Dating a Femme Fatale:

Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* and the Battle of Anghiari

by

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On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unacknowledged aid on this thesis.

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Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Introduction

With serene calm, Judith clutches a scimitar in her right hand as she hoists it behind her head. Poised to strike the neck of the man below her once more, she prepares to deliver the fatal blow. Positioned atop a triangular base, Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* (Figure 1) recounts the tale of Judith, the Jewish heroine who slays Holofernes, the Assyrian general threatening to destroy Israel in war. Holofernes sits atop a split wine cask between Judith's legs as she lunges over his right shoulder to stomp on his wrist with her sandaled foot. Her right foot, obscured by her flowing robes, jams itself between Holofernes' spread legs. As his arms droop to his sides, Judith holds Holofernes' limp body erect as she clenches a fistful of his long, wavy hair in her left hand to twist his head and expose his wounded neck for her sword. Holofernes' bearded face sags, his lips ajar and eyes closed. His flowing mane obscures the medallion wrapped around his neck and resting on his muscular, bare back. Tangled with his hair, Judith's gown brushes against Holofernes' naked chest while mixing with the cloth wrapped around his waist and hiding the right half of the medallion, only revealing the rump of a charging horse. Judith's garment spills across Holofernes' parted legs that dangle before the triangular base where putti and angels rush to harvest grapes, tread grapes for wine, and revel in the celebrations of a bacchic orgy.

Unfocused, Judith glances outwards, uninterested in the man before her or the task at hand as her parted lips pull at their edges as if in speech or labored breathing. Her soft face emerges from behind layered veils that run down her back and mask her hair. Her billowy dress lays delicately over her chest, a detailed bodice marking the bust of her gowns. Resting against her breasts, two nude, winged figures fly inwards from the right and left, respectively, to grasp an undecorated disk at the center of Judith's chest. The designs continue to her left shoulder,

where two nude figures flank a vase of flowers while surrounded by floral patterns. Her veil falls over her back and raised right shoulder, obscuring the floral designs on her right shoulder and a partial winged figure on her back. A strip of fabric cinches under her breasts while another wraps around her thighs, forcing her dress to bunch above Holofernes' head. Her flared sleeves end in delicate floral patterns, while her raised right arm reveals an armored bracelet decorated with winged figures beneath her sleeve. Prepared for spiritual battle, Judith raises her curved sword before hoisting in downwards to find its mark in Holofernes' wounded neck.

One of the most contentious issues with Donatello's *Judith* has been determining its date of creation. In 1963, H.W. Janson, like many scholars before and after him, suggested that Donatello began his work on *Judith and Holofernes* in 1455, shortly after returning from Padua and after the completion of the Palazzo Medici, Cosimo de' Medici's urban palace in Florence.[1] Though *Judith* first appeared in public records at the Palazzo Medici in 1464, Janson questioned *Judith's* origins, rejecting Cosimo's unchallenged patronage of the sculpture and the assertion that her original location was the Palazzo Medici.[2] He further suggested that *Judith* never went to her intended patron, but rather, through a series of unknown events, eventually ended up at the Medici property instead of beginning there.[3]

Rather than providing a single interpretation of *Judith*, Janson compiled a historiography of readings to consider. Giorgio Vasari (1550) and Francesco Bocchi (1591) each interpreted *Judith* as a divinely strengthened heroine displaying inhuman courage as she raises her sword

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[1] H.W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), 202.
[2] Ibid, 200-202. Janson cited the segmented casting process as proof that Donatello created Judith outside of Florence for a non-Florentine patron, ignoring years of collaboration between the Medici and Donatello. In his study, Bruno Bearzi determined that Donatello cast *Judith* in eleven individual pieces. Segmented casting was a standard process for creating monumental bronze sculptures, and neither necessitates nor disallows foreign creation, as Janson suggests. Bruno Bearzi, "Considerazioni di tecnica sul S. Ludovico e la Giuditta di Donatello," *Bollettino d'arte* 16 (1951).
[3] Janson, 202-203.

above her head. In contrast, August Schmarsow (1886) and Hans Semper (1875) viewed her stance and facial expression as one of hesitation and horror that reveal her inability to kill Holofernes.[4] Conversely, Schottmuller (1904) proposed that Judith has not only swung once but now prepares for a second whack, as indicated by the existing gash across Holofernes' neck and the account within the Book of Judith that describes the double strike that killed Holofernes.[5]

In his 1993 book *Donatello Sculptor,* John Pope-Hennessy assumed Donatello portrayed *Judith* in a moment of weakness between the first and second blow, ignoring the story in the apocryphal Book of Judith. Rather than relying on the text to explain this pause, Pope-Hennessy relied upon his assumption that Donatello believed a woman's inherent weakness would have prevented her from quickly or confidently completing her murderous deed.[6] Like Janson, Pope-Hennessy suggested that Donatello created *Judith* for a location other than the Palazzo Medici, but unlike Janson, he interpreted *Judith* as a direct metaphor for the triumph of humility over pride.[7] If commissioned in 1440, it is possible that Cosimo commissioned the sculpture for the new

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[4] Janson, 203-204. Schmarsow and Semper presumably viewed Judith raising the sword before God's divine intervention gives her the strength to kill Holofernes. In doing so, they either assumed the gash on Holofernes' neck is a casting fault, as Kauffmann suggests, or they ignored the textual and visual information linking the sculpture of *Judith* to the Book of Judith. In the apocryphal text, God strengthens Judith so she can kill Holofernes. Even with God's backing, it takes Judith two whacks to lop off Holofernes' head. With a gash already present in Holofernes' neck on the sculpture, the mark was likely either intentional, or if accidental, left due to its adherence to the apocryphal text and the expense required to fix it (though it does appear to be a deliberate mark despite Kauffman's argument otherwise). Narratively and visually, *Judith* has already struck once, which means she has been imbued with God's strength. August Schmarsow, *Donatello: Eine Studie über den Entwicklungsgang des Künstlers und die Reihenfolge seiner Werke* (Breslau: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1886). Francesco Bocchi, *Le Bellezze della Citta di Fiorenza* (Florence, 1591). Frida Schottmüller, *Donatello: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis seiner knstlerischen Tat* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1904).). Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de Piu Eccellenti Pittori* (Florence, 1550). Hans Kauffmann, *Donatello* (Berlin: 1935). Hans Semper, *Donatello: Seine Zeit und Schule; Eine Reihenfolge von Abhandlungen* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1875).

[5] Janson, 203-204. Kauffmann claimed that the gash in Holofernes' neck was a casting fault rather than an intentional design piece despite the apocryphal text's indication that Judith required two swings before killing Holofernes and the seemingly intentional placement of the marking. Hans Kauffmann, *Donatello* (Berlin: 1935).

[6] John Pope-Hennessy, *Donatello Sculptor* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993), 155. "For him it was a simple fact that no woman with a scimitar could cut off a man's head with a single blow, the moment of action depicted in the statue is that at which a first mortal stroke has been delivered, leaving a gash across the neck, and Judith's arm is raised to complete her task."

[7] Pope-Hennessy, *Donatello Sculptor*, 281.

Palazzo Medici, which he was planning by 1440. Regardless, there remains a period of time for which *Judith's* whereabouts remain unknown before she moved to the Palazzo Medici.[8] While never providing a specific date for *Judith*, Pope-Hennessy dated Donatello's bronze *David* (Figure 2) to 1440 and suggested that Donatello created *Judith* afterward as a companion piece to *David.*[9] Pope-Hennessy would later recant the 1440s dating in favor of a later dating like Janson.

Following Pope-Hennessy's cue, Peter Weller also dated *David* to 1440 in his 2012 article, "A Reassessment in Historiography and Gender: Donatello's Bronze 'David' in the Twenty-First Century," with *Judith* following shortly afterward as a companion piece, though he incorrectly cited Dale Kent in an attempt to distance both *David* and *Judith* from secular interpretations.[10] Arguing that *Judith* and *David* were created for primarily religious purposes rather than as secular messages, Weller falsely stated that Kent directly connected the inspiration for *David* to the Battle of Anghiari—the final skirmish in the ongoing Lombard wars between Florence and Milan—when instead she described the types of tyranny the inscription along the bases of *Judith* and *David* might reference. Though she mentioned the importance of Anghiari, Kent never outright connected the sculptures to the Battle of Anghiari.[11] Weller used this claim to state that, if connected to the Battle

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[8] Francesco Gurrieri and Patrizia Fabbri, *Palaces of Florence,* (New York: Rizzoli, 1995), 54. Because *Judith* and *David* were possibly completed before the Palazzo Medici was finished, it is likely that they stood in another location before moving to the Medici courtyard and gardens. Perhaps the statues rested in the Medici family's Mugello villa or within the family's original palace, also on the Via Larga. Without records specifying the locations of *Judith* and *David,* there is no way to know for certain where or when the sculptures were placed in the Palazzo Medici before 1464 when their presence was noted. For the purposes of this paper, I suggest that *Judith* and *David* were placed in the Palazzo Medici once the family moved in during the mid-to-late 1450s. For discussion, see Dale Kent and F. W. Kent, "Two Comments of March 1445 on the Medici Palace," *Burlington Magazine* 121, no. 921.
[9] Pope-Hennessy, 281.
[10] Peter Weller, "A Reassessment in Historiography and Gender: Donatello's Bronze 'David' in the Twenty-First Century," *Artibus et Historiae* 33, no. 65 (2012): 74.
[11] Dale Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 284. Weller, "A Reassessment in Historiography and Gender," 63. Weller states, "Given this context, if there were a secondary connection of the *David's* iconography to war, however, Kent's argument—that the iconography would have been inspired by the Medici-backed victory over the Milanese at Anghiari in 1440 and not by the Treaty of Ferrara in 1428—would be more resonant." However, in her argument, Kent refers broadly to any power consuming Italian land as a tyrant, specifically mentioning Milan's tyranny in the 1430s and 1440s but not explicitly citing them or the Battle of Anghiari as the inspiration behind *David.* Rather, Kent states, "The tyrant

of Anghiari, the sculpture pair was prompted by the Medici's resulting economic success and their desire to venerate the Lord's provisions rather than personal desire to produce self-aggrandizing political propaganda.[12]

Dale Kent dated *Judith* to the late-1450s after the Peace of Lodi—the 1454 treaty that officially ended the Lombard war—and focused on the sculpture's iconographical interpretations within the Medici gardens in her book published in 2000.[13] Though the Peace of Lodi was a significant turning point for the Medici family, many historians and contemporaries questioned the benefit the end of the war brought for Cosimo.[14] While it was a victory for Florence, it was a questionable triumph for Cosimo, which brought about the immediate reduction of his governmental power.[15] With the Peace of Lodi came the immediate reversal of the government institutions put in place by Cosimo that gave him the power to control elections and legislation covertly. Kent connected *Judith's* placement in the Medici gardens to Eden, stating that all gardens were inherently representative of Eden and correspondingly so to the Virgin Mary.[16] The Virgin Mary represented the triumph of virtue over vice, and Judith, too, took on this moralized tenor in Kent's interpretation.[17] Like the Virgin Mary, *Judith* acts as Virtue overcoming Luxuria and tyranny, as indicated in the base inscription, "Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues. Behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility," which Kent considered to have referred to any kingdom seeking to assume Italian territory.[18] *Judith's* sculptural counterpart,

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was any of the predatory Italian powers seeking to swallow up as much of each other's territory as they could, particularly Milan and its Visconti duke."

[12] Weller, 64-65 and 74.

[13] Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici,* 283-284. Kent dates *David* anywhere between 1430 to the mid-1460s. Between pages 281 and 286, Kent discusses the thirty-year dating possibilities that *David* presents.

[14] John M. Najemy, *A History of Florence, 1200-1575,* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 291.

[15] Ibid, 290-291.

[16] Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici,* 300.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Kent, 284.

Donatello's *David*, stood nearby in the Palazzo Medici courtyard where he, too, overcomes a military giant.

In 1992, Christine M. Sperling dated *David* between 1428 and 1430, primarily focusing on the inscription along *David's* base to frame her argument.[19] While she did not specify any date for *Judith*, Sperling discussed the history of the inscriptions and their connection to an unpublished poem by Francesco Filelfo, whom she believed wrote the poem to ingratiate himself to the Medici after his exile in 1434.[20] The validity of Sperling's argument comes into question, though, as the poem's authorship is contested by several scholars and has been linked instead to the Medici tutor, Gentile de' Becchi.[21] Like Pope-Hennessy and Weller, Sperling used *David* as a precursor to *Judith*, yet she relied upon the unknown dating of Filelfo's poem as her sole support for *David's* dating, making it challenging to ascertain *Judith's* creation date and confidently pin down *David's*.[22] Unlike Weller, Sperling correctly attributed purely secular motives to the sculpture grouping, citing the decade of the 1420s during the Milanese-Florentine conflict as motivation for *David's* creation, though not necessarily connecting it with *Judith*.[23] Despite focusing on *David*, Sperling's analysis of Filelfo's poem, along with her insistence for an early dating of *David,* allow us to consider *Judith*'s relationship to the *David* statue.

Like Janson and Kent, Sarah Blake McHam favored a late dating of *Judith* around 1453 when Donatello returned from Padua.[24] She, too, used the base inscription to focus her analysis,

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[19] Christine M. Sperling, "Donatello's Bronze 'David' and the Demands of Medici Politics," *The Burlington Magazine* 134, no. 1069 (April 1992), 224.
[20] Ibid, 220.
[21] Sarah Blake McHam, "Donatello's Bronze 'David' and 'Judith' as Metaphors of Medici Rule in Florence," *The Art Bulletin* 83, no. 1 (March 2001): 43n2.
[22] Sperling, 218-220.
[23] Ibid, 223-224.
[24] Sarah Blake McHam, "Donatello's Bronze 'David' and 'Judith,' 33.

connecting *Judith* to the famous *Tyrannicide* grouping (Figure 3) from ancient Greece.[25] While *Judith, David,* and the *Tyrannicide* grouping flow from the same anti-tyrannical stream, McHam's argument fell short in her visual comparison between the sculpture sets. While the stances appear similar, the similarities do not suggest that Donatello imitated the classical grouping (Figure 4). She used this connection to present Judith's character as a pinnacle for both men and women to aspire to, an example of justified tyrannicide, and punishment for criminals of the state.[26] Utilizing the Palazzo Medici's artistic program, McHam described an interior decorative narrative focused on virtue's triumph over pride and tyranny to echo and strengthen *Judith's* and *David's* messages.[27]

Current evidence suggests an earlier dating than Janson, Kent, and McHam propose, though not a dating as early as Sperling suggests. While certain scholars like Kent and Pope-Hennessy have suggested that the Battle of Anghiari adds a meaningful valence to Donatello's *Judith,* none have committed to the battle as an origin point for the sculpture. I would like to suggest that the Battle of Anghiari played an integral part in the inception of *Judith and Holofernes* and acts as the impetus behind Cosimo de' Medici's commission. After the clash between Florence and Milan in Anghiari on July 29, 1440, yet before Donatello departed for Padua in 1443, Cosimo de' Medici commissioned Donatello to design and cast his sculpture of *Judith and Holofernes* to sit in the palace he had begun to plan on the Via Larga. The sculpture would represent virtue's triumph over pride and, analogously, Medici triumph over domestic and foreign threats.

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[25] Sarah Blake McHam, "Donatello's *Judith* as the Emblem of God's Chosen People," in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies Across the Disciplines*, ed. Kevin R. Brine et al., (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), 312-313.
[26] Ibid.
[27] McHam, "Donatello's Bronze 'David' and 'Judith,' 42.

Judith stood in the Medici Gardens throughout the end of Cosimo's life as a reminder of Medicean and Florentine victory along with the consequences of challenging the Medici's integral position within the fabrics of Florentine life. Using the inscription along the base of *Judith*, Cosimo reminded domestic and foreign viewers of treachery and pride's consequences: "Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues. Behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility." *Judith* stands as Florence, the virtuous pinnacle for both men and women, next to her sculptural brother, *David*, as she victoriously carves away at the footholds of pride.

Chapter One

Cosimo de' Medici made a statement to friend and foe alike when he placed Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* in the gardens of his urban palace. Scholars debate Cosimo's original intentions, which have been obscured through time and distance, making it even more challenging to interpret the exact meaning behind the inscription on *Judith's* base. As the Old Testament heroine slashes into the head of the Assyrian commander, words etched in bronze state, "Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues. Behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility." She does not indicate whether this threat to tranquility refers to a contemporary or historical one, nor does she reveal the identity of whom it is who has displayed the kind of pride so worthy of such a righteous severing. Whether literal through physical decapitation or figural through exile, beheading was considered a justified punishment for criminals of the state and external tyrants.[28]

With most scholarship dating *Judith* to some point between the 1430s and 1450s, it is necessary to examine the historical backdrop behind Cosimo's commission to determine what point in history aligns with the messages contained within Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes.* The statue's inscription concentrated upon threats within and outside of Florentine walls, yet only once in Cosimo's life did he face both internal treachery and external threats simultaneously merged. This perfect storm struck Florence's leader at the Battle of Anghiari, fought in Tuscany on July 29, 1440. Agitators led by Rinaldo degli Albizzi had joined forces with a Milanese army after Cosimo exiled the pro-Albizzi Florentines from Florence in 1434.[29] The Battle of Anghiari

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[28] Sarah Blake McHam, "Donatello's *Judith* as the Emblem of God's Chosen People," in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies Across the Disciplines*, ed. Kevin R. Brine et al. (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), 313.
[29] Niccoló Capponi, *The Day the Renaissance was Saved: The Battle of Anghiari and da Vinci's Lost Masterpiece* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2015), 129.

served as the link between land-hungry tyrants and aggrieved exiles for which the inscription of *Judith's* base refers, providing Cosimo with a catalyst to commission a sculpture focused on interior and exterior dangers.

