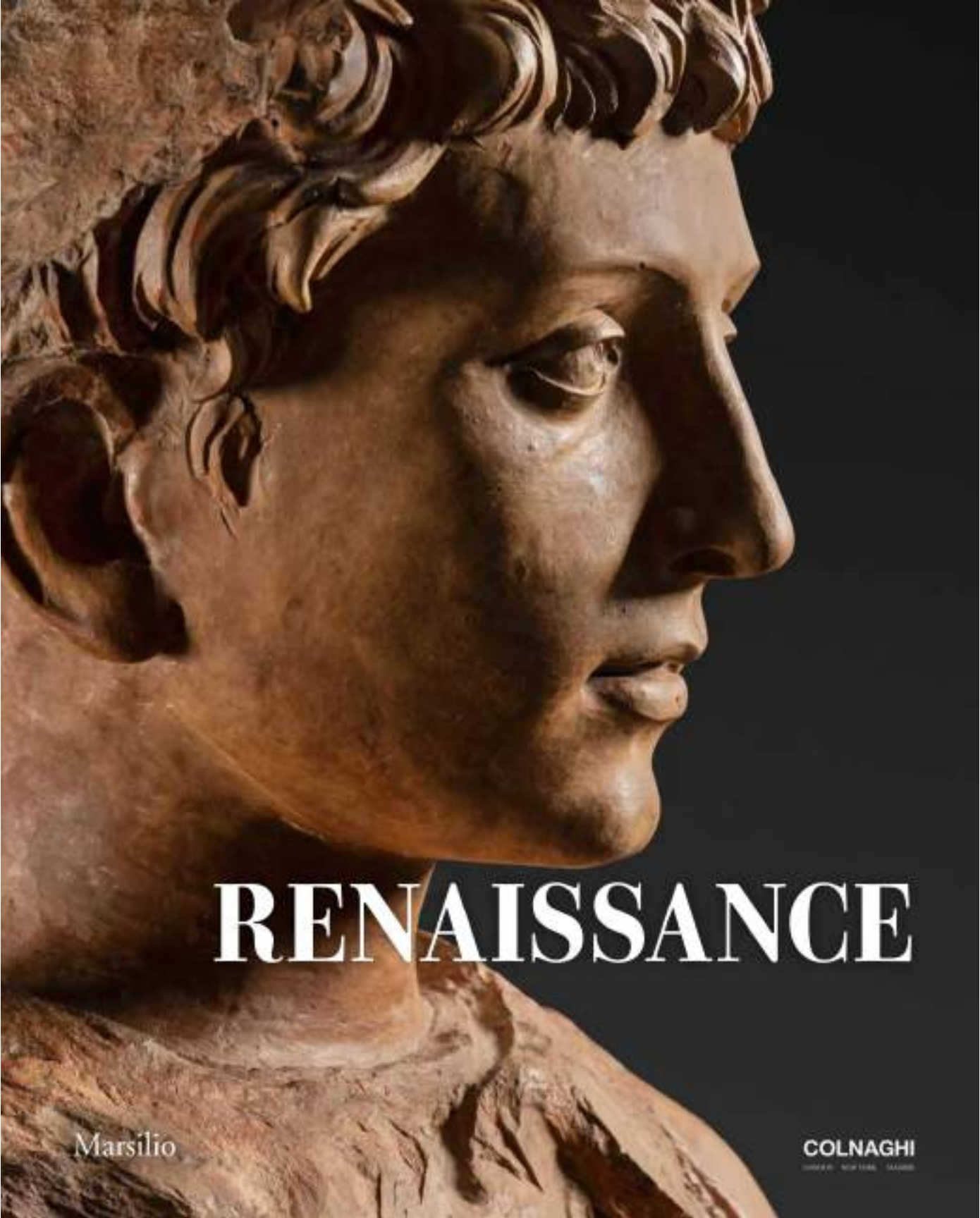




RENAISSANCE

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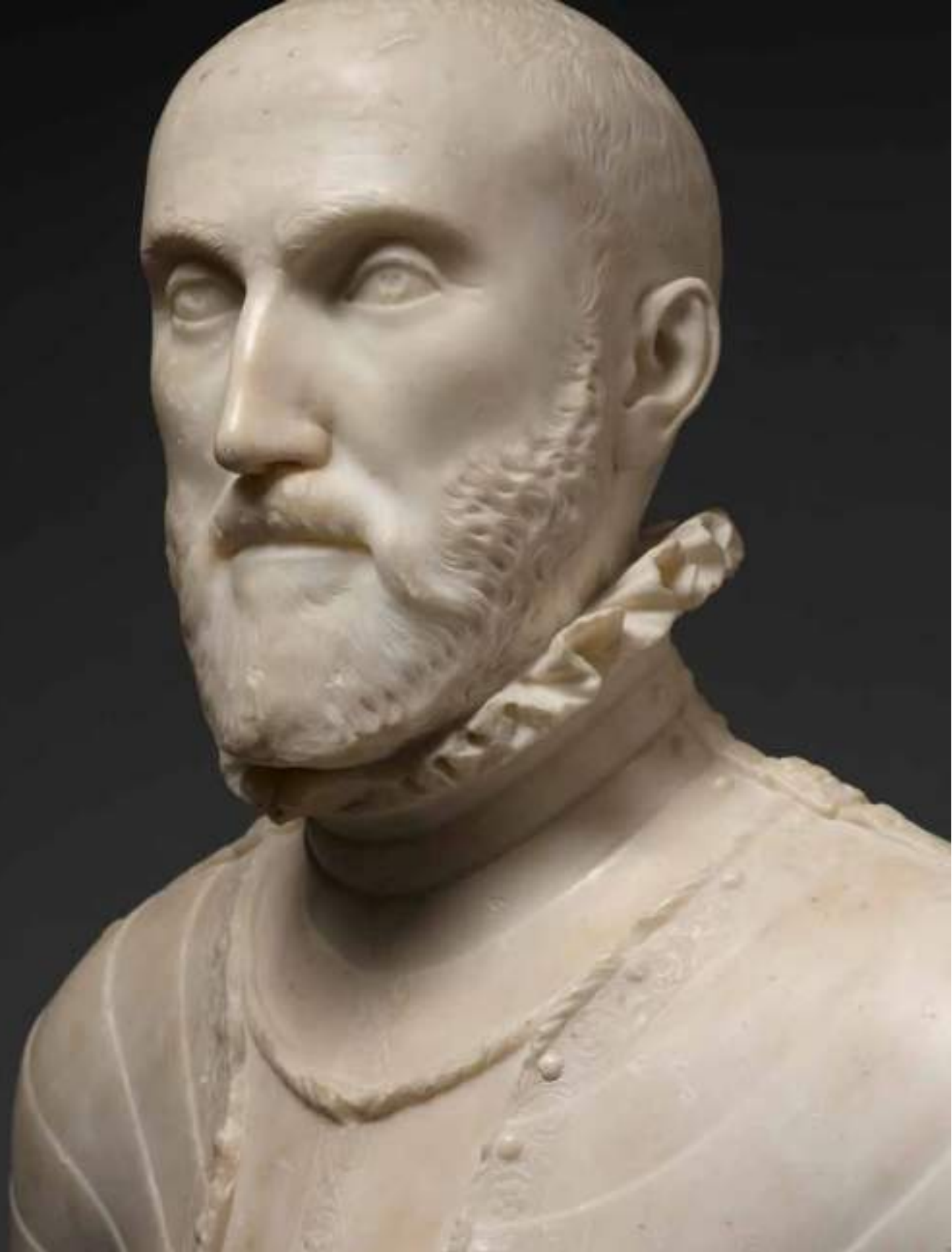






















RENAISSANCE

SIX ITALIAN MASTERPIECES
REDISCOVERED

texts by

Francesco Caglioti, Rosario Coppel, Jeremy Howard,
Peter Humfrey, Peter Marino, Jeremy Warren

Marsilio

COLNAGHI

LONDON NEW YORK MILANO

Jorge Coll

CEO Colnaghi

DURING THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES, Italian Renaissance sculpture was one of the most important and highly esteemed collecting fields. Sometime around the middle of the nineteenth century, as Jeremy Warren observes in his illuminating essay in the present catalogue, Michelangelo's *David* came to be more highly regarded than the *Apollo Belvedere*, and Italian Renaissance sculpture more avidly sought after by both private collectors - such as J. Pierpont Morgan, Baron Franchetti in Venice, Nelly Jacquemart and her husband, Edouard André, in Paris, Oscar Hainauer in Berlin and Johann II, Prince of Liechtenstein in Vienna - and by the great museums at that time, such as the Bode Museum in Berlin and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. This was a period of migration of sculptural masterpieces from the private collections and churches of Italy, which not only enriched the private and public collections of Europe and America, but also led to the formation of notable museum collections in Italy.

In the early Renaissance in Florence, the most important innovations manifested themselves in sculpture earlier than in painting. The much-travelled sculptor Donatello, who is really the hero of the present exhibition, exercised a seminal influence on painters in northern Italy such as Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini. So, in a fundamental way, engagement with sculpture enhances one's appreciation and understanding of painting as well as offering to collectors the tactile satisfaction of handling objects in their collection.

Sculpture has been one of my own passions for the last twenty years as a dealer, and I am proud to have played a part in highlighting the importance of certain areas that had been long overlooked - most notably Spanish polychrome sculpture of the Golden Age and, more recently, in our *Discovering Viceroyal Latin American Treasures* exhibition, which comprises sculpture, paintings and other artifacts from what was then known as the New World.

The present exhibition, however, is more a voyage of rediscovery than an exploration of

new worlds. This voyage has led to some truly remarkable findings, in which we have been aided by the scholarship and connoisseurship of leading experts who have contributed the catalogue entries. The most exciting of these is undoubtedly that on the Donatello terracotta of *San Lorenzo*: one of only a handful of surviving works by the artist in this medium. Thanks to the remarkable detective work of Professor Francesco Caglioti, the terracotta has now been recognized as a long mis-attributed masterpiece originating from the Pieve of San Lorenzo in Borgo San Lorenzo, near Florence.

Colnaghi is especially honoured to be partnering with our friends at Venetian Heritage on their forthcoming exhibition *From Donatello to Vittoria, 1450-1600: 150 years of sculpture in the Venetian Republic*. The exhibition will take place at Museo della Galleria Giorgio Franchetti at the Ca' d'Oro in La Serenissima in the Spring of 2022, and will allow visitors to compare our Tintoretto portrait with the bust by Alessandro Vittoria that depicts the same sitter. I will be particularly interested to see Antonio Lombardo's relief of the death of Lucretia among the other great works from the Lombardo family workshop that reside within the Ca' d'Oro. To see these masterpieces and these dialogues among the other great sculptural works of the Venetian Renaissance will be a great joy!

September 2021

Toto Bergamo Rossi

Venetian Heritage

COLNAGHI'S 2021 PRESENTATION OF SIX EXCEPTIONAL works of art by masters of the Italian Renaissance, and the company's subsequent loan of three of those works, allows me the opportunity to announce an exciting exhibition organized by Venetian Heritage that will open in Spring next year.

From Donatello to Vittoria, 1450-1600; 150 years of sculpture in the Venetian Republic will take place at Museo della Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' d'Oro in Venice, opening in April 2022. Colnaghi's fascinating bust of Saint Lawrence by Donatello, and the terracotta of the youthful and lively Saint John the Baptist will join sculptures lent from the major institutions and Churches of the Veneto. Although not a sculpture, we are especially excited that Colnaghi's rediscovered *Portrait of Tommaso Rangone* by Tintoretto will also be lent to *From Donatello to Vittoria*; the painting's return to La Serenissima will allow us to unite, for the first time, this impressive portrait with Vittoria's terracotta bust of Rangone from the collection of the Museo Correr. To see such an important patron of Renaissance Venice depicted in both oil and this most expressive of sculptural media will give us the strongest impression of the man that we could wish for. I hope it will prove to be an arresting moment in what promises to be an extraordinary exhibition of treasures.

The terracotta bust of Saint Lawrence will be especially interesting to consider alongside the artistic production of the wider Veneto region; Donatello spent almost a decade in Padua, a city within the domain of Venice since 1405, and introduced many of the important innovations of early Renaissance sculpture. He operated during a time when sculpture was still regarded as a most significant art form. Let us remember that art manuals dedicated to paintings and Italian masters were widespread in Italy since at least the seventeenth century but that catalogues of sculptures were virtually absent or rare. For the Greeks and the Romans sculpture was mainly employed as a figurative art to represent and make im-

mortal images of divinities, emperors and, later, allegories of the virtues or notable people. In Venice, sculpture was the favourite way to represent the civic virtues and celebrate the heroes and the doges of Venice as well as the Saintly protectors of the city.

It is our hope that *From Donatello to Vittoria, 1450-1600: 150 years of sculpture in the Venetian Republic* will serve to remind 21st century visitors to the Ca' d'Oro of the important role these works of art played in Venice during the cinquecento. We hope also that with their temporary change of environment we may appreciate these works of art in dialogue with each other, but also that visitors will be inspired to seek out the myriad of other sculptural treasures of the Veneto.

ABOUT VENETIAN HERITAGE

Venetian Heritage, an international non-profit organization with offices in Venice and New York, supports cultural projects through conservation, exhibitions, publications, conferences, academic study and research. Its aim is to increase awareness of the immense legacy of Venetian art in Italy and in those areas once part of the Republic of Venice.

Among the most important projects undertaken in Venice and supported by Venetian Heritage are: the cleaning of the façade of the Church of Gesuiti, the façade of the Church of San Zaccaria (one of the finest examples of early Venetian Renaissance architecture), the installation of exhibition spaces in the first five rooms of the new wing of Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia, and the restoration of the fifteenth century sculptures representing Mars, Adam and Eve, three fifteenth-century masterpieces by Antonio Bizzo, conserved at the Doge's Palace. In Padua, Venetian Heritage has financed the cleaning of the famous chapel of Saint Anthony in the Basilica of that same name.

Venetian Heritage has also begun a vast campaign of restoration in the territories that were once part of the Serenissima's domain and has awarded numerous grants for the training of specialized restorers. The façade of the Trogir Cathedral in Croatia was restored, as well as the Orsini Chapel (winning the 2003 Europa Nostra-European Community award for the year's best restoration). In co-

operation with a number of co-donors, Venetian Heritage has financed the restoration of the magnificent façade of the Cathedral of St. Mark on Korčula, an important Dalmatian island which was Venetian from 1200 to the fall of the Serenissima in 1797.

Venetian Heritage has also organised and financed various exhibitions: *Paintings from Murano by Paolo Veronese restored by Venetian Heritage* at Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, and later at the Frick Collection in New York and the New Orleans Museum of Art; *Domas Grimani: the collection of classical sculptures reassembled in its original setting after four centuries* in partnership with Direzione Regionale Musei Veneto, at the Museum of Palazzo Grimani, Venice.

More recently Venetian Heritage has financed the installation of room number 5 and number 6 (Salotti Seba-Lazzari) of the Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia and the restoration of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries masterpieces (among which is Tiepolo's *The Punishment of the Snakes*), now permanently exhibited in the new rooms.

Venetian Heritage is currently financing the restoration of the monumental Early Renaissance staircase built by Mauro Codussi in 1498 for the Scuola Grande San Giovanni Evangelista in Venezia, and Giovanni Bellini's altarpiece *The Virgin in Glory and Eight Saints* from the Church of Saint Peter Martyr in Murano which is currently being conserved by the restorers of Florence's Opificio delle Pietre Dure (OPD).

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SIX ITALIAN MASTERPIECES

REDISCOVERED

Colaugh Gallery

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Collecting Renaissance Sculpture Today

Peter Marino

PEOPLE OFTEN ASK ME ABOUT WHAT FASCINATES ME about collecting sculpture. It's a passion which has been an important part of my life for the last fifty years and I think it all goes back to my childhood when, in the 1950s, I used to visit my grandmother's house. There I remember admiring a 1930s bronze of a slightly racy river nymph holding up an ash tray large enough to accommodate several cigars and cigarettes. It was a 1930s version of the erotic Renaissance sculptures of Rizzo many of which, of course, were functional objects—ink-stands or lamps rather than ash-trays—as well as being beautiful works of art in their own right. That is part of the appeal of sculpture for me, because I have always lived with my collection and believe that works of art belong in a domestic setting, not just a museum. Another reason for my passion is the tactile quality of sculpture and the beauty of the patina of bronzes; for me sculpture collecting is a very physical pleasure and, as an architect, I appreciate the three-dimensionality of sculpture and how objects occupy space.

Later, in the 1960s, when I was a student in Professor J O Mahoney's Art History classes at Cornell, I remember being inspired by the dynamism of the slides he showed of Mannerist and Renaissance sculpture—Giambologna's *Hercules*, Coysevox's *Venuses*, and how they in turn drew inspiration from the *Laocöon*. I like to play with these influences in my collection by placing, for example, a French seventeenth-century reduced marble copy of the *Laocöon* in the centre of my mantelpiece flanked by two Florentine baroque bronze groups of *Apollo and Marsyas* and *David and Goliath* by Foggini. Other formative influences were Pierre Bergé, who introduced me to seventeenth, eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century sculpture, and encouraged me to explore the differences in style and start to develop a sense of connoisseurship, and Alain Moatti, another friend with a passion for bronzes, and Dimitrios Zikos for his academic excellence and help. I have always mixed contemporary art with antiques, though I hate the word eclectic which suggests you don't know what you are doing, and my collection includes African and Asian sculptures

as well as Renaissance, Baroque and nineteenth-century bronzes, Surrealist crocodile chairs by modern sculptors Jean-Xavier and Claude Lalanne and eighteenth-century commodes. Porcelain is another passion of mine, which is perhaps not so surprising when one considers that the greatest modeller at Meissen, Johann Joachim Kaendler, was a sculptor by training. And, of course, the cross-over between ceramics and bronze and marble sculpture was so important in the Renaissance, when sculptors like Benedetto Rovezzano produced terracotta sculptures painted to look like bronze, like the *St John* in the present exhibition; and the greatest of all the Florentine Early Renaissance sculptors Donatello used the medium to create busts with great immediacy which were also originally painted like the *St Lawrence*, which is really the star of the show at Colnaghi. I am also interested in the relationship between sculpture and metalwork. One of the favourite things in my collection are a pair of bronze vases now attributed to the Neapolitan sculptor Vaccaro, many of whose works were executed in silver. Sculpture allows you to do that, to explore these links. And, of course, one of the great pleasures of owning sculpture is that you can touch it—these things were *made* to be touched after all—which you can't do in a museum. So, I often like to close my eyes and feel the bronzes. And all this gives me so much pleasure. Those bronze vases, for example, I just have the most fun with them, I study them and turn them round and they just make me so happy.

One thing I firmly believe is that if I can afford it and I know it's an extremely rare work of art, I would rather own it than have money in my bank account. Often when something was offered to me, I would show it first to some serious clients and they would say "it's perfect, I love it—but it's too expensive". I always told them they were right and then I bought it myself. People often ask me whether I think about where I am going to put something *before* I buy it. That's not the first question to ask—it's not even the eighth- or ninth-! The question is "do you love it? Is it a great work of art? Is it beautiful? Is it extraordinary? Is it exceptional? Does it make me happy? Does it give me good memories?" I say to clients all the time "to Hell with does this go together? Who cares where you put it? I just ask people to let themselves go. If you consistently love objects, no matter what period they come from, they will magically go together. And you don't have to put Renaissance sculpture into a period setting as collectors used to do in the nineteenth century, because it brings life in modern interiors as well!



Collecting Italian Renaissance Sculpture over five Centuries

Jeremy Warren

IN THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES, collectors of Renaissance sculptures had one advantage that is denied to us today, of being able, if they so wished, to acquire works from the artists themselves. These collectors invariably came from educated elite circles, rulers of one sort or another, or wealthy aristocrats or churchmen, such as Cardinal Raffaele Riario (1461–1521), who in 1496 acquired from a dealer a marble figure of a sleeping Cupid, in the belief that it was a genuine antiquity. At this time, so far as sculpture was concerned, it was the worlds of ancient Rome and Greece that dominated collectors' horizons. Riario was bitterly disappointed when he learnt that he had been duped by the dealer and that his Cupid was in fact the work of a then unknown young artist, one Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564). Today, the wheel has turned full circle, to the extent that a collector would be stunned and overjoyed to be told that the sculpture that he had thought Roman was in fact a hitherto unknown marble by Michelangelo – a discovery that would today be considered the equivalent of the Holy Grail!

fig. 1. Michelangelo, *Bacchus*.
Marble, 1496–7. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.
© Photographic Department of the Uffizi Galleries



fig. 2.

When Riario shortly thereafter commissioned Michelangelo to make him a statue of Bacchus (fig. 1), he is thought to have framed his commission as a challenge to the sculptor to conceive another sculpture that could pass as antique among connoisseurs. Almost all sculpture made in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that was not Christian in theme or else portraiture was created with some reference to the antique, reflecting the tastes of the time. Latin texts helped to remind well-educated Renaissance men and women of the attraction of bronzes and other sculptures for their distant forbears, whilst also inculcating a strong element of enduring ancient virtue. The Venetian collector Marcantonio Michiel (1484–1552) made all the more explicit this connection between the written text and the visual when, in 1514, he wrote to Guido Celere, an artist friend, that ‘it is natural that what we read expressed so clearly . . . we also wish to gaze on with our eyes.’¹

fig. 2
 Attributed to the workshop of Antonio Rossellino,
Saint John the Baptist.
 Marble, c.1470–80. © Pinacoteca Comunale, Faenza

Demand for classical sculpture, led by the wealthiest and most powerful collectors, much outstripped supply. As Fra Sabba da Castiglione (c.1480–1554), a modest collector in his own right, noted,

Some others adorn their houses with antiquities, heads, torsos, busts and antique statues, of marble or of bronze. But because good ancient [works] are so rare and unobtainable without the greatest difficulty and expense, they therefore adorn them with the works of Donatello, who in both carving and casting can be compared with any ancient Greek sculptor.²

Sabba believed that he owned a work by Donatello. In his famous description of his collections, he evocatively wrote that 'Although I am only a poor knight, I adorn my little study with a bust of John the Baptist at the age of about fourteen, sculpted in the round from Carrara marble by the hand of Donatello, which is very beautiful.'³ Sabba's little marble bust of the Baptist survives in the Pinacoteca Comunale in Faenza (fig. 2), but is certainly not by Donatello and was instead perhaps made in the workshop of Antonio Rossellino.⁴ Sabba's mistaken belief in his charming but modest sculpture, which someone must have sold him as a genuine Donatello, demonstrates how, within a century of his lifetime, the great sculptor's name was being used to market lesser productions.

Much discussion of the patronage of Renaissance sculpture concerns princely commissions, not least since these are often so much more fully documented. A good example is Leone Leoni (1509–1590), his son, Pompeo (1533–1608), and their work over many years for the Emperor Charles V, King Philip II of Spain, their family and courts, for which many documents survive in the Spanish Habsburg archives.⁵ The demands of royal and aristocratic patrons were often heavy and restrictive, so that, even had they wanted to, the opportunities for sculptors such as the Leoni to work for other clients were limited. In Florence, Giambologna (1529–1608) and his large workshop were kept constantly busy by his Medici patrons, who certainly would not have allowed him, without their express permission, to make such a sculpture as his marble Venus for Giangiorgio Cesarini.⁶

The most interesting insights into the motivations and interests of collectors are often to be found in the rare surviving testimonies of more modest figures, such as Sabba da Castiglione. Another example is the Bolognese gentleman Gaspare Fantuzzi (c.1465/70–1536),

who we know was a patron of sculpture only because he had elaborate, highly personal inscriptions carved onto the reverses of two marble reliefs, *Eurydice* (fig. 3) and *Philoctetes*, and another onto the underside of a bronze figure of the *Sleeping Hercules*.⁷ The two marble reliefs are part of a series of reliefs of usually single-figure mythological subjects, some attributed to the Venetian sculptor Antonio Lombardo (1458–1516) and others to a younger sculptor, Giovanni Maria Mosca (active 1507–73). Since between 1512 and 1513 Fantuzzi was exiled from Bologna to Ferrara, where Antonio Lombardo was then working for Alfonso I d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, it would seem quite possible that the reliefs were acquired by Fantuzzi in some way from Antonio.⁸

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, antiquity still largely held its sway over collectors. It was during this period that small bronzes, unless their subject matter was unambiguously Christian, routinely came to be regarded as Roman works. The Ferrarese collector Roberto Canonici (1568–1631) had a substantial collection of small bronzes, many of which can be identified from their descriptions as Renaissance models, but which he proudly pronounced were all 'made during the Roman Republican age'.⁹ More than a few of the small bronzes published by the abbé de Montfaucon and the comte de Caylus in their influential compendia of antiquity were, in fact, likewise modern.¹⁰

A very small group of 'modern' sculptors remained distinctive – and collectible – personalities. Foremost from the Renaissance period were Michelangelo and Giambologna, and also, to some extent, Benvenuto Cellini (1500–1571), whose famous autobiography did not, however, become widely available in printed form until towards the end of the eighteenth century. The Florentine sculptor Massimiliano Soldani Benzi (1656–1740) created and vigorously marketed a series of small figures after 'Old Master' statues in the Medici collections in Florence, twenty models for which are currently known. Of these, fifteen were copies of antiquities, the other five, reductions of works by Cellini, Giambologna (fig. 4) and Michelangelo, and also Jacopo Sansovino (1486–1570).¹¹

In essence expensive souvenirs, Soldani's bronzes were firmly aimed at the Grand Tour market,¹² mainly well-born young men from northern Europe who made extended journeys through Europe, and especially through the peninsula of Italy, to view its ancient and its



fig. 3



fig. 4

modern wonders, with almost obligatory stops in Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples. This was the period when some of the great British collections of antique sculpture were formed, such as that assembled by Charles Townley (1737–1805), now in the British Museum. Collectors during this period would generally seek to acquire Renaissance works only if they were by one of the accepted names. Cardinal Richelieu, for example, bought Michelangelo's *Dying and Rebellious Slaves*, to accompany the classical sculptures and the Renaissance and more modern paintings he was installing in his new château at Richelieu. Likewise, Giambologna's *Samson and the Philistine* was considered by King Philip IV a worthy diplomatic gift for the young Charles, Prince of Wales, on his visit to Spain in 1623, although Charles was happy to offload it quickly to his favourite the Duke of Buckingham.

Moving forward 150 years, the fascinating auction held in London in March 1764 of bronzes from three Florentine collections, Gaddi, Marucelli and Stosch, is full of attributions to Michelangelo, Giambologna and his pupils Pietro Tacca (1577–1640) and Pietro Francavilla (1548–1615), and even Benvenuto Cellini.¹³ Some of these attributions were accurate, but most not. The sale also included Donatello's celebrated *Chellini Madonna* (fig. 5), given by the sculptor to his physician Giovanni Chellini on 27 August 1456.¹⁴ Although described in the sale catalogue as 'exceeding fine', no attempt was made to attribute it to any sculptor. In so far as

fig. 3

Attributed to Antonio Lombardo, *Eurydice*.
Marble and slate, c.1512–13. Museo Nazionale
di Capodimonte, Naples
© Ministero della Cultura - Fototeca Direzione
Regionale Musei Campania

fig. 4

Massimiliano Soldani Benzi, after Giambologna,
Virtue triumphant over Vice.
Bronze, c.1700–40, Wallace Collection, London
© Bridgeman Images



fig. 5

Grand Tourists bought Renaissance sculpture, it was generally still only works recognisably by one of the small group of great names, Giambologna being especially sought after. The English collector William Lock (1732–1810) showed remarkable prescience when, in around 1772, he acquired in Florence, from the heirs of Giambologna's friend and patron Bernardo Vecchietti, an extensive collection of models by Giambologna in terracotta and wax.¹⁵ Had the *Chellini Madonna* come onto the market a century later, in 1864, it would certainly have been a highlight of the sale, and it would probably have been correctly attributed. A more systematic approach to the art of the past had already begun in the eighteenth century, based on the study and publication of historical sources and an ever more rigorous classification of works of art by medium, iconography and style, methods of art-historical investigation that have since become the norm. By the early nineteenth century the Romantic era heralded a sea change in taste, with rapidly growing appreciation of the arts

fig. 5
Donatello, *The Virgin and Child with four angels*
(*Chellini Madonna*).
Bronze, c.1450. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

of the early and high Renaissance periods. Classical antiquity did not fall out of favour but was no longer automatically regarded as the peak of material culture. Greek sculpture increasingly came to be seen as the high point of the classical tradition, the great pinnacles of Roman classical sculpture to be seen in Florence and in Rome accordingly slightly losing their lustre. So it was that, at a certain point in the nineteenth century, the *Apollo Belvedere* was no longer considered the greatest sculpture in the world, that palm having passed instead to Michelangelo's *David*.

The great surge in collecting in the nineteenth century was further enabled by the vast quantities of works of art that had become available as the direct or indirect result of the chaos that gripped Europe over three decades, from the French Revolution in 1789 to the subsequent rise and fall of Napoleon Bonaparte, whose invasion of Italy resulted in the closure of countless churches and monasteries and the dispersal of their contents. The Romantic antiquarian spirit of collecting, much inspired by the novels of Sir Walter Scott, began to be exploited by pioneering collectors and dealers such as the French dealer Eugène Piot (1812–1890), who scoured Italy for neglected treasures, at a time when great works of the Renaissance period could be bought for what would soon come to seem paltry sums. The fruits of this new wave of collecting are today to be seen in museums throughout the world. Scholar collectors – for example, Charles Davillier (1823–1883) in France and Charles Drury Fortnum (1820–1899) in Britain (fig. 6) – built remarkable collections of sculpture and decorative arts, now mostly in the Louvre and the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, respectively. During a century when religion was deeply embedded across society, Christian subject matter became increasingly popular with collectors. As a result, the market for the mainly religious, tin-glazed terracotta sculptures of the Della Robbia dynasty was never stronger than in the nineteenth century.

In the nineteenth century there was also an exponential growth, throughout Europe and later America, in the creation of museums, accompanied by that of the parallel phenomenon of public art exhibitions. Museums, exhibitions, the new medium of photography and the explosion in publishing all brought sculpture and the arts more broadly and to more people than ever before. Two enormous exhibitions – the so-called Loan Exhibition to the



fig. 6

South Kensington Museum (today's Victoria and Albert Museum) in London in 1862 and the Musée Rétrospectif, held in Paris a couple of years later in 1865 – were arguably the most important demonstrations of the extent to which the taste for Renaissance sculpture and decorative arts had been adopted by numerous private collectors.

Museums in this period were not always immune from the spirit of nationalistic competition that grew stronger as the century progressed, presaging the conflicts of the next century. The brilliant and forceful museum director Wilhelm Bode (1845–1929), who spearheaded the meteoric development of museum collections in Berlin during the latter half of the century, certainly saw himself as contributing directly to the efforts of the new German empire to challenge the hegemony of Britain and France, the dominant European powers at the time. Bode was a ruthless and tenacious collector for his museums, the first director

fig. 6

Charles Alexander, *L'Amateur chez lui*
(*The Collector at home*).

Oil on panel, c.1893–95. © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford



fig. 7

consciously to develop a network of private collectors, whom he referred to as his 'friends', on whom he could call for funds and whom he would cajole for gifts and bequests. But his success as a collector was made possible by his scholarly understanding of sculpture and a whole range of other art forms. Bode was also seen as innovative in his approach to display, showing paintings, sculptures and furniture together, in approximations of presumed historic settings (fig. 7). The galleries he created, if somewhat more scholarly in their conception, were in truth not all that different from the often crowded and eclectic spaces favoured by new generations of collectors led by the various branches of the Rothschild family, who during the second half of the century drove the prices of sculptures and other works of art to untold levels.

It is at this point, towards the end of the century, that American collectors began to enter the fray, among them Isabella Stewart Gardner, Henry Clay Frick and John Pierpont Morgan. Their wealth rivalled or outdid their European competitors, as did their determination to emulate the museums and private collections they had seen on their own Grand Tours of the old continent.

fig. 7
The Donatello Room in the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum
(now Bode Museum), c.1900. © Zentralarchiv, Staatliche
Museen zu Berlin



fig. 8

Genuine philanthropic instinct, allied with generous fiscal incentives, meant that, in the course of the twentieth century, many of the great early American private collections ended up in the public domain, either as stand-alone memorials to the collector, such as the Frick Collection or the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, or subsumed into larger institutions – for example, the Metropolitan Museum and the National Gallery of Art.

As the twentieth century progressed, museums in the United States in particular became major players in their own right in the art market, competing with private collectors. Over time many of the most important sculptures remaining in private hands have found their way into the collections of museums in the U.S.A., Europe and beyond. Together with more rigorous export-control measures in many countries, this has meant that the availability to collectors of great Renaissance sculptures has steadily shrunk.

fig. 8

Antonio Susini, after a model by Giambologna,
Nessus and Deianira.
 Bronze, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.
 © The Robert H. Smith Collection, Washington, D.C.

Nevertheless, fine examples are still to be found, just one example being Antonio Lombardo's exquisite *Death of Lucretia* in the present exhibition, quite unknown until its appearance in 2020. At the same time, the market for the best Renaissance sculpture has remained strong, not least because of the progress that has been made by art historians in deepening our knowledge and understanding of Renaissance and Baroque sculptors and their work, allowing many lost or unidentified works to be rediscovered and correctly attributed. Subjects and schools that were hitherto little explored and even less understood have become the subject of new and more focused research, often presented through pioneering museum exhibitions. For example, before the 1960s there was very little interest in the art of the last decades of Medici rule in Florence, from the late seventeenth century through to the death in 1743 of Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici, the last lineal descendant of the main branch of the House of Medici. However, thanks to the publications of scholars such as Klaus Lankheit,¹⁶ knowledge of the period began to increase and was brought to the attention of a wider public through the landmark exhibition *Twilight of the Medici*, held in Detroit and Florence in 1974.¹⁷ A small group of astute museums and private collectors were able, with the help of a new generation of more specialist dealers, such as Andrew Ciechanowiecki, to acquire remarkable works by masters such as Soldani and Giambattista Foggini (1652–1725) for what now seem derisory prices.

