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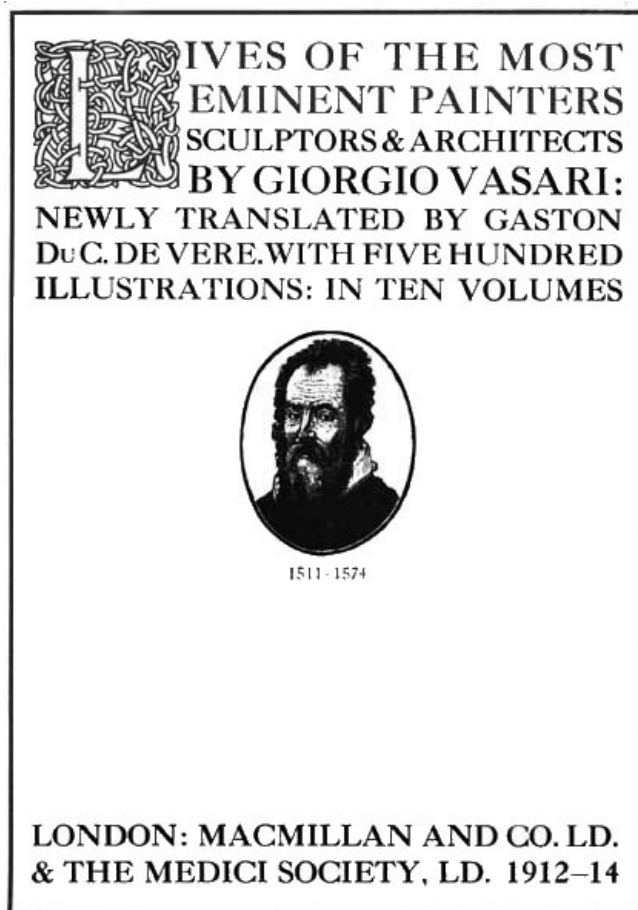
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**LIVES OF THE MOST EMINENT PAINTERS  
SCULPTORS & ARCHITECTS**

**1912**

**BY GIORGIO VASARI:**

**NEWLY TRANSLATED BY GASTON DU C. DE VERE. WITH FIVE HUNDRED**

## ILLUSTRATIONS: IN TEN VOLUMES

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MICHELOZZO  
MICHELOZZI

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## BERNA



**MADONNA AND CHILD (After the painting by  
Berna Sanese [da Siena]. Asciano: Church of S.  
Francesco)  
Burton**

[View larger image](#)

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## LIFE OF BERNA

### PAINTER OF SIENA

If those who labour to become excellent in some art did not very often have the thread of life cut by death in their best years, I have no doubt that many intellects would arrive at that rank which is most desired both by them and by the world. But the short life of men and the bitterness of various accidents, which threaten them from all sides, snatch them from us sometimes prematurely, as could be seen in poor young Berna of Siena, who, although he died young, nevertheless left so many works that he appears to have lived very long; and those that he left were made in such a way, that it may well be believed from this showing that he would have become excellent and rare if he had not died so soon. In two chapels of S. Agostino in Siena there are seen some little pictures with figures in fresco, by his hand; and in the church, on a wall now pulled down in order to make chapels there, was a scene of a youth led to execution, as well made as it could possibly be imagined, there being seen expressed in it the pallor and fear of death, in so lifelike a manner that he deserved therefore the highest praise. Beside the said youth was a friar painted in a very fine attitude, and, in short, everything in that work is so vividly

wrought that it appears, indeed, that in this work Berna imagined this event as most horrible, as it must be, and full of most bitter and cruel terror, seeing that he portrayed it so well with the brush that the same scene appearing in reality would not stir greater emotion.

In the city of Cortona, also, besides many other works scattered in many places in that city, he painted the greater part of the vaulting and of the walls of the Church of S. Margherita, where today is the seat of the Frati Zoccolanti. From Cortona he went to Arezzo in the year 1369, exactly when the Tarlati, formerly Lords of Pietramala, had caused Moccio, a sculptor and architect of Siena, to finish the Convent and the body of the Church of S. Agostino in that city, in the lesser aisles of which many citizens had caused chapels and tombs to be made for their families; and there, in the Chapel of S. Jacopo, Berna painted in fresco some little scenes of the life of that Saint, and especially vivid is the story of Marino the swindler, who, having by reason of greed of gold given his soul to the Devil and made thereunto a written contract in his own hand, is making supplication to the Saint to free him from this promise, while a Devil, showing him the contract, is pressing him with the greatest insistence in the world. In all these figures Berna expressed the emotions of the mind with much vivacity, and particularly in the face of Marino, which shows on one side fear, and on the other the faith and trust that make him hope for his liberation from S. James, although opposite there is seen the Devil, hideous to a marvel, who is warmly speaking and declaring his rights to the Saint, who, after having instilled into Marino extreme penitence for his sin and for the promise made, is liberating him and leading him back to God. This same story, says Lorenzo Ghiberti, by the hand of the same man, was in a chapel of the Capponi, dedicated to S. Nicholas, in S. Spirito at Florence, before that church was burnt down. After this work, then, Berna painted a great Crucifix in a chapel of the Vescovado of Arezzo for Messer Guccio di Vanni Tarlati da Pietramala, and at the foot of the Cross a Madonna, S. John the Evangelist, and S. Francis, in most sorrowful attitudes, together with a S. Michelagnolo, with so much diligence that it merits no small praise, and above all by reason of having been so well preserved that it appears made only yesterday. Below, moreover, is the portrait of the said Guccio, kneeling in armour at the foot of the Cross. In the Pieve of the same city, in the Chapel of the Paganelli, he painted many stories of Our Lady, and portrayed there after the life the Blessed Rinieri, a holy man and prophet of that house, who is giving alms to many beggars who are round him. In S. Bartolommeo, also, he painted some stories of the Old Testament and the story of the Magi; and in the Church of Spirito Santo he painted some stories of S. John the Evangelist, and in certain figures the portrait of himself and of many of his friends, nobles of that city.

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**BERNA: THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN**  
(*San Gimignano. Fresco*) [View larger image](#)

Returning after these works to his own country, he made on wood many pictures both small and great; but he made no long stay there, because, being summoned to Florence, he painted in S. Spirito the Chapel of S. Niccolò, which we have mentioned above, and which was much extolled, and other works that were consumed in the miserable burning of that church. In the Pieve of San Gimignano in Valdelsa he wrought in fresco some stories of the New Testament, which he had

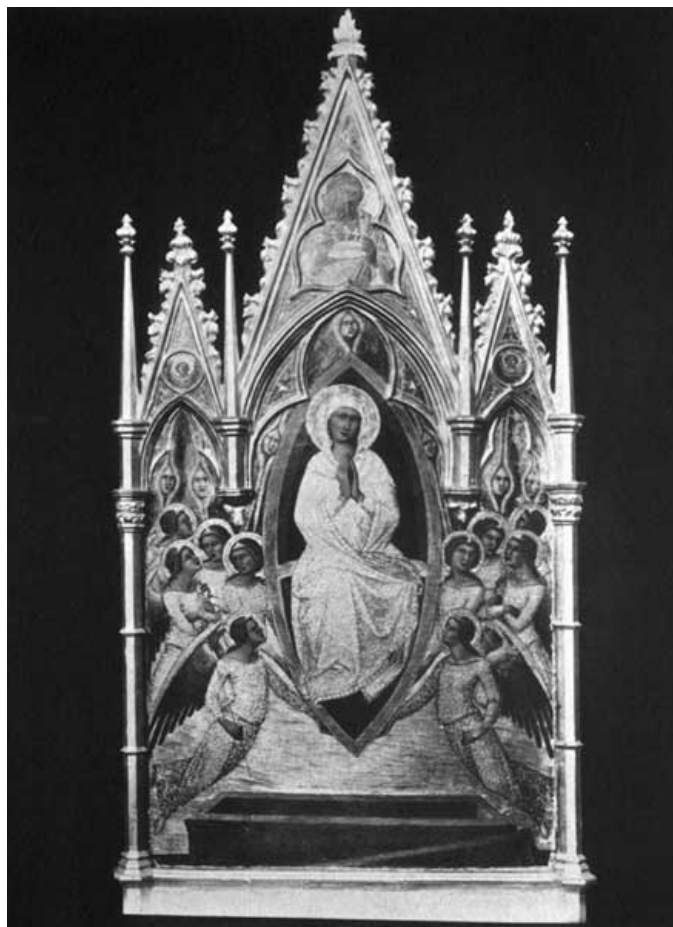
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already very nearly brought to completion, when, falling by a strange accident from his scaffolding to the ground, he bruised himself internally in such a manner, and injured himself so grievously, that in the space of two days, with greater loss to art than to himself, who went to a better place, he passed from this life. And the people of San Gimignano, honouring him much in the way of obsequies, gave to his body honourable burial in the aforesaid Pieve, holding him after death in the same repute wherein they had held him in life, and not ceasing for many months to attach round his tomb epitaphs both Latin and Italian, by reason of the men of that country being naturally given to fine letters. So, then, they conferred a suitable reward on the honest labours of Berna, celebrating with their pens him who had honoured them with his pictures.

Giovanni da Asciano, who was a pupil of Berna, brought to completion the remainder of that work; and he painted some pictures in the Hospital of the Scala at Siena, and also some others in the old houses of the Medici at Florence, which gave him considerable fame. The works of Berna of Siena date about 1381. And because, besides what has been said, Berna was passing dexterous in draughtsmanship and was the first who began to portray animals well, as bears witness a drawing by his hand that is in our book, all full of wild beasts of diverse sorts, he deserves to be consummately praised and to have his name held in honour by craftsmen. His disciple, too, was Luca di Tomè of Siena, who painted many works in Siena and throughout all Tuscany, and in particular the panel and the chapel that are in S. Domenico at Arezzo, belonging to the family of the Dragomanni; which chapel, German in architecture, was very well adorned, by means of the said panel and of the work that is therein in fresco, by the hand and by the judgment and genius of Luca of Siena.

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**THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN**  
*(After the painting by Luca di Tomé. Newhaven,  
U.S.A.: Jarvis Collection)*

[View larger image](#)

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**DUCCIO**

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**THE MADONNA ENTHRONED**  
*(After the panel by Duccio. Siena: Opera del Duomo)*

*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

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## **LIFE OF DUCCIO**

### **Painter of Siena**

Without doubt those who are inventors of anything notable receive the greatest attention from the pens of the writers of history, and this comes to pass because the first inventions are more observed and held in greater marvel, by reason of the delight that the novelty of the thing brings with it, than all the improvements made afterwards by any man whatsoever when works are brought to the height of perfection, for the reason that if a beginning were never given to anything, there would be no advance and improvement in the middle stages, and the end would not become excellent and of a marvellous beauty. Duccio, then, painter of Siena and much esteemed, deserved to carry off the palm from those who came many years after him, since in the pavement of the Duomo of Siena he made a beginning in marble for the inlaid work of the figures in chiaroscuro, wherein to-day modern craftsmen have made the marvels that are seen in them. He applied himself to the imitation of the old manner, and with very sane judgment gave dignified forms to his figures, which he fashioned very excellently in spite of the difficulties of such an art. With his own hand, imitating the pictures in chiaroscuro, he arranged and designed the beginnings of the said pavement, and he made in the Duomo a panel that was then placed on the high-altar, and afterwards removed thence in order to place there the Tabernacle of the Body of Christ, which is seen there at the present day. In this panel, according to the description of Lorenzo di Bartolo Ghiberti, there was a Coronation of Our Lady, wrought, as it were, in the Greek manner, but blended considerably with the modern. And as it was painted both on the back part and on the front, the said high-altar being isolated right round, on the said back part there had been made by Duccio with much diligence all the principal stories of the New Testament, with very beautiful little figures. I have sought to learn where this panel is to be found to-day, but, for all the diligence that I have thereunto used, I have never been able to discover it, or to learn what Francesco di Giorgio, the sculptor, did with it when he remade the said tabernacle in bronze, as well as the marble ornaments that are therein.

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He made, likewise, many panels on grounds of gold throughout Siena, and one in Florence, in S. Trinita, wherein there is an Annunciation. He painted, next, very many works for diverse churches in Pisa, in Lucca, and in Pistoia, which were all consummately praised and acquired for him very great fame and profit. Finally, it is not known where this Duccio died, nor what relatives, disciples, or wealth he left; it is enough that, for having left art the heir to his invention of making pictures of marble in chiaroscuro, he deserves infinite commendation and praise for such a benefit to art, and that he can be assuredly numbered among the benefactors who confer advancement and adornment on our profession, considering that those who go on investigating the difficulties of rare inventions leave their memory behind them, besides all their marvellous works.



**DUCCIO: THE MAJESTAS (DETAIL)**  
**(Siena: Opera del Duomo. Panel)**

[View larger image](#)

They say in Siena that Duccio, in the year 1348, gave the design for the chapel that is in the square, against the wall of the Palazzo Principale; and it is read that there lived in his times a sculptor and architect of passing good talent from the same country, named Moccio, who made many works throughout all Tuscany, and particularly one in the Church of S. Domenico in Arezzo, namely, a tomb of marble for one of the Cerchi, which tomb acts as support and ornament for the organ of the said church; and although it may appear to some that it is not a very excellent work, yet, if it is considered that he made it while still a youth, in the year 1356, it cannot but seem passing good. This man served in the building of S. Maria del Fiore as under-architect and as sculptor, making certain works in marble for that fabric; and in Arezzo he rebuilt the Church of S. Agostino, which was small, in the manner that it is to-day, and the expense was borne by the heirs of Piero Saccone de' Tarlati, according as he had ordained before he died in Bibbiena, a place in the Casentino; and because Moccio erected this church without any vaulting, and laid the weight of the roof on the arches of the columns, he exposed himself to a great peril and was truly too bold. The same man made the Church and Convent of S. Antonio, which, before the siege of Florence, was at the Porta a Faenza, and to-day is wholly ruined; and he wrought in sculpture the door of S. Agostino in Ancona, with many figures and ornaments similar to those which are on the door of S. Francesco in the same city. In this Church of S. Agostino he also made the tomb of Fra Zenone Vigilanti, Bishop, and General of the Order of the said S. Augustine; and finally, he built the Loggia de' Mercatanti of that city, which has since received, now for one reason and now for another, many improvements in the modern manner, with ornaments of various sorts. All these works, although they are in these days much less than passable, were then much extolled, according to the standard of knowledge of these men. But returning to our Duccio, his works date about the year of our salvation 1350.





**DUCCIO: THE THREE MARIES AT THE TOMB**  
*(Siena: Duomo. Panel)*

[View larger image](#)



**TRIPTYCH**

*(After the panel by Duccio. London: N.G. 566)*  
**Mansell.**

[View larger image](#)

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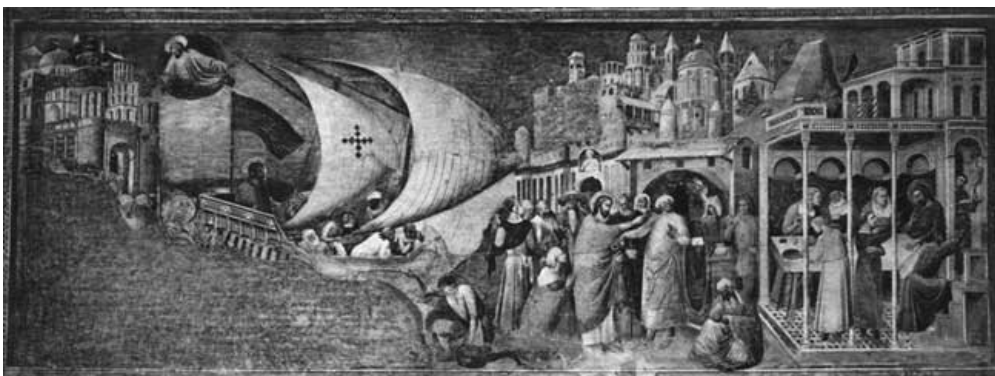
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# LIFE OF ANTONIO VINIZIANO

## PAINTER

Many who would fain stay in the country where they are born, being torn by the tooth of envy and oppressed by the tyranny of their fellow-citizens, take themselves off, and choosing for country those places where they find that their talent is recognized and rewarded, they make their works therein; and striving to become very excellent in order to put to shame, in some sort, those by whom they have been outraged, they become very often great men, whereas, by staying quietly in their country, they would peradventure have had little more than a mediocre success in their arts. Antonio Viniziano, who betook himself to Florence in the wake of Agnolo Gaddi in order to learn painting, grasped the good method of working so well that he was not only esteemed and loved by the Florentines, but also greatly cherished by reason of this talent and of his other good qualities. Whereupon, being seized by a wish to show himself in his own city in order to enjoy some fruit of the fatigues endured by him, he returned to Venice, where, having made himself known by many works wrought in fresco and in distemper, he was commissioned by the Signoria to paint one of the walls of the Council Chamber. This he executed so excellently and with so great majesty that, according to his merit, he would have obtained an honourable reward; but the emulation, or rather, the envy of the craftsmen, and the favour that some gentlemen showed to other painters from abroad, caused the affair to fall out otherwise. Wherefore the poor Antonio, finding himself thus crushed and overborne, took the wiser part and returned to Florence, with the intention never again to consent to return to Venice, and determined once and for all that his country should be Florence. Establishing himself, then, in that city, he painted in the cloister of S. Spirito, in a little arch, a Christ who is calling Peter and Andrew from their nets, and Zebedee and his sons; and below the three little arches of Stefano he painted the story of the miracle of Christ with the loaves and fishes, wherein he showed infinite diligence and lovingness, as it is clearly seen in the figure of Christ Himself, who, in the air of His countenance and in His aspect, is showing the compassion that He has for the multitude, and the ardour of the love wherewith He is causing the bread to be dispensed. Great affection, likewise, is seen in the very beautiful action of an Apostle, who is exerting himself greatly in dispensing the bread from a basket. From this work all who belong to art learn ever to paint their figures in a manner that they may appear to be speaking, for otherwise they are not prized. Antonio demonstrated the same thing on the outer frontal in a little scene of the Manna, wrought with so great diligence, and finished with so fine grace, that it can be truly called excellent. Afterwards, in S. Stefano al Ponte Vecchio, on the predella of the high-altar, he made some stories of S. Stephen, with so great lovingness that it is not possible to see either more gracious or more beautiful figures, even if they were done in miniature. In S. Antonio al Ponte alla Carraja, moreover, he painted the arch over the door, which, with the whole church, was thrown to the ground in our own day by Monsignor Ricasoli, Bishop of Pistoia, because it took away the view from his houses; although, even if he had not done this, we should to-day, in any case, be deprived of that work, the late flood of 1557, as it has been said before, having carried away on that side two arches and the abutment of the bridge on which was built the said little Church of S. Antonio.

[Pg 16]



**THE RETURN OF S. RANIERI**

**(After the fresco by Antonio Viniziano. Pisa: Campo Santo)**

*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

Antonio, being summoned after these works to Pisa by the Warden of Works of the Campo Santo, continued therein the painting of the stories of the Blessed Ranieri, a holy man of that city, formerly begun by Simone Sanese, following his arrangement. In the first part of the work painted by Antonio there is seen, in company with the said Ranieri when he is embarking in order to return to Pisa, a good number of figures wrought with diligence, among which is the portrait of Count Gaddo, who died ten years before, and that of Neri, his uncle, once Lord of Pisa. Among the said figures, also, that of a maniac is very notable, for, with the features of madness, with the

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person writhing in distorted gestures, the eyes blazing, and the mouth gnashing and showing the teeth, it resembles a real maniac so greatly that it is not possible to imagine either a more lifelike picture or one more true to nature. In the next part, which is beside that named above, three figures (who are marvelling to see the Blessed Ranieri showing the Devil, in the form of a cat on a barrel, to a fat host, who has the air of a gay companion, and who, all fearful, is commending himself to the Saint) can be said to be truly very beautiful, being very well executed in the attitudes, the manner of the draperies, the variety of the heads, and all the other parts. Not far away are the host's womenfolk, and they, too, could not be wrought with more grace, Antonio having made them with certain tucked-up garments and with certain ways so peculiar to women who serve in hostleries, that nothing better can be imagined. Nor could that scene likewise be more pleasing than it is, wherein the Canons of the Duomo of Pisa, in very beautiful vestments of those times, no little different from those that are used to-day and very graceful, are receiving S. Ranieri at table, all the figures being made with much consideration. Next, in the painting of the death of the said Saint, he expressed very well not only the effect of weeping, but also the movement of certain angels who are bearing his soul to Heaven, surrounded by a light most resplendent and made with beautiful invention. And truly one cannot but marvel as one sees, in the bearing of the body of that Saint by the clergy to the Duomo, certain priests who are singing, for in their gestures, in the actions of their persons, and in all their movements, as they chant diverse parts, they bear a marvellous resemblance to a choir of singers; and in that scene, so it is said, is the portrait of the Bavarian.<sup>[1]</sup> In like manner, the miracles that Ranieri wrought as he was borne to his tomb, and those that he wrought in another place when already laid to rest therein in the Duomo, were painted with very great diligence by Antonio, who made there blind men receiving their sight, paralytics regaining the use of their members, men possessed by the Devil being delivered, and other miracles, all represented very vividly. But among all the other figures, that of a dropsical man deserves to be considered with marvel, for the reason that, with the face withered, with the lips shrivelled, and with the body swollen, he is such that a living man could not show more than does this picture the very great thirst of the dropsical and the other effects of that malady. A wonderful thing, too, in those times, was a ship that he made in this work, which, being in travail in a tempest, was saved by that Saint; for he made therein with great vivacity all the actions of the mariners, and everything which is wont to befall in such accidents and travailings. Some are casting into the insatiable sea, without a thought, the precious merchandize won by so much sweat and labour, others are running to see to their vessel, which is breaking up, and others, finally, to other mariners' duties, whereof it would take too long to relate the whole; it is enough to say that all are made with so great vividness and beautiful method that it is a marvel. In the same place, below the lives of the Holy Fathers painted by Pietro Laurati of Siena, Antonio made the body of the Blessed Oliverio (together with the Abbot Panuzio, and many events of their lives), in a sarcophagus painted to look like marble; which figure is very well painted. In short, all these works that Antonio made in the Campo Santo are such that they have been universally held, and with great reason, the best of all those that have been wrought by many excellent masters at various times in that place, for the reason that, besides the particulars mentioned, the fact that he painted everything in fresco, never retouching any part on the dry, brought it about that up to our day they have remained so vivid in the colouring that they can teach the followers of that art and make them understand how greatly the retouching of works in fresco with other colours, after they are dry, causes injury to their pictures and labours, as it has been said in the treatise on Theory; for it is a very certain fact that they are aged, and not allowed to be purified by time, by being covered with colours that have a different body, being tempered with gums, with tragacanth, with eggs, with size, or some other similar substance, which tarnishes what is below, and does not allow the course of time and the air to purify that which has been truly wrought in fresco on the soft plaster, as they would have done if other colours had not been superimposed on the dry.