The decades preceding the Battle of Anghiari set the metaphorical battlefield between the Medici and Albizzi factions while initiating the conflict between Florence and Milan. By 1420, the Albizzi oligarchy had presided over the Florentine government for three decades with little internal dissent.[30] While the Florentine public, the *popolo*, distrusted hereditary power, the Albizzi had successfully assuaged the *popolo* through a series of military and political displays after coming to power in 1382.[31] The Albizzi's power among the political elite and their incredible wealth mitigated the dangers presented by a dissatisfied *popolo.*[32] With internal threats mollified, the Florentines needed only worry about external threats to their sovereignty, the most pressing of which came from the Visconti family that ruled the powerful province of Lombardy from their palace in Milan.[33] Though Florence enjoyed moments of intermittent peace during the Albizzi oligarchy, they continuously grappled with Filippo Maria Visconti's attempts to consume more Italian territory for the majority of the Albizzi reign.[34] As was the custom in that era for Florence, the city refrained from forced military service, never raised an army of its own citizens, and instead dug into its coffers to hire mercenary soldiers to protect their borders.[35] Simply keeping the Visconti at bay placed a significant financial burden upon the city, prompting vocal

[30] Najemy, 254.
[31] Dale Kent, *The Rise of the Medici: Faction in Florence, 1426-1434* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978) 136-150.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Najemy, 253-257.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Gene Bruker, *Renaissance Florence* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 51-88.

disputes between rival factions with opposing solutions to the Visconti problem and setting the scene for a family of bankers to rise to prominence.[36]

The Medici fully entered the Florentine chronicles in 1421, as Giovanni de' Medici, papal banker and father to Cosimo, took his place on the war *balia,* an advisory committee comprised of a group of patricians tasked with presiding over military proceedings in the current war against Milan.[37] Nearing retirement at sixty-one years of age, Giovanni had purposefully downplayed his power to avoid provoking Albizzi jealousy and retribution.[38] Giovanni tread lightly even while heading the Florentine Signoria as *gonfaloniere* in 1421, aware of how uneasy his wealth and new-found elected position made his oligarchic counterparts. Cosimo de' Medici navigated the political world quite differently from his father, favoring bold moves over careful steps. The thirty-one-year-old began his trajectory as the familial patriarch in 1420, taking over management of the successful Medici Bank from his father and extending its arms internationally.[39] For years, Giovanni had angled the family business towards Rome, securing the family a position as Papal bankers.[40] With this foundation set before him, Cosimo inherited his father's legacy by acting as both financial and political counsel to the pope and his curial court.[41] Cosimo took over the reins of the family business to become the new Medici patriarch, transitioning him from his minor spot in the political world and placing him directly into the spotlight.

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[36] Najemy, 265-267.
[37] Ibid, 254-255.
[38] Charles Yriarte, *Florence* (Philadelphia: Henry R. Coates & Co., 1897), 27.
[39] Council of Constance 1414-1418—used it to prove himself
[40] Najemy, 267.
[41] Bruker, 69-74. Najemy, 267.

The *balia* immediately sought Cosimo's respected opinion upon its formation in 1423 as they tried to determine how to proceed with the Milanese threat.[42] Cosimo urged the *balia* to exercise restraint, concerned only with the Republic's honor and advising entrance into the conflict only if Florentine honor was brought into question. Cosimo's honor-oriented foreign policy was a far cry from Rinaldo's hawkish stance on war. Not nearly ready to back down, Rinaldo degli Albizzi, the Albizzi patriarch, along with Palla Strozzi, a prominent patrician and businessman, urged the *balia* to take a hard stance against Milan, hire an expensive mercenary force, and officially enter the conflict. Florence's external threats from Milan divided the Republic as families and patricians took sides fueled by fear and greed. With his father on the *balia,* Cosimo maintained his call for restraint.

The war dragged on for years, and the financial drain on resources quickly stoked the flames of dissent.[43] After continued losses between the summer of 1424 and the autumn of 1425, it seemed as if Florence was doomed to lose the fight; troops waned, and military coffers dwindled.[44] By 1425, Florentine morale had plummeted. Breathing life into the struggle, the Medici Bank saved the war effort, distributing loans to the Republic to replenish resources and pay for reinforcements. Now Florence's primary military loan lender, the Medici family thrust themselves into the center of Florentine politics, casting themselves as the most crucial component to the Commune's health.[45] Florence fought on for three more years, reenergized by

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[42] Najemy, 254-255. The rest of this paragraph is based on Najemy's work between pages 254 and 255.
[43]Ibid, 256.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980). By 1427, all Officials of the Bank were connected to and allied with Cosimo. That same year, Giovanni championed the Catasto and ensured its implementation, making him popular among guildsmen and the working class. The Catasto was a popular tax survey intended to relieve government debt brought about by war. Initially, Giovanni was against the Catasto, but after realizing the social implications of announcing his support, he reversed his opinion and voted in favor of the new initiative.

fresh troops and additional resources.[46] With a leveled battlefield and no foreseeable end to the conflict in sight, the Milanese—spurred on by Pope Martin V, a personal ally of Cosimo's—consented to the short-lived Treaty of Ferrara in 1428. Even with peace agreed upon and signed, political hostilities bubbled at the surface between the two cities, threatening to burst and begin war once more.

Giovanni de' Medici secured popular support for the Medici party among the *popolo* as the war continued. With his support and ratification of the Catasto, a popular tax reform passed in 1427*,* Giovanni positioned the family as common *popolo* themselves —albeit glorified, elite *popolo*—to secure support from the masses.[47] Giovanni's endorsement of the Catasto garnered an anti-oligarchic reputation for the Medici, which, while untrue, helped them gain the favor of businessmen and the *popolo* within and outside of their community, or *gonfalone*.[48]

Meanwhile, Cosimo endeared himself to the *popolo* and established an extensive patronage network throughout Florence.[49] Cosimo carefully projected an image for himself characterized by charity and good-will, an image he supported as he freely loaned money and assisted families with debts and dowries. He often did not expect or demand monetary repayment from those he assisted but rather asked them for loyalty and redeemable favors, a choice that left entire communities indebted to this increasingly powerful man.[50] Casting his patronage net wide, Cosimo appealed to the masses along with the patriciate, providing himself with seemingly limitless power among the elite and common classes through legitimate endearment and forced

[46] Najemy, 269. The remainder of this paragraph is based on Najemy's work.
[47] Kent, *The Rise of the Medici,* 177.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid. Give a little background on patronage.
[50] Vespasiano, *Renaissance Princes, Popes, and Prelates,* trans. William George and Emily Waters (New York: Harber Torchbooks, 1963), 218-219. Vespasiano is a particularly biased account, and his relationship with Cosimo should be considered when examining his account of Cosimo's life.

loyalty.[51] At the center of the Commune's finances, political life, and *popolo* support, Cosimo built for himself a sturdy powerbase within the Republic.

Determined to retain his dominant position, Rinaldo degli Albizzi waited for the proper opportunity to bring his political ax down upon the Medici neck. In 1429, the Signoria created the Conservators of the Laws, a government body instated to police factional disputes and maintain peace between the powerful families vying for control of the Florentine state.[52] The Conservators of the Laws assembled a priorate comprised of the full Signoria along with eighty randomly selected citizens tasked with rooting out fellow-Florentines who posed a threat to the city's safety and peace. Each member of the Conservators would write down the name of a citizen deemed untrustworthy or dangerous, and then they would count the votes. If any single citizen received six votes, he would immediately lose the right to hold office in the Florentine government, regardless of the actual threat they posed to the city.[53] If a citizen received two-thirds of the priorate's votes, exile ensued. While Rinaldo waited patiently to use this judicial body against Cosimo, he could not rid himself and the city of Medicean checks just yet.

The war with Milan temporarily halted in 1428, though Florence did not enjoy peace for long.[54] During the same December the Conservators of the Laws first assembled and after the

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[51] Najemy, 251-252.
[52] Najemy, 269. The remainder of this paragraph is based on Najemy's work.
[53] I specifically use the pronoun "he" here because women could not serve in any government body during the 15th century in Italy, and women were not exiled. The men of the family would receive the official exile, and women would follow often follow their husbands and sons, though they did not have to. Even women who committed crimes and were given prison sentences were given shorter sentences than their male counterparts, as contemporaries felt women should return home quickly to preside over the home and family instead of remaining in prison. For more information on women in prison, crime, and exile, see Guy Geltner, "A Cell of Their Own: The Incarceration of Women in Late Medieval Italy," *Signs* 39, no. 1 (Autumn 2013), Women, Gender, and Prison: National and Global Perspectives. Guy Geltner, "Isola non Isolata. Le Stinche in the Middle Ages," *Annali di Storia di Firenze* 3 (2008). Guy Geltner, "No-Woman's Land? On Female Crime and Incarceration, Past, Present, and Future," Justice Policy Journal 7, no. 2 (Fall 2010).
[54] Ibid.

Treaty of Ferrara passed, Florence entered into war with Lucca.[55] With the Florentine coffers emptied from the conflict with Milan, the Medici became even more integral to the Republic. Once again serving as the primary military loan lenders, the Medici continued to serve Florence to such an extent that they became the primary source of money for the entire Republic beyond military expenditures.[56] While this centrality enhanced Albizzi fear, it also proved how invaluable the Medici family was during wartime. Undeterred by Medici funding—or the peace treaty he signed a year prior—Filippo Maria Visconti, the duke of Milan, allied with Lucca, hoping to defeat Florence via proxy.[57] With Lucca and Milan standing against them, internal strife flooded into the Florentine patriciate once more. After six years of exhaustive war with Milan, Rinaldo stayed his course, advocating for war to prove the Republic's strength, but Palla Strozzi reversed his stance on the foreign conflict, declaring himself against the war with Lucca.[58] Neri Capponi, a Medici ally present for the discussions, took a pro-war stance, though Cosimo remained undecided and simply urged the Republic to maintain its honor. Popularly known for his charity and patience, as recalled by Vespasiano, a Medici sycophant, Cosimo's opinions pulled much weight in war deliberations, so when Cosimo decided to join the *balia* in 1430 after a disastrous battle that threatened Florentine honor, it meant war.

The battles raged on for three more years until, in 1433, Lucca and Florence signed a peace treaty ending the war.[59] With the war finalized and Cosimo's apparent use over, Rinaldo began searching for a way to remove Cosimo from his seat of power, especially as the transfer of papal power from Martin V to Eugenius IV in 1431 yielded an even closer relationship between

[55] Ibid, 270.
[56] Ibid, 270-271
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid, 269-271. The remainder of this paragraph is based on Najemy's work.
[59] Ibid, 270.

the Medici and the Curia.[60] Rinaldo realized the perfect tool to fracture the Medici faction had been created five years earlier with the Conservators of the Laws. If he could fill the Signoria with anti-Medici members and manipulate the eighty "randomly" selected representatives, he could secure the two-thirds vote needed to exile Cosimo.[61] To test out his scheme before applying it to Cosimo, Rinaldo convinced the Conservators of the Laws to exile Neri di Gino Capponi in 1432 on manufactured charges that he was a "sower of scandal," despite Capponi's innocence.[62] Two months later, the Signoria reversed this decision and recalled Capponi, but this did not change Rinaldo's realization that he could exile whomever he wished with enough falsified evidence. His plot to oust Cosimo soon began to take shape.

Customarily selected by random drawing, Signoria elections, or scrutinies resulted in varied political bodies.[63] Hoping to ensure Cosimo's demise, however, Rinaldo began to manipulate the *accoppiatori,* the council that presided over the scrutiny, by having the 1433 September-October Signoria selected *a mano*, or by hand.[64] Doing so allowed him to shape the Signoria into a pliable body suspicious of—or outright opposed to—the Medici faction and its agenda. To further fan the flames of suspicion and distrust, Rinaldo called upon the Otto di Guardia and the Signoria to gather false evidence and testimony against Cosimo, amounting to an accusation of corruption, sedition, and treason.[65] Not only were these bodies able to produce

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[60] Yriarte, *Florence*, 30-31. During the Council of Constance (1414-1418), Cosimo represented Florence and supported Antipope John XXIII, Baldassare Cossa, in the deliberations intended to end the Western Schism. Ultimately, Pope Martin V was designated the rightful pope, and Cossa relegated to Cardinal-Bishop of Frascati after supplicating before Martin V. Cosimo's support of Cossa strained the relationship between the Medici and the Curia. With Eugenius IV, new blood was ushered in and the betrayals of the past forgotten, allowing Cosimo to form a stronger bond with the Pope and his Curia.
[61] Najemy, 270-272.
[62] Ibid. The remainder is based on Najemy's work.
[63] Bruker, 132-135.
[64] Najemy, 272-273. The rest of this paragraph is based on Najemy's work.
[65] The Otto di Guardia was a group formed to police Florence affairs. Though not all of their work was done covertly, their proceedings generally occurred outside the public eye.

abundant evidence supporting Cosimo's danger to the Republic, but they were also able to introduce a key witness into the proceedings. Niccoló Tinucci, Cosimo's former ally, stood before the Conservators of the Laws and testified against Cosimo's character, accusing him of bribing and pressuring officials to prolong the war to put money into his pockets at the Republic's expense.[66] With this evidence in mind, the Conservators cast their votes and convicted Cosimo of crimes against the state.

Rinaldo summoned Cosimo to the Signoria on September 7, 1433.[67] Always a man intent on portraying an external image of limitless virtue, Cosimo ignored his advisors and friends who insisted he run from Florence and chose to remain in the city to face his summons.[68] Cosimo was almost immediately thrown into prison at the Alberghettino after appearing before the Signoria.[69] There, Cosimo feared for his life during his month-long imprisonment, convinced his enemies would poison him.[70] The Albizzi faction used this threat of life to try to wrestle power away from the Medici faction that anxiously awaited their leader's release but would not bow to Rinaldo's will.

With the power struggle between the Medici and Albizzi factions at a standstill outside of the prison, Rinaldo had Cosimo exiled to the city of Padua.[71] Officials from the Mugello and Romagna regions, those in the hill towns North of Florence, and Micheletto Attendoll—Francesco Sforza's cousin—all objected to this punishment and chimed in with their support, offering help to the exiled Medici by approaching the Florentine Signoria with demands to

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[66] There is no doubt that Cosimo was manipulating government officials for his benefit, but, based on current evidence, he was not attempting to prolong or influence the war as Tinucci suggested.
[67] Yriarte, 32.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid, 33.
[71] Najemy, 273-274.

restore Cosimo to Florence.[72] While their petitions fell on deaf ears, Cosimo warmly welcomed Venice's invitation to spend the rest of his days in their city after only spending a few months in Padua.

Entirely unmoved by foreign demands, Rinaldo refused to recall Cosimo. Rinaldo's failure to address the Medicean threat ruthlessly at a critical moment ultimately brought about his own demise. Though he kept the priorate votes *a mano* for the majority of 1433, Rinaldo returned the scrutiny votes to sortition for the September-October Signoria cycle.[73] Whether through pure luck or crafty manipulation by Medici allies, the Signoria was now surprisingly and unexpectedly comprised of several Medici *amici* who immediately demanded Cosimo's return.[74] With a helpless Rinaldo unable to influence or countermand their decision, the Signoria quickly reversed Cosimo's exile, restored his citizenship, and permitted the opposition leader to return to Florence by the end of September 1434.[75]

Now unable to hold office in Florence, Cosimo saw his public political power hogtied.[76] Cosimo craftily began to draw upon the extensive patronage network he had built before his exile to collect power throughout the city unofficially. With a stranglehold over many of his fellow elites and *popolo* alike, Cosimo situated himself as the puppet master of the Florentine government. Cosimo allowed his allies—both those genuinely loyal to him and those loyal out of fear or obligation—to serve as the face of Medici policy while he instructed their movements from his private court.[77]

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[72] Kent, *The Rise of the Medici,* 324-340.
[73] Najemy, 273-274.
[74] Ibid. The September-October 1434 Signoria included Luca di Buonaccorso Pitti, Giovanni Capponi, Neri Bartolini Scodellari, and Niccoló Cocco-Donati, all Medici allies.
[75] Ibid, 274.
[76] Ibid, 269.
[77] Ibid.

