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The Springtime of the Renaissance

SCULPTURE AND THE ARTS IN FLORENCE 1400–60

edited by

BEATRICE PAOLOZZI STROZZI and MARC BORMAND

Mandragora

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The Rebirth of the Sculpted Portrait in 15th-Century Florence

In the present era we are inundated by images of the living and of the dead – celebrities, athletes, politicians, family, friends. But for much of post-classical history, the representation of mortals was seen as a highly honorific, and therefore highly restricted, activity, and only persons of the greatest importance and most distinguished status, such as Christ, saints, and rulers, were regularly depicted. The shift from one paradigm to the other – from an almost exclusively sacral-imperial view of art to one that embraced a larger spectrum of subjects for representation – began in the early Renaissance in Italy and Flanders. In sculpture the change started in Florence. It was there in the 1450s that artists and patrons began routinely to make sculpted images of living persons, other than rulers and popes, for the first time since the end of antiquity, roughly one thousand years before.[1]

It was a sweeping change. At the beginning of the 15th century, there were virtually no sculptures of living persons in Florence or elsewhere in Italy; one of the few exceptions was Jacopino da Tradate's monumental statue of Pope Martin V in the Duomo of Milan, made in 1418–21 (fig. 185); another important early exception was Lorenzo Ghiberti's small self-portrait on the North Doors of the Baptistery in Florence, installed in 1424 (fig. 186).

Sculptures of the non-holy dead were more plentiful, but these too were uncommon. Furthermore, they were housed almost exclusively in churches, as part of funerary monuments, and depicted only persons of very special regard, such as popes, rulers, cardinals, bishops, knights, saints, highly distinguished members of religious orders, and donors or founders of religious institutions; in the university towns of Bologna and Padua, tombs with effigies were also erected to famous professors.[2]

The scale, the physical form, and the setting of the representations were regulated, too, if only by custom, rather than law. In Florentine funerary monuments, a bishop or cardinal might be celebrated with a sculpted effigy on a large wall tomb, but a person of lesser rank, such as a knight or abbot, was thought to merit no more than an image in low relief on a floor tomb. These differences were not a matter of wealth but of decorum, and even the richest citizens in the city respected the conventions. Moreover, before the early 15th century, the only sculpted busts in Florence, as in much of Italy, were reliquaries, holding the miracle-working remains of saints; a characteristic example is the reliquary bust of Saint Zenobius, made by Andrea Arditi for the Duomo in 1331 (fig. 187).

How very different the situation was at the end of the 15th century, when, according to Vasari, there were to be "seen in every house in Florence, over the chimney-pieces, doors, windows and cornices, infinite numbers of [sculpted] portraits, so well made and so natural that they appear alive".[3] The extent of the change can be measured by both the range of the persons depicted and the variety of materials used. These portraits included not only the male leaders of the family, but wives, daughters and small children as well; and while some of the portraits were in bronze and marble, many others were in the less expensive materials of terracotta, stucco and wax.

The wide and rapid expansion of the making of portraits, both in painting and sculpture, has long been seen as proof of an outstanding feature of the Renaissance. Jacob Burckhardt in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) argued that one of the dominant characteristics of the epoch was "The Development of the Individual" – to use the title of a section of the book. Burckhardt famously said:

> Man [previously] was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family, or corporation – only through some general category. In Italy this veil first melted into air; an *objective* treatment and consideration of the State and of all things of this world became possible. The *subjective* side at the same time asserted itself with corresponding emphasis; man became a spiritual *individual*, recognized himself as such.[4]

184. Mino da Fiesole, *Bust of Piero de' Medici*. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello.

Burckhardt's idea has had the most profound influence on the study of the Renaissance portrait, beginning with his own masterly essay on the subject, published in 1898, and continuing up to the present day.[5]

Burckhardt's insight is powerful and illuminating, and yet when applied to the study of portraiture, it must be taken with a caveat. In Burckhardt's formulation, the individual is seen in distinction from the group. This idea is useful in the analysis of some Renaissance portraits, but as we shall discuss below, in 15th-century Florence, portraits regularly celebrated individuals as the exemplary representatives of groups, most especially of the patrician family.