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Having finished this work, which, being truly worthy of all praise, brought him honourable payment from the Pisans, who loved him greatly ever afterwards, Antonio returned to Florence, where, at Nuovoli without the Porta a Prato, he painted in a shrine, for Giovanni degli Agli, a Dead Christ, the story of the Magi with many figures, and a very beautiful Day of Judgment. Summoned, next, to the Certosa, he painted for the Acciaiuoli, who built that place, the panel of the high-altar, which was consumed by fire in our day by reason of the inadvertence of a sacristan of that monastery, who left the thurible full of fire hanging from the altar, wherefore the panel was burnt, and afterwards the altar was made by those monks, as it stands to-day, entirely of marble. In that same place, also, the same master made in fresco, over a wardrobe that is in the said chapel, a Transfiguration of Christ which is very beautiful. And because he studied the science of herbs in Dioscorides, being much inclined thereunto by nature, and delighting to understand the property and virtue of each one of them, at last he abandoned painting and gave himself to the distilling of simples and to seeking them out with all diligence. Changing thus from painter to physician, for a long time he followed this art. Finally, falling sick from disease of the stomach, or, as others say, from plague caught while acting as physician, he finished the course of his life at the age of seventy-four, in the year 1384, when there was a very great plague in Florence, having been no less expert as physician than he was diligent as painter; wherefore, having made infinite experiments in medicine by means of those who had availed themselves of him in their necessities, he left to the world a very good name for himself in both one and the other of these arts. Antonio drew very graciously with the pen, and so well in chiaroscuro, that some drawings by him which are in our book, wherein he made the little arch of S. Spirito, are the best of those times. A disciple of Antonio was Gherardo Starnina, the Florentine, who imitated him greatly; and Paolo Uccello, who was likewise his disciple, did him no small honour.

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## JACOPO DI CASENTINO

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### LIFE OF JACOPO DI CASENTINO

#### PAINTER

Now that the fame and the renown of the pictures of Giotto and his disciples had been heard for many years, many, desirous of acquiring fame and riches by means of the art of painting, and animated by zealous aspirations and by the inclination of nature, began to advance towards the improvement of the art, with a firm belief that, exercising themselves therein, they would surpass in excellence both Giotto and Taddeo and the other painters. Among these was one Jacopo di Casentino, who, being born, as it is read, of the family of Messer Cristoforo Landino of Pratovecchio, was apprenticed by a friar of the Casentino, then Prior at the Sasso della Vernia, to Taddeo Gaddi, while Taddeo was working in that convent, to the end that he might learn drawing and colouring in the art, wherein in a few years he succeeded so well that, betaking himself to Florence and executing many works in company with Giovanni da Milano in the service of Taddeo their master, he was made to paint the shrine of the Madonna of the Mercato Vecchio, with the panel in distemper, and likewise the one at the corner of the Piazza di S. Niccolò and the Via del Cocomero, which were restored a few years ago, both one and the other, by a worse master than was Jacopo; and for the Dyers he painted that which is in S. Nofri, at the corner of the wall of their garden, opposite to S. Giuseppe. In the meanwhile, the vaults of Orsanmichele over the twelve piers having been brought to a finish, a low rustic roof was placed upon them, in order to pursue as soon as might be possible the building of that palace, which was to be the granary of the Commune; and it was given to Jacopo di Casentino, as a person then much practised, to paint these vaults, with instructions that he should make there, as he did, together with the patriarchs, some prophets and the chiefs of the tribes, which were in all sixteen figures on a ground of ultramarine, to-day half spoilt, not to mention the other ornaments. Next, on the walls below and on the piers, he made many miracles of the Madonna, and other works that are recognized by the manner.

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This work finished, Jacopo returned to the Casentino, and after he had made many works in Pratovecchio, in Poppi, and other places in that valley, he betook himself to Arezzo, which then governed itself with the counsel of sixty of its richest and most honoured citizens, to whose care was committed the whole administration. There, in the principal chapel of the Vescovado, he painted a story of S. Martin, and in the Duomo Vecchio, now in ruins, a number of pictures, among which was the portrait of Pope Innocent VI, in the principal chapel. Next, in the Church of S. Bartolommeo, for the Chapter of the Canons of the Pieve, he painted the wall where the high-altar is, and the Chapel of S. Maria della Neve; and in the old Company of S. Giovanni de' Peducci he made many stories of that Saint, which to-day are covered with whitewash. In the Church of S. Domenico, likewise, he painted the Chapel of S. Cristofano, portraying there from nature the Blessed Masuolo, who is liberating from prison a merchant of the Fei family, who caused that chapel to be built; which Blessed Masuolo, as prophet, predicted many misadventures to the Aretines in his lifetime. In the Church of S. Agostino, in the chapel and on the altar of the Nardi, he painted in fresco some stories of S. Laurence, with marvellous manner and execution.





**TABERNACLE**  
**(After Jacopo di Casentino. *Florence: Arte della Lana*)**  
***Brogi***

[View larger image](#)

And because he exercised himself also in the things of architecture, by order of the sixty aforesaid citizens he reconducted under the walls of Arezzo the water that comes from the foot of the hill of Pori, three hundred braccia distant from the city. This water, in the time of the Romans, had been brought first to the theatre, whereof the remains are still there, and from that theatre, which was on the hill where to-day there is the fortress, to the amphitheatre of the same city, on the plain; but these edifices and conduits were wholly ruined and spoilt by the Goths. Jacopo, then, as it has been said, having brought this water below the walls, made the fountain which was then called the Fonte Guizianelli, and which is now named, by the corruption of the word, the Fonte Viniziana; this work endured from that time, which was the year 1354, up to the year 1527, and no more, for the reason that the plague of that year, the war that came afterwards, the fact that many intercepted the water at their own convenience for the use of their gardens, and still more the fact that Jacopo did not sink it, brought it about that to-day it is not, as it should be, standing.

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The while that the aqueduct was going on being built, Jacopo, not leaving aside his painting, wrought many scenes from the acts of Bishop Guido and Piero Sacconi in the palace that was in the old citadel, now in ruins; for these men, both in peace and in war, had done great and honourable deeds for that city. In the Pieve, likewise, below the organ, he wrought the story of S. Matthew and many other works. And so, making works with his own hand throughout the whole city, he showed to Spinello Aretino the principles of that art which was taught to him by Agnolo, and which Spinello taught afterwards to Bernardo Daddi, who, working in his own city, honoured it with many beautiful works of painting, which, together with his other most noble qualities, brought it about that he was much honoured by his fellow-citizens, who employed him much in magistracies and in other public affairs. The paintings of Bernardo were many and in much esteem, and above all the Chapel of S. Lorenzo and of S. Stefano, belonging to the Pulci and Berardi, in S. Croce, and many other paintings in diverse places in the said church. Finally, having made some pictures over the gates of the city of Florence on the inner side, he died, laden with years, and was given honourable burial in S. Felicita, in the year 1380.

But returning to Jacopo; besides what has been told, in his time, in the year 1350, there was founded the Company and Confraternity of Painters; for the masters who were then living, both those of the old Greek manner and those of the new manner of Cimabue, being a great number, and reflecting that the arts of design had had their new birth in Tuscany—nay rather, in Florence itself—created the said Company under the name and protection of S. Luke the Evangelist, both in order to render praise and thanks to God in its oratory, and also to come together sometimes and to give succour, in spiritual matters as well as in temporal, to anyone who on occasion might have need of it; which custom is also in use among many Guilds in Florence, but was much more so in ancient times. Their first oratory was the principal chapel of the Hospital of S. Maria Nuova,

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which was conceded to them by the family of the Portinari. And those who were the first governors of the said Company, with the title of captains, were six, besides two counsellors and two treasurers, as it may be seen in the old book of the said Company, begun at that time, whereof the first chapter begins thus: "These articles and ordinances were drawn up and made by good and discreet men of the Guild of Painters in Florence, and at the time of Lapo Gucci, painter; Vanni Cinuzzi, painter; Corsino Buonaiuti, painter; Pasquino Cenni, painter; Segna d'Antignano, painter. The counsellors were Bernardo Daddi and Jacopo di Casentino, painters; and the treasurers, Consiglio Gherardi and Domenico Pucci, painters."

The said Company being created in this way, at the request of the captains and of the others Jacopo di Casentino painted the panel of their chapel, making therein a S. Luke who is portraying Our Lady in a picture, and on one side of the predella the men of the Company, and on the other all the women, kneeling. From this beginning, sometimes assembling and sometimes not, this Company has continued up to its arrival at the condition wherein it stands to-day, as it is narrated in its new articles, approved by the most Illustrious Lord Duke Cosimo, most benign protector of these arts of design.

Finally, being heavy with years and much fatigued, Jacopo returned to the Casentino, and died in Pratovecchio at the age of eighty, and was buried by his relatives and friends in S. Agnolo, the Abbey of the Order of Camaldoli, without Pratovecchio. His portrait, by the hand of Spinello, was in the Duomo Vecchio, in a story of the Magi; and of the manner of his drawing there is an example in our book.



**BERNARDO DADDI: THE MADONNA  
AND CHILD ENTHRONED**  
*Florence: Accademia, 127. Panel*

[View larger image](#)

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## **SPINELLO ARETINO**

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## **LIFE OF SPINELLO ARETINO**

## PAINTER

Luca Spinelli having gone to dwell in Arezzo on one of the several occasions when the Ghibellines were driven out of Florence, there was born to him in that city a son, to whom he gave the name of Spinello, so much inclined by nature to be a painter, that almost without a master, while still a boy, he knew what many exercised under the discipline of the best masters do not know; and what is more, having had friendship with Jacopo di Casentino while he worked in Arezzo, and having learnt something from him, before he was twenty years of age he was by a long way a much better master, young as he was, than was Jacopo himself, already an old painter. Spinello, then, began to be reputed a good painter, and Messer Dardano Acciaiuoli, having caused the Church of S. Niccolò to be built near the Sala del Papa, behind S. Maria Novella, in the Via della Scala, and having given burial therein to one his brother, a Bishop, caused him to paint the whole of that church in fresco with stories of S. Nicholas, Bishop of Bari; and he delivered it completely finished in the year 1334, having been at work on it two years without ceasing. In this work Spinello acquitted himself so well, both in the colouring and in the design, that up to our own day the colours had remained very well preserved and the excellence of the figures was clearly visible, when, a few years since, they were in great part spoilt by a fire that burst out unexpectedly in that church, which had been unwisely filled with straw by some foolish men who made use of it as a barn or storehouse for straw. Attracted by the fame of this work, Messer Barone Capelli, citizen of Florence, caused Spinello to paint in fresco, in the principal chapel of S. Maria Maggiore, many stories of the Madonna and some of S. Anthony the Abbot, and near these the consecration of that very ancient church, consecrated by Pope Paschal, second of that name; and all this Spinello wrought so well that it appears made all in one day, and not in many months, as it was. Beside the said Pope is the portrait of Messer Barone himself from the life, in the dress of those times, made very well and with very good judgment. This chapel finished, Spinello painted in fresco, in the Church of the Carmine, the Chapel of S. James and S. John, the Apostles, wherein, among other things, there is wrought with much diligence the scene when the wife of Zebedee, mother of James, is demanding of Jesus Christ that He should cause one of her sons to sit on the right hand of the Father in the Kingdom of Heaven, and the other on the left; and a little beyond are seen Zebedee, James, and John abandoning their nets and following Christ, with liveliness and admirable manner. In another chapel of the same church, which is beside the principal chapel, Spinello made, also in fresco, some stories of the Madonna, and the Apostles appearing to her miraculously before her death, and likewise the moment when she dies and is then borne to Heaven by the Angels. And because the scene was large and the diminutive chapel, which was not longer than ten braccia and not higher than five, would not contain the whole, and above all the Assumption of Our Lady herself, Spinello, with beautiful judgment, caused it to curve round within the length of the picture, on to a part where Christ and the Angels are receiving her. In a chapel in S. Trinita he made in fresco a very beautiful Annunciation; and in the Church of S. Apostolo, on the panel of the high-altar, he made in distemper the Holy Spirit being sent down on the Apostles in tongues of fire. In S. Lucia de' Bardi, likewise, he painted a little panel, and another in S. Croce, larger, for the Chapel of S. Giovanni Battista, which was painted by Giotto.

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After these works, being recalled to Arezzo by the sixty citizens who governed that place, by reason of the great name that he had acquired while working in Florence, he was made by the Commune to paint the story of the Magi in the Church of the Duomo Vecchio, without the city, and, in the Chapel of S. Gismondo, a S. Donatus who is slaying a serpent with his benediction. In like manner, he made diverse figures on many pilasters in that Duomo, and, on a wall, the Magdalene anointing the feet of Christ in the house of Simon; with other pictures, whereof there is no need to make mention, since that church, which was full of tombs, of bones of saints, and of other memorable things, is to-day wholly ruined. I will say, indeed, to the end that there may at least remain this memory of it, that it was erected by the Aretines more than thirteen hundred years since, at the time when first they came into the faith of Jesus Christ, converted by S. Donatus, who was afterwards Bishop of that city; and that it was dedicated to his name, and richly adorned, both within and without, with very ancient spoils. The ground-plan of this edifice, whereof we have discoursed at length in another place, was divided without into sixteen sides, and within into eight, and all were full of the spoils of those temples which before had been dedicated to the idols; and it was, in short, as beautiful as a temple thus made and very ancient can be, when it was destroyed.

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After the many pictures made in the Duomo, Spinello painted in S. Francesco, in the Chapel of the Marsuppini, Pope Honorius confirming and approving the Order of that Saint, and made there from nature the portrait of Innocent IV, from whatsoever source he had it. He painted also in the same church, in the Chapel of S. Michelagnolo, many stories of him, in the place where the bells are rung; and a little below, in the Chapel of Messer Giuliano Baccio, an Annunciation, with other figures, which are much praised; all which works made in this church were wrought in fresco, with very resolute handling, from 1334 up to 1338. Next, in the Pieve of the same city, he painted the Chapel of S. Pietro e S. Paolo, and below it, that of S. Michelagnolo; and, for the Confraternity of S. Maria della Misericordia, he painted in fresco, on the same side of the church, the Chapel of S. Jacopo e S. Filippo; and over the principal door of the Confraternity, which opens on to the square—namely, on the arch—he painted a Pietà, with a S. John, at the request of the Rectors of that Confraternity, which had its origin in the following way. A certain number of good and honourable citizens had begun to go about collecting alms for the poor who were ashamed to beg, and to succour them in all their needs: and in the year of the plague of 1348, by reason of the great name acquired by these good men for the Confraternity in assisting the poor and the

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sick, in burying the dead, and in doing other similar works of charity, so many were the legacies, the donations, and the inheritances that were left to it, that it inherited the third of the riches of Arezzo; and the same came to pass in the year 1383, when there was likewise a great plague. Spinello, then, belonging to this Company, it was often his turn to visit the sick, to bury the dead, and to do other similar pious exercises, such as the best citizens of that city have ever done and still do to-day; and in order to make some memorial of this in his pictures, he painted for that Company, on the façade of the Church of S. Laurentino e S. Pergentino, a Madonna who, having her mantle open in front, has under it the people of Arezzo, among whom are portrayed from life many of the chief men of the Confraternity, with their wallets on their shoulders and with wooden hammers in their hands, like to those that they use for knocking at the doors when they go seeking alms. In like manner, for the Company of the Annunciation he painted the great shrine that is without the church, and part of a portico that is opposite to it, and the panel of that Company, wherein there is likewise an Annunciation in distemper. A work of Spinello's, likewise, is the panel which is now in the Church of the Nuns of S. Giusto, wherein a little Christ, who is in the arms of His mother, is marrying S. Catherine, together with six little scenes, with small figures, of her acts; and it is much praised.



**THE ANNUNCIATION**  
*(After the fresco by Spinello Aretino.*  
*Arezzo: SS. Annunziata)*  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

Being next summoned to the famous Abbey of Camaldoli in the Casentino, in the year 1361, he made for the hermits of that place the panel of the high-altar, which was removed in the year 1539, when, that church having been just rebuilt completely anew, Giorgio Vasari made a new panel, and painted in fresco the whole of the principal chapel of that abbey, and the tramezzo<sup>[2]</sup> of the church, also in fresco, and two other panels. Summoned thence to Florence by Don Jacopo d'Arezzo, Abbot of S. Miniato sul Monte, of the Order of Monte Oliveto, Spinello painted on the vaulting and on the four walls of the sacristy of that monastery, besides the panel in distemper for the altar, many scenes in fresco of the life of S. Benedict, with great mastery and with much vivacity of colouring, learnt by him by means of long practice and of labouring continually with zeal and diligence, even as in truth all must do who wish to acquire any art perfectly.

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After these works, the said Abbot departed from Florence, having been made Governor of the Monastery of S. Bernardo, of the same Order, in his own country, precisely when the building was almost wholly finished on the site conceded by the Aretines to those monks, just where there was the Colosseum; and he caused Spinello to paint in fresco two chapels that are beside the principal chapel, and two others that are one on either side of the door that leads into the choir, in the tramezzo<sup>[3]</sup> of the church. In one of these, which is beside the principal chapel, is an Annunciation in fresco, made with very great diligence, and on a wall beside it is the Madonna



ascending the steps of the Temple, accompanied by Joachim and Anna. In the other chapel is a Christ Crucified, with the Madonna and S. John, who are bewailing Him, and a S. Bernard kneeling, who is adoring Him. He made, also, on that inner wall of the church where there is the altar of Our Lady, the Virgin herself with her Son in her arms, which was held a very beautiful figure; together with many others that he made for that church, over the choir of which he painted Our Lady, S. Mary Magdalene, and S. Bernard, very vividly. In the Pieve of Arezzo, likewise, in the Chapel of S. Bartolommeo, he made many scenes of the life of that Saint; and opposite to it, in the other aisle, in the Chapel of S. Matteo (which is below the organ, and was painted by Jacopo di Casentino, his master), he made in certain medallions on the vaulting—besides many stories of that Saint, which are passing good—the four Evangelists in a bizarre manner, seeing that, making the busts and members human, he gave to S. John the head of an eagle, to Mark the head of a lion, to Luke that of an ox, and to Matthew alone the face of a man, or rather, of an angel.

Without Arezzo, also, in the Church of S. Stefano, erected by the Aretines on many columns of granite and of marble in order to honour and to preserve the memory of many martyrs who were put to death by Julian the Apostate on that spot, he painted many figures and scenes, with infinite diligence, and with such a manner of colouring that they had remained very fresh up to our own day, when, not many years since, they were ruined. But what was marvellous in that place, besides the stories of S. Stephen made with figures larger than life, was to see Joseph, in a story of the Magi, beside himself with joy at the coming of those Kings, on whom he was gazing with most beautiful manner, while they were opening their vessels full of treasures and were offering them to him. A Madonna in that same church, who is handing a rose to the Infant Christ, was and still is held in so great veneration among the Aretines, as being a very beautiful and devout figure, that without regard for any difficulty or expense, when the Church of S. Stefano was thrown to the ground, they cut the wall away round her, and, binding it together ingeniously, they bore her into the city and placed her in a little church, in order to honour her, as they do, with the same devotion that they showed to her before. Nor should this appear anything wonderful, because, it having been something peculiar and natural to Spinello to give to his figures a certain simple grace, which has much of the modest and the saintly, it appears that the figures that he made of saints, and above all of the Virgin, breathe out a certain quality of the saintly and the divine, which moves men to hold them in supreme reverence; as it may be seen, apart from the said figure, in the Madonna that is on the Canto degli Albergotti, and in that which is on an outer wall of the Pieve in the Seteria, and in one of the same sort, likewise, that is on the Canto del Canale.

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**SPINELLO ARETINO: THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN**  
*(Siena: Pinacoteca, 125. Panel)*

[View larger image](#)

By the hand of Spinello, also, on a wall of the Hospital of Spirito Santo, is a scene of the Apostles receiving the Holy Spirit, which is very beautiful; and so, too, are the two scenes below, wherein S. Cosimo and S. Damiano are cutting off a sound leg from a dead Moor, in order to attach it to a sick man, from whom they had cut off one that was mortified; and likewise the very beautiful "Noli me tangere," which is between those two works. In the Company of the Puraccioli, on the Piazza di S. Agostino, in a chapel, he made an Annunciation very well coloured, and in the cloister of that convent he wrought in fresco a Madonna, a S. James, and a S. Anthony; and he portrayed there a soldier in armour on his knees, with these words: HOC OPUS FECIT FIERI CLEMENS PUCCHI DE MONTE CATINO, CUJUS CORPUS JACET HIC, ETC. ANNO DOMINI 1367, DIE 15 MENSIS MAII. Likewise, with regard to the chapel that is in that church, with paintings of S. Anthony and other Saints, it is known by the manner that they are by the hand of Spinello, who, shortly afterwards, working in the Hospital of S. Marco (which is to-day the Monastery of the Nuns of S. Croce, by reason of their monastery, which was without the city, having been thrown to the ground), painted a whole portico with many figures, and portrayed there Pope Gregory IX from nature, to represent S. Gregory the Pope, who is standing beside a Misericordia.

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The Chapel of S. Jacopo e S. Filippo, which is in S. Domenico in the same city, just as one enters the church, was wrought in fresco by Spinello with beautiful and resolute handling, as was also

the half-length of S. Anthony painted on the façade of his church, so beautiful that he appears alive, in the midst of four scenes of his life; which same scenes, with many more also of the life of S. Anthony, likewise by the hand of Spinello, are in the Church of S. Giustino, in the Chapel of S. Antonio. In the Church of S. Lorenzo, on one side, he made some stories of the Madonna, and without the church he painted her seated, showing great grace in this work in fresco. In a little hospital opposite to the Nunnery of S. Spirito, near the gate that leads to Rome, he painted a portico entirely by his own hand, showing, in a Christ lying dead in the lap of the Maries, so great genius and judgment in painting, that he is recognized to have proved himself the peer of Giotto in design, and to have surpassed him by a long way in colouring. In the same place, also, he represented Christ seated, with a theological significance very ingeniously contrived, having placed the Trinity within a sun in such wise that from each of the three figures there are seen issuing the same rays and the same splendour. But to this work, to the great loss, truly, of the lovers of this art, there has befallen the same thing as to many others, for it was thrown to the ground in fortifying the city. Without the Church of the Company of the Trinità there is seen a shrine wrought very well in fresco by Spinello, containing the Trinity, S. Peter, and S. Cosimo and S. Damiano clothed in such garments as physicians used to wear in those times.

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The while that these works were in progress, Don Jacopo d'Arezzo was made General of the Congregation of Monte Oliveto, nineteen years after he had caused many works to be wrought in Florence and in Arezzo, as it has been said above, by our Spinello; and living, according to the custom of these dignitaries, at Monte Oliveto Maggiore di Chiusuri in the district of Siena, as the most honoured seat of that Order, he conceived a desire to have a very beautiful panel made in that place. Sending therefore for Spinello, by whom he had found himself very well served at another time, he caused him to paint in distemper the panel of the principal chapel, wherein Spinello made an infinite number of figures both great and small on a ground of gold, with much judgment; and an ornament being made for it afterwards, carved in half-relief, by Simone Cini, the Florentine, he made for it in certain parts, with gesso mixed with size and rather thick, or truly gelatinous, another ornament which turned out very beautiful, and which was afterwards all overlaid with gold by Gabriello Saracini, who wrote at the foot of the said panel these three names:

SIMONE CINI, THE FLORENTINE, MADE THE CARVING; GABRIELLO SARACINI  
OVERLAID IT WITH GOLD; AND SPINELLO DI LUCA OF AREZZO PAINTED IT  
IN THE YEAR 1385.

This work finished, Spinello returned to Arezzo, having received from that General and from the other monks, besides payment, many kindnesses; but making no long stay there, because Arezzo was harassed by the Guelph and Ghibelline parties, and was sacked in those days, he betook himself with his family and his son Parri, who was studying painting, to Florence, where he had friends and relatives enough. There, without the Porta a S. Piero Gattolini, on the Strada Romana, where one turns to go to Pazzolatico, he painted an Annunciation, as it were to pass the time, in a shrine that to-day is half-ruined, and other pictures in another shrine near the hostelry of Galluzzo.