Unlike Cosimo, when Rinaldo received his summons on September 29, 1434, he refused to appear before the Signoria, choosing instead to protest by inciting armed conflict.[78] Crowds of 500 to 1,000 people gathered for each side as Rinaldo positioned himself behind the Palazzo della Signoria.[79] Hoping to balance the scales, Rinaldo beseeched Palla Strozzi, asking him for his armed forces to come to Albizzi aid. Having remained a Medici ally until 1433, when he switched sides to vote for Cosimo's exile, Strozzi refused to offer his troops and remained impartial to the feud. Strozzi's refusal to support either Cosimo or Rinaldo sucked the air from Rinaldo's plan, though he was not ready to surrender yet. Not until Eugenius IV—who was already in Florence under Rinaldo's invitation—intervened did Rinaldo lay down his arms and surrender to the newly-anointed Medici state.[80] Cosimo quickly got to work exiling 73 families, resulting in the forced exodus of over 500 people from Florence, including both Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Palla Strozzi. Calling in a 6,000-person army from Mugello, Romagna, and the hill towns North of Florence, Cosimo essentially imposed Martial Law to ensure the peaceful transfer of power through military might. By the end of the purge, Cosimo had rid Florence of the entire Albizzi faction and surrounded himself with avid supporters who backed Medici supremacy.

Now the unofficial head of the Florentine government, Cosimo turned his attention to the ongoing war with Milan. To protect Florentine interests against the threats of both Milan and Venice, Cosimo forged a personal alliance with Francesco Sforza, one of the *condottiere* employed by the Visconti to defeat the Florentines in previous years, despite his council's

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[78] Ibid, 276. Parallels to contemporary American history cannot be ignored.
[79] Ibid, 276-278.
[80] Though Eugenius IV was in Florence at Rinaldo's invitation, he negotiated on behalf of Cosimo. Cosimo was still a prominent banker during his exile and continued his job as the papal banker. Eugenius IV was almost certainly influenced by the economic advantages Cosimo's tenure in Florence would bring for the Curia.

hesitance to ally with such a powerful and unwieldy man.[81] Encouraged by Eugenius IV to form this controversial alliance, Cosimo persisted in this 1434 agreement to many Florentines' chagrin.[82] The war waged on with few resolutions between 1435 and 1437, giving Cosimo time to begin an artistic program designed and decorated by Donatello and focused on Giovanni de' Medici's tomb in the *Old Sacristy* of San Lorenzo (Figure 5).[83] The *Old Sacristy* would mark the start of this healthy working relationship between Cosimo and Donatello, one that many scholars believe evolved into a true friendship that spanned through the creation of the terracotta reliefs in the *Old Sacristy,* the bronze sculptures of *David* and *Judith and Holofernes,* and the profound reliefs on the *Twin Pulpits* (Figure 6) for the crossing of San Lorenzo—the church in which both artist and patron would be buried within two years of one another.[84]

As Donatello created, Cosimo strategized. Irrespective of the change in leadership, Florence's war with Milan continued unabated with unrelenting vigor. To oversee the war, the Signoria formed the "Great Council" in 1438 as a permanent three-year council and *balia* that conducted the scrutiny via *a mano* elections, continuing to allow Cosimo to manipulate and hand-pick the Signoria members from behind the scenes. Cosimo, in turn, convinced the city-states of Naples and Venice, the Papacy, and even the upstart Sforza family to join Florence against Visconti-led Milan and King Alfonso of Aragon.[85] Italian provinces ultimately came to unite on behalf of Cosimo to prevent Visconti dominance.

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[81] Ibid, 288.
[82] Ibid, 290. This alliance was a long-term personal alliance. Military assistance was not guaranteed, nor was political affiliation. Sforza's goal was not to help Florence but instead to gain control of Milan in whatever way possible.
[83] Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance*.
[84] Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici*. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, 202-204. Cosimo was buried under the crossing after he died in 1464. Donatello was buried under the foundations of the Old Sacristy after he died in 1466.
[85] Najemy, 284.

Meanwhile, the Council of Ferrara, started in 1438 by Eugenius IV to unite Eastern and Western Christendom after the disastrous Papal Schism, moved to Florence in 1439.[86] Both Visconti forces and the Bubonic Plague encroached upon the council's original location in Ferrara, making it increasingly dangerous to continue proceedings normally, so under Cosimo's invitation, the council moved to Florence, Cosimo and Eugenius' home city. Though he was not the conference's official leader, Cosimo became the host and primary patron of the Council, placing him in a position of international religious prestige as he funded the meetings. As host and *gonfaloniere* of Florence, Cosimo joined the proceedings between Emperor John VIII Palaeologus of Byzantium, Joseph II of Constantinople, and other prominent religious figures.[87] On July 6, 1439, at the newly consecrated Florentine cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, the Council of Ferrara officially declared a union between Eastern and Western Christendom that saw the Medici at the center of global prestige.

As the Christian world united, the Italian world fractured. The war with Milan continued, and the Florentines grappled for control over the conflict as human capital began to wane.[88] Having fought in two separate wars within the last two decades and failing to hire mercenary soldiers early enough, Florence had to rely upon their own untrained troops against Milan's professional soldiers.[89] Florence, resigned to lose the war, found themselves in a precarious situation whose only apparent outcome seemed to be defeat.

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[86] Ibid, 287. The rest of this paragraph is based on Najemy's work.
[87] Though Cosimo was not technically allowed to hold office after returning to Florence in 1434, he acted as *gonfaloniere* in 1439, enabling him to sit in on the proceedings during the Council of Ferrara as they took place in Florence. Cosimo also put these foreign diplomats and dignitaries up in the homes and palaces of families he had exiled in 1434.
[88] Capponi, 9.
[89] Ibid, 9-13.

Seeing an opportunity to dethrone Cosimo, Rinaldo and his fellow Florentine exiles began to consider how a Visconti alliance could catapult them back into Florentine life.[90] Francesco Filelfo, a Florentine writer and humanist who left Florence in 1434 after the Medici had regained power, began to encourage his fellow exiles to join Milan's forces.[91] Taking it upon himself to forge the all-important alliance, Filelfo approached the Visconti court to offer his assistance and act as the bridge between the Milanese throne and the Florentine exiles. Filelfo offered Rinaldo a leadership position, and the Albizzi exile led the movement to forge an alliance with Milan intended to take down the Medici family and restore Rinaldo's power in Florence once again. A military force formed by Milanese troops and exiled Florentines coalesced and moved South into Tuscany to invade the city and its territories.

With Visconti forces and Florentine dissenters on one side of the battlefield and amateur Florentine militia on the other, the Battle of Anghiari settled the Florentine-Milanese conflict for good on June 29, 1440.[92] With their untrained troops facing Visconti's battle-tested, professional soldiers—the best in all of Italy—Florence had little hope of victory as they stared down their enemies. Even the Florentines suspected failure as rifts between their commanders threatened to destroy the army from inside. The Florentine army had significantly fewer men on their side than did the Milanese, furthering the army's disillusion.[93] Despite all that was stacked against them, Florence prepared for battle.

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[90] Ibid, 136-137. The rest of this paragraph is based on Capponi's work. Capponi cites the following sources when discussing the Battle of Anghiari and military history in 15th-century Italy. C. Ancona, "Milizie e condottieri', in Storia d'Italia," in *I Documenti*, ed. by R. Romano and C. Vivianti (Turin: Einaudi, 1973). G. Ciappelli, *Un Santo alla Battaglia di Anghiari* (Florence: Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007). M. Del Treppo, "Gli aspetti organizzativi, economici e sociali di una compagnia di ventura italiana," *RSI* 85, no. 2 (1973)..

[91] Filelfo self-exiled around 1434 and was not officially exiled until 1444.

[92] Ibid, 141.

[93] Niccoló Capponi never clearly states the number of soldiers on each side of the battle. While he does provide various statistical information on the growing and shrinking size of the armies, he never lists them chronologically or in relation to a specific battle. Based on the figures Capponi provides throughout the text, Florence could have

Hoping to catch the Florentines off guard in a surprise attack, the Milanese commander and mercenary soldier, Niccoló Piccinino, prepared for a surprise attack at noon.[94] Marching out under the afternoon sun, Piccinino and his forces rushed towards the Florentine camp, kicking up large dust clouds easily viewed in the distance.[95] At the Florentine encampment, Micheletto Attendolo, the Venetian general, saw the rising dust and knew it was time to fight. Hastily organizing the troops, he set out to defend the only bridge between the rushing Milanese army and the Florentine camp. With a superior position on the bridge, the Florentine army, dwarfed by that of the Milanese, defended their post and managed to break into Milan's right flank to surround and diminish roughly one-third of the Lombard army during the gruesome, four-hour battle. The larger, more experienced army turned and retreated, and with their surrender, ended the hopes of an Albizzi restoration of power and a Medicean defeat. Much to the surprise of all those involved, Florence had successfully defended itself against a foreign threat who had partnered with the treacherous Florentine exiles. As internal and external threats converged on the battlefield against Florence, the Florentine troops protected their homeland and successfully warded off Visconti and Albizzi dominance.

With his greatest enemies defeated by a Florentine army, Cosimo had good reason to celebrate by commissioning a sculpture focused on his triumph over treachery and pride within

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had anywhere from 1,400 knights to 4,000 knights at any given time during the Lombard wars, but it is currently unclear how many were present during the Battle of Anghiari. The primary sources that I was able to find focus on the number of captives Florence took but do not record the number of soldiers present at the battle on either side. They only indicate that Florence was in desperate need of additional foot soldiers immediately before the Battle of Anghiari occurred. Similarly, Machiavelli does not list any statistics on the battle other than falsified casualty reports in which he states that only one Florentine soldier died during the war after falling into mud and drowning. Capponi, Machiavelli, and some of the primary documents suggest that Florence was outnumbered at Anghiari, but they never provide any numbers to prove this. Niccoló Machiavelli, *History of Florence and of the Affairs of Italy from the Earliest Times to the Death of Lorenzo the Magnificent* (Project Gutenbert: 2013). Pia F. Cuneo, *Artful Armies, Beautiful Battles: Art and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (Brill: Boston, 2002), 18.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Cuneo, *Artful Armies,* 18.

both “kingdoms” and “cities,” as *Judith’s* base suggests. Though Janson and Kent proposed a late-1450s dating for *Judith* surrounding the Peace of Lodi—which officially ended the Lombard conflicts in 1454—this treaty did not address the internal conflicts referenced in *Judith’s* inscription. Additionally, the Peace of Lodi merely acted as the formal document ending the war and was not as politically significant for Cosimo as the Battle of Anghiari that unofficially halted the conflict fourteen years before the treaty was signed. Connected to the Battle of Anghiari, Judith’s character takes on a valence that emphasizes her connection to Medicean Florence at a precise moment in time when Cosimo collectively crushed the Albizzi and Milanese at the Battle of Anghiari.

Chapter Two

Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* (Fig. 1) directly draws from the story of Judith found in the Apocrypha. Written around 100 BCE and set during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians (605/604-562 BCE), the story of Judith recounts the military campaign conducted by the infamous general Holofernes and his attack on the Jewish people.[96] The story focuses on Judith as the Assyrian armies surround her home, Bethulia, threatening to overtake the final bastion between Holofernes' armies and Jerusalem, the center of Jewish life.[97]

The Israelites in Bethulia watched helplessly as the Assyrian army laid siege to their city for thirty-four days, unable to defend themselves due to their weakened—and significantly smaller—forces.[98] As the siege progressed, no external resources entered the city, and each internal resource became increasingly drained until the Israelites were left with crumbs.[99] The Israelites, under the direction of Uzziah, began to pray and barter to God, offering their eternal devotion in return for their deliverance.[100] If God did not fulfill their prayers in five days, they vowed to submit to the Assyrians that surrounded them.

Upon hearing of these exchange-based prayers, Judith, a widowed Israelite woman, sent her maid to demand a meeting with Uzziah and the other religious leaders, who agreed to hear her.[101] Judith approached them to address their sinful nature. She accused them of bartering with God due to their earthly fears and their inability to work on his eternal timeline.[102] Encouraging

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[96] "Judith: Introduction," United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, accessed March 16, 2021, https://bible.usccb.org/bible/judith/0.
[97] Judith 7:6-32 New American Bible.
[98] Judith 7:19-32 NAB.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Judith 7: 29-31.
[101] Judith 8: 9-10 NAB.
[102] Judith 8: 12-27 NAB.

them to remain patient and pursue God's will instead of their own, Judith chastised their faithlessness and, with confidence, ensured them that God would deliver Israel.[103]

Seeing her for the woman of wisdom and humility she was, the Israelite leaders blessed her for her prudence and intelligence, but unconcerned with accolades, Judith left their presence, ordering them to pray for her while insisting that they refrain from asking about her plan to rescue the Jewish people.[104] Judith then went alone to pray, asking God to use her as a divine tool before bathing and anointing herself with fine oils.[105] For the first time since her husband's death, she removed her sackcloth and dressed in jewels and finery while plaiting her hair.[106] She then collected wine, oil, roasted grain, dried fig cake, and bread before departing for the city gate with her maid.[107]

An image of ethereal beauty, Judith awed all those who beheld her, including the Assyrian soldiers who greeted her at their camp as she exited Bethulia.[108] Judith asked them to take her to Holofernes, so she might instruct him on overcoming Bethulia and defeating the Israelites, claiming she knew Bethulia would fall and wanted to stand behind the winning side upon her city's inevitable defeat. The Assyrians brought her to Holofernes, impressed by her beauty and wisdom. Holofernes immediately became aroused by this confident and brave woman who offered him military triumph over the Israelite people.

For three days, Judith remained in the Assyrian camp, bathing and praying while gaining the soldiers' trust.[109] On the third night of her visit, Holofernes invited Judith to a banquet where

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[103] Ibid.
[104] Judith 8: 28-36 NAB.
[105] Judith 9: 1-14 NAB.
[106] Judith 10: 1-9 NAB.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Judith 10: 10-23 NAB. The rest of this paragraph is based on Judith 10: 10-23 NAB.
[109] Judith 11: 1-23 NAB.

he planned to seduce her after a night spent pampering her with food and wine.[110] Judith recognized this banquet not as a moment for indulgence but instead as an opportunity to outsmart Holofernes. She accepted his invitation and adorned herself in finery again, using her beauty as her first weapon.[111]

Judith arrived at the banquet where she ate and drank with Holofernes. Overcome by the physical pleasures surrounding him, Holofernes ingested copious amounts of wine, causing him to collapse from his overindulgence.[112] Judith's plan then began to unfold. She remained in the banquet tent until all the servants had left, claiming that she wished to pray once more before returning to her tent to conceal her true intentions.[113] With Holofernes unresponsive and defenseless, Judith approached the general with tepidity as she prayed under her breath. Judith beseeched God for the bravery she required to complete this murderous deed to save Israel. Filled with God's spirit, Judith took Holofernes' sword from its sheath and removed his head with two swings of his sword while in the midst of prayer.

Judith then called for her maid, who had waited outside of the tent for Judith to complete her deed. The maid carried in the food sacks the women brought with them into the camp and hid Holofernes' severed head in a bag before heading off to pray with Judith.[114] After the women finished their prayers of gratitude, they walked through the camp and back to Bethulia, where Judith displayed Holofernes' head and worshiped God for her ability to seduce Holofernes while keeping him from defiling her.[115] Terrified by the might of one Israelite woman, the Assyrian

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[110] Judith 12: 1-20 NAB.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Judith 13:1-11 NAB. The rest of this paragraph is based on Judith 13: 1-11.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid. This account of Judith's story in which she maintains her chastity is from Jerome's translation. Origen's translation implies that there was a sexual union between Judith and Holofernes. Jerome's Vulgate Bible was the preferred text in 15th-century Florence.

soldiers surrendered in fear of a whole army backed by the God of Judith, who would surely destroy their forces with ease if one Jewish woman could kill their highest commander.[116] *Judith's* ambiguous inscription harkens back to the morals found within the text of Judith and expounded upon by medieval and early-modern theologians, saying, "Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues. Behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility."