To understand the rise of the sculpted portrait, it is necessary to look at a broad range of forces that contributed to its success. Moreover, as portraiture began earlier and developed much more widely in painting, we must view the emergence of the sculpted portrait in relation to these precedents. This will help us to see both what prepared the way for the making of sculpted busts, and how bold a departure it was when Florentine patrons and artists started to create them.

Portraits of the donors of altarpieces and chapels, such as Giotto's fresco portrait of Enrico Scrovegni in the Arena Chapel in Padua from the early years of the 14th century, were the earliest examples of convincing likenesses of persons other than saints and rulers. The popularity of donor portraits grew through the 14th century, and appears to have accelerated following the devastating attacks of the Black Death in 1348 and again in the 1360s.[6] A famous example of portraiture in early 15th-century Florence are the portraits of the donors in Masaccio's *Trinity*, painted in Santa Maria Novella in the mid 1420s (figs. 188–9).

From the time of Giotto, furthermore, it became acceptable to include portraits of artists, poets, and other prominent figures in group scenes in narrative frescoes, even of religious subjects. Although these figures were almost never identified by name, their presence added to the image's credibility. Perhaps the most famous example of this practice was the now lost fresco by Masaccio, made in the 1420s, showing the consecration of the church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence. According to Vasari, the painter included portraits of Brunelleschi, Donatello, Niccolò da Uzzano and many others among the men in the crowd.[7]

Another important prompt for the development of portraiture was the ascent of the Franciscan and Dominican orders. The personal charisma of the leaders of these movements was considered crucial for their followers' sense of mission, and to this end likenesses of Saint Francis, Saint Dominic and other distinguished members of the orders were created in great numbers. The importance of portraiture in these orders continued throughout the Renaissance; consider, for example, Fra Angelico's picture of *Seventeen Blessed of the Dominican Order and Two Dominican Tertiaries*, a predella panel from the high altarpiece of San Domenico, Fiesole, from about 1422–3, or his frescoed portraits of Dominic, Peter Martyr and other saints, in the convent of San Marco, from the 1440s.[8]

There was one other important form of portraiture in the 14th and early 15th centuries: fresco cycles of Old Testament and classical heroes and other illustrious men.[9] In contrast to portraits of donors and saints, these images represented secular figures of outstanding achievement, and they were made for either government buildings or the private residences of the very wealthy. Nearly all these series have been destroyed, and we have few documents or descriptions, but we know that they included many prestigious works, among them frescoes by Giotto in the Palazzo Reale in Naples, paintings in the Orsini palace in Rome, and a late 14th-century fresco cycle in the Sala Virorum Illustrium in Padua.

In Florentine public buildings there were two picture cycles of illustrious men: one was a late 14th-century series in the Palazzo Vecchio (destroyed); the program of this cycle was devised by Coluccio Salutati, the chancellor of the republic. Another was a series of portraits of the poets of Florence, made in 1406 by Ambrogio Baldesi in the Palazzo del Proconsolo. In addition, there were also two series in private residences in Florence, and one in Prato. Marco Datini, the so-called "merchant of Prato", commissioned a picture cycle of famous warriors and philosophers for his palace there in 1391. Probably sometime in the 1410s Giovanni de' Medici (Cosimo il Vecchio's father) commissioned Lorenzo di Bicci to paint a series of "uomini famosi" for the old family palace known as 'casa vecchia de' Medici' in Florence.[10] The other cycle from a private Florentine residence – all the more precious because it is one of the few instances to survive intact – is Andrea del Castagno's frescoes of famous men and women, which he painted in 1448–9 for the Villa Carducci, outside of Florence; four of the nine frescoes appear in the present exhibition (cat. nos. VI.7.a–d).