The other notable example of the phenomenon was the great Italo-Flemish sculptor Giambologna, who had been the subject of an excellent monograph by Elisabeth Dhanens published as early as 1956¹⁸ which was, however, written in Dutch, much limiting its readership. On the other hand, the 1978 exhibition *Giambologna Sculptor to the Medici*, shown in Edinburgh, London and Vienna and accompanied by a scholarly catalogue published in English and German editions, truly did open the world's eyes to this brilliant sculptor.¹⁹ Works by Giambologna and his followers form the foundation of the majority of the outstanding collections of Renaissance and Baroque bronzes created in subsequent decades. These include those assembled by Robert H. Smith and Claudia Quentín, two remarkable collections of small bronzes from the early Renaissance to the late Baroque periods, with important groups of works by Giambologna and his studio (fig. 8).²⁰



fig. 9

The Smith and Quentin collections were formed by collectors who, having recognised the beauty and interest of the small bronze as an art form, began from scratch to build their collections. Slightly different considerations drove another major contemporary collector, Hans-Adam II, Prince of Liechtenstein, whose ancestors princes Karl Eusebius and Johann Adam acquired very important bronzes by Soldani and other Baroque sculptors, many directly from the artists. In addition, a nineteenth-century predecessor, Prince Johannes II, collected major Renaissance sculptures.²¹ Whilst some of these acquisitions remained in the Liechtenstein collection, numerous sculptures were sold, especially after the Second World War. Prince Hans-Adam set himself the task, therefore, of restoring the glory of the Liechtenstein collection through an active policy of acquisitions, especially in its established core

fig. 9

Interior of Hester Diamond's New York apartment,
with paintings by Dosso Dossi flanking the sculpture
of Dido attributed to Aurelio Lombardo, c.1525
© Sotheby's

areas. As a result, a series of outstanding acquisitions have been made for the collection in recent decades, including works by Antico, Jacopo Sansovino and Alessandro Algardi.²²

The Liechtenstein collections are mostly displayed within historical contexts in the family's palatial residences in Vaduz and in Vienna. Other recent collections, while inspired by the example of the great princely collectors of the past, are nevertheless presented in bold ways that pay homage to the times within which they were being formed. Two notable examples are the collections of Renaissance and Baroque bronze sculptures formed by the financier J. Tomilson Hill and the New York architect Peter Marino,²³ both of whom have opted to show their historic sculptures alongside and integrated with twentieth-century masterpieces, such as paintings by Francis Bacon for Hill and, for Marino, American abstract expressionist paintings displayed alongside bronzes within an interior that has been described as 'a master class in how to combine colours, fabrics and textures to make works of art collected over decades look more beautiful than they've ever seemed before'.²⁴ The late Hester Diamond likewise showed her wide-ranging collection of Old Master paintings and sculptures in resolutely modern interiors, where they could enter into dialogue with an eclectic assemblage of objects, from contemporary furniture and sculptures through to a remarkable collection of minerals (fig. 9).²⁵

These modern solutions are quite different from the more historicising approach to display promulgated by Wilhelm Bode. Although there are many ways in which to exhibit and arrange Renaissance sculpture, all serious displays seek to encourage the observer to look long and closely at works of art, whenever possible in the round, so as to understand better the extraordinary synthesis that marks the best Renaissance sculptures: the possibilities of materials, wonderful invention, fascination with the world of the antique, outstanding workmanship.

Looking back over half a millennium to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy, and at how various Renaissance sculptors – for example, Andrea del Verrocchio (c.1434/7–1488) versus more minor figures such as Gregorio di Lorenzo (c.1436–c.1504) – are perceived and ranked within perhaps crude hierarchies of significance, it is remarkable how broadly aligned our views today are with those of our now distant forebears. Donatello and Michelangelo are still, just as they were by their contemporaries, generally regarded as the greatest sculptors of the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries respectively. To some extent our perceptions are shaped by the fact that we imbibe so much of our knowledge of sculptors, especially those working in Florence and Rome, from Renaissance sources, above all, of course, Giorgio Vasari and his *Lives*. But we are fortunate to live in an age when, thanks to two centuries of sustained research into the arts of the Renaissance, we today know so much more about the sculptors, the works they made and the historical and social contexts within which they lived, allowing us to understand and appreciate better minor figures as well as the great names.

Nothing should detract from the most important thing of all: engagement with the work of art. What has not changed over the last five hundred years, from the Medici to today's generation, is the excitement felt by all true collectors as they pursue their passion in all or any of its various guises: the chase and eventual possession; love of the sheer beauty of an object; or admiration of its previous owners and the history it brings with it.

¹ [Michiel], *Narizie d'opere di disegno nella prima metà del secolo XVI*, ed.

² 'Alcuni altri li adornano di antichità, come di teste, di tronchi, di busti, di statue antiche di marmo o di bronzo. Ma perche le antiche buone, sì come sono rare, così non si ponno havere senza grandissima difficoltà e spesa; pero le adornano con le opere di Donato, il qual certo nella scultura e nel getto si può agguagliare à qual si voglia antico scultore greco.' Sabba da Castiglione, *Ricordi ovvero Annuestramenti di Monsignor Sabba Castiglione Cavalier Hierosolomitano* . . . Milan, 1559, p. 114, *Ricordo* no. 109, 'Circa gli Ornamenti della Casa'. Fra Sabba da Castiglione, *Ricordi ovvero Annuestramenti*, ed. Santa Cortesi, Faenza, 1999, p. 160.

³ 'Ancora io, avenga che sia un povero cavaliere, adorno il mio piccolo studiolo di una testa di San Giovanni Battista, di età di anni circa quattordici, di tutto tondo, di marmo di Carrara, bellissimo, di mano di Donato,'

Sabba, *Ricordi*, p. 119, *Ricordo* no. 109; Cortesi, *Ricordi*, p. 167.

⁴ D. Thornton, 'Le mie Cose': Fra Sabba da Castiglione e i suoi oggetti', in A. R. Gentilini (ed.), *Dalle corti rinascimentali alla Commenda di Faenza: atti del convegno, Faenza, 19-20 maggio 2000*, Florence, 2004, pp. 313-28 (pp. 318-19, fig. 3). For Sabba and his collections, see also D. Thornton, *The Scholar in his Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy*, New Haven and London, 1997, pp. 106-13.

⁵ E. Plou, *Leone Leoni, sculpteur de Charles-Quint, et Pompeo Leoni, sculpteur de Philippe II: Les Maîtres italiens au service de la maison d'Autriche*, Paris, 1887.

⁶ A. Radcliffe, *Giambologna's Cornini Femur*, exh. cat. Washington D.C., 1993.

⁷ J. Warren, 'Gaspare Fantuzzi: A Patron of Sculpture in Renaissance Bologna', *Burlington Magazine*, 149, December 2007, pp. 831-5. For the marble reliefs, see also

M. Ceriana (ed.), *Il camerino di alabastro: Antonio Lombardo e la scultura all'antica*, exh. cat., Milan, 2004, pp. 250–60, cat. no. 63 (*Eurypide*, attributed to Giovanni Maria Mosca) and pp. 254–7, cat. no. 62 (*Philoctetes*, attributed to Antonio Lombardo).

¹⁰ Anne Markham Schulz has, however, consistently championed the attribution of both reliefs to Mosca. See especially *Gianmaria Mosca called Padovano: A Renaissance Sculptor in Italy and Poland*, University Park, Pa., 1998, pp. 64–9 and 239–46, nos. 5D and 7B, pls 87–90 and 92–4.

¹¹ 'essendo fatte nel tempo della Republica Romana': J. Warren, 'The Collecting of Small Bronze Sculptures in Late Renaissance Italy: The Canonici Collection' in M. Baker and I. Reist (eds), *Sculpture Collections in Europe and the United States 1500–1930: Variety and Ambiguity*, Leiden, 2021, pp. 46–79 (pp. 69 and 70).

¹² B. de Montfaucon, *L'antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*, 5 vols, Paris, 1719; B. de Montfaucon, *Supplément au livre de l'antiquité expliquée*, 5 vols, Paris, 1724; Comte de Caylus, *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques et romaines*, 7 vols, Paris, 1761–7.

¹³ The five 'modern' models were: *Bacchus* after Michelangelo; *Bacchus* after Jacopo Sansovino; *Ganymede* after Cellini; *Virtue Triumphant over Vice* and the *Cesarini Venus*, after Giambologna. For the series, see C. Avery, *Baroque Sculpture and Medals in the Art Gallery of Ontario: The Margaret and Ian Ross Collection*, Toronto, 1988; M. Leithe-Jasper and P. Wengraf, *European Bronzes from the Quentin Collection*, exh. cat., New York, 2004, pp. 262–76, cat. nos. 29–31.

¹⁴ C. Avery, 'Saddani's Mythological Bronzes and his British Clientele', *Sculpture Journal*, 14, 2005, pp. 8–29.

¹⁵ M. Baker, 'Giambologna, Donatello and the Sale of the Gaddi, Marzelli and Stosch Bronzes', *Städel-Jahrbuch*, 12, 1989, pp. 179–94.

¹⁶ Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inv. A.1-1976).

¹⁷ C. Avery, *Giambologna: The Complete Sculpture*, Oxford, 1987, pp. 239–41; J. Warren, 'A little odd man called John Bologna . . . not inferior much to Michelangelo': Giambologna in England and in America, in B. Pankofsky Strozzi and D. Zikos (eds), *Giambologna, gli dei, gli eroi: genesi e fortuna di uno stile europeo nella*

la scultura, exh. cat., Florence, 2006, pp. 126–41 (pp. 134–5).

¹⁸ K. Lankheit, *Florentinische Barockplastik: Die Kunst am Hofe der letzten Medici 1670–1743*, Munich, 1962.

¹⁹ Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit; Palazzo Pitti, Florence, *The Twilight of the Medici: Late Baroque Art in Florence, 1670–1743*, 27 March–12 June, and 28 June–20 September 1974.

²⁰ E. Dhanens, *Jean Boulogne/Giovanni Bologna Flemmingo, Duasi 1529–Florence 1608*, Brussels, 1956.

²¹ C. Avery and A. Radcliffe (eds), *Giambologna 1529–1608: Sculptor to the Medici*, exh. cat., London, 1978.

²² A. Radcliffe and N. Penny, *Art of the Renaissance Bronze 1500–1650: The Robert H. Smith Collection*, London, 2004; Leithe-Jasper and Wengraf, *European Bronzes*.

²³ B. von Götz-Mohr et al., *Die Bronzen der Fürstlichen Sammlung Liechtenstein*, exh. cat., Frankfurt, 1986.

²⁴ For a recent overview of the collection, see K. A. Schröder (ed.), *From Babes to Makart: Liechtenstein. The Princely Collections*, exh. cat., Vienna, 2019.

²⁵ P. Wengraf (ed.), *Renaissance and Baroque Bronzes from the Hill Collection*, exh. cat., New York, 2014; J. Warren (ed.), *Beauty and Power: Renaissance and Baroque Bronzes from the Peter Marino Collection*, exh. cat., London, 2010.

²⁶ R. Dormant, 'Meeting Mr Marino', in Wengraf, *Renaissance and Baroque Bronzes*, pp. 12–19 (p. 13).

²⁷ *Fearless: The Collection of Hester Diamond*, Sotheby's, New York, 29 January 2021.



Colnaghi and the Italian Renaissance: 250 Years of Dealing and Collecting

Jeremy Howard

IN 1808 THE DIARIST AND ROYAL ACADEMICIAN Joseph Farington recorded that 'Colnaghi the Printseller [Paul Colnaghi (1751–1833)], is lately returned from the Continent and told Mr Baker that the Painters in Paris are now all mad for the great style in Painting. Nothing will do but what is upon the model of Michael Angelo, Raphael etc. No prints sought but those of Marcantonio etc'.¹ By 1823, when Colnaghi had become perhaps the most fashionable print shop in London, Charles Lamb observed that 'now you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos [sic]'.² Colnaghi was evidently the go-to place for not only the best modern prints, but also prints after the most revered Italian Renaissance masters.³ Increasingly, as Dominic Colnaghi started to take over the business from his father, they were also becoming involved in drawings, sculpture and other objects of the Italian Renaissance, with Dominic buying some Giambologna waxes on behalf of Richard Ford at Sir Thomas Lawrence's sale⁴ and acquiring in 1816 a magnificent Italian Renaissance suit

View of the Living Hall of the Frick Collection, New York,
showing Titian's *Portrait of Aretino* and Giovanni Bellini's
St Francis in Ecstasy
© The Frick Collection



fig. 1

of armour, attributed to Lucio Piccinino⁵ and now in the Wallace Collection, London (fig. 1), which he sold to the great collector and connoisseur of arms and armour, Samuel Rush Meyrick.⁶ Another important collector who was a close friend and client of Dominic Colnaghi was Ralph Bernal,⁷ much of whose magnificent collection of Italian Renaissance decorative arts was acquired by the new South Kensington (later Victoria and Albert) Museum in 1855 and by the British Museum. Links with the South Kensington Museum were reinforced when Colnaghi published *Art Wealth of England* (1861), a sumptuous, photographically illustrated catalogue of an important loan exhibition of *objets d'art*, curated by the great connoisseur of Renaissance and medieval sculpture J. C. Robinson.⁸ But the most significant of all the Victorian exhibitions with which Colnaghi was involved was the huge blockbuster Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857. Colnaghi was one of the organisers of the prints and drawings section, while his nephew John Anthony Scott orchestrated the photography by Caldesi & Montecchi of some of the highlights, including large numbers of important Italian Renaissance paintings and a shield in the Royal Collection then attributed to Cellini. *Photographs of the Gems of the Art Treasures Exhibition*, published jointly with Agnew's, was a milestone in photographic art publishing, and the exhibition itself helped to re-establish

fig. 1

Luciano Marliani of Milan, called Piccinino, *Partial armour*.
Very low carbon steel, gold, silver, copper alloy, leather,
gold braid and velvet, embossed, gilt, blackened and
damascened, c.1570–90, Wallace Collection, London
© Bridgeman Images

the reputations of many neglected fifteenth-century artists, notably Botticelli,⁹ as well as paving the way for future Colnaghi sales.¹⁰ Colnaghi's pioneering role in promoting photography was also reflected in their dealings with Julia Margaret Cameron, whose inaugural exhibition at the gallery in 1865 contained photographs inspired by Raphael, Luini and Leonardo and an extraordinary 'floating head' emulating Michelangelo's *non-finito* effects, entitled 'Carlyle like a rough block of Michelangelo's sculpture'.¹¹

Leonida Caldesi, who had worked for Prince Albert's project to photograph all known works of Raphael, was also commissioned through Dominic Colnaghi to provide photographs of Italian Old Masters for various members of the House of Orléans, most notably for that great collector of Italian Renaissance art, Henri d'Orléans, duc d'Aumale.¹² Born in the Palais-Royal but forced into exile in London with the fall of the regime of his father, Louis-Philippe, in 1848, Aumale was determined to restore the family collections as well as building a great collection of his own. The collection was installed initially at Orleans House, Twickenham, and later was moved to Chantilly, which started to take on the character of a museum.¹³ In this he was assisted by Dominic Colnaghi, who acted as an art adviser and unofficial curator of the Orleans House collection,¹⁴ the closeness of their relationship being recorded in some of the letters and the commemorative Orleans Album in the Colnaghi archive.¹⁵ While the greatest Italian Renaissance pictures now at Chantilly were acquired mainly from the collector and Louvre curator Frédéric Reiset or the dealer C. J. Nieuwenhuys, Colnaghi assisted with the acquisition of the Prince of Salerno's collection in 1854,¹⁶ of which Aumale kept seventy-two paintings (half of the Italian paintings now at Chantilly).¹⁷ That same year Colnaghi sold him the great Poussin *Massacre of the Innocents* from the Giustiniani collection, and in 1859 Colnaghi attended Lord Northwick's sale, at which Aumale bought paintings by Andrea d'Assisi, Giovanni di Paolo and Giampietrino.¹⁸ Almost the last purchase made by Aumale, just before his death in 1890, was of a group of highly important Renaissance drawings, albeit French rather than Italian, by François Clouet, acquired through the young dealer Otto Gutekunst and his partner Edmund Deprez, who had joined Colnaghi in 1894.¹⁹ It was they who transformed the venerable print shop into a dealership in Old Master Paintings that was to play a seminal role in the creation of the

great Gilded-Age collections of Italian Renaissance paintings in America.

The sale that opened this new chapter was that of America's first authentic Botticelli, *The Story of Lucretia*, acquired by Isabella Stewart Gardner in 1894 through the agency of the brilliant young connoisseur Bernard Berenson, the start of an important triangular relationship. The acquisition of the *Lucretia*, from the Ashburnham collection, was an example of astute teamwork between Gutekunst and Colnaghi's senior partner William McKay, who enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the formidable Wilhelm Bode, Director of the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin, and, from 1905, Director-General of the Berlin Museums (now the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin). Through Bode's intervention, Lord Ashburnham was persuaded to consign to Colnaghi rather than to Christie's three important pictures, two of which, Rembrandt's *Preacher Anso and his Wife* and Antonio del Pollaiuolo's *Portrait of a Young Woman* (then attributed to Piero della Francesca), went to Berlin, while the Botticelli went to Boston.²⁰ The year 1894 marked Gardner's beginnings as an important and pioneering American collector of the Italian Renaissance. During the 1890s, Berenson was her frequent guest at Palazzo Barbaro in Venice, which Gardner rented over the summer months, sallying forth with her on trips to antique shops and 'picking up at ridiculous prices fascinating odds and ends, as a small Cossa, a fine Bramantino, an early Liberale, a Giambono, and a gorgeous drawing by Rubens after Mantegna's HC [Hampton Court] cartoons.'²¹ These Venetian summers were of seminal importance both in the formation of Gardner as a collector and in her eventual decision to build that Venetian *palazzo* in Boston, the present Gardner Museum. There, in pride of place in her Titian Room, she hung the *Rape of Europa* (fig. 2) This painting, described by Gutekunst as 'a picture for a great coup',²² had been sourced from the country house of the proud but impoverished Lord Darnley and originally offered to Bode, but the price proved a stumbling block. Its subsequent acquisition by Gardner was fraught with difficulty for Colnaghi, forced to negotiate between an owner whom Gutekunst described as 'a most touchy and peculiar man'²³ and the exacting Bostonian collector, who became increasingly irascible over the delays in shipping the picture to America during the summer of 1896. At one point Gutekunst became so exasperated that he wrote to Berenson, 'has the cloud burst and have you heard from our lady across the seas? Or have



fig. 2

you, better still, taken the initiative and blown her up?"²⁴ But eventually, in September, the picture arrived in Boston, and Mrs Gardner reported ecstatically to Berenson that she had just concluded a two-day 'orgy': 'the orgy was drinking myself drunk with Europa and then sitting for hours in my garden in Brookline, thinking and dreaming about her'. She also relished her victory over Boston's (predominantly male) artistic community: 'Mr Shaw, Mr

fig. 2
 Titian, *Rape of Europa*.
 Oil on canvas, 1559–62.
 © Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston



fig. 3



fig. 4

Hooper, Dr Bigelow and many painters have dropped before her. Many came with grave doubts; many came to scoff, she reported delightedly to Berenson, 'but all wallowed at her feet.'²⁵ In January 1897, in her New Year letter to him, she reported that she was waiting in her drawing room for the electrician to arrive to 'arrange [the lighting] for Europa's adorers when the sun doesn't shine',²⁶ and when the Titian was transferred to her new museum in Fenway Court, she instructed that one of her favourite Worth gowns be hung under the picture, where it remains to this day as proof of how much it meant to her.²⁷

Between 1896 and 1900 Colnaghi supplied Gardner, through Berenson, with a stream of other Italian Renaissance paintings and one bust by Cellini, concluding, in November 1900, with Raphael's *Pietà*, her last Italian Renaissance picture to come from Colnaghi. Apart from being by the most revered Italian Renaissance master, the picture gained added allure by being the predella panel to an altarpiece of which the main panel was shortly afterwards

fig. 3

View of the Titian Room at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, showing Cellini's *Bust of Binda Altoviti* next to Bandinelli's *Self-portrait with a Drawing of his Hercules and Coeus*.

fig. 4

View of the Living Hall of the Frick Collection, New York, showing Titian's *Portrait of Aretino* and Giovanni Bellini's *St Francis in Ecstasy*
© The Frick Collection

purchased for a colossal \$400,000 (twenty times what Gardner had paid for hers) by rival collector, J Pierpont Morgan.²⁸

Cellini's bust of *Bindo Altoviti* was in some ways an odd choice for Mrs Gardner, given that Cellini was then more admired as a goldsmith than a sculptor, but she may have been influenced by Longfellow's poetic account of Cellini's colourful life in which Michelangelo is implausibly said to have met Altoviti and praised the masterly quality of his bust.²⁹ Appropriately, the Cellini was placed next to the self-portrait of his Florentine rival Baccio Bandinelli (bought as portrait of Michelangelo) (fig. 3), providing to Gardner both a 'paragone' of sculpture and painting and perhaps the opportunity to relish the clash of artistic personalities, while on the opposite wall hung a portrait by Francesco Torbido then believed to be of Gardner's idol, the great Renaissance collector Isabella d'Este.

If Gardner's purchase of her two Botticellis from Colnaghi was undoubtedly influenced by the effusive writings of Walter Pater and the lush paintings of the later Pre-Raphaelites,³⁰ the Fra Angelico *Dormition and Assumption of the Virgin* reflected a more austere Ruskinian aesthetic, allowing the viewer to commune, in Lord Lindsay's words, 'with the relics of a simpler and more believing age'. Not surprisingly the picture had belonged in the early nineteenth century to a clergyman, the Reverend Sanford, one of many pioneering British clerical collectors of the Italian 'primitives', who had formed his collection while living in Florence. In November 1898 Gutekunst, who had spotted the picture in Lord Methuen's collection at Corsham Court, wrote excitedly to tell Berenson that he had seen an 'Assumption of the Virgin in perfect condition and of great beauty', an opinion enthusiastically endorsed by Berenson, who claimed to Gardner to have discovered the picture himself, although at that point he knew it only from a poor black-and-white photograph. The painting was the first Fra Angelico to go to America.³¹

In 1902 Gardner bought her last painting from Colnaghi, whose role in building her collection she never acknowledged, and Berenson began to drift away from the firm, eventually signing a secret contract to source and authenticate Italian paintings for Colnaghi's great rival Duveen. His place, as a conduit to the American market, was taken by the affable, golf-playing Charles Carstairs of Knoedler who soon became firm friends with Gutekunst,

Colnaghi sourcing and Carstairs selling paintings to their next great American client, Henry Clay Frick.³² The first major sale was of Titian's *Portrait of Aretino*, which, like Gardner's beautiful *Madonna of the Eucharist* by Botticelli, bought from Colnaghi in 1899, had come from the collection of Prince Chigi. The exhibition at 'Messrs P & D Colnaghi's Gallery, Pall Mall East' of Titian's 'superb' *Aretino*, 'hitherto unknown except to a few students', was welcomed in 1905 by the *London Times*, which compared it favourably with Titian's 'so-called Ariosto' (*Man with a Quilted Sleeve*),³³ purchased by the National Gallery for the 'enormous and excessive price' of £30,000 in the previous year.³⁴ These very positive views were seconded by the *New York Times*, which welcomed its emergence into the public domain and described the picture as 'one of the most powerful of the rapidly painted portraits of Titian's middle period', more vigorous, in the critic's view, than the version in the Pitti Palace.³⁵ By December 1905 the *Aretino* was in New York on approval to Frick, and on 20 January 1906 Carstairs had clinched the deal. 'I am not only satisfied; I am delighted!', wrote Gutekunst gleefully. 'You have done very well my son and we can do with this money by Jove! . . . Do make him buy the Hoppner and Bembo [another Titian portrait, of the humanist Pietro Bembo]. When those are done, I shall get drunk twice over.'³⁶ Following its sale, the *Aretino* was triumphantly exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and in April 1909, while on tour with her father in Italy, Helen Frick visited the Pitti Palace, where she observed with satisfaction that the Pitti's version of the portrait was 'not so strong [as ours] nor so carefully painted'.³⁷ Frick seems to have had a fondness for powerful male portraits and the colourful histories of their sitters, and today we can appreciate the placement of the worldly and scurrilous Aretino next to the ascetic and spiritual painting of Bellini's *St Francis in Ecstasy* (fig. 4), the last picture to come from Colnaghi, albeit indirectly, in 1915, and probably the most admired of Frick's Italian Renaissance paintings. Meanwhile, in the main gallery, the two great Veroneses,³⁸ which had belonged to the Emperor Rudolf II and were later in the Orleans collection, were installed by Carstairs in 1914. 'The gallery looks superb,' he wrote to Gutekunst, 'The far end held up by the 2 fine Veroneses and the other end has the Velázquez over the mantel. Do you see how you were very much identified with its appearance and character? Mr Frick, as you know, is a smart man and thoroughly appreciated the traces and character of our band.'³⁹



fig. 5

In December 1919 Frick died, and in the summer of that year a young English aristocrat recently returned from the trenches, William Lascelles, 6th Earl of Harewood, bought for a record price through Colnaghi Titian's *Death of Actaeon*, from the same series of *poesie* as Isabella Stewart Gardner's *Rape of Europa*. The £60,000 paid (then worth around \$300,000) was roughly twice what Frick had paid for his *Aretino* and three times what Gardner had paid in 1896 for the *Europa*, providing an interesting contrast to the usual story of impoverished British aristocrats selling their heirlooms to American Gilded-Age plutocrats. In 1914 the picture had been offered by Lord Brownlow to the National Gallery in London for a remarkably modest £5,000, but apparently turned down, partly on grounds of condition (a misreading of its sketchy handling) but also because Alfred de Rothschild, a

fig. 5
View of the Dining Room, Chesterfield House,
c.(?)1925, showing the installation of Titian's *Death of*

Actaeon (now National Gallery, London).
© The 8th Earl and Countess of Harewood and
Harewood House Trust



fig. 6

particularly vociferous trustee, said that 'it would not fetch £5 at Christies'.⁴⁰ In 1918 Duff Cooper had met Lascelles in the trenches looking 'extraordinarily elegant and beautifully clean' and surrounded by copies of the *Burlington Magazine* and *Country Life*.⁴¹ During and immediately after the war, seemingly indifferent to the hostilities, Lascelles bought at least five other important Italian Renaissance paintings from Colnaghi, using Tancred Borenius as his adviser.⁴² In 1919, the year he bought the *Death of Actaeon*, Lascelles moved into Chesterfield House in Mayfair, where the Titian was given pride of place on the end wall of

fig. 6
Raphael, *St George and the Dragon*,
Oil on panel, c.1506. National Gallery of Art, Washington,
D.C., Andrew W. Mellon Collection

the dining room (fig. 5), along with Sebastiano del Piombo's Cardinal Bandinelli Sauli, his Secretary and Two Geographers, now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, while some of the other Italian pictures that he had bought from Colnaghi, together with his maiolica collection, were displayed, somewhat incongruously, in the eighteenth-century Rococo interiors created for Lord Chesterfield.

Colnaghi's last great American client of the Gilded Age was Andrew Mellon. Despite having accompanied Frick on a trip to Europe in 1880,⁴³ Mellon was a slow starter as a collector of Old Master paintings, initially buying contemporary American and Barbizon School works. His first great Renaissance painting, bought from Colnaghi and Knoedler in 1925, was German rather than Italian: Holbein's *Portrait of Edward VI*. In that same year he bought Raphael's *Portrait of Giuliano de Medici* from Duveen, but later returned the picture. With his move to Washington as Secretary of the Treasury, however, the pace of his acquisitions hugely accelerated, and, in the wake of the 1929 Wall Street crash, Mellon found himself as one of the few American millionaires able to invest heavily in works of art at a time when most were having to sell.⁴⁴ His greatest coup as a collector came in 1931, when Colnaghi and Knoedler, working in tandem with the Matthiesen Gallery in Berlin,⁴⁵ supplied him with some of the greatest paintings in the Hermitage Museum, sold off secretly by the Soviets to help finance Stalin's industrialization programme.⁴⁶ This deal, which has been described as 'the deal of deals'⁴⁷ brought some extraordinary masterpieces to America which were to be the cornerstone of the National Gallery of Art. These included Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi*, Perugino's *Crucifixion*, Raphael's *St George and the Dragon* and *Alba Madonna*, Titian's *Venus with a Mirror* and Veronese's *Finding of Moses*. The most expensive of these was Raphael's *Alba Madonna*, at \$1,666,400 a world record for any painting at the time. But the picture with the most romantic history was undoubtedly Raphael's *St George* (fig. 6). Commissioned by his patron Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, as a thank-you present to Henry VII of England for the award of the Garter, the picture passed into the collection of the earls of Pembroke and was so coveted by Charles I that he swapped for it the album of Holbein drawings now at Windsor Castle. Sold after the king's execution, it belonged for a time to Watteau's patron the great collector Pierre Crozat, was acquired by Catherine the Great and later hung by Tsar Alexander

in the gallery of portraits of the generals who had defeated Napoleon.

Mellon's final purchases in 1937 marked the swansong of the Gilded Age of American private collecting, and for Colnaghi, as regards Italian Renaissance paintings, the opportunities of the Hermitage sale are never likely to be equalled or surpassed. However, from the mid-1930s and throughout the 1950s and 1960s, under the directorship of James Byam Shaw, some Italian Renaissance drawings of astonishing quality and importance, such as Michelangelo's *Dream of Human Life* (Courtauld Institute of Art) and Leonardo's marvellous drawing of a rider on a galloping horse now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, were sold by the firm for what now seem ridiculously low prices.⁴⁸

With respect to Italian paintings, the most spectacular sales during the 1960s and 1970s were arguably from the Baroque period, which had come back into vogue with collectors and museums and was promoted by Colnaghi director Roderic Thesiger, whose example was to prove an inspiration to the young Patrick Matthiesen and Michael Simpson, both of whom started their careers at Colnaghi. An exception to this trend was Mantegna's *Christ's Descent into Limbo*, which was acquired from the firm in 1974 by Barbara Piasecka Johnson. In 1981 Colnaghi's *Objects for a Wunderkammer* exhibition, curated by Alvar Gonzalez-Palacios, explored another aspect of the Italian Renaissance – its sculpture and applied arts – showcasing objects such as a maiolica plate by the great Urbino ceramicist Xanto, a heliotrope bowl from the workshop of Ottavio Miseroni, a wax portrait of Titian and a remarkable, late sixteenth-century Neapolitan ebony and ivory cabinet, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which would not have disgraced the collections of Isabella d'Este, Francesco de' Medici or, at a later date, Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild. This was not surprising, given that many of the objects came from Baron Edmond de Rothschild's collection at Prégny. Although by then the supply of great masterpieces of the High Renaissance was beginning to dwindle, the remarkable exhibition *Discoveries from the Cinquecento*, which was staged the following year in London and transferred to America to mark the inauguration of Colnaghi's New York gallery, showed that it was still possible to find great Renaissance paintings, particularly by the Italian Mannerists, whose work had been less fashionable during the Gilded Age. The inside cover illustration of the London catalogue featured a



fig. 7



fig. 8

superb Parmigianino, the *Virgin and Child with St John and St Mary Magdalene* (now in the Getty Museum), a very rare painting by the artist on paper which was rediscovered at Sudeley Castle in the Cotswolds, masquerading as a work by Parmigianino's follower Girolamo Mazzola Bedoli.⁴⁹ Other rediscoveries were a hauntingly beautiful tondo *Head of Woman* by Sebastiano del Piombo, sold to the Kimbell Art Museum in 1985, which had been wrongly attributed to Andrea del Sarto, a Salviati *Portrait of a Man*, now in the Getty Museum, which had previously been attributed to Bronzino, a very powerful Pontormo of *St Paul* and paintings by Bellini, Bronzino, Luini, Lotto and Titian.

If the focus of the 1982 exhibition was on the sixteenth century, Colnaghi's *Gothic to Renaissance* exhibition in 1988 put the clock back to the fifteenth century and included a number of works that might have appealed to Isabella Stewart Gardner. These included a panel by Jacopo Bellini from the Gattamelata Altarpiece (fig. 7), sold to a private collector in 1989 and subsequently donated to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and a pinnacle fragment by Sassetta from the great Borgo San Sepolcro Altarpiece, of which Berenson

fig. 7

Jacopo Bellini, *Saint Anthony Abbot and Saint Bernardine of Siena*. Tempera on poplar panel, 1459. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Anonymous donor, in honour of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

fig. 8

Sebastiano del Piombo, *Christ Carrying the Cross*. Oil on panel, 1515-17. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago



fig. 9



fig. 10

and the duc d'Aumale had each owned panels, the others being now in the National Gallery, London, and the Louvre. There were also notable Venetian Renaissance paintings by Giovanni Cariani (an exquisite *St Agatha*, sold to the National Galleries of Scotland) and Vittore Carpaccio (*Virgin and Child with Saints Cecilia and Barbara*, sold to a private collector).

Before taking over Colnaghi in 2016, the Spanish art dealer Jorge Coll and his then partner, Nicolas Cortés, had already begun to make a name for themselves as dealers and experts in Italian Renaissance sculpture, selling two magnificent works to a private foundation: a gilt-bronze *Corpus Christi* by Guglielmo della Porta and a bronze group of *Hercules and the Centaur* by Antonio Susini, after Giambologna, both published in scholarly monographs in 2012 and 2013 (figs 9 and 10). Guglielmo della Porta, who deserves to be much better known, enjoyed a high reputation in his day, enjoying the patronage of the Farnese family, both as a restorer of their famous collection of antique sculpture and as the recipient of important papal commissions, especially for Pope Paul III in St Peter's.⁵⁰ He also produced, around 1560, a series of bronze copies of some of the most famous classical statues in Ro-

fig. 9

Guglielmo della Porta, *Christ Crucified*.
Gilt bronze, 1569–77. Private collection.
© Colnaghi

fig. 10

Antonio Susini, after Giambologna,
Hercules and the Centaur.
Bronze, c.1600. Private collection.
© Colnaghi

man collections, which in many ways anticipates the work of Massimiliano Soldani-Benzi a century later. Della Porta had close links with Spain, supplying a magnificent silver version of the *Corpus Christi* to the Escorial, as well executing commissions for tombs.⁵¹ Although, like many of his sculptures, his moving gilt-bronze figure of Christ was executed in the 1570s, it has a degree of pathos, in line with the new spiritual intensity of the Tridentine Catholic Church which looks forward to the age of the Baroque. Antonio Susini's *Hercules and the Centaur*, on the other hand, a bronze of remarkable quality based on a Giambologna wax prototype, shows the continuity of the Renaissance classical tradition into the seventeenth century. Susini was Giambologna's most gifted assistant and the bronze dates from around 1600 or slightly later, when Susini left Giambologna's workshop to set up his own. This was also the time when a large marble version by Giambologna of *Hercules and the Centaur*, his last monumental work and now in the Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence, was installed on the Canto dei Carnesecchi, as a culmination (though by no means a termination⁵²) of the great tradition of Florentine Renaissance sculpture. The current exhibition can therefore be seen as the expression of Jorge Coll's enthusiasm for and expertise in Italian Renaissance sculpture as well tying in with Colnaghi's recently opened department of antiquities in New York (under the direction of the former Curator of Greek and Roman Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dr Carlos Picón) providing opportunities for cross-collecting that are entirely fitting, given the seminal importance of Graeco-Roman sculpture in the Italian Renaissance.