Within the Vulgate Bible, Jerome presents Judith as a paragon of virtue for women and men alike.[117] She deeply understands God's role in human life, continually surrenders herself to God, and saves the Israelites while remaining chaste and loyal to her deceased husband, though Jerome does describe Judith's latent sexuality she used to lure Holofernes into submission.[118] Jerome's original translation of the Book of Judith from its Aramaic text has been considered part of the Apocrypha in both Jewish and Christian traditions for most of its history despite Jerome's attempts to make the text into ecclesiastical canon.[119] Regardless of its designation as apocryphal or *hagiographa,* holy writing, Judith became a foundational text used to model and personify the virtues and vices while presenting an apposite model for all people irrespective of gender.[120] Jerome's Vulgate Bible set the groundwork and understanding of Judith that future theologians would manipulate to fit societal requirements, particularly his designation of Judith's actions and character as "manly" and her exemplary widowhood characterized by her continual chastity.[121]

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[116] Judith 14: 1-19 NAB.
[117] Elena Ciletti and Henrike Lähnemann, "Judith in the Christian Tradition," in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies Across the Disciplines*, ed. Kevin R. Brine et. al. (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), 43.
[118] Ibid, 61-62.
[119] Ibid, 44.
[120] Ibid, 44-48. "For not only for women, but also for men, she has been given as a model by the one who rewards her chastity, who has ascribed to her such virtue that she conquered the unconquered among all men, and surmounted the insurmountable."
[121] Ibid, 45 and58. Cosimo had a copy of Jerome's Vulgate Bible, and Donatello certainly had access either in his own inventory, through Cosimo, or simply through attending Mass. Angela Dressen, *The Library of the Badia*

Judith became a heroine admired among rulers and other individuals in power in her earliest history, popularized for her sacrifice to defend her homeland against tyrannical heathens and foreign enemies.[122] Her character quickly became reduced to its ability to be personified into an increasingly growing list of virtues.[123] In 834, Hrabanus Maurus, the Abbot of Fuida, wrote a Biblical commentary on Judith and Esther for Empress Judith.[124] The first gloss of Judith's text since Jerome, Maurus's textual observations focused on the virtue, chastity, and strength of Judith, but surprisingly failed to mention her perceived "manliness" or her status as a widow. Hoping to provide council to the new ruler, Maurus urged Empress Judith and other women to don the same humility as Judith and submit themselves to God's will instead of following their own.

Maurus' analysis of the Book of Judith cemented Judith's adaptability as a personification of virtue, making him the primary source from which the "Glossa ordinaria's" commentary on Judith was created.[125] The "Glossa ordinaria" became the standard gloss used by

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Fiesolana: Intellectual History and Education Under the Medici (1462-1494) (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2013).

[122] Roger J. Crum, "Severing the Neck of Pride: Donatello's 'Judith and Holofernes' and the Recollection of Albizzi Shame in Medicean Florence," *Artibus et Historiae* 22, no. 44 (2001): 23. McHam, "Donatello's Bronze 'David' and 'Judith,' 32-47.

[123] Ciletti, "Judith in the Christian Tradition," 45-49. Commentaries on Judith have retained this reductive quality to the present day.

[124] Ibid, 49-51. The rest of this paragraph uses Ciletti and Lähnemann's work. Cosimo owned several of Maurus' writings. Angela Dressen, *The Library of the Badia Fiesolana: Intellectual History and Education Under the Medici (1462-1494)* (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2013).

[125] Ibid. The Book of Judith in the "Glossa Ordinaria" also contains glosses from Ambrose, Athanasius, Augustine, John Chrysostom, Clement of Rome, Eusebius of Caesarea, Junilius, and Origen with Nicholas of Lyra, Josephus, and Peter Comestor, though Maurus' gloss presented the dominant rhetoric. Cosimo owned several texts from Maurus in his personal collection, along with many of the writers in the "Glossa ordinaria" like Augustine, Ambrose, and John Chrysostom. The glosses contained within the "Glossa ordinaria" would have been used to write sermons that both Donatello and Cosimo could have listened to and heard. In addition to this, theologians, philosophers, and poets like Maurus, Prudentius, and Polycraticus would have been studied in humanist courses like those Cosimo attended according to Vespasiano. Such writings were foundational to all Church teachings and would have been reflected in sermons. Through a combination of personal access in his own library, humanist studies, and church teachings, Cosimo would have had plentiful access to either the texts mentioned within this chapter or the ideas contained within them. Angela Dressen, *The Library of the Badia Fiesolana: Intellectual History and Education Under the Medici (1462-1494)* (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2013). Vespasiano, 215.

the Church until the 17th-century, and it demonstrates the medieval and early-modern impulse to abandon any descriptions or emphasis on Judith's sexuality, despite its integral importance to her triumph over Holofernes.[126] Through a partial erasure of Judith's story, medieval and early-modern theologians created a specific message rooted in Judith's virtuosity that served as an instructional model for women. Many Medieval and Renaissance theologians considered women morally and spiritually defunct when compared to men, a judgment rooted in the Old Testament story of Adam and Eve.[127] Judith's virtuosity became an aspirational image for which women should strive.

Prudentius' *Psychomachia* contains one of the earliest meditations on Judith's virtuosity. Prudentius wrote "the battle within the soul" in the late 4th century as a series of conflicts between personified virtues and vices.[128] Immensely popular in the Medieval and early-modern periods, *Psychomachia* presented a poetic consideration of the ongoing war between Chastity and Lust, which Prudentius connected to Judith and Holofernes, respectively.[129] Prudentius exemplifies Judith's morality and virtuosity in juxtaposition to the societal consideration of female moral weakness by demonstrating Judith's use of free will to follow God's will, presenting an irregular version of female morality for both men and women to emulate.[130] He imbues Judith with sexual agency during her ritual task but focuses on her choice to forgo sexual fulfillment and, instead, fashion herself into a bride of Christ focused on celibacy. While Judith

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[126] Ibid, 56-61. The rest of this paragraph draws from these pages.
[127] Though Holofernes was understood as the aggressor in the story of Judith and Holofernes, he was still often grouped among other biblical men who were destroyed or brought down by women. While he deserved his punishment that Judith delivered, 15th-century preachers often considered Holofernes with Adam and Solomon even though his downfall was technically positive and at the hands of a virtuous woman as opposed to Eve and Solomon's wives, who were sinful women that initiated treachery and destroyed their husbands' virtue.
[128] Marc Mastrangelo, "Typology and Agency in Prudentius's Treatment of the Judith Story," in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies Across the Disciplines*, ed. Kevin R. Brine et. al. (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), 153-154.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid, 156-167. The rest of this paragraph is based on pages 156 to 167 of Mastrangelo's work.

adorns herself in finery and puts her beauty on exhibit to inspire Holofernes' lust, Prudentius vitiates Judith's bodily exhibitionism with her anomalous morality. Similarly, Donatello employs specific costuming to distract from *Judith's* sexual entrapment of Holofernes and highlight her morality through her chastity, modesty, and pursuit of spiritual warfare.

Donatello presents *Judith* as a pure Florentine beauty mindful of sumptuary laws, bedecked in a fine but simple gown and veil with her feet sandaled and wrist protected with a thick bracelet she wears into spiritual warfare.[131] Donatello strays from Jerome's version of Judith, choosing to represent an ultra-chaste version of the heroine that uses humility and chastity as her shield against sin.[132] The thick bodice around Judith's neck resembles the form of a cuirass (Figure 7), a type of breastplate associated both with Athena and Medicean armor as it covers her chest like armor but seems to visually quote classical sculptures such as *Athena Armed as Athena Parthenos* (Figure 8).[133] *Judith's* bracelet similarly calls to mind a vambrace (Figure 9), a protective piece of armor knights and soldiers would wear on their forearms during battle, but its putti and chariot motif reference instead the classical concept of the warrior hero.[134] As the only figurative elements of Judith's outfit, the bracelet and breast piece connote finery but not excess, demonstrating the precarious balance contemporary women were expected to walk between gluttony and moderation.

The vambrace and cuirass act as symbols of both the spiritual and physical warfare *Judith* undergoes against Holofernes, perhaps calling to mind the most recent Florentine military

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[131] Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, "Costuming Judith in Italian Art of the Sixteenth Century," in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies Across the Disciplines*, ed. Kevin R. Brine et. al. (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), 327.
[132] Mastrangelo, 155.
[133] Apostolos-Cappadona, "Costuming Judith," 331-335.
[134] Ibid, 331.

excursion at Anghiari.[135] Donatello layered her in fabric to emphasize her chastity and juxtaposes her with Holofernes' semi-nudity, underlining *Judith's* virtuosity through her modesty and Holofernes' depravity through his nudity and drunkenness as he sits atop an opened wine cask. The statue's base further exemplifies the *luxuria* over which Judith triumphs as winged putti harvest grapes which they then tread and use for a hedonistic Bacchic orgy reminiscent of Holofernes' banquet. Holofernes' nudity and drunkenness render him and his pride vulnerable to attack, setting the stage for Humilitas to overcome Superbia.

Humilitas and Superbia directly pair with Judith and Holofernes in the *Speculum Virginum,* a manuscript heavily inspired by *Psychomachia*.[136] Conrad of Hirsau wrote the original copy of the *Speculum Virginum* around 1140 as a guide for religious women that, through a pedagogical exploration of virtue and vice, taught them to fashion themselves as brides to Christ.[137] Through its exploration of *humilitas*, the *Speculum Virginum* employs several allegorical figures of Humility or Humilitas in the forms of biblical and pagan figures who each overcome a prideful tyrant.[138] It is in *Psychomachia* and *Speculum Virginum* that tyranny and pride begin to go hand in hand as each represents the other in an inseparable pair.[139] Judith repeatedly appears as the personification of Humilitas throughout *Speculum Virginum,* while Holofernes repeatedly takes on the guise of Superbia, who eats, drinks, and fornicates with abandon like the putti on *Judith's* base.[140]

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[135] The Battle of Anghiari was the only major battle of the Lombard wars in which Florentine citizens fought for their homeland rather than the city hiring mercenary soldiers. The Battle of San Romano, another major battle during the Lombard wars immortalized by Paolo Uccello, hung in the Palazzo Medici and honored the *condottiere* who Florence had paid to fight for their cause.
[136] Elizabeth Bailey, "Judith, Jael, and Humilitas in the *Speculum Virginum*," in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies Across the Disciplines*, ed. Kevin R. Brine et. al. (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), 281.
[137] Ibid, 275-278.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.

Expounding upon the concepts outlined in *Pyschomachia, Speculum Virginum* personifies the virtues and vices through two illustrations called the Tree of Virtues (Figure 10) and the Tree of Vices (Figure 11).[141] At the base of the Tree of Virtues sits *humilitas,* which an inscription describes as the root of all virtues; the Tree of Vices sprouts from none other than *superbia*, or pride, the root of all vice.[142] From *humilitas* grows prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, each of which Judith commonly represents as seen in the Tree of Three Types of Women (Figure 12), which depicts Judith as a holy woman, favored by God and representative of *humilitas*.[143] The Tree of Vices peaks with lust, demonstrating the linear and intertwined natures of lust and pride--Holofernes' principal characteristics as a representation of Superbia. Superbia commonly pursues lustful endeavors, whether that be sexual, material, or territorial, on the back of a galloping or rearing horse, reminiscent of the partially-covered medallion strung around Holofernes' neck on Donatello's *Judith* (Figure 13).[144] Donatello uses this visual quotation to directly connect Superbia, soon to be conquered by Humilitas, with Holofernes, who sits erect in the final moments before Judith slices her sword through his neck.

Through the adoption of these conceptions of Judith, Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* might be understood as a representation of Medicean Florence overcoming the alliance between Viscontian Milan and the Florentine exiles, namely Rinaldo degli Albizzi, at the Battle of Anghiari. Firmly understood as representations of Humilitas and Superbia, *Judith and*

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[141] Arthur Watson, "The Speculum Virginum with Special Reference to the Tree of Jesse," *Speculum* 3, no. 4 (October 1928), 445.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Bailey, "Judith, Jael, and Humilitas," 279 and 285-285. Watson, "The Speculum Virginum," 445.
[144] McHam, "Donatello's *Judith* as the Emblem of God's Chosen People," 310-311.

Holofernes begin to symbolize current events to produce a contemporary valence to their interpretation by focusing on external threats and internal pride.[145]

The theme of pride is pervasive throughout the courtyard and gardens of the Palazzo Medici. As a visitor to the Palazzo entered the ground floor, they would immediately see *David* (Fig. 2).[146] Above him hung three roundels that scholars have attributed to Donatello, and even further in, they would stumble upon the Medici Gardens where *Judith* and two statues of *Marsyas* (Figure 14) stood.[147] It must be noted that builders of the Palazzo Medici did not break ground until 1445, though Cosimo had envisioned his plans for a new palace and had begun the planning process by 1440.[148] Unlike his other commissions, the Palazzo Medici focused on the family's grandeur and importance. While his other commissions similarly praised the Medici, they did so less obviously, with an emphasis on the religious or secular themes Cosimo wanted to promote.[149]

Cosimo intended to draw attention to the Palazzo Medici, not to emphasize his wealth, but rather to exemplify his civic virility.[150] The palace, like *Judith* and *David,* sits in a liminal space between the public and private realms.[151] The palace's extravagance and monumentality visually drew attention to the ostentatious design that incorporated Romanesque elements while also pulling from Tuscan architectural design.[152] The main entryways were kept open to the

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[145] The ambiguity of *Judith's* message lent to political appropriation throughout the centuries. Upon Girolamo Savonarola's rise to power in 1494, *Judith and Holofernes* was moved to the Piazza della Signoria to represent the new, "popular" republic. At Savonarola's execution in the Piazza della Signoria in 1498, *Judith* would have stood nearby, an image immortalized in a painting attributed to Francesco di Lorenzo Rosseli called *The Hanging and Burning of Girolamo Savonarola in Piazza della Signoria*.
[146] Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici*, 249-250.
[147] McHam, "Donatello's Bronze 'David' and 'Judith,' 41-43.
[148] Gurrieri et. al., *Palaces of Florence*, 54.
[149] Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici*, 217-238.
[150] Ibid, 218.
[151] Ibid, 225-228.
[152] Ibid.

streets where onlookers could peek into the doorways and see *David* standing in the center of the courtyard.[153] Yet, it remained a private residence in part, an urban dwelling intended to protect and house the Medici family while serving as a location to host allies, friends, and diplomats. Notably, the public spaces on the ground floor of the Palazzo Medici resonated with images of defeated pride, strengthening the overall artistic program between *Judith* and *David.*

The three roundels attributed to Donatello seem to emphasize the downfall of pride through known narrative stories from Classical sources.[154] In one roundel, a centaur marches forward, holding a basket of fruit in one arm, a lance-like object in his other, and a lion pelt on his back (Figure 15). Dante disseminated the iconography that cast centaurs as incapable leaders too prideful to govern judicially in *Divina Commedia*.[155] Predisposed to unjust leadership, centaurs took on a tyrannical valence that connects them with Holofernes and Goliath, two other tyrannical visual components within the Medici courtyard and gardens.

Another roundel is devoted to the story of Daedalus and Icarus (Figure 16). In Greek mythology, King Menos trapped the father-son duo in a labyrinth Daedalus has designed for the king. In an attempt to escape, Daedalus created wings of feathers and wax for the two to wear and fly away from their prison. Before executing their escape, Daedalus warned Icarus not to fly too close to the ground to avoid the sea wetting his feathers and to stay away from the sun that would melt his wings. Icarus ignored his father's warnings after feeling the euphoric rush of flight, and he began to soar upwards towards the sun, causing his wings to melt and sending the youth falling to his death. Another cautionary tale about pride, Icarus demonstrates the dangers of becoming swept up with power and the ultimate downfall such pride brings. Similarly, *Judith*

[153] Ibid, 281-286.
[154] McHam, "Donatello's Bronze 'David' and 'Judith,' 41-43.
[155] Ibid.

and *David* demonstrate the repercussions of prideful undertakings as they down arrogant military leaders.[156]

The final roundel shows the Triumph of Bacchus, with Bacchus riding on a cart next to a nude figure (Figure 17). Two figures pull the cart while one putti pushes the wheel forward, and another prods at the figures pulling the cart. Bacchus, the god of wine and military triumph, seems to have a double meaning in the Palazzo Medici. Here, a triumphal Bacchus processes down a fictive road, recalling militaristic victory and ushering in a time of peace and prosperity under just leadership.[157] This scene perhaps suggests a connection to Cosimo's final defeat of Rinaldo and Milan, bringing in an era of perceived justice and tranquility. The scene also connects to *David.* Goliath's helmet features a scene similar to the roundel's, with putti pushing and pulling a cart while a figure sits beneath a parasol while putti attend to them.[158] Goliath wears a scene of military triumph into battle, yet David stands over top of his decapitated head, the true victor who has slain Goliath's prideful assumption of triumph.

As a visitor continued to wander through the courtyard, they would enter into the gardens to find two sculptures of *Marsyas* (Fig. 14), a mythological satyr who challenged both Athena and Apollo with his flute playing.[159] While playing the flute, Athena saw how the instrument puffed out her cheeks as she played, and, embarrassed, she cursed and banned the flute from being played.[160] Even with this in mind, Marsyas continued to play the flute, testing Athena's will. Apollo grew aggravated with Marsyas' playing and challenged him to a musical duel that

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[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid, 41.
[160] Edith Wyss, *The Myth of Apollo and Marsyas in the Art of the Italian Renaissance* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 19-22.

would pit Apollo's lyre against Marsyas' flute. Marsyas accepted the duel and played a chaotic song that set its listeners into a craze. Apollo, in some stories jealous and others truly more talented, designated himself the winner of the musical fight. As punishment for testing the gods, Apollo strung Marsyas to a pine tree and flayed him. Romans and Florentines understood Marsyas' hubris to be pride. In the Medici gardens, the *Marsyas* statues, along with Goliath and Holofernes, demonstrate an image of the consequences of pridefulness.[161] Perhaps even more blatantly than *Judith* or *David, Marsyas* forces viewers to acknowledge the outcome of challenging a powerful entity as Milan had challenged Florence and ultimately lost because of their pride.