As part of this tendency to celebrate exemplary secular figures, one must also consider the monuments to condottieri and other military heroes of Florence that were made for the Duomo, beginning

185. Jacopino da Tradate, *Pope Martin V Enthroned*. Milan, cathedral.

186. Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Self-portrait*.
Florence, Baptistery of San Giovanni, North Doors (detail).

187. Andrea Arditi, *Reliquary Bust of St Zenobius*.
Florence, Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore.

with the late Trecento tomb of Piero Farnese and continuing with such celebrated works as Paolo Uccello's fresco of John Hawkwood, Andrea del Castagno's fresco of Niccolò da Tolentino.[11] There could be added Buggiano's sculpture of Filippo Brunelleschi, and Domenico di Michelino's picture of *Dante Reading from the Divine Comedy* (1465).

The 14th-century humanist and poet Petrarch was crucially important in advancing the tradition of honorific portraiture of secular heroes.[12] Whereas Saint Augustine and other medieval writers condemned the desire for fame as proud and sinful, Petrarch, citing classical authors such as Sallust and Cicero, argued that sculptures and other images portraying great men acted as an exhortation to virtue, excellence and achievement. For example, Petrarch wrote, "statues of outstanding men can kindle noble minds with desire for imitation" ("statue illustrium possunt nobiles animos ad imitandi studium accendere", *Familiarum rerum libri*, VI, 4).

Petrarch had a profound impact on humanists in Florence in the 15th century. For the development of the portrait statue this mattered in two ways. First, Petrarch's compendium of biographies of remarkable men, *De viris illustribus,* inspired in Florence a long series of works, including *De origine civitatis Florentie et eiusdem famosis civibus* by Filippo Villani, *Historia illustrium virorum* by Antonio Alberti (Leon Battista Alberti's uncle) and the biographical writings of Leonardo Bruni, Giovanni Cavalcanti, Gianozzo Manetti, and Vespasiano da Bisticci. No other city in Europe showed equal fascination for this type of literature.[13]

Second, like Petrarch, Florentine humanists praised the power of monuments to great men to inspire virtue. For instance, in 1417 Poggio Bracciolini stated the following in his funeral oration for Francesco Zabarella, the Cardinal of Florence:

> Since this most virtuous man died in service to the state, we should adorn him with public honors that may serve the name of eternal posterity … We must make sure … that a sufficiently magnificent tomb

> is built using public money, on which is written a summary of his deeds. According to the custom of the ancients for those who had died for their country, we ought to put a golden statue on his tomb, on whose base would be written "to the parent of the fatherland." But since this custom is now out of fashion, it will be enough to build a tomb and adorn it in the style of our ancestors, with an honorific inscription for his honor and for the imitation of those who will come after.[14]

As this brief review suggests, in Florence by *c.* 1420 there was an established tradition that portraits of exemplary men could serve a moral function by stimulating the desire for virtue and excellence. Almost all such images were 1) paintings, 2) depicting famous persons of an earlier period, 3) showing them as standing, and 4) arranged in a group or series. How then do you get to sculptures of living individuals in the bust format?

Several factors contributed to this development. First, the humanists Niccolò Niccoli and Poggio Bracciolini began to collect ancient portrait busts and other heads from Greek and Roman marble statuary. We have few specific details about Niccoli's collection, but we know that Bracciolini acquired at least six such works, and, furthermore, we know from his letters that he discussed them with Donatello, Cosimo de' Medici, and others.[15] One head from Bracciolini's collection, a Greek marble of *Dionysus Taurus*, is shown in the present exhibition (cat. III.8).

