Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides, found in the Christian Catacomb of the Via Latina in Rome. (For a copy of this image, see http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/roman/htm/lecture/kampen_126_100.htm.) The hero also appears prominently in the *De Genealogia deorum gentilium* ("On the Genealogy of the pagan gods") by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375). Here, once again, the hero's fortitude is highlighted.

*Omerus vero in Odissea dicit eum ab Ulixee
apud Inferos conventum et locutum. Dicit
tamen non eum quem videbat Ulixees Herculem
verum esse, sed eius ydolum. Hic insuper
quantum vivens mortales fortitudine sua fecit
attonitos, tantum vel amplius mortuus
decepit insanos. 13.1*

Homer truly says in the *Odyssey* that [Hercules] was met and talked to by Ulysses in the Underworld. He says, nevertheless, that he whom Ulysses saw

was not the real Hercules but his idol.
 As much as he, while he was alive above,
 made mortals astonished by his
 fortitude, so much more did he, in death,
 deceive insane mortals.

Boccaccio thus depicts a hero whose fortitude is so remarkable that no mortals, either living or dead, are able to comprehend it.

In *De praeclaris mulieribus* (*On Famous Women*), a collection of 106 biographies, Boccaccio also provides lives of two women important in the life of Hercules, Iole and Deianira. Iole (#23) was so beautiful that Hercules was completely infatuated with her, killed her father to obtain her, and then found himself enslaved to her by his passion to the point that the hero was completely emasculated and wore women's clothes.

. . . quasi horreret tam hispidum habitu
 amantem, acri viro ante alia ponere clavam,
 qua monstra domuerat, imperavit; ponere leonis
 nemei spoliū, suae fortitudinis insigne; ponere
 populeum sertum, pharetras sagittasque fecit.

. . . Pretending that she was afraid of a lover so roughly dressed, she ordered this once-fierce man to put aside his club by which he had tamed monsters; she made him put aside the skin of the Nemean lion, the insignia of his fortitude, and put aside his poplar wreath, his quiver and his arrows.

Boccaccio's description of Hercules' lion skin as *suae fortitudinis insigne* ("an insignia of his fortitude") echoes Macrobius' emphasis on the hero's virtue.

Boccaccio's life of Hercules' wife, Deianira (#24), is based on a story well-known from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, IX. While taking home his new bride Deianira, Hercules has to cross a river. The centaur Nessus volunteers to transport Deianira on his shoulders, but takes liberties with her during the passage. When his bride cries out, Hercules rushes the centaur and kills him with one of his arrows dipped in the poisonous blood of the Hydra he had killed earlier in his labors. In his death agony Nessus suggests to Deianira that she save some of his own blood as a love charm against the day that Hercules falls in love with another woman (sometimes called Iole). The ingenuous Deianira does this, not realizing that the centaur is seeking vengeance and that his blood is contaminated with the Hydra's blood. So, later, when Deianira does persuade Hercules to put on a cloak dipped in the centaur's blood, Hercules' body

is consumed with such terrible burning pain that he arranges his own death on a funeral pyre.

The biographies of both Iole and Deianira thus demonstrate the danger of the feminine in the life of the hero and in *Genealogia* (13.1) Boccaccio sums up Hercules' relationship with women this way: *nam cum cetera superasset monstra, amorī muliebri succubuit* ("For although he had conquered other monsters, he succumbed to the love of a woman."). Hercules' weakness for women is part of the hero's intense lifelong struggle between virtue and vice first described by the fifth-century Greek philosopher and historian Xenophon in his *Memorabilia* (2.1.21 ff). While Boccaccio does not specifically mention this episode in the life of the hero, this struggle, often called Hercules at the Crossroads, becomes a major literary and artistic theme in the Renaissance.

Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca, 1304–1374), the father of Humanism, planned to bring Hercules into the Renaissance with his unfinished portrait of the hero in *De Viris Illustribus* (*On Famous Men*), a collection of moral biographies modeled on both Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* of famous Greeks and Romans and St. Jerome's *De Viris Illustribus* on the lives of early Church Fathers. The first book of Petrarch's biographies focused entirely on famous Romans, while the second, beginning with Adam, moved through various biblical figures down to Moses and then on to the Greek heroes Jason and Hercules. In his inclusion of two Greek heroes, Petrarch was following Plutarch, who included both the extant biography of Theseus as well as a lost biography of Hercules in his *Lives*. Here is how Petrarch introduces the hero's accomplishments:

[2] Igitur Hercules ille famosior philosophus, ut quidam putant, ut alii vir bello incomparabilis et plus quam humanarum virium, quamvis utrumque simul in uno homine reperiri potuisse aliorum exempla testentur, qui excellentem rei bellicae pariter et ingenii gloriam meruerunt. Sane huic viro ingenii felicitas tribuit ut humero caelum sustinuisse fingatur, singulari peritia caelestium in illum incumbente, cui sarcinae post Athlantem, huius quoque rei peritissimum, successisse dicitur; vires vero corpore monstrorum omnium domitorem, sospitatore gentium multarum ac velut commune orbis auxilium, usque ad opinionem divinitatis per cuiusdam singularis famae praeconium extulerunt.

Therefore Hercules is (as certain people think) that rather famous philosopher, (as others think), a man incomparable in war and of more than human strength, although [these sources] testify whether it was possible to find, at the same time in a single person examples of others who merited equally excellence in warfare and the glory of innate intelligence. Certainly the good fortune of innate intelligence was bestowed on this man so that he is reputed to have held the sky on his shoulders, with the unique knowledge of having heavenly matters leaning on him, to which burden he is said to have succeeded following Atlas, who was also very knowledgeable of this matter; truly Hercules' strength in body raised him, as the conqueror of all monsters, the savior of many peoples and as the common aid of the world, to the reputation of divinity through the proclamation of a certain singular fame.

There is no mention here of the hero's fortitude. Instead Petrarch portrays Hercules as *huic viro ingenii* ("a man of innate intelligence") whose encounter with the Titan Atlas enabled him to acquire *singulari peritia caelestium* ("a unique knowledge of heavenly matters") as he took on his own shoulders the burden of the sky. Such a deed demonstrated for Petrarch not only Hercules' intelligence, but also his strength and his role as savior of those in need.

Petrarch's interest in Hercules continues with other Renaissance writers like the Italian humanist Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406). The most influential portion of Salutati's references to Hercules is probably his direct reference to Xenophon's story of the choice of Hercules in his unfinished didactic mythographic work *De laboribus Herculis* (3.7.4). For Salutati the hero's choice at the crossroads was clear and deliberate:

Viam virtutis ergo noster Hercules ingressurus non temere, sed consilio et electione—sicut asseruit Xenophontes Prodicum dixisse—virtutem aspiciens circa difficile quid cogitat nisi labores pugnante cum carne, cum mundo et spiritualibus insidiis ac exemplis perniciosis?

Therefore, about to set out on the road to virtue not recklessly but by plan and choice, what does our Hercules, seeing virtue near difficulty, think

about,—just as Xenophon asserted that Prodicus said—unless about labors and combat with the flesh, with the world, both with spiritual plots and fatal examples?

Later on the same work (3.25.17-18), Salutati presents the labors of Hercules in a philosophical and allegorical context evidently influenced by Macrobius' interest in astronomy. For example, here Salutati interprets the hero's encounter with the dragon at the Garden of the Hesperides as an allegory about the mastery of time:

(17) Et serpens ante litterarum usum caudam suam ore deglutiens in anni figuram et temporis habitudinem ponebatur, intra cuius ambitum, quicquid illo anno notabile gestum erat, ad rei memoriam pingebatur. Unde per montes situum diversitates et per draconem vigilem ipsum tempus significatum est. Sic et Saturnus, qui figuram temporis tenet, anguem revolutum in caudam manu gerere fingi solet, et non ob aliam rationem. (18) Hercules autem, vir consumatissime perfectionis, superat muros veros, scilicet astrorum situs, quatenus est possibile, designando vincitque draconem vel sopiendo vel interficiendo, hoc est: deprehendit temporum rationem. Et sic ad astrorum veniens canonem atque noticiam Iunonis sive Athlantis poma rapit, quoniam creditur ab Athlante in illis partibus didicisse astronomiam et ipsam primum in Greciam attulisse doctrinam.

(17) And before the use of letters the serpent swallowing his tail with his mouth was put into the shape of the year and the form of time. Within the circuit of the serpent was depicted for the memory of the thing whatever notable event had happened in that year. Whence time was indicated through mountains as diversity of location and through the dragon as the guardian itself. Thus, and not on account of any other reason, Saturn, who holds the shape of time, is usually also depicted holding in his hand the serpent rolled into its tail. (18) Hercules, however, a man of the most consummate perfection, went over the real walls [of the Garden of the Hesperides], that is, by marking out the situation of the stars, as far as possible; he also defeats the dragon either by putting it to sleep

or killing it, that is, he discovers the guiding principle of time. Thus coming to the model and the knowledge of the stars he seizes the apples of Juno or of Atlas, since he is believed to have learned astronomy in those parts from Atlas and to have first brought this very science into Greece.

Here Salviati's Hercules seems to possess not only the fortitude granted him by Macrobius and Boccaccio, but also the intelligence attributed to him by Petrarch, for he is described as *vir consummatissime perfectionis* ("a man of the most consummate perfection").

The dragon guarding the Garden of the Hesperides, represented in this passage as a serpent swallowing its tail, is linked by Salutati with the cyclical nature of time, especially evident in the succession of the months and seasons in a yearly rotation. By defeating the dragon, Salutati suggests, Hercules can be said to have mastered a knowledge of time and acquired an understanding of astronomy. A similar view of time, it should be noted, is later prominently displayed on Giuliano da Sangallo's 1487 frieze on the façade of the Medici Villa at Poggio a Caiano (Cox-Rearick 1982).

A prolific literary correspondent, Salutati also mentions Hercules in a letter to another Renaissance scholar Andreolo Arese (*Epistolario* VI.5.14-21 in Vol. 2, 151of Novati's edition). In this letter Salutati sees Hercules' labors as part of a divine scheme of justice.

Quid autem, si cuncta Regentis iusticiam contemplerur, occurrere potest iustius, quam crudelium depositio dominorum, quam concedit, cum audit Deus compeditorum gemitus, ut solvat filios interemptorum? hoc opus semper ordinatio divina permisit maxime virtutis viris. hinc Hercules Busiridem Egyptium, Thracem Diomedem, Anteum Libycum, Erycem Siculum, Hiberum Geryona, Cacus Italum, Narbonenses Albiona et Bergionem et innumeras alias feras, quae, cum homines fuerint, a proprietatibus vitiorum fabulose bestiarum nominibus recensentur, tum occidis creditur, tunc domuisse.

However, if we contemplate the justice of the Ruler in all things, what more just thing can happen than the deposition of cruel rulers, which God allows when He hears the groans of fettered slaves, so that He releases the sons of those who have been killed? Divine will always leaves this task especially to men of virtue. So Hercules

is believed this time to have killed, that time to have subdued, the Egyptian Busiris, the Thracian Diomedes, the Libyan Antaeus, the Sicilian Eryx, the Hiberian Geryon, the Italian Cacus, the Narbonensian Albion and Bergion and innumerable other beasts which, although they were human, were reckoned fabulously by the names of beasts from the special characteristics of their vices.

While Salutati's mythography is usually understood in a completely non-Christian context and Hercules is here described primarily as the Greco-Roman hero who defeats monsters from all over the world, it is significant that, in this passage, Salutati associates Hercules not with the ancient gods but with the Christian deity in his use of the following direct quote from scripture: *compeditorum gemitus, ut solvat filios interemptorum* ("the groans of fettered slaves, so that He release the sons of those who have been killed," *Psalm* 101 [102]:21). Such a Christianized hero, based on the early Christian association of Hercules and Christ echoed in Dante's *Inferno*, is a fundamental aspect of the hero in the Renaissance.

Hercules in Public Art in Florence

While these passages on Hercules are by no means comprehensive, they illustrate the continuing interest in the hero by medieval and early Renaissance authors, an interest which is also reflected in Renaissance art, especially in Florence, where the hero was held in special honor and appears prominently in several important works of public art in the city. Hercules also appeared on the state seal of Florence as early as 1281 (Ettlinger 1972).

Perhaps the earliest public visual representation of Hercules in Florence can be found on Andrea Pisano's bronze doors on the south side of the Baptistery. These doors were originally placed, in 1336, on the front doors facing the Duomo, but were moved to their present location when Ghiberti's so-called *Gates of Paradise* doors were added in 1424. While classical mythology would appear to have no place in such a sacred Christian context, Herculean elements on these doors are another illustration of the medieval and Renaissance willingness to syncretize the iconography of classical and Christian mythology which was noted above in such literary contexts as Dante's *Inferno*.

The eight seated figures in the bottom two rows of

the doors represent the Christian virtues. Spes (Hope), the top one on the far left, is an angel. All the rest are female and wear hexagonal halos. Below Spes is Fortitudo (Fortitude), facing right. She holds a shield in her left hand and a club in her right. The club rests on her right shoulder and a lion skin is tied around her shoulders and over her head. The club and the lion skin, of course are attributes of Hercules, and are associated with the hero's first labor, in which he had to defeat the Nemean Lion, invincible because of its impermeable skin. Hercules defeated the lion by making a club out of a tree trunk, dazing the lion with the club, and then flaying the beast with its own claws. Hercules then wore the lion skin and carried the club on his remaining eleven labors. In completing this and his other labors, the hero was using his great strength to improve the lives of those around him. So Fortitudo's use of the hero's attributes identifies the virtue not only with Hercules' great strength, but with his reputation as a savior of the oppressed, a theme which, as we have seen, runs through medieval and Renaissance references to the hero.

Hercules also appears on the campanile of the Duomo, built between 1334 and 1359 under the direction of three successive architects, Giotto di Buoninsegna, Andrea Pisano and Francesco Talenti. On the lowest story are two rows of bas-reliefs, some of which are based upon Greco-Roman mythology. The lower hexagonal panels are by Andrea Pisano and Luca della Robbia and depict scenes of human history and accomplishments. The upper ones, diamond-shaped with blue-glaze background, are by Alberto Arnolfini and Pisano's students and portray more cosmic and religious elements. So, on the west side, events from the book of *Genesis* are placed below the heavenly bodies. On the south, various human professions are ranged below the cardinal virtues. On the east, human accomplishments are below figures representing the liberal arts. Human accomplishments continue on the north side below the seven sacraments. The upper panels of the planets, the virtues, the liberal arts, and the sacraments thus place in the divine order the earthly events of the lower panels. The originals of all these bas-reliefs have been removed to the Opera del Duomo Museum and have been replaced with copies on the campanile. Hercules is associated with two of these panels.

On the upper, diamond-shaped rank of the south side are the seven cardinal Virtues. In these representations Pisano repeats some of the motifs he used on the Baptistry doors. At the far right is Fortitude, again wearing a lion skin. She holds a club

in front of her with her right hand and a shield at her side in her left hand.

On the east side of the campanile, the representation of human accomplishments continues with five reliefs representing such concepts as agriculture, navigation, theatre and architecture. The second panel from the left represents Hercules and Cacus. The hero is shown standing in full frontal view on the left side of the relief. His lower torso is naked and his right leg damaged. He wears his lion skin over his shoulders and his hood over his head, with the lion skin knotted over his chest. Hercules holds this knot in his left hand and he rests his club on the ground with his right hand. Cacus' cave is at the right side of the relief and the naked, bearded body of the monster lies face up at the mouth of the cave. A tree is growing on the hillside above the cave.

Hercules' adventure with the giant Cacus is well-known from Vergil's *Aeneid* VIII. Cacus was a cannibalistic monster who plagued the region around Rome. While Hercules was passing through Italy with the cattle he had captured from the three-bodied giant Geryon, Cacus stole several of the animals and hid them in his cave. He cunningly walked them backwards so that their tracks led out of, instead of into, their place of concealment. Unfortunately for Cacus, Hercules heard the lowing of the cattle, found their hiding place and challenged their captor to a grueling wrestling match in which the giant was eventually strangled.

The myth of Cacus fits into this series of panels representing human accomplishments in two ways. First of all, the Cacus story illustrates an important human accomplishment, namely the domestication of animals, animal husbandry, and the art of cowherding, for Hercules encounters Cacus while leading cattle back from Spain into Greece. Furthermore, in punishing Cacus for stealing the cattle, Hercules can be seen as a champion of social justice, a code of behavior on which the Florentines prided themselves, particularly during the Republic.

The reliefs on the Campanile blend together Christian and classical themes. The representations of human accomplishment on the lower rows are all incorporated into a larger composition in which the planets, the liberal arts, and human accomplishments are placed in a religious context, bolstered by the presence of the seven sacraments and seven cardinal virtues. In this context the Hercules on the Campanile parallels Salutati's description in *Epistolario* VI.5 of the hero as God's champion of justice.

A blending of classical and Christian iconography is also strongly visible on the Porta della Mandorla on the

north side of the Duomo. This doorway, dating from c.1391-1405, was carved by Giovanni d'Ambrogio, Piero di Giovanni Tedesco, Iacopo di Piero Guidi, and Niccolo Lamberti. Dominating the gable is Nanni de Banco's sculpture of the *Assumption* (1421), enclosed in a frame shaped like an almond or *mandorla* which gives the doorway its name.

The doorposts are decorated with a series of friezes, mostly filled with flowers and angels, but, especially on the left side of the door, several mythological figures can be seen. The central frieze panel consists of five tear-shaped lozenges on either side of the doorway. In each lozenge there is an angel holding a scroll, and between the lozenges are figures surrounded by floral designs. At the lower left hand corner of the door, between the first two angel lozenges, is a naked figure of Hercules with his lion skin wrapped over his left shoulder and arm. The lion's head is visible on the hero's left shoulder. His right arm is broken off, but it may once have held a club. The hero's presence on this frieze makes more explicit the association of Hercules with the virtue of fortitude seen on Pisano's Baptistery doors as well as on the Campanile, and with social justice in the story of Hercules and Cacus on the Campanile. Here the hero's appearance has an even more religious context linked, perhaps, with Dante's references to Hercules in the *Inferno*, namely as a Christ figure who sacrifices himself to aid the oppressed and who returns from the land of the dead.

The innermost frieze consists of a garland of ivy which runs around the entire doorframe. On the right only flowers are woven within the ivy, but on the left and on top there are human figures, some of which are mythological. Starting from the bottom left-hand corner, the first three figures are angels with animals scattered in the garland. The next four figures all represent Hercules. Unfortunately, the lowest has lost the objects which were in his hands. Were it not for his facial features, which are identical to the other three Hercules figures, there would be no way to identify him.

The next figure represents Hercules with the Hydra, one of the hero's twelve labors. Hercules had to slay the multi-headed Hydra, but every time he cut off one of the monster's heads, two grew in its place. In the end Hercules succeeded by cauterizing the wounds so no new heads appeared. The last, immortal, head the hero buried. In the doorframe the bare-chested hero is shown raising an axe in both hands to decapitate the Hydra. The hero does not look at the monster, but stares, instead, straight out at the viewer. Most of the hydra is worn away.

The third scene depicts yet another adventure: here Hercules wrestles with the giant Antaeus who derived his superhuman strength from the earth itself. In order to defeat him, Hercules raised the figure of Antaeus off the ground, to prevent contact with the soil. On the doorframe Hercules, shown fully frontal, holds the naked figure of Antaeus around the waist. While Antaeus has his arms wrapped around Hercules' neck, he has already lost the contest, since his feet dangle in midair behind him. Antonio del Pollaiuolo painted this myth on a large canvas for Lorenzo de' Medici. While the original painting is lost, a small copy in wood, by Pollaiuolo's own hand, survives in the Uffizi.

The last Hercules is dealing with the Nemean Lion. The naked hero is shown on the doorframe wrestling with the lion. He straddles the beast's back and has locked his legs around its neck. Hercules holds the lion's mouth in his hands. As in the other representations of the hero on the door, Hercules is shown facing the viewer and does not look at his opponent.

How can this doorframe be interpreted? While the central figure of Christ the King above the door is appropriately religious, the angels scattered through the rest of the frieze do not sufficiently balance the other figures, some of which are definitely mythological and others unidentifiable. One possible explanation of this door is to be found on the central bronze doors from old St. Peter's in Rome, decorated by the Florentine Filarete (Antonio Averlino) in 1439-1445, and placed at the main entrance to the new basilica. Filarete, certainly familiar with the Porta Della Mandorla on the cathedral in his native city, incorporated around the main religious panels of his doors a frieze very similar to the one on the Porta della Mandorla. Filarete's frieze is filled with scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* such as the encounter between Diana and Actaeon, episodes from early Roman history like the Twins Romulus and Remus with the She-Wolf and the Rape of the Sabines, and selections from Aesop's *Fables*. Could the animals in the bottom left-hand corner of the Porta Della Mandorla have inspired Filarete's plan for the doors of St. Peter's? On both sets of doors the figure of Hercules appears wrestling with Antaeus. While Filarete uses mythological figures on the doors of St. Peter's to place the stories of Sts. Peter and Paul and the Papacy at the center of universal history, the artists of the Porta Della Mandorla may have had a slightly different goal. Perhaps, borrowing the figures of Hercules from their more specific contexts on the Campanile of the Duomo, the artists here use Hercules to link their native city with the glory of Christ the King who reigns at the center of this frieze.

The influence of this doorframe can possibly also be seen in the commission of Donatello in 1415 to create a colossal statue of Hercules for the porch above the south apse of the cathedral. This gigantic statue, to be constructed of gold-gilded bronze plate around a stone core, was never completed but served as a conceptual precursor, at least in its monumentality, for Michelangelo's *David*. The prominence of Hercules in the iconography of the cathedral illustrates not only the hero's special association with Florence, but also his identification with virtue and altruism.

The Piazza della Signoria, the civic centre of Florence, is also its mythological heart. Here the myths of the ancient Greeks and Romans, mingled with biblical and historical figures, are tightly woven into the history, politics, architecture and culture of this great city. Traditionally the staunch republicans of medieval Florence identified themselves with figures who represented the victory of a weak but determined champion over a cruel oppressor. Hence the Florentine fondness for Biblical characters like David, who defeated the giant Philistine champion Goliath with only a slingshot, or the Hebrew woman Judith who managed to slay the enemy of her people, King Holofernes. Indeed, the two most well-known statues in the piazza, Donatello's bronze representation of *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (c.1455) and Michelangelo's magnificent marble *David* (1503), were moved to the piazza to celebrate the expulsion of the tyrannical Medicis in 1494. While both of these pieces are now represented in the piazza by copies, two pieces of original sculpture representing Hercules are visible from the square.

The earlier of these is Baccio Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus*. This statue, unveiled in 1534, still flanks the entrance to the Signoria today, along with a copy of Michelangelo's *David*. The success of the *David* had encouraged the Republican government of Florence in 1508 to commission from Michelangelo a statue of Hercules to serve as a complement to his *David*. Political misfortunes and papal commissions, however, kept Michelangelo from completing this project, which eventually fell into the hands of his rival Bandinelli, who finished the statue in 1534 (Bush, 1980).

Hercules can be understood here as a mythological counterpart to the Biblical David. Like David, the Greek hero Hercules was a champion of the oppressed. Just as David saved the Israelites from the Philistines by defeating the giant Goliath, Hercules destroyed many monsters and improved the lives of ordinary people during his twelve labors. His travels brought him to

many ancient lands, including Italy, and the Florentines had long claimed that their city rested on swampy land reclaimed by the great hero. For this reason Republican Florentines placed the hero on their governmental seal in the thirteenth-century. At the same time the hero was frequently associated with the Medici (Forster, 1971). For example, Pollaiuolo executed two paintings of Hercules for Lorenzo the Magnificent, and after Lorenzo's death in 1492 Michelangelo carved a large statue of Hercules in honor of his dead patron.

In this context, it is significant to note Herculean features of Michelangelo's *David* which are well described by Paoletti and Radke (2005:389):

The figure is simultaneously understandable as an ordinary man, essentially free of attributes that would readily identify him (the sling being virtually hidden from sight), and as a hero. The colossal size of the figure—nearly three times life size—implies a link with colossal sculptures of antiquity; the greatness of Greece and Rome now is equaled by that of Florence. But concentration on the statue's formal classical antecedents misses the deliberate tension in the figure between real and ideal, the suggestion that the ordinary can be transformed into the extraordinary by a decisive moment of action.

The nudity of the figure is unusual for a representation of David, Donatello's bronze *David* notwithstanding. The biblical text (I Samuel 17:38-39) leaves little room for interpreting David as a nude. The pose of the figure and David's mature body, along with the nudity, suggest, instead, a classical statue of Hercules. Moreover, the rocky terrain on which the figure stands, as well as the blasted tree trunk behind David's right leg, derive from the well-known tale of Hercules at the Crossroads. Faced with a choice between virtue and vice, allegorically represented as, respectively, a severe and rocky landscape and a lush and flowering landscape, Hercules chose the first. No one entering the Palazzo della Signoria could have missed the moral and political meaning of the statue nor the reference to the classical hero who had appeared on the state seal of Florence since the end of the thirteenth century.

From the moment of its unveiling, Bandinelli's statue has been unpopular with Florentines. Perhaps the statue was identified too closely with the fall of the Florentine Republic and with papal interference in the city's affairs. Perhaps the Florentines could not help but look at a work of Bandinelli and wish it were by Michelangelo. Perhaps nothing could ever successfully complement the *David*. The statue received its most famous and scathing criticisms from

Benvenuto Cellini, who recounts in chapter LXX of his *Autobiography* the pleasure with which he expressed his opinion to Cosimo de' Medici in the very presence of the sculptor. Cellini may be right that Hercules' muscles look like a sack of melons and his loins like a sack of long marrows. He may also be right that, if the hero's head were shaved, there would not be enough skull left to hold his brains. But lovers of mythology and of the hero Hercules can still view the statue with some pleasure and can enjoy the way that Bandinelli contrasts hero and giant. Cacus cowers at the hero's feet and grapples futilely for a weapon while Hercules, with club in hand, ignores his opponent and looks calmly out towards the Loggia dei Lanzi.

The pedestal of this statue is also worthy of note. Four herms (male figures on a post) are on each side of the base with the following Latin inscription in two sections on the front:

BACIUS BANDINELL
FLOREN FACIEBAT
MD XXXIII

Baccio Bandinelli
the Florentine
made this 1534

The corners of the pedestal are decorated with beast heads. To the north are the heads of a lion and a boar. To the south are the heads of a dragon and a dog. Each of these can be associated with a labor of Hercules: the Nemean lion, the Erymanthian boar, the dragon which guarded the Garden of the Hesperides and Cerberus, the three-headed watchdog of the Underworld.

The second sculptural group depicting Hercules in the Piazza della Signoria is a representation of Hercules and the centaur Nessus, commissioned from Giambologna by Duke Ferdinand I in 1594. This group was originally placed on a pedestal on the Via Cerretani but was moved under the Loggia dei Lanzi in the nineteenth century. Unlike Boccaccio, who was more interested in that part of the story which led to the hero's death, Giambologna focuses on the physical contest between the hero and the centaur. Nessus has been forced to the ground. He kneels on his equine forelegs while Hercules pushes the centaur's human head and throat violently back. With his human arms

Nessus struggles vainly against his enraged foe. The naked, bearded figure of Hercules leans against the centaur's left side. His left hand is at Nessus' throat and in his right hand he raises his metal club to strike. The hero's lion skin is draped over the centaur's back and the lion's head and paws hang down on Nessus' left flank, behind the hero's left thigh. Conspicuously absent in this sculpture is Hercules' bow, which is traditionally associated with this adventure.

One additional public representation of the hero in the city of Florence is a bronze composition of Hercules and the Nemean Lion signed and dated 1907 by Romano Romanelli in the Piazza Ognissanti. This bronze composition rests on a low plain rectangular stone pedestal and is meant to be viewed from all sides.

Romanelli has depicted Hercules in close physical contact with the lion. The naked hero has wrapped his arms tightly around the beast's head and is leaning over onto the lion's back. The lion has been forced to the ground and its claws are extended in a desperate attempt to find a hold for counterattack. Hercules' face, nestled in the fur on the lion's back, faces the Arno while the lion, with gaping jaw, faces west towards the Palazzo Lenzi (the French Consulate).

Romanelli's statue extends the artistic tradition of public sculpture in Florence into the twentieth century. It thematically recalls Hercules' appearance on the Porta della Mandorla of the Duomo, where the hero also wrestles with the Nemean Lion. The visual contrast between these two pieces is striking. While the Mandorla relief is essentially frontal and vertical, with hero and lion positioned side by side, Romanelli has created a 360-degree horizontal composition in which the bodies of human and beast blend in conflict.

While the literary and artistic representations of Hercules discussed in this paper are only a sampling of the hero's rich presence in Florence, I hope that they are sufficient to illustrate the dynamic portrait of a major ancient hero who has continued to resonate in the intellectual and visual life of the city throughout its history. The following list of artistic representations of Hercules in Florence is intended to provide a more comprehensive overview of the hero's presence, not only in public art but also in the many museums throughout the city.



HERCULES IN FLORENCE

A LIST OF ART OBJECTS

Public Sculpture

At the Duomo:

Pisano, Andrea. Doors on the south side of the Baptistry (1336)
 Pisano, Andrea, and Luca della Robbia. Hercules and Cacus on the Campanile (1334-1359)
 d'Ambrogio, Giovanni, Piero di Giovanni Tedesco, Iacopo di Piero Guidi, and Niccolo Lamberti. Porta della Mandorla. c.1391-1405

In the Piazza della Signoria:

Bandinelli, Baccio. Hercules and Cacus in front of the Palazzo Vecchio. 1534
 Giambologna. Hercules and Nessus in the Loggia. 1594

In the Piazza Ognisanti:

Romanelli, Romano. Hercules. 1907

Museums

In the Palazzo Vecchio:

Sala del Cinquecento

de Rossi, Vincenzo. Labors of Hercules (Cacus, Nessus, the Amazon, Diomedes, and the Erymanthian boar. Sculpture. c.1562-1584.

Studiolo di Francesco Primo

di Tito, Santi. Hercules and Omphale. Painting. 1572
 Vaiani, Lorenzo ("dello Sciorina"). Hercules and Ladon at the Hesperides. Painting. 1570-1575

Quartiere degli Elementi, Sala d'Ercole (Hercules Room)

Vasari, Giorgio and Marco Marchetti da Faenza. Baby Hercules and the Snakes. Ceiling painting. 1556-1557

Vasari, Giorgio. Hercules Slays the Hydra. Ceiling painting. 1556-1558

Machetti, Marco da Faenza. Hercules Slays the Hydra. Painting. 1556-1557.

Machetti, Marco da Faenza. Hercules Slays the Nemean Lion. Painting. 1556-1557

Machetti, Marco da Faenza. Hercules and Cerberus. Painting. 1556-1557

Machetti, Marco da Faenza. Hercules and Cacus. Painting. 1556-1557

Machetti, Marco da Faenza. Hercules and Antaeus. Painting. -1557

Machetti, Marco da Faenza. Hercules and Nessus. Painting. 1556-1557

Machetti, Marco da Faenza. Hercules and the Cretan Bull. Painting. 1556-1557

Machetti, Marco da Faenza. Hercules and Atlas. Painting. 1556-1557

Machetti, Marco da Faenza. Hercules and the Golden Apples. Painting. 1556-1557

Mezzanino (adjacent to Sala dei Duecento)

Giambologna (1529-1608). Hercules and the Hydra. Painting

In the Archaeological Museum:

Column Krater. Side A: Hercules with the Delphic tripod. Side B: Javelin Thrower. Attic. Mison. Inv. 3981. 490-480 B.C.
 Amphora. Side A: Hercules and Pholus. Side B: Dionysus and Maenads. Attic, Wurtzburg Painter. Inv. 3812. 520-510 B.C.
 Amphora. Side A: Hercules and the Cecropes. Side B: Apollo and Hercules vying over the Cerynian deer. from Dolciano (Chiusi). Attic. Achelous Painter. Inv. 3871. 510-500 B.C.

In the Museo Nazionale (Bargello):

Sala Donazione Bruzzichelli

Lombardi, Antonio (1548-1516). Labors of Hercules. Relief

Sala Donazione Carand

Limousin, Leonard (1505-1577). Hercules balancing the world on his shoulders. Grisaille plaque

Sala della Sculture del Secondo Quattrocento

Pollaiuolo, Antonio. Hercules and Antaeus. Bronze. c.1475-80

Sala dei Bronzetti

Italian school. Hercules. Small bronze. 16th cent
 Bonacolsi, (Pier Jacopo Alari, l'Antico, c.1460-1528). Hercules slaying the Hydra and Hercules slaying the lion. Small bronze

da Barga, Pietro (fl 1574-88). Hercules and Telephon. Small bronze

Bandinelli, Baccio (1493-1560). Hercules. Small bronze
 Giambologna (1529-1608). Labours of Hercules. Small bronze
 Pollaiuolo, Antonio del (1429/1433 – 1498). Hercules and Antaeus. Small bronze

Sala del Medagliere

Bonacolsi, (Pier Jacopo Alari, l'Antico, c.1460-1528). Hercules and the Hydra. Hercules and the Nemean Lion. Bronze tondi

In the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi:

Foyer to Borgia Gallery

17th century. Labors of Hercules. Bas reliefs

In the Uffizi:

ancient Roman. Calydonian Boar Hunt. sarcophagus

First (East) Corridor. North End

ancient Roman. Hercules and Centaur. Sculpture. c. 200 B.C. restored by G. B. Caccini in 1589

Room 9 (The Pollaiuolo Room)

Pollaiuolo, Antonio del. Hercules kills Antaeus. Painting. c.1460

Pollaiuolo, Antonio del. Hercules kills the Hydra. Painting. c. 1460

Room 16

ancient Roman. Labors of Hercules. Sarcophagus

Third (West) Corridor: North End

ancient Roman. Hercules. Sculpture

Room 33 (The Cinquecento Corridor)

Allori, Alessandro. Hercules and the Muses. Painting. Pre-1589

Room 41

van den Hoecke, Jan (1611-1651). Hercules between Vice and Virtue. Painting

In the Palatine Gallery of the Pitti Palace:

Cortile

Farnese Hercules

Vestibule

Two Hercules (heads modern). 4th cent. A.D.

Mars Room

da Cortona, Pietro. Prince's Rise to Power with help of Hercules, Castor and Pollux. Ceiling painting. 1641

Saturn Room

Ferri, Ciro. Young Prince Received as Hercules on Mt. Olympus. Ceiling painting. 1665

Pocchetti Gallery

Furini, Francesco (1600/1603-1646). Hylas and the Nymphs. painting

Hercules Room

Benevenuti, Pietro. The Legend of Hercules. Wall paintings depicting the Infant Hercules strangling the snakes, Hercules

at the Crossroads, Hercules Returns Alcestis to Admetus and Hercules and Nessus. On the ceiling is the apotheosis of Hercules. 1811-1812

In the Gallery of Modern Art of the Pitti Palace:

Vestibule

Bastoni, Pompeo. Hercules at the Crossroads. Painting. 1742

Bastoni, Pompeo. Hercules as a Child Strangling the Serpents. Painting. 1743

Museo Delgi Argenti

The Museum collection includes a variety of small gems and treasure pieces with themes from classical mythology, including an elaborate Hercules and the Hydra

In the Boboli Gardens:

Amphitheatre

2 Hercules

At Porta Romana entrance

Hercules Sarcophagus

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“How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?”: Fashioning the Virgin in Renaissance Venice



Katherine R. Smith Abbott

By the early seventeenth century, a visitor to the Doge's Palace in Venice would have been met by countless images that had as their focal point a sumptuously clad woman of regal status and incomparable beauty. Gazing down on the viewer from her heavenly perch, she proffered blessings, greeted supplicants, or communed with fellow members of the elect. In his 1611 description of the centerpiece of the ceiling decoration for the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Doge's Palace, the Englishman Thomas Coryat wrote: "In the first of these borders. . . is painted the picture of the Virgin Mary in marvellous rich ornaments, with an Angell crowning of her."¹ Coryat could easily identify the Virgin Mary because he knew where she belonged: in heaven, on a cloud bank, idealized, regal, holding court. What Coryat didn't know is that in Venice, all bets are off. The Queen of Heaven was, by the end of the Renaissance, displaced by the Queen of the Adriatic – Venice herself. Veronese's 1572 painting, the *Apotheosis of Venice*, **Fig.1** reflects an evolution that began in the late Middle Ages and that involved a focused approach to the Virgin's iconography. Renowned as a deft manufacturer of her own image, Venice used a close association with the Virgin Mary to reinforce an image of the Republic as inviolable. At the same time, Venetian artists and their patrons borrowed at will aspects of the Virgin's iconography as they reinvented new icons of the state: Venice as Justice, Venice as Queen of the Adriatic, Venice as Peace-Maker. In this essay, I will explore the ways in which the Virgin Mary evolved into a repository of iconographic elements that affirmed at every turn the centrality of the republic and her primary patron, St. Mark. In so doing, I will suggest that it was only in Venice that the Virgin Mary could become such a responsive player in a process of self-invention that abandoned the individual in favor of the rhetoric of state.

One of the cornerstones of the myth of Venice was the claim that the foundation of the city in 421

occurred on the same date as the Annunciation to the Virgin, March 25.² As early as 1350, leaders of the republic utilized this connection to underscore the inevitability of Venice by asking the Venetian artist Guariento to paint a massive (and ill-fated) fresco for the Sala del Maggior Consiglio. As previously noted, this room was a focal point for monumental paintings connecting the Republic to her own fabricated self-image. Guariento's fresco depicted the *Coronation of the Virgin*, an ordered, sober event well-suited for its place in the meeting hall of Venice's largest ruling body, elected as it was from the ranks of the patrician class. While the scene centered on Christ's crowning of the Virgin Mary – on a central axis with the chair occupied by the Doge – the painting was bracketed by the figures of Gabriel and the Virgin Annunciate – a direct reference to the city's foundation and by extension, its sovereignty. Appearing almost heraldic in this setting, Guariento's image of the Annunciation would have carried meaning beyond its obvious sacred import. Just as Venetians at large came to see the Annunciation as an emblem of the city's divinely pre-ordained status, so too the patriciate would have seen their own identity as the chosen leaders of the Republic reflected in this iconography. If Venice had received a sign of God's favor in its foundation on March 25, then Venice's ruling class – deliberating under the floating image of the Annunciation – saw themselves as the active arm of that favor.

Crucial to the emblematic appeal of the Annunciation is the fact that it documents Mary's virginity. Uncorrupted, pure, impenetrable – these were the terms by which Mary's chosen status was understood. They worked with startling effectiveness for the Republic as well. To visitors and natives alike, Venice could make claims simply unavailable to other city-states....that her birth was miraculous, and that by her exceptional siting, she could remain forever unconquered and pure. In her repeated appearance throughout Venice – on the roof of San Marco,

the spandrels of the Rialto bridge, and in many commissioned paintings for civic as well as sacred spaces – the Virgin Annunciate came to participate in what Edward Muir has termed “. . . a Venetian reading of Venetian experience, a story they told themselves about themselves.”³ Without forgetting its position in the sacred legend of the Virgin, Venetians also came to understand the Annunciation as their own story.

Nowhere is this more acutely exemplified than in Bonifacio dei Pitati's *Annunciation with God the Father over the Piazza San Marco*, **Fig. 2** which dates to c. 1540. In this remarkable triptych, painted for the offices of the Magistrato degli Imprestidi (the state loan office),⁴ God catapults through the central panel, attended by angels and the dove of the holy spirit. Beneath Him, glittering with order and promise, unfolds the Piazza San Marco, with views of the eponymous church, the Doge's Palace, and the Campanile – icons all of this singular city. Flanked by monumental images of Gabriel and the Virgin Annunciate, the meaning of Bonifacio's painting is astonishing, but clear: the foundation of Venice is here equated with the Incarnation of Christ.⁵ The image is therefore devotional, but only after it is political. Here, the Virgin (or her immaculately conceived son) *is* Venice, and Venice, like Christ, is commanded into being by God, the divine architect of it all. And this is in part where Mary becomes a problem: as she came to be seen *as* the state – an embodiment of its pristine character and its unconquered territories, could the Virgin still be *for* the Republic – that is, could she continue to be perceived as protectress, patron, and intercessor? Likewise, as she came to signify *for* Venice, could she remain relevant as a focus for individual prayer? The answers are complex, and lie not only in the way the Virgin was represented, but also in the way Virginity itself came to be employed on behalf of the State.

Certainly Venice was not the only city-state to claim special status with the Virgin Mary. Nearly every town in Italy seems to have acknowledged the Virgin as one of its primary patrons, and countless churches both grand and small, both Franciscan and Dominican, were dedicated in her honor. That said, it is important to identify the distinct ways in which shared iconography resonated for specific audiences. One of the best-known quasi-civic, monumental images of the Virgin Mary is Simone Martini's *Maestà*, **Fig. 3** painted for the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena between 1311 and 1317. Measuring some 31x 25 feet, the fresco covers the end wall of the Council Chamber like an enormous tapestry, reminding every person to pass through this space of the central role played by the Virgin in Medieval

and Renaissance Siena. As patron saint of this small Renaissance city-state, the Virgin offered protection in times of plague or famine, guarded the city in times of siege, and served as the primary intercessor for the city and her inhabitants. In Simone's painting, the Virgin appears flanked by saints and angels who pay tribute to her while serving as lesser intermediaries for the citizenry. The entire composition exudes a sense of calm, order, stability, and reassurance. Here is the kind of Virgin Mary a faithful citizen can put his trust in – enthroned and adored by those who surround her, she is the Queen of Heaven. She occupies a heavenly realm circumscribed by the canopy held above her, by the throne she inhabits, and by the inky blue background that allows her to float in a world separate from our own. She is distinct from, not to be confused with, Ambrogio Lorenzetti's image of *Good Government*, the city as wisely governed and harmoniously inhabited, that occupies the spaces of the Sala della Pace, just across the room and through a door from the *Maestà*. In Siena, these are separate, though complementary ideas – the city is protected by, and therefore indebted to the Virgin Mary, but the onus of wise counsel, sober civic and military judgment, and shrewd economic planning, falls on the shoulders of those mortals entrusted with the leadership of the city.

In articulating the different means by which Sienese and Venetian leaders invoked the cardinal virtue of Justice, David Rosand notes, “. . . whereas the Sienese invoked the virtue on behalf of their state, the Venetians effectively fused the two.”⁶ Rosand refers here to works such as Filippo Calendario's c. 1350 relief on the side of the Doge's Palace, **Fig. 4** where an enthroned female figure, labeled “Venecia” is seated, flanked by lions and brandishing a sword. An inscription indicates that we are looking at Venice embodied in the figure of a woman, but the iconography of this relief is borrowed, not invented anew for this relief. Calendario's relief might best be defined as “the Queen of Heaven meets the Strong Arm of Justice.” Responding to a very clear sense of self-identity in place for Venetians by the mid-fourteenth century, Calendario here participates in the same public relations crusade as that waged by the Republic's patrician political architects. Venice is the singular place on earth capable of being all things to all people; haven of serenity, seat of wise counsel and sound judgment, divinely ordained and hence protected. Here her feet rest on her defeated prisoners, the waters of the sea are contained beneath her, while the inscription that unfurls above her left shoulder reads, FORTIS/IUSTA/TRONO/FURIAS/MARE/SUB

PEDE/PONO⁷. But this is not exclusively a political stronghold, as we are to understand from Venecia's crown, her throne, and her long, flowing robes, all of which refer at some level to profoundly familiar representations of the Virgin Mary. One of the most complicated questions regarding the Virgin's role in Venice arises out of images such as this one: even as she was made to seem "not enough" – insufficient to stand alone as the beacon and protectress of the Republic, the Virgin was none the less considered an indispensable constituent of the invented self-image the republic longed to market to its citizens and foreign observers. While Simone Martini's enthroned Virgin of the *Maestà* seeks to remind viewers of the Virgin's authority, dependability, and above all her centrality in their lives, Calendario's relief both appropriates and subverts those assumptions while replacing the Virgin with Venecia.

This particularly overt and self-shaped iconography finds one of its earliest – and most unusual – interpretations in Jacobello del Fiore's painting, *Justice Between the Archangels Michael and Gabriel*, **Fig. 5** dated to 1421. Painted for the Chamber of the Magistrato del Proprio, who presided over civil and criminal courts, the work presents in a quasi-triptych format an image of Justice flanked by the two archangels, Michael to her right, and Gabriel to her left. The angels hold banderoles: Michael's exhorts Justice to allot reward and punishment as deserved, while Gabriel's instructs justice to act humanely even in the face of humanity's dark behavior.⁸ The words behind the figure of Justice read, "I will carry out the wishes of the angels and the holy words, be mild toward the pious, enemy of the evil and disdainful of the proud".⁹ Gabriel serves as an emphatic allusion to the Annunciation, while simultaneously paying homage to a figure who is no longer the Virgin Mary, but something new, fabricated, and locally powerful. The Virgin Mary is still here in residual form, as the regal figure receiving news from Gabriel. But the throne is notably flanked by lions, as in Calendario's relief for the Doge's Palace, rendering it a reference to King Solomon's throne of wisdom.¹⁰ Mary, as the support, and "throne" for Christ, was known from the Early Christian period on as *Sedes Sapientiae*, the seat of Divine Wisdom, thereby linking the Old Testament figuration of Justice with the promise of the new Christian era. It was providential for Venice that King Solomon's throne was purportedly flanked by lions, for in the reconfiguring of this Solomon/Justice/Venice/Virgin iconography, the lions function effortlessly as emblems of St. Mark, patron of the Republic.¹¹ Here

we are confronted not only with Justice as Venice, but also with the singular importance of St. Mark – patron saint of the city here symbolized by the lions – as the Virgin fades from sight.

Did the Virgin's absence from important state imagery equate with diminished relevance in a city intent upon a consistent platform of self-representation? It's a matter of perspective. To begin with, of course, the Virgin was altered, more than she was absent. As in every Renaissance city, her image continued to occupy center stage in many altarpieces and small-scale devotional panels. In many works, the Virgin would continue to appear in ultra-traditional, reassuringly iconic fashion. But in others, transformations both subtle and dramatic evince the evolving role (secondary, rather than central) played by the Virgin.

The *Madonna Nikopeia*, **Fig. 6** was brought to Venice from Constantinople in 1234. Purportedly painted from life by St. Luke, it had served as the palladium of Constantinople, and was credited with on-going miracle-working powers once it arrived in Venice. Protected in the sacristy of San Marco, the icon was brought to the high altar on four annual feast days of the Virgin, or in times when the republic was at high risk, such as in episodes of war, famine, or heavy rains.¹² As the most sacred object in the Doge's private chapel, the icon was also paraded about the Piazza San Marco on solemn state occasions, a reminder of the power and reach – as well as of the protected status – of the republic. Thus it was that the broader populace – artists included – could come to know the image, registering its appearance and its potent status. We must understand the *Madonna Nikopeia*, then, as *prima inter pares* – a painting small in scale but monumental in the place it occupied in the Venetian imagination and religious experience (albeit a religious experience defined by the state). While they may not have believed, as did their sisters and brothers in the Orthodox East, that the Virgin herself was in-dwelling in this work, Venetians had ample awe for the thaumaturgical promise of an icon worthy of theft and long-distance transplantation.

It should not surprise us, then, to find artists such as Bartolomeo Vivarini and Giovanni Bellini – among the most highly sought-after painters of the fifteenth century, producing small-scale devotional images with a distinctly Byzantine approach. In the case of Vivarini's *Madonna and Child*, **Fig. 7** dated to c. 1465-70 and now in the Correr Museum in Venice, we see the artist striving to model the Virgin and Christ in terms of light and shadow, bringing to bear on their skin,

facial topography, and the soft folds of their drapery a burgeoning facility with illusionism. At the same time, however, the painting's defining feature is the startling and enveloping gold ground against which the figures are set. Because the gold leaf surrounds the truncated Virgin, the figures are seen floating in space, disembodied, members of a sacred realm distant from – even inaccessible to – the contemporary viewer. Here we see a Madonna and Child who, for all their humanizing touches, are gripped fast by an archaic (and specifically Byzantine) mode of presentation meant to enhance the divinity of the figures while separating them from the world we inhabit.

In the 1470s, Giovanni Bellini produced a number of small-scale devotional images of the Madonna and Child that evoke strong Byzantine models in different, though equally profound, ways. In works such as the *Lochis Madonna*, **Fig. 8** the artist abandons the otherworldly gold-leaf background embraced by Vivarini, but continues to isolate the Virgin and Child by placing the pair before a heavy, dark cloth of honor. In this painting and others like it, the Virgin appears in extremely traditional garb – a velvety blue mantle edged in gold cascading over a red dress. Her features are attenuated with an eye toward exaggerated elegance; her elongated nose, wide-set, almond shaped eyes, oval face, and long fingers all serve to connect the Madonna with the vocabulary of Byzantine icons. While the Virgin cradles and restrains the Christ child, nominally adopting the Hodegetria pose of her Byzantine forebears, she does so in a distracted, even despondent fashion. We may read her facial expression as a premonition of Christ's ultimate trial and sacrifice, deeply mournful despite the predicted joy of motherhood. Whatever its source, this distraction precludes the kind of tender, intimate connection between Virgin and Child that became a hallmark of fifteenth-century humanism. A swift comparison with a well-known and contemporaneous image, Filippo Lippi's Uffizi *Madonna and Child*, **Fig. 9** brings this point home quite forcefully. Lippi's devotional work, nearly identical in size to the Bellini image, is born of an entirely different conception and need. Seen in a three-quarter view and in three-quarter length, the Virgin of Lippi's panel is reverently focused on her son, an impossibly chubby infant who is almost comically thrust toward her by two obliging, but impish angels. In coiffure, dress, setting, and physical type (even in the chair upon which she is seated) the Uffizi Virgin is at every stroke modeled on the contemporary Florentine female ideal – an ideal recognized by men and women alike. Lippi's Virgin

is one that Florentine women could be expected to aspire to and model themselves upon. A mother, yes, a devout woman, most certainly. But she is also a kind of Renaissance fashion plate, a holy figure who documents the very sumptuary excesses that women desired and contemporary officials legislated against in late-fifteenth-century Florence. While a Florentine woman might wake to venerate this super-human version of herself, a Venetian woman looked to images such as Bellini's and was reminded of....what, exactly?

San Marco. The Venetian woman who had as her focus for private devotion a Byzantinizing image of the Virgin and Child could not help but be reminded of the chief treasure of San Marco, the *Madonna Nikopeia*, and by extension, the reliquary that housed it, the basilica of San Marco, the Doge's private chapel. Venice had a relatively small artistic community acutely aware of the place occupied by the Doge's precious relic from the East. These artists and their patrons were equally attuned to the fact that the Madonna Nikopeia was Ducal, rather than Church property, residing as it did in San Marco, not in the church of the Patriarch, the cathedral of San Pietro di Castello. When it was paraded about the Piazza San Marco, then, the palladium resonated as a symbol of state privilege, as much as it did religious protection. Its guardian was the Doge, its people the patrician class from which the Doge was elected. In their conscious evocation of the *Madonna Nikopeia*, the Vivarini and Bellini images, while certainly functioning as focal points for prayer, also paid eternal homage to the state, her ceremonial leader, the doge, and her patron saint, San Marco.

When, and how, did the Virgin Mary become putty in the hands of a savvy, self-styling Republic? Once proud to share her foundation date with that of the Annunciation, when and why did Venice begin to depend upon other forms of self-identity and self-promotion? The answer may well lie in a late fourteenth-century challenge to Venice's prized military dominance and domestic tranquility, the 1378-81 War of Chioggia. Previous to this conflict, the Republic of Venice had celebrated in grand style each of the feast days of the Virgin, and these celebrations reached a pitch and conclusion in the celebration of Candlemas, also known as the celebration of the Purification of the Virgin on February 2.

By the mid-twelfth century, the celebration of Candlemas had evolved into a breath-taking spectacle known as the Festival of the Twelve Marys, which was organized by contrade, or neighborhoods. Each year, two contrade organized the festival and the related expenses were shouldered by the richest noble

families of these contrade. Throughout an eight-day period, these patrician families opened their palaces for visits and supplied the charitable gifts that were made available for the occasion. Such largesse was considerable, given some of the wildly imaginative and theatrical components of the week. These included in part: multiple processions in the piazzetta adjacent to the Ducal Palace in which young men from the designated contrade handed out flags to children, played music, and passed out sweets and wine served from silver and gold cups; an elaborate re-enactment of the Annunciation, in which one parish priest, dressed up as the Virgin Mary, and another priest, garbed as the angel Gabriel, were carried on thrones to a podium on which was seated the Doge, to whom the Virgin and Gabriel paid their respects; neighborhood processions, during which noble families opened their palaces to the public, extending an opportunity for viewings of the wooden effigies of the Virgin Mary, adorned with precious stones and crowns, that each chosen family had on view; and a special service of vespers at Santa Maria Formosa which was attended by the Doge, who accompanied the priests dressed as the Virgin and Gabriel. The culmination of the Festival, on Candlemas proper, found the two contrade preparing six boats for an elaborate water-procession. The first boat carried forty armed men, the second carried priests and the bishop, and the other four each carried three of the wooden Marys and a group of women and girls. These six boats were attended by hundreds of private ones that rowed throughout Venice, carrying their inhabitants to successive masses at San Pietro in Castello, San Marco, and finally at Santa Maria Formosa.¹³

It is no surprise that medieval Venetian women would claim such a festival as their own. In its fantasy, its pomp, and the opportunity it afforded women to leave for a week their strictly defined roles and restricted spaces of social encounter, it must have functioned for them as a high point of the Carnival season. While any celebration that afforded women the opportunity to appear side by side with the Virgin would inevitably showcase the shortcomings and inadequacies of the contemporary Venetian, an elaborate production such as Candlemas pointed to a kind of reciprocity where the Virgin and Venetian women were concerned. Even as contemporary women of every social class depended upon the Virgin as role model and intercessor, and lived in the shadow of her spotless perfection, the theatrical celebration of Candlemas depended upon the participation of hosts of women from every social station and every

contrada. Their willingness to serve as patrician hosts in the palaces of the wooden Marys and their place as custodians of the wooden effigies as they were rowed about the lagoon and up and down countless canals meant that women emerged once annually to step into and share a spotlight with their primary patron saint.

Already in place in this original form of the celebration was a focus on the primacy of the patriciate, a tribute to the distinct contrade of the city, and an acknowledgement of the centrality of San Marco, the Doge's private chapel. This was all to change by 1379, when the celebration was abolished by the Republic, to be immediately supplanted by another ceremony, distinct in nature and divergent in focus. In this new, stripped-down version of Candlemas, the Doge and the Signoria processed on foot from San Marco to Santa Maria Formosa, where the Doge and his flock were thanked, given a Mass, then offered refreshments.¹⁴ No women, no wooden Marys, no contrade. In its revised format, the celebration of Candlemas had become a celebration of the Doge and the ruling class of Venice. Their immutable power would go unchallenged by the inevitable rowdiness and broadly dispersed participation reflected in the earlier incarnation of the event. Why was this necessary? No undisputed answer exists, but with the onset of the War of Chioggia, and Venice's ensuing triumph at Genoa in 1379, it seems likely that the agents of the Republic saw San Marco at work on their behalf and chose to diminish (ironically, of course) the place of the Virgin, while underscoring the preeminence of San Marco. Not only did the format of the Candlemas festivities change abruptly at this point, but in a physically symbolic act, all of the jewels that had previously adorned the wooden Marys were pried off and used on feast days to decorate the *Pala d'Oro*, the already jewel-encrusted focal point of the high altar at San Marco.¹⁵

Painted c.1490, Giovanni Bellini's *San Giobbe Altarpiece* **Fig. 10** offers profound evidence for the ways in which these changes continued to reverberate nearly 100 years later. Bellini's painting was produced for the Franciscan Church of San Giobbe e Bernardino. It measures some 17 x 9 feet in size, and this monumental scale is matched by the sense of vast space that the artist manages to convey in shaping the architectural setting for his figural group. In type, this painting is known as a *sacra conversazione*, an altarpiece format favored in Venice that places an enthroned Virgin at the center of the composition, flanked on both sides by saints who seem to commune spiritually, rather than verbally, with the Virgin and with one another. In this

case, the saints (reading from the left) are Francis, John the Baptist, Job, Dominic, Sebastian and Louis. This entire company is bathed in a golden glow that appears to emanate from a source outside the painting, and that penetrates the far reaches of the apsidal mosaics that both crown and comment upon the scene below. It is oil paint that gives the work its remarkable luminosity and allows the artist to create such a convincing fiction of space, light and shadow, architectural stability, and corporeal substance.

What gives the painting its meaning, however, is a range of allusive selections that coalesce to create a great feast of Byzanto-Venetian references, a kind of hymn to San Marco masquerading as a tribute to the Virgin in the church of San Giobbe e Bernardino. Enthroned on the central axis of the painting, the Virgin Mary is presented to the viewer as the *Sedes Sapientiae*, the throne of wisdom for the infant Christ. Her plank-like lap and the broad, squat manner in which her form echoes that of her architectural throne further underscore the meaning of the Virgin “type” here adopted by Bellini. In facial type and dress, she is related to the Byzantinizing private devotional Madonnas addressed earlier – her hair is completely hidden, and she wears a generic white veil underneath her traditional blue mantle. Interestingly, the simple, monochromatic red under-dress that was consistently employed in those earlier devotional Madonnas is here replaced with a garment of greater specificity: a gown fabricated from Venetian damask and richly worked in gold thread. This kind of fabric, used extensively to decorate patrician wives as well as patrician interiors, becomes as much a reference point as the gold mosaic apse behind the Virgin. Worn like a heraldic shield on her chest, the Virgin’s damask proclaims the Virgin’s *Venezianità*, even as the decorative elements that surround her point to the cornerstone of that state identity.

The mosaic apse is embellished with the Latin inscription *AVE VERGIENEUS FLOS INTERMERATE PUDORIS*. Likewise, each of the seraphim ringing the bottom of the apse is inscribed with the words *AVE GRATIA PLENA*. As a commission for an important altar in a Franciscan church dedicated to the Immaculate Virgin, such a florid tribute should come as no surprise. It is, rather, the way in which these tributes to the dedicatory saint are framed by references to San Marco that takes some adjustment. Chief among these references is certainly the conspicuous use and placement of a mosaic apse. By this point in the fifteenth century, it would have been virtually impossible for a painter to include mosaics

in a composition without having his viewers make an immediate and concrete connection with the Basilica of San Marco. From the tympana over the entrances to the church to the extensive cycles within the narthex, nave, and subsidiary chapels, San Marco was almost enveloped in mosaics. They were the key decorative feature of the church and they documented both Christian and state history. While the average Venetian would not have had access to the works inside the basilica, every citizen knew of their existence, and as Gentile Bellini’s 1496 narrative painting of a *Procession in the Piazza San Marco* **Fig. 11** makes amply clear, all would have known by heart the Christian episodes documented by the great exterior mosaics.

Debra Pincus identifies other important means employed by the artist to direct his viewer – and the Virgin – toward San Marco. She argues that the pose of the San Giobbe Virgin refers at least in spirit to the Orant Virgin, displayed on the west façade of San Marco since the mid-thirteenth century as a specific, as well as public, example known to Bellini and others. Pincus goes on to link the large marble disk behind the Virgin’s head with a similar device used by Antonio Rizzo in an altar frontal at San Marco.¹⁶ Of the unusual column capitals that flank the enthroned Virgin and that serve to support the base of the golden apse, Pincus concedes that the dolphin motif renders these “an appropriate framing element for the *sacra conversazione* within.”¹⁷ She refers here to the fact that dolphins, like whales, were seen as symbols of Jonah, and by extension to rebirth, resurrection, and a second life. They could also be seen as symbols of the womb, since a living man (Jonah) issued forth from the leviathan. Finally, and significantly, dolphins were one of many marine animals closely associated with Venice herself, a point that Pincus surprisingly neglects to take up. While the allusion to resurrection, or a new life in Christ would have been profoundly significant in any altarpiece of this era, it is also crucial to consider the way in which this particular altarpiece functioned in a church dedicated to the Immaculate Virgin in a city intent upon constant – and conspicuous – self-reference. When we recall that maps were, by 1500, being made to accentuate the dolphin-like shape of the city itself, with bobbing Neptunes and nereids flanking her serene shores, **Fig. 12** it becomes impossible to ignore the multiple roles played by the seemingly innocuous dolphins in the capitals. If the dolphins promise new life, they do so by affirming that this life is best facilitated through the intercession of a Venetian Virgin who pays homage to San Marco. Some 130 years after Venice began to

fashion herself in the image of an enthroned woman, we see that refashioning employed once again, here in the service of church and state.