As a guest to the Palazzo Medici wandered through the courtyard and gardens, they would encounter both *Judith* and her companion piece, *David* (Figure 18).[162] Each bronze sculpture revolves around a triumphal decapitation of Superbia in the guise of a tyrant general that leads to a militaristic victory for God's chosen people.[163] Both *Judith* and *David* spring into heroism as unexpected saviors of their respective communities and, beyond that, God's kingdom. The sculpture program's intentionality revolves around the gender-bending nature of *Judith* and *David* while still portraying an ultimate maintenance of the status quo through the figures' respective journeys through the private and public spheres.[164]

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[161] Ibid, 62-63. Wyss specifically draws a connection between the stripping of skin to the stripping of sin, calling on the Neoplatonic ideals outlined by Pico della Mirandola in 1485. While I think her reading is relevant, she interprets the object using later sources that do not recall the focus of hubris within the mythological tale on which early-to-mid-15th century Florentines would have focused. On page 41 of her article "Donatello's Bronze 'David' and 'Judith,' McHam cites Francesco Caglioti, who suggests that the *Marsyas* sculptures represented liberty, to which McHam agrees. Such an interpretation neglects Quattrocento interpretations of the Marsyas-Apollo conflict as a positive triumph over Marsyas' hubris, a scene and theme which was often used to mark military triumphs, according to Wyss (54).

[162] Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance,* 249-251.

[163] Sarah Blake McHam, "Donatello's Bronze 'David' and 'Judith,' 32.

[164] Roger J. Crum, "Judith between the Private and Public Realms in Renaissance Florence," in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies Across the Disciplines*, ed. Kevin R. Brine et. al. (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), 293.

As seen above, medieval and early-modern theologians commonly associated Judith with masculinity.[165] Women were considered morally defunct in comparison with men and more likely to produce sinfulness through their sexuality.[166] However, Judith chooses to forgo her perceived sinful nature as a woman and use her sexuality as a weapon, placing her in the realm of masculine morality instead of feminine morality. Furthermore, Judith's bravery and willingness to put her life on the line for her community surpassed expectations for female strength and put her among a class of valorous men. While contemporary Florentines would have engendered Judith with masculine attributes, they firmly understood her as an anomalous female rather than an actual male. In Donatello's *Judith*, she was adorned with an abundance of clothing and minimal jewelry—despite the apocryphal text suggesting a more lascivious luring of Holofernes—to mark her as a chaste and humble bride of Christ.

David reversely takes on a sexual femininity as an adolescent male at the cusp of maturity.[167] Before reaching puberty, thirteen- to seventeen-year-old boys were culturally considered innocent, pure, and, therefore, feminine.[168] This concept was reinforced within workshop settings where young men beginning their trade were cast as the female partner in sexual relationships with the older masters, who would take part in the union as the male (i.e., the penetrator).[169] *David's* perceived submissiveness overcomes Goliath's dominant social

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[165] Mastrangelo, "Typology and Agency," 156-162. The rest of this paragraph draws from Mastrangelo's work.
[166] Women were blamed for men's objectification of their bodies. Women were expected to dress modestly to avoid causing a man to sin with lustful thoughts or actions.
[167] Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 88.
[168] Jill Burke, *The Italian Renaissance Nude* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 61. The rest of this paragraph is based on Burke's work.
[169] Regardless of their participation in same-sex relationships, pre-pubescent boys in Quattrocento Florence were engendered with feminine attributes and transfigured into a "female" partner during sexual intercourse with another male. Young men were not understood as females before maturation, but rather they were considered innocent and feminine until they reached maturity. For this reason, sexually deprived men turned to sodomy to fulfill their sexual desires and keep unmarried females pure. Young boys from ages seven to thirteen were associated with purity and were, therefore, cast as the feminine partner in sexual relationships. Visually, Quattrocento Italians looked to the

position, reversing the sexual expectations of these figures and demonstrating the sinfulness of excessive lust and pride. As a sexual object and adolescent boy, early-modern Christians would have seen David as an unlikely candidate for tyrant slayer, just as they would have been skeptical of a story that celebrated a cold-blooded female assassin.

Judith, as a female, and *David*, imbued with femininity, take on the guise of Florence. Without an official army of its own and with a renewed focus on art, humanism, and a culturally perceived luxurious lifestyle, other Italian territories viewed Florence as a weak, effeminate city.[170] Until the Battle of Anghiari, Florence almost exclusively relied on mercenary armies to fight their battles instead of training their own army as other "masculine" territories did. Furthering this cultural feminization of Florence was the city's emphasis on experimentation with their artistic styles while the rest of Italy continued to utilize medieval artistic conventions. Instead of viewing artistic flexibility as innovation, those outside Florence often considered artistic change as flamboyance, a distinctly feminine attribute. As feminine characters in either sexual habits or sexuality, *Judith* and *David* represent the perceived effeminate Florence who has overcome a prideful, tyrannical enemy despite the expectations stacked against them.

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presence or absence of pubic hair to explain the innocence of prepubescent boys. Pubic hair purposefully covered adult genitalia, indicating that it was no longer appropriate or acceptable for public viewership. However, young boys lack pubic hair, indicating their sexual innocence. For this reason, young boys who participated in same-sex relationships were cast as the passive partner while the adult male was the active partner. The act of sodomy made the young boy not just feminine, but, in the act of penetration, symbolically female. While heterosexual sexual relationships were the preferred sexual structure of Florence, same-sex relationships were not only common and accepted by a large population of the public but were also encouraged to a certain extent, as they protected young women from predatory men. Once married, few men ever returned to sodomy. However, when men broke these traditional norms, the government prosecuted sodomy as a crime; in some instances, the government treated sodomy as severe as murder. The information contained within this footnote was derived from Jill Burke's *The Italian Renaissance Nude* and Michael Rocke's *Forbidden Friendships* and was first researched during the Fall of 2019.

[170] Roger J. Crum, "Donatello's Bronze *David* and the Question of Foreign Versus Domestic Tyranny," *Renaissance Studies* 10, no. 4 (December 1996), 440-450. The rest of this paragraph is based on Crum's work.

Holofernes and Goliath help us understand the external threats Florence faced during Cosimo's reign in their presentation as pagan outsiders through Donatello's rendering of their hair. Each tyrant wears his hair long and beards uncut. As Goliath's hair and beard spill from his helmet to blanket *David's* toes, *Judith's* hand tangles into Holofernes' unruly mane. Deeply connected with sumptuary laws, social expectations carefully policed hair styling for both men and women.[171] Thomas Aquinas popularized the concept of excess hair and beards, or heavily ornamented hair as a physical representation of *superfluitas*, or superfluous elements of the body that would remain with the body on Earth on Judgment Day.[172] Along with the popularization of sumptuary laws came the denigration of toupees, false beards, and hair extensions, all of which priests would publicly burn as signs of arrogance and pride.[173] Physical *superbia* as connoted through hairstyling combined with historical denotations as tyrants cast Holofernes and Goliath as the uncouth outsiders described by Jerome and Maurus in their individual texts.[174]

Milan adopted this title of the tyrannical outsider after decades of warring between Florence and Milan finally concluded at the Battle of Anghiari in 1440. The effeminate Florence, considered militarily impotent, defeated the undefeatable tyrant in an unexpected turn of events that cast Florence as the dominant partner in this ongoing dance for dominance just as *Judith* and *David* overcome their prideful counterparts.

Through the reassertion of cultural norms in *Judith* and *David*, we begin to understand the pairing as representations of a Medici-controlled Florence, with *Judith* specifically

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[171] Emanuele Lugli, "Leonardo and the Hair Makers," in *Leonardo in Dialogue: The Artist Amid His Contemporaries,* ed. Francesca Borgo et. al. (Venice: Marsilio, 2019), 22.
[172] Ibid, 28.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Guido Ruggiero, *The Renaissance in Italy: A Social and Cultural History of the Rinascimento* (Miami: University of Miami, 2014), 357-367. David's long hair holds a different meaning, as he is seen as a minor. It would have been appropriate for younger boys to wear their hair long. Once they came of age, they would have been expected to cut their hair.

celebrating the Albizzi faction's downfall. As each figure narratively moves through the public and private realms, their opposite engendering heeds to gender norms.[175] Judith begins her story as a mourning widow and, as customary, remained outside of the public eye after her husband's death. She did not adorn herself with fine clothing or jewelry but instead wore sackcloth each day to mark her mourning. She then emerged into the public sphere to fulfill her calling and defeat Holofernes to save the Jewish people. For a brief moment in time, Judith steps into the public sector to display her beauty and finery as a trap for Holofernes. With her job complete, Judith returns home to live out the rest of her life in private widowhood. Similarly, David began his story in the private sphere working as a shepherd until he was called upon to face Goliath. Upon downing the giant, David, unlike Judith, remained in the public sphere, going on to become king. Judith, the female, remains sequestered to the private sphere as was expected from women in Quattrocento Italy.[176] David, like other men, entered the public sphere—and remained there—upon a societal maturation often marked by entrance into a trade.[177] *Judith* seems to take on a portrait-like quality for the Medici family, who similarly confined themselves to the private sphere while covertly controlling Florentine politics from behind the scenes.[178] The Medici only emerged into the public sphere when called upon, and they would return once more to continue pulling the strings of public happenings privately. *David*, however, seems to represent a continually public display of power with his brazen nudity and aggression on public exhibit, perhaps representative of Florentine power under Medici rule rather than the Medici themselves as *Judith* seems to suggest.[179]

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[175] Crum, "Judith between the Private and Public Realms in Renaissance Florence," 291-293.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid, 300-301.
[179] David stands almost fully in the nude, wearing only a hat and boots, unlike the aforementioned fully-clothed Judith. While it was certainly not normal for men to walk around naked, Donatello reveals a cultural willingness to

The Battle of Anghiari marked the convergence of an external tyrant, Filippo Maria Visconti, joining forces with bitter Florentine exiles to take arms against the city of Florence. Through *Judith,* we see Milan in all its tyrannical pride felled by the humility of Florence.

gaze upon a naked, adolescent male without marked offense. David was the first monumental bronze nude since antiquity, and his nudity was likened to both Roman classicism—that often portrayed the nude forms of young men—and the Biblical text that describes a David's nudity during his encounter with Goliath. Donatello intended that the viewer find pleasure and beauty upon looking at David's sensuous form and seemed to encourage a primal viewership, whereas he shielded Judith from any wandering eyes that might prey upon her. Her chastity was a shield used to demonstrate her moral superiority, otherwise uncommon in women, while David's nudity, like Holofernes', referenced their separate vulnerabilities stemming from sexual objectification and lustful pride, respectively.

Chapter Three

Many art historians date Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* (Fig. 1) to the mid-to-late 1450s after Donatello returned from Padua.[180] While Donatello was undoubtedly working on monumental bronze sculptures in the 1450s, he experienced a stylistic shift upon his return from Florence that renders *Judith* atypical to Donatello's 1450s oeuvre.

Donatello created his first monumental bronze sculpture, *David* (Fig. 2), around 1435.[181] Though many scholars debate this dating, *David* is generally considered one of Donatello's earliest bronze works and provides a starting point for examining his evolving styles. *David* grasps onto a long sword that he balances himself with as he stomps on Goliath's severed head. His shoulder-length hair curls in gentle ringlets that Donatello rendered through a series of light incisions through clumped strands that fall around his smooth, fleshy face. Goliath's overgrown hair and beard tangles around *David's* big toe in thick strands executed with the same emphasis on low relief detailing as on *David's* hair. Goliath's hair spills onto the wreath on which *David* stands. His severed head, covered with a feather-motif helmet, seems to sprout from the wreath and grow into the long feather that tickles *David's* inner thigh.

This feather and wreath motif appears to be a self-quotation that Donatello returns to multiple times in his earlier work, including the *Annunciation Tabernacle* (Figure 19), which he created between 1428 and 1433. An empty, winged wreath sits below the main niche, underscoring the scene above where the angel Gabriel kneels before the Virgin Mary. Caught in conversation, they gesticulate toward each other with their heads inclined and topped with

[180] All dates in the Visual Analysis section come from both H.W. Janson's *The Sculpture of Donatello* and John Pope-Hennessy's *Donatello Sculptor.*
[181] *David's* dating is disputed, and he has been dated anywhere from the 1430s to the 1450s.

helmet-like coiffures Donatello detailed with shallow incisions as he did with *David.* Both Gabriel and Mary glance toward each other, their elegant necks punctuated by heavy, rounded jaws. They, like *David*, retain a comfortable corpulence in their faces, though Donatello adorned them with billowing robes to simultaneously cover and reveal the bodies underneath as their vestments bunch around their stomachs to create a furrow differentiating their hips and torso. Each fold in their gowns inhabits individualized space, with each ripple imbued with a sense of originality. Both their robes display simple geometric decoration, though Mary's bodice seems to anticipate *Judith's* cuirass discussed above in Chapter Two. Mary dons a decorative frock that sits on her chest and shoulders and seems to hold up the cloak that envelopes her back and parts around her arms. These stylistic features, like the feather and wreath motif seen in *David* and the *Annunciation Tabernacle,* return in Donatello's later work in Padua as well as the artwork he created after returning to Florence.

Donatello went to Padua in 1443 to work on the equestrian bronze sculpture of *Gattamelata,* an Umbrian *condottiere* who fought for Venice and Florence against Viscontian Milan in the 1430s. While in Padua, Donatello also completed several pieces for the high altar of the Basilica of Sant'Antonio. Donatello created the *Padua Altarpiece* (Figure 20) between 1447 and 1450, marking a seminal moment between his stylistic iterations. Each figure seems to wrestle between Donatello's earlier corpulent style and his new, gaunt style. The "Madonna and Child" (Figure 21) enthronement echoes the liveliness of Donatello's early style with their supple faces and youthful fleshiness reminiscent of his *David* and *Annunciation Tabernacle.* The "Madonna and Child" display a marked departure from Donatello's earlier styles seen in Mary's gown and hair. Where the *Annunciation* Mary (Fig. 19) wore a gown that seemed to drape tenderly over her body with careful exactitude, the *Padua Altarpiece* Mary (Fig. 21) wears a

gown fraught with hurried folds that seem impossible to separate. This depictional intensity flows into *Padua* Mary's hair, which Donatello pulled back into a loose style from which a few thick strands escape. While the *Padua* Mary dons a similar style as her *Tabernacle* sister, the later Mary (Fig. 21) sports a style rendered with deep indentations that highlight each unified lock of hair as its own masterpiece, whereas Donatello cast the *Tabernacle* Mary (Fig. 19) with simpler strands.

In the same sculpture grouping, Donatello presents a fledgling style that would take over his later work.[182] To Mary's right and left stand St. Anthony (Figure 22) and St. Francis of Assisi (Figure 23), respectively, flanking the soft "Mother and Child" grouping with their newfound angularity. Donatello abandons the gentle faces and soft jaws he employed in earlier works for a gauntness he gradually seems to favor in the latter part of his career. Both saints display faces with hollowed eyes, sharp cheekbones, and angular chins and jaws.[183] The saintly pair seem to juxtapose age and youth as the older St. Anthony has deep furrows in his forehead while St. Francis has an unmarred complexion. Despite their age difference, Donatello rendered the two saints with a severity and sharpness that fail to appear in his earlier work.

The Siena *St. John the Baptist* (Figure 24), created around 1457, epitomizes this stylistic change with thin skin stretched across his angular face. St. John's collar bone juts out from his bony chest as his camel hair frock swoops and curves with fervor. Donatello cast each line with depth and exactitude that emphasizes the skeletal form and highlights the movement of St.

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[182] We first see this new style in the *Padua Crucifix* (1444-1447). Christ is shown with a muscularity Donatello does not use before 1444. Christ's eyes have a hollow quality to them that is entirely new to Donatello's style. We see the transitional quality of hair as a few curls break loose of the large mass and seem to be rendered with deeper incisions demarcating each aspect of the strand.

[183] The other figures in the *Padua Altarpiece* alternate between the gaunt style (St. Prosdocimus) and the corpulent one (St. Justina, St. Daniel, and St. Louis).

John's garment. Donatello cast St. John's hair in fat strands that curl around his face and mix with his frock, making it nearly impossible to determine where John's hair ends and the frock begins. Appearing as the desert prophet, St. John encapsulates Donatello's new preoccupation with linearity that focuses on the haggard appearance of religious figures.

Donatello did not reserve this starved quality only for Biblical figures known for fasting and eating sparse diets, but he seems to have used aspects of it for nearly every monumental figure he produced after his Paduan sojourn. Each of his final four monumental sculptures, *St. John the Baptist* (Figure 25; Venice, 1452-1453), *Mary Magdalen* (Figure 26; Florence, 1454-1455), *Giovanni Martelli* (Figure 27; Florence, ca. 1455), and the Siena *St. John the Baptist* discussed above, replicate the same frenetic quality, angular bone structure, and emaciated muscularity.