Bracciolini is best known today as the preeminent book hunter of the early Renaissance. Among the many ancient texts he rediscovered are Lucretius' *De rerum natura* and the first complete edition of Quintilian, to name only two of his most important finds. We should note that the humanist Bartolomeo Aragazzi was a close friend and companion of Bracciolini in the search for classical manuscripts. Bracciolini was also among the greatest experts of the time on ancient art. He acted as the personal guide to the antiquities of Rome and Ostia for Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici, Ambrogio Traversari, and others, and in *De varietate fortunae* he wrote one of the earliest descriptions of the archaeological remains of Rome (cat. no. III.5).[16]

Bracciolini was extremely close to the Medici. Vespasiano da Bisticci says Cosimo was "much attracted" to him;[17] and Bracciolini wrote an important public letter in defense of Cosimo at the time of his exile in 1433.[18] Bracciolini may have served as a humanist advisor to Piero de' Medici in the design of his *studiolo* in the Palazzo Medici, since the subjects of Luca della Robbia's ceiling tiles for the room were based on Columella's *De re rustica,* a text that Bracciolini rediscovered. It was also Bracciolini whom Cosimo selected to give the funeral oration for his brother Lorenzo in 1440.

Given Poggio's strong ties with the Medici, his collecting of Greek and Roman marble heads, and his expertise on ancient art, it is particularly noteworthy that we have a text by Poggio Bracciolini from 1440 where he details the function of the portrait bust; it is the first post-classical text to discuss this type of sculpture.[19] The work, *De vera nobilitate*, is a dialogue in which the three speakers are Poggio, Niccolò Niccoli and Lorenzo de' Medici. Near the beginning of the text, admiring the antique heads in Poggio's collection, Lorenzo says:

> Illustrious men of old used to ornament their homes, villas, gardens, arcades, and gymnasiums with statues, paintings, and busts of their ancestors to glorify their own name and their lineage … We know in fact that nobility does come from paintings, sculptures, elegance, wealth, and ample possessions, as well as from public offices and positions of authority … Even the most learned among the ancients spent time and energy in the acquisition of sculptures and paintings. Cicero for one, and Varro, and Aristotle, as well as other Greeks and Romans known for their versatile knowledge and for lives that were meant to show forth virtue. They adorned their libraries and gardens with art in order to ennoble those places and show their own good taste and well-spent efforts. For they believed that images of men who had excelled in the pursuit of glory and wisdom, if placed before the eyes, would help ennoble and stir up the soul.[20]

Near the close of the dialogue, Lorenzo adds:

> The great deeds and the virtues of our family seem to give dignity to their descendants, and the honor of our fathers is like a light illuminating us and making us more worthy and notable. Who would really deny that the virtues of our ancestors make us nobler and more illustrious? If we want our own deeds to be praised and remembered by our posterity the recollection and praise of parents must shine – as their portraits would – on sons.[21]

188–9. Masaccio, *Trinity* (details).
Florence, Basilica of Santa Maria Novella.

The text thus gives a clear justification of the portrait bust. It is a means of preserving, augmenting, and transmitting family honor, dignity and virtue: it will inspire future generations to live up to the record of achievement, both in public office and in other fields of endeavor (business, war), that gave the patrician family its high-standing.

Another treatise by a Florentine humanist of this period places great emphasis on the desire for glory as a spur to seeking individual virtue and maintaining family tradition; this is Leon Battista Alberti's *Libri della famiglia*. Alberti states, moreover, that the living and not just the dead, ought to be rewarded with fame. For example, he writes:

> It is everyone's duty to see that in a household intelligence, virtue, and reputation are nurtured. Is it not because we want the dutifulness and rectitude of the living to be praised and commended that we honor the dead with sepulchers and the pomp of funerals, useless to the deceased? If so, isn't it even more necessary to celebrate and honor the living, to contribute to and make efforts when necessary to exalt the living and give them a position in a place that is conspicuous and enhances the fame of the whole family?[22]

Throughout much of Renaissance Europe, the ideals of honor were based on the martial code of chivalry, and this was true in 15th-century Italy as well, where nearly every city was ruled by a military despot. But such standards had little direct relevance in Florence, a republic of bankers and merchants.

190–1. Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Self-portrait* and *Portrait of [Ghiberti's] Son*. Florence, Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, Gates of Paradise (detail).