The last five years have seen some significant sales of Renaissance paintings, notably a *Christ Carrying the Cross* (sold to the Art Institute of Chicago (fig. 8)) by Sebastiano del Piombo, an artist whose work – appropriately, in view of Colnaghi's Spanish links – was very popular and influential in Spain. Other sales reflecting the personal taste and enthusiasm of Jorge Coll and Colnaghi's current pre-eminence in the field of Spanish art include sculptures by Leone Leoni and paintings by El Greco, two artists whose working lives straddled Italy and Spain, as well as paintings and sculptures by Spanish Renaissance artists such as Joan de Juanes, Luis de Morales and Alonso Berruguete, who were profoundly inspired by the Italian Renaissance.

During the past two and a half centuries the art of the Italian Renaissance has played a very important role in Colnaghi's business, whether it be in paintings, sculpture and drawings, prints or photographs inspired by Italian Renaissance paintings, *objets d'art*, or the magnificent Renaissance armour that belonged to Dominic Colnaghi and is now in the Wallace Collection. The present exhibition, juxtaposing sculpture with contemporary Renaissance paintings, reflects in some respects a return to the more wide-ranging dealing practices of Dominic Colnaghi and the holistic vision of Wilhelm Bode, who, as discussed in Jeremy Warren's essay, believed in the enriching effect of juxtaposing Renaissance painting and sculpture in the Berlin museum. It also reflects the fact that some great Italian Renaissance artists worked in both media, the rivalry between the sister arts providing a vitally important spur to their creativity. But, unlike in Bode's museums, the Colnaghi exhibition is presented here in a modern rather than historicist way. In line with twenty-first-century cross-collecting trends, the exhibition reflects our belief that Renaissance art works well in a contemporary context and remains as relevant and appealing to the modern collector as it was a century ago to the great American collectors of the Gilded Age.

¹ J. Farington, *The Farington Diary*, ed. J. Greig, 8 vols, London, 1922–8, vol. 4, p. 255 (3 January 1808).

² *The Life, Letters, and Writings of Charles Lamb*, ed. Percy Fitzgerald, 6 vols, London, 1876, vol. 4, reprinted New York, 2008, p. 121.

³ By engravers such as Raffaello Morghens and Samuel Cousins. Colnaghi also supplied landscape engravings by 'Tizian and his school', according to Elfrida Manning's unpublished notes for her history, *Colnaghi 1760–1960* in the P & D Colnaghi Ltd Archive at Windmill Hill, Waddesdon, CO17 3/21 (hereafter EM/MSS).

⁴ Two of these wax sculptures are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, acquired through Acceptance in Lieu in c.2002, the third was sold at auction some years ago. I am grateful to Stephen Daly for first drawing this to my attention and to Jeremy Warren for

the information about their current locations.

⁵ Luciano Marfiani of Milan, called Piccinino (active 1575–95).

⁶ Meyrick had catalogued Dominic Colnaghi's collection, which he later (c.1818) acquired at cost when Colnaghi's got into financial difficulties, caused probably by the acrimonious dissolution of the partnership with Martin Colnaghi, Dominic's brother. This half-armour is no. VI in the unpublished catalogue of Dominic's collection written by Meyrick and no. 5 in the list of armours acquired from Colnaghi which is now in the Library of the Tower Armouries, Leeds, and was published in Samuel Rush Meyrick and Joseph Skelton, *Engraved Illustrations of ancient arms and armour: from the collection of Llewellyn Meyrick at Goodrich Court, Herefordshire*, 1830, vol. 1, pl. XXXIII, and pp. xv and

56, no 742. The armour was included in the Manchester Exhibition of 1857. The Meyrick collection, inherited by a distant cousin after Meyrick's death in 1848, was exhibited at the South Kensington Museum in 1868–9 and offered to the nation. When the offer was declined, the best of the armour was sold, much of it to the dealer Frédéric Spitzer, whose collection of arms and armour Sir Richard Wallace bought en bloc in 1871. The Piccinino armour is now in the Wallace Collection, London (inv. A51).

⁷ His letters to Colnaghi were addressed, 'Dear Dominic' (EM/MSS). One surviving letter from Bernal to Dominic Colnaghi, dated 30 November 1851, is in the archive of the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (GRI/GETTY_ALMA21E26982310001551, P. & D. Colnaghi & Co. Letters Received, 1802–1851) in which Bernal asks, 'what historical or antiquarian prints have you for me?' He enquires also about drawings and portrait miniatures.

⁸ Dominic Colnaghi's relationship with the South Kensington Museum remains largely un researched and unacknowledged.

⁹ Even if the attributions of some the Botticellis were unrecognized at the time; for example, the *Portrait of a Young Man* now in the National Gallery, London, was captioned in *Photographs of the Gems* as 'Masaccio by himself'. For more on the role of photography as a tool for fine-art publication at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition and of John Anthony Scott in particular, see E. Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857: Entrepreneurs, Connoisseurs and the Public*, Abingdon, 2017, pp. 121–3.

¹⁰ Notably, Titian's *Rape of Europa* in Lord Darnley's collection, although it was not illustrated in the Colnaghi publication. However, Van Dyck's magnificent portrait of Frans Snyder from Castle Howard which was sold to Henry Clay Frick in 1909 was reckoned to be one of the most successful photographs in *Photographs of the Gems*, and the book certainly helped to establish a fruitful relationship with the earls of Carlisle; see J. Howard, 'Frick's Consolation Prize: Anthony van Dyck's Portraits of Frans Snyder and Margareta de Vos and their Sale by Colnaghi and Knoedler in 1909', in

E. Quodbach (ed.), *What's Mine is Yours: Private Collectors and Public Patronage in the United States. Essays in Honour of Inge Reist*, New York and Madrid, 2021, pp. 233–53.

¹¹ See J. Howard, *Whisper of the Muse: The World of Julia Margaret Cameron*, exh. cat., London, 1990, p. 52.

¹² Including of one of the Raphael drawings (a *Virgin and Child*) now at Chantilly. A photograph of a drawing by Raphael (c.1504–5) is now in the Musée Condé, Chantilly (inv. 50 (42)). Carl Ruland, Prince Albert's librarian, catalogued the drawing in 1876 as being then in the collection of the Duke of Aumale. The purpose and the date of the drawing are still matter of dispute. In a letter from Dominic Colnaghi to Ruland, dated 23 July 1861, there is a reference to Caldesi's photographing drawings that the duc d'Aumale acquired from the sale of the Reiset collection; I am grateful to Dr Tom Stammers of the University of Durham for this information.

¹³ As noted in the introduction to E. de Boissard, *Chantilly, Musée Condé: Peintures de l'école italienne*, catalogue by V. Laverne-Durey, Paris, 1988, p. 13.

¹⁴ EM/MSS: 'February 1852 Letter from Duc d'Aumale re pictures unpacked at Orleans House hastily packed, many damaged, Colnaghi to go and see them'; '1853 Louis Philippe Sale (also Colnaghi) at Christies'; '1854 Duc d'Aumale requests to see the Sutherland Collection and Lord Ellesmere's'; '1856 Aumale buys Crimean views'; '1857 Duc d'Aumale's sale ("Italian Nobleman") Colnaghi can bring friends to Orleans House any time'; '1859 Duc d'Aumale buys paintings at Northwick Sale . . . complains of damage to picture by M. Gambart [presumably the dealer Ernest Gambart] Mr Evans [restorer] to see it'; '1863 Duc d'Aumale letter re Berchem . . . won't buy Leonardo Cartoon'; '1864 Aumale buys at Vente Andreassy. Letter re Giulio Romano painting'; '1866 Death of Prince de Condé [Aumale's son] in Australia from typhoid. Aumale hears news on the way to Colnaghi's for Wellesley sale'.

¹⁵ P & D Colnaghi Ltd Archive, COL7/2/2.

¹⁶ The prince, whose collection was housed in Naples, was Aumale's father-in-law.

¹⁷ Boissard, *Chantilly, Musée Condé*, p. 15. Of the seventy

cases of paintings, statues and mosaics in the prince's collection that were shipped to Twickenham in November 1854, seventy paintings were weeded out and sent to auction in January 1857, while others, mainly nineteenth-century Italian pictures, were consigned to Colnaghi for sale.

¹⁵ The precise degree and nature of Dominic Colnaghi's involvement with Annale's acquisitions of Italian Renaissance paintings is somewhat unclear, although he did sell large amounts of drawings to the duke – mainly French, but also including a portrait drawing by Bellini. I am grateful to Mme Nicole Garnier-Pelle, Curator of the Musée Condé, Chantilly, and to Dr Tom Stammers, University of Durham, for their helpful suggestions and much valuable information.

¹⁶ The Clouet drawings came from Castle Howard. In 1890, prior to joining Colnaghi, Gutekunst had also sold Annale an important album of watercolours by Carmontelle.

¹⁷ For a more extensive discussion, see J. Howard, 'Colnaghi, Berenson and Mrs Gardner's first Botticelli', in T. Warner-Johnson and J. Howard (eds), *Colnaghi: Past, Present and Future. An Anthology*, London, 2016, pp. 20–25.

¹⁸ Letter from Bernard Berenson to Mary Costelloe (Berenson's future wife), 21 September 1897, Berenson Archive, Villa I Tatti, Florence, quoted in A. Chong, 'Artistic Life in Venice', in E. A. McCauley et al. (eds), *Gothic Days: Isabella Stewart Gardner and the Palazzo Barbaro Circle*, exh. cat., Boston, 2004, pp. 121–2.

¹⁹ Gutekunst to Berenson, 19 February 1896, P & D Colnaghi Ltd Archive, Letterbooks, COL1/4/1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Gutekunst to Berenson, 30 January 1897, P & D Colnaghi Ltd Archive, Letterbooks, COL1/4/2.

²² Gardner to Berenson, 19 September 1896; see R. van N. Hadley (ed.), *The Letters of Bernard Berenson and Isabella Stewart Gardner, 1887–1924, with Correspondence by Mary Berenson*, Boston, 1987, p. 66.

²³ Gardner to Berenson, 1 January 1897; Hadley, *Letters*, p. 72.

²⁴ For the most comprehensive account of the intricacies of this deal, see J. Howard, 'Titian's *Rape of Europa*: Its Reception in England and Sale to America', in P. Humfrey (ed.), *The Reception of Titian in England from Reynolds to Ruskin*, Turnhout, 2013, pp. 189–99.

²⁵ See C. M. Nielsen, with C. Riley and N. Silver, *Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum: A Guide*, Boston, 2017, p. 98.

²⁶ See A. Chong, 'The Afterlife of Cellini's Bust of Bando Altoviti', in A. Chong, D. Pegazzano and D. Zikos (eds), *Raphael, Cellini, and a Renaissance Banker: The Patronage of Bando Altoviti*, exh. cat., Boston, 2003, p. 241.

²⁷ See P. Rubin, 'Pictures with a Past': Botticelli in Boston', in N. Silver (ed.), *Botticelli: Heroines and Heroes*, exh. cat., Boston, 2019, pp. 10–31; J. Howard, 'Selling Botticelli to America: Colnaghi, Bernard Berenson and the Sale of the Madonna of the Eucharist to Isabella Stewart Gardner', *Colnaghi Studies Journal*, 4, March 2019, pp. 136–64; J. Howard, 'Rome, London and Boston: Colnaghi, Bernard Berenson and the Sale of Botticelli's *Madonna of the Eucharist* to Isabella Stewart Gardner', in L. Catterson (ed.), *Florence, Berlin and Beyond: Late Nineteenth-Century Art Markets and their Social Networks*, Leiden, pp. 79–118.

²⁸ See further, J. Howard, 'Our lady across the seas': Isabella Stewart Gardner and the First Fra Angelico in America', in N. Silver (ed.), *Fra Angelico: Heaven on Earth*, exh. cat., Boston, 2018, pp. 11–21.

²⁹ For an excellent summary of Colnaghi's dealings with Frick, see C. Salzman, 'The Finest Things': Colnaghi, Knoedler and Henry Clay Frick', in J. Howard (ed.), *Colnaghi: The History*, London, 2010, pp. 32–6.

³⁰ Recently identified as a *Portrait of (?) Gerolamo Barbarigo*.

³¹ Frick Collection Archives, Curatorial Files, newspaper cuttings, quoted in the *New York Times*, 27 June 1905.

³² *Ibid.*, 6 July, 1905.

³³ Gutekunst to Carstairs, 20 January 1906, P & D Colnaghi Ltd Archive, Letterbooks, COL1/4/3.

³⁴ Helen Frick, Diary, 13 April, 1909, Frick Collection Archives.

³⁵ *Allegory of Wisdom and Strength and Allegory of Vice and Virtue (The Choice of Hercules)*.

³⁹ Carstairs to Gutekunst, 12 December 1934, Knodler Archive, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, quoted in C. Saltzman, *Old Masters, New World: America's Bid to Europe's Great Pictures*, New York and London, 2008, p. 244 (p. 305).

⁴⁰ Information supplied by Gemma Plumptre, who is researching a Ph.D. on Lascelles.

⁴¹ D. Cooper, *Old Men Forget*, London, 1953, p. 76. I am greatly indebted to Rebecca Burton, Assistant Curator and Archivist, Harewood House, and to Gemma Plumptre for drawing this to my attention.

⁴² The pictures were Sebastiano del Piombo's *Portrait Group* (previously *Averigo Vesputi Relating his Adventures to Cardinal Giulio de Medici, afterwards Pope Clement VII*; now National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), Vincenzo Catena's *Madonna and Child with St John the Baptist and St Jerome* and Mariotto Albertinelli's *Madonna and Child with the Infant St John*, in 1917; and Piero di Cosimo's *Portrait of an Ecclesiastic* (now Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art) and Jacopo Bassano's *The Parable of the Sower* (now Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid) in May and December of 1919, respectively. I am enormously indebted to Gemma Plumptre for so generously sharing this information and for other insights into Lascelles as a collector in general and the sale of Titian's *Death of Actaeon* in particular.

⁴³ Including visits to Venice, Paris and, apparently, the Wallace Collection in London. For an account of the trip, see M. F. S. Sanger, *Henry Clay Frick: An Intimate Portrait*, New York, 1998, pp. 78–80. Frick's incomplete diary survives in the Frick Collection Archives, and there is a photograph of Frick, Mellon and their two traveling companions in the Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh.

⁴⁴ For an excellent overview of Mellon's activities as a financier and a collector, see David Cannadine's exemplary biography, *Mellon: An American Life*, New York, 2006. For a more recent account of Mellon's pivotal role in the foundation of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, see D. A. Brown, 'Not All in the Name: Andrew Mellon's National Gallery', in Quodbach, *What's Mine is Yours*.

⁴⁵ Francis Mathiesen, then called Zatzemstein, changed his name on moving to England.

⁴⁶ For more information on this extraordinary deal and the circumstances surrounding it, see R. C. Williams, *Russian Art and American Money, 1900–1940*, Cambridge, Mass., 1980; Cannadine, Mellon; A. Odom and W. R. Salmond (eds), *Treasures into Tractors: The Selling of Russia's Cultural Heritage, 1918–1938*, Seattle, 2009; and, in particular, D. Ekserdjian, 'Cohnaghi and the Hermitage Deal', in Howard, *Cohnaghi: The History*, pp. 37–41.

⁴⁷ By David Ekserdjian in 'Cohnaghi and the Hermitage Deal'.

⁴⁸ See C. White, 'James Byam Shaw and Cohnaghi', in Howard, *Cohnaghi: The History*, pp. 43–6; and J. Howard and F. Russell, 'Cohnaghi in the Era of James Byam Shaw', in Warner-Johnson and Howard, *Cohnaghi: Past, Present and Future*, pp. 41–8.

⁴⁹ The painting was first published as a Parmigianino by Clovis Whitfield, who curated the exhibition.

⁵⁰ Particularly the bronze funerary monument to the Pope. He also collaborated with the papal goldsmiths Munno Sbarri and Antonio Gentili on an altar cross and two candlesticks.

⁵¹ Della Porta was responsible for executing tombs for Spanish patrons, such as that for Bishop Solís in Málaga cathedral.

⁵² The Renaissance tradition in Florentine sculpture, in fact, persisted well into the seventeenth century, particularly in the production of bronzes in the work of such sculptors as Pietro Tacca. It was continued by Massimiliano Soldani Benzi into the early eighteenth century, at a time when Giambologna's *Mercury* was entering into the canon of bronze reproductions 'after the antique' which were collected by Grand Tourists. Louis XIV owned two silver versions of the *Heracles and the Centaur*, and in 1632 Pietro Tacca cast a series of bronzes – based on Giambologna's models – which were supplied as a diplomatic gift from the Grand Duke of Florence to Henry, Prince of Wales, Charles I's elder brother, thirty-four years after the date of Giambologna's wax model of *Heracles and the Centaur*.

Donato di Niccolò di Betto, known as

Donatello (Florence, c.1386–1466)

San Lorenzo

c.1440

Terracotta, originally painted

Height: 74.5 cm; 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ in

Maximum width, from elbow to elbow: 62 cm; 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ in

Width of base: 47 cm; 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ in

Provenance:

Originally Borgo San Lorenzo (province of Florence), in the lunette over the main door of the 'Pieve' of San Lorenzo, until 1888;

With Stefano Bardini (1836–1922), Florence, until 1889, by whom sold to Johann II, Prince of Liechtenstein (1840–1929), Liechtenstein Summer Palace, Rossau, Vienna, until 1938;

Thence by descent within the collections of the Princes of Liechtenstein, Vienna and/or Vaduz; By whom sold, Amsterdam, Sotheby's, 18–20 February 2003, lot 194 (as 19th century, in the Renaissance style), where acquired.

Literature:

W. Bode, [Die Fürstlich Liechtensteinische Galerie in Wien], [s.], Die französische Schule, Die niederländische und die sächsische Schule, [Über Entstehungen und Erwerbungen des Sammlungs], in *Die Gemäldesammlungen des Kaiserthums Österreich*, III, 1895, pp. 189–29 (pp. 222, 223–5; identified as 'dem Donatello ganz nahe stehend' / very close to Donatello);

W. Bode, *Die Fürstlich Liechtensteinische Galerie in Wien*, Vienna, 1896, pp. 124, 131 (identified as 'dem Donatello ganz nahe stehend' / very close to Donatello);

W. Suida, *Malerische Götterwelt*, Wien, vol. 2, *Die Gemäldesammlungen der k.k. Akademie d. Bildenden Künste, der Sammlungen Liechtensteins, Görz's, Österreich und Schlesien-Buchstein*, Stuttgart, Berlin and Leipzig, 2004, p. 68 (identified as 'von der Nähe Donatellos' / from the circle of Donatello);

A. Prachoff, *Album de l'Exposition retrospective: Peinture Russe de 1804 à St-Petersbourg, sous le haut patronage de Sa Majesté Impériale l'Impératrice Alexandra Fédorovna, au profit des blessés de la guerre*, St Petersburg, 1907, p. 9 and fig. 1 (identified as by Donatello);

'Original and noble beauty', Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 18, 19 and 20 February 2003, Sotheby's, Amsterdam 2003, p. 68, no. 194 (identified as '19th century, in Renaissance style');

F. Caglioti, 'Donatello rinascimentale: il "San Lorenzo" per la Pieve di Borgo San Lorenzo', in *Prospettiva*, 155–6, 2014, pp. 2–99 (identified as by Donatello);

T. Verheul, 'Pulchritudo in Virtus: il San Lorenzo di Donatello / Pulchritudo in Virtus: The San Lorenzo by Donatello', in T. Verheul (ed.), *Donatello e l'arte rinascimentale: capolavori e scoperte / Donatello and Renaissance masterpieces: discovery*, Rotterdam, 2006, pp. 22–23 (identified as by Donatello);

F. Caglioti, 'Donato di Niccolò di Betto detto

Donatello . . . - San Lorenzo . . .', in *Finestre Pellegriani* (ed.), *Taglia d'Inchiostro: collezioni e collezionismo internazionale sulle orme del Vittoriano*, exh. cat., Naples, 2007, pp. 312–15, cat. no. 6.8 (identified as by Donatello);

F. Caglioti, 'Donatello e la terracotta', in A. Nanni, C. Cavalli and A. Gallo (eds.), *A nuova immagine: sculture in terracotta del Rinascimento, da Donatello a Bernini*, exh. cat., Padua and Verona, 2020, pp. 34–65 (p. 45 and note 27 (p. 60), p. 48, fig. 14, and p. 52 (identified as by Donatello).



Donatello

San Lorenzo

Francesco Caglioti

DONATELLO'S *SAN LORENZO* IS ONE of the very few completely new and therefore noteworthy additions made this century to the catalogue of the greatest sculptor of the Italian Renaissance.¹ Its historical significance is highly compelling for at least two reasons, which relate as much to the material used (terracotta) as to the bust format and the location for which the work was originally intended.

I shall return to these aspects at the end of this entry, but first there are the intriguing vicissitudes of the *San Lorenzo* over the last century and half to consider, as well as the material changes it has undergone, and its unusual critical fortune. As is almost always the case in art history, these strands are tightly interwoven and help to understand why it was not until 2014 that the authorship and importance of the *San Lorenzo* was revealed, despite the fact that at the end of the nineteenth century it was known to and passed through the hands of some of the main figures involved in dealing and collecting Italian Renaissance art in Europe: most notably those of Stefano Bardini, Wilhelm Bode and Johann II, Prince of Liechtenstein.

The *San Lorenzo* was sold in 1889 by Bardini to Johann II, one of the richest, most discerning and sensitive collectors and patrons of his time, and a regular client of the dynamic, even unscrupulous Florentine antiquarian. The bust bore no indication of provenance nor an attribution, and its price was therefore set at a level reflecting this lack of information. However, the provenance was well-known to the seller, who chose to keep it to himself given that the *San Lorenzo* was from the façade of a renowned public

church in the Florence area. This fact remained concealed, and came to light only in 2014.

Wilhelm Bode, the indefatigable director of the Berlin Museums, drew close to attributing the bust. As well as being the foremost art connoisseur of his era and an uncontested pioneer of Italian Renaissance sculpture studies, he was also a direct contact of Bardini, thanks to his role in acquiring works of art for the Berlin Museums and in advising Johann II and other major collectors influenced by his taste. Bode judged the *San Lorenzo* a 'treffliche Hälfigur' (an outstanding half-figure), 'dem Donatello ganz nahe stehend' (very near to Donatello), without ever committing to even a tentative attribution to the master.² This lack of vision explains why, although a passionate admirer of Donatello, he did not rush to purchase the object for the public collections in Berlin, allowing it to pass to his second choice of buyer, Johann II.

Bode's attitude is easily clarified by the fact that, at that time, there was already another terracotta portrait of the young Roman deacon and martyr of Spanish origin that was deemed to hold a central role in the oeuvre of Donatello: the famous half-bust from the Sagrestia Vecchia of the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence (fig. 1). The substantial presence of this terracotta among the presumed autograph works of Donatello remained undebated until 1957–8, when Horst W. Janson and Margrit Lisner, arriving at the same conclusion simultaneously and independently, recognised it as a masterpiece by Desiderio da Settignano.³ Since then this shift of authorship has been accepted several times in studies, and is now





fig. 1
Desiderio da Settignano, *Cardinal
James of Portugal*, later identified
as *San Lorenzo*.

Terracotta, originally painted,
between 1459 and 1462.
Sagrestia Vecchia, Basilica of San Lorenzo, Florence
© Maria Brunetti and Paola Ross, Florence



fig. 2
Donatello, *San Lorenzo* (here having
been repainted by an Austrian
restorer in 1955).

Terracotta, c.1440. © Stokely's, Amsterdam



fig. 3
Donatello, *San Lorenzo* (here situated
in Stefano Bardini's shop in Florence
between 1888 and 1889).

Terracotta, c.1440.
© Klaus Giehl, Florence

definitively confirmed thanks to a payment made in 1462 which demonstrates that the *San Lorenzo* (significantly also known as *San Leonardo* because, unlike Donatello's *San Lorenzo*, this youth in deacon's vestments has no other iconographical attributes) was originally a portrait of James of Portugal (1433–1459), cardinal deacon of Sant'Eustachio. The representation of this prince of the Church who was also a prince of the royal house of Portugal, celebrated for his austerity and his virginity, was modelled by Desiderio either in 1459, when James, who was on his way through Florence, died prematurely and was buried there, or soon after his death. It must then

have been transferred to the basilica of San Lorenzo through the intervention of one of the patrician Florentine families (such as the Medici, the Martelli or the Cambini) who had chapels there and had been closely connected to James. Installing the bust in the church was enough to transform a secular portrait into a devotional one and a cult object, without any material adjustment, and so guaranteeing its survival for centuries.⁵

At the time that Desiderio's *San Lorenzo* was conclusively dropped from Donatello studies, in 1957–8, no one remembered or knew of Johann II's *San Lorenzo*, even though it had been on public display in the Liechtenstein summer palace at Rossau near Vienna until 1938. It had even been given particular prominence by the prince among the countless treasures shown in those sumptuous rooms. Johann II had made other purchases from Bardini which, unlike the *San Lorenzo*, had been paid for as autograph works by Donatello but which had then turned out to be flawed, in style or quality. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a similar downgrading was reaffirmed for the *San Lorenzo* each time the specialists (of whom there were few) and the guidebook authors (of whom there were many) had the opportunity to review the Liechtenstein collections without any editorial control from the family.⁶ Meanwhile, Johann II, swept up in his personal and genuine taste, began to believe the *San Lorenzo* to be a work by Donatello and, as such, chose it to represent his passion for collecting at a major retrospective exhibition organised in St Petersburg in 1904 under the patronage of the Tsarina Alexandra

Fedorovna in aid of soldiers wounded in the war between Russia and Japan.⁶

In order to reflect the prince's disposition, authors in his circle, whether biographers of Johann II or those cataloguing the Liechtenstein collections, repeated the attribution to Donatello, which can only be traced within their bibliographies. After the palace at Rossau was closed to the public in 1938, the *San Lorenzo*, which had never featured in studies on Italian sculpture of the Renaissance, disappeared even from the Liechtenstein literature. It resurfaced only in 2003 in Amsterdam, at a Sotheby's auction of art objects being disposed of by the dynasty. Ahead of the re-opening of the Rossau palace to visitors in 2004, the present Liechtenstein family had decided to refocus and expand traditional strands of their centuries-old collecting activities (for example, the European Baroque), scaling down such areas as the sculpture and applied arts of the early Italian Renaissance, which had been of special interest to Johann II.

At the 2003 auction the *San Lorenzo* was offered as 'an Italian polychrome terracotta and plaster bust of St. Lawrence, 19th century, in Renaissance style', 'inspired by the bust of St. Leonard by Donatello in the Old Sacristy, San Lorenzo, Florence'.⁷ The cataloguing description was indeed careless, given that it was almost fifty years since it had been established that the half-bust in the Sagrestia Vecchia was not by Donatello, but also because the two works have nothing in common beyond the material of which they are made, their age and place of production (at least in my opinion),

and the fact that each shows a young deacon. Nevertheless, the even more eccentric dating of the Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo* to the nineteenth century might paradoxically have seemed likely, as the appearance of the terracotta bust was now remarkably different to its state when with Bardini, and then with Johann II. In 1935 (the date added to the lower part of the back in the hollow inside the torso) it had unnecessarily and inexplicably been repainted, and a 'restorer' had made some changes to the details of the ecclesiastical vestment, which he had completely misunderstood. In doing this he removed some distinctive features of Donatello's ingenious invention (fig. 2).

Thanks to the photographs taken for Bardini and the Liechtenstein collection between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth (fig. 3), it is possible to see that at that time the *San Lorenzo* showed mild but unmistakable signs of having been exposed at length to the elements (in particular the flaking of the skin surface of the torso). The beautiful adolescent deacon, animated by a fervid and heroic vocation for martyrdom worthy of comparison with such memorable masterpieces by Donatello as the *San Giorgio* from the Orsanmichele in Florence and the *San Daniele* in the basilica of the Santo in Padua (figs 4 and 5), was so fixated on what lay before him – both his own glorious sacrifice and his public audience – that he was unaware that the knots and tassels of his dalmatian vestment were coming untied on the right side of his chest. It was not until almost two centuries later that Gianlorenzo Bernini would arrive at such modes of expression in his



fig. 4

Donatello, *San Giorgio* (detail).

Marble, c.1405–17, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. © Photographic Department of the Uffizi Galleries, Florence



fig. 5

Donatello, *San Daniele* (detail).

Bronze, c.1447–51, Basilica del Santo, Padua. © Archivio Fotografico, Firenze – courtesy of Fondazione Misasi per la Fotografia



sculpture, in the ecclesiastical robes of Cardinal Scipione Borghese and other great prelates. In 1955, however, the clumsy 'restorer' detached the higher of these tassels slipping down the chest of the *San Lorenzo* and repositioned it further up at the same level as the upper tassel on the left side. The tip of the martyr's palm held in his right hand had at some point been broken and the traces of its absence were still visible between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the area of the new attachment. So, in similar vein, the 'restorer' covered them by gluing the higher tassel on top and partially filling in the tip of the palm.

A much more expert intervention carried out on the *San Lorenzo* after the 2003 sale removed the unattractive repaint of half a century earlier. Since the job was done without the guidance of old photographs, care was taken not to correct the plastic details. At the same time some segments of the cords of the dalmatic on the front and back, that had been already missing by the end of the nineteenth century, were filled in.

In 2014 I published the first photographs of the *San Lorenzo* as part of my reconstruction of the history of the bust, not just from 1889 onwards, but from much earlier. The 'Pieve' of San Lorenzo in Borgo San Lorenzo (fig. 6), at the heart of the Mugello area in the northern part of the province of Florence, is key to both parts of the story. A prominent Romanesque building (with much earlier origins), the 'Pieve' (that is, a chief church in a large rural district) gave its name of San Lorenzo to the village ('Borgo') that grew up around it. During the fifteenth

century it was mainly entrusted, for both its spiritual and temporal care, to a succession of senior Florentine clerics attached to the chapter of canons of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, or even to the papal Curia in Rome. The case of the latter is true for Leon Battista Alberti, who was 'pévano' (dean) of Borgo, possibly from 1449, until his death, in 1472.

Amongst the furnishings added to the church during the early Renaissance is a *San Lorenzo* in terracotta that has provided the few scholars researching the topic with some trouble, since there are two versions of it that are almost twins. The first version, currently unpainted, is set in the lunette above the main door (figs 6 and 7). The second is a variant in painted polychrome, which was for a long time kept in the sacristy and is now placed upon the third altar in the righthand nave (fig. 8). It has never been possible to determine which is the original and which the replica. Piercing together the views of the very few experts who have referred to the Borgo San Lorenzo after venturing into this part of Tuscany, off the beaten track of international tourism, we discover that in 1892 Hans Semper, the author of the first Donatello monographs (1875, 1887), thought that he could see in the exterior terracotta (then painted grey) a sculpture 'by Donatello or his workshop', in stone.¹⁷ By contrast, in 1933, Ugo Procacci, who, as an official of the Florentine Soprintendenza, had a thorough knowledge of the contents of the 'Pieve', believed that the terracotta inside the church (of which Semper was unaware) was the original and that the *San Lorenzo* on the exterior must be a 'nineteenth-century cast' taken from



fig. 6
The 'Pieve' of San Lorenzo
in Borgo San Lorenzo

© Bruno Bisti, Siena, and Francesco Gagliardi, Florence



fig. 7

After Donatello, *San Lorenzo*.

Terracotta, originally painted in imitation bronze, 1888–9.
Facade of the 'Pieve' of San Lorenzo in Borgo San Lorenzo
© Bruno Bischoff, Siena, and Francesco Caglioti, Florence



fig. 8

After Donatello, *San Lorenzo*.

Polychrome terracotta, 17th or 18th century.
Interior of the 'Pieve' of San Lorenzo in Borgo San Lorenzo
© Bruno Bischoff, Siena, and Francesco Caglioti, Florence

it. Provasi considered the polychrome bust to be in the manner of Donatello and hoped that he might be uncovering the work of a 'notevole artista della sua cerchia' – a gifted artist in his circle, disfigured by later repainting.⁹ But the attempts made in the meantime to salvage a Renaissance original from beneath the layers of pigment have not produced the hoped-for results. In fact, the clumsiness of the modelling (of the ears for example) is enough to condemn the polychrome *San Lorenzo* at first glance – and with no hope of reprieve. The bust on the facade, however, is much more successful and expressive, even if on close inspection it betrays the simplification so typical of many replicas.

The conundrum of the two *San Lorenzo* twins at Borgo is ultimately solved thanks to the Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo*, which, apart from declaring itself by virtue of its quality, is, following careful consideration, revealed to be the prototype for both the Borgo versions. Knowledge of the existence of all three objects is all that was needed to come to this conclusion, but even though I had been brooding over this certainty for many years after seeing in 1990 two old images of what was then the Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo* in the historic photo library of the Museo Nazionale del Bargello (Planiscig collection),¹⁰ I had to wait for the direct examination of the work after 2003 to resolve any doubts. The context and circumstances in which the link between the three terracottas originated are finally explained by a number of documents collated from Florentine public historical collections, including the former state Soprintendenza per i Beni

Artistici, the Archivio Arcivescovile and the Archivio Storico dell'Eredità di Ugo Bardini. Together they demonstrate that by 1865 the 'Pieve' of Borgo had, for some long time, kept the inferior polychrome bust (which is now in the church) in the sacristy, while an alter ego 'in uncoloured terracotta' was set above the main door. In 1874 the latter was described as 'very old', on account not only of the effects of the weather on it, but also of the way it related to the lunette (which was later remodelled following an earthquake in 1919). Documents from 1889, 1893, 1904, 1914 and 1931 testify that in 1888 the exterior version 'venne radicalmente restaurato sotto il vicario spirituale di questa chiesa canonico Vittorio del Corona' (was radically restored during the incumbency of Canon Vittorio del Corona as the dean of Borgo) (1914) in a way that it was 'deturpato dall'applicazione... di una tinta a polvere d'argento' (disfigured by the application... of a paint made of powdered silver) (1889), 'a imitazione [di] bronzo antico' (in imitation of antique bronze) (1914), which was then re-applied in 1906 (1914). The bust above the main portal of the 'Pieve' still bears traces of this false bronzing, which are not visible but are definitely there, although the terracotta has been stripped of most of it in recent decades, re-emerging perfectly intact. This indicates that the present *San Lorenzo* is not the one considered 'very old' in 1874, and 'radically restored' in 1888. The so-called 'restoration' can mean only that the original was replaced with a copy, as was common at that time for outdoor sculptures.