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He was then summoned to Pisa in order to finish, below the stories of S. Ranieri in the Campo Santo, certain stories that were lacking in a space that had remained not painted; and in order to connect them together with those that had been made by Giotto, Simone Sanese, and Antonio Viniziano, he made in that place, in fresco, six stories of S. Petito and S. Epiro. In the first is S. Epiro, as a youth, being presented by his mother to the Emperor Diocletian, and being made General of the armies that were to march against the Christians; and also Christ appearing to him as he is riding, showing him a white Cross and commanding the Saint not to persecute Him. In another story there is seen the Angel of the Lord giving to that Saint, who is riding, the banner of the Faith with the white Cross on a field of red, which has been ever since the ensign of the Pisans, by reason of S. Epiro having prayed to God that He should give him a standard to bear against His enemies. Beside this story there is seen another, wherein, a fierce battle being contested between the Saint and the pagans, many angels in armour are combating to the end that he may be victorious. Here Spinello wrought many things worthy of consideration for those times, when the art had as yet neither strength nor any good method of expressing vividly with colour the conceptions of the mind; and such, among the many other things that are there, were two soldiers, who, having gripped each other by the beard with one hand, are seeking with their naked swords, which they have in the other hand, to rob each other of life, showing in their faces and in all the movements of their members the desire that each has to come out victorious, and how fearless and fiery of soul they are, and how courageous beyond all belief. And so, too, among those who are combating on horseback, that knight is very well painted who is pinning to the ground with his lance the head of his enemy, whom he has hurled backwards from his horse, all dismayed. Another story shows the same Saint when he is presented to the Emperor Diocletian, who examines him with regard to the Faith, and afterwards causes him to be put to the torture, and to be placed in a furnace, wherein he remains unscathed, while the ministers of torture, who are showing great readiness there on every side, are burnt in his stead. And in short, all the other actions of that Saint are there, up to his beheading, after which his soul is borne to Heaven; and, for the last, we see the bones and relics of S. Petito being borne from Alexandria to Pisa. This whole work, both in colouring and in invention, is the most beautiful, the most finished, and the best executed that Spinello made, a circumstance which can be recognized from this, that it is so well preserved as to make everyone who sees it to-day marvel at its freshness.

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Having finished this work in the Campo Santo, he painted many stories of S. Bartholomew, S.

Andrew, S. James, and S. John, the Apostles, in a chapel in S. Francesco, which is the second from the principal chapel, and perchance he would have remained longer at work in Pisa, since in that city his works were known and rewarded; but seeing the city all in confusion and uproar by reason of Messer Pietro Gambacorti having been slain by the Lanfranchi, citizens of Pisa, he returned once again with all his family, being now old, to Florence, where, in the one year and no more that he stayed there, he made many stories of the lives and deaths of S. Philip and S. James in the Chapel of the Macchiavelli in S. Croce, dedicated to those Saints; and as for the panel for the said chapel, being desirous to return to Arezzo, his native city, or, to speak more exactly, held by him as his native city, he wrought it in Arezzo, and from there sent it finished in the year 1400.

Having returned there, then, at the age of seventy-seven or more, he was received lovingly by his relatives and friends, and was ever afterward cherished and honoured up to the end of his life, which was at the age of ninety-two. And although he was very old when he returned to Arezzo, and, having ample means, could have done without working, yet, as one who was ever used to working, he knew not how to take repose, and undertook to make for the Company of S. Agnolo in that city certain stories of S. Michael, which he sketched in red on the intonaco of the wall, in that rough fashion wherein the old craftsmen used generally to do it; and in one corner, for a pattern, he wrought and coloured completely a single story, which gave satisfaction enough. Then, having agreed on the price with those who had charge thereof, he finished the whole wall of the high-altar, wherein he represented Lucifer fixing his seat in the North; and he made there the Fall of the Angels, who are being transformed into devils and raining down to earth; while in the air is seen a S. Michael, who is doing combat with the ancient serpent of seven heads and ten horns; and below, in the centre, there is a Lucifer, already transformed into a most hideous beast. And Spinello took so much pleasure in making him horrible and deformed, that it is said (so great, sometimes, is the power of imagination) that the said figure painted by him appeared to him in a dream, asking Spinello where he had seen him so hideous, and why he had offered him such an affront with his brushes; and that he, awaking from his sleep, being unable to cry out by reason of his fear, shook with a mighty trembling, insomuch that his wife, awaking, came to his rescue. But he was none the less thereby in peril—his heart being much strained—of dying on the spot by reason of such an accident; and although he lived a little afterwards, he was half mad, with staring eyes, and he slipped into the grave, leaving great sorrow to his friends, and to the world two sons, of whom one was Forzore, the goldsmith, who worked admirably at Florence in niello, and the other was Parri, who, imitating his father, laboured continually at painting, and surpassed him by a long way in design. This sinister misfortune, for all that Spinello was old, was a great grief to the Aretines, who were robbed of the so great talent and excellence that were his. He died at the age of ninety-two, and was given burial at Arezzo in S. Agostino, where there is still seen to-day a tombstone with a coat of arms made according to his fancy, containing a hedgehog. Spinello knew much better how to draw than how to execute a painting, as it may be seen in our book of the drawings of diverse ancient painters, in two Evangelists in chiaroscuro and a S. Louis, drawn by his hand and very beautiful. And the portrait of the same man, which is seen above, was copied by me from one that was in the Duomo Vecchio before it was pulled down. His pictures date from 1380 up to 1400.

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## **GHERARDO STARNINA**

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### **LIFE OF GHERARDO STARNINA**

#### **PAINTER**

Verily he who journeys far from his own country, dwelling in those of other men, gains very often a disposition and character of a fine temper, for, in seeing abroad diverse honourable customs, even though he might be perverse in nature, he learns to be tractable, amiable, and patient, with much greater ease than he would have done by remaining in his own country. And in truth, he who desires to refine men in the life of the world need seek no other fire and no better touchstone than this, seeing that those who are rough by nature are made gentle, and the gentle become more gracious. Gherardo di Jacopo Starnina, painter of Florence, being nobler in blood than in nature, and very harsh and rough in his manners, brought more harm thereby on himself than on his friends; and more harm still would this have brought on him if he had not dwelt a long time in Spain, where he learnt gentleness and courtesy, seeing that in those parts he became in such wise contrary to that first nature of his, that on his returning to Florence an infinite number of those who bore him deadly hatred before his departure, received him on his return with very great lovingness, and ever after loved him very straitly, so thoroughly had he

become gentle and courteous.

Gherardo was born in Florence in the year 1354, and growing up, as one who had an intellect inclined by nature to design, he was placed with Antonio Viniziano in order to learn to draw and to paint; and having in the course of many years not only learnt drawing and the practice of colouring, but also given proof of himself in certain works wrought with beautiful manner, he took his leave of Antonio, and beginning to work by himself he made in S. Croce, in the Chapel of the Castellani (which was given him to paint by Michele di Vanni, an honoured citizen of that family), many stories in fresco of S. Anthony the Abbot, and also some of S. Nicholas the Bishop, with so great diligence and with so beautiful a manner that they caused him to become known to certain Spaniards, who were then staying in Florence on some business of their own, as an excellent painter, and what is more, caused them to take him into Spain to their King, who saw him and received him very willingly, and above all because there was then a dearth of good painters in that land. Nor was it a great labour to persuade him to leave his country, for the reason that, having had rough words with certain people in Florence after the affair of the Ciompi and after Michele di Lando had been made Gonfalonier, he was rather in peril of his life than otherwise. Going, then, to Spain, and executing many works for that King, he became, by reason of the great rewards that he gained for his labours, as rich and highly honoured as any man of his own rank; wherefore, being desirous to make himself seen and known by his friends and relatives in that better state, he returned to his country, and was there much cherished and received lovingly by all the citizens.

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Nor was it long before he was commissioned to paint the Chapel of S. Girolamo in the Carmine, where, making many stories of that Saint, he painted, in the story of Paola and Eustachio and Jerome, certain costumes that the Spaniards wore at that time, with very characteristic invention, and with an abundance of manners and conceptions in the attitudes of the figures. Among other things, painting a scene of S. Jerome learning his first letters, he made a master who has caused a boy to climb on the back of another and is beating him with his rod, in a manner that the poor lad, kicking out with his legs by reason of the great pain, appears to be howling and trying to bite the ear of the one who is holding him; and all this Gherardo expressed gracefully and very charmingly, as one who was going on investigating on every side the things of nature. Likewise, in the scene where S. Jerome, at the point of death, is making his testament, he counterfeited some friars with beautiful and very ready manner; for while some are writing and others earnestly listening and gazing on him, they are all hanging with great affection on the words of their master.

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This work having acquired for Starnina rank and fame among the craftsmen, and his ways of life, with the sweetness of his manners, bringing him very great reputation, the name of Gherardo was famous throughout all Tuscany—nay, throughout all Italy—when, being called to Pisa in order to paint in that city the Chapter-house of S. Niccola, he sent thither in his stead Antonio Vite of Pistoia, in order not to leave Florence. This Antonio, having learnt the manner of Starnina under his teaching, wrought in that chapter-house the Passion of Jesus Christ, and delivered it finished in that fashion wherein it is seen to-day, in the year 1403, to the great satisfaction of the Pisans. Starnina having then finished, as it has been said, the Chapel of the Pugliesi, and the Florentines being greatly pleased with the stories of S. Jerome that he made there, by reason of his having represented vividly many expressions and attitudes that had never been depicted up to that time by the painters who had lived before him, the Commune of Florence—in the year when Gabriel Maria, Lord of Pisa, sold that city to the Florentines at the price of 200,000 crowns, after Giovanni Gambacorti had sustained a siege of thirteen months, and had at last agreed to the sale—caused him to paint in memory of this, on the façade of the Palace of the Guelph party, a picture of S. Dionysius the Bishop, with two angels, and below him the city of Pisa, portrayed from nature; in which work he used so great diligence in everything, and particularly in colouring it in fresco, that in spite of the air, the rains, and its being turned to the north, it has always remained and still remains at the present day a picture worthy of much praise, by reason of its having been preserved as fresh and beautiful as though it had only just been painted. Gherardo, then, having come by reason of this and of his other works into very great repute and fame, both in his own country and abroad, envious death, ever the enemy of noble actions, cut short in the finest period of his labour the infinite expectation of much greater works, for which the world was looking from him; for at the age of forty-nine he came unexpectedly to his end, and was buried with most honourable obsequies in the Church of S. Jacopo Sopra Arno.

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Disciples of Gherardo were Masolino da Panicale, who was first an excellent goldsmith and afterwards a painter, and certain others, of whom, seeing that they were not very able men, there is no need to speak. The portrait of Gherardo is in the aforesaid story of S. Jerome, in one of the figures that are round that Saint when he is dying, in profile, with a cap wound round the head and wearing a buckled mantle. In our book are certain drawings by Gherardo, made with the pen on parchment, which are not otherwise than passing good.

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# LIFE OF LIPPO

## PAINTER OF FLORENCE

Invention has ever been held, and ever will be, the true mother of architecture, of painting, and of poetry—nay, of all the finer arts also, and of all the marvellous works that are made by men, for the reason that it pleases the craftsmen much, and displays their fantasies and the caprices of fanciful brains that seek out variety in all things; and these discoveries ever exalt with marvellous praise all those who, employing themselves in honourable ways, give a form marvellous in beauty, under the covering and shadow of a veil, to the works that they make, now praising others dexterously, and now blaming them without being openly understood. Lippo, then, a painter of Florence, who was as rare and as varied in invention as he was truly unfortunate in his works and in his life—for it lasted but a little time—was born in Florence, about the year of our salvation 1354; and although he applied himself to the art of painting very late, when already grown up, nevertheless, he was so well assisted by nature, which inclined him to this, and by his intelligence, which was very beautiful, that soon he produced therein marvellous fruits. Wherefore, beginning his labours in Florence, he made in S. Benedetto (a very large and beautiful monastery of the Order of Camaldoli, without the Porta a Pinti, and now in ruins) many figures that were held very beautiful, and in particular a chapel painted entirely with his own hand, which showed how soon diligent study can produce great works in one who labours honourably through desire of glory.

Being summoned from Florence to Arezzo, he made in fresco, for the Chapel of the Magi in the Church of S. Antonio, a large scene wherein the Magi are adoring Christ; and in the Vescovado he painted the Chapel of S. Jacopo e S. Cristofano for the family of the Ubertini. All these works were very beautiful, Lippo showing invention in the composition of the scenes and in the colouring, and above all because he was the first who began to sport, so to speak, with the figures, and to awaken the minds of those who came after him; a thing which had not even been suggested, much less put into use, before his time.

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Having afterwards wrought many works in Bologna, and a panel in Pistoia which was passing good, he returned to Florence, where, in the year 1383, he painted the stories of S. John the Evangelist in the Chapel of the Beccuti, in S. Maria Maggiore. On the wall of the church beside this chapel, which is on the left hand of the principal chapel, there follow six stories of the same Saint by the same man's hand, very well composed and ingeniously ordered, wherein, among other things, there is very vividly depicted a S. John who is causing his own garment to be placed by S. Dionysius the Areopagite over some corpses, which are returning to life in the name of Jesus Christ, to the great marvel of some who, being present at this deed, can scarce believe their own eyes. In the figures of the dead, likewise, there is seen very great mastery in some foreshortenings, whereby it is clearly demonstrated that Lippo knew, and in part grappled with, certain difficulties of the art of painting. It was Lippo, likewise, who painted the folding leaves in the Church of S. Giovanni—namely, those of the shrine wherein are the angels and the S. John in relief by the hand of Andrea; and on them he wrought very diligently in distemper stories of S. John the Baptist. And because he also delighted in working in mosaic, in the said S. Giovanni, over the door that leads to the Misericordia, between the windows, he made a beginning, which was held very beautiful and the best work in mosaic which had been made in that place up to that time; and he also restored some works in that church, likewise in mosaic, which were spoilt. Without Florence, too, in S. Giovanni fra l'Arcora without the Porta a Faenza, a church which was destroyed in the siege of the said city, he painted in fresco, beside a Passion of Christ wrought by Buffalmacco, many figures which were held very beautiful by all who saw them. In like manner, in certain little hospitals at the Porta a Faenza, and in S. Antonio within the said gate, near the hospital, he painted certain beggars in fresco, in diverse beautiful manners and attitudes; and within the cloisters, with beautiful and new invention, he painted a vision wherein he represented S. Anthony gazing on the snares of the world, and beside these the will and the desires of men, who are drawn by both the first and the second to the diverse things of this world; and all this he painted with much thought and judgment. Lippo also wrought works in mosaic in many parts of Italy, and in the Palace of the Guelph party in Florence he made a figure with the head glazed; and in Pisa, also, there are many of his works. But none the less it can be said that he was truly unfortunate, not only because the greater part of his labours are now thrown down, having gone to ruin in the havoc of the siege of Florence, but also because he ended the course of his life very unhappily; for Lippo being a litigious person and fonder of discord than of peace, and having one morning used very ugly words towards an adversary at the tribunal of the Mercanzia,<sup>[4]</sup> he was waylaid by this man one evening when he was returning to his house, and stabbed in the breast with a knife so grievously, that a few days afterwards he died miserably. His pictures date about 1410.

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About the same time as Lippo there was in Bologna another painter, Dalmasi, also called Lippo, who was an able man, and who painted, among other works, in the year 1407 (as it may be seen in S. Petronio in Bologna), a Madonna which is held in great veneration; and in fresco, the arch over the door of S. Procolo; and in the Church of S. Francesco, in the tribune of the high-altar, he

made a large Christ between S. Peter and S. Paul, with good grace and manner, and below this work there is seen his own name written in large letters. He drew passing well, as it may be seen in our book; and he taught the art to M. Galante da Bologna, who afterwards drew much better than he, as it may be seen in the said book, in a portrait from the life, a figure in a short coat with puffed sleeves.

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## DON LORENZO MONACO

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### LIFE OF DON LORENZO MONACO

#### OF THE ANGELI IN FLORENCE, PAINTER

For a good and religious person, I believe, there must be great contentment in having ready to his hand some honourable exercise, whether that of letters, or of music, or of painting, or of any other liberal or mechanical arts, such as are not blameworthy, but rather useful and helpful to other men; for the reason that after the divine offices the time passes honourably with the delight that is taken in the sweet labours of these pleasant exercises. And to this it may be added that not only is he esteemed and held in price by others the while that he lives, provided that they be not envious and malign, but that he is also honoured after death by all men, by reason of his works and of the good name that he leaves to those who survive him. And in truth one who spends his time in this manner, lives in quiet contemplation and without being molested by those ambitious desires which are almost always seen, to their shame and loss, in the idle and unoccupied, who are for the most part ignorant. And even if it comes about that our virtuous man is sometimes smitten by the malign, so powerful is the force of virtue that time covers up and buries the malice of the wicked, and the virtuous man, throughout the ages that follow, remains ever famous and illustrious.

Don Lorenzo, then, a painter of Florence, was a monk of the Order of Camaldoli in the Monastery of the Angeli, which monastery was founded in the year 1294 by Fra Guittone d'Arezzo, of the Militant Order of the Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ, or rather, as the monks of that Order were vulgarly called, of the Joyous Friars; and he applied himself in his earliest years to design and to painting with so great zeal, that he was afterwards deservedly numbered among the best of the age in that exercise. The first works of this painter-monk, who held to the manner of Taddeo Gaddi and his disciples, were in his Monastery of the Angeli, where, among many other things, he painted the panel of the high-altar, which is still seen to-day in their church, and which was completely finished, as it may be seen from letters written below on the ornament, in the year 1413, when it was set in place. On a panel, likewise, which was in the Monastery of S. Benedetto, of the same Order of Camaldoli, which was outside the Porta a Pinti and was destroyed in 1529, in the siege of Florence, Don Lorenzo painted a Coronation of Our Lady, even as he had also done in the panel for his own Church of the Angeli; and this panel, painted for S. Benedetto, is to-day in the first cloister of the said Monastery of the Angeli, in the Chapel of the Alberti, on the right hand. About the same time, or perchance before, in S. Trinita at Florence, he painted in fresco the Chapel of the Ardinghelli, with its panel, which was much praised at that time; and there he made from nature the portraits of Dante and of Petrarca. In S. Piero Maggiore he painted the Chapel of the Fioravanti, and the panel in a chapel in S. Piero Scheraggio; and in the said Church of S. Trinita he painted the Chapel of the Bartolini. In S. Jacopo Sopra Arno, also, there is seen a panel by his hand, very well wrought and executed with infinite diligence according to the manner of those times. In the Certosa without Florence, likewise, he painted some pictures with good mastery; and in S. Michele in Pisa, a monastery of his Order, he painted some panels that are passing good. And in Florence, in the Church of the Romiti<sup>[5]</sup> (also belonging to the Order of Camaldoli), which, being in ruins together with the monastery, has to-day left no memory but the name to that quarter on the other side of the Arno, which is called Camaldoli from the name of that holy place, among other works, he painted a Crucifix on panel, with a S. John, which were held very beautiful. Finally, falling sick of a cruel imposthume, which kept him suffering for many months, he died at the age of fifty-five, and was honourably buried by his fellow-monks, as his virtues deserved, in the chapter-house of their monastery.

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And because it often happens, as experience shows, that from one single germ, with time and by means of the study and intelligence of men, there spring up many, in the said Monastery of the Angeli, where in former times the monks ever applied themselves to painting and to design, not only was the said Don Lorenzo excellent among them, but many men excellent in the matters of design also flourished there for a long space of time, both before and after him. Wherefore it

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appears to me by no means right to pass over in silence one Don Jacopo, a Florentine, who lived long before the said Don Lorenzo, for the reason that, even as he was a very good and very worthy monk, so was he a better writer of large letters than any who lived either before or after him, not only in Tuscany, but in all Europe, as it is clearly proved not only by the twenty very large volumes of choral books that he left in his monastery, which are the most beautiful, as regards the writing, as well as the largest that there are perchance in Italy, but also by an infinity of others which are to be found in Rome, in Venice, and in many other places, and above all in S. Michele and in S. Mattia di Murano, a monastery of his Order of Camaldoli; for which works this good father well deserved, very many years after he had passed to a better life, not only that Don Paolo Orlandini, a very learned monk of the same monastery, should celebrate him with many Latin verses, but that his right hand, wherewith he wrote the said books, should be preserved with much veneration in a shrine, as it still is, together with that of another monk called Don Silvestro, who, according to the standard of those times, illuminated the said books no less excellently than Don Jacopo had written them. And I, who have seen them many times, remain in a marvel that they were executed with so much design and with so much diligence in those times, when the arts of design were little less than lost; for the works of these monks date about the year of our salvation 1350, more or less, as it may be seen in each of the said books. It is said, and some old men still remember it, that when Pope Leo X came to Florence he wished to see the said books and examine them carefully, remembering that he had heard them much praised to Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent, his father; and that after he had looked at them with attention and admiration, as they all lay open on the desks of the choir, he said, "If they were according to the Roman Church, and not, as they are, according to the monastic use and ordering of Camaldoli, we would be pleased to take some volumes of them for S. Pietro in Rome, giving just recompense to the monks"; in which church there were formerly, and perhaps there still are, two others of them by the hand of the same monks, both very beautiful. In the same Monastery of the Angeli there are many ancient embroideries, wrought with very beautiful manner and with much design by the ancient fathers of that place, while they were living in perpetual enclosure under the name not of monks but of hermits, without ever issuing from the monastery, in such wise as do the sisters and nuns of our own day; which enclosure lasted until the year 1470.

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**THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN**  
*(After the polyptych by Don Lorenzo Monaco. Florence: Uffizi, 1309)*

**Anderson**

[View larger image](#)

But to return to Don Lorenzo; he taught Francesco Fiorentino, who, after his death, painted the shrine that is on the Canto di S. Maria Novella, at the head of the Via della Scala, on the way to the Sala del Papa; and he taught another disciple, a Pisan, who painted a Madonna, S. Peter, S. John the Baptist, S. Francis, and S. Ranieri, and three scenes with little figures on the predella of the altar, in the Church of S. Francesco at Pisa, in the Chapel of Rutilio di Ser Baccio Maggiolini; and this work, painted in 1315, was held passing good for something wrought in distemper. In my book of drawings I have, by the hand of Don Lorenzo, the Theological Virtues done in chiaroscuro with good design and beautiful and graceful manner, insomuch that they are peradventure better than the drawings of any other master whatsoever of those times. A passing good painter in the time of Don Lorenzo was Antonio Vite of Pistoia, who, besides many other works—as it has been said in the Life of Starnina—painted, in the Palace of the Ceppo at Prato, the life of Francesco di Marco, founder of that holy place.



**DON LORENZO MONACO: THE ANNUNCIATION**  
*(Florence: Accademia, 143. Panel)*  
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**TADDEO BARTOLI**





**TADDEO BARTOLI:  
MADONNA, CHILD, AND  
ANGELS  
(Perugia: Pinacoteca.  
Panel)**

[View larger image](#)

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## LIFE OF TADDEO BARTOLI

### PAINTER OF SIENA

It is the due of those craftsmen who, in order to acquire a name, put themselves to much fatigue in painting, that their works should be placed, not in a dark and dishonourable position, wherefore they may be blamed by those who have no more understanding than this, but in some spot where, through the nobility of the place, through the lights, and through the air, they can be rightly seen and studied by all, as was and still is the public work of the chapel that Taddeo Bartoli, painter of Siena, wrought in the Palazzo della Signoria in Siena.

Taddeo, then, was the son of Bartolo di Maestro Fredi, who was a mediocre painter in his day and painted the whole wall (on the left hand as one enters) of the Pieve of San Gimignano with stories of the Old Testament; in which work, which in truth was not very good, there may still be read in the middle this epitaph:

A.D. 1356, BARTOLUS MAGISTRI FREDI DE SENIS ME PINXIT.