In the 15th century, Florentine patricians and humanists asserted a different foundation for dignity, one which had a great bearing on the portraits they made. In this view, while family heritage of public service and elegance of high life-style added to one's standing, nobility had to be earned over and over again by ceaseless striving and success in public office and commercial enterprise. Whereas a prince or a condottiere sought to distinguish himself on the field of battle in combat with other soldiers, Florentine citizens desired eminence in the forum and the counting-house: only by these means could they be contenders for the honors of the city.[23]

More than once in *Libri della famiglia*, Alberti speaks of life as a race or contest, in which every person must struggle, on behalf of his family, for honor and renown. Moreover, to succeed, one must live up to the classical ideal of human excellence[24] and embody a range of moral qualities, especially prudence, vigilance, fortitude, and moderation. Similar expressions can be found in Matteo Palmieri's *De vita civile* (1438) or in Alamanno Rinuccini's later *Dialogus de libertate* (1479). It was an intensely agonistic ideal, one that permitted – and demanded – the display of virtue and the acquisition of fame. Alberti wrote, "Happiness lies in being honored and esteemed by other men … Let us try with all our might and skill to acquire praise and reputation".[25]

At about the same time that these texts were written, Florentine patricians began to commission painted portraits of themselves and their family members. The slightly earlier precedents in Flemish painting and in Italian medals, such as Pisanello's *John VIII Paleologus*, from 1438–9 (cat. nos. IX.8.a–b), most likely helped give rise to this new practice. Moreover, whereas in other cities, only the ruler and his family could be celebrated in portraiture, in Florence many optimates could be honored in this way.[26] A dynamic of competition and innovation in portraiture quickly ensued. While fiercely proud of their Republican traditions and mercantile *ethos*, Florentines nonetheless were also intensely aware of the princely glamor of rulers and aristocrats in other Italian cities. In the age of the rise of the Medici, portraiture could serve both to celebrate the distinctive virtue of the Florentine optimates and help them to rival the prestige of nobility elsewhere on the peninsula.

The earliest phase in portrait sculpture remains slightly unclear, owing to uncertainty about Donatello's place in its creation, and continuing discussion about the *Niccolò da Uzzano* bust (cat. no. X.12), once thought to be by Donatello and from circa 1430, but now often considered to be by

Desiderio da Settignano and from the 1450s. Nevertheless, it is clear that interest in sculpted portraiture grew significantly in the late 1440s and early 1450s. Consider, for example: the face of the deceased in Bernardo Rossellino's *Monument to Leonardo Bruni* (died in 1444); the death mask of Filippo Brunelleschi, 1447; the head of the saint in Bernardo Rossellino's *Monument to Beata Villana*, commissioned in 1451; Lorenzo Ghiberti's Gates of Paradise, with his and his son's portraits (figs. 190–1), installed in 1452; the condottiere's portrait in Donatello's *Monument to Gattamelata* in Padua, finished in 1453; and the death of Carlo Marsuppini in 1453, and the decision of the Medici soon after to commission a monument to him by Desiderio da Settignano, which includes his portrait.

It was in this period, too, that Mino da Fiesole sculpted the marble portrait bust of Piero de' Medici (see fig. 184), possibly in connection with the building of the Medici's new family palace. As Francesco Caglioti has remarked, this work carved in 1453–4 is "the oldest authenticated example we have of a post-classical portrait of a living person in the form of a marble bust".[27] The artist and patron surely looked to antiquity for inspiration in making this work; and yet it is fundamentally different from a classical imagine of a Roman emperor or noble: not only in the cut of the bust – straight across the chest like a reliquary head, rather than in a curve like a classical portrait – but also in the presentation of character. Piero seems to gaze out with an alert and lively intelligence, and his expression is calm, open and almost inviting, rather than haughty and domineering. This is not a ruler portrait – it was made when the Medici were still no more than citizens, although they were then consolidating their grip on the city. Yet it presents Piero as a new kind of man and leader, one whose claim on our respect comes not from his status and office, but from his foresight and charisma. The portrait suggests it is by natural ability that Piero ranks as *primus inter pares* – first among equals.