Back of the sculpture

In 1888 precisely, Bardini, an antique dealer so skilful that he was one step ahead of scholars in exploring lesser-known areas like the Mugello, sent one of his agents, Domenico Magno, to Borgo San Lorenzo in search of artworks. In 1889 Magno was in correspondence with Canon Vittorio del Corona: it appears that the priest had recently been engaged in some sort of commercial exchange with him and had been left feeling suspicious or at least annoyed. The coincidence in the timing between the 'radical restoration' of the *San Lorenzo* on the façade of the *Pieve*, Magno's trip to Borgo, his business meeting with the priest, the arrival of a *San Lorenzo* with Bardini and its almost immediate onward consignment to Prince Johann II, is too perfect to allow room for doubt. The relationships in the dimensions

and detailing, but also in quality and style, between the three terracotta busts considered here, confirm that the *San Lorenzo* which emigrated to Vienna was the same one which had been set above the main door of the *Pieve* and that it was substituted in 1888 with a copy, made for this purpose, according to Bardini's customary methods (which he used elsewhere in the Mugello). The version that was subsequently installed on the façade (height 66 cm), while smaller than the ex-Liechtenstein one (height 74.5 cm), has the same vestment trimmings, the same gospel cover and almost the same dimensions as the one in the church (height 64 cm), but the openness of his face and his spiritual demeanor could never have been obtained without the luminous example of the Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo*. The inevitable conclusion, therefore, is that the anonymous sculptor, employed by Bardini in 1888 to make the copy that is now set on the façade, had ample opportunity to handle both the original, and the old version in the sacristy that was derived from it. They were both sent to Florence for a few weeks by Canon Del Corona. It is unclear whether the priest knew of the original's substitution with the copy commissioned by Bardini, and whether he authorised it in good faith, or if he also, secretly, took the opportunity to gain some financial advantage for his church or himself. In any case, the new *San Lorenzo* was clearly executed in accordance with the following principles: not to take a cast from the original terracotta for fear of damaging it; to follow the format and details of the old polychrome replica to achieve a complete

image with nothing missed out, in order to give the impression that the 'Pieve' retained two identical versions – one a precise copy of a surviving prototype; to paint the fake one grey to match the stone portal on the façade and to conceal its very recent manufacture. None of this prevented the skilled craftsman, working in 1888, from getting closer to the character of the original than to the sacristy terracotta, which further perfected the deception.¹¹

If the ex-Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo* is systematically considered alongside Donatello's mature corpus of work, a striking series of stylistic similarities and common technical and formal detailing emerge. To begin with, the bust has been subjected to an almost imperceptible but decisive anamorphosis, to allow the saint to loom over the heads of the faithful from the lunette of the 'Pieve'. This is a quintessential 'mist' in Donatello's art, from the *San Marco* in Orsanmichele (c.1411–13) to the *San Giorgio*, from the stone *Annunciation* over the former Cavalcanti altar in the basilica of Santa Croce in Florence (c.1433–5) to the bronze *David* in the Bargello (c.1435–40), and so on. Since there is no space here to present either in words or illustrations all this, nor to note all the anatomical and physiognomic comparisons which are possible, or those parallels relating to gesture or clothing or iconographical attributes, the reader is referred to a fuller account.¹² I confine myself to selecting just one example, that is the face of the bronze *David* (fig. 9). The two youths look like breachers or even twins, which, along with many other affinities, suggests a date for the *San Loren-*

zo of around 1440, the end of the long period when Donatello was intensively working for the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore and at the high-point of the first major phase of his relationship with the Medici.

There is no reason to imagine that the *San Lorenzo* (documented in 1865 above the main portal of the 'Pieve' consecrated to him, and noted soon after as a feature that had been there for ever) should have changed its location or position over the centuries. The person responsible for the commission of such an object must have been the rector of the church, and the date of around 1440 indicates that the most likely candidate for this task is the Florentine Jacopo di Giovanni Ugolini. Little known until now, he is especially suited to having engaged Donatello for the *San Lorenzo* as he was simultaneously a canon of Santa Maria del Fiore and an important and longtime official in the papal Curia. The Curia was then based in Florence rather than Rome, and gravitated, therefore, to the Duomo itself, the main site of Donatello's life and activity throughout those years. Pope Eugene IV, who was himself a patron of the supreme sculptor, nominated Ugolini to the 'Pieve' of Borgo in October 1437. Ugolini, in contrast to the majority of his predecessors and successors, was a conscientious advocate of the church: his coat of arms appeared there on the capitals of the sacristy (demolished in 1932–3) behind the tribune, and still remains above the portal of the tribune itself (fig. 10), which at one time led into his apartments (also demolished ninety years ago). To summarise, Ugolini was the last in a line of high prelates



fig. 9

Donatello, *David* (detail).

Rome, c.1435–40. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence © Alinari Archives, Florence – in archive of Fondazione Alinari per la Fotografia



fig. 10

Jacopo di Giovanni Ugolini's coat of arms above the portal of the tribune of the 'Pieve' of San Lorenzo in Borgo San Lorenzo

© Bruno Zevi, Siena, and Francesco Gagliardi, Florence

who, in the third and fourth decades of the fifteenth century, made Donatello the sculptor *par excellence* of the Roman Curia.

Donatello was one of the protagonists in the re-emergence of terracotta as a favored sculptural medium, after centuries in which Western artistic civilisation had abandoned a practice that was so common in the ancient world. His intense commitment to using this material, also for public functions, dates from his early youth right up to his extreme old age, and his contemporaries recognised and admired this output from early on. The following terracottas by his hand survive: numerous examples of the Virgin and Child for private devotion (spread out over his career); six *patri* atop the aforementioned stone Annunciation in Santa Croce in Florence; and the so-called *Forzori* Altar in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, that is a model of about 1450 for a monumental project, possibly the bronze arch of Saint Anselm of Lucca for the Cathedral in Mantua. This clearly appears to be a modest group when considering the huge quantity of clay preparatory models that the master and his collaborators would have made over the many decades during which he was working on a very wide range of sculpture in marble and bronze. To all this one should add that already between 1409 and 1412 the young sculptor had produced a half-colossal terracotta statue of Joshua for one of the tribune buttresses around the future dome of the Cathedral in Florence, which vanished between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³³

The ex-Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo* expands our

knowledge of the variety of Donatello's activity in terracotta, both iconographically and typologically, and it also allows us to recover a very rare work that was intended for public display in the open, as the *Joshua* was.

There are no full and systematic studies on the origin and development of half-figures of saints and other holy characters in Italian sculpture between the late medieval and the early modern era. Their diffusion does surely go back much further than Donatello. The colossal marble busts in the gothic aedicules on the exterior around the Pisa Baptistry, above the second order of blind arcading, are just one example that predates the fifteenth century. They are in part by the hands of Nicola and Giovanni Pisano and their workshop (c.1270-80). After precedents such as these, the *San Lorenzo*, from the lunette above the external architrave of a church portal, stands out because it is among the oldest busts in terracotta to have survived – if not actually the oldest. And although it was conceived for a precise architectural setting, the result is a self-contained and entirely autonomous image. Considered as such, it is an equal to the portrait busts which were promoted as a common genre in the fifteenth century for the first time since the classical era. Significantly, however, all the earliest firm examples of this phenomenon postdate the *San Lorenzo*.

¹ See F. Caglioti, 'Donatello rinascimentale: il "San Lorenzo" per la Pieve di Borgo San Lorenzo', *Prospettiva*, 137-8, 2011, pp. 2-59. This long essay includes sources for all references made in this text, which cannot be provided in the notes here for reasons of space.

² W. Rode, '[Die Fürstlich Leuchtenweisische Galerie in Wien], [6]. Die französische Schule, Die niederländische und die altdenksche Schule, [Über Vorstellungen und Erweiterungen der Sammlungen], *Die Graphischen Künste*, 18, 1895, pp. 109-29; pp. 122, 123-5; W. Rode, *Die Fürstlich Leuchtenweisische Galerie in Wien*, Vienna, 1896, pp. 124, 131.

³ H. W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, 2 vols, Princeton, 1957, esp. vol. 2, pp. 236-7 and pls 409-50; M. Lissner, 'Die Büste des heiligen Laurentius in der Alten Sakristei von S. Lorenzo: Ein Beitrag zu Donatello da Settignano', *Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft*, 12, 1958, pp. 58-70.

⁴ Caglioti, 'Donatello rinascimentale', p. 8 and notes 16-19 (p. 32), and p. 35, fig. 32; F. Caglioti, 'Donatello da Settignano rinascista: "una testa del Chiarissimo di Perugina"', ovvero il "San Lorenzo" nella Sagrestia Vecchia di San Lorenzo a Firenze', *Prospettiva*, forthcoming.

⁵ I refer by way of example only to W. Suida, *Makemer Gessenre*, Wien, vol. 2: *Die Gemäldergalerie der K.K. Akademie d. Bildenden Künste, der Sammlungen Leuchtenweis, Czernin, Harrach und Schönbach-Buchstein*, Stuttgart, Berlin and Leipzig, 1904, p. 68 (unillustrated).

⁶ A. Preußner, *Album de l'Exposition rétrospective: Folios d'art de 1894, à St. Pétersbourg, sous le haut patronage de Sa Majesté Impériale l'Impératrice Alexandra Fiodorovna, au profit des blessés de la guerre*, St. Petersburg, 1907, p. 9 and fig. 2.

⁷ *Of Royal and Noble Descent? Scutchevy*, Amsterdam, 18, 29 and 28 February 2003; Scutchevy's, Amsterdam, 2003, p. 68, no. P94, with photograph.

⁸ Hans Sempert, 'Baueigen: Bildgraphien der Kunst: einleitend: die Kunst der Renaissance', *Archiv für Kunstwissenschaft*, 5, 9, 1892, pp. 411-40, p. 426.

⁹ U. Prosser, 'Opere d'arte inedite alla Mostra del Tesoro di Firenze sacra', *Annali d'arte*, 15 (- v. 2, 5), 1933, pp. 234-44 and 429-47; p. 434 and note 1, and p. 438, fig. 6.

¹⁰ Caglioti, 'Donatello rinascimentale', esp. p. 35, fig. 9, and (p. 37) fig. 33.

¹¹ For a recent, modern version of the *San Lorenzo*, now in the Princeton University Art Museum, with possibly similar origins connected to the activities of Baccio, see Caglioti, 'Donatello rinascimentale', pp. 40-42 and notes 85-6 (p. 91), and pp. 48-9, figs 37 and 38.

¹² Caglioti, 'Donatello rinascimentale'.

¹³ For Donatello's overall contribution to sculpture in terracotta, see F. Caglioti, 'Donatello e la terracotta', in A. Nanni, U. Cavallini and A. Galli (eds), *A nuova immagine: sculture in terracotta del Rinascimento, da Donatello a Bernini*, exh. cat., Padua and Verona, 2020, pp. 34-65.

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Benedetto di Bartolomeo Grazzini, called

Benedetto da Rovezzano

(Canapale, near Pistoia, c.1474–1552 or shortly after, Vallombrosa)

Saint John the Baptist in the Desert

c.1510

Terracotta (formerly painted in imitation bronze)

74 × 44 × 29 cm; 29 1/8 × 17 3/8 × 11 3/8 in

Provenance

With Stefano Bardini (1836–1922), Florence, by 1900;

His sale, London, Christie's, 26–30 May 1902, lot 559 (French catalogue) or 554 (English catalogue), reproduced pl. 43, and sold on the 27th for 400 Guineas to a Mr Burns (probably Walter Spencer Morgan Burns, 1872–1929);

Private collection, London, by 2006;

Private collection, New York, 2007–19, from whom acquired by the present owner.

Literature

W. Bode, 'Die Florentiner Bildhauer vom Anfang der Renaissance', *Zeitschrift für italienische Kunst*, n.s., 12, 1906–7, pp. 1–4, reproduced p. 3 (as Florentine master from the beginning of the High Renaissance);

Catalogue des objets d'art, acquis par le Musée de la Renaissance provenance de la collection Marini de Florence dans la vente aux enchères de Christie's, ... in 27 Mar 1902, 2 vols, Paris, 1902, vol. [1], p. 91, no. 593, and vol. [2], pl. 43 (as Florence, 15th style);

Catalogue of a Choice Collection of Pictures and Other Works of Art, chiefly Italian, of the Italian and Renaissance Time, the Property of Signor Stephane Bardini of Florence, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 1902, p. 88, no. 554 (as School of Donatello);

W. Bode, *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance*, Berlin, 1902, pp. 104–15, and fig. 139 (as Florentine master around 1500);

C. von Faberzy, 'Kritisches Verzeichnis italienischer Bild- und Tonstatuen bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts', *Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 30, 1909, Beibl., pp. 3–381 (p. 40, no. 141, as 'Meister der Johannesstatuette');

W. Bode, *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance*, 2nd edn, Berlin, 1910, pp. 101–11 and fig. 166 (as Florentine master around 1500);

W. Bode, *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance*, 3rd edn, Berlin, 1921, pp. 110–11 and fig. 166 (as Florentine master around 1500);

W. Bode, *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance*, 4th edn, Berlin, 1921, pp. 103–4 and fig. 167 (as Florentine master around 1500);

F. Schenkmüller, *Königliche Museen zu Berlin: Beschreibung der Bildwerke der christlichen Epochen*, zweite Auflage, vol. 5, *Die italienischen und spanischen Bildwerke der Renaissance aus des Barnabä in Marone, Ton, Holz und Stein*, Berlin, 1923, p. 83 (as 'Meister der Johannesstatuette');

L. Hainig, 'Italienische Plastik des Quattrocento (unbekannte Werke Francesco di Giorgio und Andrea del Verrocchio)', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, 39 (= n.s. 35), 1926, pp. 71–96 (pp. 82–4 and notes 16–7, and fig. 82, as Francesco di Giorgio);

F. Schenkmüller, *Steinliche Museen zu Berlin*, 1929,

verle des Kaiser-Friedrich-Museums, *Die italienischen und spanischen Bildwerke der Renaissance und des Barock*, vol. 1, *Die Bildwerke in Stein, Holz, Ton und Stein*, zweite Auflage, Berlin, 1933, p. 166 (as Benedetto da Rovezzano);

I. Pope-Hennessy and R. Lightbown, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 3 vols, London, 1964, vol. 1, p. 293 (as Master of the David and Saint John Statuette, and in the Museum Bardini, Florence);

G. Gordini, 'Ignota maestro fiorentina del 1500 e il 1510 (Maestro del San Giovanni)', *San Giovanni schiavone, schiavo ...*, in *La città del centro: arte della terracotta nell'area fiorentina del XV al XVI secolo*, edn. cat., Florence, 1980, pp. 97–8, no. 2.8 (p. 98, as 'Maestro del San Giovanni'), Jacques Samorini(?);

F. Gagliardi, 'Benedetto di Bartolomeo Grazzini, die Benedetto da Rovezzano ...', *Studi di storia dell'arte*, ... serie 1590–1590, in *Il Quattrocento di Benedetto Gagliardi*, edn. cat., Paris, 1912, pp. 22–7 (p. 25, as Benedetto da Rovezzano);

J. Warren, *The Wallace Collection Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, 2 vols, London 2006, vol. 1, p. 62 and notes 9, 10 and 20 (p. 66, as Florence, early XVth century);

J. W. Mason, 'Italian, 16th century, Florence, Saint John the Baptist', in J. W. Mason and E. Wickett (eds), *Learning to live: Renaissance and Baroque Masterworks from the Plaster of the Wolf and Wolf 5: Wolf Collection*, edn. cat., St. Louis, Mo, 2007, pp. 230–31, no. 73 (pp. 232, fig. 54, and 233, as attributed to Benedetto da Rovezzano);

L. Piracy, 'Benedetto da Rovezzano ...', attributed to *John the Baptist*, ... in A. Ghong and L. Piracy (eds), *The Sculpture of Giovanni Jacopo Mazzoni and the Circle: Myth and Faith in Renaissance Florence*, edn. cat., Manchester, N.H., 2010, pp. 96–9, no. 2 (pp. 98, and 99, fig. 5, as Benedetto da Rovezzano?);



Benedetto da Rovezzano

Saint John the Baptist in the Desert

Francesco Caglioti

IN THE FIRST DECADES OF THE SIXTEENTH century, Florence, coming to the end of its long republican history, became a lively centre for the production, on an unprecedented scale, of terracotta sculptures whose format was adapted for display in private homes. There were very few wealthy residences that did not house at least one terracotta, in high-relief or in the round, dedicated to themes of Christian devotion or civic pride or celebrating the passion for the ancient world which was then at the peak of its popularity. Certain subjects, such as Saint John the Baptist, or the victorious David or Judith, were able to appeal simultaneously to religious piety and patriotism. Others, such as Abundance, satisfied both lovers of the classical world and those with a strong sense of 'national' belonging. The terracotta pieces could be coated with several colours, or even glazed (in these cases, famous workshops specialising in this, such as those of the Della Robbia and Buglioni families, were generally brought in); alternatively, they could be painted with a single colour, primarily to simulate the more 'noble' and durable medium of bronze, and were sometimes gilded. The great variety and extent of the demand for these modelled figures explains why it involved both important and innovative personalities, whose work was at the cutting edge of the development of sculpture – artists such as Giovanfrancesco Rustici (1475–1554) and Benedetto da Rovezzano and the Della Robbia and Buglioni families – and a large number of minor masters. The latter focused almost exclusively on this domestic practice or devoted themselves to a mix of artisanal

and mercantile activities, including non-figurative items, such as the so-called 'Master of the Unruly Children', who has now been plausibly identified as Sandro di Lorenzo di Smeraldo (1483–1554).¹

Inevitably many of these works were lost between the sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries or were dispersed throughout the world through the activities of dealers and collectors from the *Ottocento* onwards. This means that studies and rediscoveries are still advancing, and there are still missing many firm reference points that would enable an overall reconstruction of this historical chapter. The specific critical vicissitudes of the *Saint John the Baptist* listed here are an eloquent reflection of the difficulties in making progress that have occurred up to now, for at least two reasons: because the statue was among the first works of the genre to re-emerge and has attracted the attention of specialists since the beginning of the twentieth century, and second, because even now, more than a century later, it must be placed among the indisputable highlights of the genre itself.

In 1900, this *Saint John the Baptist* was sent to the *Universal Exhibition* in Paris by the famous dealer Stefano Bardini of Florence, who, according to the documentation preserved in his archives (now owned by the Italian State in Florence), had purchased it only recently.² As can be seen in the two catalogues (in French and English) of the Bardini auction, held in London in 1902, the antiquarian assigned the terracotta piece to the fifteenth century and to the 'Donatello school'. This attribution was

soon overruled by subsequent research, but it reflects the artist's origins in the culture of the early Renaissance.³ Bordini, however, correctly associated the figure with a second *Saint John the Baptist* in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence (inv. S538 + M106; fig. 1). The present figure is not identical but is very close in concept and format to the Bargello statue, which had been dated to the sixteenth century in the museum's most recent guide of 1898.⁴ In the meantime, the Bordini piece had engaged the attention of the greatest connoisseur of the period (and not only of Renaissance sculpture), Wilhelm Bode, in successive publications between 1901 and 1921. He employed it, on the one hand, in contrast with the marble *Saint John the Baptist* allegedly by the young Michelangelo which was, at that time, in the Berlin Museums (in reality the sculpture, which was to be lost in 1945, was a depiction of the mythical shepherd Aristaeus and a seventeenth-century work by Domenico Pierani). On the other hand, Bode utilised the Bordini terracotta to begin to focus on the personality of an early sixteenth-century Florentine sculptor who was particularly skilled at inventing and modelling in clay the figure of John the Baptist at a young age.⁵

As is common in the pioneering publications of connoisseurs, Bode's catalogue was too inclusive, gathering together not only pieces by the same hand as the Bordini Baptist (in particular, the Baptist half-bust, which is now in the Minneapolis Institute of Art; fig. 2),⁶ but also pieces by other anonymous sculptors – in some cases from the same workshop; others similar

only in general type – under a single stylistic banner, which later (with Cornelius von Fabriczy in 1909) became that of the 'Meister der Johannesstatuetten' or 'Johannesfiguren'.⁷ The subsequent development of studies and the emergence of new terracotta pieces in this field should have led experts to attempt precise distinctions sooner or later. Instead, the attributional short cuts taken by antiquarians expanded the activity of the 'Meister' to the point that it covered too wide and varied an area of Florentine clay modelling from half a millennium ago. In 1964, in particular, the oeuvre of the so-called 'Master of the Saint John Statuettes' was expanded by John Pope-Hennessy and Ronald Lightbown into that of 'Master of the David and Saint John Statuettes', to include a series of triumphant David figures that indeed show certain affinities with the style of the principal artist but have nothing to do with his best output. They rather represent the contributions of collaborators, followers and mere trade rivals, committed to what was currently fashionable and commercial.⁸ While the corpus of the 'Meister' grew under the impulse of iconographic and typological affinities, continuing to host mainly images of Saint John the Baptist, David and Saint Jerome, other pieces more characteristic of his manner were omitted, as was the case with the *Knight Trampling a Conquered Fox* in the Museo Horne in Florence (fig. 3), which, because of its subject matter, was often associated with the groups of *Battles* by Giovanfrancesco Rossini. However, some rare, more attentive observers, such as Carlo Gamba in 1920 and 1961, associated it with Andrea Sansovino



fig. 1

Benedetto da Rovezzano,
Saint John the Baptist in the Desert.

Terracotta, c.1520. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.
© Photographed by Department of the Uffizi Galleries, Florence



fig. 2

Benedetto da Rovezzano,
Saint John the Baptist.

Terracotta, c.1525. © Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota, The John E. Van Derlip Fund



(c.1467–1529) or Benedetto da Rovezzano,⁷ or attributed it, as Ulrich Middeldorf did in 1935, to Bode's 'Meister', identifying him as Baccio da Montelupo (1469–c.1535).⁸

In fact, a long and evidently premature debate about the artist's identity was taking place. Since the relationship between the 'Meister' and the young Jacopo Sansovino (1486–1570) has been repeatedly traced back to Bode in recent publications, it is worth noting that the great German scholar named Sansovino, among other contemporaries, with the express intention of discounting him. The proposal for the identification of the artist as Sansovino emerged, cautiously, only with Giancarlo Gentilini in 1990 and 1992,⁹ and was then quickly disseminated by Bruce Boucher in 1991 and again in 2001.¹² Similarly, it has been suggested that the recognition of the master as Benedetto da Rovezzano was already found in the literature of the early twentieth century: this is not true – it appeared for the first time in 1996 and then in 2012 in texts by the present writer.¹³ A century ago, that sculptor had simply been recalled a couple of times in connection with works that were not yet traced back to the 'Meister der Johannesstatuetten', the first time by Gamba, as previously cited, and the second time in a 1933 entry by Frida Schottmüller on a *Dionysos* in the Berlin Museums (which is, in fact, a terracotta from the circle of the 'Meister' but not by his hand).¹⁴ The fortunes of Rustici in relation to the 'Meister' followed a different path, but he also was never identified as the anonymous artist, because in 1935 Adolfo Venturi attributed only the *Saint John the Baptist*

from the Bargello to Rustici without any reference to other similar pieces;¹⁵ meanwhile, that artist's name was forcibly invoked by many – as has been mentioned already – for the *Hoene Knight*, without a grasp of the connections of the latter with the truly authentic works by the 'Meister'. The only candidacy for the mysterious 'Meister' that boasted a semblance of credibility was that of Baccio da Montelupo, made by Schottmüller in 1933, on the informal advice of Middeldorf and Werner Gramberg, and then repeated by Middeldorf himself in 1935,¹⁶ while the proposal to consider Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439–1501), which had been put forward by Leo Planiscig in 1929, specifically on the basis of the former Bordini Baptise, fell immediately and justifiably on deaf ears.¹⁷ In 1952, Martin Weinberger spoke out with special conviction in favour of Montelupo, in an article that curiously took its cue from an anonymous bronze *Heracles* in the Frick Collection in New York, a work that has now been definitively re-assigned to Francesco di Giorgio.¹⁸

The suggestion of recognizing the 'Meister' in the young Jacopo Sansovino, which was promoted by Gentilini by wisely adding, for the first time, the *Hoene Knight* to the 'Meister's oeuvre', gained traction in the scholarly literature for about thirty years (even among those who, like Boucher, reverted back to Rustici for the *Hoene group*). However, in 2014, in the face of my arguments, Gentilini himself finally set aside the Sansovino solution in favour of the young Benedetto da Rovezzano (albeit by publishing two new pieces – *A Pair of Kneeling Angels Holding Camélaeum*, glazed by Benedetto



fig. 3
Benedetto da Rovezzano,
Knight Trampling a Conquered Foe.

Terracotta, c.1505–30. © Museo Barberi, Florence



fig. 4
Benedetto da Rovizzano,
Saint John the Baptist in the Desert.

Terracotta, c.1506–30. Wallace Collection, London.
© Bridgeman Images



fig. 5
Follower of Benedetto da Rovizzano,
Seated Saint John the Baptist.

Painted terracotta, c.1520–30. © Saint Louis Art Museum,
Missouri (Mark S. Weil Artwork 2003 Inevitable Trust,
promised gift of Phoebe Dent Weil and Mark S. Weil 2006.44)

Baglioni (1459/60–1521) – which should not join the corpus to which our *Baptist* belongs).²⁰ Jeremy Warren, on the other hand, maintained the Sansovino attribution in 2016, in his catalogue entry on the *Saint John the Baptist in the Desert* in the Wallace Collection in London (fig. 4), which had long been justifiably included in the literature among the best examples by the ‘Meister’.²¹ Warren also alluded to the ascription of the former Bardini *Baptist* to Rovizzano, which was then circulating (my having made it known in 2012),²² without commenting on it and without considering my proposal

to reassign the core works by the ‘Meister’ to Rovizzano.

In the selection Warren made of about twenty terracotta objects representing Saint John the Baptist which are relevant to the issue in various ways, the ex-Bardini figure is mentioned three times, as being separate items from a Christie’s auction of 6 July 2006 (the second item on Warren’s list), then from the Bardini auction in London in 1902 (the third item), and also from the Galleria Alinari in Pesaro in 2015 (the fourth from last item).²³ At the top of the group of associated works is a piece that has appeared several times during the past century in the bibliography of private collections and auctions (the Emil W. Weinberger collection, sold in Vienna in 1929, and the Ruth Blumka collection, sold in New York in 1996) and finally ended up in St. Louis, Missouri, in the Phoebe Dent Weil and Mark S. Weil Collection, pledged as an irrevocable gift to the St. Louis Art Museum (2017).²⁴ This *Saint John the Baptist* (fig. 5), which was labelled in 2001 by Boucher as being by Jacopo Sansovino,²⁵ is certainly a replica of the former Bardini terracotta piece, of the same size but with a few variations, and it reinforces the status of the latter as the autograph prototype. Though its execution is decidedly different and less accomplished, the Weil *Baptist* may nevertheless have been produced by an independent artist from the same workshop.

On grounds of quality and style, which are always inescapable, the most successful group of the ‘Meister’s’ terracotta pieces must be limited to three whole figures of Saint John the Baptist in the desert (the ex-Bardini version

in the current exhibition, and the examples in the Bargello and the Wallace Collection), to the bust of *Saint John the Baptist* in Minneapolis (although its state of conservation is compromised), and to the *Horne Knight*. To them can be added two other pieces: the head of the Baptist at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (inv. 6889–1859) which, in recent centuries, has lost the rest of its body and has been reassembled on a half-bust in stucco, shaped and draped in the antique style (as if it were the portrait of a young man; fig. 6);²⁵ and the half-bust of a young man at the Bargello (inv. S537 = M158), cleanly cut below the diaphragm, and less fascinating because the beautiful head is at odds with the banal rendering of the torso, which was evidently delegated to an accomplice (fig. 7). The *Boy with Thorn* (*Spinario*) at the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris, which has already been attributed to the 'Meister' (and later to Jacopo Sansovino) several times, should be included in this group thanks to the full adherence of the style – but it is of lesser quality (fig. 8).²⁶ There are also at least two examples of *Saint Jerome in the Desert*, one in the Bode-Museum in Berlin (inv. 171) and the other in the Seattle Art Museum (inv. 57.90, as a Spanish artifact), but, for reasons of space, it is better to limit ourselves here to the images of Saint John the Baptist and the other youthful subjects that are listed above.²⁷

The great fortune craved by the Bardini, Bargello and Wallace terracotta works, whose replicas were mostly smaller and subject to slight but continuous variations in the pose of the protagonist and in the details of the glimpse of

desert that welcomes him, is important proof of the intelligence and originality of the formulae of the *primitus inventor*. It is also possible that these sculptures had an influence on contemporary painting, as suggested by at least two works by Giuliano Bugiardini (1476–1535) featuring the youthful Saint John the Baptist in the desert (formerly London, Mathiesen Gallery; and Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale), in which he is seated on a rock set against the pastoral background, and is depicted almost the same size as the clay pieces themselves.²⁸ These findings oblige us to retrace – albeit briefly – the origins and developments of the iconography of Saint John the Baptist in Renaissance sculpture, in order to then contextualise the contribution of our terracotta master in the early sixteenth century.

The intense religious and patriotic affection nurtured by Florentine society towards Saint John the Baptist, its greatest patron saint, had produced, from the late thirteenth century, a boom in new figurative ideas – both iconic and narrative – connected with his legend.²⁹ This trend experienced a further explosion during the fifteenth century, when even the more challenging art of sculpture was called upon, through the work of Donatello, to contribute powerfully to the imagery of the 'Forerunner'. After producing two masterpieces in the form of statues in bronze and wood in 1423 and 1438, both with strong personality but in which the Baptist is depicted wearing the traditional clothes of an adult prophet (the first one formerly in Berlin, Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, and today in Moscow, Pushkin Museum;



fig. 6
Benedetto da Rovezzano,
Head of Saint John the Baptist.

Terracotta, c.1540. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



fig. 7
Benedetto da Rovezzano,
Bust of a Young Man.

Terracotta, c.1505–10. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.
© Photographs Department of the Uffizi Galleries, Florence



fig. 8
Workshop of Benedetto
da Rovezzano, *Boy with Thorn*
(*Spinario*).

Terracotta, c.1505. Musée Jacquemart-André – Institut
de France, Paris.
© Studio Sphère Photographes

the second in Venice, at the Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari). Donatello explored, between approximately 1440 and 1442, the possibility of transferring the expression of asceticism and prophecy into the features of an admirable and elegant young man – one who has already been heavily tested by hardship, but retains poise and a resolute attitude – in the large Martelli marble of *Saint John the Baptist* (Bargello). The result was unparalleled, and yet it was a source of inspiration (almost always graceful) for much of the output of Desiderio da Settignano (c.1430–1464), and for a remarkable series of statues of the adolescent Baptist carved in marble by Benedetto da Maiano (1441–1497), Benedetto da Rovezzano, Giovanfrancesco Rustici, and various other Florentine sculptors throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.³⁰ In the meantime, Desiderio had also experimented with the same iconography in more economic productions for domestic furnishings, as attested by a half-bust in painted stucco from the Berlin Museum which went missing in 1945 and which had less successful replicas made after it, by anonymous artists, in painted terracotta, examples of which are now in museums in Washington and Boston.³¹ Here, the handsome, still pre-pubescent prophet, with open lips as in the Donatello marble, no longer wears his hair short and close-cropped, but is instead depicted with a thick mop that has been dishevelled by the wind, giving the subject an increased sense of his life in the wild, and of his spiritual turmoil. The art-historical bibliography in the Italian

language today tends to use the diminutive *Little Saint John* (*San Giovanniino*) for all these figures; in fact, during the Renaissance in Tuscany this name was suited exclusively to Saint John the Baptist as an infant and child. In the first phase of his career, Michelangelo was the creator of a true *Little Saint John*, aged seven or eight years old (1495–6); however, his stupendous marble statue remained hidden for four decades in the houses of the secondary – then princely – branch of the Medici family and was sent secretly in 1537 to Ubeda in Andalusia as a gift from the young Duke Cosimo I to Francisco de los Cobos, secretary to Emperor Charles V. This *Little Saint John* was therefore unable to exert the same pressure on Florentine art as Michelangelo's other masterpieces.³² The former Bardi *Saint John the Baptist* and its teenage brethren from the Bargello and the Wallace Collection pay tribute to the tradition that passes through Donatello, Desiderio and Benedetto da Maiano, but they update it completely and exquisitely, based on the passion for antiquity that was prevalent in the years around 1500. Knowledge of the recently rediscovered *Laocoön* (in Rome in 1506) has been convincingly identified in the chiastic and nimble pose of figures, such as that in the former Bardi piece.³³ We may note here also the no less profound and yet discreet influence of the pathos of the so-called *Dying Alexander*, which is visible in the slightly upturned and inclined head of each of these variants; and also of the *Apollo Belvedere*, which inspires the perfect and classic anatomical canon of each image.

fig. 9

Benedetto da Rovezzano, *Neptune*.

Rome, c.1537–40; © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, lost to the National Trust



the fanatical finish of the flesh and clothing, and the controlled and captivating explosion of ringlets atop the saint's head.

This is undoubtedly the same cultural landscape to which the young Jacopo Sansovino was exposed. This great sculptor, however, drew a heroic impulse from it at a very early age, to the point of being ready to challenge Michelangelo: an instinct that is never found in the 'Meister der Johannesstatuetten'. Moreover, all the modelled works that have come down to us and can be definitively attributed to Sansovino (in wax, clay and metal) reveal an almost innate predisposition towards the *sprezzatura* (the affectation of artlessness), which was now part of the vocabulary of the *Maniera moderna* or modern Italian style. No less gifted from a technical perspective, the 'Meister' was instead accustomed, as a result of his training in fifteenth-century fashion, to make conscientious and pervasive use of the craft, re-cleaning and almost 'licking' his splendid creations until he had concealed and surpassed the freshness of moment of their first invention. These are the characteristics of temperament and conduct that, together with the illuminating recurrence of certain unmistakable types and details between the most refined core of works attributable to Bode's 'Meister' (figs 3 and 4) and the already established output of Benedetto da Rovezzano (figs 9 and 10),³⁴ point to the clear identification of both artists.