Ironically, the war that helped to fuel St. Mark's rise to eclipse the Virgin at Candlemas and to share the stage with her in images like the *San Giobbe Altarpiece*, also led to wide-spread economic panic. This in turn prompted countless patrician fathers to send their daughters packing to the service of the Virgin in Venice's convents. By the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century, the expense of settling a dowry for a daughter had risen so precipitously that most patrician families could afford to do so only once. The urgency of agreeing to appropriately large dowries for patrician daughters emanated from two primary concerns: preserving the purity of the patrician class, and securing prestigious government posts for male members of a patrician clan.¹⁸ An elaborate network of alliances and understandings grew out of these two motivations, and the result was predictable: young women of the patrician class became precious pawns in the patriciate's fight for survival. Should a young patrician woman choose to marry outside of her class, she would not only compromise the pure status of her own family, but that of her class, and by extension the purity of the Republic itself. As concerns with dowries were reinvigorated in the wake of the War of Chioggia, Venetian patrician families seemed to return to and reinforce the message of the Serrata (or "lock up") of 1297, a law passed by the *Maggior Consiglio* that stratified Venetian society into three distinct classes, the *nobili*, or patriciate, the *cittadini*, and the *popolani*. While constituting only 5 % of the Venetian populace, and while surprisingly diverse in terms of actual wealth, members of the patrician class had exclusive claim to the 500 seats in the *Maggior Consiglio*, and it was from this body that all other councils and government posts were derived. Thus it was that male members of the patriciate had a deeply vested interest in the marriages of their sisters, daughters, female cousins, etc.

But what of the extras? The daughters to whom a patrician father's financial reach could not quite extend? Unquestionably, they were viewed as a liability to their families, their class, and the Republic. Without a proper dowry to secure them a strategic patrician marriage, they could marry beneath themselves, but even a financially advantageous marriage to a *cittadino* – an individual who might very well have triple the resources of an eligible patrician – was seen as a union that would pollute the family and class. They could remain spinsters within the family, but that ensured a

continuing financial burden with no tangible reward and the standing threat of sexual transgression that all unsettled women posed. Or they could be cloistered – safely entrusted to the care and keeping of fellow nuns, proudly committed to a perpetual devotion to, and emulation of, the Virgin Mary herself. In this way, the myth of these daughters as virgins willing and enthusiastic about dedicating their young lives to God could be preserved, and so too, their families' good names and the mythology of the ruling class from which they came. Jutta Sperling describes the multifaceted benefit of committing young patrician women to the veil:

Forced vocations were the result of a particular type of bridal exchange to which Venetian patricians had committed themselves in order to legitimize and perpetuate their political prerogatives. They were the ultimate expression of a system in which women and dowries had to be returned 'with interest' or else be offered up as brides of Christ. . . . By dedicating their virginity to Christ, the nuns were promised the bliss of an afterlife in close proximity to their celestial spouse, while their families and state received forgiveness for their sins and protection against God's wrath.¹⁹

In Renaissance parlance, then, the daughter committed by her family to a Venetian convent came to serve in the same capacity as a private altar commissioned for a prominent church. The act of paying for a private chapel and commissioning an altarpiece to adorn that space was seen as a supreme act of piety and self-sacrifice, a form of collateral that might ensure safe haven for the family come Judgment Day. So it was for the young women forced to leave behind their families, their homes, and their hopes for marriage in favor of a life spent symbolizing a patrician family's sacrifice in the service of the state and the ruling class.²⁰

But how many pre-adolescent girls in fifteenth and sixteenth century Venice wanted to play this role? Could it really be that by the late sixteenth century a full fifty percent of patrician women would long to enter a life of *clausura*? For that is the statistic that comes down to us; by 1581, over 50 percent of Venice's patrician women were living in convents, and as Sperling confirms, ". . . neither piety nor a cheerful rejection of marriage put women into convents. Venetian families did."²¹

In response to legislation such as the Serrata, involuntary vocations rose throughout the years of the Renaissance in Venice, reaching a peak in the early seventeenth century. Inventories of ten Venetian convents compiled by officials of the Patriarch between 1609 and 1618 reveal that fully three-quarters of the nuns in these convents were noble, and in many cases, 100 percent of the professed nuns in a convent were from patrician stock. While some allowance must be made for the fact that some of these patrician women entered willingly into the religious life, most of them were placed in convents by their families, against their wills, to profess a calling they did not genuinely feel.²² They were forced to do so to preserve the patriline, to ensure the purity of the patrician class and the republic at large. In like manner, Renaissance paintings of the Virgin Mary served to underscore the precepts held dear by those who ruled the republic –

the same male members of the patrician class who rationalized forced religious vocations as a necessary and justifiable means to an end. The problem of Maria was solved in a manner akin to that employed for the problem of surplus patrician daughters: by subsuming their individuality into something greater, something other than themselves, both the Virgin Mary and the patrician female youth could be prevented from posing too great a threat to the carefully crafted image that the Republic depended upon promoting. Both living and painted virgins thus became devices of the state who could be pointed to as exemplars of invented patrician values such as purity, exclusivity, *Venezianità*, a chosen connection to the leadership of San Marco, and his living representative, the Doge. These virgins in turn pointed back to the patriciate as embodying the promise of stability that was, ultimately, the promise of Venice herself.



NOTES

1. David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 46.

2. Rona Goffen, *Piety and Patronage in Renaissance Venice: Bellini, Titian, and the Franciscans* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 139.

3. Edward Muir, "Images of Power: Art and Pageantry in Renaissance Venice," *The American Historical Review*, 84, no. 1 (February 1979): 51.

4. Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice* (New York: Abrams, 1997), 92.

5. Goffen, *Piety and Patronage*, 139.

6. Rosand, *Myths of Venice*, 26.

7. Rosand, *Ibid.*, 31.

8. Giovanna Nepi Scirè, ed., *The Accademia Galleries of Venice* (Milan: Electa, 1998), 22.

9. *Ibid.*

10. I Kings 10:18-19

11. Goffen, *Piety and Patronage*, 151.

12. Patrician Fortini Brown, "The Self-Definition of the Venetian Republic," in *City States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy: Athens and Rome, Florence and Venice*, ed. A. Molho, K. Raaflaub, and J. Emlen (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 1991), 522. Goffen, *Piety and Patronage*, 142, notes that the *Madonna Nikopeia* was particularly associated with the feast of the Assumption, August 15. She cites Marin Sanuto's 1500 account of this event: "There was a procession around the Piazza, and the patriarch sang mass, and an image of Our Lady was carried around, painted, they say, by the hand of Saint Luke."

13. A thorough examination of the festival of Candlemas is found in Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 135-181.

14. These elements of the revised procession were based on an account of the original events that led to the establishment of a Candlemas festival. Written in the fifteenth century,

but purporting to document events of the tenth century, this "history" points to the moment when a group of pirates abducted previously poor, Venetian brides whom the commune had sponsored with dowries and rich jewels. Outraged by the violent event, an angry fleet of Venetian men pursued the pirates and discovered them at a port near Caorle. A group of *casseleri* (cabinet makers) were the first to take on the pirates, ultimately rescuing the brides while killing their abductors. Muir points out that in a later version of the legend, when the *casseleri* returned from their rescue of the maidens and were asked by the doge to name a reward, they requested an annual ducal procession to their parish church. "When the doge objected that it might rain or that he might be thirsty, the *casseleri* promised to provide him with a hat to protect his head and with wine and oranges to assuage his thirst." *Civic Ritual*, 155.

15. Goffen, *Piety and Patronage*, 141.

16. Debra Pincus, "Bellini and Sculpture," in *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 135-136.

17. Pincus, "Bellini and Sculpture," 130.

18. Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice: Broken Vows and Cloistered Lives in the Renaissance Convent*, (New York, Viking Penguin, 2003), 27.

19. Jutta Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 6-7.

20. Peter Humfrey points out the pervasive belief in Venice that "...if the majority of Venetians were in a state of spiritual credit, God was likely to extend favour towards the city as a whole; if they were not, he was likely to punish the city by sending afflictions such as famine, plague or defeat in war." *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 58. Among the actions Humfrey notes as likely to attract divine approval are attendance at mass and the upkeep of chapels and altars throughout the city. A justifiable addition to this list

would certainly be the dedication of one's daughter(s) to the service of the church.

21. Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic*, xiv. See also 25. Laven, 25, quotes Sir Henry Wotton, the English ambassador to Venice in the early seventeenth century, who noted in a letter of 1608 that patrician parents, "who to spare so much marriage money, impose commonly that life upon three daughters at least if they have five, and so in proportion."

22. The work that Gary Radke has done on the nuns at San Zaccaria in Venice offers a provocative counterpoint. Without taking up the question of forced monachization, he establishes the fact that the nuns of San Zaccaria were savvy and effective

administrators. Their deep investment in the art and architecture of their convent church, as well as the relics preserved therein, confirms that once committed, they found a powerful means of exercising their own agency, and of reminding the Doge, the Patriarch, and their fellow patricians, of their financial and symbolic power. "Nuns and Their Art: The Case of San Zaccaria in Renaissance Venice." *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54 (Summer 2001): 430-459. The author makes it clear that the nuns were most effective during the middle years of the fifteenth century, and that significant changes were to come about as the result of the Counter-Reformation.

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FIGURE 1. Paolo Veronese, *Apotheosis of Venice*, 1572. Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice.



FIGURE 2. Bonifacio dei Pitati, *Annunciation with God the Father over the Piazza San Marco*, c. 1540. Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice.



FIGURE 3. Simone Martini, *Maestà*, 1311-1317. Palazzo Pubblico, Siena.



FIGURE 4. Filippo Calendario, Relief of “*Venecia*,” c. 1350. Doge’s Palace, Venice.



FIGURE 5. Jacobello del Fiore, *Justice Between the Archangels Michael and Gabriel*, 1421. Galleria dell’Accademia, Venice.



FIGURE 6. *Madonna Nilopeia*, San Marco, Venice.



FIGURE 7. Antonio Vivarini, *Madonna and Child Blessing*, c. 1440. Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice.



FIGURE 8. Giovanni Bellini, *Lactans Madonna*, c. 1475. Bergamo, Galleria dell'Accademia Carrara.



FIGURE 9. Filippo Lippi, *Madonna and Child*, c. 1455. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi.



FIGURE 10. Giovanni Bellini, *San Giobbe Altarpiece*, c. 1490. Venice, Galleria dell'Accademia.



FIGURE 11. Gentile Bellini, *Procession in the Piazza San Marco*, 1496. Venice, Galleria dell'Accademia.



FIGURE 12. Jacopo de' Barbari, *Map of Venice*, 1497-1500. London Museum.

Teaching Heaven, Hell and Taddeo di Bartolo at San Gimignano



Gail E. Solberg

*For Janet Smith, dear friend, esteemed colleague, at
her retirement.*

Perverse may be the word for a discussion of heaven and hell, and so inevitably of death, in a *Festschrift*. The fact is that Janet and I talked about death a lot. With students we regularly looked at tombs and burial chapels. We talked about families and their drive to establish and then to outfit a site where their physical remains would rest until Judgment day. We explained the passage of the soul into Purgatory and then, one hoped, into the bliss of Heaven. We showed the torments of Hell as depicted on church walls to warn the faithful. We grappled with the notion of the Beatific Vision, and how Pope John XXII (d.1334) upset all of Christendom by arguing that there was no such thing, that the soul did not see the deity face to face before Judgment day. We told them that the dilemma was resolved when, in the face of universal outrage, the pontiff who had veered toward heresy recanted, albeit on his deathbed. We discussed intercession by calling to attention numerous saints, foremost among them Mary, the mother of Jesus, the intermediaries who could bend Christ's ear so that he would forward requests directly to his Father. A painting from the Florentine cathedral of the late fourteenth century (or *trecento*) shows this pyramid of responsibility complemented by explicit written pleas that move up the chain of command. (Lorenzo Monaco?, Metropolitan Museum of Art [Cloisters] inv. nr. 53.37; ca. 1390). **Fig. 1** We recounted how the communal government selected its own saints as special protectors, thanks to the way they had interceded on behalf of Florence, and in hope that they would continue to act as guarantors of well-being for the polity. We described the tight-knit relations between civic and religious life, recalling how the clergy and city officials routinely joined ranks to celebrate feast days as well as diplomatic events. We set all this against the pervasive understanding that God took direct charge of all that happened on

earth, where human beings knew that their well-being depended on his favorable disposition toward them. Citizens knew, furthermore, that they would meet him as the judge at the end of time, when, with his agent the archangel, he would separate the saved from the damned.

Janet and I spent two and a half decades together as interpreters of the material culture of Florentines of the late medieval and Renaissance period. In the process we took it as our task to reveal the divinely controlled version of universal dynamics to our students. In Florence as elsewhere, the notion had been visualized time and again, in myriad ways and media over time. No matter what time span or theme either of us was teaching, the unavoidable backdrop was the pyramid, just as the cathedral painting shows: at the base Mary and Christ, each in the temporal realm, and at the apex, God in heaven, sending the Holy Spirit down to his son and all. Whether students grasped this foreign worldview and learned to see its manifestations in the sites and objects we scrutinized were only two of our many concerns.

Students who study abroad have all kinds of experiences, most of them good. But then a fishbone perforates the stomach, a cracked hotel sink falls and breaks a foot, a reconstructed jaw is broken by a late night blow, a wallet disappears from a pocket when the pants are shed to swim in a Roman fountain, a *motorino* rented against rules shoots over a Greek cliff and a limb is broken. I thought of our students' predicaments as competitors for the unlikely and even perverse travails of the figures we selected for study, saints in pursuit of the holy life. Janet stood by stoically and sympathetically, to deal with mishaps whenever they happened. She was intercessor, to translate for Italian officials in the hospital or the police station, to explain to the Italian host family, to reassure the parents at home.

Over time, Janet and I well learned the relativity of any single worldview. We remember the time

when students really came away – when, by their transoceanic trip, they moved beyond immediate reach of home. Janet’s perspective as teacher is longer than mine, but we both see how different the world has become for study-abroad participants today. In the past, they were obliged by a simple lack of alternatives to deeply engage with their new circumstances. A generation ago, study abroad was more intense and more flavorful. Neither of us would be able to assert as much if we hadn’t done it the old way. When it took two weeks to transmit a letter and a phone call was a costly and programmed communication you were *away*. Detached from the world you took for granted, another one opened up. Perforce your efforts were directed to acceptance, to adoption of your new context, to appreciation of cultural mores different from your own. We never ceased insisting that recent students make the same acquaintance with Florentine attitudes and culture, it just got harder to do.

Often the task of deciphering medieval Florence started at a key site in the Cathedral square. We took the students into the Baptistery, built at least by the ninth century, and planted them in the middle of its octagonal floor. Heaven, Hell and Judgment were our topics. A Florentine infant became a citizen and a candidate for salvation simultaneously at baptism. The sacrament, *en masse*, was celebrated in the Baptistery only on select days of the calendar. In that age one was lucky to survive to one of those dates and not to drown in the throng during the rite. The font (dismantled centuries ago), was large, filling the center of the building. The octagonal walls of the Baptistery formed a shell around the pool, the *raison d’être* of the structure, which was of matching shape. Eight is a mystical number, it represents time beyond time, the eternity that began after seven – after the number of days it took to create the world, beyond the number of the spheres of heaven, of the hierarchy of angels, of the sacraments, and of the virtues. The dome of the Baptistery, likewise eight-part, serves to enclose the font and to protect its space. Ostensibly it is the dome of heaven. **Fig. 2** We asked students to look up into its vast mosaic program, a spectacle of gold and color. An umbrella-like form at the apex caps Paradise, the ranks of angels, and God as pantocrator and judge sitting on the seven spheres. Since about 1300, the dome presented an encyclopedic view of time. Four superimposed narratives treat the Old Testament world (Genesis and the story of Joseph), the transition to New Testament time in the life of John the Baptist, and the new law in the life of Christ. We asked students to focus on three dome sections that

face anyone who enters by the main door. **Fig. 3** This primary composition is on an axis with the cathedral nave and its high altar across the square. Here they see the Last Judgment at the end of time.

In fact two figures of Christ are presented in this zone. Our interest is in the commanding Judge, the larger of the two, his demeanor appropriately stern. **Figs. 4, 5** He spreads his hands wide, to indicate the poles. On his sinister side (viewer’s right) are the damned and the pit of Hell and on his dexter side (viewer’s left) are the saved in Heaven. The order and quiet of the Paradise portion of the composition is infinitely preferable to the chaos, rage, and shrieking devils who torment the damned in Hell. In contrast to the nude souls afflicted by torture, radiant white-robed infants sit in the protective laps of prophets. They are the saved souls, in bliss for all time in Paradise. One of the two alternatives was inevitable and sealed fate forever. No wonder citizens spent much time trying to ensure which destination awaited them.

You could negotiate. The pope’s church would get itself into trouble over just how much negotiation was allowed, but meanwhile indulgences were sold, pilgrimages undertaken, feast days celebrated with great fanfare, prayers offered, lauds sung, and all kinds of embellishments were commissioned as donations for the church as well as for associated buildings and spaces. Charitable acts, undertaken singly or collectively, by a confraternity or a religious order, aided each individual’s case. Benefits accrued from all such activities. Commission contracts accordingly opened with the words, “For the glory of God and the good of my soul...” The faithful understood that they won favor through good behavior and by the help of intermediaries, including all of heaven’s saints. The things citizens offered, said, acted out, and paid would be added up on Judgment day. Inducted into the company of the potentially elect at baptism, a medieval Florentine’s life played out between the two poles which images like those in the Baptistery made vivid and ever-present. Through life each citizen kept an eye on their account.

Below the Last Judgment of the Baptistery vault, on the pavement of the building, is the wheel of the zodiac. When a student figures out what is depicted, it causes confusion. What place has this image in a Christian building? The zodiac is one of many indications of how vestiges of classical antiquity influenced the medieval and Renaissance worlds. Other examples are the ancient sarcophagi that medieval Florentines recycled for use as their own tombs, recutting some part with their family arms. A few examples stand

against the Baptistery walls. The zodiac on the Baptistery floor functions as a timepiece, a mnemonic device to recall the inexorable passage of earthly time which carries a person ever closer to Judgment day. Inside the Cathedral students find another timepiece of similar purpose, a twenty-four hour clock (ca. 1430). Probably the heads in the corners around the clock are prophets, who look out from the distant past as additional reminders that terrestrial life runs out.

When we took students to Pisa, we could show them another *memento mori*. On the wall of the monumental cemetery, the Camposanto, one section of a panoramic fresco from the mid-trecento shows a finely dressed hawking company of knights with their elegant damsels caught up short as their mounts balk before stinking coffins, their lids blown off by the rotted, bloated and worm-eaten corpses. **Fig. 6** Nearby, angels and devils tug on single souls to recount the desperate battle that the gallants should work out for themselves, while there is time. Compared to the clock or zodiac wheel at Florence, the Pisan fresco is a more pungent *memento mori*. The same motif of a diversionary outing gone sour may have been depicted on the nave wall of Santa Croce in Florence, where remnants of a coeval mural suggest that the formula of the Pisan fresco, entitled *The Triumph of Death*, was adopted in the Franciscan context. Scare tactics such as those seen in these frescoes were cathartic.

We spent much time with students inspecting the décor of and around tombs. Tombs prove a good sequel to the grand images about death directed at the entire populace, like the Last Judgment in the Baptistery vault, the Judgment with Heaven and Hell in the cycle with *The Triumph of Death* at the Pisa cemetery, or the Judgment from centuries later in the Florentine Cathedral dome. In place of these paintings for broad public consumption, images on and near the tombs of individuals offer personalized approaches to the mechanics of death and afterlife. Case studies in private burial imagery substantiate claims about period attitudes to the present and eternity. In place after place we showed students that Florentine families, who faced the gritty visual reality of the end of time prepared for their end with hope and often in grandiose ways.

More than once Janet taught a course entitled Heaven, Hell and Purgatory. In the autumn of 2008 her syllabus opened with the section "Judgment and Travels to the Underworld." Readings included the *Apocalypse*, the section from Virgil's *Aeneid* about Aeneas' trip to the underworld, and Ovid's story of Orpheus. She took the group to the Baptistery, but by the time of that

visit, her students had already studied Giotto's *Last Judgment* on site in the famous Scrovegni (or Arena) chapel. A trip to Venice traditionally celebrated the conclusion of intensive language study and the end of the students' first month in Italy. On the excursion, we regularly made a detour to see Giotto's frescoes at Padua. This world-class mural cycle decorates the interior of a medieval chapel edifice standing in a former Roman arena. The paintings are the grandest undisputed work of the Florentine master painter, who occupies a central place in Italian painting. Giotto covered almost all the wall surfaces and the vault of the small building. On the contrafacade he painted a singular version of the *Last Judgment*. **Fig. 7** A discerning student can see that Giotto's youthful experience of the Baptistery mosaic in his native town, particularly the vision of Hell, impressed him deeply. **Figs. 8, 9** Giotto envisioned the Inferno engulfed in four rivers of fire, but his Lucifer is the same three-headed ape devil with additional serpent-like limbs. Satan devours and defecates souls from where he sits in his black pit. Hordes of human beings, minute compared to his giant form, are beset by his devilish agents in the worst of ways. Distinguished among them is the disembowelled Judas, whose greed got the better of him.

The Arena chapel is the private burial space of the Scrovegni family, whose palace once stood next door within the arena. Enrico Scrovegni's tomb is prominent in the apse of the chapel. Apart from his effigy, Enrico is shown again in Giotto's Last Judgement fresco at the feet of the Virgin, who is flanked by the other Marys (although the identity of the secondary figures is open to doubt). **Fig. 10** Scrovegni symbolically offers a miniature but accurate model of the chapel he built into Mary's hands, as a sign of his generosity and as a plea for her intercession on his behalf. Over both Enrico and Mary towers Christ's empty cross, a promise of resurrection. Further above sits the judge himself. Enrico, technically in the territory of the saved, turns to the base of the cross, but beyond it the pit of Hell opens. He was plagued by a guilty conscience, for all of Padua knew he was a usurer who had been far less than generous in life. Scrovegni's ability to underwrite the grand chapel, an architectural entity unto itself, and to import a famous artist to embellish virtually all of it, was made possible by the vast wealth Enrico accumulated by the questionable means that put his afterlife in question. Usury, his crime, was a sin that merited capital punishment. By the extraordinary building that he offers Mary, he made a grand and public bid for clemency and salvation.

As our Florentine citizen, or in this case Paduan, prepared for death, his first desire was a dignified tomb in sanctified ground, under the roof of the church, or at least close to holy walls. Inspection with students of tomb chapels for Florentine families of note takes us to various churches, for rare were citizens like Enrico Scrovegni, able to build from the ground up. A pecking order of prestige existed among a city's churches, and a commissioner aimed for the most important foundation he could afford. Student interest perks up when we explain that embedded in negotiations for a tomb location are lessons in self-promotion, family advertising, power brokering, plea bargaining, and niggling economic transaction. As the patriciate thought about the other world, they were much attached to this one.

In the thirteenth century the new mendicant orders began to construct huge churches to house the crowds they attracted. Subsequently, citizens in numbers abandoned their parish church to seek a tomb site in one of the modern buildings arising in their midst. Diversion of their endowments from the parochial foundations threw the parish priests into financial straits, and they quickly complained. The bishop stepped in with provisions that reserved some patrimony for the parishes, because the patriciate would not be wooed back to the older, usually smaller, churches. Clearly, visibility and modernity were the factors that attracted numbers of families to the churches of Francis' friars and Dominic's preachers as they sought a site for a tomb. Franciscan and Dominican churches therefore offer the greatest concentrations of tombs in a given Italian city, which means our students in Florence spend much time in Santa Croce and in Santa Maria Novella. In the former Franciscan church, Giotto painted no less than four sets of frescoes for family tomb sites, and when he left off, his pupils continued to work for other patrons to similar ends. Due to the vagaries of time, Santa Maria Novella now presents fewer chapels of the early period.

When a prominent family selected a specific church as a destination, another hierarchy of place confronted them. Within the building, an ideal burial spot was close to an altar, where prayers and invocations for the soul's safe passage were targeted. Ideally a clan acquired an altar associated with the place for their tomb. The high altar was most desirable, because here mass was celebrated most regularly, and the clergy gathered in numbers on feast days. However, competition for the chancel meant that rarely were rights to it granted to a single family or in direct fashion. If you couldn't buy a space in or before the presbytery, a location at either

side, in the transepts, did very well, while one on axis with the high altar was also prized, but greater distance from the heart of the building was directly pegged to diminishing returns. A discrete architectural space, as opposed to a stretch of church wall, was the much-prized type of surround. Its great benefit was not only easy accommodation of an altar in a family enclave, but the ability to close the area by a gate. A family bought rights to their chapel, usually in perpetuity, and as long as the place, particularly the altar, was kept to a strictly regulated set of standards, it was tantamount to personal property.

Numerous provisions were required. Students quickly saw why a wall tomb (usually well preserved) trumped a floor tomb (usually worn away). Testaments make it clear that endowing the altar with a chaplaincy preceded attention to other décor, although the altar itself required outfitting before a chaplain might begin to officiate. Liturgical vessels and books, an altar cloth, and an image of the crucified Christ were minimum requisites. Commemorative masses at the family altar, said to facilitate the safe passage into Paradise of the souls of deceased kin, were ordered in numbers commensurate with the resources provided by the patron. A simple formula applied: the more, the greater the benefit to the deceased.

After primary requirements were met, decoration of the chapel might include a painted altarpiece, murals for the walls, vault, and even the exterior aperture to the space, a stained glass window, and a wrought iron gate to demarcate the space, to protect family property within, and to prevent vandalism. Patricians spent huge sums on their chapel décor, and quite naturally vied with contemporaries in efforts at splendor as over location. We know who the patrons of the sepulchers and the chapels were, as contemporaries more certainly did, thanks to various personal signs, though the documentary trail left by legal negotiations, when it survives, helps to establish who intended what, when, and for whom. Personal identifiers on components of the décor in tomb settings are the guarantors of commemoration as well as of divine favor, which had to be channeled. Patrons marked what they wrought with their emblems, their inscribed name, and dates. In later times they inserted into narratives on the chapel walls their portraits, images of their familiars and associates, and views of the city in which they lived and worked. As a phenomenon, both tomb and tomb-chapel building strike contemplative students as death-defying.

In a study of decoration for tomb foundations, particularly those in discrete chapel spaces, our

students pay particular attention to the walls. Multi-part, total-coverage mural schemes made by the fresco technique, are the most durable and immovable elements of family chapel décor. Probably they were not the most costly, but almost always they constitute the most substantial remains of ensemble tomb settings. A fresco can be detached from its wall, but that is far more difficult to achieve than removing an altarpiece. Stained glass windows, by contrast to pigmented walls, are far more fragile. Wrought iron gates can be unhinged and melted down for profit and reuse, and usually they were. Books and altar utensils were the most vulnerable items, because usually the most valuable and always the most mobile.

Students quickly perceive that as patricians planned their chapel murals, their preference was for the life of a saint, one of the many specifically germane to them. Florentines were named for a saint, their parish was dedicated to a saint (and no doubt honored more than one), as was their quarter of the city, their confraternity, and their guild. Overarching city saints also got much consideration. Citizens learned the trials and triumphs of holy figures by the social communicators of the day, the preachers. Yet everyone knew that what you see you remember far longer and far better than what you hear or read. Patrons who had been overwhelmed by Judgment scenes also had seen sacred lives narrated visually, episode by episode, on church walls, on facades, painted panels, and in reliefs. In the Baptistery, for example, one could follow the full story of John the Baptist, the saint to whom the building and the city are dedicated, a number of times – in the mosaics of the dome, on the relief panels of the earliest set of doors, on the reliefs of the silver altar, and on the embroidered panels decorating the vestments for the priest who celebrated in the building.

The saints as models of unwavering belief, rectitude, persistence, humility, self-denial, chastity and temperance appealed greatly to medieval citizens for two important reasons. Hell was a well-defined place, and saints knew the way to avoid it. When chapel murals featured some personal saint, one the family emulated for having made it into the company of the blessed for eternity, the same notions conveyed in Heaven, Hell and Judgment cycles were paramount. A just life led to the reward of Heaven. On the journey the route would be perilous and holy intermediaries would play key roles for vulnerable mortals. However, when a family selected a single saint's exemplary experience for depiction, focus inevitably narrowed compared to the grand Heaven and Hell scenes. Multitudes of saved and damned

in Judgment sequences were appropriate for images in public places that served large audiences gathered on key days in the Baptistery, under the dome of the Cathedral in Florence, or processing through the Pisan cemetery to bury their dead. Single saints instead were optimal for patrons who looked for a more personal protector and whose relevance targeted their family. An eponymous saint made a personal connection obvious to all. Thus a commerce of favor, or of simple reciprocity, was established. The commissioner honored the saint by visual and presumably devotional attention to him or her (but female saints other than Mary are comparatively rare as dedicatees), while the saint was expected to reserve special regard for the patron and his family in return. Giovanni Peruzzi, for example, took not just one, but both saints John, the Baptist and the Evangelist, as dedicatees of the chapel Giotto painted for him in Santa Croce, just as Benedetto Alberti featured Benedict in his family chapel elsewhere.

Of the many events in protector saints' biographies, certain themes prevail as *topoi* in burial settings. Adoption of a religious way of life often opened the narrative, and steadfastness, especially under persecution or temptation, is regularly depicted. Miracles were essential, first, to win sanctification. In addition, tomb chapel patrons particularly liked the way miracles suggested the saint's power and efficacy as protector and intercessor with figures higher up the pyramid. Episodes of wondrous cure or of thwarting disaster were favored types of miracles. Such miracles are preludes in historiated sequences to the all-important culminating events, stories that suggest when terrestrial life ends another phase awaits, and it will be in Heaven. No doubt this was wishful thinking for some Florentine patricians, whose aggressive economic practices, whose competition with their fellow citizens, whose usury and political machinations were precisely what had propelled them into the class of tomb and chapel patrons. Students learn to expect that every frescoed chapel will include some scene of resuscitation, of a victim snatched from the devil's claws, or from any of a variety of paths direct to Hell. The efficacy of an intercessory saint who can achieve as much is thus proved, and the gates to Heaven proclaimed open by his or her agency. Sometimes the hand of God descends into the picture, as for Giotto's Evangelist John at Santa Croce, to suggest the direct intervention and reception patrons anticipated. A chapel vault was usually painted blue, sometimes with stars, and these heavens are occupied by prophets, evangelists, doctors of the church, or simply the

virtues, waiting for whoever will rise into their realm.

The holy exemplars to whom the Florentines regularly referred are more than slightly daunting models for twenty year-old student viewers, but Janet and I liked to set forth their examples of exceptional virtue, even though we could expect our groups to be more interested in their exceptional tribulations and persecutions, often depicted in gruesome detail. Reflective students recognize a gender divide in holy lives. The realm of female saints tends to be restricted close to home, whereas males, who are more proactive, inhabit a wider world. Clare was confined to her convent, where she ministered to the needy and to her nuns, whereas Francis wandered as itinerant preacher, sent missionaries abroad, and meditated in solitude on a mountainside. Umiliana closeted herself into her tower room in downtown Florence. Janet liked the exceptional Umiltà who put her lambskin on her head, left Faenza for Florence, and built a house for her nuns on the edge of town, at a site near where Linguaviva now stands. Students like the visual life of Benedict, the father of western monasticism. Benedict starts modestly, as he puts a broken tray back together to spare his housekeeper anguish. But with experience he gears up, and walks on water to recover the axe head that flew off its handle into the lake, depriving his monks of the tool necessary for their work. He exorcises his wayward monk and divines the poison in the wine disgruntled followers set before him. Benedict's cure for temptation is a hit with our students. A terrible distraction to him in wilderness retreat is a beautiful woman whose clawed feet indicate she is the devil in disguise. To forget her, Benedict disrobes all the way to roll in thorn bushes. Students also easily remember the little known Sylvester, whose job in the Roman forum was to vanquish the dragon whose foul breath killed. It is so bad that Sylvester's deacon plugs his nose as he approaches the beast.

Punishment of would-be saints also respects a gender divide, with males on the way to sanctification more roughly treated. This sparks student interest. Clare was yanked out of the convent by angry brothers who wanted her to marry rather than devote her life to Christ, but this was mild treatment compared to Lucy, whose eyes were gouged out; Agnes, whose breasts were shorn off; or Verdiana, who was surrounded by vipers. Comparatively it was worse for Bartholomew, whose entire skin was peeled away; Sebastian, who was shot full of arrows; or John Evangelist, who was boiled in oil. Great rewards for suffering are also depicted, so the family and other viewers might take courage, as through the saints' ability to resist and prevail, they

saw their own personal hopes foreshadowed. Mary Magdalene levitates to pray with cloud-borne angels, while the Virgin herself appears to converse with Clare. The males are again different, usually more outward bound: Minias puts his decapitated head back on his shoulders to walk up the hill to his burial site, Francis travels in a bubble mobile into the realm of his maker, while John Evangelist, emanating light, is pulled right out of worldly range by Christ, who flies down to collect him. In the way of much medieval thinking, the programs behind visual schemes of saints' lives worked by dichotomies. In the world of the holy, trials and tribulations are harbingers of a felicitous final outcome. Suffer mightily, because reward awaits.

We urged the students to the conclusion that as message centers, family chapels are, in the end, *tutt'uno* (all one) with Heaven, Hell and Judgment cycles. We proved the point with a couple of special family chapels in Florence, private foundations with apocalyptic imagery that makes the universal idea manifest. The more telling case is in Santa Croce. In the Bardi di Vernio burial chapel, the last of the row in the left transept, a pupil of Giotto painted the narrative of St Sylvester with the usual emphases, over and around two tombs. **Fig. 11** The sepulchers are of the aedicule type, a Gothic overhanging canopy covers and draws attention to a built-in sarcophagus below. The larger, more visible, and more elaborate tomb is, naturally, for the Bardi men. **Fig. 12** In an unusual mixed-media arrangement, a fresco on the back wall of the niche rises over the sarcophagus, which is carved with the family arms and the Man of Sorrows. The extraordinary image is politically loaded. The chapel was erected and decorated circa 1335, in the immediate aftermath of the theological debate over the Beatific Vision, of which *Signor Bardi* is clearly shown to be the beneficiary. His painted figure, seen from behind, dressed in a simple shift and a nightcap, pops up from his stone tomb, as though just resurrected. He faces a desolate landscape but looks up to Christ in the empyrean, surrounded by angels carrying the symbols of the Passion and others sounding the trumpets at the end of time. Christ's wounds of sacrifice are well visible, and he gestures, one hand up and one down, as he greets *Signor Bardi* in an individual moment of judgment. By no mistake Bardi is gently displaced from center to the side for the saved.

Next to the sarcophagus for the males of the Bardi line stands a smaller, undecorated sarcophagus for the women of the clan. **Fig. 13** Set at the back of the chapel space (so harder to see), it merited no sculptural adornment. The niche surround was painted with an

image of the *Entombment of Christ* which three females attend with the mother of Christ. In these figures the Bardi women mirrored themselves, grieving for the savior, but also for their own men. Where a simulated relief might have decorated Christ's frescoed tomb is an unexpected image in the form of a half-length female wearing contemporary dress. She must be a Bardi consort. She looks and prays to Christ whose limp hand is within her reach. In courses on gender topics Janet and I made much of this case, of the differential enunciated clearly in two contemporary monuments of identical purpose, for the same family, in the same place. We presented it as exemplary of a general pattern that spread beyond the mechanics of death, commemoration, and salvation.

A family with a tomb chapel in the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella underwrote a grandiose Last Judgment sequence rather than a single saint's life story. **Fig. 14** Like the Bardi di Vernio at Santa Croce, they too inserted images of themselves into the frescoed program. The chapel in question (1354-57) belonged to Tommaso Strozzi, whose patron saint was not the apostle Thomas but the Dominican Aquinas. Thomas Aquinas had recently been canonized (1323), so it was good Dominican politics to advance his cult by dedicating the large transept chapel to him. But something happened on the way to a definitive plan for decoration of the walls. Evidently the prior of the house was instrumental in forcing, or at least guiding the Strozzi commissioners as a program was devised. This often occurred after patrons had acquired a tomb or a chapel space and began to seek approval for their designs from the religious community in charge. Intervention by the order usually was proportionate to the importance or utility of the site in question with respect to their requirements. The Strozzi chapel is strategically placed in regard to the daily patterns of the Dominican brothers, and this probably explains the prior's interest in its program. The space is located behind the *tramezzo* (or barrier wall) between the lower part of the church for the laity and the area delimited for the exclusive use of the community in choir. This 'higher' part of the church, which includes all transept chapels, outclasses other parts of the church, and within it the Strozzi site occupies the prestigious area at the head of the left transept. The area abuts the convent, close to an access point from the church. The prior, an avid promoter of didactic visual schemes (as one can tell from his interest in the decoration of the chapter house, or Spanish Chapel) appreciated the merits of a universal program on the Strozzi site, even if it derailed attention to life

episodes of the new Dominican saint who was the dedicatee. When the Judgment imagery was decided, Dominicans were included in the company of the saved on the Judgment wall behind the altar and also among the saved in Paradise on the left wall. (Whether the woman in Dominican black and white among the damned belonged to the order or is simply a widow cannot be ascertained.) Thus the universal program was made specifically relevant to its context.

The huge Strozzi vision of Paradise is filled with angels and saints but also with contemporaries, men and women from different stations of life including a diminutive couple who lock hands with the archangel Michael. These secular figures must be the patrons, the Strozzi consorts, privy, like the Bardi di Vernio males and females, to a Beatific Vision. On the opposite wall, an overpowering view of the depths of Hell was designed in a new way compared to the fiery pits of the Baptistery mosaic or Giotto's Scrovegni chapel fresco. Here Hell, like Heaven, occupies a full wall, a vast uninterrupted field, so an iconography like what Giotto painted on the Arena chapel contrafacade is spun out over three adjacent surfaces. Images of the two polar places open like wings to the Judgment, the ensemble covering a vast amount of space. The Strozzi cut-away view of Hell is not only physically larger, it also is far more complicated than earlier versions of Hell. **Fig. 14** Inscriptions on stone partitions separating numerous pockets indicate that these are the circles and *bolge* of Dante's Inferno, which was divided into nine zones with twenty-four subdivisions. A Dantesque Hell is appropriate for Florence and for the erudite circle of Dominicans who worked with the patrons to devise the chapel scheme. The new literary underpinnings in turn explain the novel and spectacular visual result.

Ideally students got excited about all this, or at least learned the names and dates of these monuments of the Florentine golden ages. Ensuring that they mastered the data was no small job. Recognition value for Nardo di Cione and Orcagna (Florentine painters for the Strozzi), Maso di Banco (author of the St Sylvester cycle), or Buffalmacco (painter of the Pisan cemetery frescoes) typically falls below zero. After the Baptistery and the Cathedral square, and ample time allotted for visits to family chapels in the principal mendicant churches, Janet's syllabus for Heaven and Hell students (as they called themselves) shows they went to the churches of other orders, including Santa Trinità, San Lorenzo, San Marco, Santa Felicità, and Santa Maria del Carmine, as well as to museums such as the Uffizi. On the group excursion to Rome, a high point was of course the chapel housing Michelangelo's

Last Judgment in the Vatican, built by Sixtus IV, (and so 'Sistine'), and another visit to the Purgatory museum. Janet's range was long and broad. Her students worked on various individual topics to give class discussion depth: Who goes to Hell?, Who Invented Purgatory?, The Resurrection of the Body, The Torture Fits the Crime, Classical Precedents for Belief in an Afterlife, The Hierarchy of Devils, The Apocalypse and its Influence on Art, and more. From the late thirteenth century, across the fourteenth and fifteenth and into the sixteenth century—through that entire time span students were expected to grapple with an ultimately un-American notion, namely, that for families of those periods death loomed, death was unexplained, and the aftermath of death could be dire. At any moment the hand of God might come down to snatch the living.

One semester we had a death that brought all these lessons home. Actually it was after the semester had ended. Rachel Asrelesky came from New York and in one of two fall courses with Janet her individual project focused on a particular way medieval and Renaissance communities dealt with death. Citizens might join any of a number of para-religious organizations called confraternities. Members stood short of the commitment required of a tertiary (or third order member of a religious community) and a further distance from the vow-taking members of the second (female) or first (male) religious orders. Confraternities had multiple common aims: devotion, fellowship, charity, and self-help, but their missions were also diversified. Rachel researched confraternities whose focus was death and dying. In addition to providing a decent funeral and burial for their members, such groups looked to the needs of others at that crucial juncture. Some of them took care of condemned prisoners. They provided company through their last night in the Florentine prison (or Bargello) for convicts taken from their cell to spend their final hours in the chapel, painted about Giotto's time, predictably, with a Paradise scene on the altar wall, and a Last Judgment over the exit. The life of the penitent Mary Magdalene, narrated on a side wall, offered the example of a single penitent. The program encouraged the condemned to do something the students now foresaw: get right with their maker before their procession to the gallows outside the city gate. Rachel reported on a Roman confraternity of this type, San Giovanni Decollato, from its headquarters, with all the students and faculty of her semester courses as audience. She spoke about the organization of the confraternity, its activities, and the decorative scheme that surrounded us in the place where the members had met. Later she bought

a new hat, green, as Janet remembers, and said she was eager to show it to her mother. A short time after that, at the end of the semester, she left Florence for her American home, but Pan Am flight 103 did not get past Lockerbie, Scotland. Rachel was 21 on that day, the 21st of December, 1988. It was the feast day of St Thomas. In a second course with Janet, Rachel had focused her studies on a remarkable sculpture of St Thomas doubting Christ by Verrocchio. I suppose that with successive groups we might have recalled Rachel, the haunting numerology, and forebodings of the type familiar to the medieval mind in outspoken fashion, but it was difficult to do.

Our method with art history instruction for students in Florence is to spend as much time as possible on site. Why lecture in a classroom about monuments within physical range? Context, access, scale, appreciation for materials and light conditions are all crucial to a full perception of how artworks functioned and of their effect on viewers. Site visits, however, are not enough for a rigorous approach. When students supplement study on site with scholarly readings, and analyze that material, as we regularly asked them to do in oral presentations before a monument, and above all in essays that grew from their spoken report, they see their objects as cultural expressions of rich and articulated significance that reaches far beyond what a deracinated work can suggest. We were lucky to take students out of Florence regularly to study works related or unrelated to whatever was on our syllabi in a given term. When Janet was teaching Heaven and Hell, the Sistine chapel and Rachel's confraternity in Rome, like the Arena chapel at Padua, but also the spectacular Last Judgment mosaic on the island of Torcello near Venice (even earlier than the one in the vault of the Florence Baptistery), were particularly germane. A less well-known but hugely impressive Judgment cycle was closer to hand in Tuscany, in the tourist mecca of San Gimignano. Janet and I have been in Italy long enough to remember when this little Manhattan still had an authentic look and feel, but think it well worth a visit yet, as long as the walk down the main thoroughfare with its tawdry tourist shops is rapid.

What the *Collegiata* or collegiate church at San Gimignano offers is the grandest view of Heaven, Hell and the Last Judgment to survive as part of a fully decorated church nave. **Fig. 15** The ensemble simulates the lost décor of the most illustrious early Christian basilicas at Rome. When time leaves minor centers like San Gimignano behind, it often protects their capacity to teach about the past. In the *collegiata* a longer perspective on the broad history of Western

church decoration opens to our groups, but the place also offers a series of more localized lessons. One of the latter has to do with governmental concern for the appearance of a signature church, and another with the processes of artistic transmission in a period students tend to think of as static and retrograde. Instead, the late medieval period was marked by a vibrant exchange of ideas among mobile and analytical artists whose abilities at visual communication compete with those of their modern counterparts.

In the early *trecento* the communal governors of San Gimignano decided to call illustrious painters (and their families) to the town to practice their art, and they focused their efforts on the principal church, the *collegiata*. Starting in the 1330s they invited a series of Sienese painters to realize a holistic plan for the walls of the recently renovated building. New Testament stories, painted by Lippo Memmi came first (1337), to be followed a few decades later by a matching six-bay sweep of Old Testament narratives by Bartolo di Fredi (1367). These schemes run parallel to one another down the nave walls. The third and latest of three impressive Sienese projects wraps around the upper reaches of the first nave arcade. **Figs. 16, 17** A beholder facing the contrafacade sees Heaven on the left, Hell on the right, and the Last Judgment as the fulcrum of the other two walls. The Judgment sequence gave the nave ensemble an encyclopedic scope like the program of the Baptistery mosaics at Florence. The grand culmination to the juxtaposed Old and New Testament stories was painted about 1410-15 by Taddeo di Bartolo, the master artist with whom I have been preoccupied for three decades.

Taddeo (ca 1362/63-1422) emerged around 1400 as the premier painter of his native Siena and heir to a glorious tradition more than a century old. During a particularly prolific and peripatetic career, he was instrumental in the diffusion of Sienese style while simultaneously he transmitted foreign modes back home. Pisa, Padua, and Florence were, with San Gimignano, among the many places (including Genoa, Montepulciano, Perugia, Gubbio, Volterra, Orte, and Rome) for which he produced important paintings. His best-known frescoes were for Siena itself, where a dated series of 1413-14 suggests that the cycle at San Gimignano was contemporaneous.

One useful lesson of Taddeo's San Gimignano scheme is how he conjoined what he had seen in outlying places as he worked to the exigencies of his site and to the master plan which clearly stands behind the *collegiata* frescoes. From Giotto's Paduan *Judgment* Taddeo derived the placement of his apocalyptic

imagery on the façade wall. From the Strozzi chapel at Florence he took the triptych-like arrangement that spreads the story across three adjacent walls. From the Hell scene in the Camposanto at Pisa he adapted an organizational scheme that divides Hell into seven pockets of torment defined by the seven vices.

In Taddeo's *Last Judgment* each visual component is accounted for by some iconographic precedent, and the Florentine model for the Strozzi patrons was especially important. **Fig. 14** Of necessity Taddeo modified that prototype to the specifications of his site. What he rearranged, and what he added, offer lessons in the manipulation of conventions to suit particular circumstances especially useful for students who are practicing artists. Taddeo was constrained by the large oculus that opens in the middle of his wall. Consequently, he opted to place Christ high in the field over the window, while he moved the apostles to its lower reaches. This left space to the sides of the window aperture. To fill it, Taddeo and his patron decided to insert full-length figures to flank two angels carrying instruments of the Passion. They selected the prophets Enoch and Elijah, each spared death because assumed bodily into heaven, Elijah by a whirlwind (2 Kings: 2:11) and Enoch, taken by God (Hebrews 11:5). Hardly haphazard choices, the prophets were nonetheless unexpected, so the painter placed scrolls bearing their names in their hands. Close by he added other space fillers, inscriptions, which appear to issue from the trumpets of the archangels. They would not have been easy to read from the floor of the church, but their texts were probably transmitted by word of mouth over generations. Near Enoch, on the 'saved' side near Paradise, is a paraphrase of Matthew 25,34: "Come, O blessed of my father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The same chapter of Matthew (25, 41) is the source of the other message, on the damned side, which no one wanted to hear, "Depart from me, ye accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." The scrolls recall the inscriptions spread across the Hell in the Strozzi chapel, but those phrases, as noted, come from Dante, not the Gospel.

Under Taddeo's apostle group, seated on benches that spread across the lower part of the wall, the attentive student expects to find images of response to the trumpets sounding at either side of the window. The Strozzi fresco at Florence shows a typical scene, humans issuing from their tombs to be ushered into Heaven or consigned to Hell. **Fig. 14** Those crucial parts of the story are absent at San Gimignano. A rough seam between Taddeo's apostle group, and

unconnected frescoes of later date and different subject in the lowest part of the contrafacade wall (by Benozzo Gozzoli, 1465) should raise suspicion. Perceptive pupils realize that the saved and the damned rising to meet either angels or devils must have been lost when alterations were undertaken on this portion of the wall.

Taddeo's scene of *Hell*, like his *Last Judgment*, looks both familiar and new. **Fig. 16** Compositionally it most resembles the *Hell* in the Camposanto at Pisa, but Lucifer is at the top rather than the bottom of the field. The inversion has programmatic merits: it juxtaposes Satan with Christ in Judgment and with Mary and Christ in Paradise across the nave, at the same height in their respective fields. **Fig. 17** The awesome Lucifer is a horned, fanged, winged, and scaly monster, with mule ears and the traditional three simian heads. He devours a flailing soul in each orifice, while he defecates another human being into the flames that engulf the entire area. His genitals are painted as a fiendish face. All over Hell the damned writhe in fire around vicious serpents while they are attacked by energetic bat-winged devils who resemble Lucifer in miniature.

Once Taddeo placed Lucifer high in the field, in theoretical terms the deepest part of Hell, the mouth to the inferno had to be at the bottom. This is precisely where he painted it, right above the arch of the nave bay, close to viewers. Here a gripping detail is the demon who pitches a soul right into the fanged monster jaws. A series of scrolls identifies various sins punished in the carefully defined regions of Taddeo's *Hell*, which are stacked in three layers. One section is separated from the next by vines that twist like colonnettes. The worst offenses, those of the rational faculties, pride and vainglory, are close to the body of Lucifer, while the lesser offenses of sloth and wrath are at the bottom, to either side of the Hell mouth. In the middle register, from left to right, sins of gluttony, avarice, and lust are punished. The spatial division, according to the seven vices, is traditional and contrasts with the complicated, Dante-inspired scheme at Santa Maria Novella in Florence. No doubt, as in the *Hell* at the cemetery in Pisa, it was more appropriate to the townspeople of San Gimignano. They must have been both titillated and cowed by the outrageous imagery of naked sinners in all sorts of physical anguish. Extravagantly vile and demeaning tortures like those shown nonetheless are in keeping with what was presented in earlier Hell images: cleaving, penetrating, disemboweling, dragging, and biting. Adulterers are violated and whipped, sodomites skewered,

usurers stuffed with coins, blasphemers and heretics beheaded, the gluttonous bound before a bountiful table. Women are more prominent in Taddeo's lower regions, the areas of lesser sins, but their afflictions are as heinous and as graphically explicit as any of those for the men, the more egregious sinners. Females are dragged and pulled by their long tresses (a symbol of dissolute nature), mounted, pierced and flogged by devils and serpents.

Residents of San Gimignano occupied the *collegiata* in a typical medieval division of the sexes to opposite sides of the nave. The women of the town used the right door of the façade and stood in the right half of the building. Looking down the nave from the east end, God saw them on his sinister side, where females traditionally were relegated. Here townswomen were positioned to best see the *Hell* wall. Females among the wrathful, slothful, gluttonous, and lustful were closest to view.

Students are surprised to hear that the Hell imagery would not have shocked period viewers. Lodged in Taddeo's *Hell* is more than one lesson in social history. Medieval justice was harsh and corporal and, more important still, often effected as a display. Obscene public humiliation, usually accompanied by a harsh sentence, was common for transgressions against public morality. Taddeo's *Hell* corresponds to punishments the painter and his viewers would have witnessed as criminals were tied to posts, lashed, made to ride animals, to parade in the nude, and to wear foolscaps inscribed with their sin. In the fresco, in fact, twisting men clutched in Lucifer's talons wear fools' hats bearing their names: Nero, Herod, Averoes, Simon Magus, Maxentius, Nebuchadnezzar, Cain, and Pharaoh. Elsewhere foolscaps identify a procurer and a sodomite. In medieval cities, ignominious images of prisoners were painted on public walls as deterrents to the populace, like a variety of drastic punishments acted out in morality plays and other public spectacles. Surviving texts for some plays document a direct relationship to tortures Taddeo depicted.

In Taddeo's *Heaven*, across the nave from his *Hell*, holy personages in three interlocking arcs float up the field toward the divine couple seated in the uppermost region. **Fig. 17** The formal effect is markedly different from the tightly packed multitudes in glum linear rows of the Strozzi Paradise at Florence. At San Gimignano, Mary and Christ are silhouetted against the spheres of heaven, while below them a levitating angelic orchestra directs its music to the couple overhead. The lowest, broadest arc of Taddeo's *Paradise* includes various classes of the saved: virgins, martyrs, confessors, and

earthly rulers. Females, both secular and religious, are at the rear of the group, which places them higher and closer to the holy couple than the men nearer to the front, who include a pope, a cardinal, bishops, a deacon, monks, and friars. From the male side of the nave, the latter figures would have been in good view, and one wonders what the local men would have thought of the numerous females shown as more elect, especially because some are without haloes, so presumably not yet beyond Judgment day.

The *Paradise* fresco offers still more lessons, at which point the students are concluding, some in frustration, that art history is a rich field. I like to make two points with the *Paradise* composition. One is the need for careful inspection of any object, particularly its state of conservation. Years ago my study of early photographs of Taddeo's fresco yielded a surprising detail, a feature not evident by inspection of the fresco from the floor of the church. At the lower left of the composition, at the feet of a bishop otherwise identifiable as Augustine (by garb and age), I spotted a small-scale kneeling female dressed in a dark, hooded mantle. **Fig. 18** On the wall I could not find her. She had simply vanished from view, in part because painted *a secco*, (consequently her image had faded), and in part because further obfuscated by surface grime. Now thanks to a restoration, she is visible again, though faintly. From this students learn the need for attention to technique and state of conservation, but they also learn the limits of merely looking in the history of art

The robes of the shadowy figure suggest she is either a widow or a nun, while her posture, scale, and placement indicate a donatrix. A coat of arms below her cannot be deciphered, so the best basis for a hypothesis on her identity is her proximity to St Augustine. An appeal to the historical and documentary record is now in order. A review of the literature on eminent citizens led to her conjectural identification by another scholar as a local widow, the *Beata* Simona, who founded a convent on her property outside the walls of San Gimignano in 1333. The house was dedicated to Mary Magdalene and followed Augustine's rule. Before Simona died in 1348 of plague she was credited with saving San Gimignano from takeover by disgruntled political exiles, so it was suggested that she be read as a civic protectress. However, some critical thinking was in order. Why would Simona be placed in donor-guise in a fresco painted decades after her death? Might she by then have merited larger scale depiction and placement among the saved women without haloes? Could the kneeling female instead be a prioress of the

Augustinian house of later date, ca. 1410-15, when the frescos were realized? Is she some other contemporary female, perhaps from Simona's line, who played a role in realization of the commission? Where hard facts are lacking, logic, both visual and historical, guides. Presentation of the figure above a coat of arms, now sadly illegible, intimates a specific identity rather than the aura of age. One key fact should be assessed with other data. The same year Simona was carried off by plague in 1348, an altar to the plague saints Sebastian and Fabian was erected on the contrafacade of the *collegiata*. How this might be related to Taddeo's female figure and the rest of his commission painted above the altar is, at present, impossible to say. However, continuity in devotional practice at the site until well after Taddeo's frescoes were completed is suggested by Benozzo Gozzoli's later painting of Sebastian, commissioned in the mid-quattrocento. A different line of argument proves more fruitful because fixed to a paper trail and to the period at the turn of the century. Documents of the 1390s record that the convent of Santa Maria Maddalena prospered and won favors in those years. In June 1395 the nuns were conceded their own bell, allowed to have public mass said in their convent church on feast days, to bury their own dead, and to increase the size of their community. Each privilege was reason for celebration, and the collegiate church offered an ideal public venue for visual expression of the nuns' new status. It seems likely that the diminutive painted figure may be one of the few female patrons of the period, placed to experience a grand Beatific Vision.

Students are surprised to learn that the religious life offered a female more outlets for achievement than the secular realm, where it was extremely difficult to shake off the expectations of men and the constraints of family life. The most powerful women of the day came from two groups, consorts of rulers and heads of religious institutions. When females of such rank became patrons, they usually revealed themselves to be figures not only of unusual means but also of exceptional character—determined, forthright, and clever at working against constrictions. At San Gimignano, by careful looking and aided by history, I conclude that the visual figure discovered in *Paradise* is a contemporary of the artist, a woman he knew, a rare example of enterprise for her time. Possibly she was the abbess of Santa Maria Maddalena, a female who in any case took charge and made her mark. She makes for a good final lesson, one the students like.



FIGURE 1. Lorenzino Monaco?, *The Intercession of Christ and the Virgin*, Metropolitan Museum of Art [Cloisters] inv. nr. 53.37; c. 1390.



FIGURE 2. Florence, Baptistery, dome mosaics (full view).



FIGURE 3. Florence, Baptistery, dome mosaics, detail, three central sections.



FIGURE 4. Florence, Baptistery, dome mosaics, detail, *Christ in Judgment*.



FIGURE 5. Florence, Baptistery, dome mosaics, detail, *Hell*.



FIGURE 6. Pisa, Camposanto, fresco, *Triumph of Death*, detail of *The Three Living and the Three Dead* (Buonamico Buffalmacco).



FIGURE 7. Giotto, Arena Chapel, frescoes, *Last Judgment*.



FIGURE 9. Florence Baptistery, dome mosaics, detail, *Hell*, Lucifer.



FIGURE 8. Giotto, Arena Chapel, frescoes, *Last Judgment*, detail, Lucifer.



FIGURE 10. Giotto, Arena Chapel, frescoes, *Last Judgment*, detail, Enrico Scrovegni.



FIGURE 11. Maso di Banco?, Bardis di Vernio Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence, frescoes.



FIGURE 12. Maso di Banco?, Bardi di Vernio Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence, male tomb fresco.



FIGURE 13. Maso di Banco?, Bardi di Vernio Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence, female tomb fresco.



FIGURE 14. Nardo and Andrea di Cione (Orcagna), Strozzi Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence.



FIGURE 16. Taddeo di Bartolo, Collegiata, San Gimignano, nave frescoes, *Hell*.



FIGURE 15. Taddeo di Bartolo, Collegiata, San Gimignano, nave frescoes.



FIGURE 17. Taddeo di Bartolo, Collegiata, San Gimignano, nave frescoes, *Paradise*.

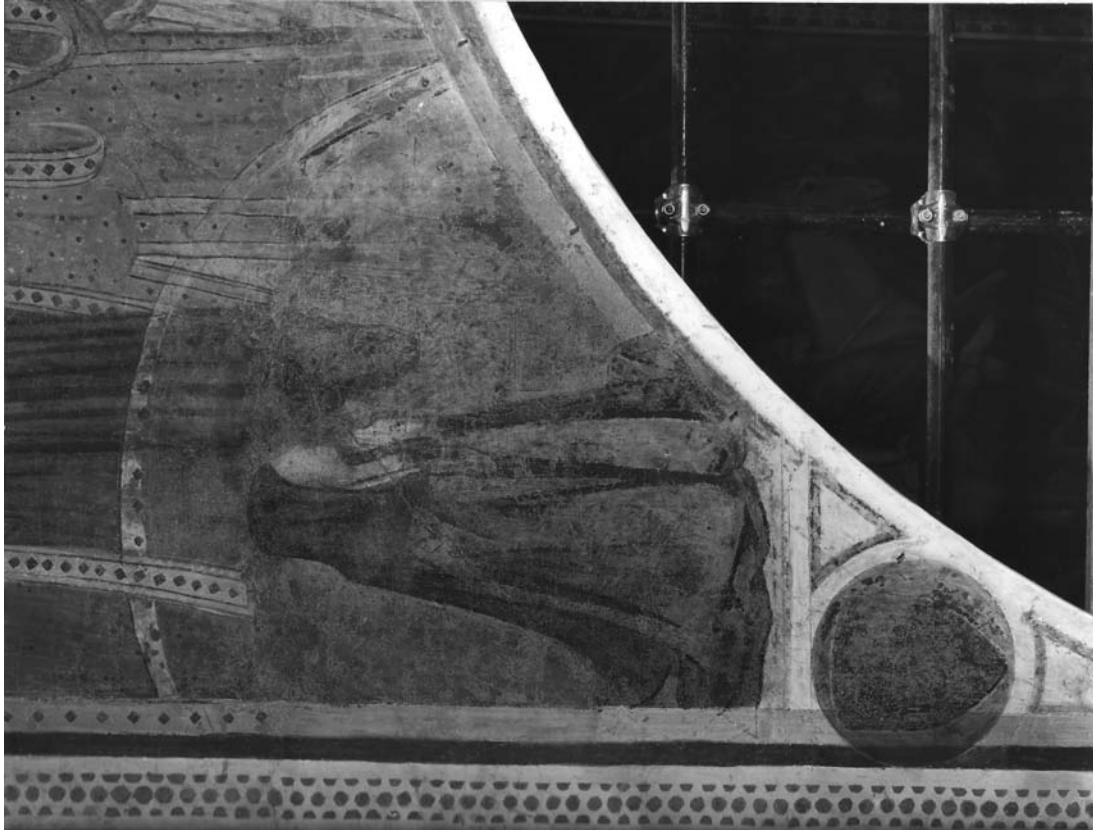


FIGURE 18. Taddeo di Bartolo, Collegiata, San Gimignano, nave frescoes, *Paradise*, detail, donor.

In the Margin: Meditations on Bernardino Poccetti



Robert Warde

Let us begin obliquely with Giovanni Donato da Montorfano, born about 1460, though the exact day and year of his coming are unknown. He does not figure prominently in histories of Italian Renaissance painting. For example, Frederick Hartt's well-known survey of the field, the fourth edition of which, published in 1994, is presently weighing down one corner of my desk, makes no mention of him at all, assuming one can trust the index, whose listings offer nothing under "Giovanni," under "Donato," or under "Montorfano." I didn't check under "da." Laurie Schneider Adams' 2001 history, presently weighing down the opposite corner of my desk, is equally silent on the subject. Yet Giovanni Donato painted a *Crucifixion* that must surely be one of the most often-viewed frescoes in all of Italian art. Of course this depends on what we mean by "view." In fact, Donato's *Crucifixion* may not be very frequently viewed. Speaking more accurately, we should say it is frequently seen. Refining our word choice even further, we might better say it is glanced at regularly. Still, how many visual representations of anything stick around for some five hundred years, to be noticed by millions of people? Giovanni Donato, not to be confused with his grandfather, Abramo, his father, Alberto, or his brother Vincenzo, would no doubt be happy to have survived at all. Or maybe not. He probably had his pride, and it can't be too comforting to think that most people now days interact with his *Crucifixion* by turning their backs to it. Giovanni Donato can be thought of as one of the thieves among painters. That is, just as those anonymous cut purses hang in the margins, flanking the crucified Christ, so our Giovanni Donato has become the prototype of marginalized painters, serving to fill out a scene whose focus lies most emphatically elsewhere.