Soon after this bust, Mino also carved sculptures of Piero's wife Lucrezia Tornabuoni (lost) and of his brother Giovanni (cat. no. X.13), who is shown in *all'antica* armor rather than contemporary dress. In 1454 Mino in Rome made the bust of the Florentine banker *Niccolò Strozzi* (fig. 192), and the next year that of the condottiere *Astorgio Manfredi*. Mino remained at the forefront of this new genre of art, but other artists and patrons quickly followed; for example, Antonio Rossellino sculpted the portrait of *Giovanni Chellini* in 1456 (cat. no. X.14), and Desiderio made the bust of *Marietta Strozzi* around 1460 (cat. no. X.17).

It is worth stressing that at its start the rebirth of the sculpted portrait was the creation of a small group of tightly interconnected artists, humanists and patrons, all centered on the Medici.[28] Beginning from this circle, the popularity of the portrait bust radiated outward, first through Florence and Italy, and then throughout the rest of Renaissance Europe.

192. Mino da Fiesole, *Bust of Niccolò Strozzi*. Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Bode-Museum.

1 The art history literature on Italian 15th-century portraiture and portrait sculpture is vast; among the most fundamental works are Pope-Hennessy 1966; Pope-Hennessy 1958, 54–62; I. Lavin 1970; Schuyler 1976; The Image 1998; Radcliffe 2001; *Renaissance Faces* 2008; Rubin, 2011.

2 On the social structure of tomb patronage and tomb types in Florence, see Butterfield 2000.

3 Vasari 1568, ed. Bettarini–Barocchi 1966–87, III, 543–4: "si vede in ogni casa di Firenze sopra i camini, usci, finestre e cornicioni, infiniti di detti ritratti, tanto ben fatti e naturali che paiono vivi"; English translation 1996, I, 555.

4 Burckhardt 1860; English translation 1958, 143.

5 Burckhardt 1898.

6 See Cohn 1992.

7 See John Pope-Hennessy 1966, 4–7; Vasari 1568, ed. Bettarini–Barocchi 1966–87, III, 129–30: "e vi ritrasse infinito numero di cittadini in mantello et in cappuccio che vanno dietro a la processione, fra i quali fece Filippo di ser Brunellesco in zoccoli, Donatello, Masolino da Panicale stato suo maestro, Antonio Brancacci che gli fece far la cappella, Niccolò da Uzzano, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, Bartolomeo Valori" ('And he portrayed therein an infinite number of citizens in mantles and hoods, who are following the procession, among whom he painted Filippo di Ser Brunellesco in wooden shoes, Donatello, Masolino da Panicale, who had been his master, Antonio Brancacci, who caused him to paint the chapel, Niccolò da Uzzano, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, and Bartolommeo Valori'); English translation 1996, I, 321–2.

8 On the portraiture of holy persons in the 15th century, see Krass 2012.

9 See Donato 1985; Donato 1986.

10 Vasari 1568, ed. Bettarini–Barocchi 1966–87, II, 315–6: "Avendo dunque Lorenzo così giovinetto fatto alcune opere a fresco in Firenze e fuora per adestrarsi, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, veduta la buona maniera sua, gli fece dipigner nella sala della casa vecchia de' Medici – che poi restò a Lorenzo fratel carnale di Cosimo Vecchio, murato che fu il palazzo grande – tutti quegli uomini famosi che ancor oggi assai ben conservati vi si veggiono" ('Lorenzo, then, young as he was, having made some work in fresco both within and without Florence for the sake of practice, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, seeing his good manner, caused him to paint in the hall of the old house of the Medici – which afterwards came into the possession of Lorenzo, brother of Cosimo the Elder, when the great palace was built – all those famous men that are still seen there today, very well preserved'); English translation 1996, I, 236.