Benedetto, who was twelve years older than Sansovino – just enough of an age gap to mark a clear epochal leap in artistic and cultural ed-

ucation between them at that time – had, compared with his talents, a rather unfortunate career and posthumous fame despite the honour of a personal biography in both editions of Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* in 1550 and 1568.³⁵ When still in Italy, he worked also in the service of foreign clients of royal rank (France), and then emigrated to England (in 1519 or soon afterwards), where he spent nearly his entire adulthood (until around or shortly after 1540). Periods of his life and work which did not fall within their respective boundaries were almost neglected by various national bibliographies. These omissions were greatly aggravated by the fact that, in the earlier decades in which he was active, Benedetto devoted himself primarily to the highly refined working of Apuan marble (*di quadro, di ornato and di figura*), while, on the other side of the channel, he much preferred metal casting, urged on by a number of competing factors: the local shortage of stone



fig. 10

Benedetto da Rovezzano, *Candle-bearing Angel for the Tomb of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, then of King Henry VIII*.

Rome, about 1524–9; © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

suitable for his virtuoso talents; the needs and expectations of his great Tudor clientele; and his advancing age, which was unsuited to slaving away at stone. Furthermore, among his indispensable collaborators in England, Benedetto did not find the metallurgical sophistication he had experienced both as an apprentice and master in Tuscany, where the Signoria of the Florentine Republic had turned to him in 1508 to finish the bronze statue of *David* to be sent to France (which Michelangelo had begun six years before but was interrupted by his activity for Pope Julius II).³⁶ Yet another double blow of bad luck for Benedetto was the fact that his two *opera magna*, namely the marble *Ark of Saint John Gualbert* in Florence (1506–13) and the mostly bronze funerary monument for Cardinal Thomas Wolsey and, later, King Henry VIII in England (c.1524–40), remained unfinished, despite his extraordinary efforts, and were then woefully reduced to fragments during the following centuries (fig. 10). Similarly, the statue of the French *David* by Michelangelo and Benedetto (which would have made it possible to verify the quality of the latter's output in metal while he was still in Tuscany) also disappeared. It therefore took the latest modern studies to reconcile the Italian Benedetto with the English Benedetto; that is, the reconciliation of the stone-carver with the metalworker.³⁷ As a result of this centuries-long oversight, the Benedetto who modelled wax, clay and other plastic materials had been inexorably obliterated until recent times. Without the understanding of his ability in these mediums, the Benedetto who must have worked with metal well before his

contribution to Michelangelo's *David*, and then brilliantly executed his English commissions, would be inconceivable. Furthermore, we have enough terracotta figures that are definitively attributed to the contemporary colleagues of Benedetto whose fortunes intersected in various ways with those of the 'Meister' (Montuppi, Rustici and Sansovino), that one could not help but be surprised that the very strange lack of a single terracotta by Benedetto persisted.

The former *Rardino Baptist* and his sister works declare, in my opinion, not only a talented master in his genre, but also a sculptor accustomed to stone like few others. Even without the fact that they are as well finished as Carrara marbles, these terracotta pieces present all the characteristics, the passages and the quirks of an artist who was consumed by the undercuts and by the *sfregature* used in the ornamentation and figures, in order to make them stand out from the background. As is well known, this was one of the principal highlights of the *Ark of Saint John Gualbert*, on which the violence of time and of man was inflicted with particular ease and injury, precisely because of the bold delicacy of those displays of bravura. In our terracotta works, the same sensitivity that Benedetto deployed in his marble pieces is not limited solely to the articulated interplay of the laminated rocks, or to self-satisfaction in the curly masses of hair, but it governs the tactile relationships between the half-naked bodies and hair itself, the fur coats and the rocks. Here, then, are arms and legs completely turned in their various movements; lower layers of a fleece falling here or there with feigned negligence; hems of fleeces coming off





chest, shoulders and armpits, indulging themselves by creating cracks, crevices and passages – for example, that at the right breast of the Bargello Baptist. And here, again, are the tapering, well-separated fingers and toes; the healthy, sharp clusters of teeth; the turgid knots of animal skins, rendered almost as bows of precious cloth atop the shoulders.

The surface effects achieved by such a 'polishing' of the clay are so convincing that they almost compensate for the partial or integral loss of the ancient pigmentation that all these figures have suffered. In the French catalogue of the Bardini sale in London (1902), the dealer noted of the Baptist in his possession (with a sensitivity that we tend to disown today) that 'this statuette has been coloured and still retains the colour, which aimed to imitate the bronze by mixing gold leaf with paint, creating a magnificent patina effect. In the National Museum of Bargello in Florence, there is a statuette of the same subject, of the same size, in a different pose, with the original colours

badly abraded through cleaning.'³⁸ The fictive bronze patina of the Bardini Baptist no longer exists and, therefore, its age can no longer be assessed; however, perhaps the colouring really was as odd as Bardini believed. It does seem possible that the bronze imitation layer, as with the Wallace specimen, was consistent with the intent of a 'monochrome' sculptor from that period working between *marfée* and metal.

In comparison with its present state, photographs from when the Baptist was with Bardini reveal – together with a suggestive, but later, gilded metal halo that has since been removed – two small integrated gaps: one of the rock (a lower corner on the front) and one of the right hand (the index finger and half of the bow). The wooden platform in the form of a rock, which stands largely underneath the terracotta group, has been preserved, and it looks like a beautiful addition from the Baroque period.

³⁷ See L. Principi, *Il Museo dei bronzi etruschi: Sculture di Lorenzo sculture in terracotta agli ordini della Mostra, Perugia, 2020* (with further bibliography).

³⁸ Florence, *Historical Archives of the Estate of Ugo Bardi*, Annunziatore, 36, Dec. 1891/1892, 1899–1903.

³⁹ *Catalogue des objets d'art, antiquités du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance provenant de la collection Bardini de Florence pour la vente aux enchères de Christie ... le 27 Mai 1902*, 2 vols, Paris, 1902, vol. [I], p. 97, no. 578, and vol. [2], pl. 43; *Catalogue of a Choice Collection of Pictures and Other Works of Art, Chiefly Italian, of Medieval and Renaissance Time, the Property of Signor Stefano Bardini of*

Florence ... Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 1902, p. 181, no. 554 (note the difference in the lot numbers for the same item between the French and English editions).

⁴⁰ L. B. Saglio, *Catalogue des E. Musée National de France (Palais des Arts)*, Paris, 1898, p. 412, no. 163.

⁴¹ R. Rade, *Die Florentiner Thronbildnisse vom Anfang der Hochrenaissance*, *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, n.s. 13, 1901–2, pp. 3–4; W. Rade, *Florentiner Bildnisse der Renaissance*, Berlin, 1902, pp. 114–15, and 116, fig. 139; *Ibid.*, 2nd edn, Berlin, 1903, pp. 110–11 and fig. 306; *Ibid.*, 3rd edn, Berlin, 1903, pp. 110–11 and fig. 306; *Ibid.*, 4th edn, Berlin, 1923, pp. 303–4 and fig. 137; *For the first time*

- by Pierotti, see F. Caglioti, 'Il "San Giovanni" mediceo di Michelangelo', da Firenze a Olanda, *Prospettive*, 143, 2012, pp. 2–81.
- ¹⁴ See F. Caglioti, *Beneditto di Bernardino Graziosi, da Benedetto da Rossellino . . .*, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste . . . vers 1500–1510*, in *Diagnostici di Duccio di Caglioti*, edn. cat., Paris, 2012, pp. 22–7.
- ¹⁵ C. von Faberzy, 'Kirkliches Verzeichnis italienischer Bild- und Tonsachen des neun. Bis zum Beginn des Quattrocento', in *Jahrbuch der Königlich preussischen Antiquarischen Anstalten*, 30, 1899, Beibl. 1, pp. 1–30; p. 48, no. 141.
- ¹⁶ J. Pope-Hennessy and R. Lightbown, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 3 vols, London, 1964, vol. 1, pp. 191–6, nos. 169–76, and vol. 3, pp. 336–7, figs 330–37.
- ¹⁷ C. Gamba, 'Il palazzo e la rucella Basso a Firenze', *Archivio*, 1, 1933, pp. 162–165; p. 176; C. Gamba, *Il Museo Basso a Firenze*, edn. cat., Florence, 1961, pp. 43–4, no. 47, reproduced.
- ¹⁸ U. Middeldorf, 'New Attributions to G. F. Bassi', *Burlington Magazine*, 66, 1915, pp. 78–82, pp. 78–81 and notes 33–8, reprinted in U. Middeldorf, *Benedetto di Serlio, Due in Uno, Collected Essays*, 3 vols, Florence, 1979–82, vol. 1, 1979–1981, 1979–81, pp. 199–210, pp. 209–10 and notes 32–8.
- ¹⁹ G. Gentili, 'Agosto maestro fiorentino tra il 1500 e il 1510 (Maestro del San Giovanni mediceo, San Giovanni aldobrandesco, etc.) . . .', in *La chiesa del centro arte della terra e nella terra fiorentina dal XV al XVI secolo*, edn. cat., Florence, 1981, pp. 97–8, no. 2.8; G. Gentili, 'Maestro del San Giovanni' (Jacopo Sansovino?), *Giardini che ospitano un'arte . . .*, in P. Barocci (ed.), *Il Giardino & San Marco maestri e compagni del giovane Michelangelo*, edn. cat., Milan, 1992, pp. 120–33, no. 37.
- ²⁰ B. Boucher, *The Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*, 3 vols, New Haven and London, 1991, vol. 1, pp. 6–7 and notes 27–9 (p. 246), and vol. 2, pp. 333–34, nos. 1–2, and figs 9–12; B. Boucher, 'Attributed to Jacopo Sansovino . . . Scull of St. John the Baptist . . .', in R. Bonatti et al. (eds), *Earth and Fire: Italian Terracotta Sculpture from Donatello to Gino*, edn. cat., New Haven and London, 2001, pp. 126–5, no. 24.
- ²¹ F. Caglioti, 'Il perduto David mediceo di Giannantonio Bazzi e il David Polizotto del Louvre', *Prospettive*, 85–4, 1996, pp. 88–103, p. 92, note 76 (p. 101); F. Caglioti, 'Beneditto da Rossellino in England: New Light on the Cardinal Wolsey–Henry VIII Tomb', in C. M. Stern, Horst-Hall and L. A. Waldman (eds), *The Anglo-Italian Renaissance Art for the Early Tudors*, New Haven and London, 2012, pp. 177–202, pp. 193–5 and note 61 (p. 202), and figs 65–7; Caglioti, 'Beneditto di Bernardino Graziosi, da Benedetto da Rossellino'.
- ²² E. Schenckel, *Statuarische Museen zu Berlin. Bildwerke des Kaiser-Friedrich-Museums. Die italienischen und spanischen Bildwerke der Renaissance und des Barock*, vol. 3, *Die Bildwerke in Stein*, Bild. von und Werke zweiter Hälfte, Berlin, 1933, pp. 149–9, no. 3011.
- ²³ A. Venturi, *Artists in Rome: Andrea*, vol. 10, *In the shadow of Michelangelo*, plate 1, Milan, 1932, p. 72, note 1, and p. 74, fig. 82.
- ²⁴ Schenckel, *Statuarische Museen zu Berlin*, pp. 146–7, for Middeldorf, see note 30.
- ²⁵ J. Plüsch, 'Toscanische Plastik des Quattrocento (mediceo) Werke Francesco di Giorgio und Andrea del Verrocchio', *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Antiquarischen Anstalten in Wien*, 39 (= n.s. 3),

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- ²⁶ M. Weinberger, 'A Bronze Statue in the Frick Collection and its Connection with Michelangelo', *Gesamtes des Kunst- und Kunstwissenschaft*, 10, 1952, pp. 103–14, 104–6, for the attribution to Francesco di Giorgio, see *The Frick Collection: An Illustrated Catalogue of the Works of Art in the Collection of Henry Clay Frick, vol. 5: Sculpture of the Renaissance and Later Periods, 1400–1700*, New York, 1953, pp. 17–20, no. 3, and pl. VII; G. Antonic, 'Storie considerazioni su alcune sculture di Francesco di Giorgio', *Prospettive*, 172, 2018, pp. 31–43, pp. 37–32 and notes (pp. 38–41), and pp. 34–9, figs 33–9.
- ²⁷ G. Gentili, 'Maestro del San Giovanni Mediceo, Mediceo da Benedetto da Rossellino . . .', in A. Barocci (ed.), *A Taste for Sculpture: Works, Treasures and Jewels (1600 to 1800)*, *Giardini, Catalogue*, edn. cat., London, 2014, pp. 6–13, nos. 1 and 2.
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- ³⁰ Warren, *The Wallace Collection Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, vol. 1, p. 62 and notes 9, 10 and 20 (p. 66).
- ³¹ L. R. Mann, *Italian, High century, Florence, Saint John the Baptist . . .*, in L. R. Mann and Elizabeth Winkler (eds), *Learning to See: Renaissance and Baroque Masterworks from the Rhode Island Red and Mark S. Ford Collection*, edn. cat., St. Louis, Mo., 2017, pp. 231–33, no. 73.
- ³² Boucher, 'Attributed to Jacopo Sansovino'.
- ³³ Cf. Pope-Hennessy and Lightbown, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, vol. 1, p. 196, no. 176, and vol. 3, p. 337, fig. 337.
- ³⁴ Gentili, 'Agosto maestro fiorentino', p. 97; Gentili, 'Maestro del San Giovanni', p. 122 and fig. 71; Boucher, *Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*.
- ³⁵ For Berlin, see Bode, 'Ein Florentiner Thorbildner', p. 4 and fig. 3; Schenckel, *Statuarische Museen zu Berlin*, pp. 146–7, no. 271; For Seattle, see <https://art.museum.washington.edu/object/151770/saint-john-the-baptist>.
- ³⁶ Cf. L. Pagotto, *Giuliano Pagotto*, Torino 1967, esp. p. 195, no. 8, and pp. 211–12, no. 45, figs 8 and 43.
- ³⁷ M. Arnsperg-Collin, 'Giovannino Battista: A Study in Renaissance Religious Symbolism', *Art Bulletin*, 37, 1955, pp. 45–101, 51; Arnsperg-Collin, 'Giovannino Battista: A Supplement', *Art Bulletin*, 45, 1963, pp. 319–26.
- ³⁸ See Caglioti, 'Il "San Giovanni" mediceo di Michelangelo', see all.
- ³⁹ Schenckel, *Statuarische Museen zu Berlin*, p. 9, no. 1791 (as 'Donatello?'); Clarence Kennedy, personal communication to F. Schenckel, *Abd. las perlags Desiderius S. Bayley, Johannes des Trübs, Basse, Entzehrungswort und die Flucht . . .*, *Ged. of Desiderius da Settignano*, in *SMB-Original: Italien: Deutschland der Sammlungen*, 2006.
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⁷ Caglioti, 'Benvenuto da Roverzano in England'.

⁸ Caglioti, *Benvenuto da Roverzano in England*, ed. [1], p. 91, no. 529, and vol. [2], p. 43.

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Pierino di Bartolomeo di ser Piero d'Antonio da Vinci, called

Pierino da Vinci (Vinci, 1530–1553, Pisa)

Two Putti Playing with a Fish

c.1545

Marble carved in the round

67.7 × 31.2 × 32.6 cm; 26 5/8 × 12 1/4 × 12 5/8 in

Provenance:

Cosimo I de' Medici, Grand Duke
of Tuscany (1519–1574), Villa
Medici dell'Olmo at Castello, near
Florence;

Private collection, France, 1980s,
by whom sold to

Private collection, Switzerland.

Literature:

G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori
e architetti* nelle edizioni del 1550 e 1568, ed.
R. Barocchi and P. Barocchi, 11 vols, Florence,
1966–97, vol. 5, 1984, p. 231.



Pierino da Vinci

Two Putti Playing with a Fish

Francesco Caglioti

WORKS BY PIERINO DA VINCI, THE SON OF ONE OF the great Leonardo's half-brothers, are very rare, in terms of both quality and quantity. His, in fact, was an unjustly brief life, but one marked by an extraordinary gift for sculpture. In the biography that Giorgio Vasari dedicated to him in the 1568 edition of his *Lives*, a few years after Pierino's death in 1551, the richest and most reliable source of information on him, the double destiny of fugacity and talent provides, from the beginning, an effective leitmotif to the narration – both, according to the author, having been predicted to the three-year-old child by two religious men who were visiting his father's house.¹

In spite of all the caution that such factors of tyrant time and great quality would advise, studies of the last century have been very optimistic in augmenting Pierino's catalogue, compared with the one compiled by Vasari. It therefore happens that one of the few books on him (a collection of papers given at a 1990 study day in Vinci devoted to the artist and published in 1995) is full of spurious sculptures ranging from the sixteenth to the late nineteenth century.² Amongst the attributions to which more space is given, there are two that have, in the meantime, been definitely resolved in favour of Giovanfrancesco Susini (1585–1653), active almost a century after Pierino: the marble *Saint John the Baptist*, formerly in the collection of the dealer Piero Tozzi in New York and now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.,³ and two small bronzes of *Discochus* and *Venus* in the Ca' d'Oro, Venice.⁴

It is therefore important for the knowledge of Pierino's oeuvre to be able to present in this entry a rediscovered work that is not only a manifesto of the artist's style and quality, but is also identifiable with one of those pieces mentioned by Vasari that has since gone unnoticed – that is, the 'due putti che s'abbracciano l'un l'altro e, strignendo pesci, gli fanno schizzare acqua per bocca' (two children who are embracing each other and squeezing fish, causing water to spout from their mouths). They were sculpted by Pierino almost at the beginning of his brief career, in the workshop of marbles over which his second master, Niccolò Tribolo (1497–1550; the first was Baccio Bandinelli, 1488–1560), presided at Castello, near Florence, where fountains and other spectacular garden decorations were created for this celebrated villa belonging to Duke Cosimo I de' Medici.⁵

While *Two Putti Playing with a Fish* remains today in optimal and commendably extraordinary condition when compared with most sculptures intended for outdoor display, a careful examination of the marble reveals that it has paid a legitimate price to the weather – a fact that confirms its antiquity. In the first place, the overall surface of the group is abraded. Moreover, the heads of both figures have been re-attached (that of the little girl only at the base of the neck, that of the little boy also below the chin), as well as both noses and the right leg of the boy (at the knee and just above the foot). Last, the left side of the sculpture's base displays an area of restoration of about 5 cm wide extending from the





fig. 1

Pierino da Vinci (or after him),
Two Putti Playing with a Fish.

TERRACOTTA, 15th century.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

front edge towards the back, so as almost to reach the boy's right foot.

The group represents two children of about two years of age, almost naked, standing on a low rocky base and embracing each other while squeezing a large fish with an open mouth, through which water would once have spouted (in the centre of the underside of the base is the circular hole of a pipe, now blocked with metal). The young girl, on the viewer's right, is securely rooted to the ground, although, with the hint of a smile on her face, appears to be about to move a step forward with her left foot; the young boy, also smiling, is almost blocking her since, through a considerable torsion in her direction, he puts both hands upon her shoulders while forcefully resting his left foot

on a tree stump, and turns his face towards the centre of the composition. The upper part of his bent leg, almost conformed above the stump, is employed to allow the body of the fish, sliding downwards, adhere to it; the fish's tail is held by the boy's right hand, while the girl's right hand gently squeezes its head, almost helping it to spout water. The twining of the bodies, skilfully studied in their immaturity and tenderly modelled, is rendered even more wonderful by the interplay of the long, thin strips of drapery that apparently have no purpose other than an ornamental one, coiling round the two bodies like a sash, before reaching the ground at the front, to the left and right sides of the fish and the leg supporting it. It would be entirely idle to follow the precise course of the drapery, which is possibly meant to represent a single length of fabric and to bind the figures still closer together.

The motif depicted in this group has been known in the literature on Pierino and Tribolo for over a century thanks to a terracotta in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (since 1910; inv. no. A.72-1910; fig. 1), whose main difference with the marble – of very close but not exact dimensions (the terracotta being 65.1 cm high, that is, around 2.5 cm shorter) – is the inversion of the two children's heads.⁶ Comparison between the two works reveals it is the marble heads that are rendered in the most coherent and functional way (the girl directing her gaze towards the boy, rather than both children looking at the ground); moreover, when in 1932 the terracotta was published in the first illustrated catalogue of the

V&A's sculptures, the heads were inverted (fig. 2), precisely as we find them in the marble (the registered height was 65.5 cm).⁷ Confirmation of this revealing connection comes from at least two other examples, both in bronze (65.8/66 and 66.2 cm high), which are especially close to the terracotta as it appeared in the 1932 photograph: the first was sold at auction in London in 1996 (fig. 3) and again in 1999, and the second in 2005.⁸

Additional significant discrepancies exist between the marble and the terracotta (fig. 1) – the majority of which are due to the diversity of materials and the respective techniques employed – such as, in the terracotta, the less detailed fish, the more agile working of the drapery and the heels of both right feet, which do not touch the ground. But further differences, starting with the simple disparity between their dimensions, prove that the V&A terracotta cannot have been the direct model for the marble under discussion: both the children in the London pair are male, and the one on the viewer's right wears an additional piece of fabric that entirely wraps round his torso above the navel; other differences are discernible in the faces and hair, the latter much thicker in the terracotta. Finally, the bases are dissimilar: although inspired by the same sort of rocky invention, the terracotta is not shaped with the same breadth and rhythm as the marble.

Much closer, as noted, are the terracotta and the twin bronzes (fig. 2 and fig. 3), the only clearly visible modification being between their draperies, which in the bronzes mod-



fig. 2
Pierino da Vinci (or after him),
Two Putti Playing with a Fish
(fig. 1 prior to 1964).

Terracotta, 18th century.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

estly cover the two children's genitals, thus prescribing to a very late fashion reminiscent of the second half of the nineteenth century in France.

Having for a long time, in twentieth-century studies, been considered an autograph model by Pierino, in recent decades the London terracotta has been discussed on the basis of purely technical examinations and conse-



fig. 3
After Pierino da Vinci,
Two Putti Playing with a Fish.

Bronze, 19th century. Sold at Christie's London,
2 July 1996, lot 190.
© Christie's



fig. 4
 Niccolò Tribolo (or after him),
Two Putti Playing with a Goose.

Terracotta, 16th century, © Victoria
 and Albert Museum, London

quently considered a product of the nineteenth century, although one whose invention dates back to the sixteenth.⁹ This may well be, since, as I have mentioned, the two bronze versions are nineteenth century and would have certainly been preceded and accompanied by examples in softer materials. All the variations that may be remarked in the terracotta when compared with the marble, however, also relate not only to the style of the sixteenth century but, more specifically, to the world of Florentine fountains created towards the middle of that century by the great sculptors at the Medici court, especially the capomastro Tribolo and his most able collaborator, Pierino.

The same conclusion may be drawn about a second pair of terracotta children, close in terms of invention and size to the marble sculpture addressed in the present entry – with the inversion of the gender roles between the two figures and the introduction of a goose in place of the fish – also in the Victoria and Albert Museum (since 1863; inv. no. 8527-1863; fig. 4). This group was repeatedly attributed to either Tribolo or Pierino,¹⁰ before being declassified in the same way as the terracotta *Two Boys with a Fish* (fig. 1).¹¹ But the existence of at least one similar marble version from the XVIth century, attributable to the workshop of Tribolo (Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, inv. no. 2023; 70 cm high, with the variation of a turtle instead of the tree stump), reassures us about the real origin of this composition.¹²

From the second quarter of the fifteenth century, in the wake of ancient models, which would

have been admired in Rome by artists and patrons alike, Tuscan sculpture intended for outdoor spaces rediscovered the infinite resources of the theme of the naked putto (with or without wings) playing with an animal, usually a fish or bird. Soon enough, fish imposed themselves on fountains as elements specifically suited to spouting water. In this context, as usual, the role of *primus inventor* belongs surely to Donatello: the Victoria and Albert Museum houses a bronze *spiritello* or putto with great wings and a large fish on his shoulders (inv. 475-1864) which, whilst it may not be autograph, was certainly created in his workshop and is his invention (c.1435-40; fig. 5).¹³ During the early Rinascimento, the most famous creation within this genre was undoubtedly the one achieved by Andrea del Verrocchio in the so-called *Spiritello with a Dolphin* for a fountain at the Medici





fig. 5

Workshop of Donatello, *Spiritello with a Fish*.

Bronze, c.1465–80. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

villa at Careggi near Florence (c.1470–75; today in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence), in which the theme of play produced by spouting water becomes one with that of the small, running winged figure, balanced only on one foot (fig. 6).¹⁴ In the meantime, also for the Medici, Antonio Rossellino had realised, according to Vasari, 'alcuni fanciulli che sbarrano delfini che gettano acqua' (some children opening the mouths of dolphins spouting water) for the marble fountain in the centre of the garden of their town palace in the Via Larga (today Palazzo Medici Riccardi). The ensemble, now in the Palazzo Pitti, has been severely altered in the middle to high part and therefore lacks those children intent on opening the dolphins' mouths, which may have been made in marble or perhaps bronze.¹⁵

When this tradition was once more picked up in the sixteenth century by the Medici, who became first dukes and then grand dukes of Tuscany, the sculptors at their court started to experiment also with compositions that were formed of more than one figure, such as those seen in the two groups with a fish or a goose, discussed above. By the end of the nineteenth century it was already noted that the motif of an embrace between two putti focused on a common object dates back once more to Donatello:¹⁶ above the Assumption in pietra serena in Santa Croce, Florence (formerly an altar reeredos for the Cavalcanti family, c.1433–5), the master added a few extremely lively terracotta *spiritelli*, comprised of two couples embracing each other and standing at the two corners in the guise of *acrotéria*; here we find the source of inspiration both for an object held up by children while it is in the process of slipping down between them (a great festoon in this case) and for the raised, twisted and protruding legs (fig. 7). For sixteenth-century sculptors, including Tribolo and Piccinno, it was, however, impossible not to return to these models in light of the great renewal of the *Maniera moderna*, or modern Italian style, which had, meanwhile, affirmed itself in Rome. Recent texts have correctly, therefore, invoked the Michelangelesque series of couples of naked, playing putti in faux marble inserted behind the seated Prophets and Sphs in the frescoed vault of the Sistine Chapel (1508–12).¹⁷ Even though none of these pairs, crafted twice for each seat from the same cartoon reversed, is playing with an animal or an-

other mobile object, it is useful to observe that they already explore the male-female alternation and rotation of extended legs (a motif very dear to Michelangelo). Particularly significant in this respect are the couples flanking the Prophets Zechariah and Isaiah.

Although the attribution to Pierino of the London terracotta *Two Boys with a Fish* was evidently favoured by the possibility of a relationship with the marble group by the adolescent sculptor at the Villa di Castello that was described by Vasari as 'two children who are embracing each other and squeezing fish, causing water to spout from their mouths', doubts have been raised concerning the allusion to more than one fish.¹⁸ Such accuracy, requiring Vasari not only to have carefully examined the sculpture as well as the thousands of other artworks he mentions, but also to have before him a precise reference image of it at the moment of writing, is lacking in common sense twice over. With great difficulty, in fact, could the two fountain putti be able to embrace each other while squeezing more than one fish of a size substantial enough to be able to hold a sufficient amount of water. Furthermore, over the whole of the sixteenth century, no such groups are known by the hand of other sculptors, not even within the vast landscape of possibilities offered by the fountains and other garden ornaments at Castello and Boboli.¹⁹

The composition and motif of the marble carving under discussion, its execution, and its quality not only agree with Pierino's oeuvre, but relate in particular to his early phase, to which



fig. 6

Andrea del Verrocchio,
Spiritello with a Dolphin.

Bronze, c.1470–72.
Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.
© Photo Library of the Florentine
Civic Museum, Florence.

Vasari attributes the *Two Putti with a Fish* at Castello that has long since disappeared from its original location. In particular, the idea of a monolithic group for a fountain comprising more than one figure standing on a rock, with the purpose of conveying a single spout of water, thrust forward from the centre of the ensemble, would later be developed to its maximum degree in the *Young River God* (c.1548–9, now at the Louvre) for the villa at Pozzuoli belonging to Don Pedro de Toledo, viceroy of Naples and Duke Cosimo I's father-in-law (fig. 8).²⁰ Here, amongst the three children helping the main subject to lift and spill his vase, two are female,



fig. 7

Donatello, *Two Spiritelli*.

Terracotta, partially gilded, c.1433–5, Santa Croce,
Florence (above the Ghiberti's Annunciation).
© FLC (Religious Buildings Fund) at the Italian Ministry
of the Interior.



fig. 8
Pierino da Vinci,
Young River God.

Marble, c.1540-41.
Musée du Louvre, Paris.
© RMN-Grand Palais /
Benoît Lévandowski



fig. 9
Pierino da Vinci,
Puer mingens with a mask.

Marble, shortly before 1543.
Museo Nazionale d'Arte Medievale e Moderna, Arezzo
© The Italian Ministry of Culture - Regional Directorate
of Museums of Tuscany, Florence

according to that gender alternation that we have already verified. Pierino's predilection for thin drapery lines that run along youthful bodies and then, having achieved their purpose, fall perpendicularly to the ground, announced itself in early work (as testified by Vasari), such as the *puer mingens with a mask*, sculpted for Cristofano Rinieri and today in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Medievale e Moderna, Arezzo (fig. 9).²³ The sensitive treatment of the rocky base of the *Two Putti with a Fish*, with visible traces of tooth chisel and open drilling, finds a suitable point of comparison in another early work, not



fig. 10
Mino da Fiesole,
Young Saint John the Baptist.

Marble, c.1478. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

mentioned by Vasari but accepted in all modern studies: the *Pan and Daphne* relief in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.²⁴

The very young and exceptionally talented sculptor exhibits in our group his ambitious programme as a virtuoso marble-carver, diversifying the plastic consistency and the surface of things with the greatest appearance of naturalness, while at the same time revealing the culture and experience of an artist who has clearly studied some of the noblest models of fifteenth-century child sculpture, first and foremost amongst them those by Desiderio da Settignano (c.1430-1464) and Mino da Fiesole (1429-1484) (fig. 10). From such masters, in fact, Pierino took inspiration not only for the puffy and cheery faces but especially for the serpentine and sparse locks of hair, very close



to the skull, which, in his slightly later and almost last works, became thicker and embedded in *chiusura*. The shape of the heads by the sixteenth-century sculptor, however, could never be assimilated to those of Desiderio or Mino, since Pierino always, and from the start, remained faithful to the new, Michelangelo-like, anatomical and aesthetic canon, one that sought to expand the upper and rear part of the head, thus almost creating, when seen in profile, a perfect triangulation between this, the forehead and the chin.

It is impossible at this stage to say at which point *Two Putti with a Fish*, noticed by Vasari at Castello, left its original seat for good, but, since the Medici dynasty kept and used the

villa until its extinction in 1737, there is no reason to doubt that the group remained in place until then. This conclusion is reinforced by the state of the marble, which implies its presence in the grounds, in a functioning state, for several generations. It is known, however, that with the arrival in Tuscany of the new Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty, great transformations and later decay befell Castello – a state that did not change until the twentieth century – and brought about the loss of many furnishings.²¹ This leads us to believe that the disappearance of *Two Putti with a Fish* from their original site and their arrival on the market would have taken place between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

²¹ G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori e architetti nel secolo xvj* (1550 e 1568), ed. R. Barriani and P. Barriani, 11 vols, Florence, 1966–97, vol. 5, 1984, pp. 229–37. For an updated biography of Pierino, and the essential bibliography, see A. Giannotti, *Pier Francesco di Bartolomeo, detto Pierino da Vinci*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 82, Rome, 2002, pp. 312–17; also online <http://www.treccani.it/>.

²² M. Gualtiero (ed.), *Pierino da Vinci: atti della giornata di studio*, Vinci, *Archivio Lorenzini*, 26 maggio 1990, Florence, 1995.

²³ Re-attributed to Susini in F. Cagliati, 'Il San Giovannino studioso di Michelangelo, da Firenze a Olanda', *Prospettiva*, 143, 2002, pp. 2–10; pp. 5–6 and notes 34–9 (pp. 50–64), and pp. 34–7, figs 30–33. It was acquired by the NGJ in 2003, as a consequence of my attribution to that sculptor via written expertise.

²⁴ Re-attributed to Susini in J. D. Dräger, 'Two Roman Statuettes by Giovanni Francesco Susini, son Pierino da Vinci', *Burlington Magazine*, 150, 2008, pp. 679–84.

²⁵ Vasari, *Le Vite*, vol. 5, p. 238.

²⁶ Pope-Hennessy and R. Lightbown, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 3 vols, London, 1964, vol. 2, pp. 442–3, no. 473, and vol. 3, p. 276, fig. 466. See also the online museum catalogue: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O6275/two-boys-with-a-fish-group-da-vinci-pierino/>.

²⁷ E. MacLagan and M. H. Longhurst, *Victoria and Albert Museum, Department of Architecture and Sculpture. Catalogue of Italian*

Sculpture, 2 vols, London, 1932, Text, p. 312, and Plates, p. 104, pl. 6a.

²⁸ Christie's, London, *Important European Sculpture and Works of Art* (...), *Tuesday 2 July 1996*, London, 1996, p. 68, no. 199 (65.8 cm); Christie's, London, *The Secret Courtbook: The S&P Collection, Wednesday 9 June 1999*, London, 1999, p. 125, no. 296 (66 cm); Christie's, London, *A Fine and Rare Square: a Private Collection* (...), *Thursday 19 November 2003–Friday 21 November 2003*, London, 2003, p. 68, no. 453 (62.2 cm).

²⁹ <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O6273/two-boys-with-a-fish-group-da-vinci-pierino/>.

³⁰ MacLagan and Longhurst, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, Text, pp. 142–3, and Plates, p. 104, pl. 6c; and Pope-Hennessy and Lightbown, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, vol. 2, pp. 407–8, no. 467, and vol. 3, p. 276, fig. 465.

³¹ <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O6270/sculpture-tributo-niccolo/>.

³² M. D'Oss, 'Dati alla galleria e al museo dello Stato (1945–1950). ... Gallerie di Roma, Galleria Nazionale Romana', *Archivio d'arte*, 4–4, 39, 1954, pp. 361–6; p. 363; E. Kersch-Appold, *Pierino da Vinci*, Munich, 2006, p. 256, note 788.

³³ Pope-Hennessy and Lightbown, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, vol. 1, pp. 79–80, no. 475, and vol. 3, pp. 56–7, figs 82–3. See also <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O6288/winged-paolo-with-a-fantastic-statue-by-donatello/>.

³⁴ Most recently F. Cagliati, 'Il "Piero col delitto"/The Winged

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¹¹ F. Caglioti, *Donatello e i Medici: Storia del David e della Giuditta*, 2 vols., Florence, 2000, vol. 1, pp. 179–78, and vol. 2, figs 323–44; F. Caglioti, *Due giardini medicei di Via degli Strozzi: monumenti in cune alla Scuderie del Moro*, in G. Caporchi, A. Fani, D. Hekking and V. Salasini (eds), *Palazzo Pitti: la reggia rinascimentale*, edn. cat., Florence, 2003, pp. 364–83.