Even his village is fairly obscure. Most atlases don't list Montorfano, and the generally reliable *Eyewitness Travel Guide to Italy* has nothing at all to say about this town. Wikipedia does offer an entry for

the place, noting that it lies about 25 miles north of Milan, that it is inhabited by 2,500 people, and that its major attractions are a very small lake and the *Circolo Golf Villa d'Este*, a major Italian golf course. Not a word about our family of painters. The fact that the Wikipedia entry, written in English, spells "Italian" "italyen" could give one pause, but, as any researcher soon learns, the ice is slippery wherever one stands. Indeed, the information I have indicates that Giovanni Donato was born in Milan, so is it simply that he comes from a family with its roots in Montorfano, or does he actually hail from the town whose name he bears? The year of his death is also open to debate, with 1502 or 1503 usually given as our two choices. The uncertainty of the death date is especially significant. Birth dates are often in question, since very few individuals are famous at their birth, Christ and royalty excepted, so who bothers to record the event? Giovanni Donato was apparently not too celebrated by the time of his death either, as the precise year remains in doubt. It seems appropriate that Montorfano means "orphan hill," since Giovanni Donato is himself history's waif, wandering homeless through shifting shadows, down the dimly lit alleyways of the past.

If you wish to visit Giovanni Donato's *Crucifixion* you need to make an appointment, often several weeks in advance. When you arrive in Milan and keep that appointment at the church and Dominican convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, you are ticketed and grouped with a collection of similarly scheduled enthusiasts, then led to a sealed holding chamber adjacent to the refectory. It isn't exactly clear what happens in this chamber, but one way or another you are cleansed of whatever contaminants may be sticking to your skin or clothing. If there were some equivalent vacuum-sealed room dedicated to the eradication of moral taints, we would live far better lives than we do. After some few minutes of purification, the small group of devotees is admitted into the refectory by a side door, entering the rectangular space in as pollutant-free a condition as

they will ever experience in our world of automobile exhaust and factory smoke; and to their left, as they set foot on the sacred refectory pavement, illuminated in all its glory, is Giovanni Donato da Montorfano's *Crucifixion*.

But of course the game is up. My readers are perfectly aware that to the right of that entering group of pilgrims, on the wall facing Giovanni Donato's fresco, visible through the intervening layers of painstakingly filtered air, is *Il Cenacolo* itself. One only gets a few minutes with Leonardo's masterpiece. That's not much time in which to gain an understanding of Western civilization. How many avid seekers want to devote precious moments to a consideration of the Donato *chef d'oeuvre*? No one will learn much about the rebirth of classical values, about proportion and perspective, or about the psychological intricacies of a human being's emotional makeup by squandering some portion of one's allotted number of gazes on the *Crucifixion*. It is clearly an affectation to pretend indifference to *The Last Supper*. Are we willing to suffer the pretentious individual who mentions that, oh yes, he dropped by Santa Maria delle Grazie the other day just to see once again Giovanni Donato's superb fresco?

Many other Italian artists fall into what we may call the Giovanni Donato da Montorfano category, and we are concerned here with one of them, a Florentine fresco painter by the name of Bernardino Poccetti. Or rather, he is Bernardino Barbatelli detto il Poccetti, sometimes known as Bernardino delle Grottesche, or delle Facciate, or delle Muse, or multiple variations on these alternatives. He was born in 1542. He was born in 1548. He was born in 1553. Depends on whom you ask. Stefania Vasetti, whose brief monograph titled *Bernardino Poccetti e gli Strozzi* is one of the few existing studies of the artist, opts for 1553, but nowhere else have I seen that date mentioned. 1548 garners the largest amount of support, and some accounts even offer a specific day (26 Agosto is popular), but there is no unanimity on this point. Comfortingly, there does appear to be agreement on the year of Poccetti's death, 1612, though dates in both October and November have been given for his demise. Thus he lived for 70 years, or maybe 64 years, or possibly 59 years. The difference doesn't much matter to us, though that extra decade or so would doubtless have meant a great deal to Poccetti himself. Ten additional years, at three meals per day, would have given him 10,956 more dining experiences, or maybe 10,959, depending on when leap year fell. The alert reader might wonder whether or not leap years figured in Poccetti's life,

and the answer is that they did. Julius Caesar was the driving force behind the creation of leap year in the first century BC, realizing that something needed to be done about the fact that a year is actually 365.242 days. The incorporation of a February 29 every four years presents an additional problem, in that it adds approximately three extra days to the calendar every 400 years. This difficulty has been addressed by omitting leap year from every century year not evenly divisible by four hundred, a fact with no bearing on Poccetti's gustatory experience, since 1600, nicely divisible by four hundred, did include a leap year, as did our more recent 2000.

Getting back to Poccetti: he was born in Florence, presumably in the neighborhood of San Frediano, unless he was born near Florence in San Marino di Valdelsa. He trained with the sixteenth-century Florentine painter Michele Tosini, but biographical entries on Poccetti can be confusing on this point, since Tosini himself learned his craft under Ridolfo Ghirlandaio, and thereafter was often called Michele Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio, or Michele di Ridolfo, or simply Michele Ghirlandaio. In any case, Poccetti, who also studied for a stretch in Rome, went on to become one of Florence's leading fresco painters, whose work survives today at numerous sites in the city and elsewhere in Tuscany. We can, then, hope to know something of him from his work, which shows strong Mannerist influences, though in the end is more frequently described as naturalistic in the spirit of Santi di Tito. In fact, the Mannerist Poccetti is usually grouped with the Contra-Maniera painters in relation to the productions of his later life. In his study of *Florentine Drawings of the 16th Century*, Nicholas Turner has called Poccetti's style "difficult to characterise," and so there you have it.

Setting aside the stylistically elusive saints and madonnas he has left for us, what can we learn of Poccetti the man? Who was he? What was he like? These are hard questions to ask of Leonardo or Michelangelo, let alone of the student who labored in the studio of Michele Tosini, and there are only three straws at which we may grasp. One clue is provided by his sobriquet, assuming we can take it at face value. The verb "poccettare" means, roughly, "to go from one osteria to another, drinking from your 'gotto' while in transit." A "gotto" is a type of glass mug with a handle. It seems, in other words, that Bernardino Barbatelli developed something of a reputation for bending the elbow, or for indulging in benders, and thus became Bernardino the Gotto-Wielding Osteria Hopper, when he wasn't passing as Bernardino of

the Grotesques, or Bernardino of the Façades, or Bernardino of the Muses.

A second clue is provided by *Self Portrait with a Dog*, included in the Uffizi's captivating collection of artist self portraits. It's a dark painting, and the dog, held in the artist's lap, is not easy to identify, but appears to be some sort of pug. What can we conclude about a painter who decides to paint himself (or herself) with a dog? No doubt the dog matters to the painter. The dog is an extension of the painter's identity. Keep in mind, however, that there are self portraits with dogs, and there are self portraits with dogs. For example, if we compare Hogarth's famous *Self-Portrait with Pug-Dog* to the Poccetti rendering that preceded it by nearly 150 years, the difference is striking. Hogarth's dog sits stiffly before its master, adjacent to a pile of leather-bound books and a palette, the tool of the painter's trade that displays Hogarth's beloved rococo line swirling across its surface. It's as if Hogarth is saying to us, "Observe. I have a statuesque pug dog, I have leather-bound books, I have a richly-oiled palette from which I produce energized lines that coil back upon themselves." The pug dog isn't looking at us. Hogarth is. Quite counter to this approach, Poccetti is holding his dog (if in fact it is *his* dog, which seems very probable). Like Hogarth, Poccetti gazes out at us, but so does his dog, and the latter comes across as a good deal more self-assured than the former. Hogarth engages us nearly straight-on, with a supremely self-contained and self-confident gaze. Poccetti depicts himself nearly in profile, obscuring one eye in darkness and barely acknowledging us with the other. His starkly highlighted face emerges sharply from deep shadows, and we are struck by the elongated, hooked nose, the sad, wistful, apologetic regard – "really, I shouldn't be bothering you with all this" – and the wrinkled white collar that never gets properly ironed. His is a visage out of El Greco. He doesn't display the dog like a statue, à la Hogarth. He holds the dog, because it comforts him to do so; because the dog is a support, confronting boldly a world that has simply been too much for the artist. Poccetti clearly needs the dog, just as he needed his gotto, its beery contents, and the restless peregrination from osteria to osteria in search of the warmth and companionship that apparently managed to elude him. Hogarth is positive he'll be remembered as the dominant English artist of his era, assured a place in the galleries of the Tate Britain. Poccetti insightfully anticipates his fate, doomed to be fleetingly glimpsed if seen at all, his flickering light cast into darkness by the blazing of his more celebrated

peers – those bright beacons sweeping out over the seas of time.

A final clue to Poccetti's character emerges from Michael Bryan's mid-nineteenth-century *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers, from the revival of the art under Cimabue, and the alleged discovery of engraving by Finiguerra, to the present time*. In his entry for "Barbatelli, Bernardino, called Poccetti," Bryan says, "It is recorded that he was of a whimsical disposition, and preferred associating with the lower orders of society, and assuming their habits and manners; while he treated the higher with insolence, or contempt." Good for Poccetti. Bryan's information leads us to modify our sense of the artist as most likely insecure and melancholic. He was "whimsical." If somewhat rueful with regard to his condition, he was at the same time bemused and capable of a healthy disdain toward those who deigned to provide him with a livelihood. Even so, one understands that contempt for one's "betters" and a penchant for "the lower orders" may well amount to the self defensiveness of a disappointed man. Unless he was simply a happy carouser, never mind all this brow-wrinkling analysis.

And how does Poccetti's position reveal itself, exactly, when we set forth through the streets of Florence in pursuit of high art? The best example is furnished by the Church of Santa Felicità, tucked away in a small piazza off the via di Guicciardini. Linked to the Vasari Corridor, this church is one of the oldest in the city, though much of its current architecture dates from the eighteenth century. To the left as one enters Santa Felicità stands the Canigiani chapel, decorated by our man Poccetti with his *Miracle of Our Lady of the Snow* (1589-90). This frescoed scene tells the fourth-century story of an elderly couple who were visited by the Virgin Mary in a dream and asked to erect a church in her honor on the Esquiline Hill in Rome. She told them to climb the hill on the following morning, where they would see the projected site of the building outlined in snow. Pope Liberius was also visited that night by the Virgin, and the next day he arrived on the hill with his entourage just as the aging husband and wife reached the same location. There they saw a large area marked out by fresh snow, and Liberius consecrated a completed basilica on that sacred spot two years later. Since the date of the utilitarian snowfall was August 5th, this narrative constituted an "alleged" miracle, though satisfactory documentation is lacking. This fact notwithstanding, pilgrims in America now flock to the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois, just across the Mississippi from St. Louis. There, among

numerous reminders of the miraculous, including a replica of the grotto at Lourdes, the faithful worship before a sixteen-foot fiberglass statue of Our Lady of the Snows, acknowledging not only the Mother of God and the wonder of snow in August, but also bearing witness to the expansion of materials available to artists in a post-industrial age.

No fiberglass for Poccetti, however. He employed water-based pigments on freshly applied plaster, illustrating the tale in the Canigiani Chapel via images of Pope, populace, and an ecstatic, foregrounded putto crowded around a blanket of white. Unfortunately, it's hard to see his work. There's a window in the chapel that throws some light, but not much, and the painted figures are soaked up by the circumambient gloom. As far as one can determine, it's quite a good depiction, somewhat cluttered perhaps, yet full of movement and the pleasing illusion of dimensionality. Nevertheless, like the Donato *Crucifixion*, Poccetti's effort is ignored. This is because, if we turn to the right upon entering Santa Felicità, we almost immediately confront Brunelleschi's Barbadori-Capponi Chapel, decorated by Pontormo, with help from his student Bronzino, and completed in 1528. It isn't going too far to say that Pontormo's oil-on-wood *Deposition* over the altar – mannered, elegant, flowing, tormented, spatially indeterminate, physiologically impossible, surprisingly sharp in its soft details, and brilliantly pastel – is one of the masterpieces of Florentine Renaissance art. Along with his adjacent fresco of the *Annunciation* and the four tondi of the Evangelists in the pendentives (where Bronzino's hand seems evident), Pontormo's chapel renders the trials and tribulations of life well worth it, even if life sometimes involves bearing the son of God, dying on a cross for the sins of others, or writing about the whole business. What chance for poor Poccetti, a fine artist but most assuredly mortal? Of course, unlike its Poccetti-decorated companion, the Capponi Chapel is radiantly lit, as long as the viewer purchases a few precious minutes of illumination by feeding coins into a box.

While his destiny as the “other” artist is most evident at Santa Felicità, Poccetti's largely invisible omnipresence haunts Florence. Tourists visit Santa Maria Novella to see works by such greats as Uccello, Masaccio, Giotto, Orcagna, Filippino Lippi and Domenico Ghirlandaio, but Poccetti contributed to the painting of the church's Chiostro Grande in the 1580s. San Marco is dominated by the frescoes of Fra Angelico, but Poccetti assisted in decorating the Cloister of Sant'Antonio there in 1602. Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti features the ceramic tondi of

Andrea della Robbia (many in the form of nineteenth-century copies), but Poccetti plied his art there too, creating, regrettably, a *Massacre of the Innocents*, one detail of which is available to contemporary consumers on either a coffee mug or a necktie, your choice. He also painted next door at Santissima Annunziata, whose Mannerists of note include Rosso Fiorentino, Andrea del Sarto, and again Pontormo. In 1608 he frescoed the Room of Bona in the Pitti Palace, and earlier he executed pastoral scenes in the first chamber of the Boboli Gardens' Buontalenti grotto, along with the stunning black and gold sgraffiti on the façade of Buontalenti's Palazzo di Bianca Cappello. The church and former convent of Santa Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi in Borgo Pinti features some of Poccetti's finest frescoes in the Cappella del Giglio, though the young scholars who now frequent the liceo housed in this complex seem more concerned with their cigarettes and their scooters than with the legacy left by our Counter Mannerist, and the tourists who visit are in search of Perugino's tripartite *Crucifixion and Saints* in the chapter house. Quite clearly Poccetti is everywhere in Florence, even as he is somehow nowhere, and his unheralded hand is present outside the city center as well, most notably at the Certosa di Firenze in Galluzzo, a Carthusian (now Cistercian) monastery, where the artist's frescoes depicting the *Funeral Rites and Ascension of Saint Bruno* dominate the Church of San Lorenzo. My postcard reproduction of Bruno's beatific elevation toward a triumphant Christ, purchased at the monastery gift shop, misspells Poccetti's name on the back.

Some scholars of the period are puzzled by this habit of overlooking Poccetti. In her monograph on the artist, Stefania Vasetti writes, “Il Barbatelli, fecondissimo artista, ha goduto di una singolare fortuna critica. Chi volesse approfondirne la conoscenza si accorgerà come a tanta abbondanza di opere non corrisponda un altrettanto intenso interesse critico.” So then, an abundance of work does not necessarily correspond to intense critical interest. Put another way, the man has frescoes all over the place and nobody pays him any mind. The aforementioned Michael Bryan notes that “Pietro da Cortona used to express his astonishment that [Poccetti] was in his time less esteemed than he merited; and Mengs never visited Florence without going to study him, diligently searching after his works.” To be valued by Raphael Mengs, despite this notable German's early leanings toward Neoclassicism, is surely strong testimony to Poccetti's claims on our attention, to say nothing of Pietro da Cortona's High Baroque astonishment.

In her catalogue entry on a Poccetti drawing in the Catalan Collection, Catherine Goguel calls her subject “the foremost specialist of religious narratives in cloisters and church interiors in Florence and all of Tuscany during the years immediately before and after 1600.”

Today, Poccetti’s status is best summarized by the monumental, two-volume treatise on *The Art of Florence*, co-authored by Glenn Andres, John Hunisak, and A. Richard Turner. In this 1,311-page, lavishly illustrated documentation of Florentine art, Bernardino Poccetti is mentioned on just two occasions. He is briefly cited as responsible for “the illusionistic frescoed landscapes” alluded to above, to be found in the first chamber of Bernardo Buontalenti’s Boboli Gardens grotto; and his 1587 pen-and-sepia drawing of the façade of the Basilica di Santa Maria dei Fiore is reproduced, both in its entirety and in a detail that features the Duomo’s lower level of sculpture. This drawing is now part of the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo’s collection, so Poccetti is represented at that important locale too; but only because his drawing is the last available depiction of the original Arnolfo di Cambio façade, before it was demolished and replaced, immediately after Poccetti’s timely rendering. In other words, Poccetti, as a painter in his own right, is completely excluded from a 1,300-plus page study of his city’s art, materializing only inadvertently because of our interest in Buontalenti’s grotto and Arnolfo di Cambio’s vision of the great Florence Cathedral, now exhibiting a front that dates from the second half of the nineteenth century, thereby quite thoroughly obscuring its Arnolfian origins. Such a lamentable situation would be understandable if little of Poccetti’s work had survived, and in fact this is the case with his paintings on canvas; but his frescoes are a central and extensive part of the modern city’s Renaissance infrastructure. You don’t get far in John the Baptist’s town without running into an image from the hand or studio of that whimsical imbiber, canine fancier, and lover of the lower orders, Bernardino Barbatelli, detto Il Poccetti.

At this point you may be wondering why this systematic neglect of Poccetti matters. Why should anyone care? Specifically, why should *I* care? Well, as with so many (but not all) things, there is a reason – in this case a personal reason. My wife and I are not serious collectors of art; we have neither the wall space, the floor space, nor the money. That said, we do enjoy the odd *objet*, and, as luck would have it, a single example of the European Old Master Drawing has found its way into what passes for our

“collection.” It will not astonish you to learn that our sole *exemplum* within this classification is a small sketch by Bernardino Poccetti.

It is a very small sketch, described in our bill of sale as “black and sanguine chalk,” 9 x 4 inches. (**Fig. 1**) The “black and sanguine” part seems pretty accurate, although the black is shaded toward grey, and if we take “sanguine” to mean blood red, then I’d say the highlights are more of a light rust in color. I don’t really understand those 9 x 4 dimensions, which fail to correspond to any principle by which the existing object might be measured. I put the original sheet itself at 3 3/4” wide by 5 1/4” high. Small. Someone, at some stage in the life of the drawing, mounted it on heavy paper and bordered it in gold. By the time it reached us it had also been matted and set off by a gilded, nineteenth-century French frame, slightly the worse for wear but attractive in that pleasantly stressed way that suggests an appealing antiquity. There is a collector’s stamp in the lower left corner of the original sheet, and another collector’s mark, it would appear, at the lower right of the heavier backing paper. The work is signed in the upper left corner: “Bernard : Poccetti.” Above the colon something else has been written and cropped. Maybe “(idino),” thereby completing our artist’s first name? It’s not clear.

You will readily see that our image is bolstered by text, and as is so often the case when language rears its head, this text prompts a range of speculations and uncertainties. The signature, to begin with, is doubtless a later addition. While no graphologist, I would wager that the handwriting style is not that of the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Furthermore, this is a quick sketch, not even a polished drawing let alone a finished work, and artists don’t often sign such slight efforts. We can assume, therefore, that somebody, at some point, added Poccetti’s name, and so this particular study *might* be from the hand of nearly anyone. The style is consistent with Poccetti’s, but there is, at bottom, a certain sameness to many Italian Old Master drawings, so positive identification is difficult. On the other hand, it should be evident from the foregoing discussion that if a dealer or collector hoped to enhance a drawing’s value by placing an artist’s name on it, Poccetti would not be the obvious choice. A conniver wishing to engage in such deception might not want to reach all the way to Leonardo, but an Annibale Carracci, for example, would bring a higher price than anything by our unheeded friend. A best guess is that the name was eventually attached simply as a means of identifying this known quantity for what it is: a Poccetti sketch.

Provenance is another matter. Collector stamps are an odd phenomenon, attesting as they do to ownership – this piece of paper is *mine*, and let there be no doubt about it. The “CBG” at the bottom left of the sheet alludes to Christian David Ginsburg (1831-1914), a British doctor of law who lived in Middlesex. He put his stamp directly onto the drawing. Partly I feel his act of hubris desecrates the artifact most unnecessarily; partly I see the stamp as, curiously enough, an integral portion of a visual document that records not only the conception of Bernardino Poccetti, but also a segment of its own circuitous history, following the moment when the artist chalked out his idea. I was struck by the fact that the San Francisco dealer who sold us the drawing supplied with it both xeroxed reproductions of other Poccetti studies and a copy of the page from *Les Marques De Collections De Dessins & D'Estampes* that documented Dr. Ginsburg's impress. We needed to be assured of the authenticity of the drawing; but equally we needed to be assured of the validity of this stamp and the importance of the collector who wielded it. The other mark at the lower right on the backing sheet is more modest, and has been written rather than stamped. It reads “Amo,” or possibly “Ame.” A later collector? Something to do with love? I have no idea. Neither did our dealer.

But there's more. Pencilled on the old mount of the drawing were the words, “fr. Sir J. Reynold's Coll.” Again, this information could have been spuriously added, and yet it is not hard to imagine that our sketch was once in the possession of Sir Joshua Reynolds himself. Reynolds' renowned collection of drawings, especially focusing on Dutch and Italian masters, was dispersed in 1793, a year after the great portrait painter's death, by the London dealer Antonio Poggi. Reynolds was familiar with Poccetti's work, as we know because he mentions the artist twice in a notebook dating from 1752, when he was visiting Florence. This vellum-bound notebook is now in the British Museum, whereas the Poccetti drawing is now in St. Paul, Minnesota, having migrated to England from Italy, perhaps via Reynolds, eventually into the Ginsburg collection, and ultimately into the hands of a private collector in San Francisco, from whom our dealer acquired it and sold it to us. Works of art exist in time, but they also exist in space, and their movements through space can be more intriguing than their temporal histories. Phidias might wonder, 2,500 years later, at the migration of parts of his Parthenon frieze from Athens to the very museum that holds Reynold's notebook, and that also holds, as it happens, multiple drawings by Poccetti. The latter artist would

be less taken aback by the presence of his quick sketch in the Upper Midwest, since I'm sure he wouldn't recall doing it. If indeed he did do it, and if indeed Reynolds collected it. The material world surrounding us is harder to pin down than we might think. I can't even swear the frame is nineteenth-century French. As for Poccetti, while he would have long forgotten the drawing, he might be very surprised and puzzled by the Upper Midwest.

Finally, what about the subject of this sketch? We see the head of a woman from behind, though not exactly from behind. She is turning to her left, enough to afford us a peek at one well-shaped ear, a cheek, a wedge of eye, and a nose that is either enticingly pert or just stumpy, I can't tell which. Her hair has been hurriedly assembled in braided coils, and is held in place (sort of) by a scrunchy. Or did they have scrunchies back then? They had leap year, so they may have had scrunchies. She is observing something we can't see, nor can we quite see her; but we can almost see her. Poccetti is reputed to have drawn studies for nearly all of the figures in his frescoes. I can trace no precise frescoed figure for which this woman is a model, and yet, in a sense, she is a model for an endless number of Poccetti figures. This is because, like many another Renaissance painter, Poccetti tended to depict a central event bracketed by two groups of enraptured people, one group staring in at the event from canvas left, and the other staring in from canvas right. People whose job it is to stare in at the tableau before them inevitably present the backs of their heads to us, while often turning just sufficiently to expose one side of their faces, a position they must assume if they hope to witness a crucifixion, or an ascension, or the Pope's discovery of miraculous snow in August.

Back to that remarkable snow, there is one dynamic female figure in contrapposto, occupying center stage in Santa Felicità's Canigiani chapel, the back of whose braided head definitely echoes our woman, despite the unavoidable fact that she is turned fully away from us, so that we see nothing of her face. Twist the visual evidence as I will, I cannot link drawing and fresco, except in a general way. Without question our lass with the scrunchy is representative of the type found regularly at the outer edges of Poccetti's compositions, called upon to marvel at the dramatic enactments of others. She is, in this respect, representative of most of us who go through life as indispensable spectators, reacting to the excitement of which we're not quite a part. Like her creator himself, she fills out the scenes that border the major action; she's there, but she's never center stage. At Santa Felicità Pontormo

takes us into the slowly pulsing heart of Christ's birth and death, while on the fringes of his predecessor's splendid vision Poccetti modestly reproduces that white blanket of summer snow, before gathering up his dog and heading off to the nearest osteria to bond with the lower classes. My plea to you is this: when next you circulate through the churches, museums, and convents of the House of Medici's city, the home of Dante, Giotto, and Machiavelli, take time to look closely at the margins. Whether you're aware of it or not, you are surrounded by walls, ceilings, and

façades upon which Bernardino Barbatelli has set his thus far indelible mark. Look beyond the glare of the big names for a change. Notice him. Appreciate him. Understand the ways in which he and his marginal men and women, faces turned partially and tantalizingly away from you, are your comrades on life's highway. If you pay sufficient attention to them, they will emerge, triumphant at last, into the light of Florence's bright day. Also, the value of our drawing might increase.

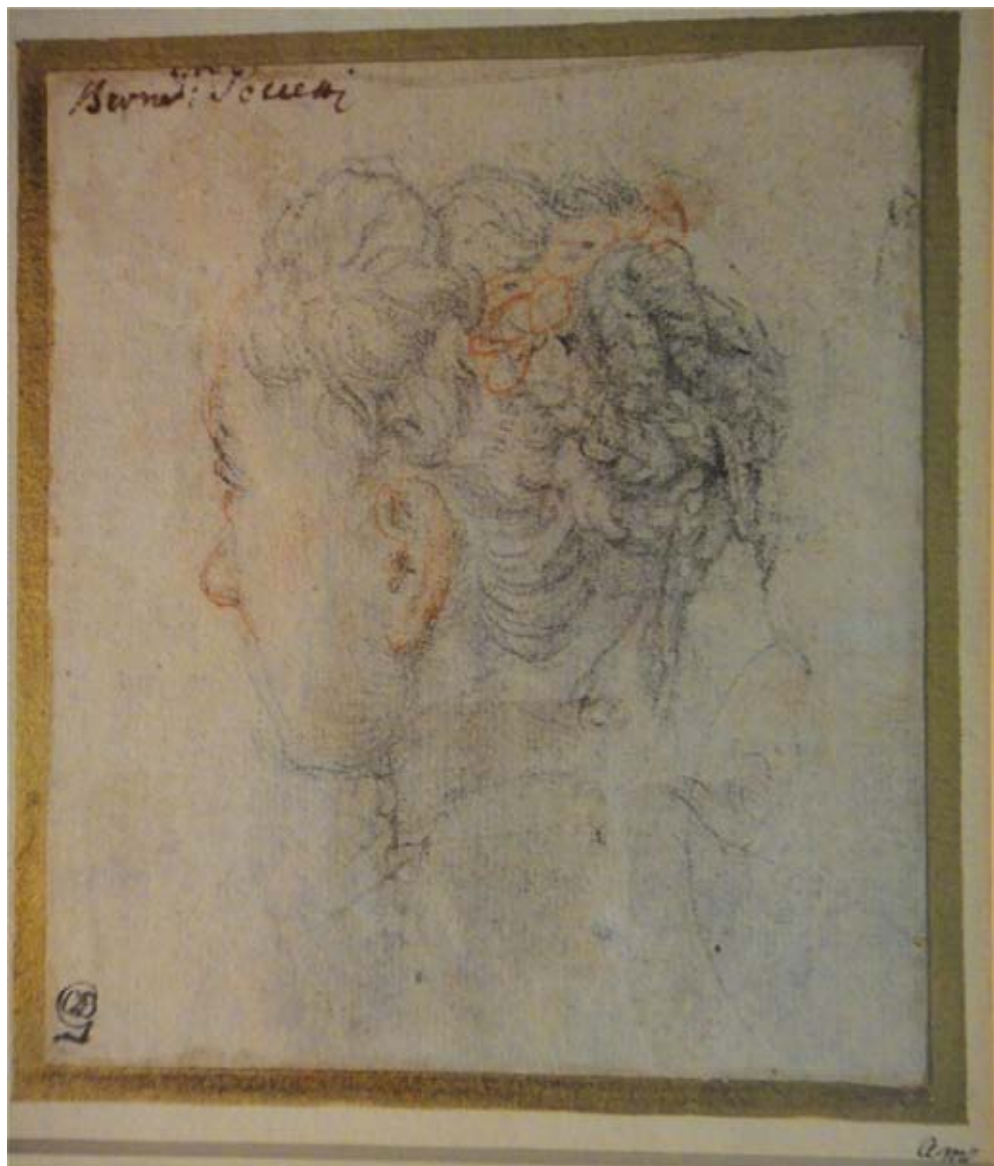


FIGURE 1. Bernardino Poccetti, *Portrait of a Young Woman*. Private Collection. Photo: author.

Part II – The City

Janet Smith's and Machiavelli's Florence

Then Back to the Future



Salvatore Bizzarro

As an art historian married to a Tuscan, Janet Smith chose Florence as a place to live for its uniqueness and remarkable appeal to any lover of art. Working for three decades for the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, she eventually decided to retire, leaving a legacy as one of the most qualified coordinators of that successful United States academic program in the city on the Arno.

When I first met Janet in Florence, I had become the Director of the Florence and The Arts of London and Florence Programs in the academic year 1986-87 (that designation would be later changed). I had just married a year before and my son Giancarlo was born in Italy in July prior to the beginning of my year-long residency in Florence. My first impressions of Janet were that she was brilliant, stolid, enormously capable, and frequently harsh with people who thought they knew more than they actually did. She was also hard on hypocritical persons and intolerant of thoughtless ones. In many ways, it was difficult for people not to be aware of the fact that Janet could unwittingly make them feel uneasy because she was so erudite and so culturally rigorous.

At the time I did not know Florence well, as I was a southern Italian, transplanted to the United States, who had visited the city of Dante only a few times as a child. I remember Janet was very helpful in giving me hints about the city's layout and how to deal with inquisitive students who asked a myriad of questions about where to find social places such as restaurants and discotheques, or famous landmarks. I returned to Florence in 2001-2002, again working with Janet and teaching in the ACM programs, when the crimes of 9/11 occurred. Those terrorist actions caused the historical earthquake which changed the world and the way we travel, and whose epicenter was the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York.

My wife and I immediately became involved with Janet in reassuring our students and commiserating with them. I could not help but notice a great deal

of care on the part of Janet for the students. She loved being with kids, my son included, who by now, at age 15, thought of himself as a college student, while struggling with the Italian language in the Liceo Scientifico where we had enrolled him so he could learn the language well.

Janet seemed like a mother who had a vivid sense of what makes children feel safe, even when confronted with tragedy. Not a biological mother, for sure, but a caring teacher and surrogate parent whenever either role was demanded of her. Students trusted her, even when she was critical of their papers or their performance in the classroom, asking them why in the world they would do what whatever it was they had done. Janet spent hours on students' papers, making them feel intelligent and secure even when they fell short.

But I am here to talk about Janet's Florence and the Florence of Machiavelli. That year of the new millennium students had arrived there with an inflated notion of who they were and what they would find. Janet made the world of art they were seeing for the first time much more meaningful from a historical and broad cultural perspective. She also discussed travel in Italy, plays seen, art exhibitions visited, and classroom conversations which, with time, would become more and more personal.

Modern-day Florence was a mixture of squalor and magnificence, and Janet knew that no matter how inimitable the city was for art, without reflecting on its history, it would have been difficult to truly comprehend it. As a gifted lecturer, Janet made the history of the Medici and the city come alive. One almost wondered if she did not live in Florence herself during the Renaissance era. One time, reading excerpts from Machiavelli's *Prince*, Janet commented that in his political writings and plays Machiavelli's Florence was vivid in all its splendor, defects and mores. She seemed to want us to know the Florence of the time of Machiavelli as though we had experienced it ourselves.

She wanted students to interpret it correctly, trying to make them see something that did not actually happen to them, as though they remembered it. Most of us tried, but we could not conjure the past as Janet herself saw it, and in the long run not even Janet was able to succeed in making the students and me see what she was seeing so clearly.

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Sitting now at my cluttered desk, I see a piece on Machiavelli I had contributed to the Brill Series: “Debauchery, Mayhem and Sex in Machiavelli’s *Mandragola*.” In it, I analyze the story of Callimaco and Lucrezia, and how upon Callimaco’s return to Florence after a twenty-year absence from Paris he falls in love with the devoted Catholic wife of the mindless Nicia. I look on my bookshelves and pick up a copy of Machiavelli’s play, so that I can relax in my rocker and read it for enjoyment once more. But when I open the book, out falls a picture of Janet in front of Santa Maria Novella. She is near the Pensione Ottaviani, where the ACM students usually stay. Looking at it, I say to myself that it is strange, the power of certain pictures. At first sight they capture your eyes. Then they become fixed in your mind and get confused with other thoughts. As I continue reading, Janet’s picture vanishes from my desk, where I had seen it moments before. I do not give it another thought, but as I read further, Janet herself appears within the pages of Machiavelli’s play, walking now in a city without cars or tourists.

She is now inexplicably in the middle of the sixteenth century, in Via della Scala, walking in the direction of Santa Maria Novella Church. Looking at the religious icons all around her, Janet comes to the realization that the Catholic Church has traditionally sided with the powerful at the expense of the poor. Politics in the city are corrupt and full of intrigue. She quickly becomes aware that she has been thrown into this other world beyond her will, just like a newly born baby who had nothing to do with coming into existence. But what she sees around her, as part of another century, seems to her all too familiar. With a sense of déjà vu, before entering the church to see Masaccio’s Trinity, she runs into Machiavelli.

Without even knowing it, she finds herself discussing with him the word *virtù*, having difficulties rendering it as “virtue”, and thinking of all the other implications such a word had back in the sixteenth century, rendered at times as valor, other times as talent, ability, strategy, resource, strength, courage, capaciousness,

perseverance, intelligence, ingenuity, but for all that, still needing *fortuna*. She is in Florence, still thinking like a twenty-first century woman, translating Italian into English, a foreigner in the anachronistic world she is visiting. While Machiavelli does not hide his admiration for those able to fool others by craft or design, so they can find a solution, no matter by what means, to the most difficult situations, Janet becomes disgusted with the ingenuity the word *virtù* seems to suggest. She is determined not to be fooled, as Nicia is in *La Mandragola*, by a smart thinker the likes of Machiavelli.

This first encounter is rather awkward for both, with Machiavelli marveling at the contemplation of such an eccentric human being.

**Machiavelli:** I never expected a complete stranger to come into my world as you did. Who are you?

**Janet:** Janet Smith (offering her hand), I am from the United States of America.

**Machiavelli:** I love what you are wearing, it seems so modern. I have never seen anything like it around here.

**Janet:** It is called a dress, it’s made out of cotton, and is best in the hot and humid climate of Florence. (Looking crossly at Machiavelli) I have been reading your play, and it seems a bit sexist and highly corrupting. I am very Kierkegardian when it comes to marriage, and am upset at the behavior of Callimaco, always seeming to need to fulfill his sexual desires. He reminds me of Silvio Berlusconi. Although I must admit he seems to have really fallen in love, whereas Berlusconi only engages in sex to augment his ego and his macho image.

**Machiavelli:** Ah, but who are these Kierkegaard and Berlusconi? Never heard of them.

**Janet:** Kierkegaard is a famous clergyman and exponent of the dictum that when one marries, he/she does so over and over every day in a relationship that is not static but always dynamic. Berlusconi is the leader of Italy several

centuries down the road, a world unknown to you physically, but that you have figured out with your “the end justifies the means”. Berlusconi is as corrupt as can be, and thrives on taking advantage of young, under age girls, who are vulnerable and whom he can attack and buy with his money. He also uses his money to avoid going to prison for crimes committed by buying corrupt judges. He favors the rich over the poor, and has no sense of social justice.

**Machiavelli:** So, you also believe then that the end justifies the means?

**Janet:** Not at all, on the contrary, I think that the end is rotten if the means are rotten. My husband Giovanni, who is a great chef, always says that you cannot make a good salad if you do not have good ingredients: a tomato, an onion, lettuce and endive, virgin olive oil and vinegar. If the tomato is rotten, for example, the salad will not taste good and it makes the salad also rotten. To have a good end, all the means need to be good, just as in a salad.

**Machiavelli:** Well, let’s dispense with salads, and the other two you just mentioned, although I must say that Berlusconi interests me more than Kierkegaard. I think I know what is upsetting you. You think that humor and politics do not mix. It is only because I am trying to show the contrast between the moral degradation of the city with the breakdown of law and order and its corrupt institutions that I chose to use a comic element in the play *Mandragola*. So far as I am concerned, there is no incompatibility between humor and politics. Humor in itself does not preclude a socially responsible teaching.

**Janet** (who is not convinced): I like some jokes, but not ethnic jokes, and I also see you use satire in your writings. I prefer satire to humor because satire is perhaps the best way for registering social criticism in the arts.

Janet and Machiavelli do not come to an agreement. For Janet, Machiavelli’s comic technique subverts his desire to raise the public consciousness about the most pressing issues of sixteenth-century Florence. So, she turns her back to him and leaves, preferring to find a shade tree in a marvelous garden by the Pitti Palace, the Giardini di Boboli, than to be with a presumptuous writer from another time dimension.

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All of a sudden, another displacement takes place. Janet is no longer in Florence proper, with its gilded Baptistery doors deserving of a saint like John, or the strong, serene Romanesque lines of a San Miniato. Instead she finds herself in the play being performed on stage at the Oricellari Gardens, noticing that the message the actors are conveying is much more complex than what she had at first imagined.

Characters go in and out of the five-act comedy, at times looking at Janet and her “preposterous” clothing with a jaundiced eye, but paying attention to their lines and their performance. Janet immediately dislikes Ligurio, a parasitical human being and profligate glutton (although she, herself, loves good food), but more so because Ligurio is easily corrupted with food or money, something that could never happen to her. She is intolerant of Nicia for his foolhardiness. By now she begins to enjoy the infectiously humorous comedy in its proper setting with a rowdy crowd of spectators that laugh and hurl epithets at the actors, not being sure whether Machiavelli is writing with the indignation of a moralist or the diversion of one who thinks that in such a tarnished society there is no remedy worth the trouble, and so it’s best to let things unfold as they please.

Fra Timoteo is by far the most interesting character for Janet, representing in an ambiguous fashion the values of the Catholic Church while, at the same time, setting his own price for his collaboration with Callimaco in the conquest of Lucrezia and the freedom she needs from her religious upbringing and her ineffectual husband.

If the story is simply telling of the love of Callimaco for Lucrezia, and how she slowly begins to find her own voice as a woman controlled by a worthless husband and a betraying church, then what Lucrezia is ultimately interested in, is true love and happiness. Janet sees that it is the vitality of the characters that makes the play succeed. The action, swift and circular, shows emotions that at one time or another are felt by us all, no matter in which century we find ourselves.

Janet's admiration for Machiavelli begins to slowly take shape in her mind, as she sees correspondence with what the play purports to transmit to the viewer and her way of thinking: the mockery and ridicule of stupidity, and the triumph of ingenuity and human intelligence, with good doses of humor. The play also serves as a condemnation of the strict, hypocritical moral code prevalent at the time, with the acquiescence and the inducement of a profligate clergy. Janet realizes that the play also succeeds due to the velocity of Machiavelli's rhetoric, which runs full throttle in a continual state of intellectual marvel.

Fra Timoteo dupes Lucrezia's indecisive husband so that she can be led into the arms of Callimaco. As the friar enters the stage, it is as if a miracle is about to occur, or as Lucrezia calls it, a "misterio." Apparently, the prevaricator cleric who traffics in the sacred has lost site of the "mystery" of the sacraments and is ready to sell his services as part of his work.

Janet is amused that Timoteo plays the role of critic in counterpoint to a faith in decline, which allows him to interpret the phenomenon of human reproduction with his mediocre and commercial sense of pecuniary wisdom. The trick being played on Lucrezia and Nicia, whereby a surrogate lover would inseminate her but would soon after die, would be all the more profitable for the friar if all turns out for the best. If Lucrezia's rigorous Catholicism needs to be silenced along with her naïveté, acts of conscience and sins are juxtaposed in the play thanks to Timoteo, with the clergyman ironically having the last words on childbearing. The play's climax and its conclusion have Nicia boasting that he, himself, has undressed the derelict chosen to be the surrogate inseminator because of Nicia's infertility (none other than Callimaco dressed up as the destitute one). Callimaco confesses to Lucrezia his love for her, and Lucrezia her happiness, and her willingness to accept that which was not of her own making, but which seemed to have come down "from Divine Providence". The play ends with Nicia playing a practical joke on himself, as he gives the key to his house to Callimaco so that he can be a habitual guest whenever the latter desires to pay a visit to Nicia and Lucrezia.

Images from other satirical plays by Goldoni, Molière and Voltaire appear before Janet's eyes, as the spectators in Florence storm the stage and embrace the actors. But Janet is looking for Nicoló, and finds him euphoric about his play's success. She tells him that Callimaco was the most likeable of his male characters (realizing also that all characters in the play, including Lucrezia and her mother, were males). Momentarily

and mentally returning to the twenty-first century, Janet, who was never someone who sympathized with discrimination, thought that she understood much better people who cross-dressed.

She tells Machiavelli that his play of intrigue and character represented the epitome of the Florentine society she had been able to observe first hand, and that his humor and vulgar joke were contained in the parameters of the reality of his time. Timoteo's sins also represented the moral decay of a corrupt Church, and explained why so many priests engaged in immoral acts, manipulated the faithful, and preyed on their ignorance. No longer on stage, but still with Machiavelli and the actors, Janet realizes that her time in the recesses of the sixteenth century is coming to an end. She needs now to return through time and space to her home, to Giovanni, her husband, and to Florence.

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As I conclude reading *La Mandragola*, Janet's picture suddenly reappears on my desk, even if it is now somewhat blurred. Closing her eyes, Janet leaps back to the future and finds herself in a pew of the Church of San Miniato, where the friars are harmonizing a Gregorian chant. The modern instability of urban life, with teeming traffic and the volatile nature of Italian society are offset by the tranquility of the unaccompanied singing. Her best memory of that other time dimension was of a Florence with about 10,000 inhabitants, a city of warriors and merchants, politicians and artists, artisans and guilds, where land was still the backbone of Florentine wealth. Within that reality, the political climate was anything but peaceful. As the affluence of Florence increased, so did the population; from Porta Romana to Porta San Frediano the city beside the river grew exponentially.

Janet was happy to be returning to her home in the northern part of Florence. The thing she missed the most, besides her conversations with Machiavelli and her continuous happiness at criticizing all that was not virtuous, was hardly the absence of tourists, who, like mosquitos, swarm Florence without pity.

Slowly she realized that her travels through time and space had not ended. She was embarking on a new journey that would end her work with the ACM in Florence, and result in losing everyday contact with her many friends acquired through the years. She would also miss working with her colleague, Gail Solberg, the ACM expert on frescoes in Italy, and most of all being with students.

Not all, however, is gloomy. Finally, she has more time to spend with the gentle Giovanni, and finds refreshing the absence of tourists now that she is in her small apartment near the beach on the Tuscan stretch of the Tyrrhenian, where a cool sea breeze makes both of them comfortable and content to be away from the suffocating humid summer weather of the city. Even her cat, whom I see sitting in

Giovanni's favorite chair, is purring with satisfaction. This new adventure will ultimately represent her other free-fall through history, perhaps as funny as her magical entrance into that period of the High Renaissance, but at the moment tumbling wildly in the water remembering, with Giovanni, happy days of their respective youth, and sun bathing in the sand in a unique swirl of colors and nature.



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# When 'The Wild Wild West' Went to Florence\*



William Urban

This account is based on Italian newspaper stories found in the National Library in Florence in 1974-75.

"Buffalo Bill's WILD WEST" made three tours of Europe. The first (1887) was the most successful and was limited to Great Britain. The Queen and millions of Britons were thrilled and charmed by William Cody (Buffalo Bill) and his troupe of actors. His show was unusual in that all the actors played themselves- only authentic cowboys, Indians, wild horses and bison were shown- and all the episodes acted out had occurred exactly as they were replayed for the audiences. Encouraged by the reception given in England, THE WILD WEST spent 1889-1890 on the continent, and some parts of the show remained there almost continuously until the final tour of 1893.

For many Europeans this was their first encounter with the stories of the American frontier. Germans and English knew of the West through dime novels and lectures, but, unbelievable as it seems, many other Europeans had never heard of cowboys and Indians- and what many had heard, they did not believe. But they learned to believe when Buffalo Bill brought the western stories right into their towns, complete with rough cowboys, mean horses and Indians who often came directly from government prisons where they had been confined for having made war against the American army.

How these Europeans reacted to the savage West as shown by Buffalo Bill depended on the country they were visiting, but the reactions were always enthusiastic and the impressions long lasting. This was important because thereafter they interpreted western history from Buffalo Bill's presentation. Hollywood also adapted its view of the West from THE WILD WEST so that its influence later reinforced the interpretation that had become standard among Europeans. The Spaghetti Western was born on the continental tour of 1890, when THE WILD WEST was in Italy.

Although Florence was a comparatively small city in 1890, it was one of the centers of European culture. Rich in art and architecture, it basked in the knowledge that theater and opera had been born there, that Dante and Petrarch had created the Italian language there, that Leonardo da Vinci was a native son and that Galileo had taught in the university, that Michelangelo and Brunelleschi had decorated their home town with unsurpassed buildings and statues, that skilled artisans and musicians still abounded and that native cooking and wine were deservedly world famous. In the general level of culture only Paris (and perhaps Vienna, Berlin and Rome) could offer themselves for comparison. Probably nowhere was there a greater contrast to the civilization of the American West.

Florence was a sophisticated city, a city that specialized in spectacular entertainment. It was a city that had raced chariots in the city squares and built volcanos for firework displays. Tens of thousands crowded the city on holidays, and there were always tourists to visit the shrines of art and architecture. Because Florence was a sophisticated city, and a city that lived by entertaining others, it was a very hard city for visitors to entertain.

It is not surprising, therefore, that few were excited when Buffalo Bill announced that he would arrive in Florence on March 11, 1890. The success of the performances in Naples and Rome had not reached the public further north, and the billboard advertisements caused more amusement than interest. His "I'm Coming" ads most likely provoked only sallies of the famous Florentine wit. The newspaper was filled with politics, the activities of the royal family, the activities of other royal families, the crisis in Africa where Italy was trying to begin a colonial empire, and the influenza epidemic. In comparison with the visit of the La Scala Opera Company from Milan, what was a traveling group of Americans?

Fortunately an editor named Sigabetta was interested; a former student of Paolo Mantegazza, the famous

pathologist, scholar and politician who had founded the Ethnological Museum on Florence, Sigabetta was impelled by a desire to see the Indians. Making his way from the office of *La Nazione* in the center of town down the Corso (the long straight street once used for horse racing) to Piazza Beccaria (where a tower remains from the old city wall that was dismantled in the 1860's), he then went left a block to the railway freight depot (long since removed), and began making notes for the article which appeared in the evening paper:

This morning at 8:30 the special train of the Buffalo Bill Company arrived from Rome. The long train was composed of tens of cars for equipment and animals and several cars of first and second class. I saw in one covered car the famous Deadwood stage that has been attacked so many times by Redskins. A truly historical object. The sides of cracked varnish and the squashed carriage showed that it had had adventures. Once there was a time when taking a ride in the stagecoach from one place to another was likely to lead one to death. The great stagecoach, of which today only the carcass remains, was then pulled by six horses. It was the first vehicle to serve for communications in the West before the railroad.

Colonel Cody (Buffalo Bill) was among the most valiant in fighting the Redskins and driving off bandits. In one of the places that the stagecoach passed Buffalo Bill killed the Indian chief Yellow Hand in personal combat. A nephew of this chief was at the station Porta alla Croce. He had a face the same color that his uncle had only for the hand.

On another wagon one could see the wooden house, with its wheels dismantled and without its smokestack (so that it could pass through the tunnels) that served as the kitchen for the savage Indians.

There was no one at the station when the special train arrived except for some agents of the company who were interpreters for the workers. Later some people gathered at the unloading platform of the station.

Several men and women got off the first class wagon, among whom was the famous shooter, Annie Oakley.

The Mexicans got out, some in their

costumes, and then all the Indians in their picturesque fashions, wrapped in colorful blankets (carpets), with their faces almost covered. They come from all types of races- Sioux, Arrapahoe, Blackfeet, and Ogallala. Little by little they opened the blankets and one could see the color of their faces- copper, gold, chocolate. Some were of an orange color, others redish. But as for the color of the cheeks, we have some civilized people right here who could compete with the most savage.

One of the Indian chiefs spoke to me while he waited for the wagons with the horses and bison to be opened: "Please, sir, something to smoke." And I almost fell in two- I gave him two cigarettes.

There are about a hundred Indians. The chief of the Redskins told me that they were very happy. They have only two women with them- perhaps that explains why. "We have other women," he observed, "but they have returned home." It seemed to me he would have liked to have added "fortunately."

Many of the Americans who are part of the company have gone to lodge at various hotels. The savages and the other are camping on the fields of the Mint. They sleep by their horses.

One should see how fast they get from the wagons the horses, the bison, and the Texas mules- which are a marvel, twice as big as our mules. They did not need any help; they did it all alone.

The horses were gotten off by a very simple means. Four cowboys held a small iron platform and the horses ran down it from the wagons onto the street. Then the Indians each took away one, two, or three horses. The horses are small, young and unshod.

The unloading was completed within a half hour of arrival. The horses, bison, and mules, were out of the cars, led by hand here and there in the unloading area of the station by the Indians.

The morning was clear and mild. In the sun the Indians let the blankets in which they were enfolded fall half away. They were in clothes of many colors, with neck laces of strange manufacture. At first they

all looked like women. In their figures, you understand, very ugly women. Long hair, very black, parted in the middle so that it was open in front and falling back over the shoulders. Some wore long braids, like our women wear, tied with ribbons made of colored material, and finally little mirrors.

Whoever had gotten up early (if you could call it early) and was along the Viale Eugenio or Piazza Beccaria a little after nine could have enjoyed a rare and picturesque spectacle.

Having finished the uploading, the Indians jumped on their horses, the Mexicans with them, with their pants of bison skin and their large hats, and some cowboys, and this cavalcade in unusual costumes, each horseman in addition to his mount leading by the bridle two, three or four others, went from the station of Porta della Croce to the Prato della Zecca. Among the horses, about two hundred in number, half mounted were the bison. Groups of cowboys on foot ran and yelled some words of American slang. The wide road was almost deserted.

I assure you it was, on that beautiful clear morning, a spectacle worthy of being seen by an actor.

Partly because he was a great showman, and partly because he was constantly short of ready money, Cody was expert at getting free publicity. No doubt about it, he was one of the greatest publicity men of all time. Even though few Europeans read newspapers, the press was still the best means of reaching the public. Therefore, Cody cultivated editors, educating and entertaining them with his stories about the wild West. After an interview with Buffalo Bill, an editor usually hurried to write a colorful article about the American celebrity who had come to town. This article appearing on the day of the first show would support the publicity campaign that began with the colorful posters and concluded with a parade up the main streets. As a further inducement to the editor, Cody would pay for an ad and promise to take out more (not mentioning that each day it would be a smaller ad until by the last day one had to hunt to find it).

Anyone who had ever tried to “cultivate” an editor knows that it can be a difficult task. How did Cody do it? Well, let’s hear again from the Florentine editor of *La Nazione*, who wrote this remarkable story in his March 13 issue:

At noon an embassy composed of two Indians, among whom was the famous Bear of the Rockies, “Rocky”, two cowboys, and one “trap man” came to announce that the colonel would receive me at the “camp” in his tent, or in his drawing room at the hotel. I preferred to meet him in his drawing room at the hotel. I met him there with his best friend, Crawford, an American journalist well known in England and France for his book., *The Life of The English Judged by an American*. Colonel William Cody is a very amiable man, with very simple manners, who dressed normally except for his big green hat that was folded in the manner of the Texas cowboys. Buffalo Bill resembled in the principal lines of his face, in his look, in his long hair, and even in his stature, a famous man, beloved in all Italy, Professor Paolo Mantegazza. He has the same lively expression tempered by sweetness, and almost the same tone of voice. The honorable Mantegazza honored me by a friendship above my merits and so I remember him with a deep reverence. And today, having spoken with Buffalo Bill, I had the impression of speaking with someone I already knew. The similarity, I repeat, is striking except that Buffalo Bill is much taller.

The life of the Colonel William Cody.... Here I stop. The Colonel is a General and Brigadier General of the Volunteer Army. And like all the famous men of the United States, he has followed the most varied professions. “Understand,” he told me this morning, “that President Garfield was a carter, sailor, teacher in a college, soldier; I was a cowboy, stagedriver, pony express rider when there wasn’t a railroad in the West. I went from Red Bluff to Truckee, a distance of 122 kilometers (73 miles) a long way, dangerous, lonely, and I had to cross the North Platte River which was 800 meters wide (730 yards) and, although not deep, it had three meters of water in places. I made 24 kilometers (15 miles) an hour on my horse, including changing mounts and time to refresh myself. Once, arrived

in Trucky, I learned that the courier who was to have made the second stage, which was 138 kilometers (83 miles), had been killed the night before. They asked me if I would do his run. I accepted, and reached Rocky Ridge at the assigned time. I made 531 kilometers (318 miles) without stopping other than to eat and change horses. And that was the most extraordinary ride the Pony Express ever made.”

Buffalo Bill does not resemble at all the large posters of him we see attached around. In those pictures he had the air of a fierce toothpuller, while, I repeat, his attitude, his look is full of simplicity and good will. He does not speak or understand anything but English, but speaks with great correctness, even a little slowly. Perhaps an act of courtesy done for his listener.

I asked about his youth.

“Ah.” He answered, “I broke off. I began to talk about my life, and suddenly told about my ride, which is much talked about in America. Look.” He let me see a copy of Buell, *History of the Prairie*, at the page which told the ride made by Cody in his youth. He reclosed the book with a certain sadness and said, “I was born at Scott, in the State of Iowa (he did not say when, but the Colonel appears to be more than half way through the number of years our century has gone.) My father, Issac Cody, emigrated to the frontier of Kansas. He was killed in the frontier wars while I was a boy. No use speaking about that war- everyone knows the story. The Whites killed one another over a disputed territory. The Redskins sought to massacre the Whites who were trying to occupy their lands, to bring civilization there. I grew up during these wars. From youth I was habituated to going on horseback and to use firearms. I accompanied General Albert Sydney Johnstone in his expedition to Utah; I was guided to a group of emigrants; I hunted for a living; and I competed against some professionals, among whom was Comstock, in hunting buffalo. In one hunting competition I killed 69

Buffalo. Comstock killed only 46. I was scout for the 5<sup>th</sup> regiment of cavalry, then commanded by General E. Carr. And I could show you in some books my name in the history of the military actions of that regiment. But you’re in a hurry... I’ll tell you that I was the chief scout, ordered to protect the construction of the Union Pacific. When I was hired to furnish meat for the workers who were occupied in building the Kansas Pacific, I killed 4862 buffalo in one season. My nickname of Buffalo Bill comes from that. Bill is the diminutive of William.”

Apparently by this time Cody had his listener well hypnotized. There had been a time or two when he nearly lost him, as one can tell by reading the Italian text from which this is translated, such as when he started to skip over the war for Bleeding Kansas and when he was tempted to tell more about the 5<sup>th</sup> regiment. But Cody was watching his interviewer and told him the type of stories he obviously wanted to hear. Also, he or Crawford saw to it that all the names were correctly spelled, and wherever the Italian language lacked a word, it was usually left in English, in the expectation that the type of person who read *La Nazione* would probably understand it. That was probably right- only a well-educated minority ever bought a newspaper. But that type of person bought the high-priced seats. The interview continued:

Here Buffalo Bill gave me an issue of *The New York Herald*, where there was a long article in his praise by the famous general who had long fought against the Redskins, A. Carr. He translated a bit. This is what it said of Buffalo Bill:

“He has shown himself to be modest and without pretense. He is a gentleman in acts and in character. He has none of the typical frontiersman. He knows how to keep his dignity when it is necessary, and was never heard to use his knife or revolver, or mix in a brawl if he could avoid it. His ability in following the tracks of the Redskins, or in hunting, or in finding lost animals is extraordinary. In the summer of 1876 Cody accompanied me into the Black Hills where he killed Yellow Hand.”

I asked the Colonel (I should say General Cody but I follow his common title) to tell me about his fight with the

head chief of the savages, with Yellow Hand. A head called a hand- do you see the joke?

The Colonel answered me very simply. "Generals Merritt and Carr, for whom I was scout, had done prodigies of valor against the hostile tribes. Suddenly the news came of the destruction of the column commanded by that valiant leader, Custer. The Indians had heard of it, and after such a bold deed they couldn't be kept back; they observed no caution. They thought they could do anything. General Merritt heard that a hundred Cheyenne warriors were at Red Cloud, going to join Chief Sitting Bull at Big Horn. General Merritt, following my advice, resolved to attack the savages and defeat them before they could join others. The 17<sup>th</sup> of June, 1876, I was sent ahead to see if the savages had already crossed the river. Not finding any tracks, I continued to look further. Going upon a hill, I saw some Indians advancing toward our camp, separating themselves from the others. I proposed an ambush to the General. The Indians were coming at full gallop. I was ready with 15 men and opened fire. Three fell dead. The others galloped back to their other men.

"Later a boy of the army was sent against the Indians. We found them nearby, and the Indians outnumbered us greatly. Suddenly we saw them part, and one Indian covered with rich ornaments, came several yard out front. He was on horseback and armed with a Winchester rifle. "I know you," he said to me, "Pa-he-has-ka" (Indian meaning long hair). "You are a great chief. You have killed many Indians. I am a great chief. I have killed many Whites. Come and fight with me." "I'm ready", I yelled."

And here Buffalo Bill was totally calm and solemn. The pencil with which I was talking notes was worn out and without being distracted he reached in his pocket and offered one to me without stopping.

"I will fight with you." I said, if the

Indians and the Whites will remain separated to watch the Red Chief and me fight with rifles." Our troops and the Indians advanced so as to see the place and remained unmoving. I came about 50 meters toward my adversary, and we both charged at a full run. We opened fire. The Indian horse fell wounded, and my horse stepped in a hole and foundered. I got to my feet twenty steps from my adversary. We opened fire again almost at the same moment. But the Indian did not hit me, and I hit him in the chest. While he was on the ground, I took a knife and cut off his scalp the little ornament of feathers that he wore. It was the greatest insult I could do to that savage, the greatest sign of victory. All the savages then moved so as to give me the same treatment, but General Merritt had already given orders to the cavalry to cover me."

The Indians are almost all Catholic. Buffalo Bill told me "Their priests had spoken to them about the Pope, and of the magnificence of the Vatican. The Pope received them, and they were enthusiastic."

"And are you Catholic?" I asked.

"I don't claim any particular religion. I believe in God." "The Indians who are with me," he added, "are all prisoners of the government of the United States, and entrusted to me, under my supervision."

At that point the interviewer apparently stopped taking notes. Cody continued to tell about his life, and how he became an actor- from the need to make a living. The Italian editor concluded his description of Cody with the comment that if Cody could go from being a politician to being an actor, probably many other politicians could well do the same. And there is more than a hint in the way that he phrased it, that indicates he would be happy if some politicians would change professions.

Later in the day the editor went out of town along the Arno River, past Santa Croce Church, to the fields where the camp had been erected just south of the giant showgrounds at the Porta alla Croce (now a suburb just west of Piazza Beccaria). He wrote:

I visited the camp at the Prati Della



Zecca about three. I entered the camp and asked for Buffalo Bill. He was pacing worriedly in his tent. He invited me to enter. Many photographs were hung up, that is, hung on the wall. I saw among them one by Rosa Bonheur that was dedicated to the Colonel. She had made a study of his white horse that she wanted to paint because she considered it a marvelous model of a horse. Colonel Cody showed me his diplomas- his appointment as a Brigadier General, his membership in the Freemasons. He is a Knight Templar of the Knights of the Legion of Honor.

In another tent was the treasurer of the company- Mr. Jules Keen. The strongbox was in the middle of the tent, with a writing table behind it. The treasurer, a fat, young American of the West, opened the safe. In it one saw only cigarettes.

I went into the tents of the cowboys. Along the side of each tent there were two or three little iron beds and a table in the middle. All sorts of pictures- the Pope, Mazzini, King Umberto, the Prince of Naples, Garibaldi, and the Heart of Jesus.

In one tent separated from the others they prepared the bullets and cartridges for shooting.

The little house that serves as a kitchen is on a wagon. I went into two big tents which were eating halls, one for cowboys, Mexican and American, and the other for the Indians. The Indians eat meat and bread like we do, only three times as much. One man was preparing the beefsteak for tonight. Two men were fixing so much mutton we think it could feed half the city. Yesterday between the Indians and the Americans they ate an entire cow. They eat beef, mutton, and milk three times a day.

The horses are kept in big tents, sixty to a tent, and are well cared for. Today they washed 200 horses one by one. The buffalo are in a corral in an open air.