Now, looking at *Judith and Holofernes*, we see Donatello portray *Judith* with a rounded jaw and fleshy cheeks. Even the depraved Holofernes, drunk and unconscious, displays a healthy robustness that Donatello abandons in his later works such as the Siena *St. John the Baptist.* Particularly characteristic of Donatello's stylistic development is his depiction of the undereye area known as the tear trough. Whereas he portrays the Siena *St. John* (Fig. 24) and other later figures with hollow tear troughs, his earlier figures, including Holofernes and Judith, have full tear troughs that seamlessly connect the undereye to their cheekbones in a gentle, sloping arch rather than depressed valleys. *Judith and Holofernes'* buoyant constitution situates the sculpture in Donatello's earlier career before his preferences navigated toward creating haggard portrayals of religious figures.

Also indicative of his pre-Paduan style, *Judith's* gown presents a transitory moment in Donatello's repertoire that favors loser linearity. The dress *Judith* wears neither resembles

Mary's from the *Annunciation Tabernacle* or from the *Padua Altarpiece* and instead strikes a balance between the two. Though Donatello imbues more linearity in *Judith's* dress than the *Tabernacle* Mary's (Fig. 19) dress, *Judith's* gown does not reach the linear severity of the *Altarpiece* Mary's (Fig. 21) gown. *Judith's* vestment ripples with folds, but Donatello still creates a sense of individuality between each fold rather than allowing them to run into and get lost in each other. This increased movement within *Judith's* dress anticipates Donatello's later focus on complex drapery folds while still echoing his earlier style's more simplistic folds.

Holofernes' hair similarly marks a transitional stage in Donatello's style, as it separates into individualized strands while still maintaining the mass-like quality Donatello favored in his earlier works. Holofernes' mane shows a greater amount of movement through increased strand details with more detailing given to Holofernes' hair than *David's*. Yet even when compared to *Padua* Mary's hair, Holofernes' strands seem less stylized than the overlapping and twisting strands of Mary's coiffure. Like Donatello's changing interest in clothing, his depiction of hair adopted increasingly linear qualities, endorsing elements of religious fervor and aesthetic freneticism.

Donatello's reliefs show a similar stylistic trajectory from simplistic, symmetrical compositions to more linear, chaotic ones in his later career. The *Assumption of the Virgin* (Figure 28) relief, created between 1427 and 1428, depicts flying angels similar to that on *Judith's* base, particularly those angels in the *Bacchic Orgy* scene (Figure 29).[184] Donatello organized and balanced the *Assumption* with Mary seated at the center, surrounded by three angels on either side, with one flying in from below. Evoking a sense of symmetry, each angel

[184] The other two sides of the base have scenes of putti *Harvesting Grapes* and *Trampling Grapes*. Each relief has been attributed to someone in Donatello's workshop rather than Donatello himself. Pope-Hennessy, 286.

swoops into the scene at the same height as a mirrored counterpart. However, Donatello lends each character individuality by twisting them in unique manners as they fly through the air in gossamer fabric that ripples across their lithe bodies. Although each angel sports an individualized portrait, they each share the same characteristics of a thick jaw and strong, flat chin while, like Donatello's early sculptures, they wear their hair in helmet-like masses with careful waves incised into the surface.

The *Twin Pulpits* (Fig. 6) for San Lorenzo, one of Donatello's final projects, capture the frenetic quality of his post-Paduan style. Created between 1460 and 1470, the scene of *Christ's Ascension* (Figure 30) demonstrates Donatello's preference for balance, which he mastered in his earlier career, while also showing a focus on portraying fervor or chaos through clumps of overlapping characters and severe diagonals. Donatello retained his interest in creating figures with thick jaws, though some of the human figures sport carefully detailed beards that obscure their chins. Like Donatello's monumental sculptures, his reliefs seem to take on increased linearity, especially in the garments that ripple and sway in the cosmic winds Jesus creates as he ascends to heaven. Unlike *Assumption of the Virgin* (Fig. 28), Donatello abandoned his preference for symmetrical, clear compositions, instead choosing to show the figures overlapping as they kneel before the rising Christ. The massive crowd obscures each body as the people rush towards Christ in a unified mob, allowing Donatello to create diagonals using the throng of people rather than their individual bodies.

The *Bacchic Orgy* (Fig. 29) on *Judith's* base acts as a pivotal marker between Donatello's evenly balanced compositions and those that were energetic and hurried in his later career. Donatello portrays each angelic figure with a thick jaw and softly rendered hair while some putti run through the scene in the nude and others wear loose garments that drape across

their chests and groins. These aspects of soft drapery and congruous portraiture harken back to Donatello's earlier *Assumption of the Virgin,* while an added compositional dynamism indicates a nascent style Donatello seems to begin experimenting within *Judith.*

Donatello splits the composition unevenly. To the left of center sits a massive, infant-like figure upon which a putti clings, providing Donatello with open space to the right of the composition to fill with more angelic figures and an architectonic doorway that creates a sense of recession and focuses the infant figure in the center of the fictive room. Before the doorway stand two putti who blow into crossing trumpets, creating an X with their extended arms and instruments. The left-most trumpet blower seems to run to the right with his back facing the viewer and his left leg extended in a diagonal as it glances off the open-mouthed fountain at the bottom of the scene. Another figure to the left of the infant balances this diagonal as he runs in the opposite direction, his stomach exposed to viewers and left leg extended towards the fountain on the ground. Other angels kneel and beseech the infant figure in the background, filling the empty areas immediately surrounding the central figure. Though he overlaps and crowds the scene with internal diagonals that he continued to master in his later career, Donatello still gave each putti an individualized body and space to inhabit, just as in *Assumption of the Virgin*. The *Bacchic Orgy* scene seems to experiment with the diagonals that Donatello relies upon in his later works, such as *Christ's Ascension* (Fig. 30) on the *Twin Pulpits* (Fig. 6). Combining the careful symmetry of Donatello's earlier work and his chaotic, crowded scenes of his later work, *Bacchic Orgy* seems to mark a transitional moment between Donatello's styles as balance meets tumult.

Those art historians like Janson, McHam, and Kent, who insist that Donatello created *Judith* after his return from Padua, seem to ignore the major stylistic changes Donatello made to

his later monumental works. Though Sperling dates *Judith* to the early 1430s, she too seems to overlook Donatello's stylistic preoccupations during his early career while also forgetting to examine Donatello's access to a bronze foundry.[185] Neither implementing the clean simplicity of his earlier works or the linear freneticism of his later works, *Judith* strikes a balance between Donatello's earlier career in the early-to-mid 1430s and his career both during and after Padua. *Judith* stylistically fits in the 1440s before Donatello goes to Padua while he was working for the Medici on the *Old Sacristy* (Fig. 5) at San Lorenzo between 1434 and 1443. In the later period of his work at San Lorenzo, between 1440 and 1443, Donatello created the *Bronze Doors* (Figure 31), for which he would have required a metal foundry. Before approximately 1435, Donatello had worked primarily in marble and terracotta, suggesting that he did not have access to a metal foundry until he began working in bronze once again between 1435 and 1440, the time period many scholars chose to date *David*. Not only did Donatello have access to a bronze foundry to create *Judith* in the early 1440s, but he was also actively working with bronze to create the *Old Sacristy* doors. Between 1441 and 1443, Donatello was only working on the *Old Sacristy* and had completed most elements other than the doors, leaving him plenty of time to create *Judith*.[186]

As he created *Judith,* Donatello constructed a sculpture featuring two diametrically opposed characters. He positioned them using clear power differentials and an emphasis on *Judith's* chastity and humility to expound upon the internal and external threats facing Florence that he developed in the inscription along *Judith's* base. The inscription states cryptically,

[185] Donatello does not seem to produce anything bronze before 1434, which is also the same year he began work on the Old Sacristy. *Bust of Youth* and *Atys-Amorino,* two bronze works stylistically similar to *David,* were likely made in the mid-to-late 1430s. For the means of this paper, I have dated David to ca. 1435 and propose that Donatello had access to a bronze foundry between 1435 and 1443 when he left for Padua.

[186] Donatello was generally working on three or more objects at a time throughout his career. Between 1440 and 1443, Donatello was only recorded working on artistic program within the Old Sacristy.

"Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues. Behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility."

This inscription relies on themes of triumph, concepts of conflict, and virtuosity of the fatherland to describe and frame the image of *Judith*. The city that rises with virtue presumably refers to Florence, with *Judith* acting as the stand-in for the perceived virtuosity of the city under the Medici regime. Through his extensive and purposeful patronage network, Cosimo constructed a reputation for himself as a humble servant of God who was wise, prudent, just, and charitable. Vespesiano immortalized this projected image of Cosimo in his book, *Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century* through his extolment of Cosimo's perceived virtuosity, while Donatello imbued *Judith* with the same unshakeable virtuosity through her chastity and humility before God.[187]

The inscription also seems to indicate a removal of pride both externally and internally, as it references how kingdoms and cities react to virtue or a lack thereof. The kingdom that allows luxury and pride to overtake them ultimately fails, while the city that rids itself of pride and focuses on virtue triumphs. As *Judith* slices away at Holofernes' neck, she simultaneously severs the neck of pride and humbles herself to God so she might complete her deed. Holofernes receives an external reduction of pride as *Judith* slices through his neck around which Superbia runs, but Judith focuses internally to root pride out of herself as she prays to God and receives divine intervention. Only at one point in Florentine history during Cosimo's life and reign do we see a culmination of internal and external threats against Medici power and Florentine sovereignty, and that is in the Battle of Anghiari.

[187] Vespasiano, 215-240.

When faced with Rinaldo degli Albizzi's tyrannical hold over Florence in 1434, Florence, under Cosimo's direction, exiled the traitorous man along with his allies. Viscontian Milan, on the other hand, willingly accepted these so-called prideful Florentines into their militaristic and political agenda. Where Cosimo cleansed his city of these traitorous men, Milan adopted them into their schemes and sullied their fold. The Battle of Anghiari finalized this struggle between Medicean Florence and an Albizzi-backed Milan, bringing a resounding completion to what Cosimo portrayed as a fight between Florentine virtuosity and Albizzi-Visconti pride. The Battle of Anghiari amalgamated the external threats from lustful Milan with the internal threats against Florence from prideful exiles and turned them into a formidable opponent bent on Medici destruction. Similarly, *Judith* struggles against her external threat—the lust-filled, prideful Holofernes—and internal pride that tries to keep her from God's intervention, but, like Florence, she overcomes the pride outside and within and becomes a beacon of humility and virtue.

Cosimo immediately began an artistic propaganda program to reassert his power and right to rule upon his return to Florence in 1434. Beginning with the *Old Sacristy* in San Lorenzo, flowing into his patronage of San Marco, and up until his personal palace and the items contained within, Cosimo positioned his commissions towards demonstrating his charitability, virtue, and ultimate control over Florence.[188] Shortly after the battle's conclusion, the Great Council *balia,* along with Cosimo, commissioned the *Impiccati*, or "the hanged," from Andrea del Castagno to depict and condemn the Florentine rebels who had fought in the Battle of Anghiari.[189]

[188] Vespasiano, 215-240.
[189] John R. Spencer, *Andrea del Castagno and His Patrons* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 15-21.

Such paintings of infamy, or *pitture infamante* (Figure 32), were common forms of condemnation in Florence that depicted the wanted criminals suspended by their ankles.[190] Most *pitture infamante,* including that commissioned by the *balia,* were painted on the outside of the Bargello, combining public disapproval and state condemnation from the *capitano del popolo,* who conducted business from inside the Bargello.[191] With the strength of the Republic behind him, Cosimo validated his power through Rinaldo's demise, reducing Rinaldo's efficacy while simultaneously reasserting his.

In 1440, Andrea del Castagno painted the *Impiccati* to function as a "Wanted Poster," a warning for criminals of the state, and as ritual humiliation and punishment for the condemned.[192] While the *Impiccati* no longer exists—surely covered by subsequent *pitture infamante* through the centuries—several records describe the painting's general composition and the inscriptions that accompanied each figure.[193] The ten rebels who took up arms against Florence hang upside down, suspended by a foot with their free legs dangling.[194] An inscription in vernacular Italian accompanies each man to describe his crimes against Florence. The painting, as well as the accompanying trial, primarily focused on Rinaldo's role in the insurrection, highlighting his treachery beyond his fellow exiles' to fully encapsulate Rinaldo's

[190] Michelle O'Malley, "Finding Fame: Painting and the Making of Careers in Renaissance Italy," *Renaissance Studies* 24, no. 1 (February 2010), 17.
[191] Spencer, *Andrea del Castagno*, 15-21.
[192] Ibid. For more on the function of pitture infamante, see Andrea Gamberini, "Eum Pictum Portabat: Pittura Infamante e Tradizioni Militari alla Fine del Medioevo," *Quaderni Sotici* 53, no. 159 (2018). The rest of this paragraph engages Spencer's work.
[193] Translations in the Appendix. *Pitture infamante* paintings were not considered permanent pieces. This object would have served as ephemera and likely would have been defaced when the next *pitture infamante* was installed. The full commissioning document for the *Impiccati* is in Latin and has not been translated into English or Italian as of April 2021. It surely contains additional information that would enrich our knowledge of the *Impiccati.*
[194] Some *pitture infamante* showed the criminals dead, while others had the criminals alive and fighting against their restraints. It is possible that the Latin text describing the commission details this information.

fall from grace. As the former leader of the Republic and the executor behind Cosimo's exile in 1433, Rinaldo presented the greatest political threat to Cosimo in Florence.

Rinaldo hung next to the other rebels for his role in the Battle of Anghiari, but we should not forget the longstanding rivalry between the heads of the Medici and Albizzi clans that came to an end upon Florence's victory at Anghiari. While the Battle of Anghiari was the culmination of Rinaldo's rebellion, to a Medicean ally, his rebellion had started eight years prior when he manipulated Cosimo's exile. The *Impiccati,* therefore, engages the Battle of Anghiari while simultaneously recalling the factional feuds that had rocked Florence in the 1430s. The oligarchic regime led by Rinaldo finally met its demise, a tyrant slain by humility.

I have translated the previously untranslated *Impiccati* inscriptions with the assistance of Stephen McCormick, Ph.D., from Washington & Lee University.

Messer Rinaldo	**Sir Rinaldo**
Crudel rubaldo Cavalier superbo	Cruel transgressor prideful Knight
Privato di mia schiatta e d'ogni onore,	Deprived of my lineage and every honor,
Ingrato alla mia patria e traditore,	Ungrateful and traitorous to my homeland,
Fra costor pendo il più iniquo ed acerbo.	Between these I hang the most tyrannical and bitter.

We immediately see a description of Rinaldo that is consistent with Judith's base and its focus on pride, tyranny, and places of origin. Not only has Rinaldo taken on the role of exile and rebel, but he also fashioned himself into a tyrant who sinned against his country when he, first, exiled Cosimo and, second, took up arms against his city at the Battle of Anghiari. The first line

of the inscription recalls Rinaldo's rise to power in 1418 when he was knighted upon his hereditary assumption of titular power through the word "cavalier," meaning knight. As a knight and ruler of his people, Rinaldo, according to the Great Council, was "crudel" and "superbo," both cruel and prideful, suggesting that he presided over Florence without concern for his people's well-being. Certainly, Cosimo and his supporters considered Rinaldo's attack against the Medici faction unjust, cruel, and arrogant, gaining him the description *iniquo,* or tyrannical. Rinaldo's inscription, like *Judith's* base, considers the antagonist through the lens of pride. The *Impiccati* described Rinaldo as "superbo" while *Judith's* base described the lustful kingdom with "superba," with both descriptors meaning pride and recalling the figure of Superbia that Holofernes wears around his neck. Rinaldo then takes on these features of *iniquo* and *superbo* as he betrayed Florence in the Battle of Anghiari, just as Holofernes becomes the impersonation of Superbia through his tyrannical attack against Israel and his prideful pursuit of Judith's body. Through the *Impiccati*, Cosimo and the *balia* publicly linked the Albizzi-led insurrection to pride and tyranny while juxtaposing themselves and Florence as the hand of Humility quelling the exiles' pride through their virtue and unlikely triumph at the Battle of Anghiari.

The *Impiccati* clues us in not only to the relationship between the Medici and Albizzi clans but also to the necessary act of ritual humiliation of the Anghiari rebels. *Judith* similarly expounds upon the concepts of humiliation and punishment for criminals of the state. While functioning as a "Wanted Poster" of sorts, the *Impiccati* did not demonstrate an actual punishment but rather served as a form of ritual humiliation for the criminals it portrayed.[195] It was a public condemnation of the crimes committed against the city and, in that way, served as a

[195] Andrea Gamberini, "Eum Pictum Portabat: Pittura Infamante e Tradizioni Militari alla Fine del Medioevo," in *Quaderni Sotici* 53, no. 159 (2018), 635-638.

source of information for the literate *popolo,* albeit a particularly biased one. *Judith* demonstrates the preferred and appropriate punishment for crimes against the state by drawing upon John of Salisbury's *Policraticus,* in which he describes the ritual punishment for criminals of the state and tyrants, including decapitation.[196] *Policraticus* was a 12th-century treatise on the government that took a prominent role in Medieval and Renaissance governments. Popularized by Thomas Aquinas, *Policraticus* became incredibly popular in Italy, particularly within Florence, one of the only Italian cities to remain a Republic by the end of the 14th century. In this text, John of Salisbury outlined the proper punishment for tyrants with his quip, "For whosoever takes up the sword deserves to perish by the sword."[197] He writes that the tyrannical prince or state-head should be killed via decapitation, which would create a physical metaphor between the severing of a head from a body to the removal of a state-head from the political body.[198] He specifically calls upon the narrative of Judith and Holofernes, citing it as an example of justified tyrannicide.[199] Notably, John of Salisbury remarked that Holofernes' demise came not from Judith, but from his indulgence in vice.[200] Similarly, we see *Judith's* base reference *luxu*, or overindulgence in some vice. In the context of *Judith,* this vice appears to be embodied by pridefulness and arrogance as the inscription pairs luxury with pride and virtue with humility. Rinaldo, similarly, seems to suffer from *superbo* and *iniquo,* or pride and a tyrannical nature for which he hangs.