At this time Bartolo must have been young, because in a panel containing the Circumcision of Our Lord, together with some saints, wrought likewise by him in the year 1388 in S. Agostino, in the same territory, on the left hand as one enters the church through the principal door, it is seen that he had a much better manner both in drawing and in colouring, seeing that some heads therein are beautiful enough, although the feet of those figures are in the ancient manner. In short, there are seen many other works by the hand of Bartolo in those parts.

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But to return to Taddeo: the painting of the Chapel of the Palazzo della Signoria in his native city being entrusted to him, as it has been said, as the best master of those times, it was wrought by him with so great diligence, and so greatly honoured with regard to its situation, and paid for by the Signoria in such a manner, that Taddeo largely increased his glory and fame thereby; wherefore not only did he afterwards paint many panels in his own country, to his great honour and infinite profit, but he was invited with great favour and sought for from the Signoria of Siena by Francesco da Carrara, Lord of Padua, to the end that he might go, as he did, to paint certain works in that most noble city; where, particularly in the Arena and in the Santo, he wrought some panels and other works with much diligence, to his own great honour and to the satisfaction of

that Lord and of the whole city. Returning afterwards to Tuscany, he wrought a panel in distemper, which inclines to the manner of Ugolino Sanese, in San Gimignano; and this panel is to-day behind the high-altar of the Pieve, and faces the choir of the priests. Going next to Siena, he did not stay there long before he was invited by one of the Lanfranchi, the Warden of Works of the Duomo, to Pisa; and betaking himself thither, he made in fresco, in the Chapel of the Nunziata, the scene when the Madonna ascends the steps of the Temple, at the head of which the priest is awaiting her in full canonicals—a highly-finished work. In the face of this priest he portrayed the said Warden of Works, and beside him his own self. This work finished, the same Warden of Works made him paint over the chapel in the Campo Santo a Madonna being crowned by Jesus Christ, with many angels in very beautiful attitudes and very well coloured. In like manner, for the Chapel of the Sacristy of S. Francesco in Pisa Taddeo made a Madonna and some saints on a panel painted in distemper, placing thereon his name and the year when it was painted, which was the year 1394. And about this same time he wrought certain panels in distemper at Volterra, and a panel at Monte Oliveto, with a Hell in fresco on a wall, wherein he followed the invention of Dante in so far as relates to the division of the sins and to the form of the punishments, but in the place itself he either could not or would not imitate him, or knew not how. He also sent to Arezzo a panel that is in S. Agostino, wherein he portrayed Pope Gregory XI—namely, the Pope who brought the Court back to Italy after it had been so many decades of years in France.

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#### POLYPTYCH

*(After the panel by Taddeo Bartoli. Perugia: Gallery 9)*

*Anderson*

[View larger image](#)

Returning after these works to Siena, he made no very long stay there, because he was called to work at Perugia in the Church of S. Domenico, where, in the Chapel of S. Caterina, he painted in fresco all the life of that Saint; and in S. Francesco, beside the door of the sacristy, he made some figures which, although to-day little can be discerned of them, are known to be by the hand of Taddeo, who held ever to one unchanging manner. A little time afterwards there befell the death of Biroldo, Lord of Perugia, who was murdered in the year 1398; whereupon Taddeo returned to Siena, where, labouring continually, he applied himself so zealously to the studies of his art, in order to become an able painter, that it can be affirmed, if perchance he did not realize his intention, that this was certainly not by reason of any defect or negligence that he showed in his work, but rather through indisposition caused by an internal obstruction, which afflicted him in a manner that he could not attain to the fulness of his desire. Having taught the art to one his nephew, called Domenico, Taddeo died at the age of fifty-nine; and his pictures date about the year of our salvation 1410.

He left, then, as it has been said, Domenico Bartoli, his nephew and disciple, who, following the art of painting, painted with greater and better mastery, and in the scenes that he wrought he showed much more fertility, varying them in diverse ways, than his uncle had done. In the pilgrim's hall of the great hospital at Siena there are two large scenes, wrought in fresco by Domenico, wherein are seen perspectives and other adornments very ingeniously composed. Domenico is said to have been modest and gentle, and a man of singular amiability and most liberal courtesy; and this is said to have done no less honour to his name than the art of painting itself. His works date about the year of our Lord 1436, and the last were a panel containing an Annunciation in S. Trinita in Florence, and the panel of the high-altar in the Church of the

There lived at the same time and painted in almost the same manner, although he made the colouring more brilliant and the figures lower, one Alvaro di Piero, a Portuguese, who made many panels in Volterra, and one in S. Antonio in Pisa, and others in other places, whereof, seeing that they are of no great excellence, there is no need to make further record. In our book there is a drawing made with great mastery by Taddeo, wherein are Christ and two angels.



**DOMENICO BARTOLI: MADONNA ORANS**  
(*Siena: Refugio. Panel*)

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## LORENZO DI BICCI

### LIFE OF LORENZO DI BICCI

#### PAINTER OF FLORENCE

When men who are excellent in any honourable exercise whatsoever accompany their ability in working with gentle ways and good habits, and particularly with courtesy, serving readily and willingly all who have need of their assistance, they secure without fail, together with much praise and profit for themselves, everything that in a certain sense is desirable in this world; as did Lorenzo di Bicci, painter of Florence, who, being born in Florence in 1400, precisely when Italy was beginning to be harassed by the wars which shortly afterwards brought her to an evil pass, was in very good credit almost from his childhood, for the reason that, having learnt good ways under the discipline of his father and the art of painting from the painter Spinello, he had ever the name not only of an excellent painter, but of a most courteous and honourable and able man. Lorenzo, then, young as he was, having made some works 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 to-day, very well preserved. This work finished, seeing that Lorenzo di Bicci wished to exercise himself in his study of painting in places where work was not so minutely examined, as the doctors still do, who make experiments in their art on the hides of needy countrymen, for some time he accepted all the work that came to his hand, and therefore painted a shrine on the bridge of Scandicci, without the Porta a S. Friano, in the manner wherein it is still seen to-day, and at Cerbaia, on a wall below a portico, he painted many saints very creditably, together with a Madonna. Next, being commissioned by the family of the Martini to paint a chapel in S. Marco in Florence, he wrought in fresco on the walls many stories of the Madonna, and on the panel the Virgin herself in the midst of many saints; and in the same church, over the Chapel of S. Giovanni Evangelista, belonging to the family of the Landi, he painted in fresco an Angel Raphael with Tobias. And afterwards, in the year 1418, for Ricciardo di Messer Niccolò Spinelli, on the façade of the Convent of S. Croce facing the square, he painted a large scene in fresco of S. Thomas looking for the wound in the side of Jesus Christ, and beside him and round him all the other Apostles, who, kneeling reverently, are watching this event. And beside the said scene he made, likewise in fresco, a S. Christopher twelve braccia and a half high, which is something rare, because up to then, excepting the S. Christopher of Buffalmacco, there had not been seen a greater figure, nor, for something so large, any image more creditable or better proportioned in all its parts than that one, although it is not in a good manner; not to mention that these pictures, both the one and the other, were wrought with so much mastery, that, although they have been exposed to the air for many years and buffeted by the rains and tempests, being turned to the North, yet they have never lost their vividness of colouring, nor have they been injured in any part. Within the door, moreover, which is between these figures, called the Martello door, the same Lorenzo, at the request of the said Ricciardo and of the Prior of the convent, made a Crucifixion with many figures, and, on the walls around, the confirmation of the Rule of S. Francis by Pope Honorius, and beside it the martyrdom of certain friars of that Order, who went to preach the Faith among the Saracens. On the arches and on the vaulting he made certain Kings of France, friars and devout followers of S. Francis, and he portrayed them from nature; and likewise many learned men of that Order, and men distinguished for dignity of rank, such as Bishops, Cardinals, and Popes, among whom are portraits from nature, in two medallions on the vaulting, of Pope Nicholas IV and Pope Alexander V. In all these figures, although Lorenzo made their garments grey, he varied them, nevertheless, by reason of the good practice that he had in working, in a manner that they are all different one from the other; some incline to reddish, others to bluish, while some are dark and others lighter, and in short, all are varied and worthy of consideration; and what is more, it is said that he wrought this work with so great facility and readiness, that being called once by the Prior, who was bearing his expenses, to his dinner, at the very moment when he had made the intonaco for a figure and had begun it, he answered: "Pour out the soup. Let me finish this figure, and I'm with you." Wherefore it is with good reason that men say that Lorenzo had so great rapidity of hand, so great practice in colouring, and so great resolution, that no other man ever had more.

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By his hand are the shrine in fresco which is on the corner of the Convent of the Nuns of Foligno, and the Madonna and some saints that are over the door of the church of that convent, among whom is a S. Francis who is espousing Poverty. In the Church of the Order of Camaldoli in Florence, also, he painted for the Company of the Martyrs some scenes of the martyrdom of some saints, and two chapels in the church, one on either side of the principal chapel. And because these pictures gave universal pleasure to the whole city, after he had finished them he was commissioned by the family of the Salvestrini—which to-day is almost extinct, there being to my knowledge none left save a friar of the Angeli in Florence, called Fra Nemesio, a good and worthy churchman—to paint a wall of the Church of the Carmine, whereon he made the scene when the martyrs, being condemned to death, are stripped naked and made to walk barefoot over spikes strewn by ministers of the tyrants, while they were going to be placed on the cross; and higher up they are seen placed thereon, in various extravagant attitudes. In this work, which was the largest that had ever been made up to that time, everything is seen to have been done, according to the knowledge of those times, with much mastery and design, for it is all full of those various emotions that nature arouses in those who are made to die a violent death; wherefore I do not marvel that many able men have contrived to avail themselves of certain things that are seen in this picture. After these he made many other figures in the same church, and particularly in two chapels in the tramezzo.<sup>[6]</sup> And about the same time he painted the shrine of the Canto alla Cuculia, and that which is on the house-front in the Via de' Martelli; and, over the Martello door in S. Spirito, a S. Augustine in fresco presenting the Rule to his friars. In S. Trinita, in the Chapel of Neri Compagni, he painted in fresco the life of S. Giovanni Gualberto; and, in the principal chapel of S. Lucia in the Via de' Bardi, some scenes in fresco of the life of that Saint, for Niccolò da Uzzano, who was portrayed by him there from the life, together with some other citizens.

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This Niccolò, with the direction and model of Lorenzo, built a palace for himself near the said church, and a magnificent beginning for a university, or rather, a school, between the Convent of the Servi and that of S. Marco—namely, where there are now the Lions. This work, truly most praiseworthy and rather that of a magnanimous prince than of a private citizen, was never finished, for the very large sums of money that Niccolò left at the Monte<sup>[7]</sup> in Florence for the building and maintenance of this school, were spent by the Florentines in certain wars or for other necessities of the city. And although Fortune will never be able to obscure the memory and the greatness of soul of Niccolò da Uzzano, it is none the less true that the public interest suffered very great harm from the fact that this work was not finished. Wherefore, if a man desires to benefit the world in similar ways, and to leave an honourable memorial of himself, let



him do it by himself while he has life, and let him not put his trust in the good faith of posterity and of his heirs, since anything that has been left to be done by successors is rarely seen brought to perfect completion.

But returning to Lorenzo: he painted, besides what has been said, a Madonna and certain saints in fresco, passing good, in a shrine on the Ponte Rubaconte. And no long time after, Ser Michele di Fruosino, being Director of the Hospital of S. Maria Nuova in Florence—which hospital was founded by Folco Portinari, citizen of Florence—determined that, even as the wealth of the hospital had increased, so its church, which was then without Florence and very small, dedicated to S. Egidio, should be enlarged. Whereupon, having taken counsel thereon with Lorenzo di Bicci, who was very much his friend, on September 5, in the year 1418, he began the new church, which was finished in a year in the manner wherein it stands to-day, and was then solemnly consecrated by Pope Martin V at the request of the said Ser Michele, who was the eighth Director of the Hospital, and of the men of the family of Portinari. This consecration Lorenzo afterwards painted, according to the wish of Ser Michele, on the façade of that church, portraying there from life that Pope and some Cardinals; and this work, as something new and beautiful, was then much praised. Wherefore he obtained the honour of being the first to paint in the principal church of his city—that is, in S. Maria del Fiore, where, beneath the windows of each chapel, he painted that Saint to whom it is dedicated, and then, on the pilasters and throughout the church, the twelve Apostles with the crosses of consecration; for that church had been most solemnly consecrated in that same year by Pope Eugenius IV, the Venetian. In the same church the Wardens of Works, by order of the State, caused him to paint in fresco, on one wall, a tomb in imitation of marble, in memory of Cardinal Corsini, who is portrayed there from nature on the sarcophagus; and above that he made a similar one in memory of Maestro Luigi Marsili, a very famous theologian, who went as ambassador, with Messer Luigi Guicciardini and Messer Guccio di Gino, most honourable cavaliers, to the Duke of Anjou.

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**LORENZO DI BICCI: MADONNA AND CHILD, WITH A DONOR**  
**(Empoli: Gallery. Panel)**

[View larger image](#)

Lorenzo was then summoned to Arezzo by Don Laurentino, Abbot of S. Bernardo, a monastery of the Order of Monte Oliveto, in the principal chapel of which he painted in fresco, for Messer Carlo Marsuppini, stories of the life of S. Bernard. But while planning to paint the life of S. Benedict in the cloister of the convent (I mean, after having painted for the elder Francesco de' Bacci the principal chapel of the Church of S. Francesco, where he wrought by himself the vaulting and half of the arch) he fell sick of a pleurisy; wherefore, having himself carried to Florence, he left directions that Marco da Montepulciano, his disciple, should paint the scenes of the life of S. Benedict in the said cloister, from the design that he had made and left with Don Laurentino; and this Marco did as best he knew, delivering the whole work finished in chiaroscuro on April 24, in the year 1448, as it may be seen written by his hand in verses and

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words that are no less rude than the pictures. Having returned to his country and being restored to health, Lorenzo painted, on the same wall of the Convent of S. Croce whereon he had made the S. Christopher, the Assumption into Heaven of Our Lady, surrounded by a choir of angels, and below her a S. Thomas, who is receiving the Girdle. In the execution of this work, being indisposed, Lorenzo caused Donatello, then a youth, to help him; wherefore, with assistance so able, it was finished in the year 1450, in such wise that I believe that it is the best work, both in design and in colouring, that was ever made by Lorenzo, who, no long time after, being old and worn out, died at the age of about sixty, leaving two sons who applied themselves to painting; one of whom, named Bicci, gave him assistance in making many works, while the other, who was called Neri, portrayed his father and himself in the Chapel of the Lenzi in Ognissanti, in two medallions with letters round them, which give the name of both one and the other. In this chapel the same man, in painting some stories of the Madonna, strove to counterfeit many costumes of those times, both of men and of women; and he made the panel in distemper for the chapel. In like manner, he made some panels for the Abbey of S. Felice in Piazza at Florence, belonging to the Order of Camaldoli, and one for the high-altar of S. Michele in Arezzo, a church of the same Order. And at S. Maria delle Grazie without Arezzo, in the Church of S. Bernardino, he made a Madonna that has under her mantle the people of Arezzo, and on one side that S. Bernardino kneeling with a wooden cross in his hand, such as he was wont to carry when he went preaching through Arezzo, and on the other side and about her S. Nicholas and S. Michelagnolo; and on the predella are painted stories of the acts of the said S. Bernardino, and of the miracles that he wrought, particularly in that place. The same Neri made the panel of the high-altar of S. Romolo in Florence; and in S. Trinita, in the Chapel of the Spini, he painted in fresco the life of S. Giovanni Gualberto, and in distemper the panel that is over the altar. From these works it is recognized that if Neri had lived, and had not died at the age of thirty-six, he would have made more numerous and better works than did Lorenzo, his father, whose Life, seeing that he was the last of the masters of the old manner of Giotto, will also be the last of this First Part, which with the aid of the blessed God we have brought to conclusion.

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**THE SECOND PART OF THE  
LIVES OF THE SCULPTORS,  
PAINTERS, AND ARCHITECTS,  
WHO HAVE LIVED  
FROM CIMABUE TO OUR  
OWN DAY. WRITTEN BY  
MESSER GIORGIO VASARI,  
PAINTER AND ARCHITECT OF AREZZO**

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**PREFACE TO THE SECOND PART**

When first I undertook to write these Lives, it was not my intention to make a list of the craftsmen, and an inventory, so to speak, of their works, nor did I ever judge it a worthy end for these my labours—I will not call them beautiful, but certainly long and fatiguing—to discover their numbers, their names, and their countries, and to tell in what cities, and in what places exactly in those cities, their pictures, or sculptures, or buildings were now to be found; for this I could have done with a simple table, without interposing my own judgment in any part. But seeing that the writers of history—those of them who, by common consent, are reputed to have written with the best judgment—have not only refused to content themselves with the simple narration of the succession of events, but, with all diligence and with the greatest power of research at their disposal, have set about investigating the methods, the means, and the ways that men of mark have used in the management of their enterprises; and seeing that they have striven to touch on their errors, and at the same time on their fine achievements and on the expedients and resolutions sometimes wisely adopted in their government of affairs, and on everything, in short, that these men have effected therein, sagaciously or negligently, or with prudence, or piety, or magnanimity; which these writers have done as men who knew history to be truly the mirror of human life, not in order to make a succinct narration of the events that befell a Prince or a Republic, but in order to observe the judgments, the counsels, the resolutions, and the intrigues of men, leading subsequently to fortunate and unfortunate actions; for this is the true soul of history, and is that which truly teaches men to live and makes them wise, and which, besides the pleasure that comes from seeing past events as present, is the true end of that art; for this reason, having undertaken to write the history of the most noble craftsmen, in order to assist the arts in so far as my powers permit, and besides that to honour them, I have held to

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the best of my ability, in imitation of men so able, to the same method, and I have striven not only to say what these craftsmen have done, but also, in treating of them, to distinguish the better from the good and the best from the better, and to note with no small diligence the methods, the feeling, the manners, the characteristics, and the fantasies of the painters and sculptors; seeking with the greatest diligence in my power to make known, to those who do not know this for themselves, the causes and origins of the various manners and of that amelioration and that deterioration of the arts which have come to pass at diverse times and through diverse persons. And because at the beginning of these Lives I spoke of the nobility and antiquity of these arts, in so far as it was then necessary for our subject, leaving on one side many things from Pliny and other authors whereof I could have availed myself, had I not wished—contrary, perhaps, to the judgment of many—to leave each man free to see the fantasies of others in their proper sources; it appears to me expedient to do at present that which, in avoidance of tedium and prolixity (mortal enemies of attention), it was not permitted me to do then—namely, to declare more diligently my mind and intention, and to demonstrate to what end I have divided this book of the Lives into Three Parts.

Now it is true that greatness in the arts springs in one man from diligence, in another from study, in this man from imitation, in that man from knowledge of the sciences, which all render assistance to the arts, and in some from all the aforesaid sources together, or from the greater part of them; yet I, none the less, having discoursed sufficiently, in the Lives of the individuals, of their methods of art, their manners, and the causes of their good, better, and best work, will discourse of this matter in general terms, and rather of the characteristics of times than of persons; having made a distinction and division, in order not to make too minute a research, into Three Parts, or we would rather call them ages, from the second birth of these arts up to the century wherein we live, by reason of that very manifest difference that is seen between one and another of them. In the first and most ancient age these three arts are seen to have been very distant from their perfection, and, although they had something of the good, to have been accompanied by so great imperfection that they certainly do not merit too great praise; although, seeing that they gave a beginning and showed the path and method to the better work that followed later, if for no other reason, we cannot but speak well of them and give them a little more glory than the works themselves have merited, were we to judge them by the perfect standard of art.

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Next, in the second, it is manifestly seen that matters were much improved, both in the inventions and in the use of more design, better manner, and greater diligence, in their execution; and likewise that the rust of age and the rudeness and disproportion, wherewith the grossness of that time had clothed them, were swept away. But who will be bold enough to say that there was to be found at that time one who was in every way perfect, and who brought his work, whether in invention, or design, or colouring, to the standard of to-day, and contrived the sweet gradation of his figures with the deep shades of colour, in a manner that the lights remained only on the parts in relief, and likewise contrived those perforations and certain extraordinary refinements in marble statuary that are seen in the statues of to-day? The credit of this is certainly due to the third age, wherein it appears to me that I can say surely that art has done everything that it is possible for her, as an imitator of nature, to do, and that she has climbed so high that she has rather to fear a fall to a lower height than to ever hope for more advancement.

Having pondered over these things intently in my own mind, I judge that it is the peculiar and particular nature of these arts to go on improving little by little from a humble beginning, and finally to arrive at the height of perfection; and of this I am persuaded by seeing that almost the same thing came to pass in other faculties, which is no small argument in favour of its truth, seeing that there is a certain degree of kinship between all the liberal arts. Now this must have happened to painting and sculpture in former times in such similar fashion, that, if the names were changed round, their histories would be exactly the same. For if we can put faith in those who lived near those times and could see and judge the labours of the ancients, it is seen that the statues of Canachus were very stiff and without any vivacity or movement, and therefore very distant from the truth; and the same is said of those of Calamis, although they were somewhat softer than those aforesaid. Then came Myron, who was no very close imitator of the truth of nature, but gave so much proportion and grace to his works that they could be reasonably called beautiful. There followed in the third degree Polycletus and the other so famous masters, who, as it is said and must be believed, made them entirely perfect. The same progress must have also come about in painting, because it is said, and it is reasonable to suppose that it was so, that in the works of those who painted with only one colour, and were therefore called Monochromatists, there was no great perfection. Next, in the works of Zeuxis, Polygnotus, Timanthes, and the others who used only four colours, there is nothing but praise for their lineaments, outlines, and forms; yet, without doubt, they must have left something to be desired. But in Erion, Nicomachus, Protogenes, and Apelles, everything is perfect and most beautiful, and nothing better can be imagined, seeing that they painted most excellently not only the forms and actions of bodies, but also the emotions and passions of the soul.

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But, passing these men by, since for knowledge of them we must refer to others, who very often do not agree in their judgments on them, or even, what is worse, as to the dates, although in this I have followed the best authorities; let us come to our own times, wherein we have the help of the eye, a much better guide and judge than the ear. Is it not clearly seen how great improvement was acquired by architecture—to begin with one starting-point—from the time of the Greek Buschetto to that of the German Arnolfo and of Giotto? See the buildings of those

times, and the pilasters, the columns, the bases, the capitals, and all the cornices, with their ill-formed members, such as there are in Florence, in S. Maria del Fiore, in the external incrustations of S. Giovanni, and in S. Miniato sul Monte; in the Vescovado of Fiesole, in the Duomo of Milan, in S. Vitale at Ravenna, in S. Maria Maggiore at Rome, and in the Duomo Vecchio without Arezzo; wherein, excepting that little of the good which survived in the ancient fragments, there is nothing that has good order or form. But these men certainly improved it not a little, and under their guidance it made no small progress, seeing that they reduced it to better proportion, and made their buildings not only stable and stout, but also in some measure ornate, although it is true that their ornamentation was confused and very imperfect, and, so to speak, not greatly ornamental. For they did not observe that measure and proportion in the columns that the art required, or distinguish one Order from another, whether Doric, Corinthian, Ionic, or Tuscan, but mixed them all together with a rule of their own that was no rule, making them very thick or very slender, as suited them best; and all their inventions came partly from their own brains, and partly from the relics of the antiquities that they saw; and they made their plans partly by copying the good, and partly by adding thereunto their own fancies, which, when the walls were raised, had a very different appearance. Nevertheless, whosoever compares their works with those before them will see in them an improvement in every respect, although he will also see some things that give no little displeasure to our own times; as, for example, some little temples of brick, wrought over with stucco, at S. Giovanni Laterano in Rome.