¹² W. Bode, 'Versuche der Ausbildung des Genies in der florentiner Plastik des Quattrocento', in *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, II, 1890, pp. 95–107, p. 95, reproduced p. 104 (linked to the London group with a group attributed on that occasion to the 'Master of the Urry Child').

¹³ Kasch-Arshfeldt, *Pierino da Vinci*, p. 238 and note 715.

¹⁴ Most recently, ibid., p. 254.

¹⁵ For an overall and updated view, see A. Giannotti, *Il nuovo di natura: Niccolò Tribolo e le origini di un genere. La scultura di animali nella Firenze del Cinquecento*, Florence, 2007.

¹⁶ See, especially, S. Masella Guida, 'Don Pedro Suarez de Toledo: ritratto di un principe nell'Europa rinascimentale', *Samarcanda*, 81–2 (s.s. 21–2), 2006–9, pp. 239–353, pp. 251–2 and notes 35–6, and F. Loffredo, 'La villa di Pedro de Toledo a Pescosolani e una nuova ipotesi per il Fiume di Piero da Vinci al Louvre', *Avvicinamento meridionale*, 2, 2011, pp. 93–113.

¹⁷ Vasari, *Le vite*, vol. 5, p. 235; U. Middeldorf, 'Additions to the Work of Pierino da Vinci', *Burlington Magazine*, 53, 1913, pp. 298–301 and 304–6; p. [301], pl. II B, and p. 305; Kasch-Arshfeldt, *Pierino da Vinci*, esp. pp. 307–12, no. 4, and notes, and figs 4–5.

¹⁸ Middeldorf, 'Additions to the Work of Pierino da Vinci', p. [301], pl. II A, and p. 305; Kasch-Arshfeldt, *Pierino da Vinci*, esp. pp. 97–102, no. 2, and notes, and fig. 2.

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Pompeo Leoni (Milan, c.1533–1608, Madrid)

Portrait of Luis Quijada (c.1515–1570)

c.1565–70

Alabaster

78 × 53 × 24 cm; 30 3/4 × 20 7/8 × 9 1/2 in (including the pedestal)

65 × 53 × 24 cm; 25 5/8 × 20 7/8 × 9 1/2 in (without the pedestal)

Provenance

D. Antonio López y López, 1st Marquis of Comillas (1817–1883);

By descent to D. Juan Antonio Güell y López, Count of Güell, 3rd Marquis of Comillas (1874–1958);

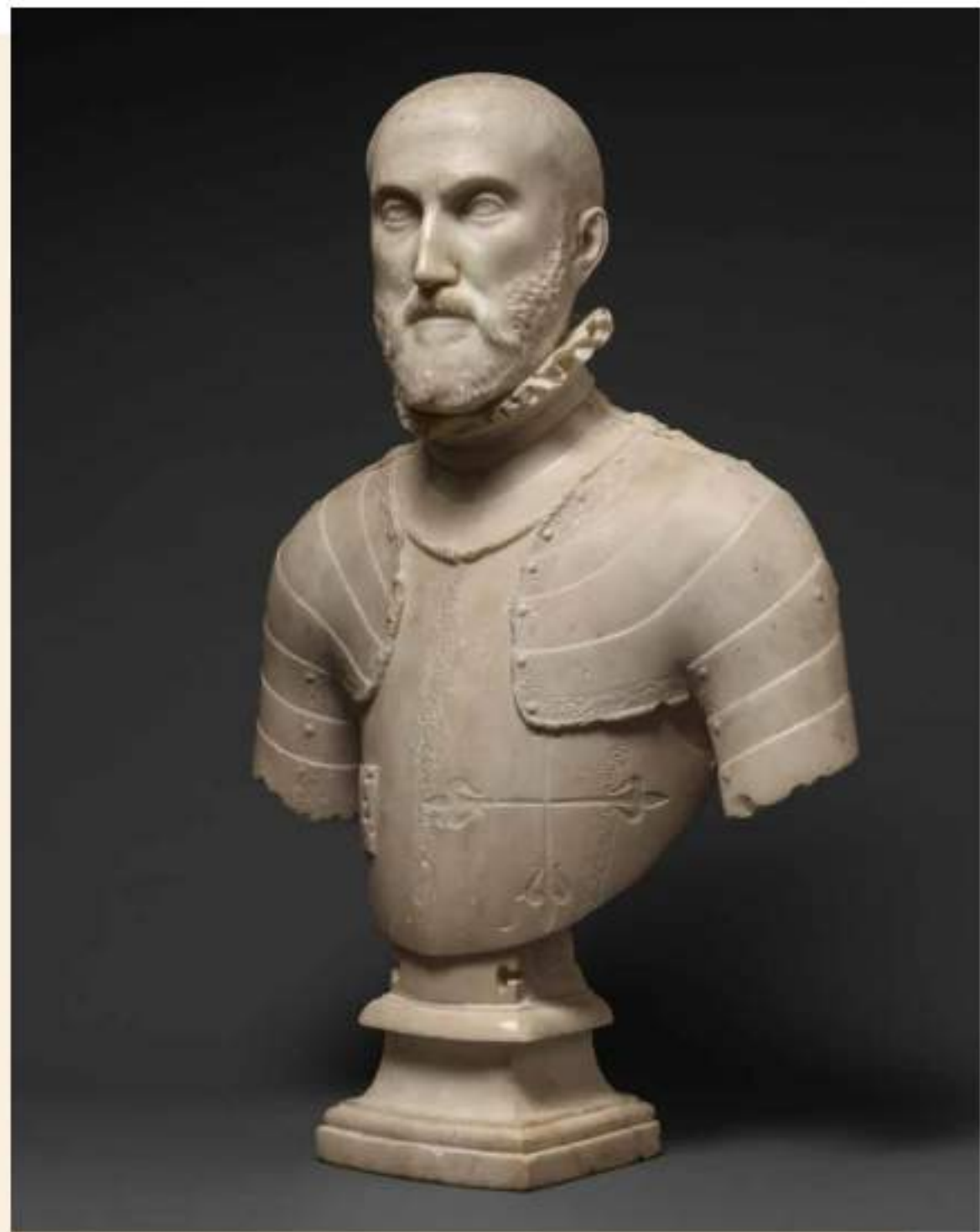
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Pompeo Leoni

Portrait of Luis Quijada

Rosario Coppel

IN 2005 THE CURRENT AUTHOR PUBLISHED a study of an alabaster bust of an unknown sitter by Pompeo Leoni. Initial research led me to two prominent contemporary figures: Luis de Ávila, Marquis of Mirabel, who was close to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, a diplomat for the Spanish Crown. Both men collected sculpture, both were evidently admirers of the father and son artists Leone and Pompeo Leoni and both belonged to the Order of Alcántara or Calatrava (one of the few clues left by the artist was the cross of one of these military orders carved on the breastplate).¹

My recent acquaintance with a painted portrait in the Collegiate Church of San Luis at Villagarcía de Campos (Valladolid) has led me to link the bust instead to another figure from the same period. I argue below that the subject of Leoni's bust is not Luis de Ávila or Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, but Luis Quijada (c.1515–1570). Luis Quijada – as he was known at the time – belonged to a traditional military family. His grandfather, also called Luis Quijada, served under the Catholic Monarchs and his father, Gutierre Quijada, fought on Charles V's side in the War of the Communes. This family history accounts for his entry into the imperial entourage at a very young age, around 1522.

Serving first as a page, then as soldier and steward, Luis eventually became one of Charles V's closest and most beloved counsellors, accompanying him on military expeditions to Africa, Germany, Italy, France and Flanders, and in his final move to the monastery at Yuste. He married Magdalena de Ulloa (1525–1598) in

1549 and settled in his hometown, Villagarcía de Campos, in a castle-palace (now in ruins), fifty-three kilometres from Valladolid. He and his wife took charge of the education of Juan of Austria (the natural son of the emperor and Bárbara Blombergh), who lived in Villagarcía de Campos for five years until the boy was taken to Guadalupe de Yuste, his father wishing to be close to him in his final retreat.²

The facts of Luis Quijada's biography are scant. Even his birthdate is unknown, although, according to Magdalena de Ulloa, he served at court for forty years, and, as he died in 1570, he must have been born around 1535. In 1534 he entered the Military Order of Calatrava at the lowest rank, *Ohbrero Mayor*.³ A year later, in 1535, he took part in the expedition to Tunisia as a captain. In 1549 he had to marry by proxy, being away in Flanders at the time, and the marriage was not made known in Valladolid until one year later.

After Charles V's death, Philip II continued to keep Luis Quijada close to his side, appointing him equeirry to his heir, the prince, Don Carlos, and tutor to Juan of Austria in 1559. Soon afterwards he was made Infantry Field-Marshal, in 1564 was awarded the honorary *Encomienda del Moral* and later became a member of the Council of State for War. In 1568 Quijada was appointed President of the General Council for the Indies, a position he never took up since he died on 25 February 1570 of wounds sustained during the Alpujarras revolt – fighting for Juan of Austria, who, at only twenty-three, was already Captain General of the navy. In 1572, two years after his death, Magdalena





de Ulloa, carrying out her husband's wish for a foundation to receive his tomb, ordered the building of the Collegiate Church of San Luis at Villagarcía de Campos, modelled on the church at El Escorial, with designs by Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón. The tombs of both Luis Quijada and Magdalena de Ulloa are in a crypt under the altar, with cenotaphs beside the chancel.⁴ Magdalena de Ulloa, who was ahead of her time, carried out work of great social importance. On being widowed, she skillfully built up a network of influential advisers, including Fray Domingo de Ulloa, her brother and a monk at the San Pablo monastery in Valladolid; Knight Commander Hernando de Villafañe; and Baltasar Álvarez, her confessor and a Jesuit. She was also in contact with Francisco de Borja, who approved the foundation as a college and novitiate house for the Jesuits. Except for a few short stays in Madrid, she lived in Villagarcía de Campos from 1549 to 1570, at which point she was widowed. She then went to live in Valladolid, in a house on the Corredera de San Pablo, where she died.⁵

PORTRAITS OF LUIS QUIJADA AND MAGDALENA DE ULLOA

In the painting in the Collegiate Church of San Luis, Villagarcía de Campos, Luis Quijada is shown standing, full length, following the model for military portraits of the time (fig. 1). He wears close-fitting armour over a doublet and high boots, holding the baton of command in his right hand and a sword in his left. The red sash of the highest rank in the navy crosses

his chest, the medal of the Order of Calatrava around his neck. He is depicted against a background of blue sky and clouds. His helmet is placed on the ground at the bottom-left corner by a curtain. A small battle scene is depicted bottom right, just above a cartouche which reads: 'Luis quijada Steward to Emperor Charles V, Equerry to Prince Don Carlos - Field Marshal of the Spanish Infantry - President of the Council of the Indies - Councillor of State and War to King [Philip II] - Order of Calatrava - Commendador - native of Villagarcía] Villamayor Villanueva, Santo finia [sic] founder of this College and Chapel died fighting the Infidel 1570.'⁶

In the companion piece, Magdalena de Ulloa is depicted with a prayer book in her hands, kneeling on a large, pink cushion before a table covered with a green velvet cloth supporting a large crucifix. She wears a long, black dress with a white neck frill, and sleeves decorated with lace are visible underneath. Over the dress she wears a black cape with simple white decorations along the hem. Her only ornament is a long coral necklace. The background is covered with heavy curtains and in the bottom-left corner is the legend: 'Doña Magdalena de Ulloa wife of Luis quijada, foundress of this College and chapel of the Colleges of the Company [Society] of Jesus of Oviedo and Santander and of the monastery of the Penitence Valladolid died aged 73 1598.'⁷

The paintings were made around 1678, long after both had died, so a previous pair of portraits, now lost, must have been painted during their lifetimes and used as models.



fig. 1
Anonymous (Spanish), *Portrait of D. Luis Quijada*
(c.1515–1570).

Oil on canvas, 1670. Collegiate Church of
San Luis, Villegueta de Campos, Valladolid.

Pompeo Leoni could have made use of Quijada's for the alabaster bust. Other images of the Quijadas are to be found in the Collegiate Church of San Luis, where their funerary monuments are placed on either side of the channel. They are portrayed kneeling in prayer on large cushions, in contemporary dress. Luis Quijada wears armour under the *habito* and

mantle of the Order of Calatrava, his helmet at his feet, his gloves on a *prie-dieu*. These figures were made in 1672 by Cristóbal Ruiz de Andino (c.1625–1690), a sculptor from Valladolid, in polychromed wood imitating alabaster, but bear no resemblance to the figures in the portraits.¹¹

Many years later, Valentín de Cardenera (1796–1880) included an engraving of Luis Quijada in his *Iconografía española* (1855). In his commentary on the print Cardenera summarises Quijada's biography and describes him as follows:

His slender, austere countenance shows courage combined with the prudence, discretion and mildness of spirit necessary to one charged with the education of the impetuous youth and victor of Lepanto: he grasps the hilt of command, head covered with a velvet cap at a slight angle, as Cambray portrayed the great Vasco da Gama. His long doublet and the top of his breeches are of white cashmere decorated with ruffles of the same stuff. The Calatrava Cross on a double gold chain round his neck proclaims his rank as Knight Commander.¹²

The Junta de Iconografía Nacional (Board of National Iconography) commissioned a portrait of Luis Quijada from Manuel San Gil y Villanueva (Borja, near Saragossa; active last third of the nineteenth century) for the Gallery of Eminent Spaniards in the Museo Iconográfico. This portrait, now in the Museo del Prado,¹³ took as its model the painting in the collection of the Count and Countess of Santa Coloma in 1877.¹⁴

THE LOST PORTRAITS OF LUIS QUIJADA AND MAGDALENA DE ILLON

It is known that the two portraits of Quijada used as models, first for the engraving and then for the Manuel de San Gil copy, were very

similar if not identical. In the Prado painting, Quijada is set against a dark background, the topcoat is unadorned, the glove is brown (not green, as described by Carderera) and the Calatrava cross does not hang from a double gold chain but from a red ribbon. The expression, too, is more distant. The print is in black and white, but Carderera's detailed description gives us an idea of the tones in the original painting. Carderera makes the valuable point that, if there were two copies of a half-length portrait of Luis Quijada, the original must have been done by an eminent artist. This artist may have been Titian, as Carderera suggests, at a time when Luis Quijada was with Charles V (1548–55), but it could also have been another great painter from the emperor's circle. The sitter's age and style of dress point to this period. The full-length portraits fit better, however, with the portrait painters in the court of Philip II in the 1560s, when Quijada was Field-Marshal and around forty-five years of age. It should be noted that Luis Quijada's pose is the same as that in the portrait by Alonso Sánchez Coello (1531/2–1588) of Don Juan of Austria, now in the convent of the Descalzas Reales in Madrid. Dated around 1567, when Don Juan was about twenty, this was commissioned by Juana of Austria for her portrait gallery in the convent. However, any of the court painters of the time could have done the portraits of the Quijada couple, copied by the anonymous artist a hundred years later for the collegiate church. Among them were Joris van Staelen, known in Spain as Jorge de la Riba (active 1552–77), who painted the prince, Don

Carlos (c.1565), and Juan of Austria (c.1567) – both of whom were close to Luis Quijada – or Sofonisba Anguissola (c.1535–1625), Jakob Seisenegger (1505–1567) or Sánchez Coello himself.¹²

Whatever the case, it is certain that Pompeo Leoni used a painted representation to sculpt the bust of Luis Quijada, as was his usual practice. He had already used paintings by Titian for his portraits of Charles V and his wife, the Empress Isabella. He would use a portrait painted by Sofonisba Anguissola (in his possession, as shown by an inventory¹³) for his image of Prince Don Carlos in the cenotaph group at El Escorial. We know that Pompeo Leoni was a keen collector who owned significant paintings and drawings by the best artists of the time.¹⁴

POMPEO LEONI'S EARLY YEARS IN SPAIN

On 28 September 1556 Pompeo Leoni disembarked with the royal retinue at Laredo. It is no secret that he found this a difficult time. Charles V had abdicated in favour of his son, Philip II, in whose absence Spain was ruled by his sister Princess Juana of Austria. The princess was the first to contract Leoni as court sculptor, in February 1557, with a monthly salary of thirty ducats back-dated to his arrival in Valladolid the previous November. In 1561, after the court's move to Madrid, Leoni opened a workshop there. He had spent a year shut away by the Inquisition in a monastery, but the only work he is known to have done before then was as a medallist. Evidence for this are the medals he made of Honorato Juan, the tutor to Don



fig. 2
Pompeo Leoni, *Portrait Bust*
of Philip II (1527–1598).

Polychromed silver bust, c.1564.
© Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Carlos (1556), the prince himself (1557) and Abbot Diego de Lerma (1557).

In the following years he finished the bronze portraits made by his father, Leone Leone, in Milan: *Charles V Restraining Fery*, *Empress Isobel*, *Maria of Hungary* and *Philip II*.¹⁵ No other work is known until 1564 (the date appearing with his signature on the imperial portraits), when Juana of Austria commissioned a portrait of Philip II in polychromed silver (61.5 x 43.5

x 29 cm, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum) (fig. 2). At the same time – as we know only from documentary evidence – she commissioned busts of Prince Rodolfo and Prince Ernesto of Bohemia, the nephews of Philip II who lived in Spain from 1564 to 1571. These are the first sculptures executed from his own models rather than those of his father in Milan.¹⁶ In 1566 Pompeo moved his workshop to the Carrera de San Francisco. He completed the imperial marble portraits, made ephemeral sculpture celebrating the entry into Madrid of Anne of Austria (1570) and made an (unfinished) marble pedestal with gilt bronze angels for the urn intended to contain Saint Eugenio's relics in Toledo cathedral. He was not appointed sculptor to the king until 1570. During the next decade he made a series of funerary monuments in several Spanish towns. The first was for Juana of Austria (deceased 1573), followed by one for the Inquisitor General Diego de Espinosa in the church at Martín Muñoz de las Posadas (Segovia) and for Fernando de Valdés in the collegiate church at Salas (Asturias).

POMPEO LEONI WORKS IN MARBLE AND ALABASTER
In his new workshop, Pompeo took up the marble portraits commissioned by Charles V from Leone Leone in 1549 which had been at a very preliminary stage when they arrived in Spain. This must have represented a kind of apprenticeship in marble for him as, like his father, he was inexperienced with this material. It is not possible to offer an in-depth assessment of the quality of these works since, owing to their

long exposure to the open air in the gardens of the Royal Palace of Aranjuez, the details of the finish have been lost. As we have seen, they were not Pompeo's creation but Leone's and closely related to the bronze portraits. Perhaps the first one Pompeo completed was the statue of Charles V, because it is unsigned, followed in 1567 by *Philip II*, which bears only Pompeo's signature, and then the *Empress Isabel*, also signed only by him, in 1572.¹⁷

In these works Pompeo developed an exceptional talent as a portraitist in stone. His most characteristic works show he was capable of infusing life in a way he could not do with his bronze portraits or medals, where the effect is much more distant. His masterpiece in marble is the large monument depicting *Juana of Austria at Prayer* (1574), in the church of the monastery of the Descalzas Reales in Madrid. It is placed in a small chapel on the Epistle side of the altar, used by the princess as an oratory (fig. 3).

BUST OF LUIS QUIJADA

This portrait bust in antique fashion represents a man down to the forearms. His face is elongated, he has a beard and a long, downward-pointing moustache, and a wide, wrinkled forehead with a receding hairline and scant hair. The pupils are drilled and kidney-shaped, the lines of the eyebrows are only lightly traced, the nose is straight, and the lips are shut, the lower one straight. The ears are precisely modelled. The figure faces forward, his bearing aristocratic. He wears a frill that emerges in a natural way from under the beavysign, and there are stud-

ded straps on his shoulders. On the right of the cuirass are traces of a lance-rest. By way of decoration there is a cord around the neck and along the pauldrons and the centre and sides of the cuirass is a narrow border with scrolls and flower motifs, small bells and a flower corolla, ending in a semi-circle in the lower part. On the left is a chiselled cross of one of the seven Spanish military orders of the time. This is the cross of the Order of Alcántara or Calatrava – both are represented in the same way and differentiated only by colour (green and red respectively).

The bust stands on a small base with semi-circular grooves on the sides, and a four-sided pedestal, all made from one block. A label with the number '735' or '732' is attached to the front, probably taken from the inventory of a previous collection. The back is hollow, with a



fig. 3

Pompeo Leoni, *Portrait of Dña. Juana of Austria* (1535–1573).

Marble, 1574. Church of the monastery of the Descalzas Reales, Madrid © Patrimonio Nacional



fig. 4
Pompeo Leoni, *Portrait of Philip II*
(1527–1598).

Marble, 1567, Palacio Real
de Aranjuez, Madrid
© Patrimonio Nacional

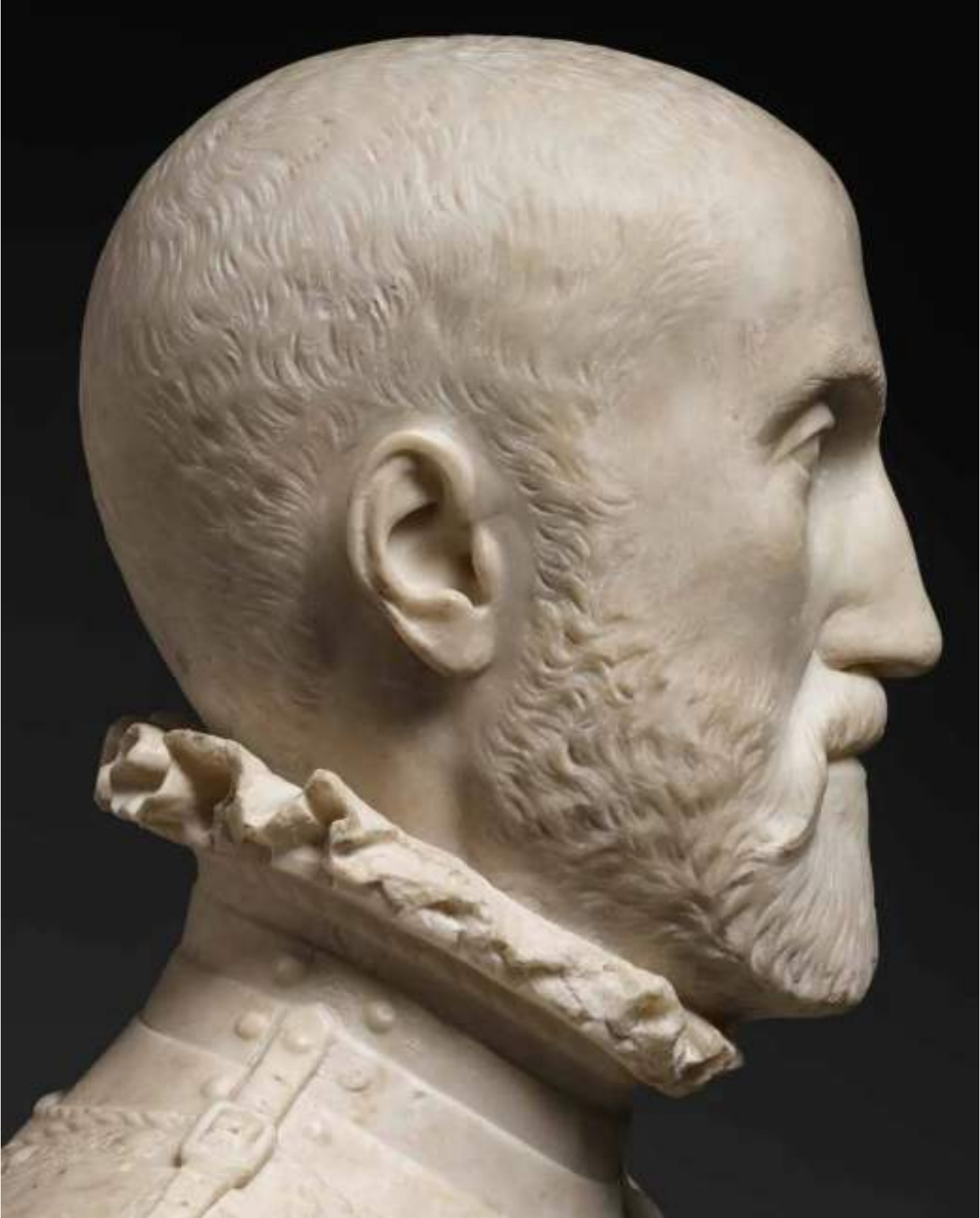
small piece sticking out in the centre to add firmness and take the weight of the sculpture. The material in this back part has a completely smooth finish.

Among the surviving works by Pompeo Leoni, the bust of Luis Quijada should be placed for stylistic reasons between the statue of Philip II at the Palace of Aranjuez, the two busts of Philip II in the Prado and the statue of Juana de Austria at prayer. The full-length figure of Philip II (167 x 65 x 40 cm) belonging to the Patrimonio Nacional is in marble and was signed by Pompeo Leoni in 1567 (fig. 4).¹³ It is in very poor condition having been, amongst other things, exposed to the open air. The details of the face have therefore lost quality but evidence of the work of the two Leonis is still there. It was sent from Italy being one of the works from the first commission of Charles V and Mary of Hungary in 1549. Philip II's moustache points upwards, his beard and hair are slightly wavy and his age is similar to that in Leoni's full-length bronze statue in the Prado.¹⁴ The marble statue corresponds to the bronze particularly in the style of dress. The armour shows signs of its former rich decoration, and a cape hangs behind.¹⁵

Another portrait of Philip II in the Prado is executed in alabaster and is much smaller at 80 cm high (fig. 5).¹⁶ The bust is cut off at the forearms, in the same way as Luis Quijada's, though in this case the pedestal is decorated with a large, winged figurehead. The hair in the portrait of Philip II is worked up more, though the eyes are carved in the same way, with kidney-shaped pupils. The lips are full-

er but the ears in both portraits are typical of the two Leonis, with intricate curved lines. The moustache and beard are also similar in each. The frill on the ruff is a little larger and less tightly gathered. The decoration of the armour is richer, as befits a prince or king, but executed in the same way, with soft, linear chiselling. The decorative motifs, too, are very similar. This portrait of Philip II is close to the portrait in polychromed silver at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (see fig. 2). We know from the inventory of 1609 that this bust was in Pompeo Leoni's workshop.

Eugène Plon attributed the Prado bust to Leone¹⁷ but Beatrice Gilman Proske suggested it could have been made in Spain after Philip II's return in 1559. Proske argued that the different model and the less finely worked decoration of the armour preclude its inclusion in the series of portraits done in the Milan workshop.¹⁸ Another marble head of Philip II now on deposit in the Museo de Historia de Madrid (fig. 6) is 22 cm high (34 cm including its jasper pedestal) and comes from the collection of Diego de Hurtado de Mendoza (1503–1575).¹⁹ It appears in the Alcázar inventory of 1602 among the sculptures left by the ambassador to Philip II and is described as 'No. 3680. A white marble statue of king Don Philippe, our lord, of only the head with a part of the chest set on a brown jasper pedestal the whole pedestal and portrait being five *dozmos* high [34 cm].'²⁰ Hurtado de Mendoza returned to Spain from Rome in 1554, so this portrait of Philip II must be dated between 1559, when the king himself returned to Spain after the conclusion





Back of the sculpture

of the Italian Wars, and 1568, when he exiled Hurtado de Mendoza to Granada after his fall from grace. The styles of the Philip II and Quijada portraits are close. The ways in which the face has been sculpted and the eyes, nose, ears, hair, moustache and beard have been chiselled are very similar. The small ruff is, however, less lifelike in *Philip II*, and the small fragment of the breast is entirely undecorated.²⁶

Despite the connection between these three portraits of Philip II, other similarities between the *Luis Quijada* work and other portraits sculpted by Pompeo Leoni in the 1570s should be mentioned. Features shared with the *Joan of Austria* are the narrow ruff, the intricate lines of the ears, the shape of the pupils and the lightly traced eyebrows (see fig. 3)²⁷

The portrait of Fernando Valdés (kneeling before a prayer book), bareheaded and wearing priest's vestments) and three assistant clergy is very lifelike but still exhibits the idealized quality characteristic of the two Leonis. The life-size figure of Diego de Espinosa kneeling on a prie-dieu with an open prayer book also appears to be a perfect likeness, corresponding to a portrait supplied to Pompen, although it still shows the same characteristics as the previous works. The effigy demonstrates the high degree of skill Pompen displayed in representing the psychology of his subjects.²⁸

All of this culminated in the portraits for the El Escorial cenotaphs where Charles V, Philip II and Prince Don Carlos (to cite only the male figures) are based on models of the early portraits but finished in a similar way to these later ones.

The portrait of Luis Quijada must have been made before his death in 1570, firstly, because he is represented as a young man, in his forties, and secondly because if not, in all likelihood the work would have been a funerary statue and not a heroic bust drawing on classical antiquity. It does not seem possible, on the other hand, that this would have been a commission from Quijada himself or from Magdalena de Ulloa. We have no information about Quijada's own artistic interests, and we know that his wife's overriding interest was in religious objects, based on those in the museum in the Collegiate Church of San Luis in Villagarcía de Campos. Her magnificent reliquary is kept here, among other valuable ritual items and a superb collection of religious ornaments.²⁹

It is likely, then, that the portrait was a gift from one of the high dignitaries Luis Quijada served. The style suggests a date of between 1565 and 1570, and at that time the people who may have wished to bestow such an honour on him were Juana of Austria, Philip II, Don Carlos and Juan of Austria. Prince Don Carlos commissioned from Pompeo Leoni a work which must have been exceptional: a gold crucifix with a crown of thorns in green enamel, fixed to a cross made by the court silversmith Rodrigo Beinalte. The cross was placed on a Calvary of gilded brass, with two skulls and fourteen bones, all made of silver covered with gold. In accordance with the last wishes of his son, who died in 1568, Philip II donated this piece to the monastery of Our Lady of Atocha in Madrid, but it was lost probably in one of the disentanglements.³⁰ The prince's close contact with Luis Quijada is evident from his will, in which he mentions him second only to his beloved tutor, Honorato Juan:

I leave I bequeath to Luis Quijada, my Esquerry, all those things of mine in his keeping at the time of my death, he may keep these and need give no account of them, and I also bequeath all the artillery I possess and may possess in the alcazar of Segovia now in the keeping of the Count of Chinchón, Mayor of this alcazar, and of his lieutenant, whom I command to hand over, along with everything attached to them, all this I bequeath to him because of the work he will have to carry out as my executor.³¹

Leoni made an idealized portrait of Luis Quijada as a soldier still in his youth, his expression powerful yet proud, keeping the characteristic shape of Quijada's prominent skull and wide forehead which allow the bust to be identified. It must have been made, we have seen, while he



fig. 5
Pompeo Leoni (attr.),
Portrait Bust of Philip II
(1527-1598).

Alabaster, c.1565.
© Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid



fig. 6
Pompeo Leoni (attr.),
Portrait Bust of Philip II
(1527-1598).

Marble, c.1565. Currently on deposit
at the Museo de Historia de Madrid
© Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

was working on the marble statues of Charles V, Philip II and Empress Isabel, perhaps at the same time as the bust and alabaster head of Philip II, and shortly before the effigy of Juana of Austria. In this latter portrait, as in the *Luis Quijada*, Pompeo Leoni stands out as a magnificent sculptor in stone, more skilled in psychological study than is evident from the later works made for the royal family in the effigies of El Escorial. The comparative study of the *Luis Quijada* with the *Juana of Austria* and other works executed around 1570 reveals the same stylistic features and the mastery that Leoni had already achieved as a portraitist by this time.³²

¹ R. Coppel, with M. Escobar and K. Holmström, *El Rey, Juan and Pompey Leont: Faith and Fame*, Madrid, 2011, pp. 115–19 (see pp. 131–9 for the proposed identifications).

² L. P. Garbarré, *Reinado et mort de Charles V et monastère de l'Esne: Lettres inédites*, 2 vols, Brussels, 1954–5. This contains the correspondence between Luis Quijada and Juan Vázquez, Charles V's secretary at Yuste, from 1556 to 1558.

³ Entry age to the Order could range from 7 to 9 (54.5%) to more than 30 (6.9%). The median age of entry was 20 to 24 (17%). *Archivo Histórico Nacional*, expediente 38-1, cited in E. F. Loquendo, *La Orden Militar de Calatrava en el siglo XVI*, Madrid, 1992, p. 415.

⁴ C. Pérez Pío, *Villagracia de Campos: estudio histórico-artístico*, Valladolid, 1982. I was grateful to Dr. Fernando Trucha S. J., museum director at the Collegiate Church of San Luis, for his time and help with the completion of this text.

⁵ J. de Villafra, *La Anunciación de Dios: reliquia histórica de la vida y victorias de la Excelentísima Señora Doña Magdalena de Ulloa... Salamanca, 1725* (digital version, Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Cultura y Turismo, 2009–10); C. M. Abad, *Doña Magdalena de Ulloa, la obispetra de Don Juan de Austria y la fundadora del colegio de la Compañía de Jesús en Villagracia de Campos* (1525–1580), Valladolid, 1979; M. Gutiérrez Anqueros, *Doña Magdalena de Ulloa, mujer de Luis de Quijada, la Doña Magdalena de Ulloa, 1796–1996: una mujer de Villagracia de Campos* (Valladolid), *Los pequeños siglos*, Valladolid, 1993.

⁶ Luis quijada Malcondono de el em / perador Carlos Quinto = Caballero Mayor / del Príncipe D. Carlos = Capitan General / de la Infanteria española = Presidente / del Consejo de Italia = y conseyero de es / tado y guerra del Rey Phel. Segundo / Obispo = Mayor de Calatrava = Comensal /ador del Moral, Sen. De villaga, villa / mayor villanueva Santo Iñigo fundador / de este Colegio y Capilla mayor peleando / con los turcos

⁷ Doña Magdalena de Ulloa mujer / de Luis quijada fundador de este / Colegio y capilla de las Calatrava de / la compañía de Ies. de Christo y sus / ruder / del monasterio de la penita / gía de valladolid murió a los 73 / años de su edad y el de 1580.

⁸ E. García Olmos, *Carilago monumental de la Pratería de la Sabiduría*, vol. 2: *Perfiles del arte de la Pratería de la Sabiduría*, 1899, pp. 115, 161, n. 18.