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[196] McHam, "Donatello's *Judith* as the Emblem of God's Chosen People," 38. The rest of this paragraph draws from McHam's work on page 38 of her article. Hrabanus Maurus expounded on this treatise, specifically siting beheading as the proper punishment for criminals of the state.
[197] Ibid, 40-41.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid.

The concepts expounded within *Policraticus* informed much of the governmental art of Italy. In Siena, Ambrogio Lorenzetti painted the *Allegory of Good Government* (Figure 33) fresco between 1338 and 1339, in which the Virtue of Justice sits enthroned with a sword in her right hand, a crown in her left, and a disembodied head resting on her right knee.[201] She sits across from the *Allegory of Bad Government* (Figure 34) on the adjacent wall from which a tyrannical ruler presides over a chaos-filled city, and a second figure of Justice holds a scale upon which she weighs souls.[202] As Justice watches the scales rise and fall, she serves rewards and punishments for the souls she considers, giving the righteous gifts while lining the sinners up for decapitation. The figure of Justice on the opposite wall showing the *Allegory of Good Government* holds one of these decapitated heads in her hand, reminding viewers that justice against tyranny and pride comes through capital punishment. In the same way, *Judith* takes part in this judicial tradition as she takes hold of Holofernes as Superbia and removes his tyrannical head with a swing of her sword.

As part of a propagandistic agenda, the *Impiccati* and *Judith* each display the consequences of pride. The *Impiccati* focuses inwards on Rinaldo's treachery and that of the other Florentine exiles while *Judith* approaches pride introspectively and outwardly, both quelling pride from within and conquering Holofernes' *superbia*. Though *Judith* is not officially connected to the Battle of Anghiari, we see the same preoccupations appear in her as those that surface in the *Impiccati*. Medicean Florence heralds in virtuosity and peace after ending the

[201] George R. Bent, *Public Painting and Visual Culture in Early Republican Florence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 163-164.
[202] Leif, Dahlberg, *Spacing Law and Politics: The Constitution and Representation of the Juridical* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 90-127.

ongoing Medici-Albizzi factional disputes along with the Milanese threat in one fell swoop at the Battle of Anghiari. Internal and external *superbia* fall while Medicean Florence rises as victor.

Conclusion

The Battle of Anghiari marks a seminal moment in Florentine history. Cosimo de' Medici successfully navigated and defeated internal threats from Rinaldo degli Albizzi and external threats from Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, as they merged in an attempt to take over Medicean Florence. While several scholars propose a date in the 1450s for Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes*, such dates ignore Donatello's stylistic transformation that occurred in the late 1440s. Working in Florence for the Medici in the mid-1430s to mid-1440s, Donatello had access to a bronze foundry to create this commission for Cosimo as he worked on the stylistic program of the *Old Sacristy* in San Lorenzo.

Beginning his work for the Medici in 1434, Donatello was integral to the Medici propaganda program initiated immediately after Cosimo's exile in 1433 and return in 1434.[203] Arriving in Florence with a grudge against Rinaldo degli Albizzi who led the charge against him, Cosimo had a list of personal wrongs to right. Cosimo exiled Rinaldo and his supporters immediately after his return and began an artistic agenda to demonstrate his political efficacy visually through various architectural programs in San Lorenzo and San Marco. Even with the Albizzi faction gone, Cosimo still had to contend with Filippo Maria Visconti and his continual affronts to Florentine sovereignty. When Rinaldo created a military alliance with the Duke of Milan in 1440, Cosimo's two greatest threats converged and planned their attack.

On July 29, 1440, in the Arezzo countryside, Milanese troops gathered alongside the aggrieved Florentine exiles under the scorching noon sun. Launching an all-out offensive against the smaller, less-prepared Florentine army, the Visconti troops should have handily defeated

[203] Najemy, 271-274.

Florence once and for all. Instead, Florence shocked the early-modern world with a decisive defeat over Milan that not only ended the Lombard wars but also silenced the 1434 Florentine exiles and their call for a return of Albizzi power in Florence.

Cosimo almost immediately initiated a new propaganda program to assert his virtuosity. Within the year, the *Impiccati* painting was on the Bargello, detailing the exiles' crimes and connoting them, specifically Rinaldo, with tyranny and pride. Cosimo also began planning for a new urban palace on the Via Larga, one that would eventually hold *Judith* and have an entire courtyard filled with images devoted to Humility conquering Pride. Though we do not know where *David* or *Judith* sat before the finalization of the Palazzo Medici, Cosimo purposefully paired them with the roundels and *Marsyas* sculptures on the ground floor—and only public floor—of the Palazzo Medici.

Conforming to contemporary beliefs that relegated women to the private sphere while perhaps indicating a connection with the Medici family, *Judith* sits within the center of the Medici gardens, inhabiting a more private space within the palazzo. Even in her private space, *Judith* portrays an anomalous female who conformed perfectly to the Christian ideals of humility and chastity while displaying masculine levels of strength to kill Holofernes. Donatello draws from contemporary understandings of *Judith* that downplayed her sexuality in favor of whichever virtue a narrative required her to personify. Judith became an analogy for the root of virtues as seen in the *Speculum Virginum*'s Tree of Virtues and Tree of the Three Type of Women. Through *humilitas,* Judith encapsulated and achieved all other virtues while overcoming the root of all vices, *superbia*.

With the final defeat of the Visconti-Albizzi alliance, Cosimo began to formulate a narrative about the conflict featuring Florence as Humilitas and Milan as Superbia. Within

Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes*, internal and external threats converge. The figure of Superbia crashes into the folds of *Judith's* gowns on a medallion hanging from Holofernes' neck. Holofernes sports the patron vice of his sins while simultaneously becoming a physical manifestation of pride that *Judith* conquers. As *Judith* inwardly overcomes pride to submit herself to God, she uses her divine strength to defeat Holofernes. If commissioned in the wake of the Battle of Anghiari, *Judith and Holofernes* represents a Medicean Florence overcoming a formidable threat thanks to their virtuous nature that positioned God on their side.

Judith's base indicates Cosimo's interest in proving his political efficacy and virtuosity with its inscription, "Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues. Behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility." Only within the context of the Battle of Anghiari does Judith's story and the inscription on the sculpture's base make sense within Cosimo's reign. The Book of Judith focuses on Judith's internal and external ability to overcome pride, while Donatello's *Judith* physically decapitates pride from its body—severing state-head from state body in a physical metaphor of Florence cutting off the power and pride of an Albizzi-supported Milan.

The Battle of Anghiari marks the only moment in Cosimo's reign where he faced internal and external threats joined against Florence. Judith, a character often used to personify virtues, takes on the role of a Medicean-led Florence, an unlikely victor against a stronger, Albizzi-backed Milan in Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes*. Overcoming the odds stacked against him, Cosimo led Florence from his private helm to triumph over the city's most significant threats. *Judith* stands as a direct commentary on the prideful tyranny of the Albizzi-Visconti alliance that resulted in their ultimate defeat. As *Judith* raises her sword to sever Holofernes' head, pride succumbs to humility, kingdoms fall, cities rise, and Cosimo triumphs.

Figures

Figure 1

Donatello, *Judith and Holofernes,* bronze.

Figure 2

Donatello, *David*, bronze.

Figure 3

Tyrannicides, marble.

Figure 4

Figure 5

Donatello, *Old Sacristy,* San Lorenzo.

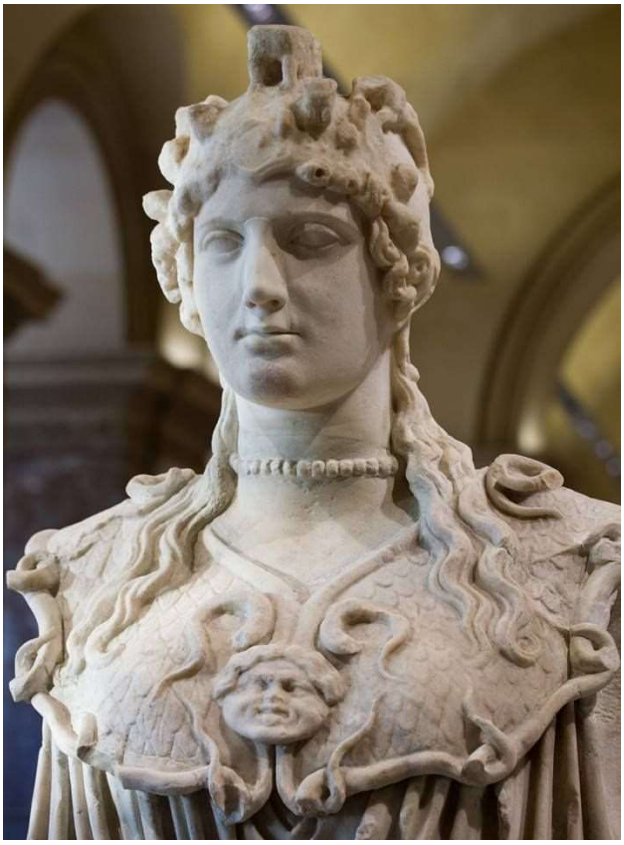
Figure 6

Donatello, *Twin Pulpits*, bronze.

Figure 7

Examples of 15th-16th century Italian cuirasses.

Figure 8

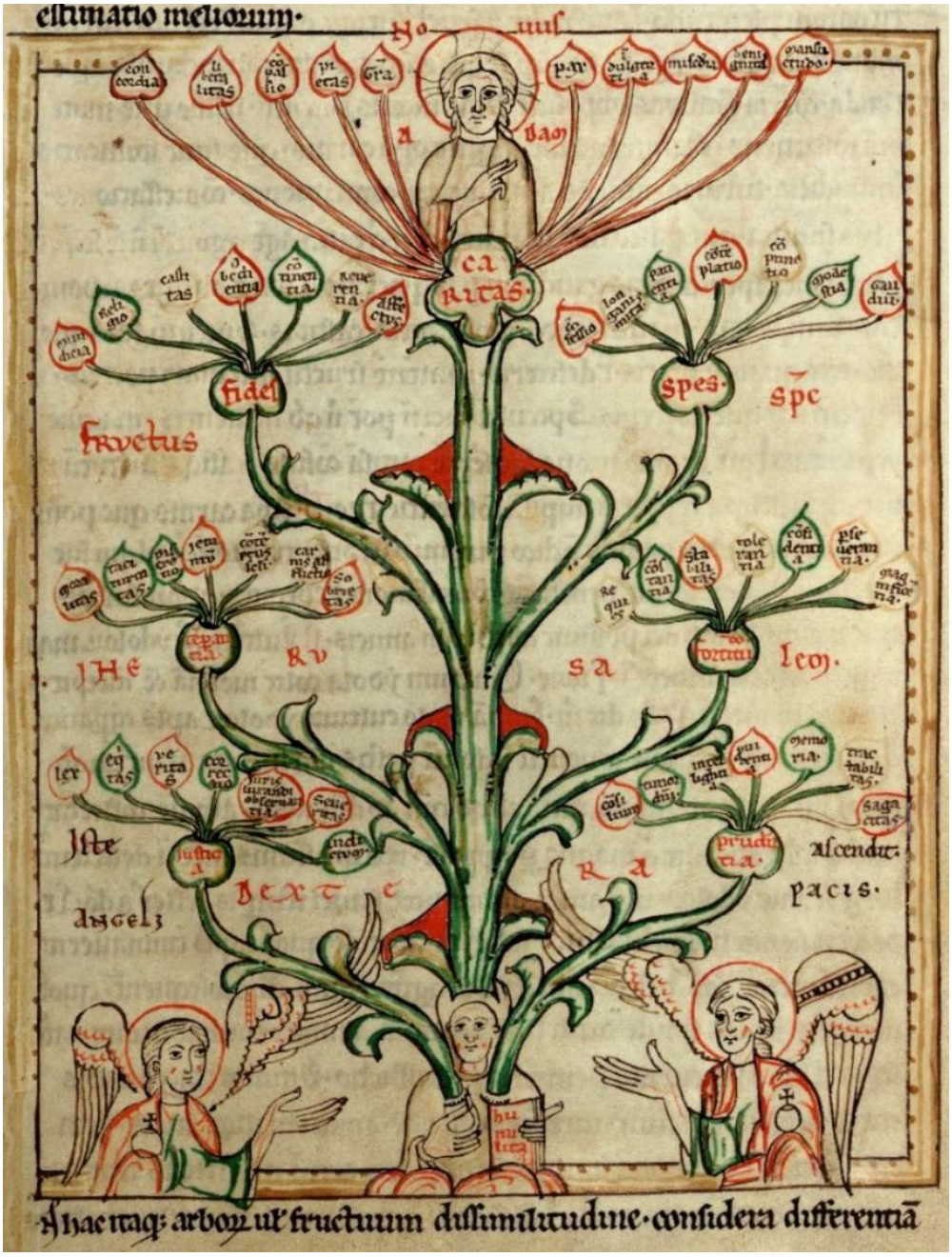


Detail of *Athena as Athena Parthenos,* marble.

Figure 9

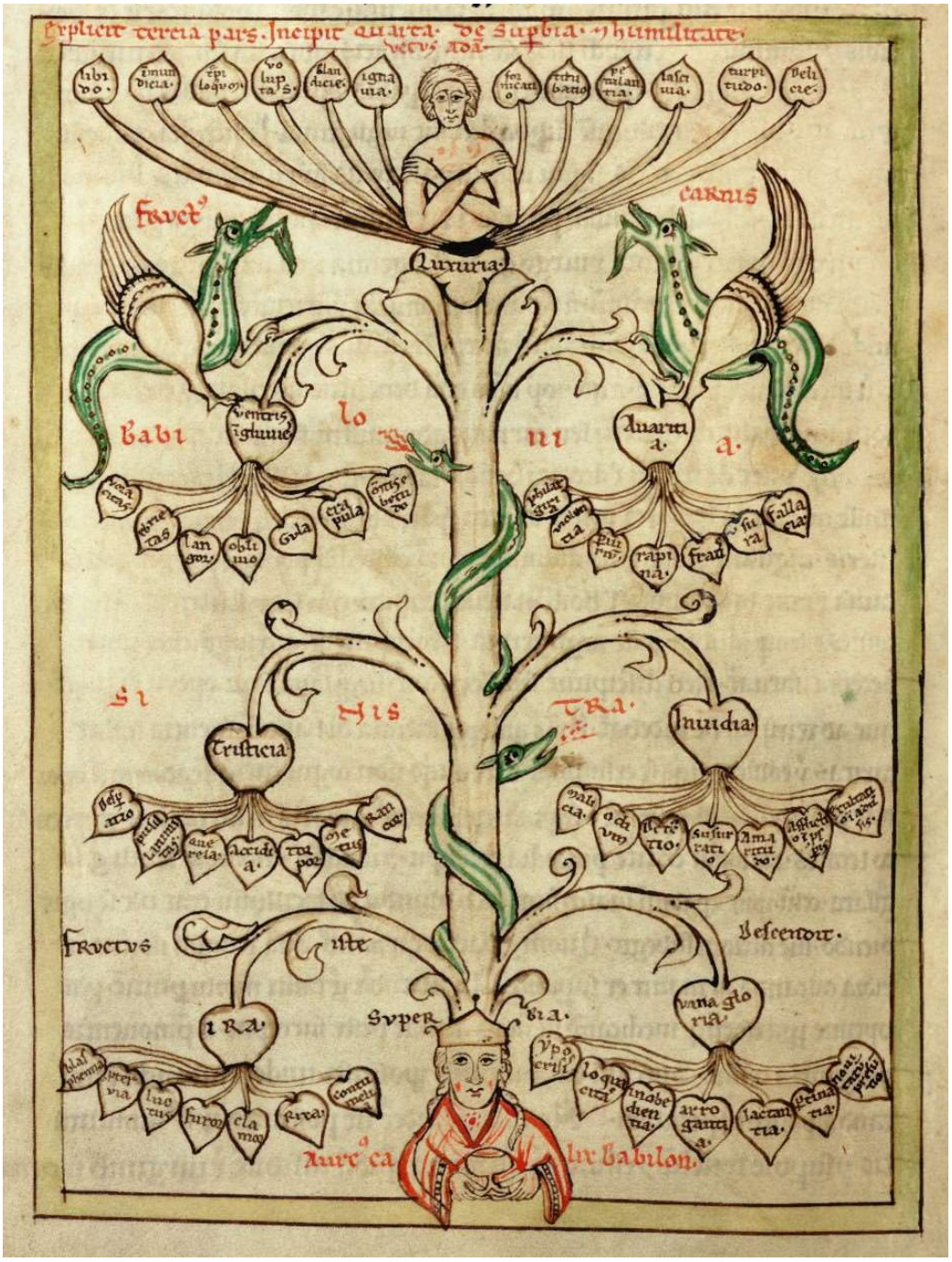
Example of 15th century Italian vambrace, steel.