The savage Indians are five or six to a tent, as if in the mountains or the prairie

of their country. The tents of the chiefs are painted with horses and people- pictures like children draw- and above the door is a tail-like hat made of many colored bird feathers and the skins of other animals. The hat is worn whenever they leave the tent. They sleep inside the tent on a type of divan. In each tent is a fireplace with burning coals, and it is warmer there than in our rooms, even when well heated.

In one tent was the celebrated Miss Oakley. She is from Ohio. She is very polite. She is one of the greatest shots ever known- a prodigy. She says that one of her tricks is this: to throw two balls with one hand and hit them with all the bullets in the rifle that she is shooting with the other hand.

In another tent is the doctor, Mama Wittaker, also from the West. There is no doctor who could persuade the Indians to take medicine if she did not tell them to do so first. Whatever she says is right. Her tent is full of purgatives.

I went into the tent of William Levi Taylor, King of the Cowboys. He is from Texas. He says that his grandfather and uncle were killed at the affairs of the Alamo. His other relatives died in the battles to secure the liberty of Texas. His family was decimated in that war. I spoke about "vaqueros." The name indicates superhuman strengths and is very proper. They said that when he drank too much whiskey it was best to avoid him.

Tomorrow I'm going to the show.

There was no article about the show, however. The editor was distracted by the influenza epidemic and local politics. Therefore, he confined his comments to saying that there was "una folle enorme" (a huge crowd). It is possible to reconstruct the outline of the program from the ads and from other shows presented by the company.

According to the Florence ads, "La Compagnia Americana" of "Buffalo Bill's Wild West" featured 100 Indians and 100 shooters, hunted, cowboys and cavalry. There also were many horses, buffalos, cows and mules. There was a ticket for every pocketbook (1-5 lira), the best seats up front in the center with a

panoramic view of the huge arena (600x400 feet) and the gigantic backdrop painted with the mountains of the American West. No doubt the Italian master of ceremonies opened the program with a short speech similar to the one copyrighted by Cody five years earlier that empathized the genuineness of the performance.

There followed a processional parade, the introduction of Buffalo Bill and his famous horse, and then the beginning of the Wild West: races between Indians on foot and horses, and Buffalo Bill killing Yellow Hand. Often the show had reenactments of famous events of the West, often using the actual participants (little Big Horn, for example, had half the original cast). Finally came the shooting and rodeo events. Buffalo Bill often did trick shooting together with Annie Oakley.

One favorite event was the holdup of the Deadwood stage. And, as was his practice everywhere else, he got the leading Florentine citizens to ride in the stagecoach during the performance. On the second day of the show, the only performance mentioned in the paper, the lucky individuals were Count Fabbriotti and an eccentric English millionaire named Frederick Stibbert, who founded one of the largest and most unusual museums in Florence. (He and Buffalo Bill must have had an interesting conversation about weapons, because Stibbert had one of the finest collections of swords, armor and firearms in the world.) There was a heavy rain, but a large crowd turned out anyway.

The newspaper ads were never large, but each day they were smaller, until by March 19 the show was listed under "Theatres" with only three lines announcing that the last performance would be the 20<sup>th</sup> (not the 21<sup>st</sup> as previously announced). Perhaps ads were not necessary. By now word of mouth had spread the news of the American's fantastic show. On the 19<sup>th</sup> this article appeared, which reflects the impact the Indians had made on the normally sophisticated Florentines:

Yesterday evening some Indians of Buffalo Bill's company came into the city, entering a linen shop in Via Calzaiaoli about eight. They complained that while the Queen of Serbia was in Florence, they couldn't enter a shop without gathering a crowd. Yesterday evening, indeed, hundreds of people crowded together outside the shop where the Indians were. I do not exaggerate. A trolley had to stop because the way was blocked. When the Indians came out, there were cries of joy. The multitude continued to walk with

them. When they arrived at the Porta alla Croce, they were at the head of several hundred persons.

While the Americans gave the Florentines a taste of exotic culture, they hardly caused any profound changes in either their ways of thinking or acting. Even today Italians have little love for "noble savages" or untamed nature. Italians are so civilized that crime is quite rare, particularly violent crime (the Mafia is Sicilian, has little importance on the mainland, and became important only in America). The Indian culture, which honored only warfare and hunting and had no painting, music or literature worth mentioning, had nothing to teach Italians. The editor of *La Nazione*, whenever he mentioned Indians thereafter, cited them only as horrible examples of barbarity. While the Buffalo Bill company was still in Florence he wrote an editorial denouncing the conditions in the orphans' hospital, which was being ravaged by the influenza epidemic. He ended his argument, saying: "I bet the Redskins, camped on the fields of the Mint, and obedient to Buffalo Bill, would not believe these things. We are the true Redskins of civilization, a false civilization a civilization horrible." One orphan died the next day- a far cry from what was occurring on the reservations at that very moment, where the Indians were herded together under unnatural and unhealthy conditions and where life seemed to lack purpose. For those reasons, the Indians in the company were happier than those at home. They were well-paid; they lived as nomads in their tents; they were honored; and they were useful. Life had a purpose. The U.S. Consul in Berlin, where the tour gave a show in July, commented, "They are certainly the best looking and apparently best fed Indians we have ever seen."

The Florentines not only did not learn from their visitors any more than the visitors learned from them, they even made fun of them (as the Indians did of the Swiss guards at the Vatican). But they did not do it to their faces. They were both too polite and too cautious. But they did it in typical Florentine fashion-

professionally and imaginatively. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, some 10 days after the company moved further north into Lombardy and then into Germany, the actor's guild in Florence gave a public performance of "Pecoro Bill" (literally Sheep Bill). Because modern theatre was born and nurtured in Florence, we may assume that the parody was skillfully done. Just as Buffalo Bill's Wild West had opened its show with a parade, Pecoro Bill opened with a presentation of the company. Groups of actors came out dressed as Indians and Mexicans, with costumes so accurately made that the audience was delighted. Then they had an attack on the stagecoach and a funny imitation of Buffalo Bill.

The editor of *La Nazione* attended the second performance and wrote some heavy-handed humor himself:

Artists know how to ridicule, and it pleases everyone to pardon people, to make jokes about and even condemn persons of good quality, those superior to others. Genius has to resign itself to this. Whoever lack that type of genius is lucky, because he will not know that inexpressible torture. But the artists of the humorist society demonstrated good taste, versatility, and an inexhaustible vein of humor in their accurate parody of Sheep Bill. Therefore it merited the applause of the cultivated, intelligent, and elegant public that Florence has. And note another novelty. All the statues in the theatre were clothed.

Although they may have laughed some, the Florentines did not forget Buffalo Bill's Wild West. In 1974 one Florentine told about a supposed contest between his cowboys and the riders of Maremma that was supposed to have resulted in the American's defeat. Although no record of this could be found, it is not impossible that such a contest took place, because there were only four regions in the world that could have produced horsemen able to challenge North American cowboys and vacqueros – Argentina, South Africa, Central Russia and the Maremma south of Florence – all areas with similar geographic features and a cattle culture. Florence is still the one place in all Europe where one can get a decent beefsteak. But

probably no contest took place. Most likely, what was in mind was the challenge in Rome by the Prince of Teano. Doubting that Cody's wild horses were really wild, the prince had challenged the cowboys to break two of his farmed Cajetan stallions. Thinking that the cowboys would fail, and even some spectators be injured, he lined carts around the arena to keep the people back. Of course, it took the cowboys only a few minutes to break the broncs and their fierce reputation.

What Cody did was to stimulate an interest in America that had laid dormant since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. An Italian has discovered America, and the continents were named for a Florentine (Amerigo Vespucci). But the early interest had died when foreigners took over Italy, a foreign yoke that remained until the time of the American Civil War. Consequently only now were Italians beginning to think about other countries.

One aspect of Cody's show, the exotic savages, perhaps stimulated the desire of Italians to conquer exotic savages of their own. Italian colonialism subsequently moved hesitantly toward Ethiopia and resulted in an even bigger defeat than Little Big Horn.

Another aspect, that of the romance of the West, appeared later in a Puccini opera, "The Girl of the Golden West." Puccini was born near Florence, was living in Milan in poverty and contemplating immigration to America; he did not go and in 1907 adapted the successful Belasco play into the opera. Caruso sang the lead role at his debut at the Metropolitan opera in New York in 1910.

A third aspect was immigration. Many Italians saw that men of courage and ability could rise to wealth in America, where the land was apparently still empty. Soon Italian emigration went from practically nothing to hundreds of thousands a year.

Lastly, Buffalo Bill stimulated the imagination. The marvelously inventive talents of the Italians created a West more violent, more exciting (if possible) than which ever existed. The Wild West went straight from Buffalo Bill to "A Fistful of Dollars."

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# When Florence Was a Flood Plain\*



Robert Hellenga

## IMAGINING THE FLOOD

In the fall of 1984 my oldest daughter returned to Florence, where our family had recently spent a year, to do the last year of Italian high school with her former classmates at the Liceo Morgani; and I started to write a novel—*The Sixteen Pleasures*—about a young woman who goes off by herself to Florence. My heroine, some ten years older than my daughter, turned out to be a book conservator at the Newberry Library in Chicago. The devastating flood of November 1966 turned out to be just the excuse she needed to slough off her old life, which was on hold, and seek a new one in Italy.

My heroine was not alone. Thousands of young people from around the world converged on Florence to offer their services. Known as *angeli del fango*, or mud angels, they went down into the cellars of the city and carried out buckets of oily mud that had been deposited by the Arno. In the cellars of the Biblioteca Nazionale they had to wear gas masks because of the poisonous fumes given off by sewage and by the decomposing leather bindings of the books; but they rescued thousands and thousands of books and documents, which were perhaps the most serious casualties of the flood. In 1989, as I was finishing *The Sixteen Pleasures*, I returned to Florence myself, though unlike the mud angels, I didn't sleep in an old railroad car behind the station; not did I survive on army rations provided by the government.

Most visitors to Florence will have difficulty, as I did, imagining the flood. In summer the Arno is often reduced to a trickle that one might easily ford; and even in November—the most dangerous month—it generally flows along quite comfortably between its stone embankments, under the famous bridges that link the downtown and the Oltrarno (other side of the Arno): the Ponte alle Grazie, the Ponte Vecchio, the Ponte Santa Trinita, and the Ponte alla Carraia. Books and newspapers tell us, nonetheless, that in November 1966, within a period of forty-eight hours almost nineteen inches of rain fell on the city and on

the surrounding hills, which gathered the water and funneled it into the tributaries of the Arno, and into the Arno itself, faster than it could be discharged. And eyewitness accounts tell us that the water was twenty feet deep in Piazza Santa Croce; that it came roaring through the narrow streets in the city center at thirty five miles per hour.

In writing about the flood I relied heavily on these eyewitness accounts and on photos in the *National Geographic* (July, 1967) and in various Italian books. But I also spent some time standing on the Ponte Vecchio, which spans the Arno at its narrowest point. Several bridges at this location have been destroyed by floods, and the present bridge, which was built in 1345, was almost destroyed by the flood of 1966. As the site of some of the most dramatic moments of the flood, it's a good place to exercise your imagination, as I did on more than one occasion.

If you had been the night watchman on the Ponte Vecchio on the night of November third (1966), you would not have needed much imagination to know that something was wrong. You would not have known that forty miles up river, in the hills of the Pratomagno, where the Arno rises, the sluice gates at the Penna reservoir, which was completely full, had been opened sometime in the early evening, and that the river was already out of control—flowing over the top of the dam as well as through the sluice gates. Nor would you have known that at about nine o'clock the water had reached the Levane dam, thirty-five miles up river, and that the gates had been opened because the dam was threatening to give way completely. The flood water was on its way. At one o'clock on the morning of the fourth, you would not have known that the river had already overflowed just east of Florence. But you would have seen with your own eyes that the river was rising dangerously, and you would have begun to telephone your employers, the gold and silver merchants whose shops line the bridge, as they have since the end of the sixteenth century. You would

have seen your employers trying to salvage what they could of their stock in the driving rain; you would have seen them taunted by not-so-innocent bystanders who had gathered, perhaps to watch the bridge collapse; you would have heard the carabinieri, who had been summoned to the scene, decline to warn the city on the grounds that they had no orders.

By 3:30 a.m. the bridge was in danger. The river was only one meter below the high point of the arches, which were becoming clogged by debris that included trees, automobiles, oil drums, and dead animals (including a cow). As the pressure on the bridge increased, the water rose up over the bridge itself, destroying the shops, which exploded like bombs. Salvage work became impossible; the bridge was closed off. Later that morning, however, another drama was enacted on the upper level on the bridge, which was still accessible—the Vasari Corridor, built in 1564 so that the Grand Duke Cosimo I could walk from the Palazzo della Signoria to the Pitti Palace without going out into the public streets. Between nine and ten o'clock in the morning officials from various agencies risked their lives to rescue the world's finest collection of self-portraits, including paintings by Filippo Lippi, Raphael, Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt, David, Corot, Ingres, and Delacroix.

If you stand by the bust of Benvenuto Cellini, in the center of the bridge, and look downriver, towards the Ponte Santa Trinita, you will see, on your right, one of the places where the Arno first found its way into the streets of the city, at about 5:30 in the morning, overflowing and eventually destroying the concrete embankment along the Lungarno Acciaiuoli. If you walk up river from the bridge, past the Uffizi, you will come to the Lungarno alle Grazie, just past the Ponte alle Grazie. Here, at about the same time, the Arno overflowed both banks, flowing down the narrow streets that lead into Piazza Santa Croce, which, because it is the lowest area of the city, was the hardest hit in terms of works of art, and in terms of human suffering.

Millions of books and documents stored in the basement of the Biblioteca Nazionale, adjacent to Santa Croce (and to the river), were submerged in oily mud; the water covered the tombs in the church and stained the frescoes by Giotto in the Peruzzi Chapel. And Cimabue's famous crucifix, in the Museum of Santa Croce, was destroyed beyond hope of restoration, despite heroic attempts by the monks to salvage even the smallest bits of gold and flecks of paint from the oily muck that remained when the water had subsided. In the words of Sir Kenneth Clark

(in *The Nude*) the Cimabue crucifix marked a return, after the middle ages, to a conception of the human body as “a controlled and canonized vehicle of the divine.” Some people were impatient with Cimabue, however, especially in the Santa Croce quarter, the quarter of the popolo minuto, the little people, the artisans—leather workers, furniture makers and restorers, antique dealers—many of whom lost all their possessions, not only their homes, but their tools as well. The high water marks for the floods of 1557 and 1966, which can be seen above your head on the north side of the piazza (just around the corner from the Via Verdi) are astonishing.

The city center, though slightly higher than Santa Croce, was also devastated. The mass of water entering the city along the Lungarno Acciaiuoli and the Lungarno alle Grazie converged on the center—the old Roman city, which had its center in Piazza Repubblica, and which stands out clearly on the map because the streets run at right angles to each other—at approximately thirty five miles per hour, completely covering the Michelangelo sculptures on the ground floor of the Bargello and ripping off five of the Ghiberti panels on the famous “Gates of Paradise” doors on the Baptistery. Ultimately it extended as far north as San Marco and the Archeological Museum, where many Etruscan artifacts were damaged or destroyed.

Thirty years later the panels from the Baptistery have been moved to safety in the Museum of the Duomo; the damaged Cimabue crucifix is now suspended on chains from the ceiling in the Santa Croce museum so that it can be raised in case of another flood; the state archives have been moved from the basement of the Uffizi to Piazza Beccaria; frescoes have been restored or in some cases even removed from walls that had begun to disintegrate; hundreds of paintings and thousands of books and manuscripts have been expertly restored; the shops in Piazza Santa Croce do a brisk business all year long, and it's always difficult to find a place to stand on the Ponte Vecchio. What did it all mean?

In *The Sixteen Pleasures*, my heroine's Italian lover is one of the officials who risks his life to save the portraits in the Vasari Corridor. (I first read about him in the National Geographic.) Linger for a moment, after the paintings have been carried to safety, he reflects on the scene below him, imagining that this is what it will be like at the end of the world. A natural disaster, yes—but also the result of human stupidity: for building in the flood plain in the first place; for crowding the



river; for aggravating the problem of flooding by deforesting the surrounding countryside; for failing to create a flood control plan, though Leonardo drew up a proposal for one in the sixteenth century; for failing to install an early warning system. Afterwards, he thinks, there will be a great flurry of activity; existing government agencies will be reorganized and new ones will be formed; commissions will be created to study the problem. And yet nothing will be done: there will be no flood control plan; there will be no warning system; precious books and documents will still be stored in basements near the river, just as they have been for years. And yet as he feels the bridge trembling beneath him he is strangely elated, as if the bridge were a stallion and he a great warrior astride it. His own instinct for happiness speaks to him of great acts of charity and kindness and selflessness; it speaks to him of natural enemies—priests and communists and carabinieri and commercianti—working together to alleviate suffering; it speaks to him of advances in the science of book and art conservation. In spite of the disaster, or perhaps because of it, he's having a good time.

For me, as a writer of fiction, the flood poses a problem that I have never quite resolved. On the one hand, for my American heroine and her Italian lover (and for the mud angels) the flood was the adventure of a lifetime. On the other hand, I continue to wonder about the natives, people who experienced the flood not imaginatively but at first hand, people who had to live in Florence after the mud angels had gone home. Surely the flood was one of the defining moments of their lives too, but was it the adventure of a lifetime, or was it simply a *disgrazia*, a disaster?

On the thirtieth anniversary of the flood, I decided to ask. I asked Franco Cipriani, who helped clean the mud out of the Museum of Santa Croce, where the Cimabue crucifix had been lifted out of the mud and placed on sawhorses; I asked Franco's friend Fabrizio

Papini, who worked with him; I asked Signora Valastro, whose husband—an army captain—helped provision the mud angels; and I asked a shopkeeper in Santa Croce, a Signor Giorgi, whose family business ("artistic objects in wood") was destroyed. My daughter, who was with me, also asked her friends and their parents. The results of this informal survey, though statistically insignificant, made me feel that I had not been too far off the mark when I granted Dottor Postiglione (my heroine's Italian lover) a certain degree of optimism. Like Dottor Postiglione, the people I talked to spoke of order rising out of chaos—not the kind of order that is imposed from without, but the kind of order that anarchists dream of: spontaneous and unpremeditated, natural rather than artificial; they spoke of the hard hearts of the Florentines being genuinely touched by the sheer numbers of young people who came to help; and they all agreed that the citizens of Florence, who seldom speak well of each other, worked together on this occasion for the greater good.

Visitors who wish to see for themselves what Florence was up against should look for a free photo exhibit, sponsored by the Comitato Caduti di Ugnano, that will be moving around the city for the rest of this year. (In November it will be at the Società di San Giovanni Battista in the Corso, a small street that runs east-west between Via Calzaioli and Via del Proconsolo. The number to call for information is 290832 or 290833.) You'll be able to watch Franco Zefferelli's documentary, narrated by Richard Burton; you'll see the water rising in the streets; and if you look closely you'll see my good friend Franco, a cigarette dangling from his lips, pushing mud past the Cimabue crucifix in the Museum of Santa Croce.

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FIGURE 1. The restored Ponte Vecchio, decades after the devastating flood of 1966. Photo: author.

# Tuscany\*

Robert Hellenga

During an academic year in Florence I often walked from the old Etruscan settlement of Fiesole, perched on a hill overlooking the city, to the little village of Settignano, perched on another hill, about eight kilometers distant. I took this walk in all kinds of weather and in all seasons, sometimes with family, or students, or American visitors, or Italian friends, but often alone. I would follow little trails or mule paths, and though these sentieri and mulattiere were all marked on my enormous military map, I frequently got lost and would have to ask directions at a farmhouse.

On these walks I was often rewarded with glimpses of the great city below me, but most of the time my reward was simply the countryside itself, the typical Tuscan landscape. It would be easy to make a list of landscapes that are more spectacular, but it would be difficult if not impossible to make a list of landscapes that are more satisfying.

What did I see that was so satisfying? I saw olive trees and terraced vineyards and orchards and meadows—the field full of flowers in which the loves kiss in *A Room with a View* is located between Fiesole and Settignano—and, on the north side of the hills, groves of oak and pine and beech (carpini?); I saw earth-toned farm houses with red tiled roofs and villas and cemeteries and churches flanked with rows of cypress trees. I also saw that it is possible for Nature and Culture to meet on amicable terms. Actually, ‘amicable’ is not strong enough. Human beings have been working and shaping and ‘developing’ this land since the time of the Etruscans, and not only have they done so without spoiling its natural beauty, they’ve actually enhanced this natural beauty, as if they’d been working together over the centuries to get everything just right.

There are no innocent eyes, of course. To a large extent we see what we are predisposed to see. The

early Florentine painters, for example, did not see what we see in the Tuscan countryside, and in fact it was not until the nineteenth century that landscape came into its own as a proper subject and not simply as background for something more important. Nonetheless, the idea of the enchanted garden, the garden of Eden, is as old as humanity itself, and our inclination to idealize the Tuscan landscape, to see it as a harmonious meeting place of Nature and Culture—which is what a garden is—has deep roots and ought to be encouraged. Instead of drawing a Maginot line between Nature and Culture, as we are inclined to do in the United States—with the Nature Conservancy on one side and the commercial developers on the other—we need to acknowledge that our own inclination to shape the landscape is itself part of Nature.

The farmhouses where I stopped to ask directions tended to impose some limits on my own idealizing tendencies. These are working farms, not picturesque cottages in a nineteenth-century painting. The contadini do not plow the land with oxen but with tractors; they work hard and their rewards are uncertain—many olive trees (which don’t bear fruit till they’re thirty years old) died in the severe winter of 1985, for example; their farm yards, like American farm yards, are often littered with pieces of broken down farm equipment; and their televisions sets blare at mid-day. But a little dose of this reality was like an alloy that strengthened my initial appreciation of the landscape, my sense that in this place I did not need to do anything; that for a little while, at least, it was enough just to be.

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FIGURE 1. Vineyards and buildings of Badia a Passignano in the Tuscan Chianti region.



FIGURE 2. Between Fiesole and Settignano, with city of Florence below. Photo: author.



FIGURE 3. Casa del Popolo, Settignano. Photo: author.





## **Part III – Italian Politics**

# Enforcing Justice: The Controversial Case of Giuseppe Musolino



Susan A. Ashley

Giuseppe Musolino, a woodcutter from Aspromonte in Calabria, stood trial for murder in April 1902.<sup>1</sup> Three and a half years earlier he had received a severe prison sentence for allegedly firing a shot at a fellow villager. He escaped from prison in January 1899 and set out to avenge himself against those he accused of lying at the trial or suspected of helping the police recapture him. During the two and a half years that he eluded the authorities, Musolino killed six people and wounded another eight, calibrating the severity of his retaliation to the gravity of the offense against him. As the press began to broadcast his deeds, Musolino gained popular acclaim for defying the authorities and fighting injustice, a phenomenon which caused the government to intensify its efforts to capture him. In October 1901, two carabinieri came on him by chance near Acqualagna in Urbino, and although he gave a false name, they soon confirmed his identity and arrested him.

Concern about his popularity prompted the government to schedule the trial in Lucca. Despite its fairly remote location, spectators and reporters flocked to the town and crowded the courtroom to see the accused and follow the proceedings. Like other key trials at the time, this case drew the attention of criminal anthropologists, forensic doctors, and lawyers who saw the outcome as central to current debates about deviance and legal responsibility.<sup>2</sup> The case resonated well beyond the experts, however, since some observers believed that the Musolino legend menaced the rule of law, Italian Unification, and civilization itself. That so many Italians embraced the accused as a hero reinforced concerns about the government's ability to secure justice and maintain order in a region that seemed to equate lawlessness with honor.

Convicted and sentenced to life in prison in 1902, Musolino remained there until 1916 when the authorities ordered him transferred to a criminal insane asylum. Amnestied in 1946 by Justice Minister Palmiro Togliatti, he lived in a civilian mental hospital until his

death in 1956 at age eighty-one. During his flight and the trial, journalists, criminologists, forensic doctors, and sympathizers described Musolino's life and detailed his actions. Depending on their perspective, they depicted him as an honorable and tenacious enemy of injustice, as a vulgar criminal, as an ordinary Calabrian, or as the victim of a medical condition. Their explanations of his crimes variously emphasized his upbringing, the region's harsh conditions, Calabria's culture of violence, or his and his family's health. More recently, historians interested in Calabria, criminology, or public opinion have rediscovered the case. They join writers and filmmakers drawn to a good story.

Late nineteenth-century Italy proved to be a productive laboratory for jurists and criminologists. The development of a new national criminal code in the 1880s highlighted the debate between the classical and the emerging positivist views of crime and justice as lawmakers rethought legal responsibility and the purposes of punishment. Continuing dissent and periodic disorder in addition to what northerners tended to see as endemic criminality in the South gave urgency to these legal debates and relevance to the emerging field of criminology. In the 1880s, Cesare Lombroso rose to prominence in the debate, in and outside Italy, as concern about crime rates shifted attention from the crime to the criminal. He and other criminal anthropologists, along with doctors, psychiatrists, and sociologists, sought to explain social deviance. These specialists met at international conferences, read each other's treatises, and referred to each other's work in journal articles and books, as they tried to account for aberrant behavior.

Particular cases, including Musolino's, showed how hard it was for courts at the time to assess legal responsibility, particularly when the criminal appeared lucid but the crimes seemed irrational. Because Musolino admitted to planning and carrying out the attacks, he bore full legal responsibility according to the Criminal Code. Musolino indicated that he knew

the difference between right and wrong, and when he explained his motives, he invoked principles of justice that set him against the authorities and against the law. Others, especially in Calabria, shared his view of honor and of vendetta, and they applauded his systematic, all-out campaign to correct injustices. In contrast, those who believed in the rule of law rejected Musolino's values and denounced him as a common criminal. Seeing Musolino as either an honorable brigand or a bad man assumed that he knew what he was doing. But the number and the cold-blooded nature of his crimes caused others to question his sanity, since a person with normal moral sensibilities did not commit serial murder. This assessment produced an explanation with strong appeal to criminologists and doctors: the biological roots of his crimes. From this perspective, either pernicious heredity, a congenital glitch, an illness, or an accident disrupted normal development or provoked a reversion to primitivism which led to the crime spree.

Given the nature and the importance of the case, the court ordered a report on Musolino's state of mind when he committed the crimes. Teams of medical experts for the defense and the prosecution looked for pathologies likely to affect his reason, moral sensibility, or self control, and epilepsy emerged as the primary suspect. Based on what Musolino and others who knew him reported and on clinical evidence, both teams concluded he had epilepsy, although the expert witnesses for the prosecution said it had nothing to do with the attacks, while those for the defense insisted that it did. It is tempting to conclude that the medical experts ignored basic scientific protocols, or that they let current criminological theories or political or personal biases influence their analysis<sup>3</sup>. It is true that they worked for the court, and presumably they shared the judge's interest in applying legal standards of personal responsibility. At the same time, the well-respected doctors and psychiatrists who wrote the reports did their best to apply recent discoveries about the medical sources of deviance. They used existing evidence about the nature of epilepsy, and they relied on up to date information to determine whether, and in what ways, the condition affected Musolino. What they looked for, however, went beyond the traditional profile of epilepsy as a motor-sensory condition. The ancient disease had acquired additional symptoms and a new status at the end of the nineteenth century, and its role in Musolino's trial shows its importance in explaining deviant behavior. How doctors verified its presence and calculated its impact on Musolino's actions offers an especially instructive example of the

ways the epilepsy diagnosis influenced justice at the time.

The medical experts for both sides published accounts of the case after the verdict, and others, including Cesare Lombroso, responded to these analyses and provided their own evaluations of Musolino based on indirect evidence. The defense team included Leonardo Bianchi, director of the clinic of psychiatry and neuropathology at the Insane Asylum of Naples, and physiologist Mariano Luigi Patrizi, professor at the University of Modena.<sup>4</sup> For the prosecution, Enrico Morselli, a doctor, and Sante De Sanctis, a psychiatrist specializing in dreams, collaborated. The defense team claimed to apply "the most stringent methods of clinical and psychological observation" to their study of the accused.<sup>5</sup> Their counterparts, Morselli and De Sanctis, claimed equal diligence in the long study of Musolino which they published after the trial.<sup>6</sup> The doctors subjected Musolino to the same physical and psychiatric tests, took his and his family's medical histories, and observed his behavior before and during the trial in order to identify any physical defects or nervous and mental disorders relevant to his crimes. Their investigation extended beyond these medical protocols to examine the effects of local conditions on his actions. Morselli and de Sanctis concluded that Musolino was partially responsible for his crimes. Using similar information, Bianchi and Patrizi argued that his medical condition determined his actions. The court split over the reports, but the vote gave the edge to the prosecution. The sentence put Musolino away for life, with ten consecutive years of solitary confinement.

In his influential study of criminal man, first published in 1876, Lombroso identified the organic defects which promoted criminal actions and described their tell tale signs. The experts examined Musolino with these indicators in mind, but neither team detected the usual stigmata of the born or innate criminal. Despite some evidence of pathologies in his family, Musolino seemed not to have inherited their illnesses or their physiological or anatomical defects. Bianchi and company reported a rapid heartbeat, but other than that, his vital signs registered normal. Outside exceptionally acute vision, neither team noted anything out of the ordinary in his senses or reflexes.<sup>7</sup> In terms of his mental capacity, the experts for the defense described Musolino as "alert, agile, quick, sure, lucid."<sup>8</sup> Although "extraordinarily credulous" and not too focused, they concluded that he showed "sufficiently normal intelligence."<sup>9</sup> The prosecution experts, Morselli and De Sanctis, also characterized

Musolino as intelligent, with quick and accurate perceptions and associations, a good memory, and the ability to make rapid judgments. Unlike the defense experts, they found him capable of concentrating for long periods, although they believed that imprisonment had dulled those powers.<sup>10</sup>

The examination of Musolino's character and personality, on the other hand, indicated underlying pathologies, and his and his family's medical histories reinforced the diagnosis. Based mainly on his temperament, Bianchi and Patrizi concluded that Musolino was an epileptic. In their view, he fit a distinctive medical profile, "an always recognizable pathological type, that is affirmed in all the treatises and in all the monographs, in whichever country they're published."<sup>11</sup> His father suffered from epilepsy and alcoholism, and epilepsy and premature death occurred in his mother's family.<sup>12</sup> Musolino himself showed signs of latent epilepsy, particularly in what the doctors saw as functional abnormalities. He was left handed, and he favored his left side, a condition which resulted from a lesion in the left hemisphere of the brain which prevented its normal operation.<sup>13</sup> An accidental blow to the head when he was six exacerbated that problem, they contended. Reports of seizures also pointed to epilepsy. Musolino said that he periodically lost consciousness or found his hands or parts of his body paralyzed. He also suffered from serious headaches which the defense team defined as epilepsy-related. In their view, evidence of a congenital lesion on the brain, intensified by trauma, indicated that Musolino did not stage the seizures. "We feel authorized," they concluded, "to decisively exclude any hypothesis of simulation."<sup>14</sup>

Bianchi and his team clarified that Musolino did not commit the crimes during a seizure, since he remembered planning and executing them. In fact, he showed limited signs of the loss of awareness which occurred with attacks produced by motor-sensory epilepsy. In their judgment, the lesions primarily affected his character and psyche by disrupting the areas responsible for moral feeling. They concluded that he suffered from psychic epilepsy, a condition that enabled him to carry out the crimes he plotted.<sup>15</sup> According to Bianchi, Musolino's vanity, emotivity, and willfulness indicated damage to the centers of moral feeling, as did the "ferocious instincts" which periodically overwhelmed him. These and other abnormalities in his character – egotism, psychic analgesia, and impulsiveness – resulted from epilepsy. "We can assert without fear of contradiction that he presents a clearly epileptic moral character."<sup>16</sup>

If psychic epilepsy weakened the mechanisms that normally discouraged violent acts, it did not determine his goals or his choice of targets, they admitted. Because he relentlessly pursued and punished those who betrayed him, Bianchi and Patrizi classified him as a "psycho-anthropological inferior type," either a primitive or a degenerate. Musolino's insistence that he sought to correct injustices pointed to primitivism, as did his credulity and religiosity. Only those with an "inferior nature" cared that much about issues of honor, they contended.<sup>17</sup> The fact that he held primitive and simplistic ideas and values did not mean that he needed to act on them, however. In their view, he possessed the intelligence to understand the consequences of his actions, but he lacked the will power to resist the drive to contest injustice. Weakened by epilepsy, his will bent to the force of his emotions more than to his more developed, rational side.

The defense experts stressed, then, that the pathological basis of Musolino's actions reduced his legal responsibility, concluding that his criminality "... is only the expression of individual and family conditions of unhealthy origin, favored by particular and transitory politico-social contingencies."<sup>18</sup> That analysis contradicted the conclusions that Morselli and De Sanctis drew at the time and then published after the trial - "... the profile of Giuseppe Musolino has nothing to do with that of the epileptic or insane criminal: Musolino is a genuine bandit, with actions which resemble those of the pseudo-brigand."<sup>19</sup> They agreed that he was of sound body and mind, with the exception of the reported epileptic attacks. Musolino, they noted, said that the seizures began when he was eighteen and intensified after he escaped from prison in 1899, when he experienced as many as three to four a day. His sister confirmed his account but said she had not seen a seizure herself.<sup>20</sup> According to Musolino, the attacks continued after his arrest in 1901, a fact the prison director confirmed but dismissed as simulation, they reported. On the basis of these accounts, Morselli and De Sanctis judged that Musolino probably had partial epilepsy provoked by trauma and characterized by intermittent seizures.<sup>21</sup>

But what Bianchi and Patrizi identified as indicators of the psychic variant of epilepsy left Morselli and De Sanctis unconvinced. He did not, in their judgment, exhibit its typical characteristics: inconstancy, depression, gloom, irritability, or an intolerance for alcohol. Nor did he show poor memory, mental dullness, or absolute egotism.<sup>22</sup> They did not see Musolino as excessively emotional either, since he expressed his feelings, especially anger and eroticism,

when he had reason to do so. He did not cry, and he controlled his sexual impulses.<sup>23</sup> Because he killed people, occasionally with ferocity, and because he showed no remorse, they agreed that he lacked “moral sensibility” or the ability to value good and reject evil. But they also pointed out that Musolino possessed an abstract sense of justice, that he set and observed certain limits, and that he did not delight in his crimes, as those lacking moral sensibility did.<sup>24</sup> More telling, the strength of his will power and self control challenged the diagnosis of psychic epilepsy. Impulsive, perhaps, in his ideas, he was deliberate in his actions, especially when it came to planning his crimes. “His conduct,” Morselli and De Sanctis argued, “followed the lines of a clearly conceived plan: nothing incoherent or tumultuous in him from 1898 to 1902.”<sup>25</sup> A thorough review of his family’s medical history supported their resistance to diagnosing psychic epilepsy. It revealed very limited or unconfirmed incidences of epilepsy, sudden death, or other serious medical conditions.

Outside his recent, periodic seizures, Musolino appeared healthy, Morselli and De Sanctis concluded. Lacking a convincing medical explanation for his crimes, they shifted their examining gaze to the possible role of the milieu. Science, they pointed out, confirmed that both individuals and the race adapted physically to the environment. As a result, a sound bio-anthropological approach paid attention to how local conditions affected the biological make up of the region’s inhabitants. They also stressed that local culture shaped the inhabitants’ values and actions, even when it did not affect their bodies. In order to identify possible social reasons for his crimes, they described Calabria and the remote, mountainous landscape of Aspromonte and detailed the qualities of its “beautiful, intelligent and proud population.”<sup>26</sup> Calabria led the country in blood crimes, they noted, and along with other southern provinces, counted high rates of offenses against authority and of defamation and insult.<sup>27</sup> Property crimes occurred less often in Calabria than crimes of violence, a pattern which indicated the dominance of “atavistic” over “evolved” criminality.<sup>28</sup> In their judgment, the region’s belief in vendetta explained why Musolino attacked his enemies, and it accounted for the tremendous admiration his crimes inspired.

Vendetta along with a spirit of revolt and contempt for laws inspired the banditry that the rugged local topography favored. Unlike the brigands of Sardinia and Sicily, Calabrian bandits avoided theft, bribery, and extortion and stuck to violence, Morselli and De Sanctis observed. They contended that the broad

appeal of this kind of criminality to the locals indicated that it stemmed less from historical factors or poverty than from the persistence of backward moral attitudes. Musolino, they concluded, “embodies and strongly synthesizes, as a typical bandit, all the characteristics of the criminality of Calabria.”<sup>29</sup> The village quarrel which provoked Musolino in the first place, and his defiant reaction stemmed from the “collective psyche” of the region.<sup>30</sup> But unlike ordinary Calabrians, he possessed a criminal temperament characterized by a primitive sense of individualism and a willingness to kill, and that temperament allowed him to carry out the murders.<sup>31</sup>

Musolino’s troubles began with a seemingly banal incident. According to a sympathetic account by a journalist in contact with Musolino and the locals: “these are the facts.”<sup>32</sup> Musolino broke up a quarrel in his father’s bar between Vincenzo Zoccoli and Antonio Romeo, then left with Romeo. Zoccoli jumped him, wounding him in the hand with a knife. Though others describe the scene somewhat differently, this version followed Musolino’s story that Zoccoli attacked him with a knife, and he defended himself.<sup>33</sup> Two days later at dawn, someone fired at Zoccoli and missed. Villagers reported hearing Musolino’s voice shouting maledictions, and they found his hat and, according to Morselli, his gun, in the area.<sup>34</sup> Evidently worried about the accusations, Musolino left town. Five months later, April 9, 1898, police arrested Musolino, Francesco and Antonio Filastò, and Vincenzo Zoccoli. At the trial at the Assizes Court of Reggio Calabria the following December, Musolino protested his innocence, insisting that he had lost his hat the night of the scuffle, and someone picked it up and left it in the area to implicate him. In any case, he argued, the injury to his right hand prevented him from firing a gun. Others, including Zoccoli and Francesco Fava, the mayor, testified against him, and their reports along with a record of previous minor assaults contributed to the guilty verdict and the severe sentence.<sup>35</sup>

Twenty-one years, two months, and fifteen days in prison for attempted murder raised doubts about the judge’s fairness. Reconstructions of the trial claim that local politics played a role in both the accusation and the verdict. Accounts favorable to Musolino suggest that the defense attorney and representative to the Chamber of Deputies, Biago Camagna, let electoral and political calculations get in the way of making a vigorous case. They note that entering a plea for extenuating circumstances rather than defending Musolino’s innocence cast doubt on his commitment to his client.<sup>36</sup> Camagna himself later argued that

he did his best and criticized the judge for hearing witnesses extraneous to the case.<sup>37</sup> Whatever the reasons, the judge convicted the wrong man. As some locals evidently suspected, Pietro Travia, a relative of Fava's, fired at Zoccoli. Not wanting to be unmasked, he left for Canada, and in 1933 he admitted his guilt.<sup>38</sup>

Transferred to a more secure prison at Gerace after the sentence, Musolino and three others organized their escape.<sup>39</sup> The police found his fellow escapees fairly soon, and they intensified their efforts to capture Musolino, once the press began to report his crimes. As he explained at the trial in Lucca, Musolino chose his victims and calibrated his attacks according to the gravity of their offense. He attacked those he believed had framed him or testified falsely at the trial for attempted murder. As the manhunt gained force, he added people he suspected of spying on him or betraying him to the police. And on one occasion, he shot his way out of an ambush, wounding a carabinieri and civilian—possibly an informer—who accompanied them. He aimed to kill the most serious offenders and to injure those guilty of lesser affronts.

Why such a trail of blood? Asked for their opinion, the forensic experts for the prosecution assigned the crimes to Musolino's allegiance to regional values and those for the defendant blamed epilepsy. One team emphasized the impact of social factors, the other the effects of pathology, and each assigned a secondary role to the alternative explanation. In some measure, the experts' assignments explain why they interpreted the evidence differently. Pleading psychological abnormality helped explain away serial murder, and it matched the extreme nature of the actions. An emphasis on social conditions, in contrast, explained the logic which drove the lucid killer, making it easier to square seemingly insane crimes with rationality. These different approaches also captured the conflict in contemporary criminology between the more established biological and the newer social theories.

While they reached different conclusions about its role, both teams centered the assessment of Musolino's legal responsibility for his crimes on epilepsy. Such a diagnosis was not unusual in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in cases of lucid killers. Their actions defied reason, yet they did not exhibit the hallucinations, compulsions, or delusions characteristic of mental illness. Epilepsy offered two plausible explanations. First, the best-known form of epilepsy—the motor variant—produced a trance-like state which could lead to eccentric and even vicious behavior. When the episode ended, the person remembered nothing. If epileptics unwittingly committed a crime

in the midst of an attack, they could not be held legally responsible for their actions, scientists and jurists argued. The other type recognized by doctors at the time, psychic epilepsy, affected people's temperament, leaving them irascible, impulsive, and unpredictable. The intensity of their emotions and impulses could overpower their will power and sideline their reason, forcing them to crime. According to this profile, they remained aware but incapable of stopping themselves. At the most, they bore partial responsibility for their deeds, according to jurists.

The emphasis on epilepsy reflected renewed interest in the condition by doctors and criminologists at the end of the century. More detailed clinical protocols, new information about the nervous system and the brain, and the prevailing theories about inherited disorders gave them fresh perspectives. Because it appeared to affect the motor, sensory, and psychic systems, different specialists got involved and the more they learned, the more symptoms they identified with epilepsy. Some doctors saw one disease with different forms; others referred to epilepsies to describe distinct variants. Writing in 1890, Salvatore Ottolenghi, for example, reported that "a large group of epilepsies" replaced and even superseded the typical motor form.<sup>40</sup> In addition to the classic variety which affected the motor system, doctors identified sensory, visceral, and psychic epilepsy. Complete epilepsy affected all four areas; the partial or incomplete form one or two; and "larval" epilepsy, a term commonly used, but not always in the same way, indicated the existence of one form, likely the psychic.<sup>41</sup>

Either inherited or acquired, psychic epilepsy occurred alone or in combination with other forms of the condition. It produced a volatile and unstable personality. The signature elements often appeared in childhood, in capricious behavior, temper tantrums, uncontrollable crying, physical violence, and difficulty getting along with others, and it worsened with age. Explosive and erratic, victims of psychic epilepsy abruptly changed their minds, their moods, and their actions. Unlike cases of motor epilepsy, where similar outbursts might occur during attacks, the psychic variant affected an individual's personality and character. Evidence of impulsiveness, irascibility, and excessive egotism, especially a combination of these behaviors, suggested and sometimes secured a diagnosis of epilepsy. And since immoderate or eccentric behavior of this kind appeared frequently, and almost by definition in criminals, experts often suspected or detected epilepsy.

A study of prison populations, conducted by



Lombroso, reinforced the links between psychic epilepsy and criminality. Convicted criminals, he asserted, had between ten and thirty times the incidence of epilepsy that normal citizens had, numbers which confirmed the affinity between what he classified as congenital criminality and the disease.<sup>42</sup> Epileptics, he reported to the fifth meeting of the Italian Society for Mental Illness, could be “extremely cruel; they are often cannibals; everyone knows of cases of cannibalism among epileptics ....”<sup>43</sup> As he explained it, an irritation triggered a discharge in the epileptic zones of the brain which produced the well-known seizures. When adjacent areas got involved “dizziness, habitual crime or moral insanity” resulted.<sup>44</sup>

Epilepsy led to criminality when it affected the centers of moral sensibility, Lombroso argued. He and other doctors and criminologists believed that reason allowed people to distinguish between right and wrong, but it did not ensure that they acted in accordance with their understanding. Something else caused them to value the good, and that recently evolved ability they labeled moral sensibility. It could be defective from birth or get damaged later on, and when either scenario occurred, people might ignore the dictates of their reason and act immorally. Such organic defects in the capacity for moral feeling produced what doctors called moral insanity. In 1885, Lombroso and Morselli presented a case that served as a benchmark for the disorder. Count K exhibited escalating bouts of anger and violence along with episodes of dizziness, brief trances, and bedwetting. These symptoms, particularly the variability and contradictory nature of his behavior, pointed to larval epilepsy, a disorder which closely resembled moral insanity.<sup>45</sup> Not surprisingly, Morselli’s team echoed this equation in their study of Musolino: “we base ourselves on the same point of view as Cesare Lombroso, who found that great criminality is almost always based on and identifies itself with epilepsy.”<sup>46</sup> But in the case of Musolino, they did not believe that the formula applied.

Not everyone merged moral insanity, epilepsy, and criminality. In his text on psychiatry published after he served as expert witness at the trial, Bianchi explained that the behavioral signs of epilepsy looked exactly like those of moral insanity: “... the same failure to adapt to the milieu, the same willfulness, cruelty, idleness, vagrancy, criminality, sexual precocity and excesses, irascibility and impulsiveness.”<sup>47</sup> But if epileptics acted like the morally insane or like born criminals, it did not necessarily mean that they were either one, he cautioned. According to another textbook on psychiatry, the conditions merged only in the more

serious cases of congenital epilepsy.<sup>48</sup> Whether or not doctors saw the three as the same or as distinct, they generally continued to accept the idea that epilepsy promoted criminality. Cases of unmotivated, impulsive, and inexplicably cruel crimes or occasions when the accused acted in a rage or a daze and remembered and regretted nothing pointed to sensory-motor epilepsy. Or, when an impulsive person consciously committed a violent crime, medical experts and criminologists thought it likely that psychic epilepsy had damaged the mechanisms that enabled self-control.

Lombroso applied his theories to Musolino’s case in 1902. Based on photographs and on Patrizi’s report, Lombroso described Musolino as more of a criminal-like type than a born criminal. In contrast to born criminals, he showed restraint in his crimes, affection for his mother and sister, and like the locals took vendetta as a sacred charge. Still he had the heredity, the record of delinquency and violence, and a few of the physical stigmata of the born criminal.<sup>49</sup> Lombroso identified epileptics among Musolino’s relatives and accepted that he experienced seizures. He also took Musolino’s mood swings and his “extraordinary agility” as confirmation of the disease.<sup>50</sup> In Lombroso’s view, Musolino’s condition caused his criminal behavior, but he also weighed social, topographical, and ethnic factors, primarily to understand the popularity which fed Musolino’s “delirium” and permitted him to elude the police.<sup>51</sup>

Lombroso’s acknowledgment of the influence of the milieu indicated a broadening of the factors he and other criminologists and doctors invoked to account for deviance. Adding topography and climate as well as social and cultural factors to the still dominant biological explanations provided a more complicated view of crime, and this richer range of variables framed the controversy over Musolino’s ability to stand trial. At the same time, his case indicates a marked convergence of these competing perspectives. Whether they emphasized the effect of the milieu or of epilepsy, the experts identified the same underlying issue: the barbaric, primitive roots of his actions.

Because epilepsy affected moral sensibility, one of the last, and therefore most fragile acquisitions of the species, it returned epileptics to a more primitive level of moral development. They made ethical distinctions, but they lost the ability to value the good. More broadly, epilepsy weakened the mechanisms of self-control and stimulated the impulsiveness, irascibility, and penchant for violence thought to characterize savages. Morselli explained that epilepsy “undoubtedly” affected prehistoric men and “savages

now” more than it did civilized people. For further evidence, experts looked to infants and children whose less-developed organisms made them more vulnerable than adults to convulsive disorders. Those who saw epilepsy as one of a group of inherited degenerative disorders recognized even tighter connections with the primitive. Degeneration, as doctors and criminologists came to see it in the last decades of the nineteenth century, interrupted the development of parts of the body, or it caused reverse or involuted evolution. Silvio Tonnino, who studied the relationship between degeneration and epilepsy, asserted that “after idiots, epileptics are the quintessential degenerates.” Their characteristic physical anomalies also indicated a “low level of development.”<sup>52</sup>

Morselli confirmed that victims of epilepsy “either retain or return to a primitive or inferior status of brain operation, consisting especially of the dominance of reflexive impulses and of the lack of control over the inhibiting faculties and conscious will.”<sup>53</sup> No need to demonstrate that epilepsy produced atavism, Lombroso explained. “When the epileptic mews, barks, bites, drinks blood, walks on all fours, and laps up dust, we see the reproduction of phenomena, not only of the savage races but even of lower animals. When we have other phenomena, such as asymmetry, tremors, color-blindness, insensitivity of touch, we no longer have atavistic but pathological phenomena, and from this it is evident that moral insanity is both an atavistic and a pathological phenomenon.”<sup>54</sup>

The more sociological approach to criminality emphasized that inhabitants of certain regions, particularly in the South, acted in a primitive fashion. Observers pointed to Calabria to support this theory, because people, particularly in the more isolated areas, exhibited less civilized habits and values. As proof, they emphasized the inhabitants’ hostility to authority, their appetite for violence, and their practice of vendetta. These characteristics produced high rates of bloodcrimes along with sympathy for bandits and brigands. According to these experts, a number of factors including poverty, autocratic rule, the ethnic mix, and stubborn individualism, accounted for their relatively slow development. In his evaluation of Musolino, for example, Lombroso specified that the mixture of races in Calabria affected the evolutionary process and produced a “low level of conscience.”<sup>55</sup>

Morselli explicitly connected the regional and the pathological, proposing that epilepsy and epileptic psychoses were more widespread in Calabria and in the South than elsewhere in Italy. It is not surprising, he noted, that “less socially evolved populations

and personalities where the more recently-acquired elements are not fully integrated” experience higher rates of epilepsy and degenerative disorders.<sup>56</sup> In his view, the greater incidence of conditions which weakened the nervous system, such as syphilis and alcoholism, helped explain the pattern. At the same time, he admitted, the rates of epilepsy and of these other ailments did not always coincide.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps, he speculated, the higher incidence of epilepsy could be understood by fusing the “bio-anthropological theory of primitivism and the pathological theory of degeneration.”<sup>58</sup>

Theories that pinpointed primitivism as the source of his crimes left unexplained the even more vexing matters of Musolino’s successful flight and of his legend. To elude the authorities for over two and a half years required local support, and it certainly called the government’s competence into question. Increasing numbers of police, carabinieri, and soldiers deployed throughout the South tracked Musolino, and the reward for information leading to his capture climbed from 100 to 20,000 lire.<sup>59</sup> The longer he escaped arrest, and the more forceful and widespread his appeal became, the stronger the challenge to the state. Morselli and Lombroso both addressed the issue of his popularity in articles published after the conclusion of the trial. In a piece in the *Nuova Antologia*, Morselli attributed Musolino’s appeal to a “real flowering of atavistic feelings” on the part of his followers.<sup>60</sup> As the number of murders and the public sympathy for bandits demonstrated, Italy lagged behind other countries in moral development. Too many Italians, in his view, remained impulsive, tempted by vendetta, and prone to lionize brigands and criminals. Clearly, they had not evolved beyond Nero and Duke Valentino, and it fell to the “more advanced Italians” to do everything possible to “extinguish, at its first breath, even the smallest indication of this atavistic insensibility to violent crimes against persons” especially in regions such as Calabria.

The degree of worry Musolino and his legend inspired underscores how disconcerting the authorities found his popular appeal. He claimed to stand for the individual and to fight injustice, even if it meant taking the law into his own hands, just as the founders of United Italy had forty years before. In their longer analysis of Musolino, Morselli and De Sanctis described his values: “For him, only the individual is sacred; and no damage to society can be more important than the liberty and the happiness of the individual. Musolino is, then, an intransigent individualist, but it can’t be said that his reasoning lacks a logical foundation.”<sup>61</sup> The

makers of Italy had expressed their commitment to similar values, asserting the primacy of the individual against arbitrary rule. When they won power, they applied what they saw as the most advanced principles of government to the creation of a state designed to protect individual freedom through the rule of law. They soon discovered the practical difficulties of installing liberty while keeping order. Musolino's popularity constituted a reproach to the young government and a counterpoint to its authority. His accusation that official justice failed the individual rang true, especially in the context of studies of the South that underscored the abuses of power by landowners and politicians. In his case, not only did public officials and the court convict an innocent man, they permitted local rivalries and animosities to undermine the rule of law. When Musolino decided to settle the score himself, he subverted the state while invoking the language of rights and justice familiar to liberals. His ability to elude capture added insult to injury, as more and more Italians rooted for the little guy, mayhem or no.

Those in charge understood the need to marginalize Musolino and to school Italians in their civic duty. They framed the case as the conflict of the civilized against the primitive, other more highly-evolved countries against Italy, the North against the South, more advanced areas in Calabria against the more isolated and barbaric Aspromonte. They also insisted that in all regions evolution favored some individuals with more refined moral sensibility and stronger will power than others possessed. More troubling, they argued that even the most civilized people faced the possibility that pathologies would weaken their centers of restraint or plunge them into atavism. No matter what the angle, it looked as if the fragility of civilization and the force of the primitive accounted for disorder and its allure.

Using that framework also allowed those in power to dismiss their adversaries, including those perceived by many as champions of the individual and of justice, as brigands, bandits, criminals, or primitives. Thus, the divide between the civilized and the savage offered a measure of consolation to those who identified themselves with government authority. The idea that congenital glitches, diseases or accidents could arrest or dissolve the organic bases of their own civilized lives gave a more ambiguous and unsettling message. On the one hand, the possibility of succumbing to an inner, savage self indicated the fragility of reason and will power. On the other hand, these medical theories helped explain why political leaders found it so difficult to establish liberal values and to produce good citizens.

Musolino shed light on the perplexing dilemma of deviance in modern, liberal society. In the eyes of those who defended order, he deserved the highest penalty, because he took the law into his own hands when it failed to protect his innocence. According to other observers, he escaped legal responsibility because epilepsy damaged his ability to value the good as civilized people defined it. Because of organic defects which weakened his will power, he carried his values too far, they believed. Either way, Musolino escaped the government's normalizing power and exposed the tension between justice and the rule of law. Seeing the power of his appeal, those in authority felt the need to explain away his acts by calling him either misguided or sick. Whether they saw it as the result of socialization or pathology, they emphasized Musolino's primitivism and saw it as the reason why he operated on the margins of modern society. But for those who embraced the legend, Musolino stood as an agent of justice and a rebel with a cause—much to the dismay of the experts and the politicians.



## NOTES

1. The trial began April 14, 1902.
2. Dario Altobelli, *Indagine su un bandito: il caso Musolino* (Rome: Salvatorelli, 2006). He notes that unlike other cases where the experts were involved just in the trial, in this one they commented during his escape and after his imprisonment as well.
3. *Ibid.*, 110. Altobelli describes the clinical information as weak and the diagnoses as influenced by non scientific and "prejudicial" assessments. The scientific investigations he characterizes as "genuine parodies of scientific discourse which nonetheless hold the power of life and death for the individual to whom they refer," 124.
4. A doctor from Lucca, M. Del Carlo, joined Morselli and De Sanctis and Andrea Cristiani, director of the Insane Asylum of

Lucca, served with the defense team.

5. M. L. Patrizi, *La fisiologia d'un bandito (Musolino): Esperimenti e commenti* (Turin: Fratelli Bocca Editori, 1904), 205. All the translations are mine.
6. E. Morselli and Sante De Sanctis, *Biografia di un bandito: Giuseppe Musolino di fronte alla psichiatria ed alla sociologia* (Milan: Treves, 1903).
7. *Ibid.*, 90-91 describes his hearing as perfect on both sides and his sense of smell more acute than his sense of taste.
8. Patrizi, *La fisiologia*, 208.
9. *Ibid.*, 209.
10. Morselli, *Biografia*, 100, 120-21.
11. Patrizi, *La fisiologia*, 210.
12. *Ibid.*, 205.

13. Ibid., 206.
14. Ibid., 210.
15. Ibid., 212.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 213.
18. Ibid.
19. Morselli, *Biografia*, 245.
20. Ibid., 39-40.
21. Ibid., 265.
22. Ibid., 266-9.
23. Ibid., 124-6.
24. Ibid., 129.
25. Ibid., 143.
26. Ibid., 169.
27. Ibid., 443, 184-5.
28. Ibid., 186.
29. Ibid., 202.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 320.
32. Amerigo Vespucci, *Giuseppe Musolino: il bandito calabrese* (Naples: F. Bideri, 1932), 9.
33. Aroldo Norlenghi, *Delinquenza presente e delinquenza futura: a proposito della condanna di Musolino* (Turin: Renzo Streglio, 1902), 13, says Musolino and his cousin Antonio Filastò got in a fight with Zoccoli, October 27, 1897. Morselli and De Sanctis, *Biografia*, 12, reported that Zoccoli and Musolino left the bar together, began fighting, and both ended up injured.
34. Norlenghi, *Delinquenza*, 13. Morselli, *Biografia*, 14, specified that Stefano Crea and Rocco Zoccoli were among the witnesses, and they said they heard Musolino yelling: “Nemmeno con questo sei morto” [“Even this didn’t kill you.”]. Norlenghi says they also found Francesco Filastò’s hat in the garden.
35. Antonio De Leo, *Il brigante Musolino* (Rosarno: Virgiglio, 1996), 9-10.
36. Ibid., 64, refers to A. Rossi, “Nel Regno di Musolino,” *D’Adriatico* XI, no. 83 (March 25, 190) who said Camagna took issue with Musolino’s family’s politics.
37. Norlenghi, *Delinquenza*, reported that the judge called the prison guards who had nothing to say about the case, 14, and that he refused to hear a witness with evidence that Musolino lost his hat on the 27th, or to verify whether or not Zoccoli could have heard Musolino shouting, 12-13.
38. Enzo Magri, *Musolino: Il brigante dell’Aspromonte* (Milan: Camunia, 1989), 262.
39. Altobelli, *Indagine*, 18. Giuseppe Surace, Antonio Saraceno, Antonio Filastò, all three cousins of Musolino. Surace and Saraceno had thirty years for murder and Filastò nine for charges related to the incident which put Musolino in prison.
40. S[alvatore] Ottolenghi, “Epilessie psichiche,” *Rivista Sperimentale di Freniatria* 16 (1890):189; [Silvio] Tonnino, “Le epilessie” *Archivio di Psichiatria, Scienze Penali ed Antropologia Criminale* 6 (1885): 371-3; Charles Féré, *Les épilepsies et les épileptiques* (Paris: Alcan, 1890) argue for the plural. Jules Voisin, *L’épilepsie* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1897) saw it as one disease. Epilepsy, Lombroso reported, “has acquired an extraordinary quantity of forms and types that previously no one ever imagined. . .”, *Atti del Quinto Congresso della Società Freniatrica Italiana, Siena*, “Seduta antimeridiana (September 22), September 19-25, 1886 (Milan: Fratelli Rechiedei, 1887), 222-239, 230.
41. Voisin, *L’épilepsie*, 1-2.
42. Cesare Lombroso, “Identità dell’epilessia colla pazzia morale e delinquenza congenita,” *Archivio di Psichiatria, Scienze Penali, ed Antropologia Criminale* 6 (1885): 1-2.
43. Lombroso, *Atti*. . . , 228.
44. Ibid., 230.
45. E[nrico] [Morselli and C[esare] Lombroso, “Epilessia Larvata-Pazzia Morale,” *Archivio di Psichiatria, Scienze Penali, ed Antropologia Criminale* 6 (1885): 41.
46. Morselli, *Biografia*, 321.
47. Leonardo Bianchi, *Trattato di psichiatria ad uso dei medici e degli studenti* (Naples: V. Pascal, 1905) 477. See also Cesare Agostini, *Manuale de psichiatria per uso degli studenti e dei medici*, 3d ed. (Milan: Dater Francesco Vallardi, 1908), 427.
48. Agostini, *ibid.*, 428-9.
49. Cesare Lombroso, *Delitti vecchi e delitti nuovi* (Turin: Bocca, 1902), 325-7. See also Lombroso “L’ultimo brigante: Giuseppe Musolino,” *Nuova Antologia* 97 (February 1, 1902): 508-16.
50. Lombroso, *Delitti*, 509 and *Nuova*, 327-328.
51. Ibid., *Nuova*, 332.
52. Tonnino, “Le epilessie,” 381.
53. Morselli, *Biografia*, 234.
54. Lombroso, *Atti*, 230.
55. Ibid., 332-35.
56. Morselli, *Biografia*, 235.
57. Ibid., 232-3.
58. Ibid., 233.
59. Altobelli, *Indagine*, 25-31.
60. Enrico Morselli, “Riepilogo del ‘fenomeno Musolino,’” *Nuova Antologia* 185 (December 16, 1902): 701.
61. Morselli, *Biografia*, 121.

# Italy and Its Mediterranean Vocation



Robert D. Lee

The Mediterranean has at some historical moments been a vast and isolating barrier. It seemed that way to ancient sailors, who aimed to stay within sight of land as they made their way East or West<sup>1</sup>. For medieval Europe the Mediterranean helped insulate Christianity from Islam, and today it seems to protect European standards of living against the influx of North Africans eager to share in them. More frequently the Mediterranean has been a highway, an element of commonality, a tie between peoples, as it was in the Roman era, the era of Arab domination, and the era of Venetian and Genoese supremacy over the sea. The records of the Cairo Geniza show that traders and scholars moved easily from place to place. Migration is perhaps the most vivid contemporary evidence of such fluidity –Turks in Germany, Moroccans in Belgium and the Netherlands, Algerians in Paris.