⁹ *Be continues*. The *topcoat* – or Portuguese *overgarment* – very common to Charles V's time, is black, with lapels revealing rich furs and sleeves embellished at the shoulder with shorter sleeves. These have neck slashes and are decorated with trappings or little gold and pearl flourishes in oval shapes. In these costumes sleeves often fall loose and flaring (giving rise to the term *mancha peribito*) and were worn in various ways by ladies and gentlemen until well into the seventeenth century. This cut of the sleeve reveals the doublet, usually richer than the rest of the clothing. Finally, there is the neck attire, which later became a ruff or hollow neck adornment, taken to extremes in Philip II's time. The left hand wears a green

ish-coloured glove, which rests, rather clumsily, on the sword hilt. Vicente Gárdenero y Solana, *Iconografía española: Gárdenero de retratos, costuras, monedas y otros monumentos artísticos... de los siglos el XVI*, vol. 2, Madrid, 1875 and 1894, no. LXV. The accompanying text reads: DON LUIS QUIDA GENERAL, TO EMPEROR CHARLES V. The drawing was supervised by Gárdenero, and the print engraved by Carlos Legrand (1619–1620). Engraving by J. E. Mariño, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Sala Goya, Bellas Artes (CE/3085; 86/3085(1)). Gárdenero goes on to some interesting facts about the painting which served as model for the print: 'This painting is scarcely to be praised for its artistic merit – rather lacking, if truth be told – and suffers from old, badly done restoration. This gives us reason to think that the original was painted by a master and has been lost in the course of the past three centuries. The rich, warm tone of the colour, the sober, individual, unaffected pose, together with the life and character of the head, show still that it is almost worthy of great Titian. What has become of its whereabouts? It would be hard to speculate about the fate of such an interesting painting. But we were pleased to discover there is, fortunately, another full-length, life-size portrait in the magnificent Anselmo chapel founded in Villagracia de Campos by his wife, Doña María de Ulloa. The portrait and here to the foundation, the Marquis de Valdehormas y de Fontalba, who told us of this, particularly appreciates this picture, keeping it in his home. It is reproduced here with his permission, granted with his habitual kindness and courtesy.'

¹⁰ This is the same portrait that appears as the frontispiece to the fictionalized biography *Jerónimo* by Luis Golema (1993), according to María Kasebe, who cites another version in the Church of San Isidro, Oviedo. She refers to 'retroscios' – paintings, tapestries and drawings – owned by Don Juan de Austria, with particular reference to portraits by Sánchez Coello; in M. J. Hernández Gaitero and M. A. Zalamea Rodríguez (eds), *Caribe y los otros: Promoción artística y función imperial*, Valladolid, 2000, pp. 251–74 (citation on p. 273).

¹¹ P1452; dimensions: 150 x 160 cm; in deposit at the Real Academia de la Historia since 1913. See J. L. Díaz, A. Gárdenero, Marqués, P. J. Martínez Plaza (eds), *Marqués de San Juan de los Ríos: Pío de la Historia del Arte en el Museo del Prado*, Valladolid, 2015, p. 514.

¹² M. Kasebe, 'Sofonista Angustosa en España y retratos de corte junto a Alonso Sánchez Coello y Jorge de la Cruz', *Archivos Españoles de Arte*, 42, no. 163, 1989, pp. 399–420.

¹³ M. Kasebe, 'El retrato de D. Carlos por Sofonista Angustosa', *Archivos Españoles de Arte*, 282, 2000, pp. 385–94.

¹⁴ Marqués del Saltillo, 'La herencia de Pompeio Leont', *Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excavaciones*, 42, 1934, pp. 95–121; K. Holmström, *El Rey*, The Chief and perhaps only Anqueros in Spain: Pompeio Leont and his Collection in Madrid, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 137–47. Inc. of 1609, fol. 114r. 'Un retrato del Príncipe don Carlos de Sofonista clama de la Reyna doña Isabel la francesa con su mano negro y dorado en trescientos reales. Pompeio and Sofonista must have been close, and it is now known that the magnif

rent portrait of the sculptor working on a bust of Philip II in 1565, previously attributed to El Greco, was her work. See M. Kuehn, *Retratos y retratadores. Alonso Sánchez Gual y sus contemporáneos Siglo dieciséis hispánico, Arte de la Ilustración y del Barroco*, Madrid, 2003, pp. 229–28, fig. 193.

¹¹ All four are in the Prado. See J. Urrutia (ed.), *Los Leoni (1509–1605): escultores del Renacimiento italiano al servicio de la corte española*, edn. var., Madrid, 1994; R. Coppel, *Museo del Prado. Catálogo de la colección de Escultura Italiana. Siglos XVI–XVIII*, Santander and Madrid, 1998, pp. 46–98.

¹² M. Escella, 'Nuevos datos sobre Pompeo Leoni', *Archivos Españoles de Arte*, 262, 1995, pp. 132–49; C. Keyser-Gerrick, 'Pompeo Leoni's Portrait in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna', in S. Schöner (ed.), *Leoni and Pompeo Leoni: Proceedings of the International Symposium, Museo Nacional del Prado, October 2001*, Madrid, 2002, pp. 99–107.

¹³ Coppel, *Museo del Prado*. This group includes the two large reliefs of Charles V and Empress Isabel, a bust of Charles V and a bust of Queen Mary of Hungary, all in the Prado. The fine study by Beatrice Gilman Prados offers an in-depth analysis of this aspect of Pompeo's work. Each sculpture is accurately described, with a thoroughness that allows full appreciation of every detail. The first work was the full-length marble portrait of Charles V (a masterpiece overshadowed by the grandeur of the bronze group Charles V Accompanying Jure), followed by the two marble statues of Philip II (in poor condition) and Empress Isabel – not as identical to the bronze statue as might seem at first sight. See B. G. Prados, *Pompeo Leoni: Work in Marble and in Bronze in Relation to Spanish Sculpture*, New York, 1956.

¹⁴ Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid (inv.1006499).

¹⁵ Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (inv. E-272).

¹⁶ J. L. Sanchez, 'La estatua de los Leoni en los jardines de las Américas', in Urrutia, *Los Leoni*, pp. 65–76, fig. 6.

¹⁷ Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (inv. E-275).

¹⁸ E. Pica, *Leoni Leoni, scultori de Charles-Quint, et Pompeo Leoni, scultore de Philippe II. Les Maîtres italiens au service de la couronne d'Espagne*, Paris, 1887, p. 323.

¹⁹ Prados, *Pompeo Leoni*, p. 56; Coppel, *Museo del Prado*, no. 23.

²⁰ Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (inv. E-279).

²¹ E. J. Sánchez Cantón, 'Inventarios Reales: Breves apuntes que pertenecieron a Felipe II', *Archivos Documentales Españoles*, III, no. 2, 1936–9, p. 187.

²² Coppel, *Museo del Prado*, no. 22.

²³ Prados, *Pompeo Leoni*, pp. 12–13, figs 7–8.

²⁴ Pica, *Les Maîtres italiens*, pp. 323–4, pl. 313; El Gordo de Gólibio, 'Martín Muñoz de los Pañados', *Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excavaciones Arqueológicas Históricas*, 18, cuarta trimestre, 1930; Prados, *Pompeo Leoni*, pp. 14–16, figs 7–10.

²⁵ Pérez Pardo, *Villaperdón de Campos*.

²⁶ R. Coppel, 'La colección de escultura del príncipe don Carlos (1547–1568)', in S. Schöner (ed.), *El coleccionismo de escultura italiana en España: Simposio Internacional, Museo Nacional del Prado, 21 y 22 de mayo de 2001*, Madrid, 2002, pp. 41–102; R. Coppel, 'La colección de un joven príncipe del Renacimiento: Don Carlos y las esculturas integradas en el mundo antiguo',

Boletín de Arte, 156, 2003, pp. 16–29.

²⁷ Copia del Testamento cerrado original del Príncipe D. Carlos, otorgado ante Domingo Zavala, escribano de Cámara del Consejo Real, 1566. Archivo General de Simancas, Testamentos y testamentos reales, Legajo no. 5, published by the Marquis and Marchioness de Pidal and D. M. Salva, in *Colección de Documentos inéditos para la Historia de España*, vol. 34, Madrid, 1854, rego. Novales, Linceos, 1964, pp. 214–50 (citation on p. 322).

²⁸ Coppel, Escella and Helmsdorfer (D. Dio, *Leoni and Pompeo Leoni*); R. Coppel, 'Los retratos de la emperatriz Isabel y de Juan de Austria', in Schöner, *Leoni and Pompeo Leoni*, pp. 87–98.

Attributed to

Antonio Lombardo (Venice, c.1458–1516, Ferrara)

The Death of Lucretia

c.1508–16

Marble relief

48.3 × 42.9 × 10 cm; 19 1/8 × 16 7/8 × 4 in

Provenance

Private collection, Europe, since
the 1950s;

Sale, Christie's, London, 29 July
2020, lot 15;

Private collection.

Description

Classical: From the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century.
Christie's London, 29 July 2020, lot 15.



Antonio Lombardo

The Death of Lucretia

Jeremy Warren

THIS BEAUTIFUL AND REFINED RELIEF IS A masterpiece of Italian Renaissance sculpture. Previously entirely unknown to scholars, its appearance on the art market in 2020 was one of the most important art-historical discoveries of recent years.

The sculpture depicts the Roman heroine Lucretia as she commits suicide by plunging a dagger into her stomach below her right breast, following her violent rape by Sextus Tarquinius. She is flanked on her left by an elderly man, presumably her father, Spurius Lucretius, and on her right by a young woman, probably her maidservant, who appears to cry out. The figures stand upon a small integral base, curved at the left and right edges, with Lucretius's left foot projecting over it. Behind the figures are three columns, the one on the left fluted, the others plain, and the beginnings of arches. Holes on the top edge of the relief seem to confirm that there was originally a separately carved top section, which would have completed the arches. Lucretia originally held a small dagger, the hilt of which, now lost, was probably made of metal, inserted into a small hole in her right hand. Other than the loss of the top section, the relief is overall in very good condition, with just some minor losses, such as Spurius Lucretius's left toes, and the fingers of Lucretia's left hand. Some areas that would not have been particularly visible have been left unworked – for example, the back parts of Lucretia's head, or the father's left thumb.

The story of the noble Roman woman Lucretia, her rape and the subsequent redemption

of her honour through suicide was immensely popular in Italy and elsewhere in Europe during the Renaissance period. Lucretia was one of a group of mythological and historical women who were regarded as exemplars of nobility and female virtue and whose stories were recounted in literature, especially Boccaccio's tremendously popular *De mulieribus claribus*,¹ and in art.² The Italian retellings of Lucretia's story were derived from earlier Latin texts, including Ovid and, in particular, the account given by Livy in his *History of Rome* (Book I, chapters 57–9).³ From the late fifteenth century, Italian translations of Livy's history of Rome began to appear, notably an influential edition with woodcut illustrations in Venice in 1493.⁴

The events recounted by Livy and subsequent authors took place in 509 b.c., when Roman troops were camped outside the city of Ardea during a siege. The group included Sextus Tarquinius, the son of the Roman king, and his kinsman Collatinus. In the course of a drinking bout, the men began to debate whose wife was the most virtuous. Collatinus loudly proclaiming that his Lucretia would unquestionably win any such competition, but that they should test the matter for themselves by riding to visit their respective spouses. The party, by now the worse for drink, set out for Rome, to find Sextus Tarquinius's wife and other royal princesses enjoying a banquet and disporting themselves frivolously. They rode on to Collatia, where Lucretia was, on the other hand, discovered 'still in the main hall of her home, bent over her spinning and surrounded by her







fig. 1

Tullio Lombardo, *Miracle of the Repentant Son*.

Marble, c.1500–5, ex Cappella di Sant'Antonio,
Basilica del Santo, Padua



fig. 2

Antonio Lombardo, *Miracle of the Speaking Baby*.

Marble, c.1500–5, ex Cappella di Sant'Antonio,
Basilica del Santo, Padua

maids as they worked by lamplight'. Taken with her beauty and virtue and, perhaps, smarting a little from the comparison with his own wife's behaviour, Sextus Tarquinius became consumed with sexual desire. A few days later and unbeknown to Collatinus, he again travelled to Collatia, where he was graciously welcomed as a guest and given a room. Once the household was asleep, Tarquinius crept to Lucretia's bedroom with his sword in hand, threatening Lucretia and confessing his passion for her. When the woman refused to submit, Tarquinius further threatened to kill both her and a slave, whose body he would place in the bed alongside hers. Faced with the prospect of utter shame for herself and her family, Lucretia finally submitted. However, after Tarquinius had left, she quickly sent to Rome for her father, Spurius Lucretius, and to Ardea for her husband, Collatinus. Each came with a companion, Spurius Lucretius with Publius Valerius and Collatinus with Lucius Junius Brutus. Explaining to the men that although her body had been defiled, her soul remained pure, the

disconsolate Lucretia demanded from them a pledge to punish Sextus Tarquinius: 'It is up to you', she said, 'to punish the man as he deserves. As for me, I absolve myself of wrong, but not from punishment. Let no unchaste woman hereafter continue to live because of the precedent of Lucretia.' She took a knife she was hiding in her garments and drove it into her breast. Doubling over, she collapsed in death.'

Lucretia's death had profound consequences for Roman history, as Brutus seized the opportunity of the horrendous circumstances of the rape and dishonouring of Lucretia to stoke outrage against the ruler of Rome, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, and his family. This led quickly to their expulsion and replacement by a new and long-lasting monarchy.

On its appearance at auction in 2020, the relief was attributed to the Venetian sculptor Antonio Lombardo, whose father, Pietro Lombardo (1435–1515), ran the leading architectural and sculptural workshop in Venice in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, with the



fig. 3
Antonio Lombardo and workshop,
*Virgin and Child with Saint George
and a Donor*.

Marble, c.1515, ex Museo civico di arte antica,
Palazzina di Marfisa d'Este, Ferrara



fig. 4
Attributed to Antonio Lombardo,
The Healing of Anianus.

Marble, c.1500-5, Scuola Grande
di San Marco, Venice
© Getty Images Art, Venice

active participation of Antonio and his brother, Tullio (c.1455-1532). In 1506 Antonio left Venice for Ferrara, where he worked until his early death in 1516 for Alfonso I d'Este, Duke of Ferrara (1476-1534), one of the greatest patrons of art in Renaissance Italy. The artistic styles of both Antonio and Tullio are based on a refined form of classicism and in many respects are closely similar. It is, nevertheless, possible to distinguish Tullio's severe and usually rather dry classicism from the fuller and more empathetic style of Antonio. As Anne Markham Schulz has observed, this can best be done by comparing the two reliefs of the *Miracle of the Repentant Son* and the *Miracle of the Speaking Baby*, made by Tullio and Antonio respectively for the Chapel of Saint Antony in the Basilica di Sant'Antonio in Padua (figs 1 and 2) during the years around 1500-5: 'a comparison of the brothers' two reliefs shows Tullio to possess an appreciation of structure and hierarchy analogous to systems of scholastic reasoning, and so obsessive a sense of order, so pronounced a tendency toward abstraction, that Antonio's composition appears by contrast almost casual'.⁵ Other subtle differences can be discerned in the two brothers' work, including the modelling of draperies, the treatment of hair and the sense of volume in figures.

The attribution of the *Death of Lucretia* to Antonio when it was offered at auction is very likely to be correct, although the high degree of symmetry and spatial organisation in the relief is perhaps more characteristic of Tullio's approach to sculpture. But the evidence

for attribution to Antonio is compelling: for example, the strong sense of volume in the three figures, the use of a drill for the hair of the elderly man, the engagement between the protagonists and the powerful psychological intensity, discussed further below. The relief may for example be compared with two larger multi-figure reliefs, the *Virgin and Child with Saint George and a Donor* from the workshop of Antonio Lombardo, formerly in the Church of San Domenico in Ferrara (fig. 3),⁶ and the relief depicting the *Healing of Anianus* that flanks the doorway to one of the entrances to the former Scuola Grande di San Marco in Venice (fig. 4), paired with Tullio's relief of the *Baptism of Anianus*.⁷

Antonio's most celebrated work is the extensive series of figurative and decorative reliefs made for the *studio dei warmi* created by Alfonso I d'Este for the Via Coperta of his palace in Ferrara, almost all of which are now in the Hermitage, St Petersburg.⁸ Most of the surviving panels, one of which is dated 1508, are largely decorative, but in the Hermitage are two large figurative reliefs depicting *The Contest between Minerva and Neptune for the Possession of Attira* and *The Forge of Vulcan* (fig. 5), conceivably made for another room in the Via Coperta.⁹ The figure of Vulcan is directly based on the famous antique sculpture of Laocöon, that had been discovered in 1506. Although these reliefs are very different in their conception from the *Death of Lucretia*, several stylistic parallels are apparent: the drapery of Minerva and that of the woman at left in the *Death of Lucretia*; the magnificent rendering

of nude figures: the handling of the beards in the figures of Vulcan and of Spurius Lucretius in the present relief.

However, the closest comparisons, and the best context for the *Death of Lucretia*, are to be found in the well-known group of independent, smaller-scale reliefs of subjects from mythology and Roman history that have long been associated with Antonio Lombardo and his circle.¹⁰ With just one or two exceptions, these reliefs are all vertical compositions, measuring mostly around 40 by 25 cm, with a single figure occupying much of the compositional space. The figures stand upon an integral projecting ledge and are carved in high relief, to the extent that many are almost free-standing. There is a rather random selection of male subjects, from the god Mars to the hero Hercules, the Homeric Greek archer Philoctetes and the Roman hero Mucius Scaevola. On the other hand, the female themes, other than the *Venus Anadyomene* (fig. 6), form a more coherent series of famous virtuous women, all of whom came to a tragic end, mostly at their own hands: Cleopatra, Dido, Eurydice, Lucretia, Portia. As well as the relief of *Cleopatra* in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rennes,¹¹ another of this subject, once in the Mazarin collection, has been recently rediscovered at Wilton House (fig. 7).¹² Most of these reliefs feature a carefully lettered Latin inscription along the base identifying the subject, absent from the *Death of Lucretia*.

The reliefs were first discussed as a series by Julius von Schlosser, who attributed them to Antonio Lombardo on the basis of compari-

son with the sculptures from the *catastrofe di alabastro* in the Hermitage.¹³ However, just a few years later Leo Planiseig identified the majority as the work of the Paduan sculptor Giovanni Maria Mosca, known as Padovano (active 1507–73),¹⁴ attributions that have more recently been confirmed by Anne Markham Schulz, who further proposed the four versions of the *Philoctetes* as Mosca's work.¹⁵ The attribution of most of these reliefs to Mosca has been widely but by no means universally accepted,¹⁶ while the *Pan and Leda* in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich, is generally accepted as the work of Mosca's master, Antonio Minello (c.1465–1529).¹⁷ The only relief in the series that is now universally accepted as the work of Antonio Lombardo is the *Venus Anadyomene* in the Victoria and Albert Museum,¹⁸ in which the beautiful figure of Venus is stylistically close to the figure of Lucretia in the form of the face and the modelling of the torso.



fig. 5

Antonio Lombardo, *The Forge of Vulcan*.

Marble, c.1544–45. © The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg.
Photograph by Vladimir Terehin



fig. 6

Antonio Lombardo,
Venus Anadyomene.

Marble, c.1510–15. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



fig. 7
Attributed to Giovanni Maria Mosca,
Cleopatra.

Marble, c.1528–29. © The Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery
and Trustees of the Wilson Hope Trust,
Wilson House, Salisbury, UK.



fig. 8
Attributed to Antonio Lombardo, *Allegory
of Victory at the Battle of Ravenna*.

Bronze, c.1511. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
© Sharon & Eden, London

The refined modelling of form in the *Death of Lucretia* can also be compared with another work recently attributed to Antonio Lombardo that recalls the single-figure mythological reliefs but on a much smaller scale, a bronze relief depicting *Victory*, which also appeared on the market in London in 2020, when it was identified as probably an allegory of Alfonso d'Este's victory in the Battle of Ravenna in April 1512. This jewel-like small sculpture has recently been acquired by the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (fig. 8).³⁰

The attribution of the *Death of Lucretia* is therefore secure, and the relief may be placed within the context of a series of other works by Antonio Lombardo and members of his circle. When it was sold, it was suggested that the up-turned head of Lucretia and her opened mouth were derived from the head of one of the sons of the Trojan priest Laocoön in the celebrated antique marble group that was discovered in Rome in 1506. This would date the relief to the period after Antonio Lombardo had moved from Venice to Ferrara, to take up the position as court sculptor to Alfonso I d'Este. It could have been made at any time between

about 1508 and the sculptor's death in 1516. The relief stands out for its size, the number of figures within the composition and its quality. But beyond these physical attributes, the sculpture appears to be truly exceptional in its treatment of its subject.

There are many depictions of the death of Lucretia in Renaissance art, in paintings, prints, sculpture and maiolica. Some, especially a series of Florentine cassone and *spalliera* paintings, show Lucretia dying amidst a small crowd.³¹ Only very few follow more closely the description by Livy, Boccaccio and others in which it is implied that the heroine committed suicide before a very small group of people consisting essentially of her father, her husband and their two companions. These include a *spalliera* panel of around 1517–18 by the Siennese painter Andrea del Bessicamo (c.1510–c.1569) which was made together with allegorical paintings of *Hope and Charity*, *Lucretia here symbolising Faith*.³² Another rare instance is a painting from the 1490s made in the Ferrarese workshop of Ercole de' Roberti (c.1455/6–1496) depicting Lucretia, in contemporary dress, standing before her husband, Collatinus, and father, Spurius Lucretius (fig. 9).³³ Together with two other surviving panels, this painting formed part of a series of images of famous women and was also very probably a commission from the Este rulers of Ferrara, for whom the *Death of Lucretia* is also likely to have been made.

However, most fifteenth- and sixteenth-century images of the death of Lucretia show the heroine alone, very often depicting her naked

fig. 9

Workshop of Ercole de'Roberti, *Death of Lucretia*.

Oil on panel, c.1600, Galleria Estense, Modena.
© The Ministry of Culture - Photographic archive
of the Estense Galleries.
Photograph by Carlo Vannini

or semi-clothed. A good example is the relief of the *Death of Lucretia* attributed to Mosca, in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore,²² but there are many more. Many of these depictions are to varying degrees voyeuristic, even titillating, a reminder that the principal audience for such images was male. One important reason why the subject of Lucretia was so popular among Renaissance males was the fact that the story exalted faithfulness and chastity, the fundamental qualities expected from a wife. As Baldassare Castiglione explained, 'countless evils result from the incontinence of women which do not do so from the incontinence of men . . . therefore . . . it is wisely made the rule that women are allowed to fail in everything else, and not be blamed, so long as they can devote all their resources to preserving that one virtue of chastity, failing which there would be doubts about one's children . . .'²³

At first sight, with Lucretia's drapery sensuously slipping away to reveal her naked torso, the *Death of Lucretia* might be thought to follow the popular pattern of these slightly lubricious representations. Indeed, this sculpture is very carefully designed to focus the viewer's attention on the woman's torso, with the v-shape of the falling drapery and the directional folds of the lower draperies of her two companions designed to lead the eye towards the vulva, while, conversely, the arms of the maidservant and of Spurius Lucretius direct attention towards the act of stabbing, but also provide a sort of frame for Lucretia's breasts. In her death throes, Lucretia is shown with her eyes closed and mouth wide open. Best seen if

the relief is viewed from the left, there are very few parallels in Renaissance art for her extraordinary expression, hardly less ambiguous and subversive than Saint Teresa of Avila's as she experiences her vision of God, as sculpted by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) more than a century later.

In truth, there is very little in the *Death of Lucretia* that could be described as titillating. Instead, imbued as it is with a quiet and solemn intensity, it illustrates, to an extent that can hardly be paralleled in any of the many other Renaissance images of the subject, Lucretia's death as a noble sacrifice.

A fundamental influence, hardly surprising in the work of the Lombardo family, is the pervasive influence of the antique, first in the composition, with the array of three standing figures





fig. 10

Venus Anadyomene, Roman copy after a Hellenistic original.

Marble, 2nd century A.D.
 Museo Archeologico, Venice



fig. 11

Raphael, *Lucretia*.

Pen and brown ink over black chalk, c.1544–48.
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
 (Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1997)

reminiscent of some Hellenistic and Roman sculpted votive reliefs – for example, a marble relief with the god Sarapis and a Pudenaic queen in the British Museum.²⁵ The torso of *Lucretia*, which displays all the idealising qualities of Hellenistic sculpture, is very likely to have been directly inspired by an antique marble, such as the *Venus Anadyomene* now in the Museo Archeologico in Venice (fig. 10).²⁶ This very beautiful sculpture could certainly have been known to Antonio Lombardo, since it was in the collection of Domenico Grimani (1461–1523), Cardinal Patriarch of Venice, who bequeathed it to the Venetian state in 1523.

More surprisingly, perhaps, a powerful Chris-

tian element may also be perceived in the *Death of Lucretia*. Although suicide was regarded by the Roman Catholic church as a mortal sin, Lucretia's modesty and devotion to her chastity appear to have ensured for her a certain acceptance within the broader Christian canon. She was thus used to personify the Christian virtue of Faith in Andrea del Bresciano's painting in Siena. Several instances are known of sixteenth-century paintings of Lucretia paired with images of the penitent Magdalen, while a diptych with the Virgin and Child and a male donor painted in about 1530 by Jan van Scorel (1495–1562) has, on the reverse of the panel with the male portrait – thus visible when the diptych was closed – a depiction of the naked Lucretia stabbing herself.²⁷ The Christian association is more subtly but powerfully evident in one of the most widely diffused sixteenth-century images of Lucretia, Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving based on a drawing by Raphael, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (fig. 11). In both drawing and print Lucretia's raised arms clearly allude to the Crucifixion, but the Christian parallels are even more evident in the drawing, with Lucretia's eyes raised upwards, as it were towards heaven.²⁸

The Christian resonances are likewise subtle in the present sculpture but would surely have been apparent to contemporary audiences. The bold presentation of Lucretia recalls the exposition of the suffering Christ in some versions of the *Ecce Homo* – for example, the painting by Andrea Mantegna of around 1500 in the Musée Jacquemart-André.²⁹ The *Death of Lucretia* shares the startling immediacy of





fig. 12

The Blood of the Redeemer, Paduan or Venetian.

Onyx cameo, c.1500, British Museum, London
 © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved

Manegna's central figure, if not the grotesque accompanying figures. The lamenting maid-servant and the gently solicitous father, as well as Lucretia's left hand held wide open in supplication, ineluctably also point towards other Christian iconographies popular at the time in Venice and northern Italy, the Blood of the Redeemer and the Pietà. An onyx cameo in the British Museum (fig. 12) and a closely related terracotta relief in the Victoria and Albert Museum show Christ as the Man of Sorrows, closely flanked by the Virgin, Saint John and other figures, with his hands held out towards the viewer.³⁰ The cameo, in particular, captures the quiet intensity of the grief being experienced by Christ's mother and by Saint John, 'the disciple Jesus loved', an emotional quality that is likewise so strongly present in the responses of the father and maid-servant in the *Death of Lucretia*. While her sacrifice is never anything other than a proper means by which to preserve the perceived order of things, the parallels in the *Death of Lucretia* with Christian iconography emphasise and enhance the viewer's empathy with Lucretia and the nobility of this wronged woman. This empathetic grief arguably reaches its highest expression in this period in the art of Giovanni Bellini (c.1430/35–1516) and his Pietà compositions (fig. 13), which stimulate in the viewer what can only be described as a 'noble grief', their quiet dignity quite different from the frenzied acts of sorrow to be seen in, for example, the great Lamentation scenes of Donatello. As a fellow Venetian, Antonio Lombardo would have been more than deeply familiar with Bellini and his work.

As in Bellini's representations of the Pietà, the role of the viewer is crucial. It is possible that the now missing top section included an inscription that would have helped enhance the engagement of anyone looking onto the relief. The key absent figure from the composition is Lucretia's husband, Collatinus, and perhaps as viewers we are intended to imagine ourselves in his role. One of the most popular reinterpretations of the story of Lucretia's rape and suicide around 1500 was the short *De Lucretia*, written in about 1390 by the humanist and Chancellor of Florence Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), which circulated through numerous manuscript versions and became more widely available towards the end of the fifteenth century, when it was published in 1496 as part of a compilation of Pope Pius II's *Epistolae*. Coluccio's text takes the form of a dialogue between Collatinus and his wife,³¹ with Collatinus firstly urging Lucretia not to take her own life, arguing that although her body may have been violated, her soul remained untouched, and that suicide would poison rather than save her reputation: 'A woman will not be thought to be innocent who afflicts herself with punishment as a criminal.' Collatinus actually uses a sculptural analogy to emphasise Lucretia's resistance and detachment during the act of rape: 'you kept your mind most chaste during the violence of copulation . . . in saving his lust, instead of granting him a woman of flesh, you offered a marble statue'. Lucretia's reply to her husband and father is a ringing demand to be allowed to choose her own fate, in which she emphasises the injury done to her chastity and her fear that, should

she elect to live with the memory of the rape, its horror might with time come to seem less and she might even be tempted in the future: 'if I debn, perhaps shameful acts will begin to please me'. Instead, Lucretia urges her menfolk to seek revenge 'not less courageously than I will perform my murder. Let not Lucretia be given as an example to Roman women so that, on account of my life, they may convince themselves that life is lawful for the unchaste.'

Further evidence for the exceptional nature of the portrayal of the heroine's sacrifice in the present work is the disparate and very different nature of those very few other contemporary representations of the story of Lucretia that match its power. Lorenzo Lotto's great portrait of an unknown woman, whose name must have been Lucretia,³² is in its way no less challenging but approaches the subject from an entirely different direction. The beautiful alabaster torso of a woman in anguish, possibly Lucretia, made around 1515–20 by a sculptor in the circle of Cristoforo Solari, gains its power in part through its deliberately fragmentary conception.³³

Consideration of the viewer leads on to who might have originally commissioned and owned the *Death of Lucretia*. It seems very probable that this significant work was made for the duke or a member of his family; perhaps it is no coincidence that the duke's wife bore Lucretia's name, none other than Lucretia Borgia (1480–1519). Perhaps, too, the remarkably sympathetic treatment of Lucretia in this sculpture owes something to the fact that in the decades around 1500 a number of women in Italy exercised more power and played



fig. 13

Giovanni Bellini, *Pietà*.

Tempera on panel, c.1465–70, c. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan

a more significant role in state affairs than might have been expected, given the prevailing societal norms. Most of these women grew up in the North Italian courts, such as Milan, Mantua and Ferrara, which were notable for the high level of education of the women of the ruling families. If the best-known example is Caterina Sforza (1463–1509), the doughty ruler of Forlì and Imola, Eleonora of Aragon (1450–93), the wife of Duke Ercole I d'Este, played an active role in the government of the Duchy of Ferrara, especially during her husband's absences, while in nearby Mantua Eleonora's daughter Isabella d'Este (1474–1539), Marchioness of Mantua, also on occasion took

part in the governance of the territory but, more significantly, became one of the great artistic patrons of her age.

In some of these centres in the latter decades of the fifteenth century a humanist debate even began as to the relative status and equality of women and men. In Ferrara in 1487 the notary Bartolomeo Goggio dedicated to Eleonora of Aragon his *De laudibus mulierum*, a significant early attempt to demonstrate the superiority of women over men, largely by showing how often men failed to achieve the virtues such as chastity that had been traditionally demanded of women.²⁴ It has been argued that Eleonora of Aragon commissioned Ercole de' Roberti's series of famous women, including the panel of the *Death of Lucretia* (Fig. 9), with its remarkable depiction of Lucretia, one in which the painter avoids visualizing signs of vulnerability or victimhood but focuses instead on Lucretia's moment of greatest power.²⁵ These paintings, hanging in the ducal palace in Ferrara, would certainly have been known to Antonio Lombardo, whose own duchess, the much-maligned Lucrezia, was a distinguished

patron in her own right and a remarkably astute businesswoman and property investor.²⁶

The newly discovered *Death of Lucretia* is an exceptional work by any standards. It is both a superbly conceived and executed sculpture in its own right and a carefully considered, fresh and emotionally satisfying interpretation of a well-known but powerful story. Antonio's response to the harrowing subject bears witness to his profound acquaintance with the heritage of classical literature and sculpture, the rediscovery and reevaluation of which was at the heart of the Renaissance in Italy. At the same time, the *Death of Lucretia* is a remarkably modern work that draws on Christian themes and, implicitly, alludes to contemporary debate in Ferrara on the dignity and status of women. Ultimately, in its dignified and sympathetic portrayal of the suicide of Lucretia and the responses of her companions, Antonio Lombardo's *Death of Lucretia*, like all great works of art, transcends the centuries since it was made and is as powerful and affecting for us today as it would have been for its first owners.

²⁴ G. Boccaccio, *Famous Women*, ed. and trans. Virginia Brown, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2004, chapter 48, pp. 195–9.

²⁵ L. Baskin, *Quattrocento Portraits, Humanism and Gender in Early Modern Italy*, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 120–39; Maria Scuderi (ed.), *Lucretia Romanica: la storia delle donne da Raffaello a Bontà*, vol. cat., Milan, 2006.

²⁶ For a modern translation, see Lily, *The Rise of Rome: Books One to Five*, trans. T. J. Luce, Oxford, 1993, 137–9, pp. 66–9.

²⁷ *Death of Tito Livio*, ed. by Giovanni, Johannes Hubertus Verellenius, for Lucianus Genta, Venice, 11 February 1993. The book was used for subsequent editions in 1992 and 1993.

²⁸ A. M. Salsola, *The Sculpture of Tullio Lombardo*, Turin, 2004, p. 35.

²⁹ L. Luciani (ed.), *Lucretia Borgia*, vol. cat., (Palazzo Bonaccorsi), Ferrara, 2002, pp. 170–71, no. 33; M. Ceriana (ed.), *Il con-*

vizio di Lucretia (Antonio Lombardo e le sculture offensive), vol. cat., Milan, 2004, pp. 294–5, cat. no. 77; A. Sacchi, *Antonio Lombardo*, Venice, 2008, pp. 271–3, no. 28, figs. 182, 183, 185, 189.

³⁰ Salsola, *Sculpture of Tullio Lombardo*, pp. 16–9, figs. 225 and 226.

³¹ Ceriana, *Il convezio di Lucretia*, cat. nos. 1–25, see also W. A. Sheard, 'Antonio Lombardo's Reliefs for Alfonso d'Este's Study of Rome: Their Significance and Impact on Titian', in J. Moore (ed.), *Titian 500: Centre for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, Symposium Papers XXX*, Washington, D.C., 1993, pp. 314–27; C. Hope (ed.), *Il Regno e l'Arte: i convezio di Alfonso d'Este, arte e arte di Ferrara*, Florence, 2002, esp. pp. 77–204.