Figure 10



Conrad of Hirsau, Tree of Virtues, *Speculum Virginum*, ink and pigment on parchment, 12th c.

Figure 11

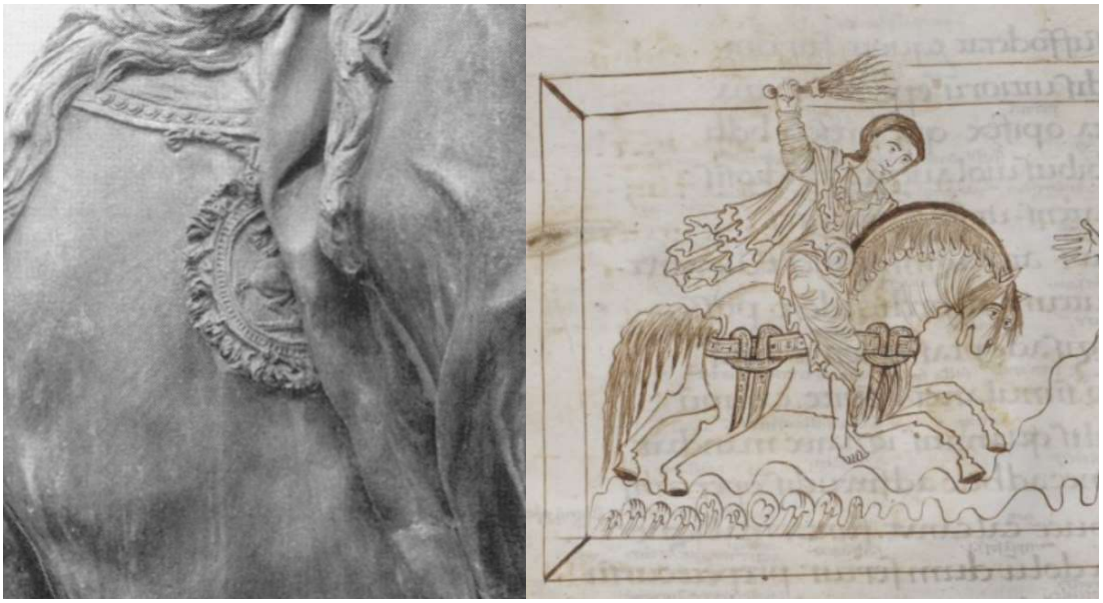


Conrad of Hirsau, Tree of Vices, *Speculum Virginum*, ink and pigment on parchment, 12th c.

Figure 12

Conrad of Hirsau, Tree Showing the Three Types of Women, *Speculum Virginum*, ink and pigment on parchment, 12th c.

Figure 13



Detail of Holofernes from Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* paired with Charging Superbia from *Psychomachia*.

Figure 14

Marsyas, Roman, marble.

Figure 15

Attributed to Donatello, Centaur Roundel in Palazzo Medici, stone.

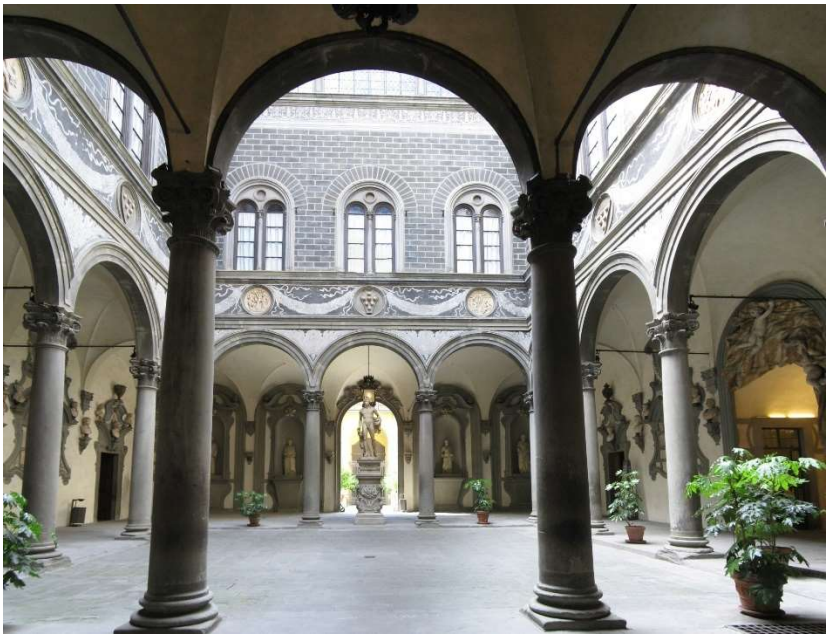
Figure 16

Attributed to Donatello, Daedalus and Icarus Roundel, Palazzo Medici, stone.

Figure 17

Attributed to Donatello, Triumph of Bacchus Roundel, Palazzo Medici, stone.

Figure 18



Michelozzo (architect), Donatello (decoration), Palazzo Medici courtyard.

Figure 19

Donatello, *Annunciation Tabernacle,* Florence, stone, 1428-1433.

Figure 20

Donatello, *Padua Altarpiece* (detail), Padua, bronze, 1447-1450.

Figure 21

Donatello, Madonna and Child, *Padua Altarpiece* (detail), Padua, bronze, 1447-1450.

Figure 22

Donatello, St. Anthony, *Padua Altarpiece* (detail), Padua, bronze, 1447-1450.

Figure 23

Donatello, St. Francis of Assisi, *Padua Altarpiece* (detail), Padua, bronze, 1447-1450.

Figure 24

Donatello, *St. John the Baptist*, Siena, bronze, ca. 1457.

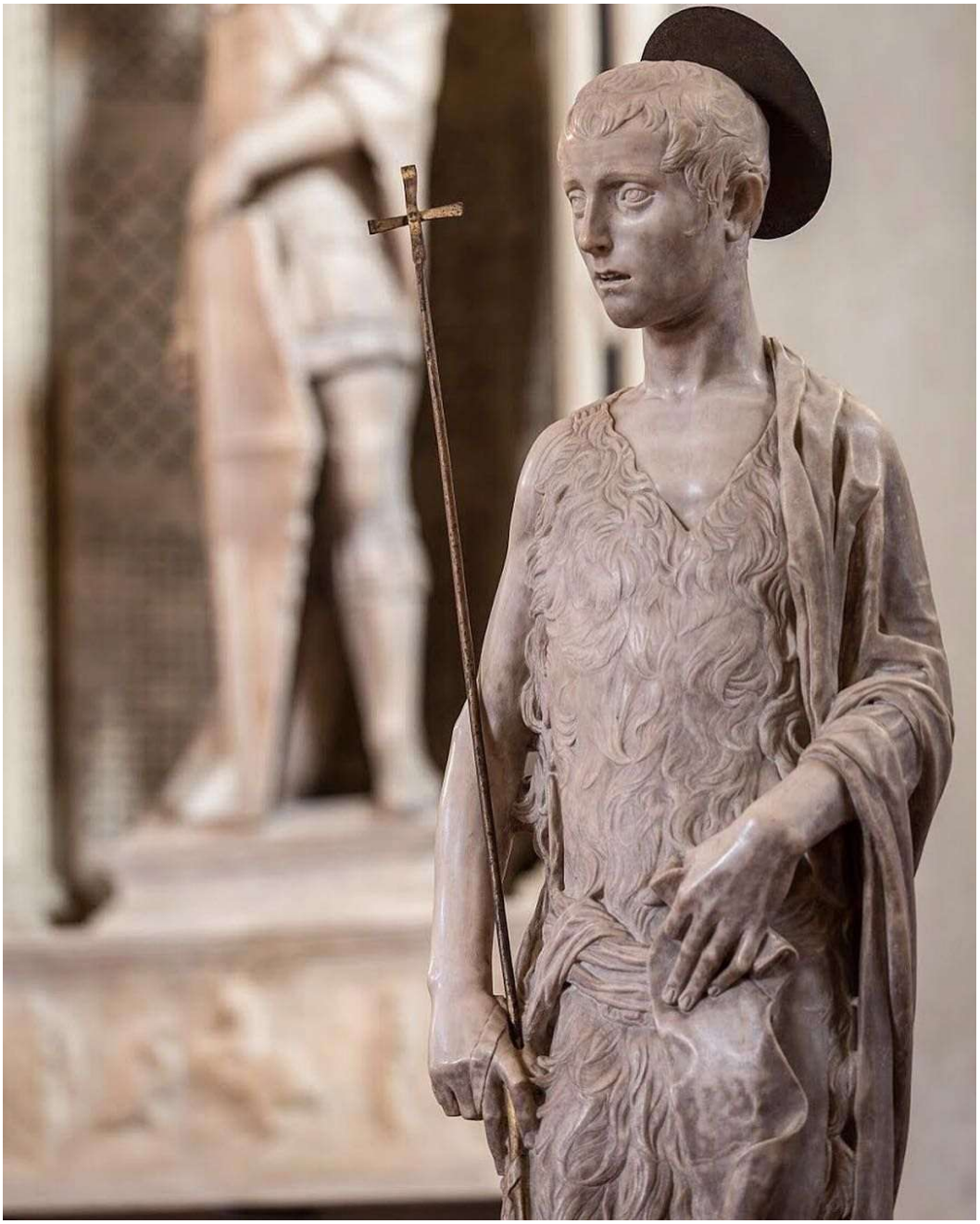
Figure 25

Donatello, *St. John the Baptist,* Venice, wood, 1452-1453.

Figure 26

Donatello, *Mary Magdalene*, Florence, wood, 1454-1455.

Figure 27



Donatello, *Giovanni Martelli,* Florence, marble, ca. 1455.

Figure 28

Donatello, *Assumption of the Virgin,* marble, 1427-1428.

Figure 29

Donatello, Bacchic Orgy base relief, *Judith and Holofernes* (detail), Florence, bronze.

Figure 30

Donatello, Christ's Ascension, *Twin Pulpits* (detail), Florence, bronze, 1460-1470.

Figure 31

Donatello, Bronze Doors, *Old Sacristy*, San Lorenzo, Florence, bronze, 1440-1443.

Figure 32

Example of *pitture infamante* style by Andrea del Sarto, ca. 1500.

Figure 33

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Allegory of Good Government* (detail), Siena, 1338-1339.

Figure 34

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Allegory of Good Government* (detail), Siena, 1338-1339.

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Appendix

The original inscriptions are reproduced here as published in John Spencer's *Andrea del Castagno and His Patrons* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 145-147. I have added the English translations I produced with the assistance of Stephen McCormick, Ph.D.

Messer Rinaldo	Sir Rinaldo
Crudel rubaldo Cavalier superbo	Cruel transgressor, proud Knight
Privato di mia schiatta e d'ogni onore,	Deprived of my lineage and every honor,
Ingrato alla mia patria e traditore,	Ungrateful and traitorous to my homeland,
Fra costor pendo il piú iniquo ed acerbo.	Between these I hang the most tyrannical and bitter.

Ormanno degli Albizzi	Ormanno degli Albizzi
Aspido della mente e del colore,	Corrupt of the mind and of demeanor,
Strambo travolto ontoso e pien d'inganno,	Crooked, corrupted, dishonorable, and full of deception,
Son di messer Rinaldo il buono Ormanno,	I am the good Ormanno of Rinaldo,
Che pendo allato al padre traditore.	That hangs beside my traitor father.

While "colore" means "color" in modern Italian, it was also used to refer to quality of character or demeanor in Medieval and early-modern Italian. In the context of the verse, "colore" seems to refer to Ormanno's nature rather than physical color.

Giovanni Gianfigliazzi	Giovanni Gianfigliazzi
Di tradimenti, falsitá ed inganni	Of betrayals, falsehoods, and deceptions
Contro a mia patria giá maestro dotto;	Against my country I am already learned;
Peró qui pendo col capo di sotto,	Yet here I hang with the head below,
E di messer Rinaldo son Giovanni.	And of Sir Rinaldo I am Giovanni.

Stefano Peruzzi	Stefano Peruzzi
Per ladro e per ruffiano e per ribaldo	For thief and for pimp and for transgressor
In prima delle forche bando avendo,	I have been called first to the gallows proclamations,
Lisca Peruzzi son, che poi qui pendo	I am Lisca Peruzzi who finally hangs here
Per seguire l'orme di messer Rinaldo.	for following the path of Sir Rinaldo.

As written, "Lisca" appears to be a nickname for Stefano. "Lisca" means "lisp" or "fishbone" and does not appear to speak to a characteristic of Stefano beyond his name.

Lodovico de' Rossi	Lodovico de' Rossi
Non credo che in consigli o in opre fossi	I don't think that in advice or in work you were
Di me piú vile, e in parole gagliardo:	More cowardly than me, and in strong words:
Poltron ghiottone falseron bugiardo	Lazy glutton, brazen liar
Traditor son Lodovico de' Rossi.	Traitor, I am Lodovico de' Rossi.

The phrase “falseron bugiardo” indicates Lodovico’s sneaky, two-faced character. “Falseron” can be translated as “falsified,” “lying,” or “brazen.” I have chosen to translate the phrase as “brazen liar” to communicate the extent of Lodovico’s dishonesty which the author(s) or the inscription were attempting to convey in this statement.

Papino Gianfigliazzi	Papino Gianfigliazzi
Contro all patria e spiegate bandiere	Against the fatherland and unfurled flag
Venni, e de’Gianfigliazzi son Papino’	I came, and of Gianfigliazzi I am Papino’
Ladro pazzo ruffiano e assassino,	Crazy thief, ruffian, and assassin,
Fui sempre per natura barattiere.	I was always of bartering nature.

“All” is likely a misprint of “alla”—meaning “to the”—either in the original document or in Spencer’s Appendix within *Andrea del Castagno and His Patrons.*

Don Niccoló Gianfigliazzi	Don Niccoló Gianfigliazzi
Niccoló son d’Anton Gianfigliazzi io,	I am Niccoló of Anton Gianfigliazzi,
Detto Sacchin, di Passignano abate,	called Sacchin, of Abbott Passignano,
Bastardo e mulo; e qui pendo, sappiate,	Bastard and mule; and know it is here I hang,
Perch’io cercai tradir la patria e Dio.	because I tried to betray the fatherland and God.

Baldassare Gianfigliazzi	Baldassare Gianfigliazzi
I piú di nostra stirpa han questa pecca,	Most of our lineage has this flaw,
D'essere o ladri o traditori o pazzi	To be thieves or traitors or insane
O barattieri; e io de'Gianfigliazzi	Or barterers; and I of Gianfigliazzi
Son Baldassarri, detto Carnesecca.	Am Baldassari, called Carnesecca.

"Carnesecca" was a nickname for Baldassare literally meaning "dried meat."

Lamberto Lamberteschi	Lamberto Lamberteschi
Io son Lamberto Lamberteschi, a cui	I am Lamberto Lamberteschi, to whom
Ben si puó dire: A te voló il cervello!	It can be well said: To you flew the brain!
Con questi traditor farmi rubello	With these traitors who made me rebel
Della mia patria, ove giá ricco fui.	From my fatherland, where I was already rich.

The phrase "A te voló il cervello!" seems to be an idiomatic expression meaning to lose your mind, to go insane, or perhaps, to not have a brain/to be unintelligent. I was not able to find records of this phrase being used elsewhere, so its intended meaning is not clear.

Bernardo Barbadori	Bernardo Barbadori
Il padre mio Niccoló Barbadori,	My father Niccoló Barbadori,
Spogliatore di chiese e di ospitali,	Stripper of churches and of hospitals,
Piú ch'io Bernardo, cagion de' miei mali,	More than myself Bernardo, causer of my ills,
Pinger dovresti fra noi traditori.	you should be painted among us traitors.

The verb "spogliatore" is associated with sacrilegious thefts.

Conclusione	Conclusion
Mai piú trovossi o sbanditi o rubelli	Never was there found bandits or rebels
Di questa alma cittá, che per tornare,	Who, to return to the nourishing city, who to return,
Sua libertá tentassin maculare,	attempted to stain its liberty,
Altri che questi traditori e felli.	other than these traitors and felons."

"Alma" is a Latinism that means "nurturing," "mothering," or "nourishing." I chose "nourishing" because it seems to best counter "maculare," or to stain in a defamatory manner. "Maculare" indicates a detractive process whereas "alma" suggests an additive entity. In the same way, nourishing seems to represent the additive quality of the city described in this inscription.