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The same do I say of sculpture, which, in that first age of its new birth, had no little of the good; for after the extinction of the rude Greek manner, which was so uncouth that it was more akin to the art of quarrying than to the genius of the craftsmen—their statues being entirely without folds, or attitudes, or movement of any kind, and truly worthy to be called stone images—when design was afterwards improved by Giotto, many men also improved the figures in marble and stone, as did Andrea Pisano and his son Nino and his other disciples, who were much better than the early sculptors and gave their statues more movement and much better attitudes; as also did those two Sienese masters, Agostino and Agnolo, who made the tomb of Guido, Bishop of Arezzo, as it has been said, and those Germans who made the façade at Orvieto. It is seen, then, that during this time sculpture made a little progress, and that there was given a somewhat better form to the figures, with a more beautiful flow of folds in the draperies, and sometimes a better air in the heads and certain attitudes not so stiff; and finally, that it had begun to seek the good, but was nevertheless lacking in innumerable respects, seeing that design was in no great perfection at that time and there was little good work seen that could be imitated. Wherefore those masters who lived at that time, and were put by me in the First Part of the book, deserve to be thus praised and to be held in that credit which the works made by them merit, if only one considers—as is also true of the works of the architects and painters of those times—that they had no help from the times before them, and had to find the way by themselves; and a beginning, however small, is ever worthy of no small praise.

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Nor did painting encounter much better fortune in those times, save that, being then more in vogue by reason of the devotion of the people, it had more craftsmen and therefore made more evident progress than the other two. Thus it is seen that the Greek manner, first through the beginning made by Cimabue, and then with the aid of Giotto, was wholly extinguished; and there arose a new one, which I would fain call the manner of Giotto, seeing that it was discovered by him and by his disciples, and then universally revered and imitated by all. By this manner, as we see, there were swept away the outlines that wholly enclosed the figures, and those staring eyes, and the feet stretched on tip-toe, and the pointed hands, with the absence of shadow and the other monstrous qualities of those Greeks; and good grace was given to the heads, and softness to the colouring. And Giotto, in particular, gave better attitudes to his figures, and revealed the first effort to give a certain liveliness to the heads and folds to his draperies, which drew more towards nature than those of the men before him; and he discovered, in part, something of the gradation and foreshortening of figures. Besides this, he made a beginning with the expression of emotions, so that fear, hope, rage, and love could in some sort be recognized; and he reduced his manner, which at first was harsh and rough, to a certain degree of softness; and although he did not make the eyes with that beautiful roundness that makes them lifelike, and with the tear-channels that complete them, and the hair soft, and the beards feathery, and the hands with their due joints and muscles, and the nudes true to life, let him find excuse in the difficulty of the art and in the fact that he saw no better painters than himself; and let all remember, amid the poverty of art in those times, the excellence of judgment in his stories, the observation of feeling, and the subordination of a very ready natural gift, seeing that his figures were subordinate to the part that they had to play. And thereby it is shown that he had a very good, if not a perfect judgment; and the same is seen in the others after him, as in the colouring of Taddeo Gaddi, who is both sweeter and stronger, giving better tints to the flesh and better colour to the draperies, and more boldness to the movements of his figures. In Simone Sanese there is seen dignity in the composition of stories; and Stefano the Ape<sup>[8]</sup> and his son Tommaso brought about great improvement and perfection in design, invention in perspective, and harmony and unity in colouring, ever maintaining the manner of Giotto. The same was done for mastery and dexterity of handling by Spinello Aretino and his son Parri, Jacopo di Casentino, Antonio Viniziano, Lippo, Gherardo Starnina, and the other painters who laboured after Giotto, following his feeling, lineaments, colouring, and manner, and even improving them somewhat, but not so much as to make it appear that they were aiming at another goal. Whosoever considers this my discourse, therefore, will see that these three arts were up to this time, so to speak, only sketched out, and lacking in much of that perfection that was their due; and in truth, without further progress, this improvement was of little use and not to be held in too great account. Nor would I have anyone

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believe that I am so dull and so poor in judgment that I do not know that the works of Giotto, of Andrea Pisano, of Nino, and of all the others, whom I have put together in the First Part by reason of their similarity of manner, if compared with those of the men who laboured after them, do not deserve extraordinary or even mediocre praise; or that I did not see this when I praised them. But whosoever considers the character of those times, the dearth of craftsmen, and the difficulty of finding good assistance, will hold them not merely beautiful, as I have called them, but miraculous, and will take infinite pleasure in seeing the first beginnings and those sparks of excellence that began to be rekindled in painting and sculpture. The victory of Lucius Marcius in Spain was certainly not so great that the Romans did not have many much greater; but in consideration of the time, the place, the circumstances, the men, and the numbers, it was held stupendous, and even to-day it is held worthy of the infinite and most abundant praises that are given to it by writers. To me, likewise, by reason of all the aforesaid considerations, it has appeared that these masters deserve to be not only described by me with all diligence, but praised with that love and confidence wherewith I have done it. Nor do I think that it can have been wearisome to my brother-craftsmen to read these their Lives, and to consider their manners and methods, and from this, perchance, they will derive no little profit; which will be right pleasing to me, and I will esteem it a good reward for my labours, wherein I have sought to do nought else but give them profit and delight to the best of my power.

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And now that we have weaned these three arts, to use such a fashion of speaking, and brought them through their childhood, there comes their second age, wherein there will be seen infinite improvement in everything; invention more abundant in figures, and richer in ornament; more depth and more lifelike reality in design; some finality, moreover, in the works, which are executed thoughtfully and with diligence, although with too little mastery of handling; with more grace in manner and more loveliness in colouring, so that little is wanting for the reduction of everything to perfection and for the exact imitation of the truth of nature. Wherefore, with the study and the diligence of the great Filippo Brunelleschi, architecture first recovered the measures and proportions of the ancients, both in the round columns and in the square pilasters, and in the corner-stones both rough and smooth; and then one Order was distinguished from another, and it was shown what differences there were between them. It was ordained that all works should proceed by rule, should be pursued with better ordering, and should be distributed with due measure. Design grew in strength and depth; good grace was given to buildings; the excellence of that art made itself known; and the beauty and variety of capitals and cornices were recovered in such a manner, that the ground-plans of his churches and of his other edifices are seen to have been very well conceived, and the buildings themselves ornate, magnificent, and beautifully proportioned, as it may be seen in the stupendous mass of the cupola of S. Maria del Fiore in Florence, and in the beauty and grace of its lantern; in the ornate, varied, and graceful Church of S. Spirito, and in the no less beautiful edifice of S. Lorenzo; in the most bizarre invention of the octagonal Temple of the Angeli; in the most fanciful Church and Convent of the Abbey of Fiesole, and in the magnificent and vast beginning of the Pitti Palace; besides the great and commodious edifice that Francesco di Giorgio made in the Palace and Church of the Duomo at Urbino, and the very strong and rich Castle of Naples, and the impregnable Castle of Milan, not to mention many other notable buildings of that time. And although there were not therein that delicacy and a certain exquisite grace and finish in the mouldings, and certain refinements and beauties in the carving of the leafage and in making certain extremities in the foliage, and other points of perfection, which all came later, as it will be seen in the Third Part, wherein there will follow those who will attain to all that perfection, whether in grace, or refinement, or abundance, or dexterity, to which the old architects did not attain; none the less, they can be safely called beautiful and good. I do not call them yet perfect, because later there was seen something better in that art, and it appears to me that I can reasonably affirm that there was something wanting in them. And although there are in them some parts so miraculous that nothing better has yet been done in our own times, nor will be, peradventure, in times to come, such as, for example, the lantern of the cupola of S. Maria del Fiore, and, in point of grandeur, the cupola itself, wherein Filippo was emboldened not only to equal the ancients in the extent of their structures, but also to excel them in the height of the walls; yet we are speaking generically and universally, and we must not deduce the excellence of the whole from the goodness and perfection of one thing alone.

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This I can also say of painting and sculpture, wherein very rare works of the masters of that second age may still be seen to-day, such as those in the Carmine by Masaccio, who made a naked man shivering with cold, and lively and spirited figures in other pictures; but in general they did not attain to the perfection of the third, whereof we will speak at the proper time, it being necessary now to discourse of the second, whose craftsmen, to speak first of the sculptors, advanced so far beyond the manner of the first and improved it so greatly, that they left little to be done by the third. They had a manner of their own, so much more graceful and more natural, and so much richer in order, in design, and in proportion, that their statues began to appear almost like living people, and no longer figures of stones, like those of the first age; and to this those works bear witness that were wrought in that new manner, as it will be seen in this Second Part, among which the figures of Jacopo della Quercia have more movement, more grace, more design, and more diligence; those of Filippo, a more beautiful knowledge of muscles, better proportion, and more judgment; and so, too, those of their disciples. But the greatest advance came from Lorenzo Ghiberti in the work of the gates of S. Giovanni, wherein he showed such invention, order, manner, and design, that his figures appear to move and to have souls. But as for Donato,<sup>[9]</sup> although he lived in their time, I am not wholly sure whether I ought not to place him in the third age, seeing that his works challenge comparison with the good works of the

ancients; but this I will say, that he can be called the pattern of the others in this second age, having united in his own self all the qualities that were divided singly among many, for he brought his figures to actual motion, giving them such vivacity and liveliness that they can stand beside the works of to-day, and, as I have said, beside the ancient as well.

The same advance was made at this time by painting, from which that most excellent Masaccio swept away completely the manner of Giotto in the heads, the draperies, the buildings, the nudes, the colouring, and the foreshortenings, all of which he made new, bringing to light that modern manner which was followed in those times and has been followed up to our own day by all our craftsmen, and enriched and embellished from time to time with better grace, invention, and ornament; as it will be seen more particularly in the Life of each master, wherein there will appear a new manner of colouring, of foreshortenings, and of natural attitudes, with much better expression for the emotions of the soul and the gestures of the body, and an attempt to approach closer to the truth of nature in draughtsmanship, and an effort to give to the expressions of the faces so complete a resemblance to the living men, that it might be known for whom they were intended. Thus they sought to imitate that which they saw in nature, and no more, and thus their works came to be better planned and better conceived; and this emboldened them to give rules to their perspectives and to foreshorten them in a natural and proper form, just as they did in relief; and thus, too, they were ever observing lights and shades, the projection of shadows, and all the other difficulties, and the composition of stories with more characteristic resemblance, and attempted to give more reality to landscapes, trees, herbs, flowers, skies, clouds, and other objects of nature, insomuch that we may boldly say that these arts were not only reared but actually carried to the flower of their youth, giving hope of that fruit which afterwards appeared, and that, in short, they were about to arrive at their most perfect age.

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**DAVID**  
**(After the bronze by Donatello.**  
**Florence: Bargello)**  
**Anderson**

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With the help of God, then, we will begin the Life of Jacopo della Quercia of Siena, and afterwards those of the other architects and sculptors, until we come to Masaccio, who, having been the first to improve design in the art of painting, will show how great an obligation is owed to him for the new birth that he gave to her. Having chosen the aforesaid Jacopo for the honour of beginning this Second Part, I will follow the order of the various manners, and proceed to lay open, together with the Lives themselves, the difficulties of arts so beautiful, so difficult, and so highly honoured.

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## JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA



**HEAD OF ILARIA DEL CARRETTO, FROM THE TOMB  
(After Jacopo della Quercia. Lucca: S. Martino)  
*Alinari***

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## LIFE OF JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA [*JACOPO DELLA FONTE*]

### SCULPTOR OF SIENA

The sculptor Jacopo, son of Maestro Piero di Filippo of La Quercia, a place in the district of Siena, was the first—after Andrea Pisano, Orcagna, and the others mentioned above—who, labouring in sculpture with greater zeal and diligence, began to show that it was possible to make an approach to nature, and the first who encouraged the others to hope to be able in a certain measure to equal her. His first works worthy of account were made by him in Siena at the age of nineteen, with the following occasion. The people of Siena having their army in the field against the Florentines under the captainship of Gian Tedesco, nephew of Saccone da Pietramala, and of Giovanni d'Azzo Ubaldini, this Giovanni d'Azzo fell sick in camp and was carried to Siena, where he died; wherefore, being grieved at his death, the people of Siena caused to be made for his obsequies, which were most honourable, a catafalque of wood in the shape of a pyramid, and on this they placed the statue of Giovanni himself on horseback, larger than life, made by the hand of Jacopo with much judgment and invention. For he, in order to execute this work, discovered a method of making the skeletons of the horse and of the figure which had never been used up to that time—namely, with pieces of wood and planking fastened together, and then swathed round with hay, tow, and ropes, the whole being bound firmly together; and over all there was spread clay mixed with paste, glue, and shearings of woollen cloth. This method, truly, was and still is better than any other for such things, for, although the works that are made in this fashion have the appearance of weight, none the less after they are finished and dried they turn out light, and, being covered with white, look like marble and are very lovely to the eye, as was the said work of Jacopo. To this it may be added that statues made in this fashion and with the said mixtures do not crack, as they would do if they were made simply of pure clay. And in this manner are made to-day the models for sculpture, with very great convenience for the craftsmen, who, by means of these, have ever before them the patterns and the true measurements of the sculptures that they make; and for this method no small obligation is owed to Jacopo, who is said to have been its inventor.

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After this work, Jacopo made in Siena two panels of lime-wood, carving the figures in them, with their beards and hair, with so great patience that it was a marvel to see. And after these panels, which were placed in the Duomo, he made some prophets in marble, of no great size, which are in the façade of the said Duomo; and he would have continued to labour at the works of this

building, if plague, famine, and the discords of the citizens of Siena had not brought that city to an evil pass; for, after having many times risen in tumult, they drove out Orlando Malevolti, by whose favour Jacopo had enjoyed creditable employment in his native city. Departing then from Siena, he betook himself by the agency of certain friends to Lucca, and there, in the Church of S. Martino, he made a tomb for the wife, who had died a short time before, of Paolo Guinigi, who was Lord of that city; on the base of which tomb he carved some boys in marble that are supporting a garland, so highly finished that they appeared to be of flesh; and on the sarcophagus laid on the said base he made, with infinite diligence, the image of the wife of Paolo Guinigi herself, who was buried within it, and at her feet, from the same block, he made a dog in full relief, signifying the fidelity shown by her to her husband. After Paolo had departed, or rather, had been driven out of Lucca in the year 1429, when the city became free, this sarcophagus was removed from that place and was almost wholly destroyed, by reason of the hatred that the people of Lucca bore to the memory of Guinigi; but the reverence that they bore to the beauty of the figure and of the so many ornaments restrained them, and brought it about that a little time afterwards the sarcophagus and the figure were placed with diligence near the door of the sacristy, where they are at present, while the Chapel of Guinigi was taken over by the Commune.

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Meanwhile Jacopo had heard that the Guild of the Merchants of Calimara in Florence wished to have a bronze door made for the Church of S. Giovanni, where, as it has been said, Andrea Pisano had wrought the first; and he had come to Florence in order to make himself known, above all because this work was to be allotted to the man who, in making one of those scenes in bronze, should give the best proof of himself and of his talent. Having therefore come to Florence, he not only made the model, but delivered one very well executed scene, completely finished and polished, which gave so great satisfaction, that, if he had not had as rivals those most excellent masters, Donatello and Filippo Brunelleschi, who in truth surpassed him in their specimens, it would have fallen to him to make this work of so great importance. But the business having concluded otherwise, he went to Bologna, where, by the favour of Giovanni Bentivogli, he was commissioned by the Wardens of Works of S. Petronio to make in marble the principal door of that church, which he continued in the German manner, in order not to alter the style wherein it had already been begun, filling up what was lacking in the design of the pilasters that support the cornice and the arch, with scenes wrought with infinite love within the space of the twelve years that he was engaged in this work, wherein he made with his own hand all the foliage and ornamentation of the said door, with the greatest diligence and care that he could command. On each of the pilasters that support the architrave, the cornice, and the arch, there are five scenes, and five on the architrave, making fifteen in all; and in them all he carved in low-relief stories from the Old Testament—namely, from the Creation of man by God up to the Deluge and Noah's Ark, thus conferring very great benefit on sculpture, since from the ancients up to that time there had been no one who had wrought anything in low-relief, wherefore that method of working was rather out of mind than out of fashion. In the arch of this door he made three figures in marble, as large as life and all in the round—namely, a very beautiful Madonna with the Child in her arms, S. Petronius, and another Saint, all very well grouped and in beautiful attitudes; wherefore the people of Bologna, who did not think that there could be made a work in marble, I do not say surpassing, but even equalling that one which Agostino and Agnolo of Siena had made in the ancient manner on the high-altar of S. Francesco in their city, were amazed to see that this one was by a great measure more beautiful.

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After this, being requested to return to Lucca, Jacopo went there very willingly, and made on a marble panel in S. Friano, for Federigo di Maestro Trenta del Veglia, a Virgin with her Son in her arms, and S. Sebastian, S. Lucia, S. Jerome, and S. Gismondo, with good manner, grace, and design; and in the predella below he made in half-relief, under each Saint, some scene from the life of each, which was something very lovely and pleasing, seeing that Jacopo gave gradation to his figures from plane to plane with beautiful art, making them lower as they receded. In like manner, he gave much encouragement to others to acquire grace and beauty for their works with new methods, when he portrayed from the life the patron of the work, Federigo, and his wife, on two great slabs wrought in low-relief for two tombs; on which slabs are these words:

HOC OPUS FECIT JACOBUS MAGISTRI PETRI DE SENIS, 1422.

Afterwards, on Jacopo coming to Florence, the Wardens of Works of S. Maria del Fiore, by reason of the good report that they had heard of him, commissioned him to make in marble the frontal that is over that door of the church which leads to the Nunziata, wherein, in a mandorla, he made the Madonna being borne to Heaven by a choir of angels sounding instruments and singing, with the most beautiful movements and the most beautiful attitudes—seeing that they have vivacity and motion in their flight—that had ever been made up to that time. In like manner, the Madonna is draped with so great grace and dignity that nothing better can be imagined, the flow of the folds being very beautiful and soft, while the borders of the draperies are seen following closely the nude form of the figure, which, with its very covering, reveals every curve of the limbs; and below this Madonna there is a S. Thomas, who is receiving the Girdle. In short, this work was executed by Jacopo in four years with all the possible perfection that he could give to it, for the reason that, besides the natural desire that he had to do well, the rivalry of Donato, of Filippo, and of Lorenzo di Bartolo, from whose hands there had already issued some works that were highly praised, incited him even more in the doing of what he did; and that was so much that this work is studied even to-day by modern craftsmen, as something very rare. On the other side of the Madonna, opposite to S. Thomas, Jacopo made a bear that is climbing a pear-tree; and with regard to this caprice, even as many things were said then, so also there could be others said by

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me, but I will forbear, wishing to let everyone believe and think in his own fashion in the matter of this invention.



**MADONNA AND CHILD**  
**(After Jacopo della Quercia. *Bologna: S. Petronio*)**  
*Alinari*

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After this, desiring to revisit his own country, Jacopo returned to Siena, where, on his arrival, there came to him, according to his desire, an occasion to leave therein some honourable memorial of himself. For the Signoria of Siena, having resolved to make a very rich adornment in marble for the waters that Agostino and Agnolo of Siena had brought into the square in the year 1343, allotted that work to Jacopo, at the price of 2,200 crowns of gold; wherefore he, having made the model and collected the marbles, put his hand to the work and finally completed it so greatly to the satisfaction of his fellow-citizens, that he was ever afterwards called, not Jacopo della Quercia, but Jacopo della Fonte. In the middle of this work, then, he carved the Glorious Virgin Mary, the particular Patroness of that city, a little larger than the other figures, and in a manner both gracious and singular. Round her, next, he made the seven Theological Virtues, the heads of which are delicate, pleasing, beautiful in expression, and wrought with certain methods which show that he began to discover the good and the secrets of the arts, and to give grace to the marble, sweeping away that ancient manner which had been used up to that time by the sculptors, who made their figures rigid and without the least grace in the world; whereas Jacopo made them as soft as flesh, giving finish to his marble with patience and delicacy. Besides this, he made there some stories from the Old Testament—namely, the Creation of our first parents, and the eating of the forbidden fruit, wherein, in the figure of the woman, there is seen an expression of countenance so beautiful, with a grace and an attitude so deferential towards Adam as she offers him the apple, that it appears impossible for him to refuse it; to say nothing of the remainder of the work, which is all full of most beautiful ideas, and adorned with most beautiful children and other ornaments in the shape of lions and she-wolves, emblems of the city, all executed by Jacopo with love, mastery, and judgment in the space of twelve years. By his hand, likewise, are three very beautiful scenes in half-relief from the life of S. John the Baptist, wrought in bronze, which are round the baptismal font of S. Giovanni, below the Duomo; and also some figures in the round, likewise in bronze, one braccio in height, which are between each of the said scenes, and are truly beautiful and worthy of praise. Wherefore, by reason of these works, which showed his excellence, and of the goodness and uprightness of his life, Jacopo was deservedly made chevalier by the Signoria of Siena, and, shortly afterwards, Warden of Works of the Duomo; which office he filled so well that neither before nor since were these Works better directed, for, although he did not live more than three years after undertaking this charge, he made many useful and honourable improvements in that Duomo. And although Jacopo was only a sculptor, nevertheless he drew passing well, as is demonstrated by some drawings made by him, to be found in our book, which appear to be rather by the hand of an illuminator than of a sculptor. And his portrait, similar to the one that is seen above, I had from Maestro Domenico Beccafumi, painter of Siena, who has related to me many things about the excellence, goodness, and gentleness of Jacopo, who finally died, exhausted by fatigues and by continuous labour, at the age of sixty-four, and was lamented and honourably buried in Siena, the place of his birth, by his friends and relatives—nay, by the the whole city. And truly it was no small good-fortune for him to have his so great excellence recognized in his own country, seeing that it rarely comes to pass that men of excellence are universally loved and honoured in their own country.



**TOMB OF S. ROMANO**  
**(After Matteo Civitali. Lucca: S. Romano)**  
*Brogi*

[View larger image](#)

A disciple of Jacopo was Matteo, a sculptor of Lucca, who made the little octagonal temple of marble—in the Church of S. Martino in his own city, in the year 1444, for Domenico Galigano of Lucca—wherein there is the image of the Holy Cross, a piece of sculpture miraculously wrought, so it is said, by Nicodemus, one of the seventy-two disciples of the Saviour; which temple is truly nothing if not very beautiful and well-proportioned. The same man carved in marble a figure of S. Sebastian wholly in the round, three braccia high, and very beautiful by reason of its having been made with good design and in a beautiful attitude and wrought with a high finish. By his hand, also, is a panel wherein there are three very beautiful figures in three niches, in the church where the body of S. Regulus is said to be; and likewise the panel that is in S. Michele, wherein are three figures in marble; and in like manner the statue that is on the corner of the said church, on the outer side—namely, a Madonna, which shows that Matteo was ever striving to equal his master Jacopo.

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Niccolò Bolognese was also a disciple of Jacopo, and he, among other works, brought to completion divinely well—having found it unfinished—the marble sarcophagus full of scenes and figures wherein lies the body of S. Dominic, a work made long ago by Niccola Pisano in Bologna; and he gained thereby, besides profit, that name of honour, Maestro Niccolò dell'Arca, which he bore ever after. He finished this work in the year 1460, and afterwards, for the façade of the palace where the Legate of Bologna now lives, he made a Madonna in bronze, four braccia high, and placed it in position in the year 1478. In a word, he was an able master and a worthy disciple of Jacopo della Quercia of Siena.