The Mediterranean has been a cradle of civilization, the home of the “societies of the Book/book.”<sup>2</sup> Greek learning made its rounds as did Roman government. Then came Arab conquest and the spread of Islamic culture. And since the Renaissance, European civilization has left its imprint everywhere. By one line of argument tourism is transforming the entire Mediterranean basin into “one vast, unmistakable amusement park,”<sup>3</sup> but it is also a flycatcher for international crises: conflicts of decolonization, headlined by the Algerian revolution; internal transformation, such as the Egyptian revolution of 1952, which changed the dynamics of a region, and the upheavals in the spring of 2011 that have overturned two dictatorships and threatened several others in the region; international wars such as the struggle over the Spanish Sahara, the fight between Greece and Turkey for control of Cyprus, or the serial conflicts between Israel and some of the Arab states; terrorism by states such as Libya and Israel, and against states such as Algeria and Israel; and crises of identity that have marked Lebanon, Palestine, Yugoslavia, and Algeria. Such is a partial account of the turmoil afflicting the region since World War II.

Most of the crises and problems afflict almost everyone in the region: the polluted waters wash all shores; instability affects everyone in some measure; the Islamic challenge in Algeria necessarily affects the Balkans and Gaza; the fall of authoritarian regimes opens new possibilities but also disconcerts trading partners. More important, the modernization unleashed by the European thrust south and eastward starting about 1800 has left its traces everywhere. On the northern shore, an increasing prosperity and integration into the European Union has produced rising standards of living, self-satisfaction and unprecedented movement toward the democratic camp, but on the southern and eastern shores there remain residues of bitterness at colonialism, at poverty that persists despite great efforts at development, and at authoritarianism exerted to contain discontents and dampen discussion. As a result, human beings have long been fleeing the South toward better conditions in the North.

If the Mediterranean constitutes a distinct region by virtue of its common problems, it may also be a region in which common solutions can be pursued. If the “societies of the Book/book” share a common heritage, is this not a region that could and should be reunited?<sup>4</sup> Is this not the place where the crisis of modernization theory and the demand for authenticity must be resolved? The argument for environmental cooperation is overwhelming. Europe understands that migration flows reflect differential economic conditions between northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean; Turkey, Israel and the Maghreb understand that their welfare depends on a tight relationship with that emerging economic giant, the European Union. The construction of a Palestinian state requires not just the support of Israel but of all the actors in the region and some beyond it.

What are the prospects for building regional identity and regional institutions through which problems might be confronted and crises mitigated? What are the chances that the fluidity of Mediterranean

waters will dilute conflict, sustain general growth and development, distribute tolerance and liberal democracy, and cleanse the wounds sustained on all sides? Alternatively, what are the chances that the sea will again be a barrier to communication, a fault between civilizations, and a possible seam for cultural conflict?

With decision making still focused largely in the nation-state, answers to those questions would require close examination of attitudes and decision making in each of the riparian states. In what measure does each state see itself as a part of a common Mediterranean world? How does it see others with whom it might cooperate in regional endeavors? What incentive does it have to cooperate and what obstacles may there be to policies that would implement cooperative ventures? A full answer to the question would also require treatment of the international system as a whole. How would the United States and NATO respond to the emergence of regional entity? To what extent would such an entity complement or conflict with the Arab League, the so-called “peace process” in the Eastern Mediterranean, or the African Union?

Here I will attempt an assessment of the Mediterranean commitment of just one state, Italy, whose centrality to Mediterranean history is unsurpassed, whose professed commitment to a “Mediterranean vocation” has been constant (though sullied by colonial ambitions), and whose initiatives toward Mediterranean consultation have led to meetings and discussion, if not solutions. Several forces including history pull Italy toward greater interaction with its Mediterranean neighbors. Energy needs, instability in the region, the gap in living standards between North and South, environmental issues, and migration from south to north constitute some of those forces. But Italy is also constrained by its ties to northern Europe, by its long-standing commitments to NATO, by racism against foreigners in its population, by a sketchy and perhaps inadequate scholarly foundation for understanding the whole of the Mediterranean, and, perhaps most important, by a transformation of the political system that has necessarily caused Italian energies to focus inward since scandals of the 1990s toppled an entire political class and generated at least an appearance of political transformation.

It is difficult to imagine a Mediterranean community without Italy in a leading role. It has some of the same incentives and encumbrances as France, where entanglement with three former colonies in North Africa guarantees both engagement and friction. Italy’s

relationship to Libya creates a similarly conflicted bond. The size and vigor of the Italian economy gives that country greater weight than Greece and Spain; it ranks as a middle power,<sup>5</sup> a power with a strong stake in international order and a modest capability for defending that stake. Italy divides the Mediterranean, east from west, and Sicily – barely 150 miles from Tunisia – pulls Europe toward Africa. Immigrants have come to Italy from North Africa, but not in anything approaching the numbers seen by France<sup>6</sup>.

The Mediterranean disposition, if it exists anywhere, ought to be discoverable in Italy. My tentative findings do not entirely betray that hypothesis but neither do they offer firm support. General public attitudes do not appear to be a barrier to closer ties with North Africa, but neither does there appear to be sufficient public concern with common issues, such as pollution of the sea, to make Mediterranean cooperation a high-profile issue. Meanwhile, Italian politicians tend to see foreign policy questions affecting the Mediterranean as subordinate to their country’s obligations to NATO and the European Union. For Italians, the Mediterranean remains a historical, geographical, and theoretical idea – not a framework for approaching a set of common problems and seeking regional solutions, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the more recent Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) notwithstanding.

### Italy’s Vision of Itself in the Mediterranean

“Italy is a European country in the Mediterranean, not a Mediterranean country in Europe.”<sup>7</sup> That may be an accurate statement of contemporary realities, but it does not, of course, speak to history. When Rome dominated the world, the world it dominated was largely Mediterranean. Europe did not exist as a meaningful entity. The Romans inherited Greek civilization and became the distributors and propagandists for a culture that came to embrace a new Mediterranean religion, Christianity. They helped to lay the foundations of Europe, and their decline opened the way for Muslim conquest of the region.

The city-states of Renaissance Italy were products of Mediterranean culture. The Venetians came to dominate Byzantium, but not before Byzantine art and culture had won the Venetians. The Crusades carried Europeans into discovery of the East. Arab settlements in southern Italy and Sicily introduced Italians to good living and Islamic learning, and the Papacy established itself as an autonomous force only



after a long struggle with the Eastern hierarchy. It is commonplace to say that the European Renaissance began in Italy; it is less common to acknowledge its debts to Mediterranean culture.

Giulio Andreotti, the most prominent Italian statesman of the last four decades, saw a permanent dialectic between the Mediterranean and European visions. He linked the Mediterranean vision with the Bourbon Kingdom of Naples and the Two Sicilies, caught, as he puts it, “between holy water and salt water.”<sup>8</sup> The completion of the Suez Canal in 1869 enhanced the importance of the Mediterranean basin, but the vision of Italy as a part of Europe, championed by the House of Savoy, guardian of the Alps and of access to the Po and Rhone valleys, acquired preeminence in the process of unification. By virtue of its economic power and political leadership, Northern Italy led Italy into close ties with Northern Europe, ties recently cemented by the Treaty of Rome and its product, the European Union. Yet for Andreotti and others the “traditional Mediterranean component” of Italian foreign policy was still alive. “Italy’s task, which is anything but easy and at times even thankless, consists in maintaining that indispensable balance of peace and cooperation in the regions of the Near East and North Africa.”<sup>9</sup>

The distinctiveness of the Italian vision emerged in the Achille Lauro affair of 1985. Italians joined the Egyptians in seeking a quick end to the Palestinian hijacking of the Italian vessel. By agreement with Yasir Arafat, Egypt put the hijackers on a plane bound for Tunisia, but the United States intercepted the plane and forced it to land in Italy without Italian permission. Italy was quite content to restore Mediterranean order and let the hijackers disappear, even though the US wanted extradition and punishment for those who had pushed the paraplegic Leon Klinghoffer over the side of the cruise ship. The testiness of the Italian government, headed by Bettino Craxi, the Socialist, reflected an Italian conception of the sort of balance to which Andreotti refers. Italian refusal to support the US bombing of Libya by extending overfly rights further substantiates the existence of independent Italian thinking<sup>10</sup>

### At the End of the “First Republic”

Parliamentary debates about Italian participation in the Gulf War offer some help in understanding how Italian politicians thought in 1990 about their country’s responsibilities in the Middle East. Would Italian policy

be driven by conceptions anchored in Europe or in the Mediterranean? Because one Arab state had attacked another, because oil supplies appeared to be at stake, and because several North African states were almost instantly inclined to oppose the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait, Italy might well have used the Mediterranean as a frame of reference. On the other hand, the United States was leading the defense of Kuwait, rallying NATO countries and asking the United Nations to cover its action. Atlantic solidarity also appeared to be at stake.

A careful reading of the debates of August 11 and August 23, 1990 – the first in committee, the second in the Chamber of Deputies as a whole – lends little credence to the notion that Italian elites approached the issue from a Mediterranean perspective<sup>11</sup>. Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis, a member of the Italian Socialist Party, said on the August 11 that NATO had met and agreed that it would support United Nations resolutions, stand by Arab states opposing Saddam Hussein, back the US decision to go to the defense of the Saudis, and act as individual members states to help prevent further Iraqi aggression. Italy would be at liberty to decide how it would intervene. This statement promised NATO intervention in an “out-of-area” issue, something for which there was no precedent in the Cold War era. The Atlantic alliance was then, for De Michelis, the first point of reference. The Italians authorized American use of NATO bases in Italy. The second point of reference was the European Union, then still called the European Economic Community (EEC). De Michelis reported that the EEC had “in the last week survived under fire” and had achieved a “qualitative leap” in its discussions of foreign policy<sup>12</sup>. With Italians presiding in the council, the community approved sanctions and affirmed its commitment to the United Nations and to the Europeans trapped in Kuwait and Iraq.

When De Michelis reported to the whole Chamber on the August 23, he made less mention of NATO and talked more of the unity in the EEC, which had, he said, decided to 1) stand together on the issue of hostages, 2) to hold the Iraqis responsible for their actions, 3) to make a common diplomatic effort to obtain release of the hostages, and 4) to offer European support of the Arab countries. He presented these actions as fully consistent with the efforts of the United Nations<sup>13</sup>. Defense Minister Rognoni invoked the Western European Union, which included the EEC members who were also members of NATO, as actively promoting the implementation of sanctions.

He said the WEU would coordinate the use of diverse naval forces.<sup>14</sup>

Most speakers in the debates of August 11 and August 23, whether favorable to the Government or the opposition, recognized Italy's stake in a world order epitomized by the United Nations. Some speakers objected that the UN had not yet authorized military actions, but others felt that Italy could not in good conscience let the United States stand alone as the world's policeman. NATO and the European Community needed to bolster that order with firm stands. Even Achille Occhetto, chief of the PCI, recognized that anarchy was not an acceptable alternative to the bygone bipolar world. For him, however, American hegemony was not the solution.

Occhetto said the West had never had a political strategy for dealing with the Middle East. He urged that Italy take the lead in supporting international legality, a solution to the Palestinian problem, and a more equitable distribution of economic resources. He called upon Italy to lead the way toward better North-South relations through the United Nations. He said Italy should send naval forces to the gulf only upon resolution of the Security Council.<sup>15</sup> Another member of the opposition, Russo Spina, of Democrazia Proletaria, a party of the extreme left, again affirmed that Italy ought "in the abstract" to be the key European actor in a Mediterranean policy. As temporary president of the EEC, Italy should be the link between North and South. He invoked the dangers constituted by the "tidal wave of the Islamic world" south of the Mediterranean, poised for an attack "on the critical points of the market system."<sup>16</sup>

These debates and others carried on in the fall of 1990 and the spring of 1991 suggest Italian awareness of the North-South dimension and of the Mediterranean as a relevant sphere of action. Both Government and opposition spoke of the potential utility of closer relationships with countries south of the Mediterranean and, therefore, of the need to sponsor conferences and build rapport. But no speaker seemed to be thinking: "How will this affect our standing in the Mediterranean? How can we bring the states of the Mediterranean together for decision making in this matter? How should our stance be shaped by the positions of the Mediterranean countries?"

The relevant reference groups were NATO, the Western European Union (WEU), the EEC, and the United Nations. Standing with other Europeans in alliance with the United States appeared to be a prerequisite of Italian policy. The decision of the Arab League to condemn Iraq affected Italian thinking; when

Italy argued it should support friendly Arab states, it was surely thinking of Mediterranean countries such as Tunisia and Egypt, both regarded as "old friends" in the region, but it referred to them as Arab rather than Mediterranean states. These debates show that Italians saw a close relationship between the crisis and the Mediterranean as a geographical phenomenon, but political leaders did not conceptualize responses in terms of the Mediterranean as a geopolitical unit. The assertion that "Italy is a European country of the Mediterranean, not a Mediterranean country in Europe" fit Italian policy making in the Gulf Crisis.

### Foreign Policy under the "Second Republic"

The end of the Cold War brought transformation of Italian politics. The disintegration of the Italian party system and its re-invention in what has become known as the Second Republic altered Italian discourse on foreign policy, as it affected the discussion of domestic policy. The disintegration of the Christian Democratic (DC) party, which had always been a concatenation of personalized factions but one that had been the foundation of most Italian governments since World War II, touched off a search for new coalitions. The Socialist party (PSI) of Bettino Craxi, one of the principal protagonists of Italian politics in the 1980s, disappeared altogether as the result of the Tangentopoli scandal and Mani Pulite investigations. The eventual result was a competition of two loose coalitions, center-left and center-right, the center-left built around most of the former Italian Communist Party (PCI), calling itself the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), and the center-right focused on media magnate Silvio Berlusconi and his new party called Forza Italia (as in a sports cheer that might be translated "Go Italy!"), which captured some fragments of the former DC. The center-right also drew in parties long excluded from governing coalitions such as the neo-Fascist MSI-DN, which reformulated itself as the National Alliance (AN), and the Northern League (LN), which had won support, especially in Lombardy, for its notion that the rich northern region should secede from Italy and form a state called Padania!

In the chaotic and uncertain atmosphere of the 1990s, with Italian parties dissolving and regrouping, foreign policy receded in importance. The Northern League's platform for the parliamentary elections of 1994 devoted one of forty-one pages to foreign affairs.<sup>17</sup> It proclaimed itself favorable to the EU and NATO, at least until NATO could be replaced

by a European security organization. It spoke about a “Europe of nations” by which it meant a Europe made up of autonomous regions such as Lombardy or Veneto. The newest entry into the political game in 1994, Forza Italia, devoted four of ninety-five pages in its electoral platform to foreign policy issues<sup>18</sup>. Berlusconi expressed support for the UN, NATO, and the EU; he said he thought Italy should have enhanced status (a seat in the Security Council?), but in general he devoted little time and attention to foreign affairs. His coalition with the Northern League and the MSI called Polo delle Libertà triumphed in the election, and Berlusconi succeeded in forming a government.

Though it would be hard to argue that Italian political life is any easier to understand in the Second Republic than it was in the first, it is true that the Second Republic has achieved something the First could not: an alternation of power between government and opposition. For much of the First Republic, which largely coincided with the Cold War, anti-Communist and anti-Fascist attitudes rendered the extreme parties of both Right and Left unacceptable as coalition partners. It was therefore impossible to bring down a government without enlisting most of the forces supportive of the outgoing cabinet in the effort to form a new one. Genuine alternation of leadership could not and did not occur. In the Second Republic, a change from center-left to center-right or vice-versa has produced a clean sweep in the cabinet.

Has this new pattern of alternation also produced significant change in Italian foreign policy? Most analysts refer to three poles of orientation for Italian policy: Europe, the Atlantic, and the Mediterranean. Romano Prodi, who led a government of the center-left from 1996 to 1998, and again from 2006-2008, confirmed the primacy of Italy’s orientation toward Europe—joining the Euro zone, pushing for a European constitution and favoring common policies on defense and foreign affairs. Between his two stints as Prime Minister, Prodi served as president of the European Commission in Brussels. With that perspective and experience, he tended to see Italy acting in the Mediterranean via Europe, as in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which dates from 1995. The center-left sometimes found itself resisting American impulses in the Mediterranean, as had Craxi and even Andreotti in the 1970s and 1980s. Under Prodi the center-left sought to rehabilitate Qadhafi in Libya and to continue Italy’s longstanding efforts at good relations with all of the Arab world, policies quite consistent with those pursued in the First Republic.

The man who has dominated the first two decades

of the Second Republic is, however, Silvio Berlusconi, who first assumed the prime minister’s post from May 1994 until January 1995. He served a full five years in that office, from June, 2001, until May 2006, and then, after a two-year interlude of center-left government under Prodi, Berlusconi returned for a third term in May 2008, supported as always by a coalition of center-right parties. By some accounts, Berlusconi moved Italian foreign policy sharply toward concern with the Atlantic alliance and especially the relationship between Italy and the United States<sup>19</sup>. Berlusconi cultivated personal ties to several international leaders, including President George Bush, Tony Blair, Vladimir Putin, Nicolas Sarkozy, and others. By supporting the Bush policies in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, Berlusconi apparently hoped to bolster Italy’s standing with the world’s only superpower. Italy supported the American military operation in Afghanistan, and, despite unfavorable opinion in Italy, Berlusconi sent a small number of troops to help with the occupation of Iraq. Moreover, Berlusconi and his foreign minister, Gianfranco Fini, visited Israel on separate occasions to counterbalance what they perceived as the center-left’s tilt toward the Palestinians. The Berlusconi initiatives came to be known as neo-Atlanticism, which seems to translate as pursuing American policies in the Mediterranean. The opposition argued that Italy, by slavishly following American initiatives, had no Mediterranean policy at all under Berlusconi. (“...Italian Foreign policy does not exist; it has simply been delegated to the US.”)<sup>20</sup>

Rhetoric may have changed more than policy under Berlusconi. What appeared to be his contempt for European institutions softened into a pragmatic approach of evaluating particular policies in terms of Italian “national interest.” Is this not what every member state does and exactly what the center-left had done and would do, as well? The differences between center-right and center-left may be really about the definition of “national interest;” the center-left may be more inclined to accept the growth and strength of EU institutions as a part of Italy’s national interest; the center-right may be more inclined to judge the EU institutions by their output, favorable on some occasions and injurious to the national interest in other cases. And while the Italian left was slow to rally to Atlanticism in the First Republic – the Socialists embraced NATO after the Hungarian uprising of 1956, the Communists came to accept the Atlantic Alliance in the 1970s – no Italian government has had to make stark choices between Europe and the United States as the driver of Mediterranean policies.

The Berlusconi tendency to move toward the United States can be interpreted as yet another instance of the Italian tendency to bandwagon. Berlusconi's policies reflect the same sort of pragmatism as those of the center-left, the same desire to be seen as a mediator, a similar attention to economic issues, and a similar lack of a grand strategy for the Mediterranean region aside from the projects of Europe or the United States. The Berlusconi actions confirm once again the notion that Italy is a European country in the Mediterranean.

A modest survey of higher education in Italy further substantiates that conclusion. Scholarship seems to follow the flag, and the Italian flag only got as far as Libya and Eastern Africa in the colonial period. That may be one reason Italian scholarship on the Mediterranean is less extensive than the Orientalist tradition in France and Britain. Italian teaching about the Middle East and North Africa appears highly fragmented. The University of Naples offers the greatest collection of courses and talent but its strength is not the contemporary world. Many universities offer courses on aspects of Mediterranean culture somewhere in their curricula but much of the instruction lurks within much broader courses on "colonialism" or "African politics and history." Italy has produced a few distinguished scholars of the Middle East but the numbers remain small, the resources available to them limited and dispersed. In looking at Italian study of and research on the Mediterranean world, "we must confront an everyday reality that is much more modest than we might legitimately presume given the 'Mediterranean vocation' and the geographical circumstances of our country."<sup>21</sup> The configuration of teaching and research in Italy does not appear consistent with a Mediterranean identity.

### Italy's Vision of its Mediterranean Neighbors

Italian policy makers have not been unduly concerned about a direct military threat from other countries in the Mediterranean<sup>22</sup>. Qadhdhafi's Libya, which launched Scud missiles against the Italian island of Lampedusa (and the American base there) in the wake of the American attack on Tripoli in 1986, does not possess sufficient strength to constitute a threat. Italy obviously perceives no threat from its NATO allies (Turkey, Greece, Spain, France, and Portugal) nor from democratic Israel. Egypt, with the greatest manpower, and Tunisia, with the greatest proximity, constitute an "old friends" category unto themselves; only revolutionary transformation of those regimes

could turn them into military threats.<sup>23</sup> While Italy may have played a role in bringing Ben Ali to power in Tunisia, he fled his country in January 2011 not to Italy but to Saudi Arabia. In neither Egypt nor Tunisia did the 2011 uprisings target Europeans in general or Italians in particular, unlike the insurrection of armed Islamist group in Algeria in the 1990s, which targeted foreigners, especially journalists.

The principal risk in the Mediterranean region, as seen from the Foreign Ministry in Rome, is instability in the Maghreb; a second risk is disruption generated by the continuation of the Israel-Palestine conflict,<sup>24</sup> and a third risk is uncontrolled migration. Conflict in southern Lebanon, Qadhdhafi's unwillingness to extradite the Lockerbie bombers and his apparent determination to manufacture chemical weapons, the civil war in Algeria, and, even closer to home, the struggle for Bosnia constituted serious disruptions of the region in the 1990s. Italy twice participated in multinational forces in Lebanon to help dampen the reverberations of that country's civil war and invasion by Israel. Later it found itself confronting Mediterranean terrorism inside Italy, including an attack on the Rome airport, and outside, as in the hijacking of the Achille Lauro. Italy sought to dampen those episodes without becoming a contestant. It apparently struck a secret agreement with the PLO to keep terrorism off Italian soil in return for non-prosecution of perpetrators, such as the protagonists of the Achille Lauro affair. By one account, Italy also cooperated with Israeli secret services on other occasions to fend off potential threats.<sup>25</sup>

In the last decade, Italy has come to see the Mediterranean as a source of illegal immigration. As a signatory of the Schengen agreements, Italy finds itself the defender of a long, coastal border difficult to patrol<sup>26</sup>. "Italy has consistently attempted to impress on the rest of the EU that, being a gateway to Europe, it needs further resources to deal with migration issues, though it has been able to negotiate a number of agreements individually with Morocco, Tunisia and, above all, Libya."<sup>27</sup> The island of Lampedusa, an Italian territory only a few miles off the coast of Tunisia, has been a favored point of European arrival, and Libya has been the favored transit route. Starting in 1998, Italy began an effort to resurrect Colonel Qadhdhafi from the ignominy he enjoyed after the attacks on the Pan Am flight in 1986 and the UTA flight in 1987 and his other ventures into disruption and terrorism. By opening his southern borders to immigration as part of his conception of a united Africa, Qadhdhafi brought in thousands who, failing to find jobs in Libya,

sought passage across the Mediterranean. These migrants became an important lever in Qadhdhafi's hands. He demanded an apology for Italian colonial behavior, which he claimed had cost 100,000 Libyan lives, and construction of a superhighway from Egypt to Tunisia as compensation.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the state of relations between Qadhdhafi and the West, the Italians continued to depend on Libya to satisfy a large portion of their energy needs. While the United States sought to threaten and bomb Qadhdhafi into compliance with international norms, the Italian sought to re-establish negotiations, partly out of economic self-interest and partly in response to what they perceived was a potential migration crisis. It was a time when an important segment of the Italian public had begun to see immigrants as a threat to their way of life. The Northern League under the leadership of Umberto Bossi, participating in center-right coalitions headed by Silvio Berlusconi, blamed immigrants for many ills and demanded better control of borders. Relative to the total number of immigrants arriving annually in Italy, the flow through Libya across the Mediterranean was relatively small, but perhaps it was the color of skin (dark) and the religion (Islam) of many who came from the south that inflamed the passions of the Right.<sup>29</sup> The Italians helped Qadhdhafi open refugee camps in Libya for repatriated immigrants, supplied ships for patrolling the Libyan coast, and funded electronic surveillance equipment for Libya in exchange for cooperation in the control of immigration. This collaboration went hand-in-hand with the political rehabilitation of the Libyan leader, facilitated by his decision to compensate the victims of Lockerbie, to renounce his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and his willingness to pursue the war on terror. Twice the Italians apologized for colonial misdeeds, and repeatedly they promised compensation of the sort Qadhdhafi had been seeking. Libya gained in stature in that period, only to lose many of those gains in the first months of the 2011 revolt. Italian reluctance to take up the cudgels against Qadhdhafi in the spring of 2011 must be understood in the light of that country's effort to deal with instability coming from Libya.

The Italian preoccupation with instability translates into a concern for development south of the Mediterranean. Greater economic prosperity would be more conducive to democracy and might slow the flow of migrants northward, or so the thinking ran. Higher growth rates might even help defuse the Islamist movements that threaten regimes all across North Africa.

...The perception is that what is at stake in the Mediterranean is a cultural and social balance that is far more complex than a military one. From an Italian or, indeed a Southern European point of view, security challenges like (mass) migration, terrorism, and intercultural confrontation are often as frightening as the conventional and unconventional arms proliferation in the region.<sup>30</sup>

Because Italy lacks sufficient resources to promote significant regional development, it has enlisted Southern Europe (Spain, France, and Portugal) as allies in that effort, although the interests of these countries are scarcely identical. Spain and Portugal have ties to Latin America and Africa, and France remains linked to its former colonies in North Africa. More concerned with the Balkans, Greece seems to stand still further to one side.<sup>31</sup> Italian foreign assistance peaked in 1989 at .42% of national income and then diminished in the 1990s to a low of .11% in 1997. In the twelve years from 1994 to 2005, the total volume of Italian aid averaged .19%.<sup>32</sup> A third to half of the aid passed through multilateral channels. Although Prime Minister Berlusconi's government proposed a "Marshall Plan" for Palestine, nothing came of the initiative. His foreign minister, Fanco Frattini, proposed a "Marshall Plan" for the Arab world as a whole in the context of the Union for the Mediterranean (UFM) but he did not say how it would be funded.

In economic terms, the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean need Europe more than Europe needs them. The states of the Maghreb, for example, did 65% of their foreign trade with the European Union in 1989, while for the EU trade with the Maghreb constituted 4% of the total.<sup>33</sup> Of all the states in the Mediterranean basin, Morocco, Tunisia, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey, and Israel have the strongest economic ties to the European community.<sup>34</sup> Already in 1969 Morocco and Tunisia signed trade agreements with the community, providing free access to Europe for Maghreb-manufactured products other than textiles and preferential conditions for agricultural products. Then came the oil crisis, and in 1976 they signed aid agreements as well. In 1990 the Community adopted a reinvigorated policy toward the Mediterranean and increased aid by 2.3 times. The new policy reduced customs duties on some agricultural products and included cooperation on environmental issues, but the southern shore wanted a free trade zone in the Western Mediterranean together with debt relief.

When Spain proposed such measures in 1992, the northern members of the community dragged their feet. Morocco was able to get favorable terms by being tenacious in its complaints.<sup>35</sup>

What is true of Europe as a whole applies to Italy more specifically. Italy has been importing a fourth to a third of its oil from Libya and a third of its natural gas from Algeria, and this dependence may grow with the completion of a gas pipeline from Algeria to Sardinia. But the dependence also runs the other way: Italy has accounted for almost half of Libya's sales of petroleum.<sup>36</sup> The countries of the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean depend more heavily on trade with Italy than Italy depends on trade with them. For example, Italy is Turkey's fifth largest trade partner even though it accounts for about 1.5% of Italian imports and 2.3% of exports. Italy is the sixth largest trade partner of Israel, but Israel accounts for only .2% of Italian imports and .5% of its exports. **Fig. 1** Italy does more business in Eastern Europe than in the Middle East and North Africa combined. No country in the region depends more heavily on Italy than does Tunisia by virtue of Italy's direct foreign investment there, reported at 607 million euros in 2003. Some 800 small- and medium-sized Italian businesses were operating in Tunisia at that time.<sup>37</sup>

The Italian peninsula divides the Mediterranean into two basins, West and East. Policy makers appear to identify themselves more closely with the Western basin, where the key allies are France and Spain, on one side, and Tunisia, on the southern shore. The Italians lost out to the French in Tunisia in 1882, but, in some respects, the French lost out to the Italians in 1956, when Tunisia became independent. The Italians never ceased to express their sympathy for the Tunisian struggle all the while remaining sufficiently circumspect to satisfy the concerns of their French allies.<sup>38</sup> As a result, the Italo-Tunisian relationship has continued to prosper. Together the Spanish and the Italians put together a meeting of the Western Mediterranean dubbed the group of "4 + 5": Italy, Spain, France, and Portugal plus the five countries of the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Libya), but Western sanctions against Libya after the bombing of the Pan Am plane over Lockerbie undermined that group and made larger meetings a necessity. The Barcelona conference of Mediterranean states (less Libya, Albania, and the former-Yugoslav states) in November, 1995, would be an example. That conference produced the Euro-

Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), or what has become known as the Barcelona process.

For Italian policy elites, then, the Mediterranean represents a set of risks and opportunities that have become more and more prominent since the 1980s, when Italy found itself drawn into the dramas of Lebanon, the Gulf, and Mediterranean terror, but aside from perpetual proclamation of Italy's "Mediterranean vocation," which mostly served as a propaganda cover for nationalist ambitions, they see the region as a marginal part of Italian identity. The Mediterranean as a concept does not appear to have been a major factor in decisions about participation in the Gulf War of 1991; it remains secondary to concepts such as NATO, the EU, and the United Nations in official Italian thinking. The Italian decisions to intervene in Afghanistan and again in Iraq, albeit after the initial invasion, reflect Silvio Berlusconi's allegiance to the Atlantic alliance and the United States. The Mediterranean remains an idea without much substance.

## The Role of Public Opinion

Would public opinion in Italy permit the development of such an idea or does prejudice against immigrants from south of the Mediterranean create a barrier of distrust that would obstruct Italian participation in a "new Mediterranean?" Although public opinion seldom plays a leading role in foreign policy decisions, it does, perhaps, limit the range of possibilities. General public support for Israel, for example, has certainly conditioned American policy ever since 1948, although that support has not prevented leaders from establishing relations with the PLO and encouraging Israel to negotiate. Potential public response to higher gasoline prices in the United States probably conditions the response of every American statesman confronted with crisis in the Gulf States. French policy makers cannot ignore the bitterness that lurks in many circles against the Gaullist policies in Algeria and against the immigrants who have crossed the Mediterranean.

In the 1980s the Italian public seemed less conscious of immigrants who come from south of the Mediterranean than did most other European peoples. In a survey done in October and November, 1988, Europeans were asked: "When you hear about people of other nationalities, to whom do you think of [sic] (what nationality)?" "When you hear about people of another religion, to whom do you think of [sic] (what religion)?" "When you hear about people of another race, to whom do you think of [sic] (what race)?" and "When you hear about people of another



culture,” etc. In each case interviewers were urged not to prompt respondents with suggestions.<sup>39</sup> Collapsing all the responses referring to North Africa or the Middle East produces a single index varying from 0 (for no mentions of relevant nationalities, races, religions or cultures) to four (for one relevant mention in each category.) Cross-tabulation of the results by country demonstrates a relationship significant at the .99 confidence level. That is, consciousness of North Africa varied sharply among the twelve states of the EEC. Only 9.3% of the Dutch failed to mention at least one relevant nationality, race, religion or culture, whereas 81.3% of the Portuguese failed to mention any. Fewer than one per cent of the Italian sample scored four on the index, compared with 15.5% of the Danish sample. As that comparison suggests, Italy did not rank with European countries where there is the most awareness of Mediterranean peoples and cultures (Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, France, and Belgium). Italy fit with Greece in this ranking, ahead of the UK and Spain. Ireland, Luxembourg, and Portugal showed least awareness. **Fig. 2**

In the 1980s awareness of Mediterranean peoples and cultures did not go hand-in-hand with judgments about the presence of immigrants from outside the EU. For example, ranked by the proportion of respondents who judged the presence of such persons as “a bad thing” or “bad to some extent,” Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, and Greece emerged at the top of the EEC. Italy fell in the next group, between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, with a score near the average for EU countries of 40.1%. Spain, Portugal, Luxembourg, and Ireland fall well below this average. The surprises are Greece, whose respondents expressed highly negative judgments towards foreigners despite low awareness of Mediterranean peoples, and the Netherlands, whose high awareness did not manifest itself in the negative assessments one might expect. Other questions in the survey asked respondents if there were “too many” people of other nationalities, races, religions, or cultures and whether they, the respondents, “were disturbed about” the presence of peoples of other nationalities, races, religions, or cultures. Ranking the EEC countries on each of four elements (nationality, race, religion, culture) on both questions (“too many,” “disturbed”) produced relatively consistent results, even though respondents were much less likely to admit they were “disturbed” than to say there were “too many” foreigners. (Overall, 31.7% of all respondents said there were too many people of another nationality in their country; only 10% called the presence of such nationals disturbing.) On the

“too many” question, France, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, and the United Kingdom ranked at the top in percentage of respondents taking a negative view of outsiders. On the “disturbed” scale it was Belgium, Germany, France, Greece and Denmark. Greece traded places with the United Kingdom. In both cases Italy fit into an intermediate group. **Fig. 3**

In four countries there appeared to be a strong relationship between awareness of Mediterranean peoples and cultures and the judgment that there were “too many” foreigners in the country or that respondents felt “disturbed” by the foreign presence. Cross-tabulations were significant at the .99 level for France, Belgium, Netherlands, and Denmark. In Germany, Luxembourg, and Portugal the relationship appeared weak. In the other European countries, the negative perception of foreigners did not correlate with awareness of Mediterranean peoples and cultures. In Italy there was no significant relationship in either case. Looking at Italian respondents who mention “North Africans” as people from outside the community, I found no relationship between awareness of North Africans with judgments about the presence of foreigners being good or bad. The same lack of relationship held if the reference was to Africans in general or “Moroccans” in particular. Although only 7.8% of Italians mentioned Asians from the Far East as people who came to mind when they thought of outsiders, there was a correlation between mentions of East Asians and the perception that the presence of other nationalities was a “bad thing.”

Immigration has become a sharper issue in Italy in the last twenty years. The Italian perception of foreigners has apparently deteriorated in absolute terms and relative to the rest of Europe. By 1999 one in six Italians were telling pollsters they would not want immigrants/foreign workers or people of a different race or Muslims as neighbors, and Italians ranked near the top in Europe for the degree they were concerned (“much concerned” or “very much concerned.”) about immigrants. **Fig. 4** Asked in 2005 whether they would trust people of another religion or another nationality, almost three-fifths of Italians responded “not very much” or “not at all,” whereas only one-fifth of French and British citizens gave those answers. (The negativity of the Italians went beyond that of the Spaniards and the Germans, at least half of whom provided negative responses.) **Fig. 5** By the end of the decade, 38% of Italians were more or less willing to agree that immigrants constituted a “danger for our culture.” Some 32% agreed that they were a threat to employment. A solid majority of Italians did not

express agreement with either of those propositions.<sup>40</sup>

#### Fig. 6

The swelling number of immigrants is one possible explanation of changing attitudes. The largest influx of undocumented migrants, almost 50,000, hit Italy in 1999 as result of the crisis in the Balkans. From 2000 to 2007 that number hovered between 20,000 and 25,000, only to spike again in 2008 to 35,000.<sup>41</sup> Another explanation would be the enhanced role of the far Right in governing coalitions. Worry about immigration and resentment of foreigners runs much higher among those who identify themselves with the Right. **Fig. 7** An outburst of anti-Muslim sentiment occasioned by the events of September 11, 2001, and amplified by an inflammatory writer, Oriana Fallaci, probably contributed, as well. She published a four-page article in *Corriere della Sera* entitled “The Rage and the Pride,” (*La Rabbia e l’Orgoglio*), which she turned into a book that sold a million copies in 2002. She argued for the superiority of Christian civilization, categorized Muslims as an enemy within Europe and urged Italians to be both supportive of the United States and patriotic.<sup>42</sup> (By one estimate there were 800,000 Muslims in Italy on 9/11, a little more than one per cent of the population.)<sup>43</sup> In a 2009 survey, more than half of Italians (57.1%) said they did not agree (“per niente” or “poco”) that it would be “fair to permit Muslims to construct mosques on Italian territory.”<sup>44</sup>

In general, the Italian public image of Mediterranean immigrants does not appear unduly harsh or threatening when compared with attitudes in other European countries. While there is deep concern about the number of immigrants reaching Italy, the southern shore of the Mediterranean accounts for a rather small part of the Italian problem. Only two countries from the area, Morocco and Tunisia, figured among the top ten countries of origin for 2.6 million foreigners living in Italy in 2006. Morocco ranked second (12%) behind Albania (13%) and just ahead of Romania (11%). Tunisia (3%) trailed China (5%) and Ukraine (4%).<sup>45</sup> Bitterness about immigrants from North Africa does not appear sufficiently widespread to intimidate political leaders from supporting initiatives for greater Mediterranean consultation and coordination. The second Berlusconi government (2001-06) launched new legislation to regulate immigration, drawing attention to the phenomenon but also legitimizing it by regularizing immigrants who had already arrived.

On another issue public opinion may be changing in a fashion that would be favorable to Mediterranean cooperation: the pollution of Mediterranean waters.

In a 1992 survey about the Maastricht treaty, Italians (42.2%) distinguished themselves from other Europeans (but not from East Germans) by identifying pollution with automobiles. The mean for EU countries was 29.8%. But the Italians were less likely than others to mention oil pollution of the sea and coasts. Only 27.4% of them did so, compared with a EU mean of 44%. Slightly more than half of the Greeks mentioned it, 45.9% of the Spanish respondents, and 52.4% of the French. Greeks ranked at the very top in mentioning industrial waste as a source of pollution; Italy placed at the European mean of 39.2%. High percentages of respondents in all countries mentioned chemical products released into the air (mean of 69.4%) and few mentioned “uncontrolled mass tourism” (mean 4.9%).

Some 13 years later, both Italians and Spaniards seem to accord importance to the global pollution of rivers, lakes, and oceans. Four-fifths of a Spanish sample and three-fourths of an Italian sample said they thought such pollution was “somewhat” or “very” serious issue for the world as a whole. In the 2005 survey, a majority of respondents in France, Italy, Great Britain and Spain identified protecting the environment as more important than stimulating economic growth.<sup>46</sup> Whether respondents concerned about pollution of rivers, lakes, and oceans were thinking of the Mediterranean is, of course uncertain, as it is uncertain that pollution of the Mediterranean was foremost in the minds of respondents when they made environmental protection a high priority. The new Union for the Mediterranean does put the fight against pollution in the Mediterranean at the top of its agenda.

### Italian Policy Toward the Mediterranean

Despite its history and geography, despite the assertions of its foreign policy elites, and despite the evolution of its policies under the center-right coalition in the last decade, Italy has not managed to assert the leadership role in Mediterranean affairs that it covets. It has not succeeded in formulating a coherent conception of community in the Mediterranean, and, as a result, has not pursued a set of policies that constitute a single coherent strategy. Moreover, as has often been the case with Italy, the resources it has been able to bring to bear do not match the objectives it has set for itself. As a consequence, its aspirations in the Mediterranean region have not been fully realized.

Some of the reasons are internal. Italy managed to

construct a consensus about European integration only some fifteen years after the end of WWII. It took another fifteen years to win the support of the principal opposition party, the PCI, for the NATO alliance. While transformed in the 1990s, the Italian political system still depends for its stability upon the construction of multi-party coalitions often held together by tenuous, transitory agreements rather than broad consensus on policy issues.<sup>47</sup> A lack of a consistent strategy in the Mediterranean may be one casualty. Of course, as in any vigorous democracy, non-governmental organizations, interest groups, and public opinion as a whole complicate decision-making in Italy. The policies of the Vatican have undoubtedly influenced Italian elites, especially in the era when Christian Democrats held the reins; Church sympathies for Christians in countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine may have helped push Italy toward pro-Arab positions, just as the Vatican's reconciliation with Israel may have nudged Berlusconi governments toward a "rebalancing" of the Italian position.<sup>48</sup> Enormous popular opposition to the American assault on Iraq in 2003 caused the Berlusconi government, committed to support the American effort, to identify its occupation force as peacekeepers.

External complexities outweigh internal constraints, however, in explaining Italian frustrations. Some of these complexities afflict all countries in their relationships with the Mediterranean region. In that context, Italy's reliance on energy supplies from the region, and especially from Libya and Algeria, is scarcely unusual, nor is its vexation at the authoritarianism of governments who are peddling these resources. Like other Western states, Italy wants regime change but fears that liberalization might bring Islamists to power. It wants transition with stability, and in the end has preferred stability to transition.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Italy has been outspoken in its embrace of a Palestinian state but has sought to maintain a relationship with Israel without sacrificing its ties to the Arab world. Like other European states, Italian industry needs the help of immigrant labor, but a significant segment of the population would prefer to slow down the influx of foreigners, some of whom come from across the Mediterranean.

Besides these complexities faced by most Western states, the Italians have encountered a few others. One stems from their colonial experience in Libya and their longstanding stake in Tunisia. Those relationships, whether burdensome or advantageous, have generated a series of dilemmas for policymakers, including the effort to help rebels overthrow Colonel Qadhafi in

the spring of 2011. Moreover, the French-led effort to establish privileged trade relationships with North Africa has produced both support and misgivings in Italy, because Italian agriculture competes with North African products such as olive oil. The immigration issue affects Italy more directly than some other European states. The Government looks bad if it turns back boatloads of immigrants at its shores, and it also looks bad when it leans on Libya to imprison and then repatriate immigrants to other African countries. Perhaps as much as any European state, Italy has championed multilateral efforts in the Mediterranean at the expense of bilateral policy making, whether those efforts come from the EU, the Atlantic Alliance, the United Nations, or the Union for the Mediterranean, but one result has been the lack of a policies it can call its own. The Berlusconi governments have sought to revive bilateralism without being able to call upon the resources, especially in a period of economic crisis, that would make such policies successful. The traditional gap between aspirations and the capacity of Italy to achieve those aspirations appears as large as ever.

Italy has championed multilateral initiatives in the region, such as the Barcelona process (EMP), the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and now the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Such initiatives appear to support both Europe and the Mediterranean, but the language of EMP was bipolar: its initial declaration of purpose referred to the EU on one side and its "Mediterranean partners" on the other, even though some of the EU member states (including Italy) are also Mediterranean. Whatever the intent of participants, such language reinforced the split between northern and southern shores. The purpose of the Barcelona process was "to encourage economic and social development and to promote universal human rights," but it has not lived up to its promise. Among the reasons: the Oslo accords outlining a road to settlement of the Israel-Palestine question broke down, the EU undertook enlargement to the East, authoritarian regimes resisted the push for human rights, and terrorist threats hung over the region<sup>50</sup>. The EMP gave way to the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) launched in 2004. Less ambitious, it sought to work with countries engaged in reform. Like the EMP, this venture again centered on Europe rather than the Mediterranean.

The newest multilateral initiative, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), avoids this "we-Europeans-and-you-others" approach even though it originated with a European, Nicolas Sarkozy, who advanced

the idea before he was elected president of France. Without initially winning much international support, he nonetheless managed to launch the program in July 2008. Forty-three heads of state and government attended the opening ceremonies in Paris, where the secretariat is located though Paris is not usually regarded as a Mediterranean city. In creating the UfM, Sarkozy apparently hoped to deflect Turkish desires to join the European Union. Italy supported the new initiative despite its simultaneous support for Turkish efforts to enter the EU.

The UfM appears to reflect a notion that the Mediterranean basin must rediscover its cultural unity. One of its early successes is the establishment of a Mediterranean University system centered in Slovenia. Although Sicily would have been a prime location for such a university, and the governor of the region sought to bring it there, the condition of Sicily – still Mafia infected, underdeveloped economically – tipped the choice in favor of Slovenia. Cugliandro recommends the cultural approach as a Mediterranean policy for Italy: “The cultural variable represents a soft-issue, which can be tackled with few political repercussions and only needs the mutual awareness of a common Mediterranean identity by its advocates. This attitude mostly mirrors Italian foreign policy behavior, devoted to gain the maximum benefit with the minimum cost.”<sup>51</sup> Italy already hosts the European University Institute in Florence, a graduate school funded by the EU. To have played host to the Mediterranean University would have been a significant step toward leadership in the Mediterranean, a step, however modest, toward the cultural *remembrement*<sup>52</sup> of the Mediterranean so dear to Mohammed Arkoun.

A reconstruction of the cultural unity of the Mediterranean still seems far off. Between overcoming a conception of permanent division and achieving a renewed sense of oneness there lurk less ominous but nonetheless discordant visions of the Mediterranean. Islam and Christianity do not divide the northern and southern shores in definitive fashion but they still may be seen that way. Judaism and Islam may serve to mobilize some Israelis and some Palestinians in their conflict, but the role of religion is not central there either. The notion of pan-Arabism, which long served to remind some states of their differences from not just Europe but Israel and Turkey, too, has largely dissipated as an effective political force. Might its remnants re-emerge as an obstacle? The recognition of Amizigh (Berber) demands in Morocco and Algeria may be helpful in this regard, unless they trigger a pan-Arab reaction. The old division between

colonizer and colonized seemingly disappeared fifty years ago with the independence of Algeria, although the occupation of Iraq or even the intervention in Libya reawaken negative memories. It does seem that there is greater agreement on fundamental values than Europeans have tended to think. Survey research in an expanding number of countries has tended to show overwhelming support for liberal, democratic values even in predominantly Muslim countries with authoritarian governments. The Arab Spring of 2011 has served to underline that fact. While the “clash of civilizations” appears less plausible than it once did, a full reconstruction of cultural unity in the Mediterranean still looks unrealistic.

Political and economic unity may be even more unrealistic, however. The division between rich and poor states remains significant and intractable, underpinning the migration problems that afflict the area. The UfM takes individual nation-states as its members, but those nation-states are not equal in population, in wealth, or even in status. The members of the EU are nation-states with an asterisk that denotes a sacrifice of some sovereignty to a set of supranational institutions. This is not to suggest, however, that the nation-state has lost its pre-eminence as a form of political organization. The breakup of Yugoslavia, the impending split of the Sudan, and the Palestinian demand for a state remind us that the nation-state still has no serious competitor. Any realist must imagine a Mediterranean region of the future composed as it is now of nation-states, some more powerful than others, rather than as a collection of tribes, regions, or individuals. Italy cannot really hope to re-establish a Roman Empire or to foster a Mediterranean Republic.

More useful than the idea of cultural reconstruction or political and economic unification is, perhaps, Braudel’s notion of the Mediterranean as a place where “to live is to exchange.”<sup>53</sup> It goes beyond the idea of the Mediterranean as a zone of conflict and chaos without presuming commonality. Exchange has always occurred and is still occurring, but it is possible to think about enhancing it in political, economic, social, and cultural directions. To promote exchange is to promote communication, transport, tourism, trade, cultural interaction, and even political collaboration. Exchange does not imply exclusivity. A country such as Italy can be a participant in exchange, intense in some cases and modest in others, without according any privilege to one part of the world. It need not choose between Europe and America, or between either one of them and the Mediterranean. And exchange does not imply a need for a coherent strategy,

policy, or even leadership. Exchange reminds us that the Mediterranean has not one but many elements, that conversation among those elements has often been stilted if not impossible, that interchange itself constitutes a value at the root of what have come to be known as universal human rights, and that the free exchange of goods and ideas has led to the diminution of conflict, even in places such as Europe, where war once seemed to be the norm.

Italy has always been a primary player in the commercial, artistic, scientific, and social interactions of the Mediterranean. In that sense, its Mediterranean vocation is beyond dispute. With the fifth or sixth largest economy in the world, it will necessarily be a continuing force in the region, but Rosa Balfour writes: "Even in

the presence of clear economic interests and security concerns, Italy's position in the Mediterranean has not been as high profile as might have been expected."<sup>54</sup> Italy cannot withdraw but neither can it transform the region without the cooperation of others. As a result, it engages in (unjustified?) self-flagellation in this as in so many other matters. That fact that others have not been able to dominate either does not console Italians, because others do not share Italian glories and history; they do not share the burdens that go with that history. "Mediterranean vocation" is an expression of Italian exceptionalism, but Italy is not the world's only superpower and cannot implement its manifest destiny. Such is the reality of international politics, for better or for worse.

## NOTES

1. See John H. Pryor, *Geography, Technology, and War: Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649-1571* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988), Chap. 1.
2. Mohammed Arkoun uses that expression to emphasize the common heritage of Muslims, Jews, and Christianity by virtue of adherence to revealed scripture (the Book) and commitments to scholarship and literacy (the book). See Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam* (Boulder: Westview, 1994), Chap. 12.
3. Paolo Guidicini e Asterio Savelli, eds., "Il Mediterraneo come sistema turistico complesso," *Sociologia Urbana and Rurale* 10, no. 26 (1988): 1-255, at 5.
4. Arkoun makes a plea for putting the Mediterranean cultural area back together again in the final chapter of *Rethinking Islam*.
5. Carlo Maria Santoro, *L'Italia e il Mediterraneo: Questioni di Politica Estera* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1988), Chap. 4.
6. In Italy, non-EC foreigners constitute .4% of the population; that population is 3.8% in France. From *Europe in Figures* (Luxembourg: Eurostat, 1992), 90.
7. Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, "Italy," in Mathias Jopp, Reinhardt Rummel and Peter Schmidt, eds., *Integration and Security in Western Europe* (Boulder: Westview, 1991), 192, quoted in Gareth M. Winrow, "NATO and the Out-of-area Issue: The Positions of Turkey and Italy," *Il Politico* (1993: 4), 651.
8. Giulio Andreotti, "Foreign Policy in the Italian Democracy," *Political Science Quarterly* 109:3 (1994): 531.
9. Andreotti, 536. Manlio Graziano associates Andreotti with "Mediterranean Atlanticism." See his "The Rise and Fall of 'Mediterranean Atlanticism' in Italian Foreign Policy: the Case of the Near East," *Modern Italy* 12:3 (November 2007): 287-308.
10. Giampaolo Calchi Novati, "The Case of the Achille Lauro Hijacking and Italo-Arab Relations: One Policy, Too Many Policies, No Policy?," *Journal of Arab Affairs* 10:2 (Fall 1991): 153-179.
11. *La Guerra nel Golfo Persico, I dibattiti alla Camera, in Assemblea in Commissione, Agosto 1990—Febbraio 1991*.
12. *I Dibattiti*, August 11, 1990, 14.
13. *I Dibattiti*, August 23, 1990.
14. *I Dibattiti*, August 23, 1990, 80.
15. *I Dibattiti*, August 23, 1990, 82.
16. *I Dibattiti*, August 23, 1990, 98.
17. Mario Sznajder, "Italy's Right-Wing Government: Legitimacy and Criticism," *International Affairs* 71:1 (1995): 87.
18. *Ibid.*, 100.
19. For the debate about Berlusconi's foreign policy, see James Walston, "Italian Foreign Policy in the 'Second Republic,' Changes of Form and Substance," *Modern Italy* 12:1 (2007): 91-104; Sergio Romano, "Berlusconi's Foreign Policy: Inverting Traditional Priorities," *The International Spectator* 41:2 (2006): 101-107; Elisabetta Brighi, "One Man Alone? A *Longue Durée* Approach to Italy's Foreign Policy under Berlusconi," *Government and Opposition* 41:2 (2006): 278-297; James E. Miller, "Silvio Berlusconi and the Traditions of Italian Foreign Policy: A Comment on Ambassador Romano's Presentation," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 14:1 (2009): 15-20; Roberto Aliboni, "Neo-Nationalism and Neo-Atlanticism in Italian Foreign Policy," *The International Spectator* 38:1(2003): 81-90; Maurizio Carbone, "Italy in the European Union, between Prodi and Berlusconi," *The International Spectator* 44:3 (2009): 97-115; Arturo Marzano, "Italian Foreign Policy Towards Israel: The Turning Point of the Berlusconi Government (2001-2006)," *Israel Studies* 16:1 (Spring 2011): 79-103; Osvaldo Croci, "The Second Berlusconi Government and Italian Foreign Policy," *The International Spectator* 37:2 (2002): 89-101; Sergio Romano, "Italian Foreign Policy after the End of the Cold War," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 14:1 (2009): 8-14; and Raffaella A. Del Sarto and Nathalie Tocci, "Italy's Politics without Policy: Balancing Atlanticism and Europeanism in the Middle East," *Modern Italy* 13:2 (May 2008): 135-153.
20. Massimo Cacciari quoted by James Walston, "The Shift in Italy's Euro-Atlantic Policy: Partisan or Bipartisan?" *The International Spectator* 39:4 (2004): 121.
21. Romain H. Rainero, "Gli Studi Italiani sul Nord Africa Contemporaneo," in *L'Italia e il Nordafrica contemporaneo* (Milan: Margorah, 1988): 11.
22. Laura Guazzone, "Security in the Mediterranean: Italy's Perceptions and Policies," *Journal of Arab Affairs* 10:2 (1991): 186.

23. Ibid., 187-188.
24. Ibid., 185-186.
25. Jacob Abadi, "Constraints and Adjustments in Italy's Policy Toward Israel," *Middle Eastern Studies* 38:4 (October 2002): 63-94.
26. Ferruccio Pastore, "Italy Facing International Migration: Recent Policy Developments," *The International Spectator* 35:2 (April-June 2000): 29-39.
27. Maurizio Carbone, "Between Ambition and Ambivalence: Italy and the European Union's Mediterranean Policy," *Modern Italy* 13:2 (May 2008): 162.
28. See Karim Mezran and Paola de Maio, "Between the Past and the Future: Has a Shift in Italian-Libyan Relations Occurred?," *The Journal of North African Studies* 12:4 (December 2007): 439-451; Yehudit Ronen, "A Libyan-Italian Encounter: The Changing Mosaic of Mediterranean Migration," *The Maghreb Review* 33:1 (2008): 60-81; Yahia H. Zoubir, "Libya and Europe: Economic Realism at the Rescue of the Qaddafi Authoritarian Regime," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 17:3 (December 2009): 401-415; and Emanuela Paoletti, "Power Relations and International Migration: The Case of Italy and Libya," *Political Studies* 59 (2011): 269-289.
29. See Paoletti, "Power Relations," 280.
30. Guazzone, "Security in the Mediterranean," 196.
31. Alvaro de Vasconcelos, "The Shaping of a Subregional Identity," in Roberto Aliboni, ed., *Southern European Security in the 1990s* (London: St. Martin's, 1992), 15-27.
32. Maurizio Carbone, "The Domestic Foundations of Italy's Foreign and Development Policies," *West European Politics* 30:4 (September 2007): 916.
33. Bruno Callies de Salies, "Europe-Maghreb: de la coopération au partenariat," *Défense Nationale* 50 (June 1994): 125-139.
34. See Corrado Maria Daclon, *Mediterraneo ambiente e sviluppo* (Rimini: Maggioli, 1993), Chap. 1.
35. See Callies de Salies, "Europe-Maghreb," for an account of these developments.
36. Mezran and de Maio, "Between the Past and the Future," 445.
37. Rosa Balfour, "Italy's Policies in the Mediterranean," in *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Assessing the First Decade*, ed. Haizam Amirah Fernández, Richard Youngs (Madrid: Real Instituto Elcano; FRIDE, 2005.), 123. Table VII takes inspiration from the Balfour table on 123.
38. See Bruna Bagnato, *Vincoli europei, echi mediterranei* (Florence: Ponte alle Grazie, 1991.) for an extensive discussion of Italian policy toward Tunisia in the post WWII period.
39. Karlheinz Reif and Anna Melich, *Euro-Barometer 3; Immigrants and Out-groups in Western Europe, October-November, 1988*. Conducted by Faits et Opinions, Paris. Produced and distributed by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, Ann Arbor, 1992.
40. Italian National Election Studies, 2008 dataset, by permission.
41. Paoletti, "Power Relations and International Migration," 280.
42. Ruth Ellen Gruber, "Italy Searches for Its Soul," *New Leader* 84:6 (November-December 2001): 9-11. Also Andrew Geddes, "Il rombo dei cannoni? Immigration and the centre-right in Italy," *Journal of European Public Policy* 15:3 (April 2008): 349-366.
43. Gruber, 10.
44. Italian National Election Studies, 2008 dataset, by permission.
45. Geddes, "Il rombo dei cannoni?" 357.
46. World Values Survey, Italy 2005, online data analysis.
47. Filippo Andreatta, "Italian Foreign Policy: Domestic Politics, International Requirements and the European Dimension," *European Integration* 30:1 (March 2008): 178.
48. Graziano, "The Rise and Fall," 287-308.
49. Alvaro de Vasconcelos, "The EU and the Mediterranean: Overhauling the Status Quo Approach," *International Spectator* 38:2 (2003): 100.
50. Fabrizio Tassinari and Ulla Holm, "Values Promotion and Security Management in Euro-Mediterranean Relations: 'Making Democracy Work' or 'Good-Enough Governance?'" *Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) Working Paper* (2010):17. 5. Maurizio Carbone writes: "Despite the initial enthusiasm, the EMP fell short of its goals." See his "Between Ambition and Ambivalence," 162.
51. Donatella Cugliandro, "Italian 'Mediterraneanness': A New Path in Italy's Foreign Policy?" *Hellenic Studies/Etudes Helleniques* 17:2 (Autumn 2009): 115.
52. The literal meaning is "putting back together," as in a piece of property that has been cut up, but the term also evokes memory, which is also appropriate in this case.
53. Tassinari and Holm, "Values Promotion," 13.
54. Balfour, "Italy's Policies in the Mediterranean," 129.



**Fig. 1—  
Italian  
Trade  
with  
Mediterranean  
2010**

(in  
millions of  
Euros)

| Countries | Imports<br>% of Total<br>Exports<br>% of Total |      |         |      |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------|------|---------|------|
| Morocco   | 529                                            | 0.1% | 1,430   | 0.4% |
| Algeria   | 7,904                                          | 2.2% | 2,872   | 0.9% |
| Tunisia   | 1,316                                          | 0.4% | 3,430   | 1.0% |
| Libya     | 11,836                                         | 3.2% | 2,705   | 0.8% |
| Egypt     | 1,888                                          | 0.5% | 2,936   | 0.9% |
| Lebanon   | 28                                             | 0.0% | 1,038   | 0.3% |
| Syria     | 1,134                                          | 0.3% | 1,168   | 0.3% |
| Palestine | 1                                              | 0.0% | 6       | 0.0% |
| Israel*   | 888                                            | 0.2% | 1,733   | 0.5% |
| Turkey**  | 5,571                                          | 1.5% | 7,857   | 2.3% |
| World     | 364,950                                        |      | 337,583 |      |

Source: Camera di Commercio Italo-Arabo using Istat data (except for Turkey and Israel)

\* For Israel statistics from Israeli government, central statistics.

\*\* For Turkey the numbers come from Hurriyet Daily News.com; statistics for 2008.