11 See above the essay of Ilaria Ciseri.

12 Donato 1985, with additional bibliography.

13 We should note that we have explicit evidence that Cosimo de' Medici and the humanists in his circle shared with one another manuscripts of exemplary lives; see the letter by Poggio Bracciolini to Niccolò Niccoli of 21 October 1429, Bracciolini, *Lettere*, ed. 1984, I, 88; English translation in *Two Renaissance* 1974, 153.

14 "Nunc illud superest ad quod ad animadvertatis oporet P.C. ut quoniam vir hic optimus in reipublicæ munere interijt, eum quoque publicis honoribus decoremus, qui sint ad nomen posteritatis sempiternum … Curandum est … ut sepulchrum sibi ex publico aere aedificetur que magnificum, in quo scribatur breviarium gestorum eius, prout solitum est fieri his qui pro patria occubuissent. Superimponenda esset sepulchro aurea statua more priscorum, cuius in basi esset inscriptum. Parenti patriae. Sed quia hic mos venit in desuetudinem, satis erit constitui sepulchrum ornarique ad modum maiorum nostrum, cum inscriptione honorifica quæ sit ad honorem ipsius et ad imitationem posterorum" (Bracciolini, 'In Funere', ed. 1964, 260); English translation by Laura Waelbroeck, to whom I am grateful for her assistance. That Poggio's recommendations here are suggestive of the Baldassare Cossa Monument is perhaps no accident. Both Zabarella and Bracciolini were appointed to their positions by Cossa; and both the patron of the Cossa tomb, Cosimo de' Medici, and its principal sculptor, Donatello, were close friends of Bracciolini.

15 On Poggio and Donatello, see Bracciolini's letter of 23 September 1430 in Bracciolini, *Lettere*, ed. 1984, I, 195–6, English translation in *Two Renaissance* 1974, 167; on the errant delivery of ancient sculptures, meant for Poggio, to Cosimo de' Medici instead, see the letter dated 15 May 1438 by Poggio Bracciolini, ibid., II, 295–7.

16 On Bracciolini and antiquities see A. Traversari, *Latinae epistolae*, ed. 1759, LII–LII; Walser 1914, 147 ff.; Krautheimer 1956, 302–5; Christian 2010.

17 Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Le vite*, ed. 1970–7, 548: "amicissimo".

18 Bracciolini, *Lettere*, ed. 1984, II, 181–8; English translation in Shepherd 1837, 226–35; this is a fundamental document of Medicean Florence.

19 Oddly, this extremely important text has largely been overlooked by art historians; for a rare reference to it, see Alison Luchs, 1995, 18–9.

20 Bracciolini, *De vera nobilitate*, ed. 2002, 7: "Hic hospes noster – inquit – cum legerit fuisse moris antiqui apud priscos illos excellentis viros, ut domos, villas, hortos, porticus, gymnasia variis signis tabulisque maiorum quoque statuis exornarent ad gloriam et nobilitandum genus … tamen tabulis, signorum varietate atque elegantia, opibus, rerum copia, magistratibus insuper atque imperiis parari nobilitatem videmus … Nam constat etiam priscos doctissimos viros in signis et tabulis comparandis plurimum operis studiique posuisse. Cicero ipse, Varro, Aristoteles ceterique cum Greci tum Latini insignes omni doctrinarum genere viri, qui virtutum specie se ad studia contulerunt, eiusmodi rebus suas quoque bibliothecas et hortos excolebant ad loca ipsa in quibus constituta erant nobilitanda idque laudis et industrie esse volebant. Multum enim ad imitandum excitandumque animum conferre extimaverunt imagines eorum qui glorie et sapientie studiis floruissent ante oculos positas"; English translation in *Humanism* 1978, 122–3. Clearly this passage is influenced by the discussion of the use of portraits in Rome that appears in book 35 of Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis historia*. It is noteworthy that, of the few known copies of Pliny in Florence in the early 15th century, one belonged to Cosimo de' Medici and two belonged to Niccolò Niccoli. Of Niccolò's copies, one had previously belonged to Coluccio Salutati and Leonardo Bruni; see M. Davies 1995.