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**MADONNA AND CHILD**  
*(After Matteo Civitali. Lucca: Museo)*  
*Brogi*  
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## NICCOLÒ ARETINO

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### LIFE OF NICCOLÒ ARETINO [*NICCOLÒ D'AREZZO* *OR NICCOLÒ DI PIERO LAMBERTI*]

#### SCULPTOR

About the same time, engaged in the same pursuit of sculpture, and almost of the same excellence in the art, lived Niccolò di Piero, a citizen of Arezzo, to whom Nature was as liberal with her gifts of intellect and vivacity of mind as Fortune was niggardly with her benefits. He, then, being a needy fellow, and having received some affront from his nearest of kin in his own country, departed, in order to come to Florence, from Arezzo, where—under the discipline of Maestro Moccio, sculptor of Siena, who, as it has been said in another place, wrought some works in Arezzo—he had applied himself to sculpture with no little fruit, although the said Maestro Moccio was not very excellent. And so, having arrived in Florence, Niccolò at first for many months wrought whatsoever work came to his hand, both because poverty and want were pressing him hard, and also out of rivalry with certain young men, who, competing together honourably with much study and labour, were occupying themselves with sculpture. Finally, after many labours, Niccolò became a creditable sculptor, and was commissioned by the Wardens of Works of S. Maria del Fiore to make two statues for the Campanile; these statues, having been placed therein on the side facing the Canon's house, stand one on either side of those that Donato afterwards made; and since nothing better in full-relief had been seen, they were held passing good.

Next, departing from Florence by reason of the plague of 1383, he went to his own country. There he found that by reason of the said plague the men of the Confraternity of S. Maria della



Misericordia, whereof we have spoken above, had acquired great wealth by means of bequests made by diverse persons in the city through the devotion that they felt for that holy place and for its brethren, who attend to the sick and bury the dead in every pestilence, without fear of any peril; and that therefore they wished to make a façade for that place, but in grey-stone, for lack of a supply of marble. This work, which had been begun before in the German style, he undertook to do; and assisted by many stonecutters from Settignano, he brought it to perfect completion, making with his own hand, in the lunette of the façade, a Madonna with the Child in her arms, and certain angels who are holding open her mantle, under which the people of that city appear to be taking shelter, while S. Laurentino and S. Pergentino, kneeling below, are interceding for them. Next, in two niches at the sides, he made two statues, each three braccia high—namely, one of S. Gregory the Pope, and one of S. Donatus the Bishop, Protector of that city, with good grace and passing good manner. It appears that in his youth, before making these works, he had formerly made three large figures of terra-cotta which were placed over the door of the Vescovado, and which are now in great part eaten away by frost, as is also a S. Luke of grey-stone, made by the same man while he was a youth and placed in the façade of the said Vescovado. In the Pieve, likewise, in the Chapel of S. Biagio, he made a very beautiful figure of the said Saint in terra-cotta; and one of that Saint in the Church of S. Antonio, also in terra-cotta and in relief; and another Saint, seated, over the door of the hospital of the said city.



**S. MARK**  
*(After Niccolò Aretino. Florence:  
 Duomo)*  
*Broggi*

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While he was making these and some other similar works, the walls of Borgo a San Sepolcro were ruined by an earthquake, and Niccolò was sent for to the end that he might make—as he did with good judgment—a design for a new wall, which turned out much better and stronger than the first. And so, continuing to work now in Arezzo, and now in the neighbouring places, Niccolò was living very quietly and at his ease in his own country, when war, the capital enemy of the arts, compelled him to leave it, for, after the sons of Piero Saccone had been driven out of Pietramala and the castle had been destroyed down to its foundations, the city and the district of Arezzo were all in confusion. Wherefore, departing from that territory, Niccolò betook himself to Florence, where he had worked at other times, and for the Wardens of Works of S. Maria del Fiore he made a statue of marble, four braccia high, which was afterwards placed on the left hand of the principal door of that church. In this statue, which is an Evangelist seated, Niccolò showed that he was truly an able sculptor, and he was therefore much praised, since up to then there had not been seen, as there was afterwards, any better work in wholly round relief. Being then summoned to Rome by order of Pope Boniface IX, as the best of all the architects of his time, he fortified and gave better form to the Castle of S. Angelo. On returning to Florence, he made two little figures in marble for the Masters of the Mint, on that corner of Orsanmichele that



faces the Guild of Wool, in the pilaster, above the niche wherein there is now the S. Matthew, which was made afterwards; and these figures were so well made and so well placed on the summit of that shrine that they were then much extolled, as they have been ever afterwards, and in them Niccolò appears to have surpassed himself, for he never did anything better. In short, they are such that they can stand beside any other work of that kind; wherefore he acquired so great credit that he was thought worthy to be in the number of those who were under consideration for the making of the bronze doors of S. Giovanni, although, when the proof was made, he was left behind, and they were allotted, as it will be said in the proper place, to another. After these labours Niccolò went to Milan, where he was made Overseer of the Works of the Duomo in that city; and there he wrought some things in marble which gave great satisfaction.

Finally, being called back to his own country by the Aretines to the end that he might make a tabernacle for the Sacrament, while returning he was forced to stay in Bologna and to make the tomb of Pope Alexander V, who had finished the course of his years in that city, for the Convent of the Friars Minor. And although he was very unwilling to accept this work, he could not, however, but comply with the prayers of Messer Leonardo Bruni, the Aretine, who had been a highly-favoured Secretary of that Pontiff. Niccolò, then, made the said tomb and portrayed that Pope thereon from nature; although it is true that from lack of marble and other stone the tomb and its ornaments were made of stucco and brick-work, and likewise the statue of the Pope on the sarcophagus, which is placed behind the choir of the said church. This work finished, Niccolò fell grievously sick and died shortly afterwards at the age of sixty-seven, and was buried in the same church, in the year 1417. His portrait was made by Galasso of Ferrara, very much his friend, who was painting at that time in Bologna in competition with Jacopo and Simone, painters of Bologna, and one Cristofano—I know not whether of Ferrara, or, as others say, of Modena—who all painted many works in fresco in a church called the Casa di Mezzo, without the Porta di S. Mammolo. Cristofano painted scenes on one side, from the Creation of Adam by God up to the death of Moses, Simone and Jacopo painted thirty scenes, from the Birth of Christ up to the Last Supper that He held with the Apostles, and Galasso then painted the Passion, as it is seen from the name of each man, written below. These pictures were made in the year 1404, and afterwards the rest of the church was painted by other masters with stories of David, wrought with a high finish. And in truth it is not without reason that these pictures are held in much esteem by the Bolognese, both because, for old things, they are passing good, and also because the work, having been preserved fresh and vivacious, deserves much praise. Some say that the said Galasso, when very old, painted also in oil, but neither in Ferrara nor in any other place have I found any works of his save in fresco. A disciple of Galasso was Cosmè, who painted a chapel in S. Domenico at Ferrara, and the folding doors that close the organ of the Duomo, and many other works, which are better than the pictures of Galasso, his master.

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Niccolò was a good draughtsman, as it may be seen in our book, wherein there are an Evangelist and three heads of horses by his hand, very well drawn.

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## DELLO

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### LIFE OF DELLO PAINTER OF FLORENCE

Although Dello the Florentine, while he lived, had only the name of painter, which he has had ever since, he applied himself none the less also to sculpture—nay, his first works were in sculpture, seeing that, long before he began to paint, he made in terra-cotta a Coronation of Our Lady in the arch that is over the door of the Church of S. Maria Nuova, and, within the church, the twelve Apostles; and, in the Church of the Servi, a Dead Christ in the lap of the Virgin, with many other works throughout the whole city. But, being capricious, and also perceiving that he was gaining little by working in terra-cotta and that his poverty had need of some greater succour, he resolved, being a good draughtsman, to give his attention to painting; and in this he succeeded with ease, for the reason that he soon acquired a good mastery in colouring, as many pictures demonstrate that he made in his own city, and above all those with little figures, wherein he showed better grace than in the large. And this ability served him in good stead, because the citizens of those times used to have in their apartments great wooden chests in the form of a sarcophagus, with the covers shaped in various fashions, and there were none that did not have the said chests painted; and besides the stories that were wrought on the front and on the ends, they used to have the arms, or rather, insignia of their houses painted on the corners, and sometimes elsewhere. And the stories that were wrought on the front were for the most part fables taken from Ovid and from other poets, or rather, stories related by the Greek and Latin

historians, and likewise chases, jousts, tales of love, and other similar subjects, according to each man's particular pleasure. Then the inside was lined with cloth or with silk, according to the rank and means of those who had them made, for the better preservation of silk garments and other precious things. And what is more, it was not only the chests that were painted in such a manner, but also the couches, the chair-backs, the mouldings that went right round, and other similar magnificent ornaments for apartments which were used in those times, whereof an infinite number may be seen throughout the whole city. And for many years this fashion was so much in use that even the most excellent painters exercised themselves in such labours, without being ashamed, as many would be to-day, to paint and gild such things. And that this is true has been seen up to our own day from some chests, chair-backs, and mouldings, besides many other things, in the apartments of the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici, the Elder, whereon there were painted—by the hand, not of common painters, but of excellent masters, and with judgment, invention, and marvellous art—all the jousts, tournaments, chases, festivals, and other spectacles that took place in his times. Of such things relics are still seen, not only in the palace and the old houses of the Medici, but in all the most noble houses in Florence; and there are men who, out of attachment to these ancient usages, truly magnificent and most honourable, have not displaced these things in favour of modern ornaments and usages. Dello, then, being a very good and practised painter, and above all, as it has been said, in making little pictures with much grace, applied himself for many years, to his great profit and honour, to nothing else save adorning and painting chests, chair-backs, couches, and other ornaments in the manner described above, insomuch that it can be said to have been his principal and peculiar profession. But since nothing in this world has permanence or can endure any long time, however good and praiseworthy it may be, it was not long before the refinement of men's intellects led them from that first method of working to the making of richer ornaments and of carvings in walnut-wood overlaid with gold, which make a very rich adornment, and to the painting and colouring in oil of very beautiful stories on similar pieces of household furniture, which have made known, as they still do, both the magnificence of the citizens who use them and the excellence of the painters.

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But to come to the works of Dello, who was the first who occupied himself with diligence and good mastery in such labours; for Giovanni de' Medici, in particular, he painted the whole furniture of an apartment, which was held something truly rare and very beautiful of its kind, as some relics demonstrate that are still left. And Donatello, then quite young, is said to have assisted him, making there by his own hand, with stucco, gesso, glue, and pounded brick, some stories and ornaments in low-relief, which, being afterwards overlaid with gold, made a beautiful accompaniment for the painted stories. Of this work and many others like it Drea Cennini makes mention in a long discourse in his work, whereof there has been enough said above; and since it is a good thing to maintain some memory of these old things, I have had some of them, by the hand of Dello himself, preserved in the Palace of the Lord Duke Cosimo, where they are, and they will be ever worthy of being studied, if only for the various costumes of those times, both of men and women, that are seen in them. Dello also wrought the story of Isaac giving his benediction to Esau, in fresco and with terra-verde, in a corner of the cloister of S. Maria Novella.

A little after this work, being summoned to Spain to enter the service of the King, he came into so great credit that no craftsman could have desired much more; and although it is not known precisely what works he made in those parts, it may be judged, seeing that he returned thence very rich and highly honoured, that they were numerous and beautiful and good. After a few years, having been royally rewarded for his labours, Dello conceived the wish to return to Florence, in order to show his friends how he had climbed from extreme poverty to great riches. Wherefore, having gone for permission to that King, not only did he obtain it readily (although the former would have willingly retained him, if Dello had been so minded), but he was also made chevalier by that most liberal King, as a greater sign of gratitude. Whereupon he returned to Florence in order to obtain the banners and the confirmation of his privileges, but they were denied him by the agency of Filippo Spano degli Scolari, who had just come back from his victories over the Turks as Grand Seneschal of the King of Hungary. But Dello having written immediately to the King of Spain to complain of this affront, the King wrote so warmly on his behalf to the Signoria that the due and desired honour was conceded to him without opposition. It is said that Dello, while returning to his house on horseback, with his banners, having been honoured by the Signoria and robed in brocade, was mocked at, in passing through Vacchereccia, where there were then many goldsmiths' shops, by certain old friends, who, having known him in youth, did this either in scorn or in jest; and that he, turning in the direction whence he had heard the voice, made a gesture of contempt with both his hands and went on his way without saying a word, so that scarcely anyone noticed it save those who had derided him. By reason of this and other signs, which gave him to know that envy was no less active against him in his own country than malice had been formerly when he was very poor, he determined to return to Spain; and so, having written, and having received an answer from the King, he returned to those parts, where he was welcomed with great favour and ever afterwards regarded with affection, and there he devoted himself to work, living like a nobleman, and ever painting from that day onwards in an apron of brocade. Thus, then, he gave way before envy, and lived in honour at the Court of that King; and he died at the age of forty-nine, and was given honourable burial by the same man, with this epitaph:

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DELLUS EQUES FLORENTINUS  
PICTURÆ ARTE PERCELEBRIS  
REGISQUE HISPANIARUM LIBERALITATE  
ET ORNAMENTIS AMPLISSIMUS.  
H. S. E.

Dello was no very good draughtsman, but was well among the first who began to show judgment in revealing the muscles in nude bodies, as it is seen from some drawings in our book, made by him in chiaroscuro. He was portrayed in chiaroscuro by Paolo Uccello in S. Maria Novella, in the story wherein Noah is made drunk by his son Ham.

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## NANNI D'ANTONIO DI BANCO

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### LIFE OF NANNI D'ANTONIO DI BANCO

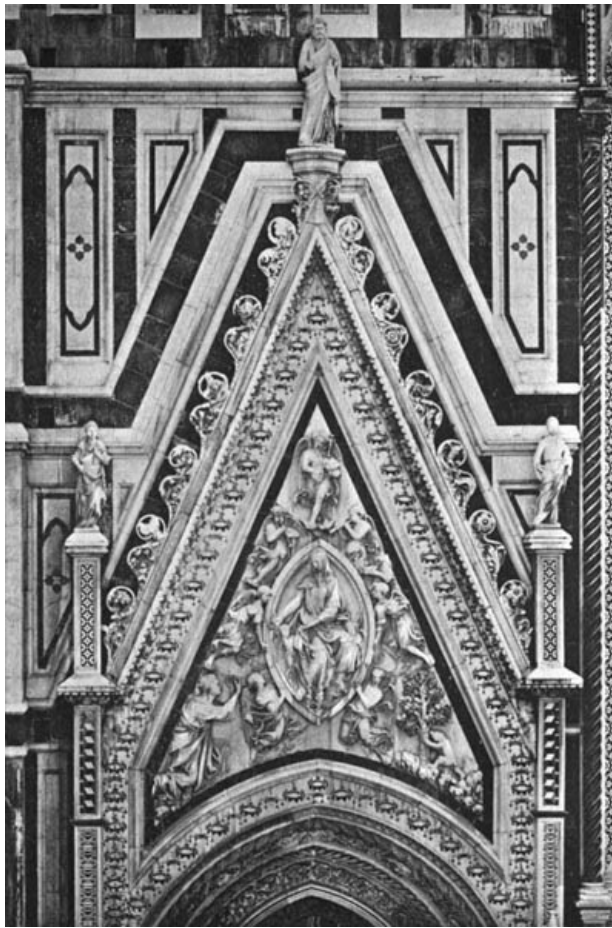
#### SCULPTOR OF FLORENCE

Nanni d'Antonio di Banco was not only rich enough by patrimony, but also by no means humble in origin, yet, delighting in sculpture, he was not only not ashamed to learn and practise it, but took no small pride therein, and made so much advance that his fame will ever endure; and it will be all the more celebrated in proportion as men know that he applied himself to this noble art not through necessity, but through a true love of the art itself. This man, who was one of the disciples of Donato, although I have placed him before his master because he died long before him, was a somewhat sluggish person, but modest, humble, and kindly in his dealings. There is by his hand, in Florence, the S. Philip of marble which is on a pilaster on the outside of the Oratory of Orsanmichele. This work was at first allotted to Donato by the Guild of Shoemakers, and then, since they could not agree with him about the price, it was transferred, as though in despite of Donato, to Nanni, who promised that he would take whatsoever payment they might give him, and would ask no other. But the business fell out otherwise, for, when the statue was finished and set in its place, he asked a much greater price for his work than Donato had done at the beginning; wherefore the valuation of it was referred by both parties to Donato, the Consuls of that Guild believing firmly that he, out of envy at not having made it, would value it at much less than if it were his own work; but they were disappointed in their belief, for Donato judged that much more should be paid to Nanni for his statue than he had demanded. Being in no way willing to abide by this judgment, the Consuls made an outcry and said to Donato: "Why dost thou, after undertaking to make this work at a smaller price, value it higher when made by the hand of another, and constrain us to give him more for it than he himself demands? For thou knowest, even as we do also, that from thy hands it would have come out much better." Donato answered, laughing: "This good man is not my equal in the art, and endures much more fatigue than I do in working; wherefore, if you wish to give him satisfaction, like the just men that I take you for, you are bound to pay him for the time that he has spent." And thus the award of Donato was carried into effect, both parties having agreed to abide by it.

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This work stands well enough, and has good grace and liveliness in the head; the draperies are not hard, and are in no wise badly arranged about the figure. In another niche below this one there are four saints in marble, which the same Nanni was commissioned to make by the Guild of Smiths, Carpenters, and Masons; and it is said that, having finished them all in the round and detached one from another, and having prepared the niche, it was with great difficulty that he could get even three of them into it, for he had made some of them in attitudes with the arms outstretched; and that he besought Donato, in grief and despair, to consent with his counsel to repair his own misfortune and lack of foresight. And Donato, laughing over the mischance, answered: "If thou wilt promise to pay for a supper for me and all my apprentices, I will undertake to get the saints into the niche without any trouble." This Nanni promised to do right willingly, and Donato sent him to Prato, to take certain measurements and to do some other business that would take him some days. Whereupon, Nanni having departed, Donato, with all his disciples and apprentices, set to work and cut some of the statues down in the shoulders and some in the arms, in such wise that he contrived to group them close together, each making place for the other, while he made a hand appear over the shoulders of one of them. And thus the judgment of Donato, having joined them harmoniously together, concealed the error of Nanni so well that they still show, in that place where they were fixed, most manifest signs of concord and brotherhood; and anyone who does not know the circumstance sees nothing of the error. Nanni, finding on his return that Donato had corrected everything and put all his disorder to rights, rendered him infinite thanks, and with great goodwill paid for the supper for him and his pupils. Under the feet of these four saints, in the ornament of the shrine, there is a scene in marble and in half-relief, wherein a sculptor is carving a boy with great animation, and a master is building, with two men assisting him; and all these little figures are seen to be very well grouped and intent on what they are doing.

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**MADONNA DELLA CINTOLA**  
**(After Nanni d'Antonio di Banco. Florence:**  
***Duomo***  
***Brogi***

[View larger image](#)

In the façade of S. Maria del Fiore, on the left side as one enters the church by the central door, there is an Evangelist by the hand of the same man, which is a passing good figure for those times. It is also reputed that the S. Lo which is without the said Oratory of Orsanmichele, and which was made for the Guild of Farriers, is by the hand of the same Nanni, and likewise the marble shrine, in the base of which, at the foot, there is a scene wherein S. Lo, the Farrier, is shoeing a frenzied horse, so well made that Nanni deserved much praise for it; and he would have deserved and obtained much greater praise with other works, if he had not died, as he did, while still young. None the less, by reason of these few works Nanni was held a passing good sculptor; and being a citizen, he obtained many offices in his native city of Florence, and because he bore himself like a just and reasonable man both in these and in all his other affairs, he was greatly beloved. He died of colic in the year 1430, at the age of forty-seven.

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## **LUCA DELLA ROBBIA**





**CANTORIA**  
*(After Luca della Robbia. Florence: Opera del Duomo)*  
*Anderson*

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## LIFE OF LUCA DELLA ROBBIA

### SCULPTOR OF FLORENCE

Luca Della Robbia, sculptor of Florence, was born in the year 1388 in the house of his ancestors, which is in Florence, below the Church of S. Barnaba; and therein he was honestly brought up until he had learnt not only to read and write but also to cast accounts, in so far as it was likely to be needful, after the custom of most Florentines. And afterwards he was placed by his father to learn the art of the goldsmith with Leonardo di Ser Giovanni, who was then held the best master of that art in Florence. Now, having learnt under this man to make designs and to work in wax, Luca grew in courage and applied himself to making certain things in marble and in bronze, which, seeing that he succeeded in them well enough, brought it about that he completely abandoned his business of goldsmith and applied himself to sculpture, insomuch that he did nothing but ply his chisel all day and draw all night; and this he did with so great zeal, that, feeling his feet very often freezing at night, he took to keeping them in a basket full of shavings, such as carpenters strip from planks when they shape them with the plane, in order to warm them without giving up his drawing. Nor do I marvel in any way at this, seeing that no one ever became excellent in any exercise whatsoever without beginning from his childhood to endure heat, cold, hunger, thirst, and other discomforts; wherefore those men are entirely deceived who think to be able, at their ease and with all the comforts of the world, to attain to honourable rank. It is not by sleeping but by waking and studying continually that progress is made.

Luca was barely fifteen years of age when he was summoned, together with other young sculptors, to Rimini, in order to make some figures and other ornaments in marble for Sigismondo di Pandolfo Malatesti, Lord of that city, who was then having a chapel made in the Church of S. Francesco, and a tomb for his wife, who had died. Luca had given an honourable proof of his knowledge in some low-reliefs in this work, which are still seen there, when he was recalled by the Wardens of Works of S. Maria del Fiore to Florence, where, for the campanile of that church, he made five little scenes in marble, which are on the side that faces the church, and which were wanting, according to the design of Giotto, to go with that wherein are the Sciences and Arts, formerly made, as it has been said, by Andrea Pisano. In the first Luca made Donato teaching grammar; in the second, Plato and Aristotle, standing for philosophy; in the third, a figure playing a lute, for music; in the fourth, a Ptolemy, for astrology; and in the fifth, Euclid, for geometry. These scenes, in perfection of finish, in grace, and in design, were far in advance of the two made, as it has been said, by Giotto, in one of which Apelles, standing for painting, is working with his brush, while in the other Pheidias, representing sculpture, is labouring with his chisel. Wherefore the said Wardens of Works—who, besides the merits of Luca, were persuaded thereunto by Messer Vieri de' Medici, then a great citizen and a friend of the people, who loved Luca dearly—commissioned him, in the year 1405, to make the marble ornament for the organ which the Office of Works was then having made on a very grand scale, to be set up over the door of the sacristy of the said church. In certain scenes at the base of this work Luca made the singing choirs, chanting in various fashions; and he put so much zeal into this labour and succeeded so well therein, that, although it is sixteen braccia from the ground, one can see the swelling of the throats of the singers, the leader of the music beating with his hands on the shoulders of the smaller ones, and, in short, diverse manners of sounds, chants, dances, and other pleasing actions that make up the delight of music. Next, on the great cornice of this

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ornament Luca placed two figures of gilded metal—namely, two nude angels, wrought with a high finish, as is the whole work, which was held to be something very rare, although Donatello, who afterwards made the ornament of the other organ, which is opposite to the first, made his with much more judgment and mastery than Luca had shown, as will be told in the proper place; for Donatello executed that work almost wholly with bold studies and with no smoothness of finish, to the end that it might show up much better from a distance, as it does, than that of Luca, which, although it is wrought with good design and diligence, is nevertheless so smooth and highly finished that the eye, by reason of the distance, loses it and does not grasp it well, as it does that of Donatello, which is, as it were, only sketched.