**Fig. 2—Awareness of  
Other Nationalities, Races,  
Religions, Cultures**

| Question:                                                                                                                                                                      |                                   |      |                                 |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|--|
| When you hear about people of other nationalities, religions, races, or cultures, what do you think of? Per cent mentioning terms relevant to the Middle East and North Africa |                                   |      |                                 |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                |                                   |      |                                 |  |
| Country                                                                                                                                                                        | Mentions in<br>3 or 4 categories* | Rank | No mentions<br>Relevant to MENA |  |
| Netherlands                                                                                                                                                                    | 44.8                              | 1    | 9.3                             |  |
| Denmark                                                                                                                                                                        | 43.1                              | 2    | 10.7                            |  |
| France                                                                                                                                                                         | 30.6                              | 3    | 16.2                            |  |
| Germany                                                                                                                                                                        | 38.3                              | 4    | 11.8                            |  |
| Belgium                                                                                                                                                                        | 27.7                              | 5    | 17.6                            |  |
| Italy                                                                                                                                                                          | 3.4                               | 6    | 51.6                            |  |
| Spain                                                                                                                                                                          | 1.8                               | 7    | 67.9                            |  |
| Ireland                                                                                                                                                                        | 1.2                               | 8    | 72.4                            |  |
| Greece                                                                                                                                                                         | 1.2                               | 9    | 52.4                            |  |
| Luxembourg                                                                                                                                                                     | 1                                 | 10   | 78.0                            |  |
| United Kingdom                                                                                                                                                                 | 0.9                               | 11   | 67.2                            |  |
| Portugal                                                                                                                                                                       | 0.3                               | 12   | 81.3                            |  |

| <b>Fig. 3—The Presence of Non-EU Nationals, 1988</b>                                     |                 |      |  |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------|--|--|
| Question:                                                                                |                 |      |  |  |
| How do you judge the presence of non-EU nationals in your country?                       |                 |      |  |  |
| Choices: 1. A good thing; 2. Good to some extent; 3. Bad to some extent; 4. A bad thing. |                 |      |  |  |
| Country                                                                                  | % Responses 3-4 | Rank |  |  |
| Belgium                                                                                  | 50.7            | 1    |  |  |
| Denmark                                                                                  | 55.3            | 2    |  |  |
| Germany                                                                                  | 52.3            | 3    |  |  |
| France                                                                                   | 50.7            | 4    |  |  |
| Greece                                                                                   | 47.8            | 5    |  |  |
| United Kingdom                                                                           | 41.5            | 6    |  |  |
| Italy                                                                                    | 39.8            | 7    |  |  |
| Netherlands                                                                              | 27.1            | 8    |  |  |
| Spain                                                                                    | 26.4            | 9    |  |  |
| Portugal                                                                                 | 26.1            | 10   |  |  |
| Luxembourg                                                                               | 21.0            | 11   |  |  |
| Ireland                                                                                  | 15.5            | 12   |  |  |

Source: Eurobarometer, October and November 1988.

| <b>Fig. 4—Change in Italian Attitudes toward Outsiders</b> |  |            |      |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--|------------|------|------|
| Question:                                                  |  | % Response | 1981 | 1990 |
| Whom would you NOT want as neighbors:                      |  |            |      | 1999 |
| Immigrants/Foreign Workers                                 |  | Mentioned  | 3.5  | 14.5 |
|                                                            |  |            | 16.5 |      |
| People of a Different Race                                 |  | Mentioned  | 7.3  | 13.4 |
|                                                            |  |            | 15.6 |      |
| People Who are Muslims                                     |  | Mentioned  | NA   | 14.9 |
|                                                            |  |            | 17.2 |      |

Source: World Values Survey, Italy 1981, 1990, and 1999, online analysis.

| <b>Fig.5---Trust of Others in Five Countries, 2005-2007</b> |                      |        |       |       |         |               |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------|-------|-------|---------|---------------|--|
| Question:                                                   |                      |        |       |       |         |               |  |
| How much can one trust people of:                           |                      |        |       |       |         |               |  |
|                                                             | Per Cent Responding: | France | Italy | Spain | Germany | Great Britain |  |
| Another Religion                                            | Not much, or at all  |        |       | 22.3  | 59.0    | 53.0          |  |
|                                                             |                      |        |       |       |         | 57.0          |  |
|                                                             |                      |        |       |       |         | 19.1          |  |
| Another Nationality                                         | Not much, or at all  |        |       | 21.4  | 55.6    | 50.6          |  |
|                                                             |                      |        |       |       |         | 58.2          |  |
|                                                             |                      |        |       |       |         | 19.8          |  |

Source: World Values Survey: France 2006, Germany 2006, Great Britain 2006, Italy 2005, Spain 2007, online analysis.

| <b>Fig.6—Italian Attitudes on Immigrants, 2008</b> |                      |               |                    |                |                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Question:</b>                                   | Not at all<br>Agreed | Not<br>Agreed | Somewhat<br>Agreed | Much<br>Agreed | Doesn't<br>Know<br>No<br>Response<br>Total |
| Immigrants are a danger . . .                      |                      |               |                    |                |                                            |
| For our culture                                    | 32.8                 | 24.7          | 20.8               | 17.5           | 3.6<br>0.5<br>99.9                         |
| For employment                                     | 30.8                 | 24.4          | 22.5               | 19.1           | 2.9<br>0.3<br>100                          |

Source: Italian National Election Studies, 2008.

| <b>Fig. 7—Attitudes in Italy by Self-Positioning on Left-Right<br/>Scale, 2005</b> |                                  |                                                                      |              |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| <b>Question</b>                                                                    | <b>% Response</b>                | <b>Left</b>                                                          | <b>Right</b> |  |
|                                                                                    |                                  | <b>2</b>                                                             |              |  |
|                                                                                    |                                  | <b>3</b>                                                             |              |  |
|                                                                                    |                                  | <b>4</b>                                                             |              |  |
|                                                                                    |                                  | <b>5</b>                                                             |              |  |
|                                                                                    |                                  | <b>6</b>                                                             |              |  |
|                                                                                    |                                  | <b>7</b>                                                             |              |  |
|                                                                                    |                                  | <b>8</b>                                                             |              |  |
|                                                                                    |                                  | <b>9</b>                                                             |              |  |
| Immigrant<br>Policy in Italy:<br>"I favor . . ."                                   | Strict limits, or<br>Prohibition | 31.2<br>24.6<br>29.3<br>35.6<br>38.4<br>37.7<br>55.3<br>44.3<br>76.9 | 54.2         |  |
| How much can<br>one trust people<br>of another<br>nationality?                     | Not much, or<br>not at all       | 53.0<br>41.2<br>39.4<br>46.2<br>56.1<br>54.4<br>52.5<br>53.6<br>68.0 | 65.2         |  |

Source: World Values Survey, Italy 2005, online analysis.

# The Contentious Path of the Italian Left, 1920-2012



W. Rand Smith<sup>1</sup>

*The Communist and Socialist parties are natural allies, bound by their common hostility to the existing capitalist society, yet they were also natural enemies, competing for the allegiance of the same workers.*

—Alexander De Grand<sup>2</sup>

Italian politics has long captured the dramatic imagination. As political scientist Joseph LaPalombara commented a generation ago: “Quick scene changes, simultaneous and often confusing action, tragedy on one occasion and comedy on another, unexpected ironic twists of fate, many layers of meaning: all of this and more is the stuff of Italian political drama.”<sup>3</sup> If Italian politics, as LaPalombara claimed, can be viewed as spettacolo, then Italian citizens in the post-World War II period have witnessed two long-running acts. The first was the so-called First Republic that began with the people’s rejection of the discredited monarchy in 1946 and ended with the crumbling, in 1992-93, of the established party system. Undermined by corruption scandals, the end of the Cold War, and the pressures of European integration (which caused a crisis with the lira and unpopular austerity measures), the three main parties of the postwar order – the Christian Democrats (DC), Communists (PCI), and Socialists (PSI) – either collapsed (DC, PSI) or transformed their identity (PCI) within that two-year span.

The tumult of the early 1990s clearly constituted a political crisis in the sense defined by Gramsci: “The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.”<sup>4</sup> One can debate whether Silvio Berlusconi, the Northern League (Lega Nord, or LN), and the National Alliance (Alleanza Nazionale) constituted morbid symptoms, but there is no question that they indeed appeared – and they have remained central actors in a reconfigured party system. This “second act,” commonly called the

Second Republic, still commands the stage. What has essentially changed is not the governing order per se – indeed, the 1948 republican constitution stands intact – but rather the makeup of the main political actors and the dynamics among them.

What has become of the Left in this “new” Republic? This is an important question, because from the origins of Italy’s republican system in the early postwar years, politics was defined by a fundamental split between a Catholic-inspired, anti-communist Right and a secular and (at least nominally) anti-capitalist Left. The two famiglie politiche featured not only antagonistic ideologies, but also separate symbols, heroes, ancillary organizations (labor unions, women’s and youth groups, etc.), and external allies (U.S. vs. USSR). The Communists, the dominant force on the Left, never shared in power at the national level after 1948; however, they were a significant presence by virtue of their large electorate (about one-fourth of the voting public), mass membership, strong grassroots organization, ties with organized labor, and a reputation for honest, effective governance at the local level. Although the Socialists could not match the Communists in terms of votes and organization, they too played an important role, especially after 1963, when they joined a series of DC-led governments. To examine the fate of the Left in the past two decades is, therefore, to investigate the broader direction of Italian politics in the wake of the First Republic’s demise.

The issue of the Left’s trajectory since the early 1990s can be focused more specifically on two questions: First, what caused the collapse of the Socialists and the transformation of the Communists? Second, what have been the consequences of these changes for Italian politics in an era dominated by the ultimate showman, Berlusconi? For answers, this paper turns to an examination of the history of the two parties’ relationship. As the quotation from De Grand that begins this chapter implies, the Communist-Socialist

relationship is a key determinant of the Left's capacity to achieve unity and thereby exert effective political influence.

On the basis of his examination, this chapter makes three main arguments, which are developed, respectively, in the next three sections. First, the recasting of the Italian Left that has taken place in the past two decades has its roots in a complex relationship of rivalry and cooperation between Communists and Socialists stretching back to 1920 and extending well into the Cold War period. Second, during the 1960s and 1970s the two parties made fateful strategic choices – most notably about alliance partners – that put them on diverging paths and eliminated any prospect of future cooperation. Finally, for both Communists and Socialists those strategic choices ultimately proved counterproductive, thereby leaving the Left divided and disorganized. While the Left's current debility cannot fully be blamed on alliance strategies launched decades ago, those strategies do constitute the most important factor in explaining the Left's contemporary state.

## Deep Roots – Rivalry and Cooperation, 1921-1962

The immediate years after World War I were difficult everywhere in Europe, but especially in Italy, as the nation increasingly polarized between militant forces on both the Left and the Right. This polarization was due to several domestic and international factors, including the economic and political fallout from the country's "mutilated victory" in the war, which de-legitimized the traditional ruling elite, and the Bolshevik takeover in Russia, which engendered a Red Scare among conservatives. Polarization extended into the two main political families as well. For the Left the critical moment came in 1921 when its largest formation, the Socialist Party, voted on the "Twenty-One Conditions" laid down by the Third International (read: Lenin). Chief among these conditions was the demand that Bolshevik sympathizers throughout the world form a Communist Party pledging loyalty to Moscow. In a party congress vote on whether to follow the Leninist script and transform the PSI into a Communist party, only about one-third of the delegates supported the move. In a scenario that played out in several other European nations, the pro-Soviet group resigned from the PSI to form a new Communist party. Thus was established a fundamental organizational and ideological split within the Left that would endure for the next seven decades.

Initially, however, the imperative of survival took precedence over ideology and rivalry, as repression by Mussolini's Fascist government and then the Nazi occupation during World War II impelled the two parties to cooperate in the face of common enemies. Moreover, Stalin's 1934 Popular Front strategy – whereby Communist parties were called upon to join with socialist and social democratic parties in the fight against fascism – further dampened the parties' inherent rivalry. During the war itself, PCI and PSI partigiani joined forces (with the Americans and British) in resisting the Nazi occupation and Mussolini's puppet regime. This tendency carried over in the Liberation and early postwar period (1944-47), as Communists and Socialists worked with other anti-fascist parties, including the newly born Christian Democratic party, to establish a new republican constitution and rebuild the economy.

Critical to this dynamic was a major shift in the PCI's orientation – a sea-change in political approach that is termed the "svolta di Salerno" (the Salerno "turn" or "turning point"). Upon returning to Italy in March 1944 from Moscow where he had spent much of World War II, PCI leader Palmiro Togliatti announced his support of the pro-monarchy, American-supported Badoglio government headquartered in the southern coastal town of Salerno. This move angered some other members of the anti-fascist coalition who were forthrightly republican, but for Togliatti (and for the USSR, which backed him) this represented a practical move that anticipated postwar Italian realities. Togliatti's view was that the transition to socialism would be a long march, requiring new alliances and the building of mass organizations within the capitalist order. This svolta provided the template for PCI strategy for much of the next five decades. The Communists henceforth would not only reject revolution in favor of a parliamentary path to socialism, they would also seek to cooperate with centrist and even conservative parties, including the Christian Democrats, which implied a conciliatory stance toward Catholic and conservative sensibilities.

Although the Liberation period reinforced the PCI's position as its dominant force, the Left as a whole found itself defeated and excluded politically by the onset of the Cold War. The watershed moment occurred in May 1947, with the ousting of both PCI and PSI representatives from the government by DC prime minister De Gasperi. Parliamentary elections the following year saw the DC gain a majority, while the Communists and Socialists, running as a single bloc, performed poorly. These elections set a pattern

that would hold until the early 1990s. In essence, the party system became polarized between two competitive mass parties, the Christian Democrats and the Communists.

On one side, the DC participated in, and usually headed, every government. Losing its absolute majority in the next elections, in 1953, the DC had to recruit coalition partners in order to govern, and these were typically such smaller parties as the Liberals, Republicans, and Social Democrats. Practicing an informal “*conventio ad excludendum*” – an agreement to exclude the Communists from any consideration as a coalition partner – these parties had trouble agreeing on little else, and so governments were typically short-lived, on average about eleven months. On the other side – the outside – stood the Communists, who were essentially powerless in parliament, but more able to influence politics through governing at the regional and local levels.

For the first fifteen years of the new system, the Socialists chose to remain “excluded” along with the PCI. The PSI-PCI cooperation owed much to the personal commitment of Socialist leader Pietro Nenni, who went so far as to advocate the reunification of the two parties. But the PCI-PSI partnership began to fray in 1956. In that year, Khrushchev presented his “secret speech” to the CPSU’s Twentieth Party Congress, denouncing Stalin’s errors and excesses, while during the same period the Soviet army suppressed revolts in Eastern Europe. These events reverberated through both the PCI and PSI. For the former, although Togliatti continued to support the Soviet system publicly, he also began to distance his party from the Soviets by speaking of an “Italian Road to Socialism” – an approach that would respect Italian political culture and traditions rather than copy the Soviet model.<sup>5</sup>

The PSI’s reaction was much more negative. Most symbolically, Nenni returned the Stalin Peace Prize that he had won in 1951. Although he maintained a public façade of unity with the Communists and refused to join a DC-led government, behind the scenes he began exploring alternative alliance possibilities with the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats. While the Socialists’ split with the Communists did not come for several more years, the events of 1956 crystallized Nenni’s determination to move his party out of the Communists’ large shadow. A fundamental shift of the Socialists’ political loyalties was underway.<sup>6</sup>

## Fateful Choices – The Importance of Alliances, 1963-1994

The next three decades saw this initial split widen into a chasm, as both Socialists and Communists commenced a search for new alliances. As we shall see in the following overview of the period from 1963 to 1994, both parties – albeit at different time points under contrasting political conditions – sought allies toward the center, specifically with the Christian Democrats. These were fateful choices in that, in both cases, the resulting alliances not only eliminated the prospect of a PCI-PSI rapprochement, but ultimately harmed the fortunes of both parties – either directly, in the case of the PCI, or indirectly, in the case of the PSI.

For the Socialists, the official transfer of alliances came in 1963, when the party accepted DC Prime Minister Aldo Moro’s offer to join his cabinet. This “*apertura a sinistra*,” or “opening to the left,” set historic precedent in that, except for the short-lived Liberation period (1944-47), it marked the first time since Italy’s 1870 unification that the socialist Left had participated in a government. Three main factors made this historic opening possible. The most obvious was Socialist leader Nenni’s increasingly harsh accusations that the USSR was violating human rights in Eastern Europe. Although Togliatti was no vocal defender of the USSR on every occasion, by refusing to criticize Soviet action he put his party at odds with the Socialists. For the DC, this was a golden opportunity to take advantage of the split and co-opt the Socialists. Moreover, important actors including the Kennedy administration, big business, and the liberalizing Catholic Church under Pope John XXIII approved such a move.<sup>7</sup> Finally, for the DC there was simple necessity: the Christian Democrats needed a significant new coalition partner. The DC vote share had declined from 48.5 percent in 1948 to 38.3 percent in 1963, making the party’s ability to muster a majority ever more precarious and dependent on satisfying its smaller coalition partners. In this context, the Socialists could bring in new voters, especially from the working class.

The opening created a new three-fold dynamic in terms of party competition and strategy that had lasting effects. First, it turned the PSI and PCI into competitors and definitively ended the two parties’ long history of collaboration. The *apertura* also gave the Socialists an opportunity to establish a new identity as independent reformers no longer subordinate to



the Communists. In this endeavor they could claim some success, although the decision to break with the Communists engendered much internal opposition (and yet another organizational split) as well as electoral decline. Finally, by tilting Italy's center of political gravity slightly to the Left, this new phase provided a space for the Communists, by the early 1970s, to launch their own opening: a bid to collaborate with the Christian Democrats. In the process, the PCI sought to escape the political isolation, the Cold War ghetto, into which both the DC and, after 1963, the PSI had consigned it.

The opening to the left arrangement lasted, albeit bumpily, from 1963 to 1974. Although the Socialists never held the prime ministership, they held cabinet positions in most of the governments formed during this period. The alliance did produce several reforms – notably nationalization of the electricity industry and a bill of rights for workers – but most of these came early in the collaboration, and the Socialists received little long-term credit from the voters; between 1963 and 1972 their vote share slumped from 13.8 to 9.6 percent. Moreover, the decision to join DC-led governments prompted a left-wing faction to leave the party and form a separate party that eventually merged with the PCI.

By the late 1960s, it was clear that the center-left governing experiment, however innovative politically, had failed to resolve major problems of economic and social modernization. Sluggish growth, coupled with rising inflation and unemployment, were fueling manifestations of protest from students and workers alike. The “Hot Autumn” of 1969 witnessed a huge jump in strike activity, especially by unskilled, newly arrived migrant workers from the South now working in heavy industry in Northern cities such as Turin and Milan.<sup>8</sup> Strikes and building occupations by university students protesting the Vietnam War, overcrowded classrooms, and poor employment prospects also became daily occurrences. In this context, violent extremist movements mobilized, both on the Left and Right.

How to respond to these multiple crises became the central question for both Communists and Socialists. For the Communists the issue was whether the party should support the various protests and push for the defeat of the DC, or seek some accommodation with the DC in order to preserve the current system. In late 1973, in the wake of the Pinochet coup in Chile, the new PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer proposed a new stance, a “Compromesso Storico,” or “Historic

Compromise,” in which the PCI would share power with the DC in a government of national unity.

Although analysts have rightly labeled Berlinguer's proposal as another *svolta*, one sees a strong element of continuity with both Togliatti's “Salerno” line of 1944 and Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony. Both of these predecessors were well aware of the PCI's need to appeal to loyal Catholics. Berlinguer argued that the DC was a mass party that drew support not only from devout Catholics but all sectors of the population; therefore, no definitive change could be effected without the DC's cooperation. While linking his proposal to his party's past, Berlinguer also tied it to the present – specifically Italy's current crisis, as well as the “lessons of Chile.” To seek an exclusive coalition with the PSI, which at best could garner a slight majority, would run the risk of further polarization and even the prospect of a military coup. Only a coalition with the DC, he argued, would have the necessary public support to avoid a right-wing backlash.<sup>9</sup> Berlinguer also wagered that, with sufficient Communist pressure, the DC could be pushed to enact progressive reforms. For the first few years, the Compromise strategy appeared to be paying off in new members and voters. By contrast, the Socialists, tarnished with the image of dependency on the DC, stagnated. By 1976 the Communists appeared to be in a credible position to negotiate a “grand coalition” style government with the Christian Democrats.

There is no question that Berlinguer's compromise strategy, which played out over the next four years, proved negative for the Communists in two crucial respects. First, it did not work as planned, for a simple reason: although the Communists pushed to become an official partner in the government, the DC kept the door closed, forcing the PCI into a position of “support” without portfolio, but with no policy responsibility. Between August 1976 and January 1979 – a span of two and a half years – the Communists supported two *monocolore* (DC only) governments headed by Giulio Andreotti. The government did pass new laws in such areas as regional government, urban planning, and mental health provision, but implementation was often poor or non-existent. In the critical area of wages, the PCI, through its influence on the largest union, the CGIL, counseled restraint and discouraged active pressure to keep wages at least in line with inflation. But workers received little quid for their quo: unemployment continued to rise, and a union proposal to stimulate job growth in the South received little attention.<sup>10</sup>

Second, the PCI's compromesso bid exacted a high cost in terms of party unity and electoral appeal. Local-level militanti and even party staff had trouble understanding the logic behind the strategy, especially the party leadership's relative passivity toward the DC.<sup>11</sup> Such disappointment became all the more difficult to bear given the party's poor electoral performance. In local elections in 1978 the PCI drew just 26 percent, and in parliamentary elections the following year just over 30 percent – down a full four points from its high of just three years earlier.

One can conclude that both the strategy and its dispiriting results were both logical and even predictable outcomes of the path defined by Togliatti in the 1940s. As noted earlier, that path, the vaunted “via italiana al socialismo,” was based on a tension inherent in the party's dual role as both vanguard of change and participant in Italy's highly imperfect democratic system. On the one hand, the PCI, proclaiming an essential loyalty to the Soviet Union, bore the banner of a party sworn to bury capitalism. This implied a readiness, indeed a desire, to contest the very legitimacy of the capitalist system and those social forces, including other political parties, that supported that system. On the other hand, the PCI, having played a central role in writing the 1946 republican constitution, swore to defend Italy's institutional order, both as a “vaccination” against any possible reversion to authoritarianism and as a way of achieving the Gramscian goal of cultural hegemony. The tension in these conflicting roles produced the widely recognized *doppiezza* – a double-speak of revolutionary rhetoric coupled with cautious, regime-reinforcing behavior – that posed no great problem for the party as long as there was no realistic prospect of ever having to exercise power. In essence, the party could eat its revolutionary cake and have it too, since the revolution was always “out there” in some undefined future. From 1948 until the mid-1970s, the PCI could credibly claim to be both a party of protest and radical change and a party of order, moderation, and, in the case of local administration, good government.

This formula became untenable, however, in the late 1970s, as the party faced the sharpening of its contradictory stance. On one side, the PCI found itself pushed from below, by an influx of young activists impatient for change. Push also came from the voters, who viewed the governing parties as incapable of managing the country's polarization. By the mid-1970s the PCI was a credible contender to join the inner-system parties, and the Historic Compromise proposal was the party's appeal to do so. On the other

side, however, the Communist initiative met a push-back in the form of the DC's refusal to grant the PCI full partnership, a stance that was encouraged by the United States.

At that crucial moment, the PCI had no real counterploy, no real vision of what structural changes it would demand in exchange for its support. The key problem was that, for the PCI, the Compromise had become an end in itself, not a tactic for eventually achieving the party's longer-term goals. This was the case in large part because the party had no clearly defined, longer-term goals. In essence, the party's commitment to defending the flawed democratic system took precedence over its other professed aim of radical transformation. Forced finally to confront the contradictions of *doppiezza*, the party opted for preservation over transformation.

Just as the Communists were sinking in the late 1970s, the Socialists under a new leader, Bettino Craxi, who became party chief in 1976, were rising. A supreme Machiavellian in his ability to identify and eliminate possible enemies within his own party and to be a nemesis to other parties, Craxi had a clear vision: to bring the PSI out from under the Communists' shadow by building a “socialist pole” unifying all the forces of the non-Communist Left. In Craxi's view, this pole would not just rival the Communists, it would destroy them. In this concept, one sees the animus of Craxi's tenure as head of the Socialist Party from 1976, when he became its leader, until his flight into exile in 1994: an unrelenting anti-communism. Craxi's rise thus created a new dynamic in PSI-PCI relations – one of unrelenting opposition – that would endure until the early 1990s.

For an observer surveying the Italian political scene in 1980, it would have been almost impossible to imagine the seismic shocks that were to come in the next dozen years. Even as late as 1987, an expert as knowledgeable as Joseph LaPalombara enthused: “Italy is fundamentally a healthy, dynamic, democratic country, with little chance of going over the brink and breaking to pieces.”<sup>12</sup> Five years later, no one would make such a claim. Perhaps the nation itself did not break apart, but the political system certainly went over the brink. By 1993, the three largest parties – the DC, PCI, and PSI – either no longer existed or were engulfed in crises that would soon bring them down. For the two Left parties specifically, this period brought the disgrace and collapse of one party (the PSI) and a fundamental transformation of the other (the PCI).

To understand the Socialists' collapse, one is naturally drawn to analyze the central role of Craxi. Once the PCI returned to the opposition in 1980, Craxi aligned the Socialists with the DC. He proved a prickly partner, however, rarely hesitating to criticize DC leaders even as his party held cabinet positions. Following the 1983 elections, when the Socialists advanced only slightly but the DC fell dramatically, Craxi felt emboldened to demand the prime ministership from his much larger partners. The DC acceded, and Craxi became the first Socialist prime minister in Italian history; his government, in power from August 1983 to April 1987, was the longest running postwar government up to that time.

Craxi did score some impressive policy victories, most notably in a battle with the Communists over his government's attempt to alter and eventually abolish the *scala mobile* – a 1975 law that protected wages against inflation via nation-wide cost-of-living adjustments. At the same time, he presided over a party that was rapidly embedding itself in the traditional spoils system. Thus any explanation of the Socialists' rise and fall must take into account not only Craxi's individual actions, but also the party culture that he helped foster. With little by way of an ideological rudder and lacking a mass organization of selfless activists, the PSI under Craxi devolved into a spoils-seeking machine whose mantra seemed to be “enrichissez-vous.” Ginsborg's description provides an evocative image of the “new Socialist man” of the 1980s: “To be a Socialist politician in Italy in these years meant to have a portable telephone and a BMW, to mix with high-flying lawyers and businessmen, to lunch at Matarel or Savini in Milan's Galleria, to have a good line of conversation on information technology and to take exotic holidays.”<sup>13</sup>

Craxi's nearly four years as prime minister were not enough, however, to bring about a decisive shift in the traditional *rapporti di forze* among the political parties in favor of the Socialists. In the 1987 elections, the Socialists did advance three points over their previous performance (from 11.4 in 1983 to 14.3 percent), but the Christian Democrats also advanced, putting them in a position to remove Craxi and impose a DC prime minister. Nonetheless, the Socialists remained in the governing coalition and were thus able to use their entrenched positions to continue partaking of the free-flowing largesse produced by the *sottogoverno* – Italy's highly developed under-the-table system of payoffs, extortion, rigged contracts, and outright theft. All of this, of course, came to an end, however temporarily, in the early 1990s, as an energized class

of Milanese magistrates began vigorously prosecuting flagrant corruption. Swept up in this vast campaign, quickly dubbed “*Mani pulite*” (“Clean Hands”) by the press, were hundreds of Socialist and Christian Democratic politicians who were charged with various crimes. The biggest malefactor to go down was Craxi himself, who was charged with forty counts of corruption and illegal party funding. Exile status as a fugitive from justice in 1994 soon followed, but by then the Socialist Party was largely defunct. Following elections that year, in which the PSI polled a negligible 2.2 percent, the party dissolved, ending its century-long existence.

The fate of the Communist Party during the 1980-92 period was hardly less dramatic than that of the Socialists, as the party underwent both a makeover and a breakup. In the wake of the failure of the Historic Compromise strategy in 1979, the PCI found itself isolated, without allies to the left or right, and thus became a party in search of a new role. Predictably, the PCI's troubles outside spelled trouble inside. First, the sudden abandonment of the Historic Compromise strategy in 1980 generated dismay and demoralization at the grassroots. For years local party officials, in the tradition of democratic centralism, had dutifully defended the *compromesso* line, with, as noted earlier, considerable resistance and incomprehension among the rank-and-file. With the shift in strategy in late 1980, these officials found themselves, virtually overnight and without any internal party debate, called upon to advocate rejection of the compromise line.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, to this demoralization *alla base* was added polarization at the top. While the PCI had always had diverse internal tendencies, these were traditionally kept under control by Leninist strictures concerning party discipline. During the 1980s, however, fissures appeared in the unitary façade. Distinct camps emerged around three prominent leaders within the party's anticapitalist but independent bloc (Pietro Ingrao), its reformist center (Giorgio Napolitano), and an orthodox, pro-Soviet bloc (Armando Cossutta).

Parliamentary election results in 1983 (29.9%) and 1987 (26.6%), while far from catastrophic, clearly showed the PCI on a downward course; in fact, the 1987 performance was the party's poorest since 1963. Moreover, there was a disruptive turnover in leadership. Still massively popular and respected for his image of austere probity, Berlinguer died unexpectedly of a stroke in 1984. He was then followed by the uninspiring Alessandro Natta, who himself was forced to resign for health reasons in 1988. The new leader

selected to replace Natta, Achille Occhetto, inherited a divided and isolated party.

At the outset of his tenure, Occhetto seemed to follow in the footsteps of the early Gorbachev in trying to reform the party rather than transform it. This proved to be a doomed enterprise. Within his first year, Occhetto abandoned the party's historic practice of democratic centralism by allowing members to publicly criticize the leadership while expanding the size of the party's central organs. As under Gorbachev, the short-term result was to increase division and factionalism in the party, rather than unify it. Occhetto's counterploy – announced in a speech in Bologna in November 1989 – was to espouse a *fundamental transformation of the PCI*.<sup>15</sup>

Occhetto's speech aroused immediate opposition within the party. At issue was nothing less than the basics of the party's culture, what David Kertzer has termed the PCI's "symbolic universe": the rituals, historical references, language, songs, slogans, and graphic representations (notably the hammer and sickle) that made up what it meant to "be a Communist."<sup>16</sup> Occhetto was proposing, in effect, to reframe the party's seventy-year collective memory as outmoded and obsolete – a move that many party veterans viewed as rank betrayal. The issue was finally settled in two party congresses in 1990 and 1991, in which a majority of delegates supported Occhetto's proposal to dissolve the PCI and constitute a new party, to be called the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS). Soon thereafter, the PDS was accepted into the Socialist International, a move that constituted the reintegration into the political family that the PCI had abandoned in 1921. In reaction, the internal opposition, led by two orthodox hard-liners, Armando Cossutta and Fausto Bertinotti resigned and formed a new party, the Communist Refoundation Party (*Partito della Rifondazione Comunista, or PRC*).

Thus in the early 1990s the PCI was simultaneously abandoning Communism and splitting apart even as the PSI was self-destructing because of its complicity in rampant corruption. The damage was dramatic all around. In the 1992 elections, the PDS obtained just 16.1 percent and the PRC 5.6 percent – a combined total representing a drop of nearly five percent compared with the PCI's previous result. In elections just two years later, following the wave of corruption charges falling on the PSI, the full dimensions of the Left's crisis became apparent, as the PDS, PRC, and PSI polled a combined 28.6 percent – a far cry from the PCI-PSI total of 41.3 percent a decade earlier. Shortly thereafter, the PSI itself formally dissolved. In

all, by 1994 the traditional Italian Left had definitively run its course. The established parties of the Left, the Communists and Socialists, no longer existed after nearly 75 years of intermittent competition and cooperation. Left in their place was a set of largely undefined splinter parties searching for programs and voters.

Many factors combined to transform the Italian Left during the three decades just surveyed. The contention here is that the most important of these factors was the two parties' choices regarding alliances. In both cases Communists and Socialists opted to pursue an alliance not with each other, but rather with the center-right DC. The consequences of these choices, in both cases, were negative. To summarize, for the Communists the vaunted *Compromesso Storico* remained stillborn, producing little political influence while leading to public disaffection and internal party disillusionment and strife. For the Socialists, the alliance with the DC beginning in 1963 eventually gave the party considerable governmental influence but also enmeshed it in a rampantly corrupt spoils system that reached its apogee during Craxi's tenure. It remains to assess what has become of the Left in the wake of the crisis each party experienced in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

### A New Start? The Uncertain Road of the Second Republic, 1994-2010

The Left's redefinition and recomposition in the 1990s took place within a party system that itself was being refashioned. In summary, what happened between 1992 and 1994 was a perfect storm of domestic causes and external factors that combined to produce both institutional reforms and the collapse (or transformation) of virtually all of the traditional postwar parties and the emergence of new political forces. The underlying domestic cause was the virtual paralysis of the party system: a manifest inability of the traditional parties to govern effectively. While not a new problem, this failure became glaring and intolerable in the light of an immediate domestic cause: the "Clean Hands" campaign by activist magistrates to root out party and governmental corruption, beginning in Milan in 1992. The explosion of political scandals produced revulsion on the part of voters, who began massively deserting the traditional parties. Between 1992 and 1994, the Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Liberals, and Republicans either dissolved completely or splintered into smaller

formations. Reinforcing this vicious domestic cycle were two external influences: the end of the Cold War and the pressures of European integration. The former removed the *raison d'être* of the DC – anti-communism – as a motivation for voters, while the latter produced a lira crisis and the need for austerity measures.

One response to this intersection of crises was institutional reform, specifically a revamped electoral system for municipal and parliamentary elections. The principal innovation was that the new rules reserved three-quarters of the parliamentary seats to contests carried out in single-member districts. Unlike the erstwhile system of strict proportional representation that awarded even small parties seats in parliament, this new “first past the post” system put a premium on large, catch-all coalitions. Another response was the appearance of new or transformed parties that were seeking to attract voters “stranded” by the collapse of the old parties while also trying to construct coalitions that could thrive under the new voting system.

Chief among the new parties, of course, was Berlusconi's Forza Italia. Although Berlusconi had never run for office, he used the political vacuum to create a new formation revolving around his carefully crafted image as a successful and, above all, *furbo* (shrewd and clever) businessman. Berlusconi then quickly assembled a coalition out of apparently contradictory elements: on the one hand, the Northern League – an anti-South, anti-immigrant party with strong roots in the northern regions; on the other, the National Alliance – the “post-fascist” successor of the Italian Social Movement (Movimento Sociale Italiano, or MSI), whose social base was precisely the shiftless southerners that the Northern League detested. This coalition won a majority in the 1994 elections, thus marking the first time since 1948 that the governing coalition did not include the Christian Democrats as its largest element.

As for the Left, the PDS patched together its own coalition called “the Progressives” with their former comrades, Rifondazione Comunista, as well as the Greens and several smaller groups. Although the Progressives were easily beaten by Berlusconi's coalition, they did position themselves as a potential power contender with 34 percent of the vote. The chief lesson from these elections was that to succeed, the Left coalition would have to draw in more centrist voters who had previously supported the Socialists, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, and other smaller parties in the broad middle.

If the 1994 elections set the basic template of this

“Second Republic,” subsequent experience refined the outlines of the new party system and the Left's place within it. This system had several distinctive traits. First, it had a broadly bipolar dynamic, with two large coalitions vying to form majorities. Second, while each coalition had a specific name (which has changed several times), each also had a commonly employed generic description: Center-Left and Center-Right. The strategy of each coalition was to hold onto its base – on the Left or the Right – while appealing, catch-all style, to floating voters who lacked strong party loyalties. Third, the new system demonstrated a flexibility and dynamism largely lacking in the First Republic in that alternation of the governing coalition became a regular feature; in every one of the five parliamentary elections between 1994 and 2008, the governing majority changed hands. Finally, although the system had an alternating bipolar dynamic, there remained considerable fragmentation as evidenced by the sheer number of parties. In the 2006 elections, for example, the incumbent Berlusconi-led Casa della Libertà coalition consisted of twelve parties, while the winning center-left coalition headed by Romano Prodi contained fifteen parties – a total of 27 parties!

This new system shaped a Left that had little in common with its pre-1994 predecessors. Indeed, given the center-pulling tendencies in the system, many analysts questioned whether one could still speak of a clearly demarcated Left, other than with respect to a few fringe parties. Gone, of course, were the old stalwarts, the PCI and PSI, along with, for the most part, any ideological or historical references to Marx, Lenin, Gramsci, Togliatti, or Berlinguer as inspirational ancestors. The only residual element of the old Left was Rifondazione Comunista (PRC), which averaged 6.2 percent in the five national elections between 1992 and 2006.

The post-communist PDS has been the central element of the Left, constituting not only the largest party but also the driving force behind endeavors to forge a broader Left coalition. In seeking to redefine itself, the party had to confront three basic questions. The first concerned what kind of party it would become. The debate revolved around two contrasting visions: a mainstream social democratic party in line with those of other European nations, versus a more centrist, catch-all party that would incorporate classic liberals as well as devout Catholics. By 2008, it was evident that the latter model, championed by former Rome mayor, Walter Veltroni, had won the day. The party has now been renamed, simply, the Democratic Party. The second question concerned what kind of

program the party would embrace. To mix metaphors, to the degree that the Democratic Party enlarged its tent, it also watered its wine. Each successive incorporation of this or that small party blurred the party's identification with classic Left positions such as income redistribution, union rights, and public control over corporate power, not to mention the "moral" issues that traditionally divided Catholics and non-Catholics.

The final question was that of leadership and organizational continuity. By jettisoning the old Communist practice of democratic centralism and incorporating new elements into its structures, would the post-communist party encourage an extensive "circulation of elites" and the recruitment of new leaders, especially at the local and regional levels? Evidence to date suggests a negative answer. Although the party instituted internal elections and other mechanisms that provide for fuller participation of the rank-and-file, much of the old PCI structure remained intact.<sup>17</sup> There has been relatively little turnover in the leadership group since the 1980s, and the PCI's latest successor, the Democratic Party, is still dominated by former Communists.<sup>18</sup>

Despite this continuity in party personnel from the pre-1991 PCI period and despite a long-term trend toward amalgamation of various elements of the old Left and Center into an umbrella party, the larger picture of the Left under the Second Republic is decidedly mixed. On the positive side, the Center-Left demonstrated an ability to build a coalition capable of gaining power – something the pre-1992 Left was never capable of doing. In the fourteen years between 1994 and 2008, the Center-Left coalition formed the governing majority for fully one-half of this period: 1996-2001 and 2006-08. (Berlusconi's coalition triumphed in 2008, the most recent elections as of this writing). In the four elections since its founding – 1996, 2001, 2006, and 2008 – the Center-Left coalition averaged 44.0 percent of the vote, versus the Berlusconi coalition's 45.6 percent.

But winning office is only part of the story. The other part is trying to govern, and here the Center-Left's experience between 1994 and 2008 was largely one of frustration born of limited policy options and internal fractiousness. In both of its tenures as a governing majority, the Center-Left was largely called upon to "manage the crisis," that is, put the public accounts in order by cutting fiscal deficits, limiting inflation, and reducing the public debt. This task was especially pressing during the late 1990s in the run-

up to the launch of the euro in which all participating nations had to conform to the "convergence" criteria. By all accounts, the first Prodi government (1996-98) performed respectably in meeting the convergence goals, but politically it proved a thankless endeavor that left little room for social reforms. The second Prodi government (2006-08) faced many of the same limits, this time forced by the global slowdown. Both tenures in office ended in electoral defeat, as voters apparently concluded that Center-Left had lost its élan.

The Center-Left in office was also hamstrung by weak leadership and internal divisions. A major difficulty was that Prodi, although esteemed as a diligent public servant, had few "troops." A man of Christian Democratic background who had spent most of his career as an economics professor and technocrat, Prodi had no prior links to the Left and no organization behind him. This made for an inherent tension between Prodi, the Center-Left's main leader during most of this period, and the leadership of the coalition's constituent parties. For example, in the Center-Left's second period in office in 2006-08, Prodi spent most of the two years seeking to placate one or another of his fourteen coalition partners. The final straw came in January 2008 when a coalition senator, who was also Minister of Justice, withdrew his support from the government, ultimately forcing Prodi's resignation and new elections that produced the return of Berlusconi for his third term as prime minister. In all, although the Left could note some successes in its attempt to regroup and reform following the trauma of 1991-1993, it continued to engage in divisive, self-destructive behavior even as it sought to redefine itself.

## Conclusion

The past three decades have been challenging, to say the least, for the Left in Western Europe. For the Italian Left they have been downright devastating. For over seven decades the two great parties, the PSI and the PCI, carried on an on-again-off-again relationship with each other. They fought together in the Resistance, maintained an alliance during the early Cold War, and shared power within the largest union confederation after World War II. They also split apart, in the 1960s, over the question of partnering with the Christian Democrats, and then fell into outright mutual animosity in the late 1970s and 1980s. Yet as recently as the mid-1980s, there was every reason to believe that this complex relationship would go on indefinitely. That, as we have seen, most decidedly did not happen.



This chapter has traced these complex relations since their origin, ultimately seeking to explain why these two parties either transformed themselves (PCI) or collapsed (PSI) in the early 1990s. The explanation, like all things Italian, is multi-layered; however, the historical evidence suggests that a key factor influenced these changes, namely the parties' alliance strategies. Those strategies, defined and carried out in the 1960s and 1970s, foreclosed any effective mobilization of

the Left's combined political potential and ultimately harmed the parties' long-term fortunes. The Second Republic, dominated by Berlusconi's reinvention of leadership as a seamless merging of political power and personal business interests, has only deepened the Left's travails. This is not to conclude that the Left is forever doomed to impotence, but it is to suggest that in the ongoing drama that is Italian politics, the Left has been largely relegated to the wings.



## NOTES

1. This essay draws on the author's book manuscript, *Enemy Brothers: Socialists and Communists in France, Italy, and Spain*, currently under publisher's review. During the year I taught in the Florence program (2005-06), Janet Smith and I had many conversations about Italian politics, and she taught me a great deal. While I seriously doubt that she will learn much new from this article, I hope she will find satisfaction in knowing that she contributed greatly to my knowledge of the complexities and vicissitudes of the Italian Left.

2. Alexander De Grand, *The Italian Left in the Twentieth Century: A History of the Socialist and Communist Parties* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), xi.

3. Joseph LaPalombara, *Democracy Italian Style* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 91.

4. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 276.

5. Joan B. Urban, *Moscow and the Italian Communist Party: From Togliatti to Berlinguer* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

6. Donald Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 266.

7. Alexander De Grand, *Italian Left*, 131; Spencer M. Di Scala, *Renewing Italian Socialism: Nenni to Craxi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 115-132.

8. Ida Regalia, Marino Regini, and Emilio Reyneri, "Labour Conflicts and Industrial Relations in Italy," in *The Resurgence of Class Conflict in Western Europe Since 1968: Volume 1. National Studies*, ed. Colin Crouch and Alessandro Pizzorno, 101-158 (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978).

9. See Enrico Berlinguer, "Riflessioni sull'Italia dopo i fatti del Cile," *Rinascita* 30 (12 October, 1973): 3-5. Also see Geoff Eley, *Forging*

*Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 410; Stephen Hellman, *Italian Communism in Transition: The Rise and Fall of the Historic Compromise in Turin, 1975-1980*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 22-23.

10. Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943-1988* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 390.

11. See especially Stephen Hellman's excellent study of the reception of the *compromesso* strategy in Turin (cited in note 9).

12. LaPalombara, *Democracy Italian Style*, x.

13. Paul Ginsborg, *Italy and Its Discontents: Family, Civil Society, State: 1980-2001* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 151.

14. Marzio Barbagli and Piergiorgio Corbetta, "After the Historic Compromise: A Turning Point for the PCI," *European Journal of Political Research* 10:3 (1982): 235.

15. Martin Bull, "Social Democracy's New Recruit? Conflict and Cohesion in the Italian Democratic Party of the Left," in *Conflict and Cohesion in Western European Social Democratic Parties*, ed. David S. Bell and Eric Shaw, 37-38 (London: Frances Pinter, 1994); David I. Kertzer, *Politics and Symbols: The Italian Communist Party and the Fall of Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 1-3; Mino Lorusso, *Ochetto: Il Comunismo Italiano da Togliatti al PDS* (Florence: Ponte Alle Grazie, 1992), 225-227.

16. Kertzer, *Politics and Symbols*, 1-3.

17. Daniela Giannetti and Rosa Mulé, "The Democratici di Sinistra: In Search of a New Identity," *South European Society & Politics* 11:3-4 (September-December): 463.

18. Carlo Baccetti, "After PCI: Post-Communist and Neo-Communist Parties of the Italian Left After 1989," in *The Crisis of Communism and Party Change: The Evolution of West European Communist and Post-Communist Parties*, ed. Joan Botella and Luis Ramiro, 35-52 (Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Polítiques I Socials, 2003).



## **Part IV – Literature and Literary Criticism**

## Images from Italy\*



Robert Grafsgaard

Hurried through the hills of collapsed escalators, I dragged in double-clutched claws my Sisyphean rolling boulder suitcase into the graffitied on-rail office of a genial gypsy with begging accordion and open palms. I found it impossible, after arriving at the hidden hostel and soaking up the sweating sun in a single-sheeted, jet-lagged sleep, to do quite as the Romans do, wandering now through one of the many districts bursting with banks and cafés, for the Romans simply were not there. These industrious inheritors of Roman resolve, I was later informed, had fled the brick oven streets of the city to get in touch with their rustic roots among gnarled olive trunks and webs of tangled grapevines. My Italian, that is to say my ability to place a unique Mediterranean accentuation on such classic essentials as pizza and buongiorno, being about as robust and palatable as an alleyway Birra Moretti, I sweated myself through the threshold of my first prezzo fisso, congealing at a small table to be ambushed by a sidelong stare and unexplained appetizers. After a three-course meal of ambiguous price and an ambiguous exchange with the centurion at the cash register concerning a three-course bill, I perspired with my traveling accomplice to get more acquainted with the owners of the haphazard hostel and to plan our next couple days in Rome until our rail trip to Florence, where we would soon chaotically congregate in ceremonious intervals with the rest of our comrades and hunters of culture, to prepare for the subsequent safari. Yet still in Rome, the hostel in question consisted of an empty room in the apartment of an American expatriotess who originated from among the skywayed, skyward cityscape of Minneapolis/St. Paul, the Twin Cities from which I also sprung. Her husband, born and forever Italian, spoke to me of Valium and flights across the ocean. In gestures and meandering English cut by a questioning cadence, he recounted his many opiate-aided expeditions to the Twin Cities, which he referred to always as a single entity, fabled as Avalon and oracular as Oz.

Had this been my first finite stay in the eternal city, dropped ankle deep in that toe and heel country, I do not know what my response to the first frantic impulse

of travel and terra (mostly) incognita would have been. Instead were memories, anticipation, familiarity, for it was the pervasive memories of my previous experience while on a family vacation to Italy a few years prior that urged me to revisit the country. It was on this vacation that I gained my first international experience (as a native Minnesotan, of course, I know better than to count Canada); I crossed the Grand Canal on the traghetto as it shoved itself against the marble banks in Venice; I was shoved off slender sidewalks by the fashionable in Florence; and I shoved my gray grandpa headlong into shutting subway trains in Rome. It was not until after internally navigating the great and terrible machine of the Leonardo da Vinci Airport like a mouse rushing through the rusting gears of a grandfather clock, waiting to fly off from this brief fortnight trip that I realized that it was entirely impossible for one to leave Italy feeling indefinitely satisfied. Arrived back home, in stories and reflections, I felt as if I had traveled only along the zipper track in that high boot of Italy. So among the cobbles, softened across centuries, and cool in the shadows of rouge-tiled roofs, there I left my promise of return.

But that is not what you came to listen about. You want to know of the introspection, the sacrifice, the internal journey of the heart. In truth, I am not yet fully accomplished. I'm still turning it over in my mind. A wise man once spoke yesterday of how we can only view our lives in posterity, these collected images that one day will make up the totality of our lives; it is only then that we can see and appreciate things as they were truly. So, let me share with you a few of the images of Italy which I have kept with me:

In a low-roofed sunlit alley, gathered like geese around breadcrumbs, a group of old Italian men stand conversing, ruffling their feathers for attention. As a straniero walks by, they fall silent almost at once. The man furthest out in the empty street nods, and gestures, "Buona sera."

Across the throng of tourists tossing coins for safe return at the Trevi Fountain, limitless locks are clasped around the rusting bars of an iron fence, a symbol of a young Italian couple's eternal love, their

keys swallowed up by the eternal city. When the locks become too numerous, a dutiful shear-bearing Italian cuts them off one by one.

Watching the news at the dinner table, a woman starts to cry as she curses under her breath. She hates this city, this country, these politics. She loves her city, her country, her family.

Watching the tourists wander by from a street side café, a young man touches espresso to his lips for the first time. At that very moment the astral bodies whirling in their way about the heavens align, an ever-reaching Adam touches the eternal finger of God, and somewhere in a studio apartment beyond time and mortal toils, a barista sprouts wings and ascends to his reward.

And now, because I am still for the next few weeks a diligent classicist, and because it is a widely accepted fact that everything that is said in Latin sounds profound, I conclude:

*Roma, Florentia, quicquid vestri iam  
imis mihi iaceat intus,*

*Sic iam iam altis in moenibus vestris  
manet pectus.*



\*This essay was originally written for presentation at the 2010 ACM Student Symposium on Off-Campus Study in Chicago, Illinois.

# “Worn Out Shoes”

## A Translation from Natalia Ginzburg’s

### *Le Piccole Virtù*



Virginia Hellenga

I have worn-out shoes, and the friend I am now living with also has worn-out shoes. When we are together we often talk about shoes. If I speak to her about the time when I will be an old, famous writer, she immediately asks me, “What shoes will you have?” Then I tell her that I will have some green suede shoes with a big gold clasp on the side.

I belong to a family in which everyone has solid shoes in good condition. My mother even had a small chest made just for the purpose of holding her shoes, she had so many pairs. When I visit my family, they raise loud cries of indignation and pain at the sight of my shoes. But I know that one is able to live even with worn-out shoes. In the period of German occupation, I was alone here at Rome, and I had only one pair of shoes. If I had taken them to the shoe repairman, I would have had to stay in bed for two or three days, and for me this was impossible. So I continued to wear them, and to make things worse, it rained. I felt them falling to pieces gradually, becoming soft and out of shape, and I felt the cold of the pavement under the soles of my feet. It is for this reason that even now I still have worn-out shoes: because I remember that pair and by comparison, these do not seem so worn out. Besides, if I have some money, I prefer to spend it on other things, because to me shoes do not seem so very essential.

I was spoiled in early life, always surrounded by tender, watchful affection. But that year I was alone here at Rome for the first time, and for this Rome is dear to me, even if loaded with personal history, filled with tormenting memories and only few happy hours. My friend also has worn-out shoes, and because of this we get along well together. She has no one who reproaches her for the shoes she wears. She has just one brother, who lives in the country and goes around in hunting boots. She and I know what happens when it rains and our legs are bare and wet and water gets in our shoes, making little squishing sounds at each step.

My friend has a pale, masculine face and uses a

black cigarette holder. When I saw her for the first time, seated at a table, with dark-rimmed tortoise shell glasses, her face mysterious, full of disdain, with the black cigarette holder between her teeth, I thought she looked like a Chinese general. At that time I did not know she had worn-out shoes. I found that out much later.

We have known each other for only a few months, but it is as if it were many years. My friend does not have any children, but I have children, and for her this is strange. She has never seen by children except in photographs because they stay with my mother a long way from Rome. This is the strangest thing between us, that she has never seen my children. In a certain sense, she does not have problems; she can yield to the temptation to throw her life to the dogs, but I cannot. Well, my children live with my mother, and so far they do not have worn-out shoes. But what will they be like when they are men? I mean, what shoes will they have when they are men? What path will they choose for their footsteps? Will they decide to exclude from their desires everything which is pleasurable but not necessary, or will they affirm that everything is necessary, and that a man has the right to have shoes on his feet that are solid and in good condition?

These things my friend and I discuss at length, and wonder how the world will be then, when I will be an old, famous writer and she will travel the world over with a knapsack on her back like an old Chinese general, and my children will follow their own roads wearing shoes solid and in good condition, with the firm step of one who does not give up; or will they go with worn-out shoes and the broad, indolent step of one who knows that which is not necessary.

Sometimes we invent marriages between my children and the children of her brother, the one who goes around the countryside in hunting boots. We carry on this discussion until late into the night, drinking bitter black tea. We have a mattress and a bed, and every



night we toss a coin to see which of us should sleep in the bed. In the morning when we get up, awaiting us on the carpet are our worn-out shoes.

At times my friend says she is fed up with working and would like to throw her life to the dogs. She would like to withdraw into some dark tavern and drink away all her savings, or else just put herself to bed and not think anymore about anything, and let them come and turn off the gas and lights, letting everything go adrift little by little. She says this is what she will do after I leave. As our life together will not last long, soon I will be leaving, returning to my mother and my children, to a house where I will not be allowed to wear worn-out shoes. My mother will take care of me; she will not

permit me to use safety pins instead of buttons, or to stay up half the night writing. And I, in my turn, will take care of my children, overcoming the temptation to throw my life to the dogs. I will once more become serious and motherly as always happens to me when I am with them, a person very different from what I am now, a person whom my friend does not know at all.

I will look at the clock and keep track of time, watchful and attentive, and will make sure that my children's feet are always dry and warm, because I know that this is the way it should be, as much as possible, at least during childhood. Perhaps, in fact, in order to learn later to walk in worn-out shoes, it is good to have dry and warm feet when one is a child.



**“My Poetry Won’t Change the World”**  
**Selected Poems Translated from Patrizia Cavalli’s**

*Le Mie Poesie Non Cambieranno Il Mondo*



Virginia Hellenga

Education permits you to eat  
with refinement, and permits  
other things; but if you want to fly  
Either you have wings  
or you don’t have wings.

Neither death nor madness will  
seize me  
a trembling in my veins perhaps  
an outburst of sharp laughter, my blood  
pulsing, a momentary inebriation.

In the shadow of a metaphor  
give me a daisy  
for I can hold a daisy  
in my hand.

Hearing oneself say life is cruel  
is just the reason to go for a walk.

Eternity and death together  
threaten me:  
nothing about either do I understand,  
nothing about either will I understand.

Little about myself do I remember  
I who have always thought about myself.  
I disappear as an object  
looked at too long.  
I will return to speak  
of my luminous disappearance.



# A Holy Career in Early Modern Florence: The *Vita* of Maria Minima Strozzi di San Filippo Neri\*



Anne Jacobson Schutte

*For Janet, whose intellectual curiosity knows  
no bounds.*

Between 1625, when Pope Urban VIII began to issue new guidelines for the making of saints,<sup>1</sup> and the end of the Old Regime, Italian presses issued vernacular biographies of some eight hundred people who had led holy lives but had not yet been officially promoted to any degree of sanctity by beatification or canonization.<sup>2</sup> Most subjects of these accounts were Italians, but the *vite* of some Spanish, Portuguese, French, and a few German and Netherlandish figures also appeared in Italian translation. The overwhelming majority had lived in the relatively recent past: some in the mid-fifteenth century; most in the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth. Of the small proportion (about fifteen percent) eventually elevated to the honor of the altars, many achieved this distinction at a much later date.<sup>3</sup>

I have begun to explore this category of books in an effort to identify examples of holiness – beyond those proposed in sermons, confession and spiritual direction, religious treatises, and published lives of canonically recognized saints – available to early modern Italians literate in their mother tongue, and to others who listened to them read. With few exceptions, historians and literary scholars have neglected this genre after the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> In Mario Rosa's recent essay on religious books and reading in the early modern era, for instance, lives of holy people find no place.<sup>5</sup> The same is true of Mario Infelise's study of the eighteenth-century Venetian printing industry. His silence about *vite* as an important component of the market suggests that he shares the disdain expressed by a protagonist of his book, Gasparo Gozzi, for "rancidumi . . . di nessun valore."<sup>6</sup> The sheer volume of such publications, however, demands attention. It stands to reason that if customers had not been interested in purchasing and reading them, bookmen

in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would not have been so active in bringing out new titles and reissuing old ones.<sup>7</sup>

The titles of these books almost always began with the apparently neutral noun "life" (*vita*, Italian plural *vite*). Used in a religious context, it had a more specific meaning: life of a holy person. I began my research with the expectation that the vast majority of biographees would be ecclesiastics: priests (including those who rose to the rank of bishop or archbishop, cardinal, or even pope), monks, friars, canons regular, and members of male religious congregations. To my surprise, about forty percent of them turned out to be women, and a considerable number were lay people.<sup>8</sup> Their authors followed accepted conventions of composing holy lives, conforming in most instances to the restrictions prescribed by Urban VIII, and offered their subjects as models to be imitated and revered. Many expressed or implied either their intention either to initiate the process of obtaining official recognition of these individuals, or their hope that proceedings already under way would reach a positive conclusion before the Congregation of Rites in Rome.

As the subject of this essay, I have chosen a Florentine woman of aristocratic birth, Camilla Strozzi (1617-72), who became a Carmelite nun of the Ancient Observance under the name Maria Minima di San Filippo Neri.<sup>9</sup> The first of two editions of her *vita* appeared in 1701.<sup>10</sup> I will first examine briefly the producers of this *vita* (the author and publisher), then analyze in greater detail its content and possible readership, concluding with some brief remarks on the subject's terrestrial afterlife.

Luigi Strozzi, who wrote the *vita* of Maria Minima Strozzi di San Filippo, belonged to the same enormous, many-branched Florentine patrician clan as she, but was not closely related to her. Son of Senator Carlo di Tommaso Strozzi (1587-1670), a well-known collector of books and family historian, and Virginia di Luigi

Gaetani, he had two sisters (one married, the other became a nun) and two brothers.<sup>11</sup> Born in Florence on 18 March 1632, he was probably the eldest of the males, but rather than marrying and carrying on the lineage, he became an *abate* – meaning a secular priest with literary interests and accomplishments. After studying at the Jesuit college in Florence and the University of Pisa (where he probably did not take a degree), at the early age of twenty-two he succeeded a paternal uncle, the *abate* Niccolò, as counselor of state and resident of the king of France in the Tuscan capital, a position he held until 1689. On the death in 1666 of Louis XIV's mother, Anne of Austria, he delivered an address at the memorial service held in Florence in the presence of Grand Duke Ferdinando II and his court; this, the first of his two published works, soon appeared in print.<sup>12</sup> He wrote much more, reorganized his father's extensive library and purchased a palazzo in which to house it, and participated actively in the Accademia della Crusca. From 1670 on, he served as canon, deacon, and then archdeacon of the Florentine cathedral. He died in Florence on 22 December 1700.

Active during the decade 1693-1703, Pietr'Antonio Brigonci, Strozzi's publisher, brought out sixty-three books on a wide variety of subjects in several languages: forty in Latin, twenty-seven in Italian, and one each in French and ancient Greek. How this author and publisher entered into a business relationship is unknown. Since the statements of approval by various religious authorities who had inspected Strozzi's manuscript and the imprimatur are dated between August and 8 December 1700,<sup>13</sup> Strozzi may have made arrangements for its publication shortly before his death on 22 December 1700, but obviously he never saw the finished product. The colophons on almost all of Brigonci's imprints identify him as printer to the Grand Duke of Tuscany – during his career, Cosimo III de' Medici (r. 1670-1723). Devoutly religious to the point of bigotry, the Grand Duke may have read the *vita* of Maria Minima. He could also have perused the *vita* of the reputed Florentine stigmatic Maria Margherita Diomira del Verbo Incarnato by the Theatine Bishop of Massa, Pier Luigi Malaspina, published by Brigonci two years later; and a synopsis of Maria Minima's life compiled by the Florentine Carmelite nuns, issued in 1717.<sup>14</sup>

Like all *vite*, Strozzi's life of Maria Minima begins with a dedication – this one to the prioress and sisters of her convent, Santa Maria degli Angioli. There and elsewhere, he makes clear who comprises his primary intended audience: the nuns, noblewomen, and especially members of the Strozzi family, to whom

Maria Minima left “un'esempio alla Nobiltà tanto Secolare, che Religiosa, più facile ad essere ammirato, che da vicino imitato.”<sup>15</sup> The body of the text, typically, is divided into three books; the first, concerning her life, takes up almost half the volume. Born in Florence on 19 May 1617 to Roberto di Giovanni Strozzi and Cammilla di Bernardo Bini, she was baptized Lucrezia after her paternal grandmother. When her mother died a few days later, her father decided to rename her Cammilla. The following year Roberto took a new wife, Ginevra di Cosimo Pasquale. Like many stepmothers in *vite*, Cammilla's treated her stepdaughter harshly, attempting to break her spirit. The child took refuge in her love for God, reading spiritual books and adorning holy images with flowers and lights. After the death of her father when she was about nine, she was taken in by two maternal uncles, Giovanni Battista and Bernardo Bini. They entrusted her to their widowed mother (Cammilla's grandmother), Ginevra di Esau di Cosimo Martinelli, who treated her lovingly in memory of her deceased daughter (the girl's mother) and trained her in the management of the Bini palazzo on the Via Romana near the church of San Felice in Piazza.<sup>16</sup>

At age fifteen, the beautiful and wealthy Cammilla had many suitors. The only relative who did not favor her marrying was another Bini uncle, Pietro (1593-1635), who returned to Florence in the fall of 1632 after a long stay in Rome. There he had taken priestly orders and tried but failed – perhaps on account of “gli eccessi e le stranezze che lo inducevano i suoi incontrollati trasporti mistici” – to gain admission to the Congregation of the Oratory, founded in the previous century by the Florentine Filippo Neri.<sup>17</sup> To his project of establishing that congregation in Florence, his mother added another assignment: assuming the spiritual direction of his niece Cammilla. The young woman confided to him a vision in which Saint Filippo Neri had taken her before the Virgin Mary, who urged her to choose the religious life. Pietro Bini, certain that she was destined for the cloister, was overjoyed. When he compelled her to reveal to her grandmother and other uncles what she had experienced and to request that they grant her a year's time in which to determine whether the Virgin's call was genuine, Ginevra Martinelli turned violently against her, expressing regret for the time she had spent as her surrogate mother.