³² Ceriana, *Il convezio di Lucretia*, cat. nos. 1–2; Sacchi, *Antonio Lombardo*, nos. 25–36. See also J. M. Scholz, 'La Faccia di Lucretia di Antonio Lombardo in stile. In data, il sito di riferimento,

in M. Ceriana (ed.), *Tullio Lombardo: sculture e architettura nella Ferrara del Rinascimento*, *Atti del Congresso di Studi*, 4–6 aprile 2006, Venice, 2007, pp. 329–44.

¹⁰ Ceriana, *Rinascimento di alabastro*, cat. nos. 60–73. For discussion of the group, see also A. M. Schade, *Giannicola Mosca called Polidoro: A Renaissance Sculptor in Italy and Poland*, 2 vols, University Park, Pa., 1996, vol. 1, pp. 61–82.

¹¹ A. Bacchi and L. Giannelli (eds), *Rinascimento e Passione per l'Antico: Antonio Nicoli e il suo tempo*, cat. cat., Treviso, 2000, pp. 496–504, cat. no. 112; M. Bormand, B. Paszkiewicz and F. Tassi (eds), *Le Corps et l'Âme: De Donatello à Michel-Ange. Sculptures italiennes de la Renaissance*, cat. cat., Paris, 2020, pp. 170–71, cat. no. 104.

¹² P. Stewart, *A Catalogue of the Sculpture Collection at Wilton House*, Oxford, 2010, pp. 191–3, no. 122, pl. 124.

¹³ J. von Schlosser, 'Von der Bildhauerkunst der Renaissance: Fragmente zur Geschichte der Renaissanceplastik. III. Eine Reliefserie des Antonio Lombardo, Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses', 51, 1903–14, pp. 87–100; J. von Schlosser, 'Prolegomena zur der Skulpturenentwicklung des Altertums. Nachlese zu der Abhandlung von der Bildhauerkunst der Renaissance', *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, 31 (1913–14), pp. 347–58, esp. pp. 436–8.

¹⁴ L. Planiscig, *Trasvolante dell'Antico*, Verona, 2021, pp. 259–70.

¹⁵ Schade, *Giannicola Mosca called Polidoro*, nos. 1 A–B, 4 A–C, 5 A–B, 6, 7 A–B, 12, 13, 18.

¹⁶ See, for example, Sergei Andrussov's strong defence of the attribution of the St Petersburg *Philomena* to Antonio Lombardo in Ceriana, *Rinascimento di alabastro*, cat. no. 62, or J. Warren, 'Gargara Farnesi: A Patron of Sculpture in Renaissance Bologna', *Burlington Magazine*, 149, December 2007, pp. 101–3, in which it is argued that the reliefs of *Philomena* and *Parthena* with dedicatory inscriptions on the reverse could have been made in the Lombardo workshop in Ferrara, to which city Gargara Farnesi was exiled in 1512–13. For a summary of the argument, see A. Bayer (ed.), *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, cat. cat., New York, 2008, pp. 120–21, cat. no. 496.

¹⁷ A. M. Schade, 'Ten New Works by Antonio Minelli', *Burlington Magazine*, 137, 1995, pp. 799–800; Bormand, Paszkiewicz and Tassi, *Le Corps et l'Âme*, pp. 360–9, cat. no. 111.

¹⁸ Ceriana, *Rinascimento di alabastro*, no. 69; Schade, *Antonio Lombardo*, no. 20, fig. 364; most recently, Bormand, Paszkiewicz and Tassi, *Le Corps et l'Âme*, pp. 366–7, cat. no. 112.

¹⁹ Cates, *Michelangelo and Renaissance*; Marten and Telen, *London*, 4 November 2010, lot 8, uncoll. Acquired in September 2012 by the Ashmolean Museum with the assistance of David and Molly Burdwick, Sam Fogg Ltd, Trinity Fine Art and many other donors.

²⁰ For example, in depictions by Filippino Lippi and Botticelli; see Baskins, *Giorgio's Painting*, pp. 344–5, fig. 31, pp. 149–5, fig. 54.

²¹ *Pinacoteca Nazionale*, Siena, G. Agosti et al., *Donatello: Riscoperta e il suo tempo*, cat. cat., Milan, 1993, pp. 204–8, cat. no. 616; Lucarelli, *Lacertina Romana*, p. 349, cat. B.

²² Moderni, *Galleria Estense*, I. Marini, *The Art of Ercole di Roberto*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 137–8, no. 70; M. Mathews, *Ercole di*

Roberto, Milan, 1995, pp. 277–8, no. 41. For further discussion of the series, see also D. Allen and L. Syson (eds), *Ercole di Roberto: The Renaissance in Ferrara*, *suggested to Burlington Magazine*, 141 (April 1999), pp. i–vi (pp. xviii–x, nos. V3–X18) (written by Luke Syson); Bayer, *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 389–91, cat. no. 142 (entry by Nancy Edwards).

²³ Ceriana, *Rinascimento di alabastro*, cat. no. 70; A. Lucchi (ed.), *Tullio Lombardo and Ferraresi High Renaissance Sculpture*, cat. cat., Washington, D.C., 2009, pp. 128–9, cat. no. 32.

²⁴ R. Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. G. Bull, London, 1776, p. 241. See also L. Syson and D. Thurnham, *Objects of Desire: Art in Renaissance Italy*, London, 2000, pp. 56–7.

²⁵ Inv. GR 4892.11–11.1, S. Waller and P. Higgs (eds), *Chopart of Egypt, from History to Myth*, cat. cat., London 2001, pp. 102–3, cat. no. 125.

²⁶ Inv. 3645–5, Traversari, *La Statuaria ellenistica del Museo Archeologico di Firenze*, Rome, 2006, pp. 143–6, no. 48; L. Faravento and G. Traversari, *Tracce di scultura greca a Firenze: rinvenimenti prima del 500 al Museo Archeologico*, Venice, 1993, pp. 144–5, fig. 57.

²⁷ N. Penny, *National Gallery Catalogues: The Sixteenth Century Italian Paintings*, vol. 1: *Paintings from Bergamo, Brescia and Cremona*, London, 2004, pp. 85–6, figs 12 and 13.

²⁸ C. Banti, 'La *Lacertina Cristiana* di Raffaello e la "mobile morte"', in M. Scattoli (ed.), *Lacertina Romana: la terra delle donne in Raffaello a Roma*, cat. cat., Milan, 2016, pp. 37–71, esp. pp. 62–5, 67–8, figs 1–4.

²⁹ R. Lightbown, *Monoprosopos*, Oxford, 1986, pp. 647–8, no. 48, pl. 136; J. Marinova (ed.), *Andrea Mantegna*, cat. cat., London, 1992, pp. 247–7, cat. no. 61.

³⁰ M. Curry, D. Howard and B. Laven (eds), *Medieval and Renaissance: The Holy Shave in Renaissance Italy*, cat. cat., Cambridge, 2017, pp. 40–61, reproduced pl. 58, fig. 23.

³¹ For discussion and a transcription and translation, see S. Jod, *Chore Thinking: The Rape of Lavinia and the Birth of Mimesis*, Bloomington, 1999; for the translation, see pp. 349–51.

³² Penny, *Sixteenth Century Italian Paintings*, pp. 74–91.

³³ Victoria and Albert Museum, London, A. Lucchi, 'The London Roman in Anguish. Attributed to Girolamo Solari: Erotic Pantomime in a Renaissance Bust', *Antiques & Historicity*, 24, 2010, pp. 125–76; Bormand, Paszkiewicz and Tassi, *Le Corps et l'Âme*, pp. 414–15, cat. no. 126.

³⁴ P. J. Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman: The Challenge of Female Independence in the Literature and Thought of Italy and England*, University Park, Pa., 1992, esp. pp. 31–64; Stephen Kibbey, *The Ghost of Boccaccio: Writings on Italian Women in Renaissance Italy*, Turnhout, 2005, esp. pp. 172–90; M. Franklin, *Boccaccio's Decamer: Power and Virtue in Renaissance Society*, Aldershot, 2006, pp. 121–3; Bayer, *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, p. 330.

³⁵ Franklin, *Boccaccio's Decamer*, p. 139.

³⁶ For *Lacertina*, see Lucarelli, *Lacertina Romana*, and for her property dealings, see D. Giannini, *Lacertina Romana*, *Imprenditoria nella Ferrara rinascimentale*, in L. Arrighi and S. Pizzoni (eds), *Donne-Rapporte nel Rinascimento*, Rome, 2006, pp. 129–45.

Jacopo Tintoretto (Venice 1518 - 1594)

Portrait of Tommaso Rangone

c.1555-6 (?)

oil on canvas

108 × 94.6 cm.; 42 1/4 × 37 1/4 in.

Provenance

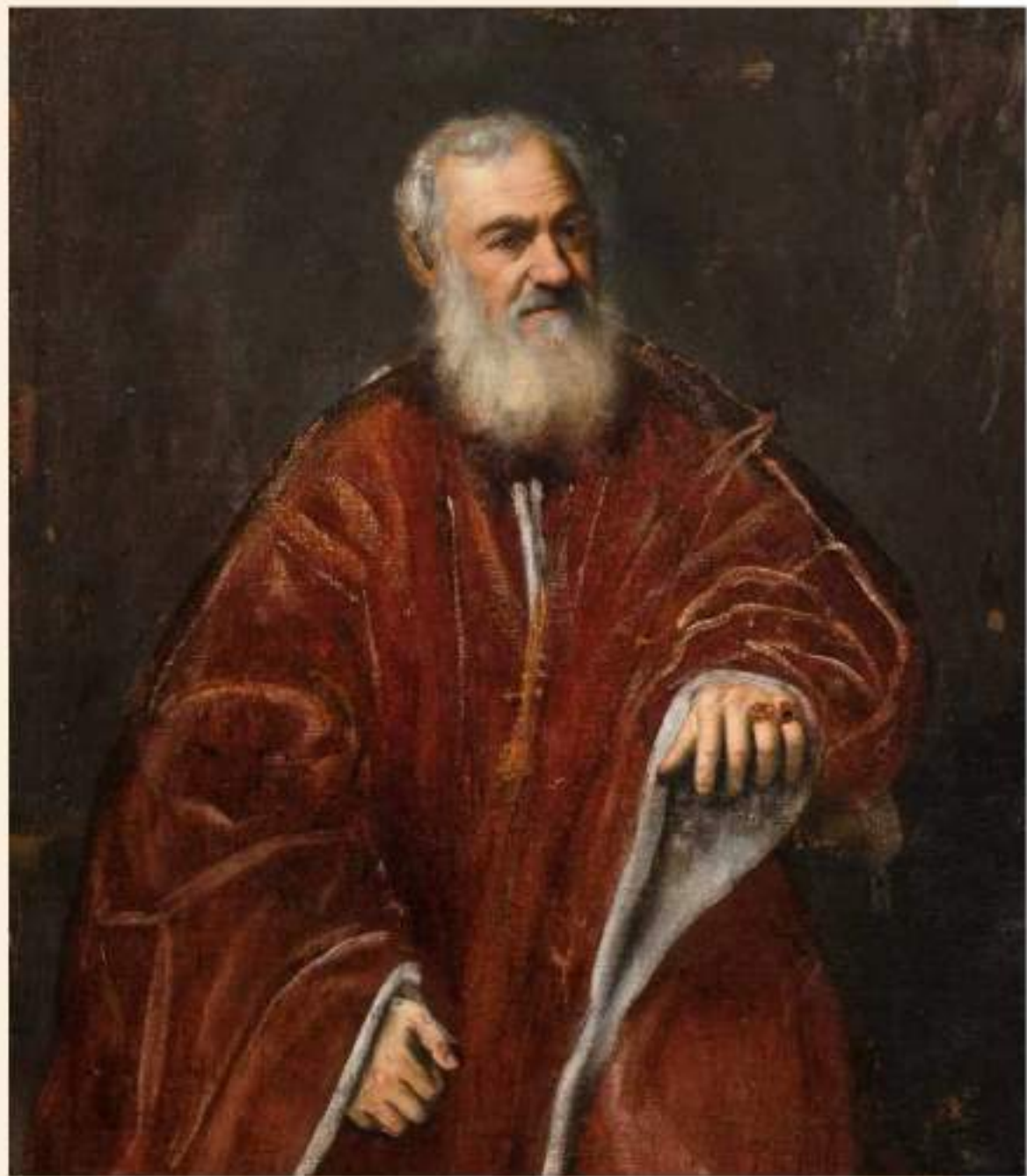
Probably, the collection of Tommaso Rangone (1493-1577), Venice, and perhaps listed in his will, drawn up a month before he died in September 1577, as 'imago mea Tintorettyanae' (see E. Weddigen, 'Thomas Philologus Ravennas: Gelehrter, Wohltäter und Mäzen', in *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte*, 9, 1974, p. 52);
Count Melzi d'Eril;
Marchese Zaccaria, Milan;
With Jacob M. Heimann, New York, by 1940;
Anne R. and Amy Putnam, San Diego;
By whom gifted to the Fine Arts Gallery, San Diego, 1950 (inv. no. 1950.113);
By whom sold, Sotheby's, New York, 11 June 2020, lot 1 (as attributed to Tintoretto and workshop), where acquired by the present owner.

Literature

A. Venturi, 'Pre il Tintoretto', *Classe*, 40, October 1997, pp. 323-3.
H. Tietze, *Four Centuries of Venetian Painting*, exh. cat., Toledo, 1980, cat. no. 50.
E. F. Richardson, *Masterpieces of Art from European and American Collections*, exh. cat., Detroit, 1941, p. 21, cat. no. 56.
A. Miller, 'San Diego Se-opens Fine Art Academy in Bessie Bell Park', *Art Digest*, 22.7, 1 January 1948, p. 9.
J. D. Morse, *Old Masters in America*, New York, 1952, p. 160.
The Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego Catalogue, San Diego, 1960, p. 49.
E. B. Fredericksen, *Canvas of Pre-Nineteenth Century Italian Paintings*, Cambridge, 1972, pp. 201, 520, 632 (as follower of Jacopo Tintoretto);
E. Weddigen, 'Thomas Philologus Ravennas: Gelehrter, Wohltäter und Mäzen', in *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte*, 9, 1974, pp. 7-78 (p. 32);
J. Murrant, *Italian, Spanish, and French Paintings before 1850 in the San Diego Museum of Art*, San Diego, 2005, pp. 417-9, no. 37, reproduced (dated c.1577, as a late workshop follower of Tintoretto).

Exhibited

New York, Cosmos Park, *World's Fair*, 1939-40;
Toledo, Toledo Museum of Art, *Four Centuries of American Painting*, March 1940, no. 50 (as a portrait of Tommaso Rangone);
Detroit, The Detroit Institute of Arts, *Masterpieces of Art from European and American Collections*, 1 April-31 May 1941, no. 56.



Jacopo Tintoretto

Portrait of Tommaso Rangone

Peter Humfrey

THIS STRIKING BUT LITTLE-KNOWN PORTRAIT belonged until recently to the San Diego Museum of Art (inv. 50.113). It was published in 1937, shortly before it left Italy for the United States, by Adolfo Venturi, as a superb example of the work of Tintoretto, 'scintillating with life and intelligence'.¹ More recent verdicts have been less favourable, and at the San Diego Museum it was downgraded to the status of 'Follower of Tintoretto' before being sent for sale at Sotheby's, New York, in 2020.² Since then, however, it has been cleaned and conserved, with results that not only vindicate the enthusiasm expressed by Venturi, but confirm the identification of the sitter as the eminent physician Tommaso Rangone (1493–1577).

Before cleaning, it had been noted that the canvas support had been cut – surprisingly, not at the top or bottom, but at both sides, indicating that the already unusually wide format was originally even wider (although perhaps not by much).³ Conservation involved the removal not only of yellowed varnish, making the image much more legible, but also of disfiguring, later overpaint. This was probably applied with the purpose of bringing the costume to the same level of finish as the head, and it included an awkward attempt to give the crimson robe the texture of brocade. It now appears that the thin and sketchy handling of the costume and background was deliberate on the part of the painter, as a way of lending special emphasis to the more powerfully modelled head and to the finely executed hairs of the moustache and beard. With time, the thinly applied areas have suffered aban-

sion and in parts have become transparent, so that wipes of the painter's brushes have now become visible at the top right. In addition, the x-radiograph (fig. 1) made during conservation shows that during the course of execution the artist shifted the position of the head from a frontal gaze towards the spectator to the present, more active look to the right. The line of the cheek and the visibility of the neck in the radiograph also suggest that the work was begun as a portrait of a different, much younger sitter, or perhaps of a woman. This re-use of an existing canvas was a frequent practice by Tintoretto, as well as by Titian and other Venetian painters.

Compositionally, the portrait is both typical and atypical of Tintoretto.⁴ In common with some of his finest contributions to the genre is the neutral background, from which the strongly lit figure emerges from a surrounding darkness. There is a minimum of accessories, and attention is focused on the powerfully modelled face and hands. More commonly, however, Tintoretto's sitters look outwards at the viewer and fill a vertical field more completely. Also unusual is the effect of incipient movement: shown in three-quarter length, his left arm resting on the arm of his chair, the sitter turns his head to the right and seems about to stand up, as though to greet an arriving visitor. The effect of immediacy is heightened by the unusual and informal detail of the plating of the sitter's spectacles on top of his right ear. This is an unsparingly realistic portrayal of a middle-aged or elderly man, with wrinkled skin above his deep-set eyes, and wispy white





fig. 1
X-radiograph of Jacopo Tintoretto's *Portrait*
of Tommaso Rangone (1493-1577).

© Colnaghi

hair and beard. But his expression, enquiring and responsive, perfectly complements the vigorous alertness of his pose and communicates a vivid sense of personality.

In 1940, soon after the arrival of the portrait in the United States, it was exhibited with the title *Portrait of Tommaso Rangone*.³ An important patron of the architect Jacopo Sansovino (1486–1570) and the sculptor Alessandro Vittoria (1525–1608), as well as of the painter Tintoretto, Rangone was one of the most colourful personalities in Venetian society in the middle of the sixteenth century, and the identification of him as the sitter obviously added considerably to the interest of the portrait. Such identifications can be hazardous, since one elderly, bearded sitter wearing official robes can look often much like another; and the San Diego Museum and the sale catalogue of 2020 were perhaps wise to be cautious in accepting the idea too readily. Yet Rangone's features are exceptionally well documented in the various works of art he commissioned, from medals to busts (fig. 2), and from a full-length statue (fig. 3) to painted donor portraits (fig. 4). All of these consistently show him, as here, with a middle-length, squarish beard and a bulbous nose. The red gown, or toga, is somewhat less distinctive. With its large, open, fur-lined sleeves, known as *maniche dogali*, it is of a type worn by the highest patrician officials in the Venetian government; but its use was not governed by strict rules, and Rangone would have been just one of many wealthy and prominent members of the citizen class who adopted it. Somewhat

more telling is the prominent display on the sitter's left hand of two large gold rings inset with precious stones. Rangone is known to have had a particular passion for jewels, and in his will he specified that his body on his funeral bier should be displayed wearing no less than five such rings.⁴ But clinching evidence that the sitter in the present portrait is indeed Rangone is provided by another item of jewellery: the gold pendant shown hanging from a chain round his neck. Although executed very sketchily, this clearly shows a cross above a winged Lion of Saint Mark, the emblem of the Scuola di San Marco. The same emblem,



fig. 2

Alessandro Vittoria, *Portrait Bust of Tommaso Rangone (1493–1577)*.

Bronze, c.1575. Art and Science, Venice
© Contraphoto Arte, Venice



fig. 3

Alessandro Vittoria, *Statue of Tommaso Rangone (1493–1577)*.

Bronze, 1565–7. Façade of San Giuliano, Venice.
© Contrasto/Art, Venice.

with the wings spread out like a fan, appears on the carved wooden ceiling of the Scuola's Chapter Hall (fig. 5), a room for which Rangone commissioned Tintoretto to paint three large-scale narrative paintings during his year in office as Guardian Grande (presiding officer) of the Scuola in 1562.

Rangone was born Tommaso Giannotti in 1493 in Ravenna, a city not part of the Venetian mainland empire but of the papal states.⁷ Although from a modest social background, he was from the beginning highly ambitious and studied classics and philosophy before graduating in medicine from the University of Bologna in 1516. During the 1520s, he was employed in Modena both as a physician and as an astrologer by Count Guido Rangone, in whose honour he adopted his official surname.

In 1532, he moved to Venice, where he became very wealthy as a medical practitioner, advising prominent individuals as well as such institutions as the Venetian navy. He also raised his public profile by taking advantage of the Venetian printing press to publish numerous treatises on such subjects as the treatment of syphilis and, more generally, on how to maintain a healthy life through diet, exercise and fresh air. He made himself much in demand for his expertise on herbal remedies, particularly those derived from exotic plants imported from the New World. His achievements were officially recognised by the Venetian government in 1562, when he was created a Knight of Saint Mark, and in 1572 by the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, who created him a count palatine. Presumably, his remedies were considered to be effective; certainly, he himself lived a long life, and he died in Venice in 1577, at the age of eighty-four.

In his adoptive city, Rangone was highly active as a philanthropist and in public service. In 1552, he founded a college in Padua for thirty-two students from poor backgrounds to enable them to achieve a university education. He served as lay procurator for several Venetian parish churches and convents, acting as their legal representative and helping to manage their financial affairs.⁸ In the case of two of the parish churches, San Geminiano (situated very close to his house in Piazza San Marco) and San Giuliano (situated nearby, in the Mercerie, on the way from the Piazza to Rialto), he undertook to pay from his own pocket the entire cost of having new classicising façades erected to

designs by Sansovino.⁹ The church of San Giuliano also became the site of his burial chapel. He served three terms as Guardian Grande of two of the great devotional confraternities – the Scuola Grande di San Marco, in 1562 and again in 1568, and the Scuola Grande di San Teodoro in 1563 – an office that carried major financial and philanthropic responsibilities, as well as high social prestige. At the Scuola di San Marco, he similarly made the exceptionally generous gesture of funding the three large-scale narrative paintings by Tintoretto. In 1548, the Scuola had employed the painter to embark on an extensive cycle depicting posthumous miracles performed by its patron saint, beginning with the *Miracle of the Slave* (now Accademia, Venice). But, as so often happened with Scuola commissions, progress on the larger project was delayed by inadequate institutional funds, and when Rangone was elected in 1562, the *Miracle of the Slave* was still the only canvas in place. Now, in the space of just two or three years, Tintoretto added three more canvases to the cycle. Rangone's benefactions came, however, with a certain cost to their recipients. All of his commissions show an obsessive concern with self-promotion by having portraits of himself displayed in some of the most prominent sites in the city. Traditionally, Venetians were suspicious of any attempt at self-promotion by individuals, and the government encouraged a corporate ethos, according to which all the members of a particular social class were equal. During the course of the sixteenth century, this ethos was gradually eroded, as some families – not only from the patrician

but especially also from the citizen class – chose increasingly ostentatious forms of art patronage. But now Rangone, who was neither a patrician nor even a native Venetian, sought to test convention to the limit. When offering to fund the new façade of San Geminiano in 1552, he attempted to have a statue of himself placed there. This attempt was foiled by the Senate, which could not accept the placing of the statue of an individual at the very heart of the Republic, in the Piazza, directly opposite



fig. 4

Jacopo Tintoretto, *Removal of the Body of Saint Mark from the Funeral Pyre*.

Oil on canvas, 1562–6, © Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice – Ministry of Culture



fig. 5

Vettor da Feltre, *Lion of Saint Mark*.

Gilt and polychrome wood, 1555. From the ceiling of the Chapter Hall, Scuola Grande di San Marco, Venice.
© Gettyimages Art, Venice

the venerable basilica of San Marco. A year later, however, he succeeded in gaining permission to have his statue placed on an only slightly less prominent site, the façade of San Giuliano; and in 1559, the full-length bronze by Vittoria (fig. 3), cast in 1557, was put in place above the main portal.¹⁰ Seated like a gowned professor in his chair, Rangone is shown holding a large tome in one hand and a branch of a medicinal plant in the other, surrounded by more books, a celestial and a terrestrial globe and other objects of learning. But Rangone never abandoned his desire to commemorate himself in his own parish church, and in 1571 he was given permission to have another bronze by Vittoria, in bust format with all its connotations of antique Rome (fig. 2), placed above the side door of the church.¹¹

When elected Guardian Grande of the Scuola di San Marco in 1562, Rangone once again tried to have a statue of himself placed on the exterior of the confraternity building, and once more he was rebuffed. The governing board could not, however, resist his offer to commission from Tintoretto the three scenes of miracles of Saint Mark, respectively the *Restoration*

of the Body from the Pyre (fig. 4), the *Finding of the Body* (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan), and *Saint Mark Rescuing a Saracen from Shipwreck* (Accademia, Venice).¹² All three are treated in terms of high drama, with the tempestuous movement of the figures complemented by spectacular effects both of perspective and of lighting. Yet in all three, at the very centre of the action, Tintoretto places the anachronistic figure of Rangone, wearing his rich ceremonial robes and actively assisting the historical actors, or passionately responding to the miraculous events. It was perfectly traditional for the narrative cycles painted for lay confraternities to include portraits of the officers who had commissioned them; but in such cases, there were usually several of these anachronistic figures, as if to express their corporate responsibility, and they were placed to the side, as passive witnesses. The prominence given here to a single donor was completely unprecedented, and it was clearly the result of Rangone's insistence, as a just acknowledgment of his funding of the three canvases. It is true that, as portrayed by Tintoretto, it is possible to interpret the figure of the donor as an inspiring model of piety for contemporary viewers to imitate. In the *Restoration*, for example, Rangone is shown tenderly cradling the head of the martyred saint, providing Mark with a sort of counterpart of Joseph of Arimathea in scenes of Christ's Deposition.¹³ At the same time, it is not difficult to imagine that not all of the members of the confraternity felt equally inspired, and that many of them found the prominence of Rangone unpleas-





fig. 6

Jacopo Tintoretto, *Portrait of a Man with a White Beard*.

Oil on canvas, c.1733. © Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

antly obtrusive. In 1573, in fact, after he had left office, the governing board had the three canvases removed from the Chapter Hall and sent to his house. He immediately returned them, whereupon they were sent instead to the artist, so that he could eliminate the offend-

ing figure. This would obviously have been to the detriment of his compositions, and, in the end, the canvases were reinstated in the Chapter Hall without alteration. But Rangone naturally took deep offence at the ingratitude of his confrères, and the episode marks the end of his association with the *Senola*.

There is plenty of evidence that, in addition to these portraits incorporated into narrative scenes, Tintoretto and his associates painted a number of *autonomous* portraits of Rangone. Several survive, while three more are mentioned in his long and detailed will, drawn up just a month before he died in September 1577.¹⁴ Two of these cannot be identical with the present portrait, since one of them showed him wearing the golden gown of a Knight of Saint Mark, and another was not by Tintoretto himself but by his follower Domenico Molino.¹⁵ The third, however, is described as 'imago mea Tintoretii tyanea' – in other words, Tintoretto portrayed him wearing, as here, the colour described by the Venetians as *porpora* or *porpora*, the wine-red of crimson (as opposed to scarlet), adopted by many senators and other high-ranking officials, and it may well correspond to the present work. This, in any case, may now be regarded as easily the finest of the autonomous portraits, and while it successfully conveys the sitter's social dignity, it also communicates a strong sense of the close and warm personal relationship that must have existed between patron and painter. Here, in fact, there is little suggestion of Rangone's self-promoting vanity; rather, he comes across as the kindly philanthropist that he also was.









Back of the painting

Timoretti's portraits are often difficult to date on internal stylistic grounds, and this is especially true of the present portrait, which, as has been seen, is in many respects unusual in his activity as a portraitist. Around 1562–4, when he must also have made a number of sketches for Rangone's portrait in the narrative canvases, might seem a likely date; yet Rangone appears somewhat younger in the present work, and it is equally possible that it dates from a few years earlier, perhaps around the time that Vittoria was preparing his wax model for the bronze statue on the exterior of San Giuliano in 1556 (fig. 3). In pose, in fact, the statue is rather similar to the painted portrait: seated, the head turned slightly to his left, his left arm resting on the arm of his chair. The similarity raises the further possi-

bility that Timoretti produced the painted portrait primarily as a guide for the sculptor – a circumstance that might also account for the concentration on the head at the expense of the costume.¹⁵ At any rate, the mid-1550s is a plausible date for the present work by stylistic analogy with other portraits by Timoretti datable to this phase, such as *Portrait of a Man with a White Beard* in Vienna (fig. 6).¹⁷

This *Portrait of Tommaso Rangone* is not mentioned by Timoretti's seventeenth-century biographer, Carlo Ridolfi, and its modern history goes back only as far as the middle of the nineteenth century. According to the records of the San Diego Museum, before the painting arrived in the United States in 1939/40 it was owned by a 'Marchese Zaccaria' of Milan, and before him, a 'Count Melzi d'Eril'.¹⁸ When publishing it in 1937, Venturi described it simply as belonging to a 'Private Collection', perhaps still referring to Zaccaria or, more probably, to an intermediary dealer. This Milanese marquis must be the Marchese Guiscardo Zaccaria (born in 1887), whose mother, Carolina, was the daughter of Count Giacomo Melzi d'Eril (1827–1875). From this it may be deduced that Zaccaria inherited the portrait from his maternal grandfather. Count Giacomo was a direct descendant of the very distinguished eighteenth-century collector Count Francesco Saverio Melzi (1699–1776), and it is possible that the portrait formed part of his collection. However, several other members of the Melzi clan were likewise keen collectors, including perhaps Count Giacomo, and, for the time being, this provenance must remain no more than a hypothesis.

¹ A. Venturi, 'Per il Tizianesimo', *L'Espresso*, XI, October 1927, pp. 322-3.

² R. H. Frederickson and E. Zeri, *Crimes of Pre-Nineteenth-Century Italian Paintings in North American Public Collections*, Cambridge, MA 1972, pp. 204, 220, 652; E. Woldfgen, 'Thomas Philologus Barenz, Gelehrter, Wollkünstler und Mäzen', *Saggi e Memorie di Storia dell'Arte*, IX, 1974, pp. 7-76 (p. 52); J. Marciani, *Italian, Spanish and French Paintings before 1820 in the San Diego Museum of Art*, San Diego 2015, pp. 187-9; New York, Sotheby's, 11 June 2020, lot 1. It was not included in the standard catalogue of Titian's portraits: Paula Rossi, *Giuseppe Tizianesimo*, *L'Espresso*, Milan 1982.

³ J. Marciani, *Italian, Spanish and French Paintings before 1820 in the San Diego Museum of Art*, San Diego 2015.

⁴ For a recent discussion of Titian as a portrait painter see H. Eickhof and F. Behrman, 'Portraitist', in *Titian: Artist of Renaissance Venice*, ed. cat., Palazzo Ducale, Venice, and National Gallery of Art, Washington 2018-19, pp. 144-69.

⁵ H. Tietze, *Four Centuries of Venetian Painting*, Toledo 1940, no. 72.

⁶ E. Woldfgen, 'Thomas Philologus Barenz, Gelehrter, Wollkünstler und Mäzen', *Saggi e Memorie di Storia dell'Arte*, IX, 1974, pp. 54-5.

⁷ The fundamental account of Bagnone's life is in E. Woldfgen, 'Thomas Philologus Barenz, Gelehrter, Wollkünstler und Mäzen', *Saggi e Memorie di Storia dell'Arte*, IX, 1974, pp. 7-76. See also most recently S. Mazzoni, 'Tommaso Giannotti: Bagnone a life modelled on books and (not just medical) art', in *Art, Faith and Belief in Titian's Venice*, ed. cat., G. Mazzoni and C. Kleinert, Venice 2018, pp. 42-57.

⁸ For Bagnone as a lay Procurator, see A. Sherman, 'Did *Don Juan* or *gloria*? Lay Procurator patronage and the art of identity formation in Renaissance Venice', in *Architecture, Art and Identity in Venice and its Territories, 1450-1750*, ed. by N. Arcidiacono and E. Jones, Farnham and Burlington VT 2013, pp. 17-31 (pp. 20-5).

⁹ For Bagnone as a patron of Sansovino, see D. Howard, *Giuseppe Sansovino: Architecture and Patronage in Renaissance Venice*, New Haven and London 1975, pp. 31, 54-6.

¹⁰ R. Boschi, *The Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*, New Haven and London 1991, pp. 113-19, 318-9; T. Martin, *Alessandro Vittoria and the Portrait Bust in Renaissance Venice*, Oxford 1995, pp. 39-42; H. Güler, *Favorite Sonnet: a Saggio Profano*, Venice 2002, pp. 207-36.

¹¹ T. Martin, *Alessandro Vittoria and the Portrait Bust in Renaissance Venice*, Oxford 1995, pp. 123-4.

¹² Y. Nichols, *Titian: Tradition and Identity*, London 1999, pp. 117-45; A. Caraculov, 'Le corps de Saint Marc et celui de Bagnone. Ou le principe d'induction selon Titian', *Studiolo*, II, 2001, pp. 107-15.

¹³ A. Caraculov, 'Le corps de Saint Marc et celui de Bagnone. Ou le principe d'induction selon Titian', *Studiolo*, II, 2001, pp. 123-8.

¹⁴ E. Woldfgen, 'Thomas Philologus Barenz, Gelehrter, Wollkünstler und Mäzen', *Saggi e Memorie di Storia dell'Arte*, IX, 1974, pp. 28-9.

¹⁵ E. Woldfgen, 'Thomas Philologus Barenz, Gelehrter,

Wollkünstler und Mäzen', *Saggi e Memorie di Storia dell'Arte*, IX, 1974, p. 52, tentatively identified this portrait by Molin with the present work, but on the basis of a photograph of it in its overpainted state.

¹⁶ This and other helpful suggestions were generously made to me by Roland Kriechel. For a comparable instance within the Titian workshop of the use of an unfinished sketch as a model for a sculpture, see E. Kriechel, 'Portraiture: Diplomate Jacopo Tizianus Ritratto del Paolo Tiepolo', *Realist: Jahrbuch*, LXXIII, 2012, pp. 107-58 (pp. 124-6).

¹⁷ H. Eickhof and F. Behrman, 'Portraitist', in *Titian: Artist of Renaissance Venice*, ed. cat., Palazzo Ducale, Venice, and National Gallery of Art, Washington 2018-19, p. 144.

¹⁸ J. Marciani, *Italian, Spanish and French Paintings before 1820 in the San Diego Museum of Art*, San Diego 2015, p. 187; Sotheby's sale catalogue, 2020.

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