**TOMB OF BISHOP FEDERIGHI**  
**(After Luca della Robbia. Florence: S. Trinita)**  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

To this matter craftsmen should pay great attention, for the reason that experience teaches us that all works which are to be viewed from a distance, whether they be pictures, or sculptures, or any other similar thing whatsoever, have more vivacity and greater force if they are made in the fashion of beautiful sketches than if they are highly finished; and besides the fact that distance gives this effect, it also appears that very often in these sketches, born in a moment from the fire of art, a man's conception is expressed in a few strokes, while, on the contrary, effort and too great diligence sometimes rob men of their force and judgment, if they never know when to take their hands off the work that they are making. And whosoever knows that all the arts of design, not to speak only of painting, are similar to poetry, knows also that even as poems thrown off by the poetic fire are the true and good ones, and better than those made with great effort, so, too, the works of men excellent in the arts of design are better when they are made at one sitting by the force of that fire, than when they go about investigating one thing after another with effort and fatigue. And he who has from the beginning, as he should have, a clear idea of what he wishes to do, ever advances resolutely and with great readiness to perfection. Nevertheless, seeing that all intellects are not of the same stamp, there are some, in fact, although they are rare, who cannot work well save at their leisure; and to say nothing of the painters, it is said that the most reverend and most learned Bembo—among the poets—sometimes laboured many months, perchance even years, at the making of a sonnet, if we can believe those who affirm it; wherefore it is no great marvel that this should happen sometimes to some of the masters of our arts. But for the most part the rule is to the contrary, as it has been said above, although the vulgar think more of a certain external and obvious delicacy that proves to lack the essential qualities, which are made up for by diligence, than of the good, wrought with reason and judgment, but not so highly finished and polished on the outside.

But to return to Luca; the said work being finished and giving great satisfaction, he was entrusted with the bronze door of the said sacristy, which he divided into ten squares—namely, five on either side, making the head of a man at every corner of each square, in the border; and

he varied the heads one from another, making young men, old, and middle-aged, some bearded and some shaven, and, in short, each one beautiful of its kind in diverse fashions, so that the framework of that door was beautifully adorned. Next, in the scenes in the squares—to begin at the upper part—he made the Madonna with the Child in her arms, with most beautiful grace; and in the one beside it, Jesus Christ issuing from the Sepulchre. Below these, in each of the first four squares, is the figure of an Evangelist; and below these, the four Doctors of the Church, who are writing in different attitudes. And the whole of this work is so highly finished and polished that it is a marvel, and gives us to know that it was a great advantage to Luca to have been a goldsmith.

But since, on reckoning up after these works how much there had come to his hand and how much time he spent in making them, he recognized that he had gained very little and that the labour had been very great, he resolved to abandon marble and bronze and to see whether he could gather better fruits from another method. Wherefore, reflecting that clay could be worked easily and with little labour, and that it was only necessary to find a method whereby works made with it might be preserved for a long time, he set about investigating to such purpose that he found a way to defend them from the injuries of time; for, after having made many experiments, he found that by covering them with a coating of glaze, made with tin, litharge, antimony, and other minerals and mixtures fused together in a special furnace, he could produce this effect very well and make works in clay almost eternal. For this method of working, as being its inventor, he gained very great praise, and all the ages to come will therefore owe him an obligation.

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**THE MADONNA OF THE ROSES**  
(After Luca della Robbia. Florence: Bargello.)

[View larger image](#)

Having then succeeded in this as much as he could desire, he resolved that his first works should be those that are in the arch over the bronze door which he had made for the sacristy, below the organ of S. Maria del Fiore; and therein he made a Resurrection of Christ, so beautiful for that time that it was admired, when placed in position, as something truly rare. Moved by this, the said Wardens of Works desired that the arch over the door of the other sacristy, where Donatello had made the ornament of the other organ, should be filled by Luca in the same manner with similar figures and works in terra-cotta; wherefore Luca made therein a very beautiful Jesus Christ ascending into Heaven.

Now, not being yet satisfied with this beautiful invention—so lovely and so useful, above all for places where there is water, and where, because of damp or other reasons, there is no scope for paintings—Luca went on seeking further progress, and, instead of making the said works in clay simply white, he added the method of giving them colour, with incredible marvel and pleasure to all. Wherefore the Magnificent Piero di Cosimo de' Medici, one of the first to commission Luca to fashion coloured works in clay, caused him to execute the whole of the round vaulting of a study in the Palace—built, as it will be told, by his father Cosimo—with various things of fancy, and likewise the pavement, which was something singular and very useful for the summer. And seeing that this method was then very difficult, and that many precautions were necessary in the firing of the clay, it is certainly a marvel that Luca could execute these works with so great perfection that both the vaulting and the pavement appear to be made, not of many pieces, but of one only. The fame of these works spreading not only throughout Italy but throughout all Europe, there were so many who desired them that the merchants of Florence, keeping Luca, to his great profit, continually at this labour, sent them throughout the whole world. And because he could



not supply the whole, he took his brothers, Ottaviano and Agostino, away from the chisel, and set them to work on these labours, wherein the three of them together gained much more than they had done up to then with the chisel, for the reason that, besides those of their works that were sent to France and Spain, they also wrought many things in Tuscany; and in particular, for the said Piero de' Medici, in the Church of S. Miniato al Monte, the vaulting of the marble chapel, which rests on four columns in the middle of the church, and which they divided most beautifully into octagons. But the most notable work of this kind that ever issued from their hands was the vaulting of the Chapel of S. Jacopo, where the Cardinal of Portugal is buried, in the same church. In this, although it has no salient angles, they made the four Evangelists in four medallions at the corners, and the Holy Spirit in a medallion in the middle of the vaulting, filling the other spaces with scales which follow the curve of the vaulting and diminish little by little till they reach the centre, insomuch that there is nothing better of that kind to be seen, nor anything built and put together with more diligence.

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Next, in a little arch over the door of the Church of S. Piero Buonconsiglio, below the Mercato Vecchio, he made the Madonna with some angels round her, all very vivacious; and over a door of a little church near S. Piero Maggiore, in a lunette, he made another Madonna with some angels, which are held very beautiful. And in the Chapter-house of S. Croce, likewise, built by the family of the Pazzi under the direction of Pippo di Ser Brunellesco, he made all the glazed figures that are seen therein both within and without. And Luca is said to have sent some very beautiful figures in full-relief to the King of Spain, together with some works in marble. For Naples, also, he made in Florence the marble tomb for the infant brother of the Duke of Calabria, with many glazed ornaments, being assisted by his brother Agostino.

After these works, Luca sought to find a way of painting figures and scenes on a level surface of terra-cotta, in order to give long life to pictures, and made an experiment in a medallion which is above the shrine of the four saints without Orsanmichele, on the level surface of which, in five parts, he made the instruments and insignia of the Guilds of the Masters in Wood and Stone, with very beautiful ornaments. And he made two other medallions in the same place, in relief, in one of which, for the Guild of Apothecaries, he made a Madonna, and in the other, for the Mercatanzia, a lily on a bale, which has round it a festoon of fruits and foliage of various sorts, so well made, that they appear to be real and not of painted terra-cotta. In the Church of S. Brancazio, also, he made a tomb of marble for Messer Benozzo Federighi, Bishop of Fiesole, and Federighi himself lying on it, portrayed from nature, with three other half-length figures; and in the ornament of the pilasters of this work, on the level surface, he painted certain festoons with clusters of fruit and foliage, so lifelike and natural, that nothing better could be done in oil and on panel with the brush. Of a truth, this work is marvellous and most rare, seeing that Luca made the lights and shades in it so well, that it scarcely appears possible for this to be done by the action of fire. And if this craftsman had lived longer than he did, even greater works would have been seen to issue from his hands, since, a little before he died, he had begun to make scenes and figures painted on a level surface, whereof I once saw some pieces in his house, which lead me to believe that he would have easily succeeded in this, if death, which almost always snatches the best men away just when they are on the point of conferring some benefit on the world, had not robbed him of life before his time.

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Luca was survived by Ottaviano and Agostino, his brothers, and from Agostino there was born another Luca, who was very learned in his day. Now Agostino, pursuing the art after the death of Luca, made the façade of S. Bernardino in Perugia in the year 1461, with three scenes in low-relief therein and four figures in the round, executed very well and with a delicate manner; and on this work he put his name in these words, AUGUSTINI FLORENTINI LAPICIDÆ.

Of the same family was the nephew of Luca, Andrea, who worked very well in marble, as it is seen in the Chapel of S. Maria delle Grazie, without Arezzo, where he made for the Commune, in a great ornament of marble, many little figures both in the round and in half-relief; which ornament was made for a Virgin by the hand of Parri di Spinello of Arezzo. The same man made the panel in terra-cotta for the Chapel of Puccio di Magio, in the Church of S. Francesco in the same city, and that representing the Circumcision for the family of the Bacci. In S. Maria in Grado, likewise, there is a very beautiful panel by his hand with many figures; and on the high-altar of the Company of the Trinità there is a panel by his hand containing a God the Father, who is supporting Christ Crucified in His arms, surrounded by a multitude of angels, while S. Donatus and S. Bernard are kneeling below. In the church and in other parts of the Sasso della Vernia, likewise, he made many panels, which have been well preserved in that desert place, where no painting could have remained fresh for even a few years. The same Andrea wrought all the figures in glazed terra-cotta which are in the Loggia of the Hospital of S. Paolo in Florence, and which are passing good; and likewise the boys, both swathed and nude, that are in the medallions between one arch and another in the Loggia of the Hospital of the Innocenti, which are all truly admirable and prove the great talent and art of Andrea; not to mention many, nay, innumerable other works that he made in the course of his life, which lasted eighty-four years. Andrea died in the year 1528, and I, while still a boy, talked with him and heard him say—nay, boast—that he had taken part in bearing Donato to the tomb; and I remember that the good old man showed no little pride as he spoke of this.

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**ALTAR-PIECE**  
**(After Andrea della Robbia. Arezzo: *S. Maria in***  
***Grado***  
***Alinari***

[View larger image](#)

But to return to Luca; he was buried, with the rest of his family, in their ancestral tomb in S. Piero Maggiore, and in the same tomb there was afterwards buried Andrea, who left two sons, friars in S. Marco, where they received the habit from the Reverend Fra Girolamo Savonarola, to whom that Della Robbia family was ever devoted, portraying him in that manner which is still seen to-day in the medals. The same man, besides the said two friars, had three other sons: Giovanni, who devoted himself to art and had three sons, Marco, Lucantonio, and Simone, who died of plague in the year 1527, having given great promise; and Luca and Girolamo, who devoted themselves to sculpture. Of these two, Luca was very diligent in glazed works, and he made with his own hand, besides many other things, the pavements of the Papal Loggie which Pope Leo X caused to be made in Rome under the direction of Raffaello da Urbino, and also those of many apartments, wherein he put the insignia of that Pontiff. Girolamo, who was the youngest of all, devoted himself to working in marble, in clay, and in bronze, and had already become an able man, by reason of competing with Jacopo Sansovino, Baccio Bandinelli, and other masters of his time, when he was brought by certain Florentine merchants to France, where he made many works for King Francis at Madri, a place not far distant from Paris, and in particular a palace with many figures and other ornaments, with a kind of stone like our Volterra gypsum, but of a better quality, for it is soft when it is worked, and afterwards with time becomes hard. He also wrought many things in clay at Orleans and made works throughout that whole kingdom, acquiring fame and very great wealth. After these works, hearing that he had no relative left in Florence save his brother Luca, and being himself rich and alone in the service of King Francis, he summoned his brother to join him in those parts, in order to leave him in credit and good circumstances, but it fell out otherwise, for in a short time Luca died there, and Girolamo once more found himself alone and without any of his kin; wherefore he resolved to return, in order to enjoy in his own country the riches that his labour and sweat had brought him, and also to leave therein some memorial of himself, and he was settling down to live in Florence in the year 1553, when he was forced to change his mind, as it were, for he saw that Duke Cosimo, by whom he was hoping to be honourably employed, was occupied with the war in Siena; whereupon he returned to die in France. And not only did his house remain closed and his family become extinct, but art was deprived of the true method of making glazed work, for the reason that, although there have been some after them who have practised that sort of sculpture, nevertheless they have all failed by a great measure to attain to the excellence of the elder Luca, Andrea, and the others of that family. Wherefore, if I have spoken on this subject at greater length, perchance, than it appeared to be necessary, let no man blame me, seeing that the fact that Luca discovered this new form of sculpture—which, to my knowledge, the ancient Romans did not have—made it necessary to discourse thereon, as I have done, at some length. And if, after the Life of the elder Luca, I have given some brief account of his descendants, who have lived even to our own day, I have done this in order not to have to return to this subject another

time.



**THE ANNUNCIATION**  
**(After Andrea della Robbia. *La Verna*)**  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

Luca, then, while passing from one method of work to another, from marble to bronze, and from bronze to clay, did this not by reason of laziness or because he was, as many are, capricious, unstable, and discontented with his art, but because he felt himself drawn by nature to new things and by necessity to an exercise according to his taste, both less fatiguing and more profitable. Wherefore the world and the arts of design became the richer by a new, useful, and most beautiful art, and he gained immortal and everlasting glory and praise. Luca was an excellent and graceful draughtsman, as it may be seen from some drawings in our book with the lights picked out with white lead, in one of which is his portrait, made by him with much diligence by looking at himself in a mirror.

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**THE VISITATION**  
(*After Giovanni della Robbia. Pistoia: S. Giovanni  
Fuorcivitas*)  
*Alinari*  
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## PAOLO UCCELLO

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### LIFE OF PAOLO UCCELLO

#### PAINTER OF FLORENCE

Paolo Uccello would have been the most gracious and fanciful genius that was ever devoted to the art of painting, from Giotto's day to our own, if he had laboured as much at figures and animals as he laboured and lost time over the details of perspective; for although these are ingenious and beautiful, yet if a man pursues them beyond measure he does nothing but waste his time, exhausts his powers, fills his mind with difficulties, and often transforms its fertility and readiness into sterility and constraint, and renders his manner, by attending more to these details than to figures, dry and angular, which all comes from a wish to examine things too minutely; not to mention that very often he becomes solitary, eccentric, melancholy, and poor, as did Paolo Uccello. This man, endowed by nature with a penetrating and subtle mind, knew no other delight than to investigate certain difficult, nay, impossible problems of perspective, which, although they were fanciful and beautiful, yet hindered him so greatly in the painting of figures, that the older he grew the worse he did them. And there is no doubt that if a man does violence to his nature with too ardent studies, although he may sharpen one edge of his genius, yet nothing that he does appears done with that facility and grace which are natural to those who put each stroke in its proper place temperately and with a calm intelligence full of judgment, avoiding certain subtleties that rather burden a man's work with a certain laboured, dry, constrained, and bad manner, which moves those who see it rather to compassion than to marvel; for the spirit of genius must be driven into action only when the intellect wishes to set itself to work and when the fire of inspiration is kindled, since it is then that excellent and divine qualities

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and marvellous conceptions are seen to issue forth.

Now Paolo was for ever investigating, without a moment's intermission, the most difficult problems of art, insomuch that he reduced to perfection the method of drawing perspectives from the ground-plans of houses and from the profiles of buildings, carried right up to the summits of the cornices and the roofs, by means of intersecting lines, making them foreshortened and diminishing towards the centre, after having first fixed the eye-level either high or low, according to his pleasure. So greatly, in short, did he occupy himself with these difficulties, that he introduced a way, method, and rule of placing figures firmly on the planes whereon their feet are planted, and foreshortening them bit by bit, and making them recede by a proportionate diminution; which hitherto had always been done by chance. He discovered, likewise, the method of turning the intersections and arches of vaulted roofs; the foreshortening of ceilings by means of the convergence of the beams; and the making of round columns at the salient angle of the walls of a house in a manner that they curve at the corner, and, being drawn in perspective, break the angle and cause it to appear level. For the sake of these investigations he kept himself in seclusion and almost a hermit, having little intercourse with anyone, and staying weeks and months in his house without showing himself. And although these were difficult and beautiful problems, if he had spent that time in the study of figures, he would have brought them to absolute perfection; for even so he made them with passing good draughtsmanship. But, consuming his time in these researches, he remained throughout his whole life more poor than famous; wherefore the sculptor Donatello, who was very much his friend, said to him very often—when Paolo showed him mazzocchi<sup>[10]</sup> with pointed ornaments, and squares drawn in perspective from diverse aspects; spheres with seventy-two diamond-shaped facets, with wood-shavings wound round sticks on each facet; and other fantastic devices on which he spent and wasted his time—"Ah, Paolo, this perspective of thine makes thee abandon the substance for the shadow; these are things that are only useful to men who work at the inlaying of wood, seeing that they fill their borders with chips and shavings, with spirals both round and square, and with other similar things."

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The first pictures of Paolo were in fresco, in an oblong niche painted in perspective, at the Hospital of Lelmo—namely, a figure of S. Anthony the Abbot, with S. Cosimo on one side and S. Damiano on the other. In the Annalena, a convent of nuns, he made two figures; and within the Church of S. Trinita, over the left-hand door, he painted stories of S. Francis in fresco—namely, the receiving of the Stigmata; the supporting of the Church, which he is upholding with his shoulders; and his conference with S. Dominic. In S. Maria Maggiore, also, in a chapel near the side-door which leads to S. Giovanni, where there are the panel and predella of Masaccio, he wrought an Annunciation in fresco, wherein he made a building worthy of consideration, which was something new and difficult in those times, seeing that it was the first possessing any beauty of manner which was seen by craftsmen, showing them with grace and proportion how to manage the receding of lines, and how to give so great an extent to a level space which is small and confined, that it appears far distant and large; and when to this, with judgment and grace, men can add shadows and lights by means of colours in their proper places, there is no doubt that they cause an illusion to the eye, so that it appears that the painting is real and in relief. And not being satisfied with this, he wished to demonstrate even greater difficulties in some columns, which, foreshortened in perspective, curve round and break the salient angle of the vaulting wherein are the four Evangelists; which was held something beautiful and difficult, and, in truth, in that branch of his profession Paolo was ingenious and able.

In a cloister of S. Miniato without Florence, also, he wrought the lives of the Holy Fathers, chiefly in terra-verde, and partly in colour; wherein he paid little regard to effecting harmony by painting with one colour, as should be done in painting stories, for he made the fields blue, the cities red, and the buildings varied according to his pleasure; and in this he was at fault, for something which is meant to represent stone cannot and should not be tinted with another colour. It is said that while Paolo was labouring at this work, the Abbot who was then head of that place gave him scarcely anything to eat but cheese. Wherefore Paolo, having grown weary of this, determined, like the shy fellow that he was, to go no more to work there; whereupon the Abbot sent to look for him, and Paolo, when he heard friars asking for him, would never be at home, and if peradventure he met any couples of that Order in the streets of Florence, he would start running and flying from them with all his might. Now two of them, more curious than the rest and younger than Paolo, caught him up one day and asked him for what reason he did not return to finish the work that he had begun, and why he fled at the sight of a friar; and Paolo answered: "You have murdered me in a manner that I not only fly from you, but cannot show myself near any carpenter's shop or pass by one, and all because of the thoughtlessness of your Abbot, who, what with pies and with soups always made of cheese, has crammed so much cheese into me that I am in terror lest, being nothing but cheese, they may use me for making glue. And if it were to go on any longer, I would probably be no more Paolo, but cheese." The friars, leaving him with peals of laughter, told everything to the Abbot, who made him return to his work, and ordered him some other fare than cheese.

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After this, he painted the dorsal of S. Cosimo and S. Damiano in the Carmine, in the Chapel of S. Girolamo (of the Pugliesi). In the house of the Medici he painted some scenes on canvas and in distemper, representing animals; in these he ever took delight, and in order to paint them well he gave them very great attention, and, what is more, he kept ever in his house pictures of birds, cats, dogs, and every sort of strange animal whereof he could get the likeness, being unable to have them alive by reason of his poverty; and because he delighted in birds more than in any other kind, he was given the name of "Paolo of the Birds" (Paolo Uccelli). In the said house,



among other pictures of animals, he made some lions, which were fighting together with movements and a ferocity so terrible that they appeared alive. But the rarest scene among them all was one wherein a serpent, combating with a lion, was showing its ferocity with violent movements, with the venom spurting from its mouth and eyes, while a country girl who is present is looking after an ox made with most beautiful foreshortening. The actual drawing for this ox, by the hand of Paolo, is in my book of drawings, and likewise that of the peasant girl, all full of fear, and in the act of running away from those animals. There are likewise certain very lifelike shepherds, and a landscape which was held something very beautiful in his time. In the other canvases he made some studies of men-at-arms of those times, on horseback, with not a few portraits from the life.

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**PAOLO UCCELLO: THE BATTLE OF S. EGIDIO**  
**(London: National Gallery, 583. Panel)**

[View larger image](#)

Afterwards he was commissioned to paint some scenes in the cloister of S. Maria Novella; and the first, which are at the entrance from the church into the cloister, represent the Creation of the animals, with an infinite number and variety of kinds belonging to water, earth, and air. And since he was very fanciful and took great delight, as it has been said, in painting animals to perfection, he showed in certain lions, who are seeking to bite each other, the great ferocity that is in them, and swiftness and fear in some stags and fallow-deer; not to mention that the birds and fishes, with their feathers and scales, are most lifelike. He made there the Creation of man and of woman, and their Fall, with a beautiful manner and with good and careful execution. And in this work he took delight in making the trees with colours, which the painters of those times were not wont to do very well; and in the landscapes, likewise, he was the first among the old painters to make a name for himself by his work, executing them well and with greater perfection than the painters before him had done; although afterwards there came men who made them more perfect, for with all his labour he was never able to give them that softness and harmony which have been given to them in our own day by painting them in oil-colours. It was enough for Paolo to go on, according to the rules of perspective, drawing and foreshortening them exactly as they are, making in them all that he saw—namely, ploughed fields, ditches, and other minutenesses of nature—with that dry and hard manner of his; whereas, if he had picked out the best from everything and had made use of those parts only that come out well in painting, they would have been absolutely perfect. This labour finished, he worked in the same cloister below two stories by the hand of others; and lower down he painted the Flood, with Noah's Ark, wherein he put so great pains and so great art and diligence into the painting of the dead bodies, the tempest, the fury of the winds, the flashes of the lightning, the shattering of trees, and the terror of men, that it is beyond all description. And he made, foreshortened in perspective, a corpse from which a raven is picking out the eyes, and a drowned boy, whose body, being full of water, is swollen out into the shape of a very great arch. He also represented various human emotions, such as the little fear of the water shown by two men who are fighting on horseback, and the extreme terror of death seen in a woman and a man who are mounted on a buffalo, which is filling with water from behind, so that they are losing all hope of being able to save themselves; and the whole work is so good and so excellent, that it brought him very great fame. He diminished the figures, moreover, by means of lines in perspective, and made mazzocchi and other things, truly very beautiful in such a work. Below this story, likewise, he painted the drunkenness of Noah, with the contemptuous action of his son Ham—in whom he portrayed Dello, the Florentine painter and sculptor, his friend—with Shem and Japhet, his other sons, who are covering him up as he lies showing his nakedness. Here, likewise, he made in perspective a cask that curves on every side, which was held something very beautiful, and also a pergola covered with grapes, the wood-work of which, composed of squared planks, goes on diminishing to a point; but here he was in error, since the diminishing of the plane below, on which the figures are standing, follows the lines of the pergola, and the cask does not follow these same receding lines; wherefore I marvel greatly that a man so accurate and diligent could make an error so notable. He made there also the Sacrifice, with the Ark open and drawn in perspective,

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with the rows of perches in the upper part, distributed row by row; these were the resting-places of the birds, many kinds of which are seen issuing and flying forth in foreshortening, while in the sky there is seen God the Father, who is appearing over the sacrifice that Noah and his sons are making; and this figure, of all those that Paolo made in this work, is the most difficult, for it is flying, with the head foreshortened, towards the wall, and has such force and relief that it seems to be piercing and breaking through it. Besides this, Noah has round him an infinite number of diverse animals, all most beautiful. In short, he gave to all this work so great softness and grace, that it is beyond comparison superior to all his others; wherefore it has been greatly praised from that time up to our own.