That left this vulnerable adolescent alone in the hands of padre Pietro, the most sadistic spiritual director I have ever met on paper. In order to reduce her to “blind and perfect obedience” to him, he imposed innumerable dangerous, heart-breaking, and

humiliating penances. Three among many possible examples will provide a taste of his method. He made her tend a household servant who had contracted the plague. He ordered that she stop playing with and feeding her beloved little dog; the pet soon died of starvation and/or a broken heart. He had a tailor make her a priest's habit and forced her to wear it in public, topped with his biretta. Her horrified relatives and other patricians drew the situation to the attention of Archbishop Pietro Nicolini. In February 1634 the prelate removed Cammilla from Bini's control, assigned her a new confessor, and ordered her into a convent.<sup>18</sup>

According to Strozzi, Cammilla was not anxious to become a nun.<sup>19</sup> Given the fractured relationship with her grandmother, however, a temporary refuge away from home may have seemed like her only viable alternative. It took her very little time to select a provisional religious abode: the Ancient Observance Carmelite house of Santa Maria degli Angioli, which had moved in 1629 from the Oltrarno to Borgo Pinti. This convent was renowned as the home, in its earlier location, of the aristocratic Florentine mystic Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi (1566-1607), beatified in 1626. Cammilla's new confessor, the Carmelite Alberto Leoni, may have influenced her choice. She entered as an *educanda*<sup>20</sup> on 8 April 1634. Her relatives (inspired by the devil, says Strozzi) soon secured her release into "the world" so that she could decide freely whether she really wanted to embrace religious life. Officials in the archiepiscopal curia then ruled that she could reenter the house, where she took the veil on 2 February 1635. Her self-image as the world's greatest sinner – a very common one among holy women, but in her case clearly exacerbated during the fifteen months she was in the clutches of Pietro Bini – led her to choose the religious name Maria (after the Virgin) Minima ("the least") di San Filippo Neri (beatified in 1615, canonized in 1622, idolized by her uncle Pietro, and the guide in her vision). Exactly a year later, after a novitiate punctuated and followed by illnesses physicians could not cure (perhaps in part psychosomatic, and also almost universal among holy women), she professed her solemn vows.<sup>21</sup>

In the remainder of Book I, Strozzi outlines Maria Minima's stellar career as administrator in what must have been a populous convent.<sup>22</sup> Only four years after professing (more than two of them spent in the infirmary), she went to Rome with several *consorelle*, including Urban VIII's nieces Maria Grazia and Innocenza Barberini, charged with fulfilling the pope's desire to establish a new Ancient Observance

Carmelite convent there, the Santissima Incarnazione del Verbo di Dio (still known as "le Barberine"). On her return to Florence in 1640, after being put for six months in charge of the *educande*, she was elected novice mistress. In 1646 she became sacristan and then novice mistress again. As soon as she reached the minimum age of forty, she was elected prioress in 1658, after which she served a third term as novice mistress. Her second elevation to the post of prioress came in 1664, immediately followed by a third term when Alexander VII waived the rule against succeeding herself. In 1670 she was chosen to serve as *maestra delle giovani*: supervisor of nine recently professed young women, who in this convent were required to undergo a further period of training, especially in obedience.<sup>23</sup>

Not content with reconstructing this part of Maria Minima's *curriculum vitae*, Strozzi takes pains to account for the characteristics of her leadership. She was affable to all.<sup>24</sup> Asked by an ingenuous nun why she had so many friends, she replied that God was compensating her for the early loss of her parents.<sup>25</sup> Although the hierarchical cast of early modern society in general and convent regulations in particular discouraged sororization between elite *professe* (choir nuns) and *converse* (servant nuns from the lower classes), she made a point of dining every so often with the *converse* and helping them wash the dishes afterwards.<sup>26</sup> Able to discern the personal characteristics of her novices and surmise what they were thinking, she worked against their natural inclinations, assigning light penances to those who loved mortification and harsher ones to tepid and lazier ones.<sup>27</sup> Serving a novitiate under her direction did not fall into a deadly serious, unvaried routine: she had the novices make figures for the crèche and a full-size Virgin Mary out of papier maché.<sup>28</sup> When Maria Minima undertook the construction of new quarters for the novices, one of her tactics for raising the necessary funds must have amused some, if not all, the nuns. She told the Virgin that if the money did not materialize, she would snatch away Baby Jesus and keep him.<sup>29</sup> To the nuns under her direction, she tried her best to transmit her firm commitment to the monastic rule, which she termed "le tre chiavi d'oro de i voti,"<sup>30</sup> by insisting, for instance, that the vow of poverty meant absolute poverty: not even a needle should be considered private property.<sup>31</sup>

Devoted to mental prayer and the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, Maria Minima encouraged her nuns do both as often as possible. According to Strozzi, they emerged from the Exercises weeping, "con tanto ardore di spirito, che parevano tante Sante."<sup>32</sup> Well in advance of what would be the biggest event in Santa

Maria degli Angioli's recent history, the canonization of Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, Maria Minima – now in her third term as prioress – thought hard about how to prepare for celebrating it. Her initial idea was to have all the nuns simultaneously perform the Spiritual Exercises, an undertaking that required a full-time commitment of several weeks. Eventually, when she realized that a project involving all members of the convent at once would seriously disrupt both the observance of monastic hours in choir and the functioning of the convent in general, she revised her plan. Beginning in mid-January 1668, fifteen months before the scheduled canonization, groups of fifteen nuns at a time performed this devotion.<sup>33</sup> By the time the ceremony took place in Rome on 28 April 1669, all inhabitants of Santa Maria degli Angioli had presumably attained a suitably purified spiritual state.<sup>34</sup>

For the most part, Strozzi reserves description of Maria Minima's inner life and "marvelous" actions for Books II and III, as did most writers of *vite*. There are some exceptions. Early in life, while under Pietro Bini's direction, she went into ecstatic trances, out of which only he could bring her. Francesco Cerretani, Bini's collaborator in the founding of the Florentine Oratory, reported having seen her levitate. When she hurt her knee in a fall and could not go to church, her aunt Costanza Cerretani, wife of Lorenzo Bini, saw invisible hands, thought to be angelic, giving her communion.<sup>35</sup> As Strozzi approaches the account of her death, he mentions for the first time a longtime characteristic of Maria Minima: her special, unidentifiable fragrance, attested to not only by nuns but also by former *educande*, gentlemen, and priests, which physicians were unable to explain. In her final illness, the fragrance became stronger.<sup>36</sup> Her scent of sanctity was quite different from the almost universal postmortem phenomenon described in *vite*: when holy people's bodies should have begun to stink, they instead emitted a pleasant odor.

In the fall of 1671 Maria Minima, who had long experienced frequent bouts of asthma, developed a new chest ailment so severe that she could barely breathe, was forced to sleep sitting up, and had difficulty speaking. Nonetheless, she carried on instructing her *giovani*. Asked by the convent's ordinary confessor whether she would recover from this illness, as she had from so many others, she replied in the negative. After he had administered extreme unction, the nuns filed one by one into her cell to bid her farewell. When he came to chat with her at suppertime on 19 November 1672, she asked him a favor: since she had framed her life around obeying her superiors, could he order her

to die? Not at that moment, said he; she had to suffer for three hours, just like Jesus on the Cross. Shortly before midnight, she passed away.<sup>37</sup>

In most respects, the short period between Maria Minima's death and burial resembles that of other holy biographees. The nuns put her in a coffin and took her to their chapel, where Mass was said the next morning. Despite the fact that she was well into her fifty-sixth year and had died in pain, her skin became as white as alabaster and there was a smile on her face. People of all ranks and life stations (including Cosimo III and his consort, the French king's first cousin Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans) flocked to pay their respects – so many that the viewing period had to be extended to a third day. "Ne contentandosi del solo aspetto, molti chiedevano di poter portar seco qualche piccolo avanzo di così ricco tesoro, chiedendo e fiori, vesti, e simili altre cose, le quali parcamente, e con permissione a taluno concesse con segni di tenerezza, e di divozione baciati, ricco di sì bramoso acquisto se ne partiva contento." In this instance, the uncontrolled snatching of "relics" that features in so many other *vite* did not occur. As they left, they repeated "Non Minima, ma Maxima, Maxima," and many repented of their sins. Then she was interred in the nuns' common burial place in a separate casket, marked only by a simple inscription – perhaps the one found on her portrait in the *vita*.<sup>38</sup> **Fig. 1**

As in many other works in this genre, Books II and III of Strozzi's *Vita di suor Maria Minima* concern, respectively, her "Principali virtù, e Sentimenti" and her previously unpublished "Esortationi, e documenti," along with reports on her postmortem appearances and "marvelous" cures performed during her lifetime and after her death.<sup>39</sup> Thoroughly typical of *vite* and not particularly interesting, they need not concern us here. What is worth noting is how scrupulously Strozzi abides by Urban VIII's rules concerning writing about holy people. At beginning and end, he includes the two required *protestationes*: statements affirming that the author does not wish readers to take what he has written as other than "human history," for deciding on the subject's degree of holiness is the prerogative of the pope and the Congregation of Rites.<sup>40</sup> Neither in the title nor in the text does he give her an appellation – *beata*, *santa* – that she has not been officially awarded. He carefully refrains from terming anything that happened during or after her lifetime a "miracle": that, too, is a matter for the authorities to determine. Instead, he uses "marvel" in noun, adjective, and adverb forms. He refrains, furthermore, from talking about luminescence surrounding her, prohibited



explicitly by Urban VIII in visual representations, but no doubt frowned on in verbal ones as well. As a well-educated priest, he knew better than to mention any indications that a cult devoted to Maria Minima had immediately developed, which could pose a serious obstacle to later proceedings in her behalf. In fact, one of the many investigations conducted in considering a candidate for beatification was a *processus non cultu*, designed to assure that he or she was not already being venerated.

How did Strozzi acquire his information about Maria Minima? Probably not through first-hand acquaintance. Fifteen years apart in age, they belonged to different branches of the Strozzi family. If he talked with her at the grate in the *parlatorio* (visiting room) of her convent, he does not mention it. In his prefatory address to the reader, he states that since many people who knew her are still alive, he has no option but to tell the truth as he has heard it from her *consorelle* and spiritual directors and read it in her writings.<sup>41</sup> Near the end of Book III, he names his most important informants: Suor Maria Agostina Rucellai di Sant'Angiolo, prioress at the time of Maria Minima's death; Suor Maria Caterina Rinuccini di Gesù Crocefisso, who was ordered by the secular priest Gabriello Alberti (at one time the convent's ordinary confessor) to keep a written account of what the holy woman said and did;<sup>42</sup> and above all the secular priest Ignazio Conti, ordinary confessor at the time of her demise. As Conti stood by her bedside on the day before her death, she pulled out from under her pillow a sheaf of her writings, which he lent or gave to Strozzi.<sup>43</sup> Strozzi must have collected these oral reports and written materials not long after Maria Minima's death. When he actually composed the work remains unknown.

Many *vite* contain an engraved portrait of the subject, often with the name of the artist (*inventor*) who had taken it from life or from a death mask, and sometimes with that of the engraver (*sculptor*) if he was a different person.<sup>44</sup> Maria Minima's portrait (producers unidentified) graces the first edition of her *vita*.<sup>45</sup> **Fig. 1** In most respects it is quite typical of portrait engravings in biographies of holy people. With a slight smile, the subject gazes on a crucifix in her right hand. On the table below are two other objects: a closed volume with a ribbon bookmark – perhaps the Office – and a rosary. The portrait is framed in a simple oval. Ribbons surround the identification of the subject and her date of death – perhaps, as suggested earlier, her epitaph. One unusual feature is the allusion to the subject's lineage, which Florentine viewers would have

recognized immediately. In the upper corners, the three crescent moons of the Strozzi coat of arms are arranged in triangles separated by flames.<sup>46</sup> Pride in his illustrious family and its holy representative may well have led Luigi Strozzi to commission this image.

Did the *Vita di suor Maria Minima* reach Strozzi's intended audience: aristocrats, particularly women and members of his own clan? That is impossible to know. One may conjecture that it may have appealed to Florentines below the highest social level because it concerned an eminent member of their city's aristocracy and to Carmelites of the Ancient Observance because it treated one of their own. How far beyond these circles it penetrated I cannot say. Since most surviving books in the *vita* genre seem to have gone straight into ecclesiastical libraries, few contain indications of ownership. This one does. The title page contains a handwritten note: "questo Libro è per uso di D[onn]a Caterina Sambuchi," probably a lay woman. On two previous blank leaves are many other ownership notes; but unfortunately, those two leaves are glued together and cannot be inspected. How Caterina Sambuchi and other readers of this or any other *vita* reacted to it cannot be known, for not a one of them made notes in the margin or marks on the text.

Did Maria Minima have a terrestrial afterlife beyond the *vita*? As noted earlier, Luigi Strozzi expressed no intention to initiate her cause for beatification. Someone at a later date, however, did. The proof of this lies in the changed title of the 1737 edition: *Vita della serva di Dio suor Maria Minima . . .*<sup>47</sup> "Serva/o di Dio" is no mere pious compliment. In canon law, it has a precise meaning: a person concerning whom an investigation on the episcopal level (*processo ordinario*) has been held and the transcript has been sent to and received in Rome. Such an investigation might have been conducted at any point after Maria Minima's death, but according to Urban VIII's rules, action on the case in Rome could not proceed until fifty years thereafter – that is, in 1722. When the investigation in the archdiocese of Florence was conducted I do not know, nor can I tell what relationship to it the 1737 publication bore.<sup>48</sup> All I can say is that apparently the case of Maria Minima advanced no further. Evidence at my disposal indicates that she was never declared venerable, let alone being beatified and canonized. Evidently, the sustained moral, political, and above all financial support necessary for promoting her to the honor of the altars never materialized from the most likely sources: the Ancient Observance Carmelites, the Grand Duchy of Florence, and the Strozzi family.

## NOTES

1. \*All bibliographical information comes from the website [www.sbn.it/opacsbn/opac/iccu/antico.jsp](http://www.sbn.it/opacsbn/opac/iccu/antico.jsp), produced by ICCU (Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane e per le Informazioni Bibliografiche). Covering libraries large and small, secular and religious, this wonderful resource has only one shortcoming: almost certainly not through the compilers' fault, it does not include the holdings of two important religious libraries: the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana and the Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan. I have also consulted their websites, as well as those of large national libraries in Europe and WorldCat. In titles and quotations, except for replacing the letter "u" with "v" in appropriate places, I have not altered spelling (including the odd double m in Cammilla), punctuation, or capitalization.

These decrees were made available in print in *Urbani VIII Pont. O. M. Decreta servanda in canonizatione et beatificatione sanctorum. Accedunt instructiones et declarationes quas E.mi et R.mi S.R.E. Cardinales praesulesque Romanae Curiae ad id muneris congregatae ex eiusdem Summi Pontificis mandato condiderunt* (Rome: Reverenda Camera Apostolica, 1642). On the origin and early application of them, see Miguel Gotor, *I beati del papa: Santità, Inquisizione e obbedienza in età moderna* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2002).

2. Most *vite* concern a single individual; there are some in groups (e.g., martyrs); a few feature thumbnail biographies of others associated with the main subject. Given multiple editions of the same work and successive treatments of a person by different authors, the number of titles issued is of course much larger than 800.

3. Juan de Palafox y Mendoza (1600-1659), bishop of Puebla de los Angeles (Mexico) and then of Osma (Spain), who was beatified on 5 June 2011, is the most recent example. The beatification of Mariano Arciero (1707-88), a southern Italian secular priest, is scheduled to take place on 24 June 2012.

4. On this problem, see the valuable observations of Vittoria Fiorelli, *Una santa della città. Suor Orsola Benincasa e la devozione napoletana tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Naples: Editoriale Scientifica, 2001), 181-82.

5. Mario Rosa, *L'«Arsenal divoto»: Libri e letterature religiose nell'età moderna, in Libri per tutti: Generi editoriali di larga circolazione tra antico regime ed età contemporanea*, ed. Ludovica Braidà and Mario Infelise (Turin: UTET, 2010), 79-105.

6. Mario Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana nel '700* (original ed. 1989; Milan: Franco Angeli, 2000), 300.

7. Infelise offers no evidence to support his repeated assertion (306, 319, 340) that in the second half of the eighteenth century the demand for religious books went into a steep decline. One set of data suggests the need to reconsider this claim. Consider the books produced by the Remondini firm: Laura Carnelos, *I libri da risma. Catalogo delle edizioni Remondini a large diffusione (1650-1850)* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2008). Of the 632 titles in this Italian equivalent of the *Bibliothèque bleue*, more than seventy-five percent were religious and devotional. Ludovica Braidà, *Gli studi italiani sui «libri per tutti» in antico regime: Tra storia sociale, storia del libro e storia della censura*, in *Libri per tutti*, 333. Since many booksellers whose names appear in colophons did not themselves print their wares, I use the neutral term "bookmen."

8. These include female tertiaries, wrongly termed "semi-religious," as much of an oxymoron as "a little bit pregnant." Only those who had taken solemn, public, perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience were properly called "religious." Jean Gribomont and Jean-Marie-Roger Tillard, "Religio (Religiosus)," *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, ed. by Guerrino Pelliccia and Giancarlo Rocca, 10 vols. (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1974-2003), 8: 1632-33; Giancarlo Rocca, "Terz'Ordine Regolare," *ibid.*, 9: 1052-53. Among the lay males, most were associated with companies devoted to religious purposes that were not technically speaking religious orders because they did not involve taking solemn vows.

9. The female branch of Carmelites of the Ancient Observance, officially recognized by Nicholas V in the mid-1450s, should not be conflated with the Discalced Carmelites, founded in the early 1560s by Teresa of Ávila. These two orders continue their separate existence today.

10. Luigi Strozzi, *Vita di suor Maria Minima Strozzi detta di s. Filippo* (Florence: Pietr'Antonio Brigonci, 1701), consulted in Venice at the Biblioteca San Francesco della Vigna (shelfmark ZB VI 4). Other copies of this book, none of which I have seen, may be found in Florence at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, and in Washington, D.C. at Georgetown University and the Carmelitana Collection.

11. Pompeo Litta, *Famiglie celebri d'Italia*, 14, "Strozzi di Firenze" (Turin: Luciano Basadonna, 1839), unpaginated, Tavola XV. Litta, who called him Ludovico, was mainly interested in the continuance of family lines. This branch of the Strozzi family, carried on by Luigi's brother Alessandro (1634-1704), became extinct in 1784. For other family members, including Luigi, Litta usually neglected to furnish dates of birth and death. Unless otherwise noted, the information in the rest of this paragraph comes from Jean Alazard, *L'abbé Luigi Strozzi, correspondant artistique de Mazarin, de Colbert, de Louvois et de La Tendière: Contribution à l'étude des relations artistiques entre la France et l'Italie au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Bibliothèque de l'Institut Français de Florence (Université de Grenoble) 1<sup>re</sup> series, 8 (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Édouard Champion, 1924), 3-8. For having examined this book, thereby enabling me to order a copy of the relevant pages, I am grateful to Alison Weber.

12. *Delle lodi d'Anna Maria Maurizia d'Austria regina di Francia, orazione funerale dell'abate Luigi Strozzi* (Florence: nella stamperia di S.A.S., 1666).

13. Strozzi, *Vita di suor Maria Minima*, 254-55.

14. Pier Luigi Malaspina, *Vita della serva di Dio suor Maria Margherita Diomira del Verbo Incarnato religiosa del venerabil convento delle vergini stabilite nella carità di Gesù buon pastore della città di Firenze* (Florence: Pietro Antonio Brigonci, 1703); *Breve ristretto della vita della venerabil madre s.or Maria Maria Minima di s. Filippo Neri* (Lucca: Domenico Ciuffetti, 1717). Between 1692 and 1743, Ciuffetti, who began by concentrating on the subject of astrology, printed 204 heterogeneous books, no others on holy people.

15. Strozzi, *Vita di suor Minima*, +2r-v, 119 (quotation).

16. *Ibid.*, 1-3. Litta supplied her stepmother's name. Roberto apparently had no surviving male issue from either marriage; this Strozzi line, which died out in 1742, did not continue through him. Litta, Tavola IV. Antonio Cistellini identifies her grandmother

Martinelli's father and grandfather and the location of the Bini palazzo: "Una pagina di storia religiosa di Firenze nel secolo XVII," *Archivio storico italiano* 125 (1967): 186-245, at J1202n.,199. In 1775 Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo acquired the building (by then known as Palazzo Torrigiani) to house the zoological section (Museo della Specola) of the public natural history museum. Thanks to Brenda Preyer for making this connection.

17. Anon., *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 10 (1968): 519-20. Cistellini (himself an Oratorian) gives a much more favorable picture of Bini, whom some call "venerable" (recognition of a candidate's "heroic virtue": the step preceding beatification). The relevant section on the Congregation's official website, [www.oratoriosanfilippo.org](http://www.oratoriosanfilippo.org), does not support this appellation.

18. Strozzi, *Vita di suor Maria Minima*, 3-20.

19. *Ibid.*, 19.

20. Many convents took in girls and young women to be instructed in reading, writing, needlework, in some cases music and dancing, properly deferential manners, and piety and protected from loss of virginity. Some *educande* were destined by their parents to become nuns (most often in another convent), others to wed once a suitable spouse was found.

21. Strozzi, *Vita di suor Maria Minima*, 20-33.

22. I have not been able to learn anything specific about the population of Santa Maria degli Angioli during Maria Minima's time. The revised constitutions of 1611 set the maximum number of nuns (*professe* and *converse*) at 80. Thanks to Clare Copeland for this information.

23. *Ibid.*, 35-95

24. *Ibid.*, 21. After her return from Rome, probably at her initiative, she and her grandmother made peace. *Ibid.*, 38-39.

25. *Ibid.*, 40.

26. *Ibid.*, 81.

27. *Ibid.*, 43-57.

28. *Ibid.*, 47.

29. *Ibid.*, 86-87.

30. *Ibid.*, 35.

31. *Ibid.*, 96-99.

32. *Ibid.*, 82-83.

33. *Ibid.*, 89-91.

34. Strozzi neglects to mention that immediately following Santa Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi's canonization, the convent was renamed after her. After moving several times, it has operated since 1928, still as a cloistered house of the Ancient Observance Carmelites, at Via dei Massoni 26 in the northwestern part of Florence near the Ospedale di Careggi.

35. Strozzi, *Vita di Maria Minima*, 15-18.

36. *Ibid.*, 99-100.

37. *Ibid.*, 111-16.

38. *Ibid.*, 117-19.

39. *Ibid.*, 121-86, 186-246.

40. *Ibid.* +4rv, 252-53.

41. *Ibid.*, +3rv.

42. *Ibid.*, 227-29.

43. *Ibid.*, 112-13.

44. Three articles on portraits in *vite* published in Spanish-ruled southern Italy and Spain should stimulate further attention to this genre of artistic representation: Jean-Michel Sallmann, "La représentation imagée de la sainteté dans l'Italie méridionale à l'époque de la Réforme catholique," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 147 (1989): 419-32; Mindy Nancarrow, "The 17th-Century Spanish Vida: Producing Sanctity with Words and Images," *Woman's Art Journal* 25 (2004): 32-38; and Helen Hills, "The Face is a Mirror of the Soul: Frontispieces and the Production of Sanctity in Post-Tridentine Naples," *Art History* 31 (2008): 547-73.

45. The portrait probably appeared also in the second edition: Luigi Strozzi, *Vita della serva di Dio suor Maria Minima di s. Filippo Neri al secolo Camilla Strozzi, religiosa carmelitana* (Florence: Anton Maria Albizzini, 1737), held by the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (shelfmark Stamp.Barb. T.II.16), which I have not yet seen.

46. Brenda Preyer provided useful advice on this image.

47. For the full title, see n.45. The 1717 *Breve ristretto* (see n.14) goes further, calling her "venerable": a step beyond "servant of God," indicating official recognition of a candidate's "heroic virtue."

48. Further investigations in the Archivio arcivescovile di Firenze and the *fondo* Congregazione dei Riti in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, which I have not yet been able to conduct, might clarify this issue.



FIGURE 1. Luigi Strozzi, Vita di suor Maria Minima Strozzi detta di s. Filippo (Florence: Pietr'Antonio Brignonci, 1701), n.p. Venice, Biblioteca San Francesco della Vigna, ZB VI 4.

## Four Poems\*



Nicholas Regiacorte

### Niente di speciale

The bloom of an octopus stewed  
for two hours and this tender?  
How can you say they are  
nothing special—  
the donuts we ate on the beach?  
The chicken that Lola the fox took  
from our fingers?  
Ladyfingers in a bowl of coffee?  
with a half-lame right hand  
folding beaten egg white  
into whipped cheese and  
then the layering?  
Can we say it is nothing—  
pasta alla carbonara with  
a second course of bones,  
bread soaked in olive oil and  
just a little salt, *for the dogs*?  
Or for Rita's mother one night,  
after her ritual hour of sobbing  
into the dark of the stairwell,  
the glass into which we stirred  
a tablespoon of baking soda  
for which she loved us deeply?

### Marittima

We're all family when freed from  
having to look at each other,  
we give our dirty plates to Rugola  
the half-stray, and pick our teeth.

The hills' warmth, rumors  
of houselights—all dinner parties  
like this are boats, plumbing  
new depth of the valley.

That might be Miemo.  
Can you make out Orciatico from here?

Everyone's oarstrength fades  
as evening swells:  
Open the other bottle, Giovan'.  
Don't you know where our  
little Earth is going—*in a hand basket*?

But he's already planned  
on one day more, at least,  
to patch the water tank,  
rain or shine. I saw him this morning  
climb down in, and he can do it.

## Selvatica

Thinned grasses lead through thick,  
then bent through standing on a walk  
around the house, past the thorny heads  
of wild artichokes that we count  
down to the woods today. S— stops me  
where she's found a single oak leaf suspended  
in thin air, or on a single filament of web.  
We hear a young stag bark out fearfully for  
his mother, who's paid us no heed at all and  
won't wait for him to break our spell.

## This is the Breed

Take Gamba the baker  
who carved out a new home at twelve  
and the knife itself  
take the Champion of the World welding  
crooked doors  
and the confounded world itself  
take your friend Rose who did time  
for her would-be bomb-maker  
and the bomb itself  
our Baptist in his boa and chaps  
all those he's saved  
and his baptism itself  
while we're at it Archimedes  
the machinist  
this civil religion  
civility itself  
take our Black Shirt  
all his sons and daughters  
and one daughter alone  
Frank's stomach for blood  
and our blood itself  
Tina's skill with the bones and  
our very bones  
our songs for the road and

Middle Road in full leaf  
Ella's unwavering tastes  
and Ella—  
take my aim from the garden  
and the garden we grew  
from *this hill*  
in a fit of wild crocuses  
honeysuckle  
and walnut trees  
whose fallen nuts our dogs cracked in their teeth  
will crack  
we would take more than pot shots  
more than just hostages ears  
stringing any occupiers' heads  
nobles' heads  
heads of heads of state  
over our bazaar feast day  
own funeral  
to greet Napoleon's brother  
ripe cavalry  
with waving arms of flame  
and flame itself.



\*For Janet. Following the example of my librarian friend, I have written the first three poems **mo' mo'** – *on the spur of the moment*, or upon the occasion of your retirement. You will be spared two hours of standing in various parts of the Biblioteca Nazionale, my reading and explicating (as he did) each poem from a lengthy manuscript, and blowing smoke (as he did) at each page. You will be spared the little announcements, such as “You’ll like this” or “Here’s another good one.” All I’ll say of these is that they celebrate a few of my and Sunshine’s favorite moments with you and Giovanni. The others took more time, but may give you an idea of the wider impression left by our year in Italy 2008-09. So, with love and admiration, ti abbraccio e vi auguro tante avventure.



“Mixed field Greens” and  
“At Madonna dell’Incoronata”  
both translated from *Fujj’ ammëšche*, poems in Vastese\*

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Nicholas Regiacorte

Mixed Field Greens

I’ve prepared a few mixed greens—  
you name it I’ve got it  
sow-thistle, common poppy, wild chicory,  
viper’s bugloss and fat chickens.

Since you’re here you can test them and maybe  
you’ll like them, use the chair, here  
sit—see how poor but generous I am.

There, it’s not so exotic  
but like grass that grows so well on its own  
only Christ’s watered it.

You can’t stomach it?  
What else do you want?  
It’s all I’ve got for you brother or  
there’s the body, go cry over it.

At Madonna dell’Incoronata  
the last Sunday of April

Like this [*a bunch in the fist*]  
—are the people  
around Incoronata!  
with tubs of lupini beans, little chicks  
rosaries of roasted hazelnuts and piles of chestnuts  
bakers from Roccascalegna peddling dainties.

Right by the church Pichicche pushing  
his toy boxes and paper rattles  
and under an arch is the puppet-maker Miscione  
sitting behind a table of whistles.

One farmer’s playing bagpipes,  
two boys, further down, are flipping buttons  
and, in the shed, where they’re playing for swigs  
of wine,

a knife flashes  
everyone scatters, and in the middle of the  
hubbub—  
someone shouts “They killed Cianarelle!  
They killed Cianarelle!”

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\**Fujj’ ammëšche*, edited by Luigi Anelli, c.1892

## *Il Cuore Perduto*\*



Sylvia Zethmayr Shults

*Venice, Italy. 1715*

Max arrived in Italy less than a month after he left St. Petersburg. Peter's reforms aside, the roads in Russia were still primitive, and it took him a week just to reach the border of Sweden. Once out of Russia, though, travel became easier. Max took advantage of the long coach trip to study Italian. He read through the Italian dictionary he'd purchased from a shop in St. Petersburg before leaving. His lips moved slightly as he pored over the small book. The language flowed in his mind; he looked forward to speaking it in conversation. He supposed that the smattering of French he'd picked up in the European-friendly streets of his home city helped him now in the study of another language.

Max stepped out of the coach onto the streets of Venice, and it was love at first sight. Just walking down the streets, he was greeted with music everywhere he went. He spent his days in a happy delirium. The love songs that the gondoliers crooned for their passengers made Max weak-kneed with delight. Women sang to themselves at the market, or as they hung out their wash on laundry day. Strains of music floated from open windows; professional musicians rehearsing for their next performance, beginners practicing their scales, working composers ironing out their latest production. Everywhere, everywhere there was music.

Max took a room at the Seven Bells Inn until he could find a job and proper lodging. He had been there about a week when he made his first friend in Italy.

Max was enjoying an impromptu concert in the dining room of the inn. He had just sat down at a table with several other guests of the inn, cradling a large bowl of stew and a hunk of bread. The men at the next table were kidding a woman with good-natured cajoling. Max's Italian was still wobbly, but the men seemed to be trying to talk the woman into getting up to sing for the room. Laughing, shaking her head, the woman finally shoved her chair away from the table and walked over to the large hearth.

Turning to face the room, the woman took a deep breath and opened her mouth to sing. She was a coloratura soprano, with the voice of an angel. The joshing men sat silent, grins pasted on their faces as they listened. She had chosen a challenging solo, full of trills and runs that showed off her strong, well-trained voice. Max sat transfixed, his supper forgotten.

The soprano finished her song with a flourish. The room erupted with applause, men yelling and banging on the tables in appreciation. The woman smiled and curtsied deeply, accepting the ovation as her due.

As the woman sat down again, the man sitting across from Max spoke. "Sure she's good, I'll grant you that. But you should hear Zabetta."

"I'm sorry?" Max said, picking up his fork.

"Zabetta, of the Incurabili. She's incredible. She sounds like . . . like she's swallowed a violin," the man said, gesturing with his tankard. He took a deep swig of ale, and grinned at Max. "You should hear her, really."

"I'm new in town," Max admitted. "Do you suppose you could show me around?"

"Course I could." The young man stuck his hand over the table. "Vittorio Armani."

Max shook the man's hand. "I'm Maximilian Kastalsky."

Vittorio picked up his tankard again. "You're Russian, aren't you?"

Max nodded.

"What brings you to fair Venice?"

"I want to be a musician," Max said. "I think I've come to the right place."

"You have indeed, my friend. You've met the right person, too. I play violin and cello, and dabble in viola. Venice is the place for music, all right." Vittorio leaned back in his chair.

"Who was that girl you mentioned before?" Max asked.

"Oh, she's with the convent of the Incurabili. I don't know if she's a novice or just one of the orphans, but she's one of their best performers."

"They give concerts?"

"Oh yes." Vittorio cocked his head. "You mean you've never been to one of their Vespers concerts? You weren't kidding when you said you were new in town. Tell you what, I'll meet you here Saturday evening, and we'll both go."

"That sounds wonderful."

"These girls are unbelievable," Vittorio said as they sat in the gondola. The small boat rocked pleasantly underneath them as the gondolier pushed it in a easy glide through the waters of the canal. Vittorio had called for Max early Saturday evening, as he had promised. Now they were headed out to one of the Vespers concerts.

"There are four main convents that give these concerts," Vittorio explained, "the Mendicanti, the Pieta, the Incurabili, and the Ospedaletto. They were originally founded as schools for foundlings and orphans, but they've become known for their musical performances.

"These girls do everything," he said, waving his arms as if he himself was conducting the girls as they floated along. "They sing, play flute, oboe, violin, cello – you name it, they do it. The Pieta is best for instrumental music. It's a bit closer to the Seven Bells, too, but we're going to the Incurabili."

"Why's that?"

Vittorio grinned. "You'll find out."

They pulled in to a small boat launch, and Max carefully got to his feet and stepped out of the boat. Vittorio leapt from the gondola much more nimbly than Max had. He tossed the gondolier a coin, then he continued his lecture as they walked down the street. "These girls are seriously cloistered just like the nuns that care for them. The programs sometimes go on and on about 'pious virgins'. I do know that they hardly ever go out. If they do, they're chaperoned by vicious guard dogs – I mean, the good sisters of the convent. Ah, here we are."

They had arrived at the convent of the Incurabili. Iron gates stood open, inviting the worshippers in for the Vespers concert. Max and Vittorio followed the other concert goers up the walk to the church of San Salvatore. Max stole glances at the gravestones in the tiny churchyard as they passed. Many of the stones were old, and green with lichen. An angel with drooping wings brooded over the rows of stones.

They made their way into the chapel and found seats. All around them was a quiet symphony of shuffling and coughing as the audience tried to get comfortable on the hard wooden pews. Max gazed around at the interior of the church, at the soaring ceilings and the intricate tile mosaic on the floor. The church was a

symphony of cool whites and greys, instead of the rich colors and gold of the church he'd known from childhood. It made for a different kind of beauty, elegance rather than opulence.

Even with the distraction of the uncomfortable seats, Max could feel a strange sense of expectancy in the audience. He shared their anticipation. He had never heard of an all-female performance, and the novelty intrigued him. He couldn't wait to hear these girls he'd heard so much about from his friend.

Soon the girls filed in and took their places at the front of the chapel, up near the altar. They performed behind a grille, nearly hidden from their audience. Only the most persistent onlooker could catch more than a teasing glimpse through the tiny holes in the screen. As far as Max could tell, the girls were all dressed alike, each in a spotless white habit. Each girl also had a tiny bouquet of flowers tucked into her hair. A man, dressed in a conservative waistcoat and breeches, stepped up to the podium in front of the group. He raised his hands, and the girls came to attention, waiting for the signal to begin. The man gestured, and the girls began to play.

The music was a sprightly string concerto, the violins and violas accompanied by the delicate plucking tones of a harpsichord. Max closed his eyes and smiled. All around him he could feel the enjoyment of the audience. The melodies wove in and out in an intricate dance, each line complementing the other in a precise counterpoint.

Max sat as still as he could, entranced by the music. He drank it all in, the music, the beautiful young girls, the silent, enthralled audience. All unknowing, he had discovered the particularly Venetian formula for an evening of pleasure: a subtle, sophisticated interplay of sensuality, spiritual fulfillment, and aesthetic perfection.

"This song's one by Bach," Vittorio said. "Zabetta's going to do the solo. Now you're in for a treat."

A pretty young girl stepped to the front. She sang the solo, her voice reaching effortlessly to the heights of the carved stone ceiling. Trills cascaded from her throat just as Vittorio had promised, sounding like the sweet spring jubilation of a meadowlark.

"Isn't she wonderful?" Vittorio breathed.

Max nodded, but he was only half listening to Zabetta's impressive solo. His attention had been captured by a girl who sat halfway up the aisle, in the middle of the group of performers. She was playing a double-strung lap harp, caressing it and drawing forth the music of the heavens. Max had never heard any sound like it before. Not even the majesty

of the human voice could compare. Each note was thrown out to shimmer in the air, hanging in delicate perfection before fading into the rest of the sound. Yet for all its delicacy, the tone of the harp was certain and strong. Max made a vow. From now on, he would come with Vittorio to these concerts whenever he had the chance.

As it turned out, they were able to attend the concerts almost every weekend. "If you're going to be a musician, you need to listen to good music as well," Vittorio explained. Max was only too happy to take his friend's advice. The energy he got from these concerts kept him well-satisfied and contented the whole week long. And every Saturday night, he could see, behind the filigreed screen, a glimpse of the girl who lifted his spirits for the week ahead.

One day, Max decided to take a stroll past the convent during the week. It was nothing more than a whim, but perhaps he would have a chance to meet his lovely idol. If he could only see her, maybe speak to her for a moment, he could tell her how much he enjoyed her music every Saturday evening. It was the longest of long shots, but it was worth a try.

As Max came closer to the convent, he saw that the iron gates were open. Well-dressed people were strolling up to the convent and entering through a side door. How was it that they were getting to go inside? Puzzled, Max decided to follow them. He went through the gates and made his way up to the convent.

From overheard scraps of conversation, Max realized that these people had every right to visit the girls of the orphanage, the girls he had always thought were kept in cloistered seclusion. They were relatives, or good friends, or simply admirers of the musicians. Every week, the girls were allowed to receive visitors in the parlatorio. Max's heart leapt, and he could hardly hide the grin that spread over his face. He was finally going to get to meet his idol.

By the time Max got into the parlatorio, most of the other visitors had said their goodbyes for the week, and were getting ready to leave. Max peered through the iron bars of the grille that divided the room. He saw a group of girls on the other side of the grille having a sedate conversation under the watchful eye of a stern-looking nun. The nun caught sight of Max, and glared at him across the room. Max backed away from the bars in a hurry.

He waited for a few moments. Should he go up to the grille again, try and spot his favorite? Or should he take the nun's unspoken, ferocious hint, and just leave? After all, he'd see his beautiful girl on Saturday.

No good. The curiosity was unbearable. Max squared

his shoulders and marched back up to the screen.

A dark-haired siren was waiting for him, running her fingers idly along the iron bars. She looked up as he approached. Here at least was someone he recognized.

"Buon giorno, signorina Zabetta."

The girl gave him a slow, warm smile. She seemed mildly surprised that he'd called her by name, but pleasantly so. "You know me, Signor?"

"I know of you. I – my friend and I – have been enjoying your Vespers concerts for weeks."

"I'm pleased." Zabetta turned and cast a quick glance back at the other girls. "Oh good. Sister Hilarion's gone. For now, anyways."

She turned back to him. "So you've been coming to the concerts?" she prompted.

"Oh yes, we come every week. My friend Vittorio likes you."

"Oh really?" Zabetta sidled closer. She reached out a pale hand and touched the grille, close to Max's face. "And what about you? Do you like me too?"

Here was his chance. His mouth was dry as he spoke. "The harp player – I've never heard such beautiful music. What's her name?"

Zabetta's smile faltered a little, and her hand dropped. "That would be Cecelia."

Max tried to see past Zabetta to the group of girls in the parlatorio. "Is she here with you?"

Just then the stern nun came striding across the room, calling to the girls. Max guessed that this was the infamous Sister Hilarion.

"I have to go," Zabetta said. She turned away.

"Wait, please! Which one is Cecelia? Can you point her out to me?" But Zabetta was gone. Max strained to see the other girls, but Sister Hilarion's eagle stare stopped him cold. Nun or not, Max had the idea that if he stayed in the parlatorio any longer, the good sister would drag him out by his ear and toss him into the street. He slunk away to find Vittorio.

That Saturday, Max and Vittorio went to the concert as usual. This time, Max made sure to pick up a program when they came in the door. He sat down and scanned the program. Reading down the page, he found that Cecelia also played the cello, in addition to the harp.

Months of listening to music had made Max acutely aware of the part played by each performer. The energy of the audience was good, it sustained him and nurtured him. Lately, though, he had found that the energy the musicians gave off was sustaining as well. Their vitality seemed different than that of the audience. The audience simply sat quietly and listened to the music. The enjoyment of the musicians was that

of performance. To amuse himself, he had begun to try to identify each musician by their special feelings.

Zabetta's energy was strong and brassy. She wanted to be noticed. Max closed his eyes and let his mind drift over the group of musicians, seeking Cecelia's energy. He frowned. He knew she was up there performing. He'd just seen her, and she was listed in the program. Where was she? He reached out a little farther.

As he sat there, eyes closed, he heard her harp solo begin. Now Max could feel her energy. Why on earth hadn't he noticed it before? She was here, of course she was here, playing with confidence and joy. Max smiled.

"I have to meet her, Vittorio." Max paced back and forth in his room, while Vittorio sat at the small table and watched him.

Max stopped. "Signor Vivaldi can get into the convent of the Pietà. Why can't I get into the convent of the Incurabili?"

"Signor Vivaldi is a conductor," Vittorio pointed out. "He has to come in to rehearse his compositions with the girls. That's his ticket inside. You told me when we met that you wanted to be a musician. Do you even know how to play an instrument? Any instrument?"

"No," Max admitted.

Vittorio leaned forward, his hands on his knees. "Would you like me to teach you?" he asked kindly. "It will be some time before you're good enough to offer lessons to the Incurabili, but at least you'll be able to present yourself to Cecelia as a musician."

They went to a nearby shop to pick out an instrument. Max, remembering the ensemble at Menshikov's party, chose a violin. Vittorio ran his fingers lovingly over the dark reddish-brown belly of the instrument.

"Good choice, Maximilian. Stradivari made this. He works in Cremona, not too far from here. He's one of the best."

Vittorio picked up the violin, tucked it under his chin, and tossed off a quick run of notes. "Yes, listen to that tone! This is the one you want, Max. Trust me."

"We'll take it," Max told the shopkeeper. Vittorio placed the violin carefully in its case. Max counted out the money, and soon they were on their way back to the Seven Bells.

Back in Max's room, Vittorio undid the clasps on the case. He lifted the violin from its cradle of dark blue velvet. Patiently he showed Max the correct way to hold the instrument. "Tuck this part under your chin. Your left hand goes up here, on the strings. Don't worry yet about where to place your fingers. That will come later. Now take the bow in your right hand. Relax, Maximilian! Little finger rests lightly on the nut

at the end. Hold the bow against the strings like this, and – play!"

Max dragged the flat of the bow lightly across the open strings. A harsh note scraped out of the violin, then another as he pushed the bow back. Max winced with sudden self-doubt. Had his father been right? His playing was awful! It sounded as though he was dragging the protesting bow over a saw blade, not the strings of a fine instrument. These squawks and creaks weren't music! He might as well lay the violin back in its safe nest of velvet and stop torturing it. Max put the violin down.

"I'm sorry. That was pathetic."

"Of course it was," Vittorio agreed. "You're just a beginner. I'll teach you everything I know. You'll be playing well enough to impress Cecelia within six months, I guarantee it. Now, get that violin back up there. We've got work to do." Max went to the next Vespers concert with a spring in his step. He was on his way to becoming a real musician. He'd been practicing with Vittorio every day. His playing still sounded like the protestations of an amorous alley cat, but he was getting better. He didn't need Vittorio's encouragement to tell him that. The satisfaction he got from playing, even in practice, convinced him of his improvement.

He sat on the hard pew, listening in elation to Pachelbel's Canon. Cecelia was playing cello. She had begun the piece with a strong, steady beat, setting the tempo for the rest of the musicians. Max smiled as he soaked in her energy. The cello was the heartbeat of the piece, a slow, sure beat, but he got so much more from Cecelia's performance. Through her playing, he could feel the joy and comfort of the music. He could feel the music lifting her, transporting her to another time, another place. Where that place was, he couldn't tell. It was enough for him to be with her as she played, even if she was unaware of his presence.

Max arrived as soon as he could at the convent the next morning. It was a visiting day, and he desperately wanted to talk to Cecelia. He shifted from foot to foot in excitement as he peered through the grille, ignoring the other visitors in the room. Max squinted. He thought he recognized Cecelia. Was she the one sitting on the bench over there? Before he could be sure, he heard a familiar voice.

"Buon giorno, signor. Have you come for another visit?"

Zabetta was in front of him, smiling prettily, her head cocked to one side. Max tried to see around her, but she shifted and blocked his view of the girls in the room behind her. "I saw you at the concert Saturday

evening. You were sitting in the third row, right in the middle, like you always do.”

“Yes, Vittorio and I were both there.” He tried once more to see around her. The girls were filing out of the room, and his chance was slipping away fast.

“Signorina Zabetta, I wonder if you could do me a small favor.”

Zabetta came closer to the grille, a secret smile playing on her lips. “Of course, Signor. But what could a poor orphan ever do for you?” Her lips parted, showing even white teeth.

Max fumbled in the pocket of his coat. He found the folded piece of paper he’d labored over for hours the day before, and thrust it through the bars at her.

“This is a note for Cecelia. Will you give it to her for me?” He held his breath, waiting for her answer.

Zabetta looked down at the note in Max’s hand, then back up at him. “What’s in it for me?”

Max blinked, surprised. He had thought she’d take the note without any questions, happy to aid her fellow orphan in a conspiracy right under the noses of their guardians. “What do you want?”

Zabetta lifted her chin. “I want a kiss.”

“Are you crazy?” Max yelled, then looked around, panicked, for one of the guardian nuns. He lowered his voice and continued.

“You should know better than to ask me that. Your chaperones are always watching. Besides, even if – “ He stopped himself. He’d been about to say “even if I wanted to kiss you”, but that would have been hurtful and rude.

“Even if I *could* kiss you,” he said, “there’s still the little matter of these bars between us.”

Without a word, Zabetta put her right hand through the bars, waiting.

Max took her hand, feeling the delicate bones beneath the pale skin. He bent and kissed the back of her hand, imagining it was Cecelia’s scented skin under his lips. He straightened and gave her an uncertain smile.

Zabetta snatched the note from him. Then she whirled and ran.

The violin lessons with Vittorio continued, and so did Max’s improvement. Soon he was playing his way through more challenging arrangements, pieces by Handel and Albinoni. He could even muddle through the melodious concertos of Vivaldi.

Vittorio was a patient teacher, and preferred to teach by example. That suited Max just fine. He could sit and enjoy Vittorio’s demonstrations just as well as a full concert. He remained fascinated by his friend’s mastery of the violin. In Vittorio’s talented hands, the

Stradivarius could sound almost like a human voice crying out, raised in glorious song.

“Music is a call to battle. It is a soothing voice that comforts the sick, and reminds us in quiet sorrow of those we have loved and lost. It is a joyful shout that celebrates the brilliance of life. Music can make us see demons, or it can lift us up to glimpse the face of the Divine. It is the tender yearning of lover calling to lover, the desire to die a little in the other’s embrace.”

Max smiled as he played. Vittorio’s lectures were brilliant speeches, as much fun to listen to as the music he made. Vittorio paced the room, gesturing as he talked.

“Music is sound, beautiful sound, where before there was only silence. It is the alchemy of performance, of creating something from nothing, of touching the strings, or the keys, or blowing into the mouthpiece – or opening a mouth – and drawing melody into the world.”

Max threw himself into his studies. When Saturday evening came around again, he stayed in his room, polishing the scales and trills that Vittorio had taught him. As the weeks went by, Max became more and more confident in his playing. Soon, he had hatched a plan. He would make sure that Cecelia would notice him, and he would finally be worthy of her notice.

One rainy autumn Friday, Max shrugged his greatcoat on, tucked the violin case safely underneath, and set off through the dreary streets to the convent. He’d been away too long. It was time to set his plan in motion.

Max smiled as he walked along. His plan had a few flaws, but it was the best he could come up with under the circumstances. He’d convince Zabetta to go get Cecelia. He’d kiss her again if he had to. Cecelia would come out to the parlatorio. Max would take his violin out of its case. He’d snug it up underneath his chin, pick up the bow, and play for her. He’d play something fast and complicated and playful, maybe that piece by Handel he’d been working so hard on for the past week. Then Cecelia would clap her hands and smile, and – what then? His imagination didn’t dare to go any farther. He’d find out soon enough.

Max marched straight up to the gates of the convent. Cold water dripped from the iron bars as Max peered into the yard. He gave the closed gate an experimental shake. Locked, of course. It wasn’t a visiting day. A stray gust of wind caught the dead leaves at his feet and sent them spiralling towards the gate. Zabetta was nowhere in sight.

Max was vaguely disappointed. She’d been his only contact with Cecelia. He almost felt as if he knew



Cecelia through his conversations with Zabetta. That was silly, of course. The only way he'd get to know Cecelia would be if he could talk to her directly.

Another girl was in the courtyard, carrying a basket along the walk that joined the church to the orphanage. Max called softly to her. She turned, but he didn't recognize her. Perhaps she wasn't a musician at all, but one of the *figlie di comun*, the worker bees of the convent. She came over to him and stood waiting, the basket balanced on one hip.

"I'm sorry to disturb you, signorina. I'm looking for Zabetta or Cecelia. Can you get one of them for me?" His boldness surprised even him, but he'd decided on a plan, and there was no turning back now.

The girl looked closely at him. "You're the musician, aren't you? The one who gave Zabetta the note for Cecelia?"

"Yes, I'm the musician." He felt a little tingle of pride at the recognition. "Did she give Cecelia the note? Where is she? Will she come to the gates to see me? Cecelia, I mean, not Zabetta."

The girl looked down and scuffed at the mud with the toe of her shoe. "Zabetta never gave Cecelia the note."

The news was a dagger in Max's heart. "She didn't? Why not?"

The girl sighed. "You must understand, signor, Cecelia was very ill. She had trouble with her stomach. I believe there was a growth there."

A sick feeling was beginning to grow in Max's chest. "Dear God, no!" he breathed.

"I don't think God intended it, signor. God should not allow suffering such as hers." The girl quickly put a hand to her mouth, then continued. "She found relief only in her music. She said that when she played her instruments, the harp or the cello, the vibrations would soothe the pain she felt in her belly. It's been her only solace in the last few months."

Sickened, Max thought back to the last concert he'd attended. The girls had performed the Concerto in D major by Telemann. Cecelia had played with a dreamy, peaceful expression on her lovely face, probably taking comfort in the vibrations of the music's sure, steady beat. Now Max knew the awful truth. He'd sat in the audience and sought out her energy, never wondering why it was so weak at times, only becoming strong when she played. She hadn't been playing for him, or for her audience. She had been playing for herself.

Max swallowed hard, hearing a click in his throat. "Signora, I know you are cloistered, but I beg you, may I see her? In God's name, where is she?"

The girl turned and pointed towards the courtyard, close to the church. Max grabbed hold of the gate and looked through, leaning his face against the cold iron bars in a desperate attempt to see farther.

There in the churchyard was a fresh pile of dirt. A polished headstone shone white with an inner glow, in brilliant contrast to the older, mossy stones around it. Rain beat down on the face of the guardian angel statue and dripped off her chin. Her hands were outstretched in a gentle benediction as she wept raindrops onto the fresh black soil.



\*Excerpted from the forthcoming novel of the same name.

## *Ut pictura, poesis: A Note on the Word Order in De Rerum Natura I.99*



Daniel J. Taylor

The word order of *mactatu maesta parentis* is striking.<sup>1</sup> Granted, poetry regularly contravenes any number of grammatical, lexical, and contextual constraints, almost by definition. As Varro (*Ling.* 9.5) observes, poets can leap such boundaries with impunity. But there is method in their leaping, and word-order displacement is one of the most common methods used to stretch language in order to attain the desired pragmatic effect, whether literary or simply conversational. When we encounter such hyperbaton, especially in poetry, we ought pause and appreciate.

In the case of *De Rerum Natura* I.99 we can readily envision the picture that Lucretius must have had in mind when he composed this sequence of words. Metrical and phonetic considerations, even in tandem, are insufficient *per se* to explain the word order, for the poet wants us to **see** what is happening as well as to **hear** his alliterative enoplon. It is the picture that counts, and that picture, I suggest, is a simple but stark one. The tragic victim (*maesta*) is held firmly between the sacrificial stroke (*mactatu*) and its deliverer (*parentis*). That is, the father is standing behind his daughter with his arm—and, perforce, the knife—stretched out in front of her: *mactatu maesta parentis*. The father strikes what is nominally a sacrificial blow but which here becomes one of murder, at least insofar as Lucretius is concerned, and to note that animals are often slaughtered in precisely this way and that the knife is normally kept concealed from the victim until the fatal moment<sup>2</sup> is only to reinforce the inhumanity of the deed. Lucretius wants us to see what he has himself seen, namely, the knife, the girl, and the father, in that order. The caesura (with, from our point of view, its horrific etymology) and the verse-ending frame the picture all too effectively.

Lucretius' verbal artistry sketches a unique visual representation, but the technique or method is by no means uncommon. Cicero's word order no less than

the Catilinarian conspiracy places him in the midst of great fear as he addresses the ringleader directly in *Cat.* 1.5: *Magno me metu liberabis...* But the first line of Horace's Pyrrha ode (I.5) is probably the most well-known word-order mosaic. Just as the roses surround the lovers, so too the slender youth straddles the poem's addressee: (*Quis*) *multa gracilis te puer in rosa*. Form and meaning<sup>3</sup> are one, and the picture is complete. Style is but the exploitation of potentialities inherent in the language, and Lucretius is every bit as capable as Horace or Cicero when it is a matter of manipulating Latin word order for literary effect.<sup>4</sup> It should therefore come as no surprise that Lucretius literally paints a picture in words when he so dramatically describes the sacrifice of Iphigenia.

The sacrifice of Iphigenia is a favorite topic among ancient artists, but whether Lucretius had actually seen a picture such as his words create is not ours to know. Neither Timanthes' famous painting as described, admittedly incompletely, by Quintilian (*I.O.* 2.13.13) and Pliny (*N.H.* 35.10.73), nor Pompeii's equally renowned wall painting accords with Lucretius' verbal picture; indeed, none of the numerous Iphigenia scenes in extant ancient art does,<sup>5</sup> but that is not to say that Lucretius had not seen any such painting. Tiepolo, though his inspiration obviously derives from Euripides and though he substitutes Calchas for Agamemnon, depicts the sacrificial scene exactly as Lucretius sketches it in poetry, for the large fresco executed in 1757 for the atrium of the Villa Valmarana near Vicenza<sup>6</sup> shows us the knife at the breast of the victim, behind whom stands the priest, ready to strike. The scene is the raw material of nightmares, and the dreadful *exemplum* is exactly what the Epicurean poet needs here. What Lucretius has seen in his mind's eye, if not in real life, we can see too, thanks to his *mactatu maesta parentis*.\*



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>H.A.J. Munro, *T. Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura Libri Sex, volume II: Explanatory Notes*, 4<sup>th</sup> rev. ed. (1886; repr., London: G. Bell and Sons, 1928), 40, describes “the position of the words” in *De. rer. nat.* I. 98-9 as “very artificial,” and so it is. The lines read as follows: *sed casta inceste, nubendi tempore in ipso, / hostia concideret mactatu maesta parentis*. Munro further suggests, *inter alia*, that “*maesta* disjoined from *hostia* and put between *mactatu* and *parentis* gains great additional force”. The purpose of this note is to explain exactly how we should visualize that “great additional force”.

<sup>2</sup>See Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, translated by John Raffan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 56.

<sup>3</sup>The scene requires no verb, and thus Horace places *urget* in the next line where, amidst *perfusus liquidis odoribus*, it aptly characterizes the young man’s inexperienced sexual technique.

<sup>4</sup>For an excellent account of such phenomena, see Donald Lateiner, “Mimetic Syntax: Metaphor from Word Order, Especially in Ovid,” *American Journal of Philology* 111 (1990): 204-237, in particular §3 on enclosure, concealment, and imbrication. My own “Painting Pictures with Words in Latin,”

*Voice of WAFLT* 33,1 (2005): 14-15, is primarily pedagogical in nature but does adduce several striking examples of the phenomenon at issue.

<sup>5</sup>For a survey of these paintings see Silvia Fazio, *Ifigenia nella poesia e nell’arte figurata* (Palermo: Scuola tip. ‘Boccone del povero’, 1932).

<sup>6</sup>See Michael Levey, *Giambattista Tiepolo: His Life and Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 229-233, for plates and a moving description of this masterful “*coup de théâtre*”. The *topos* is congenial to Tiepolo, but none of his other versions—two on canvasses now in Paris and Venice and a badly damaged fresco in Merlengo—depicts the crucial moment exactly as does the fresco in the Villa Valmarana.

\*It is with the utmost respect and affection that I dedicate this little offering to Janet Smith (and Giovanni), for she introduced not only me, but also my wife and two daughters, to the exquisite and profound beauties of Renaissance art, Florentine architecture, and Italian culture. After more than three decades the breadth and depth of her knowledge continue to amaze.

# *Prudenza* as Spectacle: Machiavelli, Cervantes, and Their Leading Ladies



Patricia Vilches

Lucrezia, from Machiavelli's *La Mandragola* (c. 1518),<sup>1</sup> and Dorotea, Princess Micomicona in Cervantes' *Don Quijote* (Part One, 1605), embody and perform the successful social comeback. Embracing failure and humiliation to succeed in the game of life, these extremely beautiful ladies display strong instincts for survival and reverse their social disgrace by means of carefully staged *prudenza*. *Prudenza* as strategy and spectacle benefits readers and spectators alike and illustrates not only how Machiavelli's and Cervantes' leading ladies achieved a reversal of fortune. It also expressively illuminates the biographical predicaments of the two authors.

For the Florentine author, the theater had its aims and purposes, and he was deeply involved in discussions of its role within the intellectual community of the Orti Oricellari.<sup>2</sup> He was explicitly conscientious of his plays' spectators and considered theirs to be a relationship of mutual dependence "emphasizing his audience's power over him and his power over the audience."<sup>3</sup> In his plays, he was meticulous about delineating the social ills, hard choices, and dissembling that an individual had to face and embrace in negotiating life.<sup>4</sup> His texts were conceived as a warning against life's exigencies. He conceded that we could not control unforeseen events, expressed concisely in his term, *fortuna*, but he urged us to prepare well for them with prowess, *virtù*, because *fortuna* "demonstrates her power where virtue has not been put in order to resist her."<sup>5</sup>

"Acting" was also crucial for Cervantes. He had "struggle[d] against poverty and neglect" and had begun his literary career "out of desperation"<sup>6</sup> in addition to a genuine love of writing. He constructed *Don Quijote* as a theatrical "illusionistic experience that never abandon[ed] a critical relationship with reality."<sup>7</sup> For him, there was a strong correlation between the stage and the written text which betrayed "a profound preoccupation with the theater."<sup>8</sup> Cervantes used a theatrical approach to construct Dorotea. Her social vulnerability was a reflection of don Quijote's

precarious social standing. With *virtù*, he had not hesitated to arrogate to himself the grandiose title of "don" and, thus, to construct a new self<sup>9</sup> and status within a hostile social sphere. Likewise, Dorotea made herself the princess Micomicona to advance herself socially; her "theatrical performance" communicated a tale of survival in a rigid society that did not allow for public trespasses. Dorotea's representation of a princess was not the only other "performance" in Cervantes' text. *The Quijote* characters exhibited definite theatrical skills and performed for each other. In a Machiavellian sense, they appeared to be subjects they were not.<sup>10</sup>

Machiavelli and Cervantes wrote specific scenes for their ladies. Each displayed the sexual vulnerability of young women in society. Both stories dealt with the desecration of the institution of marriage and imminent rape by handsome young men (including murder in Machiavelli's case). In *La Mandragola*, Callimaco Guadagno, a Florentine, had fled to Paris to escape from war only to return because of his lust for the beautiful Lucrezia. For her part, Dorotea was pursued by the handsome and irreverent don Fernando, the second son of an illustrious landlord. To conceive a child, Lucrezia was convinced by members of her household and by a representative of the Church to drink from a *mandragola* root and lie in bed with a stranger; that is, to dishonor herself, her husband, and her position in society. Don Fernando entered Dorotea's bedroom by force with absolute resolve to possess her, uttering faked promises of marriage.<sup>11</sup> Her marriage of convenience to a wealthy young man who was of her same social station was thus thwarted because of her abrupt sexual initiation by don Fernando. The two women had the sacredness of their bedrooms violated by men in hot pursuit of their bodies. Lucrezia endured being lectured by Messer Nicia himself, her mother, and her priest about the benefits of drinking the *mandragola* and bedding a stranger who would be dead after intercourse. Yet in

both instances, social order was reimposed by the two young women who acted with strength and resilience.

Machiavelli and Cervantes shared the condition of lower birth. They were not born into wealth and were forced to struggle with life's vicissitudes, a fact that came across in their intellectual works. Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt asserted that "the writers we love did not spring up from nowhere and... their achievements must draw upon a whole life-world and... this life-world has undoubtedly left other traces of itself."<sup>12</sup> In the same way, Machiavelli's convictions sprang from his own political, professional and social experience and led to the rediscovery/creation of a *sui generis* political theory that he desired to offer the Medici. His life, then, "left other traces of itself" in his writings. Machiavelli, writing in exile from his family farm in San Casciano, acted like a don Quijote-in-waiting, defeated by life's adversities but still bravely hopeful in the midst of his tragic circumstances. He wrote of being a mediocre fisherman, playing games at the tavern with the locals as best he could. He declared that he had been defeated by Lady Fortuna's designs.<sup>13</sup> He was an Italian Alonso Quijana, immersed in his books, having conversations with fictional characters. He never abandoned a Quixotic ideal in which his intellectual valor would conquer the heart of the Medici. He was a self-confessed inept who could not do trade or commerce, but a humanist who knew how to theorize and build narrative discourses about historical actors, past and present. He exhibited a pre-Cervantesque sardonic way of inquiring about humanity: "I observe mankind: the variety of its tastes, the diversity of its fancies."<sup>14</sup> Because of his passion for the lives and actions of historical *cavallieri* he stated that men of antiquity were by his side and, in the evening, in spite of his previous political humiliations, he was invited to mingle with glorious men of the past, to exchange the food of knowledge imparted by those individuals. At that privileged banquet, Machiavelli reaffirmed his own worth: "I nourish myself on that food that *alone* is mine and for which I was born... And for four hours at a time I feel no boredom, I forget all my troubles, I do not dread poverty, and I am not terrified by death."<sup>15</sup>

Cervantes reproduced his own misfortunes in his masterpiece, leaving clues about his hardships everywhere in the text. In the book burning that took place in don Quijote's library, for instance, the priest and the barber not only defended Cervantes, they boasted about knowing the author: "What's this [book] ...?" *'Galatea, by Miguel de Cervantes.'* "That fellow Cervantes has been a good friend of mine for

years, and I know he's more conversant with adversity than with verse. His book's ingenious enough; it sets out to achieve something but doesn't bring anything to a conclusion."<sup>16</sup> He waited a long time to get final redemption and success as the author of *Don Quijote*. It was his last resort. Cervantes knew of life's tribulations and had to endure the overwhelming force of *sfortuna*. These included involvement in a shooting that resulted in a warrant for his arrest in Madrid – with the possibility of a ten-year exile. A gunshot injury also permanently maimed his right hand when he fought as a soldier for Spain. And a disastrous military enterprise made him a prisoner and a Christian slave in Algiers.