21 Bracciolini, *De vera nobilitate*, ed. 2002, 33–4: "Hanc maiorum quoque nostrorum preclara facinora et virtutes videntur prebere posteris et paterne glorie decus nobis tribuere tanquam lumen, quo lariores notioresque efficiamur. Quis negarit nos progenitorum virtutibus reddi illustriores ac nobiliores? Nam si que agimus celebrari volumus memoria posteritatis, necesse est ut ea commemoratio commendatioque tanquam in parentum imagines refulgeat in filios"; English translation in *Humanism* 1978, 143.

22 L.B. Alberti, *I libri della famiglia*, ed. Romano–Tenenti 1969, 27: "Egli è debito a tutti studiare che nella casa crescano ingegni con virtù e fama. Perché piace egli onorare chi già sia caduto di vita con sepulcri, ornarli con quelle superchie e a' passati inutile pompe de' mortorii, se non perché la piatà e officio de' vivi sia lodata e approvata? Se così credete, non serà egli necessario molto più ornare e onorare e' vivi, contribuirvi, concorrere ove bisogna pignerli inanti e statuirli in luogo prestante e famoso a tutta a famiglia"; English translation 1971, 50. I have modified the English translation; thanks to Davide Gasparotto for his advice here. It should be noted that Alberti's use here of *pignerlo et statuirlo* is a play of words on terms that also mean "to paint" and "to sculpt."

23 On the desire for military glory among the princes and condottieri of Italy, see Piero Alberti's remarks about King Ladislaus in Book IV of *Della Famiglia.* In my characterization of the Florentine ideal of achievement, I refer to Alberti's statement "nelle pubbliche piazze surge la gloria" ('Glory is to be gained in the forum' ibid. 194; English translation 1971, 186); and on Alamanno Rinuccini's proud reference to his ancestors as "contenders for honors of the city" in his essay "On Liberty" (quoted in *Humanism and Liberty* 1978, 212).

24 Cicero's *De officiis*, and Aristotle's *Politics* and *Ethics*, which Leonardo Bruni had translated into Latin, were especially influential on the moral thought of Florentine humanists and patricians.

25 L.B. Alberti, *I libri della famiglia*, ed. Romano–Tenenti 1969, 141, 196: «Alcuni pongono la felicità … in essere onorati, stimati dagli altri uomini … seguiamo con virtù, con ogni studio, con ogni arte a meritare lodo e fama»; English translation 1971, 141, 187.

26 As Burckhardt (1860, English translation 1958, 31) remarked: "Florence was then the scene of the richest development of human individuality, while for the despots no other individuality could be suffered to live and thrive but their own and that of their nearest dependents".

27 F. Caglioti, in *The Renaissance Portrait* 2011, 166–8, no. 47.

28 As we have already seen, Poggio Bracciolini and Niccolò Niccoli were close friends of Cosimo de' Medici, and Poggio was also friends with Lorenzo and Piero de' Medici, and he was a cousin of Niccolò da Uzzano. Furthermore, he wrote a memorial tribute to Leonardo Bruni and followed Carlo Marsuppini as the chancellor of Florence. Alberti, too, was friends with Piero de' Medici. Of the other Florentine patricians whose portrait busts appear in the show, Francesco Sassetti was a top manager in the Medici bank, and Dietisalvi Neroni was a long time ally of the family, before becoming an important rival. And, of course, Giovanni Chellini was Donatello's doctor. Another example, not in the show: Matteo Palmieri, who commissioned a portrait bust of himself from Antonio Rossellino in 1468, was a close ally of the Medici and gave Marsuppini's funeral oration. Furthermore, both of the chancellors whose tombs with portrait statues were erected in Santa Croce in the late 1440s or early 1450s, Leonardo Bruni and Marsuppini, were also allies of the Medici; this is especially true of Marsuppini, who had served as a tutor to Medici children.