The Florentine thinker created oddball characters in *La Mandragola* to illustrate Florentine – and universal – social upheavals. He also had ulterior motives: "The world of imagination promised the best way for him to seek deliverance from his agony."<sup>17</sup> Like Lucrezia, he was in need of a *mandragola*, a magic potion that could get him back where he belonged. He knew of his self-worth, emphasizing that "nowhere does he stand in awe of any man who speaks his mother tongue."<sup>18</sup> However, he had encountered the perils of his social station; he was highly educated, but lacked wealth. He was aware that "he might be forced to bend the knee to one who wears a better cloak than he."<sup>19</sup> In *The Prince* (published in 1532), Machiavelli was obliged to humble himself to Lorenzo de' Medici, nephew of Leo X, urging the *podestà* to "turn your eyes from the summit of your height to these low places" (*P. Dedicatory Letter*). *The Prince* itself became the magic potion with which the Florentine secretary thought to stage a dramatic comeback into the city's politics; hence, in his texts he spoke loudly about the hard lessons he had been forced to learn. To succeed in politics – and in the game of life – he had observed that effective rulers had to remain alert to those moments of peril in which keeping one's word could be detrimental. For Machiavelli, acting like a fox or a lion – according to the moment – provided individuals with the right attributes to protect themselves in times of vulnerability; the fox would recognize the traps and the lion would not be deterred. "But it is necessary to know well how to color this nature, and to be a great pretender and dissembler; and men are so simple and so obedient to present necessities that he who deceives will always find someone who will let himself be deceived."<sup>20</sup>

Cervantes' family life was not easy. Not only did he endure an unhappy marriage but he also suffered the humiliation of his family's indecorous behavior.

The death of a man in a duel led to his family being investigated; no involvement was proven, but the inquiry revealed that his sister and his daughter had entertained male visitors and “received gifts from them.”<sup>21</sup> From personal tragedies like these, it has been said that “Cervantes could no longer cry. He had already done too much of it while excommunicated and when in prison; and when he endured the drama of his sister and his daughter Isabel.”<sup>22</sup> He turned around his *sfortuna* with the *virtù* of his writing. He created the immortal heroes Don Quijote and Sancho Panza, ready for the world in 1605. Leading up to this point, Cervantes had requested and had been denied a transfer to the Spanish colonies in 1580 and 1590. Like many of his contemporaries, he desired a new life and better economic perspectives than the abject ones surrounding his own nation. Given the economic conditions in Spain, any expectation of finding a well-respected position were virtually non-existent.<sup>23</sup> The multi-colored reinventions of the *Quijote* in the New World make clear that what Cervantes “did not accomplish (that is, go to America and triumph there), his books quickly accomplished, in particular one of them... [the] *Quijote*.”<sup>24</sup> Latin American authors were fascinated by Alonso Quijano – or Quijana or Quesada – who, having “drunk” his own *mandragola*, that is, excessive reading, became the shining knight don Quijote. He emblemized a literary tradition that included *Amadís de Gaula* and *Orlando Furioso*, a text “well known by Cervantes.”<sup>25</sup> The impeccable comportment of the knight – when not performing crazy deeds – followed the precepts of *sprezzatura*,<sup>26</sup> established in Renaissance courts and exemplified by *Il libro del Cortegiano* (1528), of Baldassare Castiglione, which the Spanish author had read.<sup>27</sup> Cervantes held out hope for himself and, like Machiavelli, kept a smile – a bitter one – that was discernable in his writings even when he was accepted by Spain’s intellectual and social order.

Machiavelli’s works in Spain were put on the *Índice*, thus banned, by the Spanish Inquisition, but they had a powerful protector, Charles V.<sup>28</sup> Like many of his compatriots, Cervantes did not need a translation of Machiavelli in Spanish, because he could read him in the original.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately for the inquisitors, Machiavelli’s works circulated widely partly because of *licencias* that would allow Spaniards to navigate the perilous waters of the Inquisition to still gain access to forbidden texts.<sup>30</sup> In Spain and other parts of Europe, Machiavelli’s thought permeated the social and political arenas extensively. This created a delicate situation in which many thinkers depicted themselves

as anti-Machiavellian even as their own writings favorably embraced Machiavellian traits and ideas.<sup>31</sup> Mimicking Machiavelli’s own fascination with men of antiquity – and Don Quijote’s – privileged Spanish intellectuals maintained copies of Machiavelli’s texts in their vast libraries, finding in his writings tools for survival at court. “As much as the Inquisition wanted to persecute the work of Machiavelli, it did it much later than the Inquisition in Rome and not with much success... Even though forbidden by the Inquisition, Machiavelli was well known to ecclesiastics, politicians, intellectuals, military people and noblemen.”<sup>32</sup> In Cervantes’ text, for instance, Don Quijote alluded directly to Machiavellian precepts in his conversation with his niece. He explained to the baffled young lady the various ways of acquiring a principedom and the role of *fortuna* in successfully holding a realm.<sup>33</sup> Cervantes, then, incorporated into the actions of his very unfortunate princess Dorotea/Micomicona, lessons found in the Florentine thinker’s political treatises.

Machiavelli stated that a ruler should fight with laws – proper to humans – and force – proper to beasts. For him laws were never enough and the toughness of the beast, incarnated by the fox and the lion, were essential for a successful outcome.<sup>34</sup> For the *segretario*, the operative word was “acting” according to the circumstances. Driven by her strong instinct for survival, Dorotea knew that she could not win don Fernando back through the law. She turned herself into a fox and a lion to save herself. She aided the canon and the barber with their quest to eliminate the illustrious don Quijote and put in place the less interesting Alonso Quijano; but the comedy did not work out for the illustrious knight. How could it have succeeded? Don Quijote would not have allowed it. However, it worked out for Dorotea. She was not interested in going back to being plain Dorotea. She benefitted tremendously from her act of becoming a young princess and she acted the role of her life as the exquisite Micomicona. Sancho looked up to her and was in awe of how lucky he and his master were. In other words, Dorotea subverted the social hierarchy, vanquishing rigid societal rules to change her life from that of a *contadina* to an aristocrat. Alone, shamed to confront her parents with the precious loss of her virginity, she encountered don Quijote and seized an *occasione* to fight herself back into society.<sup>35</sup> Unlike other female characters of part one of *Don Quijote*, Cervantes infused the young woman with remarkable resilience, giving her strong acting instincts to dramatize a life only equivalent to that of Alonso Quijano’s don Quijote himself. In narrating her story, Dorotea found relief



for her afflictions and paved a secure way to a final marriage to don Fernando. She did this because she was determined to end her wandering and isolation.

Dorotea, the beautiful *contadina*, exercised the *prudenza* of the fox when she decided to prostrate herself at don Fernando's feet to persuade him of her worth. What might have been conceived as utterly humiliating was, instead, a strong act of will on the part of the young woman. She "threw [herself] into the road to recover what [she] considered hers: honor, love, hacienda, matrimony."<sup>36</sup> Dorotea, realizing that she could not stop don Fernando's sexual assault, turned her forced sexual initiation into a less violent encounter. In the very precise moment in which *fortuna* decided her future, Dorotea opted to give herself to don Fernando: "if I scorn and reject him, I can see he's in such a state that he'll ignore his obligations and use violence, and I'll be dishonoured and left without the excuses that anyone who doesn't know how innocently I have come to this pass would otherwise have made for me. Because what arguments will be powerful enough to persuade my parents and others that this gentleman entered my room without my consent?"<sup>37</sup> Machiavelli likened the power of *fortuna* to violent rivers: "everybody yields to their impetus without being able to hinder them in any regard."<sup>38</sup> At her most vulnerable, Dorotea was able to quickly decide what would be the least worse thing that could happen to her. She knew that changing don Fernando's mind was impossible and accepted the disastrous tide of her *fortuna* until she could build dykes "to contain her."<sup>39</sup>

Lucrezia had sacrificed her youth and beauty to marry an old man. She led a rather pleasant life, but Machiavelli specifically positioned her in an uncomfortable social status. Even though he adhered to the tenets established by Roman comedians, the Florentine dramatist made use of his intellectual freedom to convey social realities for a woman of Lucrezia's status.<sup>40</sup> Her position was unstable not only because she had not procured an heir. Her husband's death would have left her childless; and certainly she would have been disinherited by his family.<sup>41</sup> Hence, her mother begged her to heed *frate* Timoteo's advice: "Let yourself be persuaded, my daughter. Don't you see that a woman who has no children has no home? Her husband dies, she's left like a beast, abandoned by everyone."<sup>42</sup> Lucrezia's greatest flaw was her belief system. Ligurio made sure to instruct Callimaco that the sexual tryst between his social superior and Lucrezia had the potential to be of long duration because rejecting Callimaco would signal social ruin for her:

You must gain her for yourself tonight, and, before you leave, make yourself known to her, uncover the trick to her, show her the love you bear for her, tell her of the good you wish her; and how without scandal she can be your friend, and with great scandal, your enemy. It's impossible that she won't agree with you, and that she'll want this night to be the only one.<sup>43</sup>

Loss of honor would have sealed the deal for Callimaco but, because of Lucrezia's acquiescence to betray her husband, blackmail "was a road not taken".<sup>44</sup> Just by virtue of being herself, Lucrezia could not possibly continue her domestic harmony. Had it not been Callimaco, it would have been somebody else.<sup>45</sup> Worst of all, Messer Nicia was willing to go to any length to assure his wife's social disgrace.

Ligurio, a social parasite who orchestrated the "play" that transformed Lucrezia, described the ineptitude of Messer Nicia and the great capabilities of his wife: "I don't believe there's a stupider man in the world than this fellow, yet how fortune has favored him! He's rich, he has a beautiful wife, wise, well-mannered, and fit to govern a kingdom".<sup>46</sup> Machiavelli's lady, once she found herself at the mercy of the Catholic Church, of her husband's stupidity, her mother's social ambitions, and of her passionate lover's desire for her body, abandoned the margins and took center stage. Lucrezia, it has been said, "will[ed] necessity in the guise of religion," and controverted morality itself because she acted willingly.<sup>47</sup> She took the *opportunità* that life had given her to begin anew and got back at the person who had most injured her sense of morality, her husband. Her experience in trying to talk reason into the old man, her mother, and the church made her realize that she had to embrace the *prudenza* of appearing to be good because she had ceased "being" the dutiful wife:

Since your astuteness, my husband's stupidity, my mother's simplicity, and my confessor's wickedness have led me to do what I never would have done by myself, I'm determined to judge that it comes from a heavenly disposition which has so willed; and I don't have it in me to reject what Heaven wills me to accept. Therefore, I take you for lord, master, and guide.<sup>48</sup>

Because of the *sfortuna* of losing her virginity, Dorotea became a woman with a mission; she sought to restore her social dignity and pursued don

Fernando so that he would honor his “marriage” to her. Hers was an extremely difficult task because Cardenio, working for Duke Ricardo – father of don Fernando – had stated that the young man as a *segundón* had led a life of idleness. He had never intended to comply with his promises of marriage to Dorotea. After having sex with her, with the pretext that he needed to leave to come to his senses about his love for Dorotea, don Fernando had vanished from her sight. Believing don Fernando’s words, Cardenio, ever the loyal servant, thought that he had helped in preventing an imminent social scandal for the Duke’s family.<sup>49</sup>

Dorotea’s only woeful weapon against don Fernando was social shame. Hence, conducting herself with the ferociousness of the lion, she convinced her audience and don Fernando himself that he would lose his own honor if he did not repair hers. With the guile of the fox, she made sure her “spectators” would decide that don Fernando was at fault:

I am the woman who, enclosed within the bounds of virtue, lived a contented life until she responded to the insistent calls of what seemed like true love, opened the doors of her chaste seclusion and handed you the keys of her freedom, a gift you thought very little of, as is made clear by my being reduced to the circumstances in which you find me, and by your being in the situation in which I find you. Yet in spite of all that I shouldn’t wish you to imagine that I have come here driven by my dishonor: it is only the deep sorrow of being forgotten by you that has brought me. You wanted me to be yours and you were so successful that, even if you now want me to stop being yours, you can’t stop being mine.<sup>50</sup>

Dorotea became an alter ego of Don Quijote as she created herself as the Princess Micomicona to fix her social predicament. Don Quijote constructed an identity to cope with an undesirable reality. Dorotea did exactly the same. She enacted Machiavelli’s recommendation that a ruler did not necessarily have to “be” the person sought out by subjects, but should “appear” to be that person. She was a woman on a mission. Dorotea, as the ruler of a realm, convinced others and herself that the elusive don Fernando had to be conquered. She became a monarch who succeeded in fighting Fernando/Pandafileando de la Fosca Vista’s perfidy against her realm. She was forced to wander inhospitable paths to search for don Fernando to

integrate herself back into society as a married, honorable woman who would maintain the patriarchal order. The young *contadina* was reconciled with the fact that she would have to fight and humble herself to the very same man who made her so unhappy – as Machiavelli had had to humble himself to the Medici. Her objective was to obtain the final prize of *his* hand. The prudent political strategies of the strong young lady saved her reputation. The odds of her being restored to society were not good. Dorotea was a beautiful and rich woman, but she lacked nobility. She dressed as a man to wander the roads in search of don Fernando, exemplifying the Machiavellian principle that successful rulers adjust to the unpredictability of the times and of life itself.<sup>51</sup> Gaining the hand of the elusive don Fernando was for Dorotea an act of *virtù*.

Lucrezia’s final success underscores Machiavelli’s encouragement to separate private self from public self for survival. He might have held strong opinions about the Medici regime, attempting to trivialize the power of the *signori* in his texts, but he knew that his only chance to re-emerge in society was to find a narrow space for himself within the very same political factions that had condemned him. He finally secured a commission in the service of the elusive Medici, to compile a political history of Florence. Writing about the powerful Florentine family presented various obstacles because the Medici were “simultaneously the cause of his downfall and his imagined rescuers, the obstacle to his continued involvement in politics and yet central players in his recurring dreams of political reform and renewal.”<sup>52</sup> He navigated the treacherous waters of dissembling for the final good of serving again in the Florentine government. His own political turmoil was performed by Lucrezia in *Mandragola*. Once she found herself, by no fault of her own, in the predicament of bedding a stranger, there was no turning back to her old self. She quickly came to terms with the fact that her sexual encounter with Callimaco signaled an abrupt end to her “satisfactory lifestyle [and] contentment with the status quo.”<sup>53</sup> Her life had been one of pleasant harmony, if not marital felicity. Once Callimaco entered her life, she became an unflagging negotiator, advocating to her “new” husband the need for dissimulation. She had to act with *prudenza* “to seize control not of the old order, which... [was] irretrievably lost, but of the new order.”<sup>54</sup> Lucrezia, like a gifted actress, learned to separate thought from action, encouraged by the belief that she could continue acting the part of the dutiful wife. She had previously been afraid that following the actions advised by her husband could

terminate her life.<sup>55</sup> Her words to her husband after her sexual initiation with Callimaco exemplified a woman in charge of her destiny: "I hold [Callimaco] very dear, and want him to be our close friend."<sup>56</sup> She had learned to use the force of the lion to impose her new rules. "[S]he is the character that emerges as the victor."<sup>57</sup>

Cervantes described Dorotea in overtly dramatic tones. Highlighting the spectacle of her despair and, at the same time, of her decision to act in a virile manner, she was presented as a cross-dresser, wearing man's clothing: "Oh God, is it possible that I've at last found a place that can serve as a hidden tomb for the heavy burden of this body of mine, which I so unwillingly bear? Yes... if the solitude promised by these sierras doesn't deceive me... since they'll give me the opportunity to bewail my fate and tell heaven of my misery."<sup>58</sup> She not only spoke to heaven but to Cardenio and his group, who were mesmerized by the beautiful young "male". She spoke of "solitude" but she desired an audience to tell of the false promises of marriage of don Fernando. Cervantes took special care in detailing Dorotea's abandonment, highlighting his personal obsession with marriage, its detriments and benefits. Being part of an ill-fated marriage himself, he was especially anxious about the subject of match making.<sup>59</sup> Dorotea was of marriageable age but her chances of securing a successful marriage were erased at the precise moment when don Fernando set his eyes on her. The spoiled nobleman took advantage of his social station and promised a marriage that he knew he could ignore. Clandestine marriages were prohibited by the Council of Trent during Cervantes time, but they were still being conducted.<sup>60</sup> Even though he used the Virgin as his witness, Don Fernando never intended to honor his promise of marriage to the beautiful *contadina*.<sup>61</sup> Dorotea, cross-gendered her way into the masculine realm to find protection from society; while in the Sierra Morena she waited for the *opportunità* to dress the part of a princess and attain her fairy-tale marriage. While she was wearing men's clothing, she kept the wardrobe of a noblewoman in her sack: "Dorothea replied that she could play the damsel in distress better than the barber, and, what was more, she had with her some clothes for making her performance totally convincing."<sup>62</sup>

Lucrezia had entered her marriage aware of the limitations of Messer Nicia. In fact, she became his wife because of material needs. "For what other reason would a beautiful young woman marry an unintelligent aged man but for material security?"<sup>63</sup> She did not start with an ideal situation in life, but she was determined

to be a dutiful wife. She knew from the start of the marriage that her husband's foolishness would at some point become a predicament for her. She confided to her mother: "I've always feared that Messer Nicia's longing to have children would make us commit some error and, because of this, whenever he's spoken to me about something, I've been on guard and suspicious of it."<sup>64</sup> Her suspicions about her husband through the agency of Callimaco, Ligurio and the *frate* had come to fruition. Messer Nicia had positioned her in a very vulnerable social position. She fought her husband's ridiculous proposition with a staunch resolve to remain moral: "to have to submit my body to this disgrace, to be the cause that a man might die for disgracing me... I couldn't believe that such a course would be allowed to me."<sup>65</sup> Since she could not fight with the laws, Lucrezia prepared for the worst with the force of the lion and the astuteness of the fox. She had to learn that chastity would not maintain her marriage; it had to be replaced with adultery.<sup>66</sup> The beautiful Florentine lady did not act like her namesake the Roman Lucretia; instead, she became a "modern Lucrezia."<sup>67</sup>

Machiavelli was a staunch patriot who observed in frustration how his beloved Florence lost its power. His precious city became hapless, at the mercy of France and Spain, two powerful nations that inflicted excruciating pain on the Italians, making him describe Italy as "leaderless, lawless, crushed, despoiled, torn, overrun."<sup>68</sup> In his political treatises, mostly drafted during his years of social isolation at his family farm, he illustrated a recommended political comportment that can be read in Lucrezia's final response to chaos. Following this, Lucrezia abandoned a "reputation of extreme virtue and piety,"<sup>69</sup> for one of Machiavellian *virtù*.<sup>70</sup> Callimaco sought her but, through him, she saw the *opportunità* to secure her place in Florentine society. With a young stud by her side, the odds were in her favor to produce an heir for Messer Nicia. She heeded Fra Timoteo's advice about the benefits of sex with a stranger: "where there is a certain good and an uncertain evil, one should never leave that good for fear of that evil."<sup>71</sup> Without a *primogenito*, there was no social place for a woman in Florence. For Fra Timoteo, a true sin would have been to go against her husband's wishes: "As to the act, that it might be a sin, this is a fable, because the will is what sins, not the body... Besides this, the end has to be looked to in all things; your end is to... make your husband happy."<sup>72</sup> The beautiful Lucrezia fought against the facetious arguments of a corrupted society to remain virtuous. With *prudenza*, she realized that she did not need to

acquiesce; she found that she could have it all, a lover, a marriage and a secure place in the social order.

Dorotea accommodated her identity to better cope with her social mishaps, humiliating herself to obtain good results. She exchanged the solitude of the Sierra Morena (ostracized from society) for fulfillment as the wife of a rich landowner's son. Don Fernando was horrified at the thought of marrying a plebeian. Dorotea prostrated herself at his feet: "if you believe that you'll destroy your blood if you mix it with mine, bear in mind that there are few, if any, noble families in the world who haven't travelled down this road."<sup>73</sup> Dorotea possessed the strength that Don Fernando lacked. In Machiavellian terms she did not display "lack of courage in the face of fickle fortune."<sup>74</sup> She was in fact so firm that the proud don Fernando ultimately admitted defeat: "You've won, lovely Dorotea, you've won: nobody could have the heart to deny such an assemblage of truths."<sup>75</sup> Dorotea made good use of *prudenza* in her implausible journey to regain her honor. She was bitter about don Fernando, calling him "heir to I don't know what, unless it's the treachery of Vellido and the deceit of Ganelon,"<sup>76</sup> but she understood that she needed the cunning of the fox to handle the young aristocrat, the person who had offended her the most. Once Don Fernando trapped her in her own chamber, Dorotea knew she was at his mercy; nonetheless, she quickly realized that fighting for her honor would be to her and her family's detriment. Nobody would believe her word against that of a nobleman:

If, sir, as I am in your grip, I were in that of some fierce lion, and I could gain my freedom by doing or saying something to the prejudice of my chastity, it would be as possible for me to say it or to do it as it is for that which has been to cease to have been. For if you hold my body in your arms, I keep my soul secure in the purity of my intentions, which are very different from yours, as you will soon realize if you try to carry them into effect by force.<sup>77</sup>

She sought a commitment from don Fernando, knowing, of course, that it would not matter, but a commitment of marriage put her in a much better position than in the one she found herself. Dorotea won the war of love against the young nobleman because "if fortune had allowed her to retain one good quality it was her determination to face up to any disaster that could befall her."<sup>78</sup>

For Machiavelli, an individual had to express his subjectivity through social flexibility and steadfast control over reversals of fortune. The two young men, Callimaco and don Fernando, were driven by passion whereas their lovely ladies, by contrast, were driven by a strong determination to maintain the state of marriage to remain good members of society. For Machiavelli, a successful political strategist possessed a dual persona, a public one and an intimate one – a hidden one – that would express real feelings only among the most trusted *ministri*.<sup>79</sup> "Everyone sees how you appear, few touch what you are; and these few dare not oppose the opinion of many."<sup>80</sup> Lucrezia and Dorotea reacted to hostile circumstances in such impeccable ways that they managed to reverse socially damning situations into successful and advantageous ones. The two beautiful young women incorporated in their resolutions the hard choices that a wise individual is forced to make to avoid the horror of social rejection. In confronting what *fortuna* had prepared for them, they embraced failure and turned it into success. Both of them established new rules of order in their respective societies. Lucrezia assured herself a vigorous young lover and, thus, the certainty of a child that would secure her position in society even further. Dorotea executed the unattainable feat of marrying up, as her peasant stock "soiled" the noble stock of her new husband.

Machiavelli's response to his own political and social misfortunes correlates with Lucrezia's hard choices. He used his writings as a *bella vendetta* to get back at his critics and opponents, the Messer Nicias of Florence. He felt that his honor had been destroyed and sought revenge through laughter and dissembling. In a similar light, Cervantes channeled his own predicaments by the agency of Dorotea's travails. Through the *Quijote* characters, we relive what he had personally endured: family and social crises and, most important for him, lack of recognition by his peers as a worthy author. As readers of his *Don Quijote*, "we find a somber side to the novel, a dark tale hidden between the light-hearted lines."<sup>81</sup> With Dorotea, we find answers and Cervantes' final vindication. The *contadina* first appeared to us as a young man; she quickly discarded that attire and put on regal clothing. However, she continued to act in a masculine manner and "[broke] with socially acceptable female conduct"<sup>82</sup> to regain what she had lost. She was extremely successful because, using the fox and the lion, "she constantly create[d] and recreate[d] her own persona"<sup>83</sup> and managed to change her socially adverse circumstances to gain a well-deserved place in Spanish society.

## NOTES

1. See Sergio Bertelli, "When did Machiavelli Write *Mandragola*?" *Renaissance Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (1971): 317-326, EbscoHost. Available: <http://search.epnet.com> (accessed March 29, 2011). The critic addresses some discrepancies among critics about the date of composition of *La Mandragola*. For instance, Bertelli asserts that for Ridolfi, the famous biographer of Machiavelli, "the comedy must have been written between January and February 1518, for the marriage of Lorenzo de' Medici the younger," 317. For Bertelli, however, Machiavelli's theatrical master piece was written much earlier than 1518. He associates the early writing of the lost work *Le Maschere*, in which Machiavelli was outspoken against Florentine political figures, with a supposedly early writing of *La Mandragola*: "Machiavelli was interested in the theatre in an early period of his life; an interest which grew from Machiavelli's careful copy of Terentius," 324.
2. Jane Tylus, "Theater and Its Social Uses: Machiavelli's *Mandragola* and the Spectacle of Infamy," *Renaissance Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (2000): 656-686, EbscoHost. Available: <http://search.epnet.com> (accessed March 29, 2011), 660.
3. Angus Fletcher, "The Comic Ethos of *Il Principe*," *Contemporary Drama* 43, no. 3 (2009): 293-315, EbscoHost. Available: <http://search.epnet.com> (accessed March 29, 2011), 306.
4. See Peter Brand, "Machiavelli and Florence," in *A History of Italian Theatre*, ed. Joseph Farrell and Paolo Puppa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 54. Machiavelli believed that comedy was meant to cause hilarity. For this reason, wit and local language were of the essence for him.
5. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. with and intro. Harvey C. Mansfield. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 25-98.
6. Manuel Durán, *Cervantes* (New York: Twayne, 1974), 25.
7. Jesús G. Maestro, "Cervantes y el teatro del *Quijote*," *Hispania* 88, no. 1 (2005): 41-52. EbscoHost. Available: <http://search.epnet.com> (accessed October 6, 2010), 42. Translation mine. All translations from Spanish to English are mine, unless otherwise specified.
8. José María Díez Borque, "Cervantes y la vida teatral del Siglo de Oro" in *Cervantes y el mundo del teatro*, ed. Héctor Brioso Santos (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 2007), 13.
9. Carroll B. Johnson, *Cervantes and the Material World* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 15.
10. Alonso Quijano was anxious to escape his precarious social circumstances and constructed an identity that was more in harmony with a desired membership in the aristocracy; he became a caballero, an individual outside of his times. See Francisco Ayala, *Experiencia e invención: Ensayos sobre el escritor y su mundo* (Madrid: Taurus, 1960). His new persona, according to Ayala, was in stark contrast with "his surrounding reality, a vulgar reality, made out of humble circumstances... the house, the village, his housekeeper, his niece, the priest, the barber," 72.
11. Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra, *Don Quijote de la mancha*, trans. John Rutherford. Intro. Roberto González Echevarría (New York: Penguin, 2000). Dorotea emphasized to Cardenio and don Quijote that don Fernando made her fall from grace because without previous notice he presented himself in her virginal chamber, aided by the monetary betrayal of Dorotea's maid. Realizing that she was in grave danger and that she would lose her virtue no matter what she said to don Fernando, she made quick decisions: "I found him standing there before me, and the sight of him so shocked me that I lost my sight and my power of speech. So I couldn't shout out, and anyway I don't believe he'd have let me because he hurried over to me, took me in his arms (as I've said, I was so shocked I had no strength with which to defend myself) and began to say such things to me – I just don't know how it's possible for duplicity to possess such skill in constructing lies that they seem like evident truths," 1.28:253.
12. Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 12-13.
13. James B. Atkinson and David Sices, trans. and ed. *Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 264.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Cervantes, *DQ*.1.6:58.
17. Charles Tarlton, "Machiavelli's Burden: *The Prince* as Literary Text" in *Seeking Real Truths: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Machiavelli*, eds. Patricia Vilches and Gerald Seaman (Leiden & Boston, 2007), 44.
18. Niccolò Machiavelli, *La Mandragola* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1981), prologue.
19. Ibid.
20. Machiavelli, *P*.18:70.
21. Manuel Durán, *Cervantes* (New York: Twayne, 1974), 27.
22. Ángel Oruesagasti Gallástegui, *Cervantes en su tiempo, en su patria y en su obra universal* (México D.F.: Costa-Amic Editor, 1961), xxi.
23. Diana de Armas Wilson, "Cervantes and the New World" in *The Cambridge Companion to Cervantes*, ed. Anthony J. Cascardi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 207.
24. Emilio Carilla, *Cervantes y América* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de la Universidad, 1951), 14.
25. Manuel Durán, *La ambigüedad en el Quijote* (Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1960), 46.
26. Juan Boscán, the epitome of a courtier, translated Castiglione's *Cortegiano* in 1534, only six years after the original was published.
27. Durán, *Cervantes*, 124.
28. Helena Puigdomènech Forcada, "Maquiavelo y maquiavelismo en España: Siglo XVI y XVII" in *Maquiavelo y España: Maquiavelismo y antimachiavelismo en la cultura española de los siglos XVI y XVII*, eds. Juan Manuel Forte y Pablo López Álvarez (Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 2008), 42.
29. Helena Puigdomènech Forcada, *Maquiavelo en España: Presencia de sus obras en los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1988), 85. Puigdomènech explains that the scarcity of Spanish translations or Spanish editions of Machiavelli's works "does not imply that our author was an unknown in Spain... [This] is due to one reason only: They were unnecessary. Those who were interested in his work, and there must have been many, could read him in his original language, as it is suggested by the great number of Italian works that are found in the Spanish

libraries of the time... knowing Tuscan Italian was considered to be in good taste, a fashion from which nobody who pretended to be an intellectual could escape. We only need to remember a passage from the *Quijote* (13) in which the barber boasts to have a book by Ariosto in Italian... [he] assures us that for village people it was not sufficient to dress like a gentleman, one felt pressured to speak a bit of French and proclaim Petrarch (14)," 85-86. In *DQ*, the characters deliberate about the intricacies of translations: "[they leave] behind much of what was best in [an original text], which is what happens to all those who try to translate poetry: however much care they take and skill they display, they can never recreate it in the full perfection of its original birth," 1.6:54.

30. Ibid., 62. There was a conflict of interest between Rome and the Spanish Inquisition about granting the *licencias* for forbidden books. This conflict benefitted the readers because Rome granted the "licencias" more quickly than Spain.

31. J.A. Maravall "Maquiavelo y maquiavelismo en España," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 165 (1969): 183-218, 184.

32. Puigdomènech Forcada, "Maquiavelo y maquiavelismo," 49.

33. Don Quijote says: "Of the first kind [of princedom], those who had humble beginnings and rose to the greatness that they preserve to this day, let the Ottoman house serve as an example, for, springing from a humble, lowly herdsman, it has reached the heights where we contemplate it now... Of those who began in splendor and tapered away there are thousands of examples; because all the Pharaohs and Ptolemies of Egypt," Cervantes, *DQ* 2.6:523.

34. Machiavelli, *P* 18:69.

35. Marcela, another important woman of *The Quijote*, appeared toward the beginning of the work. She has traditionally been considered a proto-feminist, an individual who refused to abide by the rules established by men. Nonetheless, she could not live among others in society, but remained in the peace of the forest.

36. Lidia Falcon, "Amor, sexo y aventura en las mujeres del *Quijote*," *Vindicación Feminista* (Madrid: Editorial Hacer, 1997), 110.

37. Cervantes, *DQ* 1.28:255.

38. Machiavelli, *P* 25:98

39. Ibid., *P* 25:99.

40. Anthony Ellis, *Old Age, Masculinity, and Early Modern Drama: Comic Elders on the Italian and Shakespearean Stage* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 44.

41. Joseph A. Barber, "The Irony of Lucrezia: Machiavelli's 'Donna di virtù,'" *Studies in Philology* 82, no. 4 (1985), pp. 450-459, EbscoHost. Available: <http://search.epnet.com> (accessed September 07, 2007), 457. Also, see Leon Battista Alberti, *The Albertis of Florence: Leon Battista Alberti's Della Famiglia*, trans., intro. and notes Guido A. Guarino (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1971). In his *Della famiglia*, Alberti discussed how instrumental family life was: "no relationship can be more sacred than that of marriage... Children are born, and it would take too long to describe how they form a common and firm bond to give two souls identity," 105.

42. Machiavelli, *M* 3,11:36.

43. Ibid., 4,2:42.

44. Tylus, "Theater and Its Social Uses," 658.

45. Before Callimaco's pursuit of Lucrezia, she had already encountered the evils of society. Messer Nicia, relating to Ligurio how difficult it was to convince her of doing anything highlighted that Lucrezia was in peril even in church: "She used to be the

sweetest person in the world, and the most easy-going, but when one of her neighbors said that, if she vowed to hear the first mass at the Servi for forty mornings, she'd become pregnant, she vowed it and went for perhaps twenty mornings. Well, wouldn't you know, one of those big *frati* began to hang around her so she didn't want to return there any more. It's really bad, though, that those who should be giving us good examples are like this," Machiavelli, *M* 3,2:28-29.

46. Ibid., 1,3:17.

47. Harvey C. Mansfield, "The Cuckold in Machiavelli's *Mandragola*," in *The Comedy and Tragedy of Machiavelli: Essays on the Literary Works*, ed. and intro. Vickie B. Sullivan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 26.

48. Machiavelli, *M* 5,6:52.

49. Cardenio declared that he was at the mercy of the capricious don Fernando: "I supported his ideas and encouraged his plan, advising him to carry it out as soon as possible, because absence was bound to have its effect, in spite of the strongest feelings. By the time he told me all this he had already, as later became apparent, enjoyed the girl's favours as her husband, and looking for an opportunity to reveal all without having to pay the consequences, fearful as he was of what the Duke his father would do when he found out about his folly... What I'm trying to say is that as soon as Don Fernando had his way with the farmer's daughter his desires abated and his ardour cooled, and, if at first he'd pretended to want to leave so as to cure his desires, now he really did want to leave so as not to put them into effect," Cervantes, *DQ* 1.24:200.

50. Ibid., 1.36:341.

51. Machiavelli, *P* 25, 99.

52. John Najemy, "Machiavelli and the Medici: The Lessons of Florentine History," *Renaissance Quarterly* 35, no 4 (1982): 551-576. EbscoHost. Available: <http://search.epnet.com> (accessed April 26, 2011), 553-54.

53. Barber, "Donna di virtù," 456.

54. Ibid., 455.

55. Machiavelli, *M* 3,11:36.

56. Ibid., 5,6:54

57. Barber, "Donna di virtù," 457.

58. Cervantes, *DQ*, 1.28:247.

59. Eric J. Kartchner, *Unhappily Ever After: Deceptive Idealism in Cervantes's Marriage Tales* (Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta, 2005), 131.

60. Anne J. Cruz, "Dorotea's Revenge: Sex and Speech Acts in *Don Quijote*, Part 1," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 82, no 5 (2005): 615-632. EbscoHost. Available: <http://search.epnet.com> (accessed April 26, 2011), 620.

61. Dorotea knew that don Fernando would not stop until he had her; she still had the will to demand a marriage pledge. The aristocrat responded passionately and speedily, fully knowing that he would not honor his marriage to Dorotea: "What happens next in my story is that Don Fernando picked up a holy image that I had in my room and made it the witness of our wedding. With persuasive words and extraordinary vows he gave me his word of marriage even though, before he finished speaking, I told him to think what he was doing and consider how angry his father would be when he discovered that he was married to a peasant girl, one of his tenants... I told him that if he wished to do me a kindness, because of his love for me, he should allow my life to run a course appropriate to my rank, because such uneven matches



- never retain for long the happiness of their first days,” Cervantes, *DQ*, 1.27:254-55.
62. Ibid., 1.29:262.
63. Heather Hadar Wright, “Lucrezia in *Mandragola*: Machiavelli’s New Prince,” *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 36, no 2 (2009): 145-164, 153.
64. Machiavelli, *M* 3, 10:34.
65. Ibid., 3, 10:35.
66. Arlene W. Saxonhouse, *Women in the History of Political Thought: Ancient Greece to Machiavelli* (New York: Praeger, 1985), 168.
67. Ibid., 169
68. Machiavelli, *P*, 26:134.
69. Wright, “Lucrezia in *Mandragola*,” 147.
70. Barber, “Donna di virtù,” 450.
71. Machiavelli, *M* 3, 11:35.
72. Ibid., 3, 11:36.
73. Cervantes, *DQ*, 1.36:342.
74. Wright, “Lucrezia in *Mandragola*,” 148.
75. Cervantes, *DQ*, 1.36:342.
76. Ibid., 1.28:250.
77. Ibid., 1.28:253
78. Ibid., 1.28:254.
79. The *prudenza* of a ruler is judged by his choice of advisors. “If they are capable and faithful, he can always be reputed wise because he has known how to recognize them as faithful,” Machiavelli, *P*, 22:92.
80. Ibid., 18:71
81. Manuel Durán and Fay R. Rogg, *Fighting Windmills: Encounters with Don Quixote* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 4.
82. Cruz, “Dorotea’s Revenge,” 617.
83. Ibid.

# Inferno...and Beyond



Susan Warde

Dante'd lost his way. He stood,  
Afraid of leopard, she-wolf, lion,  
Besieged by doubt in a darkened wood.

He found the situation tryin'.  
But Virgil's here to help him! Oh,  
He'll aid his literary scion!

The Latin poet, come from Limbo,  
Agreed to guide til he'd retire  
And, later on, there'd be some bimbo

Who'd take D. on to regions higher  
With Lasting Light at the very center.  
But first he'll view sights grim and dire.

He sallies forth and with his mentor  
Above the gates of Hell sees writ  
"Abandon hope all ye who enter."

Then Dante has a fainting fit.  
Awake again he meets a lady,  
Francesca, who, we must admit,

Was too well read in a way D.  
Thinks a pity. She claimed 'twas love  
and not her fault. A rather shady

Deal it was. The husband, who to free her  
from a lover, offed, in a plot complex,  
the two of them: no Heaven above

For him! But was it really love, or sex?  
In any case, they felt the need,  
Whom now the trials of Hell do vex.

Then down and down the two proceed,  
The Florentine and the Latin poet,  
Finding souls whose lust or greed

Has cast the sinners here below. It  
Seems there's mud and fire and ice  
That they now reap if they did sow it.

The bowels of Hell aren't half as nice  
For those whose faults have brought them here  
As it is for the folks in Paradise.

Showers of flame the sinners sear.  
There're lakes of blood and boiling pitch  
And devils prodding from the rear.

There're people here who once were rich.  
There're popes and clerics, princes, kings.  
And all have ended in the ditch.

A buzzing horde of insects stings  
Some wretches. Others wounds do show  
As D. explores Inferno's rings.

Each person tells his tale of woe.  
Those, who on earth were crowned with glory,  
Schism, fraud, and theft brought low

Ugolino tells this story:  
Incarceration in the tower.  
Be forewarned: this tale is gory.

He grew more famished by the hour.  
He watched his offspring, every one,  
'Til hunger more than grief had power.

And when they died, he seized each son.  
I think it's true—at least it's said,  
He fed on them. The deed was done.

Now in Hell he gnaws the head  
Of his arch foe who there in Pisa  
Locked him up and wished him dead.

The Italian poets now then seize a  
Chance to see the netherworld  
Where Satan manages to freeze the

Very depths with wings unfurled  
And Judas in his mouth, I fear,  
That one who to this place was hurled.

Well, that's enough. The end is near  
And now their goal is Purgatory.  
We will have to leave them here  
Since purging is another story.

But wait a bit. There's still some more!  
A tortured place—an ACM,  
That e'en our friends did not explore.

There are some folks we would condemn  
To deepest Hell where they'll reside  
Forever. It's too good for them!

Janet took it all in stride,  
But lasting punishment is best  
For those who Janet's patience tried:

Students who—I do not jest—  
From hotel windows hair did throw,  
Or, faking illness, skipped a test.

Others simply did not go  
To join the group and board the train:  
Send them to torments far below

For causing Janet so much pain.  
And don't forget the budget cutters,  
Who thought by trimming costs to gain

A place on high. But one now mutters,  
"How wrong I was! Indeed, mistaken"  
From down among Inferno's gutters.

And contract breakers, now forsaken  
By all and sundry here on earth,  
From darkest night will ne'er awaken.

Alack, alas, there is no dearth  
Of sins and sinners down in hell.  
But Janet! All applaud her worth,

And all of us do wish her well  
As now she leaves these trials behind.  
We hope she'll finally sit a spell  
And Heaven in retirement find.



## Afterword

### Janet Smith's Humanism



Diane Mockridge

As we end this volume in honor of Janet, it is appropriate to draw some larger connections between the woman we all know and love and the time period in Western history that she loves. In this personal essay, I will not focus on the art of the Italian Renaissance. Instead, I will show how the core values on which Renaissance humanism is based are embedded in Janet's beliefs and exemplified in the life she has lived. In fact, when I teach my course on the intellectual history of the Italian Renaissance and try to think of a modern example of a humanist, it is Janet who comes to mind first.

As an undergraduate at Radcliffe, Janet was exposed to the liberal arts and found her calling. As we know, the liberal arts curriculum currently taught in American colleges and universities ultimately derives from a long tradition of study dating back to classical antiquity. Already in the early Middle Ages, the liberal arts divided into the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, logic) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music). Renaissance humanism, in turn, developed primarily out of the study of the *trivium*, when Italian intellectuals like Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374) turned their gaze to ancient literature and focused on those subjects, which to scholars of the time, seemed to make us most human: grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history and moral philosophy. The *studia humanitatis* as they called those subjects, or the humanities as we label them today, was the focus of this fourteenth-century intellectual movement.

So what does this have to do with Janet? As I briefly explore Renaissance humanism, it should be clear through personal observations and anecdotes, that Janet truly embodies the spirit of Renaissance humanism. Indeed, we can find the antecedents to Janet's core principles of life specifically in Quattrocento humanism, which took the scholarly ideals of Petrarch's humanism and insisted that those values be applied in civic society.

What unites the above-mentioned five topics of the *studia humanitatis* is that they were all concerned with the life of humans in society. Grammar, rhetoric, and poetry facilitate eloquent communication; history and moral philosophy are social arts which, when studied, teach people appropriate ways to conduct themselves. Ultimately the humanists believed that if one studied the works of the ancient writers on these topics and applied their principles to their lives, they would become better people. By marrying eloquence (rhetoric) with wisdom (history and moral philosophy), one would emulate the virtue of the ancients. In believing in the importance of rhetoric combined with passion to move the will and thus affect behavior, many humanists decried the dullness (that is, the lack of eloquence) of the ancient author Aristotle. In his work, *On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others* (1370), Petrarch said:

"I have read all Aristotle's moral books. ... Sometimes I have perhaps become more learned through them when I went home, but not better, not so good as I ought to be; ... I myself remain the same. It is one thing to know, another to love; one thing to understand, another to will. He teaches what virtue is, I do not deny that, but his lesson lacks the words that sting and set afire and urge toward love of virtue and hatred of vice."<sup>1</sup>

In sum, to effect change, Petrarch believed in the necessity of inspiring others. And the only way to do that was through education.

Like the Renaissance humanists, a key aspect of Janet's philosophy of teaching is her unfailing belief in the efficacy of education. She has taken her mission as an educator very seriously. The Latin word "educare" means to lead or to draw out, and that is what Janet strove to do in all her classes. And when I say all her classes, I mean every one of them. I doubt Janet

ever cancelled a single class in her thirty-six years as a professor for the ACM. She did reschedule a few, but cancel, no. She recounted one incident when she was on site in Florence and a downpour started unexpectedly. The students and Janet all got soaked. It was late in the afternoon, and she decided to finish the class at Linguaviva. Feeling uncomfortable in her wet clothes, Janet excused herself and searched for something in the janitor's closet to wear. With none of the other professors or students around at the end of the day, Janet decided to strip down to her lingerie and wear the large apron she found in the closet. While it covered her well in the front, it merely tied in the back! But Janet simply walked into the classroom as if nothing was wrong or unusual, and keeping her back to the wall she made her way to the front of the classroom, where she proceeded to teach the class. I asked her why in the world she didn't just tell the students they were done for the day when they were all soaked, and she looked at me incredulously and said it would have been such a waste to have not been able to finish that material!

Janet believes, as did the humanists of the Renaissance, that by studying earlier civilizations one can, according to an expression ascribed to the twelfth-century intellectual Bernard of Chartres, be like 'dwarfs on the shoulders of giants' who can see further from their higher vantage point and thus build on those achievements and effect change.<sup>2</sup> But in order to effect change, as Petrarch made clear in the above quote, one must inspire the student. Janet has done that through her extensive knowledge of earlier civilizations and her passion for imparting that knowledge to her students. While she doesn't deliberately strive to be rhetorical, she is, nevertheless, eloquent. When my students have returned from studying with Janet in Florence, it is clear they have been "set afire" by her words and share with her a deep love of the Italian Renaissance.

While Janet has inspired a number of students to continue their study of art history at the graduate level and become professors themselves, it is in the testimony of students who pursued other careers that I find the most compelling evidence of the success of Janet's mission. While on a field trip to Rome in the spring of 2010, we bumped into a former student of Janet's who happened to be waylaid there by the recent volcanic activity in Iceland. Janet immediately recognized this student from fifteen years earlier, and we all shared a delightful meal together. A journalist now, the former student explained that she came to Rome with her sister because Italian art had become a life-long passion for her, and she just had to see

the current exhibit of Caravaggio's works. She talked about how much that semester abroad transformed her, and how indebted she was to Janet's inspiration.

As the ancients claimed, and the humanists proved, studying the humanities does make us more virtuous people. But virtue is only meaningful if it is shown and directed toward other people. Students adore Janet because she gives of her time unselfishly and is completely devoted to them. She will do whatever she can to help them—including their laundry! Before the advent of laundromats in Italy, when the host families were unwilling to do the students' laundry, Janet took their items to her house and washed them herself. As dryers did not exist in Italy yet, that also meant that Janet and Giovanni lived in an apartment where every available rack and radiator was covered with items of student clothing! She even developed a system to make sure the correct student got their own clothes back from her.

But Janet's helpfulness to others goes far beyond this funny anecdote. As all the contributors to this volume know, Janet's virtue shines forth in her countless daily small acts of kindness and her unconditional love and support of her friends. Having been friends with Janet for almost fifteen years now, I cannot possibly list all the things she has done for me. But the generosity of her heart was clear from the moment my family arrived in Florence in the summer of 1997—none of us having ever travelled to Italy before. Janet, realizing everything that I knew about Florence was stuff I had read in books, devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to helping me get to know the city and its resources so that I could effectively teach on site that fall. She quickly turned into my mentor, sharing scholarship and ideas to make my courses successful. But more importantly, she became my confidante and one of my closest friends. She and Giovanni opened their hearts and home to my entire family, for which I am truly grateful. At the end of that first year in Italy, as I was packing to leave and Janet and Giovanni came to say their goodbyes, we all stood in the foyer of the apartment together, not talking much about the impending departure. As many know, Janet the New Englander is not an overly sentimental person. But as the three of us stood there, Janet suddenly started to tear up. At that point I started to cry, and Giovanni, standing between us flashed his adorable smile at the two of us and burst into tears.

In arguing that much of Janet's values find antecedents in humanistic education and values that developed in fourteenth-century Italy, a final topic needs to be explored. While those early humanists,

such as Petrarch, celebrated the contemplative life and frequently retired to remote places to find it (Petrarch went to his getaway spot in the Vaucluse mountains in France), later humanists of the fifteenth century championed the ideal of the active life instead. In the early days of the Quattrocento, Florence was threatened by the Visconti family ruling as despots in Milan, and rose to the challenge with a wave of activism. This new civic humanistic movement ushered in a period in Florence of extreme civic pride and patriotism as Florence saw itself as the sole defender of republican liberty in Italy. Although the existence of Florence as a true republic was short-lived given the rise of the Medici family, the legacy of pride in the autonomy of the city remained.

The relative merits of the active versus the contemplative life had certainly been debated throughout the Middle Ages, but given the weight of Christian tradition, the argument had always been settled in favor of the meditative style. So the humanists of the fifteenth century were unique in arguing for the primacy of the active life of civic engagement, though they still valued the quiet time they were able to devote to scholarship. Janet definitely follows in the footsteps of these civic humanists, though she does value the quiet life she is able to live with Giovanni on the top of a mountain in Tuscany—her own personal Petrarchan Vaucluse. She and Giovanni fixed up a small farmhouse and created a beautiful retreat away from the bustle of downtown Florence. While she enjoys these periods of respite, overall Janet is, as we all know, as politically and civic-oriented as one can be. She has always shared her civic values with her students, and encouraged them

to engage in the political process. Former students on the program share wonderful stories of field trips to Rome with Janet who spontaneously joined in local rallies held by the Communist party protesting the over-reaching rule of Silvio Berlusconi. Of late, Janet has even been known to vary her wardrobe colors away from her browns and tans and occasionally don purple in symbolic protest to Berlusconi's rule! But most importantly, Janet believes, as did those fifteenth-century civic humanists, that it is only after studying the humanities that one will be able to take up a life in society, to communicate with others clearly and effectively, to understand both the past and the principles on which one's community values were based, and to promote and defend those civic values.

The basis of Renaissance humanism, thus, is the connection made between the past and the present. Their hope was that by mining knowledge from the ancient world, one would be better able to frame and make sense of the present. When I walk along the streets of Florence today, I'm constantly struck by the physical display of that humanistic concept—in the streets of Florence the past exists contemporaneously with the present. The buildings I pass and the very streets I walk on were used and celebrated by Dante and others in their lifetime. My experience of the city is so much richer given the extra temporal dimension offered by this Renaissance and modern city. To me, Janet embodies these humanistic ideals. For decades she has taught the past to help students understand the present, and she continues to serve as a living model on its civic application. And we are all so much richer for it.



## NOTES

1. Francesco Petrarch, "On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others," in *The Renaissance Philosophy Of Man*, eds. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Kristeller, and John Randall, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 103.

2. John of Salisbury, *The Metalogicon of John of Salisbury: a Twelfth-Century Defense of the Verbal and Logical Arts of the Trivium*, trans. Daniel D. McGarry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), 167.



## *Appendix*

### Visiting Faculty for ACM Florence Programs 1971-2012

|         |                                                   |               |                                                   |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1971-72 | Lewis Williams                                    | 1993-94       | Chiara Briganti (Carleton College)                |
| 1972-73 | Richard Howe (Grinnell College)                   | 1994-95       | Gabriella Ricciardi (Colorado College)            |
| 1973-74 | Dino Zei (Ripon College)                          | 1995-96       | Stephen and Brenda Fineberg<br>(Knox College)     |
| 1974-75 | William Urban (Monmouth College)                  | 1996-97       | Timothy Chasson (Grinnell College)                |
| 1975-76 | Richard Ring (Ripon College)                      | 1997-98       | Diane Mockridge (Ripon College)                   |
| 1976-77 | Charles Speel (Monmouth College)                  | 1998-99       | J. Patrick Polley (Beloit College)                |
| 1977-78 | Stephen Bailey (Knox College)                     | 1999-00       | Robert Lee and Susan Ashley<br>(Colorado College) |
| 1978-79 | Susan Dannenbaum Crane<br>(St. Olaf College)      | 2000-01       | Pericles Georges (Lake Forest College)            |
| 1979-80 | George Saunders (Lawrence<br>University)          | 2001-02       | Salvatore Bizzarro (Colorado College)             |
| 1980-81 | John Wyatt (Beloit College)                       | 2002-03       | Robert Warde (Macalester College)                 |
| 1981-82 | William Carroll (Cornell College)                 | 2003-04       | Marie Daniels (Colorado College)                  |
| 1982-83 | Robert Hellenga (Knox College)                    | 2004-05       | Jeffrey Hoover (Coe College)                      |
| 1983-84 | Anne Schutte (Lawrence University)                | 2005-06       | W. Rand Smith (Lake Forest College)               |
| 1984-85 | Susan Ashley (Colorado College)                   | 2006-07       | Ellen Mease (Grinnell College)                    |
| 1985-86 | Daniel Taylor (Lawrence University)               | 2007-08       | Patricia Vilches (Lawrence University)            |
| 1986-87 | Salvatore Bizzarro (Colorado College)             | 2008-09       | Nicholas Regiacorte (Knox College)                |
| 1987-88 | Marcella Taylor (St. Olaf College)                | 2009 (fall)   | Edmund Burke (Coe College)                        |
| 1988-89 | Frederick Ortner (Knox College)                   | 2010 (spring) | Diane Mockridge (Ripon College)                   |
| 1989-90 | Philip Kintner (Grinnell College)                 | 2010 (fall)   | Bonnie Koestner (Lawrence<br>University)          |
| 1990-91 | Edith Kirsch (Colorado College)                   | 2011 (spring) | Thomas J. Sienkewicz<br>(Monmouth College)        |
| 1991-92 | Robert Lee and Susan Ashley<br>(Colorado College) | 2011 (fall)   | Katy Stavreva (Cornell College)                   |
| 1992-93 | Thomas J. Sienkewicz<br>(Monmouth College)        | 2012 (spring) | Ruth Caldwell (Luther College)                    |

## Visiting Faculty Courses for ACM Florence Programs 1971-2012

|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1971-72 | Lewis Williams: "Cultural History of Pre-Renaissance and Renaissance Italy"                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 1982-83 | Robert Hellenga (Knox College): "Contemporary Italy" And "Problems in Historical Periodization: The Renaissance" And "The Renaissance Experience of Self" And "Seminar: The Medieval-Renaissance World View" |
| 1972-73 | Richard Howe (Grinnell College): Title not known.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 1973-74 | Dino Zei (Ripon College): "The History of Cosmology from Dante to Galileo"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1983-84 | Anne Schutte (Lawrence University): "The Machiavellian Moment, 1469-1527" And "Seminar: Florence and Venice in the Renaissance"                                                                              |
| 1974-75 | William Urban (Monmouth College): "Introduction to the Arts of Florence And "History of Florence"                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 1984-85 | Susan Ashley (Colorado College): "The Self and Society" And "Seminar: Machiavelli, Mazzini, and Mussolini"                                                                                                   |
| 1975-76 | Richard Ring (Ripon College): "Medieval and Renaissance Florence"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 1976-77 | Charles Speel (Monmouth College): "Christian History: Early, Medieval and Renaissance"                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1985-86 | Daniel Taylor (Lawrence University): "Language in Action" And "Greek and Roman Myths"                                                                                                                        |
| 1977-78 | Stephen Bailey (Knox College): "History of Renaissance Florence"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 1986-87 | Salvatore Bizzarro (Colorado College): "Contemporary Italy" And "Twentieth-Century Italy Through Its Literature and Cinema" And "Literature of the Italian Renaissance"                                      |
| 1978-79 | Susan Dannenbaum Crane (St. Olaf College): "Medieval Romance" And "Italian Renaissance Literature" And "Seminar: Dante's <i>Divine Comedy</i> " And "Renaissance Literature: The Three Crowns of Florence"                                                                                                | 1987-88 | Marcella Taylor (St. Olaf College): "Contemporary Italy" And "Literature of the Italian Renaissance" And "The Italian Renaissance: Myth, Text and Cult" And "Dante and His Contemporaries"                   |
| 1979-80 | George Saunders (Lawrence University): "Contemporary Italy" And "Belief, Symbolism and Ideology in Italy" And "Florence: Urban and Rural Milieux" And "Seminar: Millenarians and Mystics in Medieval and Renaissance Italy" And "Society and Culture in the Italian Renaissance" And "Contemporary Italy" | 1988-89 | Frederick Ortner (Knox College): "Florentine Sculpture" And "A Traveler's Sketchbook" And "Renaissance Art of Central Italy"                                                                                 |
| 1980-81 | John Wyatt (Beloit College): "Contemporary Italy" And "The Latin Liturgy" And "A Renaissance Conception of Human Nature: Niccolo Machiavelli" And "Seminar: The Platonic Academy at Florence" And " <i>The Divine Comedy</i> "                                                                            | 1989-90 | Philip Kintner (Grinnell College): "Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Italian Culture, 1200-1560" And "Renaissance Florence"                                                                               |
|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 1990-91 | Edith Kirsch (Colorado College): "Patron and Artist in Renaissance Florence" And "Dante's Florence" And "Renaissance Florence and Antiquity"                                                                 |
| 1981-82 | William Carroll (Cornell College): "Contemporary Italy" And "Renaissance Humanism" And "Galileo and Modern Science" And "Seminar: <i>The Divine Comedy</i> " And "Dante's Florence"                                                                                                                       | 1991-92 | Robert Lee (Colorado College): "Italy in the Mediterranean World, 500-1500" and Susan Ashley (Colorado College): "Renaissance Thought and Culture"                                                           |

|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1992-93 | Thomas J. Sienkewicz (Monmouth College): "The Ancient Roman Family" And "Classical Gods and Heroes in Florence" And "The Renaissance and Classical Mythology"                                                                           | 2000-01     | Pericles Georges (Lake Forest College): "Enduring Italy: The Shape of Urban Italy during One Thousand Years, from Cities of the Plain to Hilltop Fortresses" And "Humanism. The Birth of the Modern Mind in the Violent Crucible of Renaissance Italy" |
| 1993-94 | Chiara Briganti (Carleton College): "With the Poets in Tuscany" And "Traveling Companions: Italy in the English and American Imagination"                                                                                               | 2001-02     | Salvatore Bizzarro (Colorado College): "Film and Fiction Against Authority" And "Here's Looking at You Florence"                                                                                                                                       |
| 1994-95 | Gabriella Ricciardi (Colorado College): "Middle Ages to Renaissance: Cultural Confluence in Florence" And "Italy After Fascism Through Literature and Film" And "The Italian City in 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Literature and Film"      | 2002-03     | Robert Warde (Macalester College): "Inventing Italy: Landscape and Culture through Foreign Eyes" And "Conformity and Resistance: Struggles for Identity in Modern Italy"                                                                               |
| 1995-96 | Stephen Fineberg (Knox College): "Ancient Mythological Sources for the Art of the Renaissance" and Brenda Fineberg (Knox College): "City and Country in Ancient Rome" And "Ancient Mythological Sources for the Art of the Renaissance" | 2003-04     | Marie Daniels (Colorado College): "Through the Florentine Frame" And "Fashioning the Self in the Italian Renaissance"                                                                                                                                  |
| 1996-97 | Timothy Chasson (Grinnell College): "Michelangelo in Florence" And "Urbanism in Medieval and Modern Italy" And "The Urban History of Florence"                                                                                          | 2004-05     | Jeffrey Hoover (Coe College): "From Commune to Republic: Origins of the Secular European State in Northern Italy" And "A Re-Vision of Nature: The Italian Renaissance and the Rise of the New Science"                                                 |
| 1997-98 | Diane Mockridge (Ripon College): "The Earthly Republic: Florentine Writers and their World" And "The Heavenly Republic: Medieval and Renaissance Saints"                                                                                | 2005-06     | W. Rand Smith (Lake Forest College): "Italian National Development and Identity" And "Italy in Europe"                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1998-99 | J. Patrick Polley (Beloit College): "Etruscan and Roman Art and Archaeology" And "Renaissance Science and Art"                                                                                                                          | 2006-07     | Ellen Mease (Grinnell College): "Dante's <i>Divine Comedy</i> " And "Renaissance Self-Fashioning: Florence's Golden Age"                                                                                                                               |
| 1999-00 | Robert Lee (Colorado College): "Italy in the World" and Susan Ashley (Colorado College) "The History of Memory" And "Public and Private Life in Renaissance and Modern Italy"                                                           | 2007-08     | Patricia Vilches (Lawrence University): "Bella Figura!" And "Il Sorriso di Machiavelli"                                                                                                                                                                |
|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2008-09     | Nicholas Regiacorte (Knox College): "Fortuna e Natura" And "Sheets for the Table"                                                                                                                                                                      |
|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2009 (fall) | Edmund Burke (Coe College): "Italian City States: Ancient Rome and Renaissance Florence- the Society, Economics, and Politics of Historical Transition" And "An Historical Construct - Women of Rome and Renaissance Florence"                         |

|               |                                                                                                                                    |               |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2010 (spring) | Diane Mockridge (Ripon College):<br>“Renaissance Florence: Politics, Art,<br>and Intellectual Life”                                | 2011 (fall)   | Katy Stavreva (Cornell College):<br>“Weaving the Tale: Literary and<br>Visual Art Narratives of Renaissance<br>Florence” And “Dante’s <i>Divine Comedy</i><br>and the City of Florence” |
| 2010 (fall)   | Bonnie Koestner (Lawrence<br>University): “Celebrating the City”<br>And “The Professional Artist in<br>Renaissance Florence”       | 2012 (spring) | Ruth Caldwell (Luther College):<br>“Renaissance Men and Women in<br>Dialogue”                                                                                                           |
| 2011 (spring) | Thomas J. Sienkewicz (Monmouth<br>College): “Florentia and Firenze:<br>Ancient Rome and Classical Mythology<br>in Modern Florence” |               |                                                                                                                                                                                         |