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#### THE DELUGE

*(After the fresco by Paolo Uccello. Florence: S. Maria Novella)*

*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

In S. Maria del Fiore, in memory of Giovanni Acuto, an Englishman, Captain of the Florentines, who had died in the year 1393, he made in terra-verde a horse of extraordinary grandeur, which was held very beautiful, and on it the image of the Captain himself, in chiaroscuro and coloured with terra-verde, in a picture ten braccia high on the middle of one wall of the church; where Paolo drew in perspective a large sarcophagus, supposed to contain the corpse, and over this he placed the image of him in his Captain's armour, on horseback. This work was and still is held to be something very beautiful for a painting of that kind, and if Paolo had not made that horse move its legs on one side only, which naturally horses do not do, or they would fall—and this perchance came about because he was not accustomed to ride, nor used to horses as he was to other animals—this work would be absolutely perfect, since the proportion of that horse, which is colossal, is very beautiful; and on the base there are these letters: PAULI UCCELLI OPUS.

At the same time, and in the same church, he painted in colours the hour-dial above the principal door within the church, with four heads coloured in fresco at the corners. He wrought in terra-verde, also, the loggia that faces towards the west above the garden of the Monastery of the Angeli, painting below each arch a story of the acts of S. Benedict the Abbot, and of the most notable events of his life, up to his death. Here, among many most beautiful scenes, there is one wherein a monastery is destroyed by the agency of the Devil, while a friar is left dead below the stones and beams. No less notable is the terror of another monk, whose draperies, as he flies, cling round his nude form and flutter with most beautiful grace; whereby Paolo awakened the minds of the craftsmen so greatly, that they have ever afterwards followed that method. Very beautiful, also, is the figure of S. Benedict, the while that with dignity and devoutness, in the presence of his monks, he restores the dead friar to life. Finally, in all these stories there are features worthy of consideration, and above all in certain places where the very tiles of the roof, whether flat or round, are drawn in perspective. And in the death of S. Benedict, while his monks are performing his obsequies and bewailing him, there are some sick men and cripples, all most beautiful, who stand gazing on him; and it is noticeable, also, that among many loving and devout followers of that Saint there is an old monk with crutches under his arms, in whom there is seen a marvellous expression, with even a hope of being made whole. In this work there are no landscapes in colour, nor many buildings, nor difficult perspectives, but there is truly great design, with no little of the good.

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In many houses of Florence there are many pictures in perspective by the hand of the same man, for the adornment of couches, beds, and other little things; and in Gualfonda, in particular, on a terrace in the garden which once belonged to the Bartolini, there are four battle-scenes painted on wood by his hand, full of horses and armed men, with very beautiful costumes of those days; and among the men are portraits of Paolo Orsino, Ottobuono da Parma, Luca da Canale, and Carlo Malatesti, Lord of Rimini, all captains-general of those times. And these pictures, since they were spoilt and had suffered injury, were restored in our own day by the agency of Giuliano Bugiardini, who did them more harm than good.

Paolo was summoned to Padua by Donato, when the latter was working there, and at the entrance of the house of the Vitali he painted some giants in terra-verde, which, as I have found in a Latin letter written by Girolamo Campagnola to Messer Leonico Tomeo, the philosopher, are

so beautiful that Andrea Mantegna held them in very great account. Paolo wrought in fresco the Volta de' Peruzzi, with triangular sections in perspective, and in the angles of the corners he painted the four elements, making for each an appropriate animal—for the earth a mole, for the water a fish, for the fire a salamander, and for the air a chameleon, which lives on it and assumes any colour. And because he had never seen a chameleon, he painted a camel, which is opening its mouth and swallowing air, and therewith filling its belly; and great, indeed, was his simplicity in making allusion by means of the name of the camel to an animal that is like a little dry lizard, and in representing it by a great uncouth beast.

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### PORTRAITS

*(After the panel by Paolo Uccello. Paris: Louvre, 1272)*

*Mansell*

[View larger image](#)

Truly great were the labours of Paolo in painting, for he drew so much that he left to his relatives, as I have learnt from their own lips, whole chests full of drawings. But, although it is a good thing to draw, it is nevertheless better to make complete pictures, seeing that pictures have longer life than drawings. In our book of drawings there are many figures, studies in perspective, birds, and animals, beautiful to a marvel, but the best of all is a mazzocchio drawn only with lines, so beautiful that nothing save the patience of Paolo could have executed it. Paolo, although he was an eccentric person, loved talent in his fellow-craftsmen, and in order that some memory of them might go down to posterity, he painted five distinguished men with his own hand on a long panel, which he kept in his house in memory of them. One was Giotto, the painter, standing for the light and origin of art; the second was Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, for architecture; Donatello, for sculpture; himself, for perspective and animals; and, for mathematics, Giovanni Manetti, his friend, with whom he often conferred and discoursed on the problems of Euclid.

It is said that having been commissioned to paint, over the door of S. Tommaso in the Mercato Vecchio, that Saint feeling for the wound in the side of Christ, Paolo put into that work all the effort that he could, saying that he wished to show therein the full extent of his worth and knowledge; and so he caused a screen of planks to be made, to the end that no one might be able to see his work until it was finished. Wherefore Donato, meeting him one day all alone, said to him: "And what sort of work may this be of thine, that thou keepest it screened so closely?" And Paolo said in answer: "Thou shalt see it. Let that suffice thee." Donato would not constrain him to say more, thinking to see some miracle, as usual, when the time came. Afterwards, chancing one morning to be in the Mercato Vecchio buying fruit, Donato saw Paolo uncovering his work, whereupon he saluted him courteously, and was asked by Paolo himself, who was curious and anxious to hear his judgment on it, what he thought of that picture. Donato, having studied the work long and well, exclaimed: "Ah, Paolo, thou oughtest to be covering it up, and here thou art uncovering it!" Whereupon Paolo was much aggrieved, feeling that he was receiving much more by way of blame than he expected to receive by way of praise for this last labour of his; and not having courage, lowered as he was, to go out any more, he shut himself up in his house, devoting himself to perspective, which kept him ever poor and depressed up to his death. And so, growing very old, and having but little contentment in his old age, he died in the eighty-third year of his life, in 1432, and was buried in S. Maria Novella.

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He left a daughter, who had knowledge of drawing, and a wife, who was wont to say that Paolo would stay in his study all night, seeking to solve the problems of perspective, and that when she called him to come to bed, he would say: "Oh, what a sweet thing is this perspective!" And in truth, if it was sweet to him, it was not otherwise than dear and useful, thanks to him, to those who exercised themselves therein after his time.

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## LORENZO Ghiberti

# LIFE OF LORENZO Ghiberti

## [*LORENZO DI CIONE Ghiberti OR LORENZO DI BARTOLUCCIO Ghiberti*]

### PAINTER OF FLORENCE

There is no doubt that in every city those who, by reason of any talent, come into some fame among men, are a most blessed light and example to many who are either born after them or live in the same age, not to mention the infinite praise and the extraordinary rewards that they themselves gain thereby while living. Nor is there anything that does more to arouse the minds of men, and to render the discipline of study less fatiguing to them, than the honour and profit which are afterwards won by labouring at the arts, for the reason that these make every difficult undertaking easy to them all, and give a greater stimulus to the growth of their talents, when they are urged to greater efforts by the praises of the world. Wherefore infinite numbers of men, who feel and see this, put themselves to great fatigues, in order to attain to the honour of winning that which they see to have been won by some compatriot; and for this reason in ancient times men of talent were rewarded with riches, or honoured with triumphs and images. But since it is seldom that talent is not persecuted by envy, men must continue to the best of their power, by means of the utmost excellence, to assure it of victory, or at least to make it stout and strong to sustain the attacks of that enemy; even as Lorenzo di Cione Ghiberti, otherwise called Di Bartoluccio, was enabled to do both by his own merits and by fortune. This man well deserved the honour of being placed before themselves by the sculptor Donato and by the architect and sculptor Filippo Brunelleschi, both excellent craftsmen, since they recognized, in truth, although instinct perchance constrained them to do the contrary, that Lorenzo was a better master of casting than they were. This truly brought glory to them, and confusion to many who, presuming on their worth, set themselves to work and occupy the place due to the talents of others, and, without producing any fruits themselves, but labouring a thousand years at the making of one work, impede and oppress the knowledge of others with malignity and with envy.

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Lorenzo, then, was the son of Bartoluccio Ghiberti, and from his earliest years learnt the art of the goldsmith from his father, who was an excellent master and taught him that business, which Lorenzo grasped so well that he became much better therein than his father. But delighting much more in the arts of sculpture and design, he would sometimes handle colours, and at other times would cast little figures in bronze and finish them with much grace. He also delighted in counterfeiting the dies of ancient medals, and he portrayed many of his friends from the life in his time.

Now, while he was working with Bartoluccio and seeking to make progress in his profession, the plague came to Florence in the year 1400, as he himself relates in a book by his own hand wherein he discourses on the subject of art, which is now in the possession of the Reverend Maestro Cosimo Bartoli, a gentleman of Florence. To this plague were added civil discords and other troubles in the city, and he was forced to depart and to go in company with another painter to Romagna, where they painted for Signor Pandolfo Malatesti, in Rimini, an apartment and many other works, which were finished by them with diligence and to the satisfaction of that Lord, who, although still young, took great delight in matters of design. Meanwhile Lorenzo did not cease to study the arts of design, and to work in relief with wax, stucco, and other similar materials, knowing very well that these small reliefs are the drawing-exercises of sculptors, and that without such practice nothing can be brought by them to perfection. Now, when he had been no long time out of his own country, the pestilence ceased; wherefore the Signoria of Florence and the Guild of Merchants—since at that time sculpture had many excellent craftsmen, both foreign and Florentine—determined that there should be made, as it had been already discussed many times, the other two doors of S. Giovanni, a very ancient temple, indeed, the oldest in that city; and they ordained among themselves that instructions should be sent to all the masters who were held the best in Italy, to repair to Florence in order that their powers might be tested by a specimen scene in bronze, similar to one of those which Andrea Pisano had formerly made for the first door.

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Word of this determination was written to Lorenzo, who was working at Pesaro, by Bartoluccio, urging him to return to Florence in order to give a proof of his powers, and saying that this was an occasion to make himself known and to demonstrate his genius, not to mention that he might gain such profit that neither the one nor the other of them would ever again need to labour at making ear-rings.

The words of Bartoluccio stirred the spirit of Lorenzo so greatly, that although Signor Pandolfo, with all his Court and the other painter, kept showing him the greatest favour, Lorenzo took leave of that lord and of the painter, and they, with great unwillingness and displeasure, allowed him to go, neither promises nor increase of payment availing to detain him, since to Lorenzo every hour appeared a thousand years until he could return to Florence. Having departed, therefore, he arrived safely in his own city. Many foreigners had already assembled and presented themselves to the Consuls of the Guild, by whom seven masters were elected out of the whole number, three being Florentines and the others Tuscans; and it was ordained that they should have an allowance of money, and that within a year each man should finish a scene in bronze by way of test, of the same size as those in the first door. And for the subject they chose the story of Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac, wherein they thought that the said masters should



be able to show their powers with regard to the difficulties of their art, seeing that this story contained landscapes, figures both nude and clothed, and animals, while the foremost figures could be made in full-relief, the second in half-relief, and the third in low-relief.

The competitors for this work were Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, Donato, and Lorenzo di Bartoluccio, all Florentines; Jacopo della Quercia of Siena, and Niccolò d'Arezzo, his pupil; Francesco di Valdambrina; and Simone da Colle, called Simone de' Bronzi. All these men promised before the Consuls that they would deliver their scenes finished within the said time; and each making a beginning with his own, with all zeal and diligence they exerted all their strength and knowledge in order to surpass one another in excellence, keeping their work hidden and most secret, lest they should copy each other's ideas. Lorenzo alone, who had Bartoluccio to guide him and to compel him to labour at many models before they resolved to adopt any one of them—Lorenzo alone was ever inviting the citizens, and sometimes any passing stranger who had some knowledge of the art, to see his work, in order to hear what they thought and these opinions enabled him to execute a model very well wrought and without one defect. And so, when he had made the moulds and cast the work in bronze, it came out very well; whereupon, with his father Bartoluccio, he polished it with such love and patience that nothing could be executed or finished better. And when the time came for comparing the various works, his and those of the other masters were completely finished, and were given to the Guild of Merchants for judgment; but after all had been seen by the Consuls and by many other citizens, diverse opinions were expressed about them. Many foreigners had assembled in Florence, some painters, some sculptors, and others goldsmiths; and they were invited by the Consuls to give judgment on these works, together with the other men of that profession who lived in Florence. They numbered thirty-four in all, each well experienced in his own art. Now, although there were differences of opinion among them, some liking the manner of one man and some that of another, nevertheless they were agreed that Filippo di Ser Brunellesco and Lorenzo di Bartoluccio had composed and completed their scenes better and with a richer abundance of figures than Donato had done in his, although in that one, also, there was grand design. In that of Jacopo della Quercia the figures were good, but they had no delicacy, although they were made with design and diligence. The work of Francesco di Valdambrina had good heads and was well finished, but was confused in the composition. That of Simone da Colle was a beautiful casting, because the doing of this was his art, but it had not much design. The specimen of Niccolò d'Arezzo, which was made with good mastery, had the figures squat and was badly finished. Only that scene which Lorenzo made as a specimen, which is still seen in the Audience Chamber of the Guild of Merchants, was in every part wholly perfect. The whole work had design, and was very well composed. The figures had so graceful a manner, being made with grace and with very beautiful attitudes, and the whole was finished with so great diligence, that it appeared not made by casting and polished with tools of iron, but blown with the breath. Donato and Filippo, seeing the diligence that Lorenzo had used in his work, drew aside, and, conferring together, they resolved that the work should be given to Lorenzo, it appearing to them that thus both the public and the private interest would be best served, and that Lorenzo, being a young man not more than twenty years of age, would be able to produce by this exercise of his profession those greater fruits that were foreshadowed by the beautiful scene which he, in their judgment, had executed more excellently than the others; saying that there would have been more sign of envy in taking it from him, than there was justice in giving it to him.

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Beginning the work of that door, then, for that entrance which is opposite to the Office of Works of S. Giovanni, Lorenzo made for one part of it a large framework of wood, of the exact size that it was to be, with mouldings, and with the ornaments of the heads at the corners, round the various spaces wherein the scenes were to be placed, and with those borders that were to go round them. Having then made and dried the mould with all diligence, he made a very great furnace (that I remember seeing) in a room that he had hired opposite to S. Maria Nuova, where to-day there is the Hospital of the Weavers, on the spot that was called the Aia, and he cast the said framework in bronze. But, as chance would have it, it did not come out well; wherefore, having realized the mischief, without losing heart or giving way to depression, he promptly made another mould and cast it again, without telling anyone about it, and it came out very well. Whereupon he went on and continued the whole work in this manner, casting each scene by itself, and putting it, when finished, into its place. The arrangement of the scenes was similar to that which Andrea Pisano had formerly made in the first door, which Giotto designed for him. He made therein twenty scenes from the New Testament; and below, in eight spaces similar to these, after the said scenes, he made the four Evangelists, two on each side of the door, and likewise the four Doctors of the Church, in the same manner; which figures are all different in their attitudes and their draperies. One is writing, another is reading, others are in contemplation, and all, being varied one from another, appear lifelike and very well executed; not to mention that in the framework of the border surrounding the scenes in squares there is a frieze of ivy leaves and other kinds of foliage, with mouldings between each; and on every corner is the head of a man or a woman in the round, representing prophets and sibyls, which are very beautiful, and demonstrate with their variety the excellence of the genius of Lorenzo. Above the aforesaid Doctors and Evangelists, which are in the four squares below, there follows, on the side towards S. Maria del Fiore, the first scene; and here, in the first square, is the Annunciation of Our Lady, wherein, in the attitude of the Virgin, he depicted terror and a sudden alarm, as she turns away gracefully by reason of the coming of the Angel. And next to this he made the Nativity of Christ, wherein the Madonna, having given birth to Him, is lying down and taking repose; with Joseph in contemplation, the shepherds, and the Angels singing. In the scene next to this, on the other half of the door, on the same level, there follows the story of the coming of the Magi, and of their

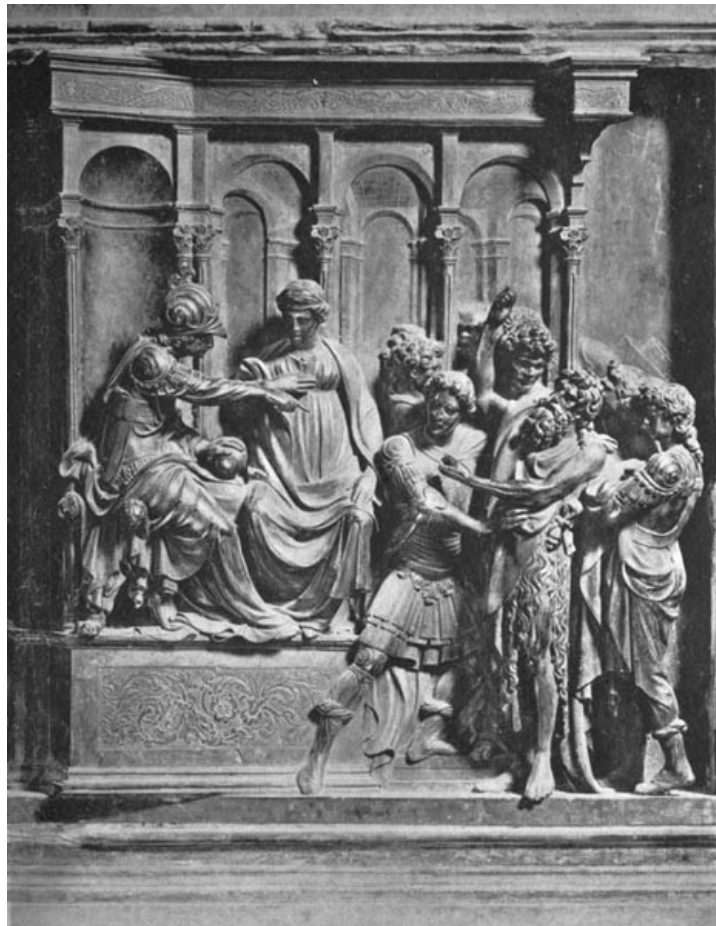
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adoration of Christ, while they give Him their tribute; and their Court is following them, with horses and other equipage, wrought with great genius. And beside this, likewise, there is His Disputation with the Doctors in the Temple, wherein the admiration and the attention which the Doctors give to Christ are no less well expressed than the joy of Mary and Joseph at finding Him again. Above these—beginning again over the Annunciation—there follows the story of the Baptism of Christ by John in the Jordan, wherein there are seen in their gestures the reverence of the one and the faith of the other. Beside this there follows the Temptation of Christ by the Devil, who, terrified by the words of Jesus, stands in an attitude of terror, showing thereby that he knows Him to be the Son of God. Next to this, on the other side, is the scene where He is driving the traders from the Temple, overturning their money and the victims, doves, and other merchandise; wherein the figures, falling over each other, have a very beautiful and well conceived grace in their headlong flight. Next to this Lorenzo placed the shipwreck of the Apostles, wherein S. Peter is issuing from the ship and is sinking into the water, and Christ is upholding him. This scene shows an abundance of various gestures in the Apostles, who are toiling to save the ship; and the faith of S. Peter is recognized in his coming towards Christ. Beginning again above the story of the Baptism, on the other side, there is His Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, wherein Lorenzo demonstrated, in the attitudes of the three Apostles, how celestial visions dazzle the eyes of mortals; even as the Divinity of Christ is also recognized as He holds His head high and His arms outstretched, between Elias and Moses. And next to this is the Resurrection of the dead Lazarus, who, having issued from the sepulchre, is standing upright with his feet and his hands bound, to the marvel of the bystanders. Martha is there, with Mary Magdalene, who is kissing the feet of the Lord with very great humility and reverence. Beside this, on the other half of the door, there follows the scene when He rides on an ass into Jerusalem, while the children of the Hebrews, in various attitudes, are casting their garments on the ground, with the olives and palms; not to mention the Apostles, who are following the Saviour. And next to this is the Last Supper, very beautiful and well composed, the Apostles being placed at a long table, half on the near side and half on the farther side. Above the scene of the Transfiguration there is the Prayer in the Garden, wherein the three Apostles are seen asleep in various attitudes. And beside this there follows the scene when He is taken and Judas kisses Him, wherein there are many things worthy of consideration, since we see therein both the Apostles, who are flying, and the Jews, who, in taking Christ, are making most violent gestures and efforts. On the other side, next to this, is the scene when He is bound to the Column, wherein is the figure of Jesus Christ writhing not a little with the pain of the blows, in a pitiful attitude, while there are seen, in those gestures that the Jews who are scourging Him are making, terrible rage and lust of vengeance. Next to this there follows the leading of Christ before Pilate, who washes his hands and condemns Him to the Cross. Above the Prayer in the Garden, on the other side and in the last row of scenes, is Christ bearing His Cross and going to His death, led by a crowd of soldiers, who appear, with strange attitudes, to be dragging Him by force; besides the gestures of sorrow and lamentation that the Maries are making, insomuch that one who was present could not have seen them better. Beside this he made Christ on the Cross, and Our Lady and S. John the Evangelist seated on the ground, with gestures full of sorrow and wrath. Next to this, on the other side, there follows His Resurrection, wherein the guards, stunned by the thunder, are lying like dead men, while Christ is ascending on high in such an attitude that He truly appears glorified, by reason of the perfection of His beautiful limbs, wrought by the most ingenious industry of Lorenzo. In the last space is the coming of the Holy Spirit, wherein are very sweet expressions and attitudes in those who are receiving it.

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This work was brought to that completion and perfection without sparing any labour or time that could be devoted to a work in bronze, seeing that the limbs of the nudes are most beautiful in every part; and in the draperies, although they hold a little to the old manner of Giotto's time, there is a general feeling that inclines to the manner of the moderns, and produces, in figures of that size, a certain very lovely grace. And in truth the composition of each scene is so well ordered and so finely arranged, that he rightly deserved to obtain that praise which Filippo had given him at the beginning—nay, even more. And in like manner he gained most honourable recognition among his fellow-citizens, and was consummately extolled by them and by the native and foreign craftsmen. The cost of this work, with the exterior ornaments, which are also of bronze, wrought with festoons of fruits and with animals, was 22,000 florins, and the bronze door weighed 34,000 libbre.



**S. JOHN BEFORE HEROD**  
**(After Lorenzo Ghiberti. *Siena: Baptistery*)**  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

This work finished, it appeared to the Consuls of the Guild of Merchants that they had been very well served, and by reason of the praises given by all to Lorenzo they determined that he should make a statue of bronze, four braccia and a half high, in memory of S. John the Baptist, on a pilaster without Orsanmichele, in one of the niches there—namely, the one facing the Cloth-dressers. This he began, nor did he ever leave it until he delivered it finished. It was and still is a work highly praised, and in it, on the mantle, he made a border of letters, wherein he wrote his own name. In this work, which was placed in position in the year 1414, there is seen the beginning of the good modern manner, in the head, in an arm which appears to be living flesh, in the hands, and in the whole attitude of the figure. He was thus the first who began to imitate the works of the ancient Romans, whereof he was an ardent student, as all must be who desire to do good work. And in the frontal of that shrine he tried his hand at mosaic, making therein a half-length prophet.

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The fame of Lorenzo, by reason of his most profound mastery in casting, had now spread throughout all Italy and abroad, insomuch that Jacopo della Fonte, Vecchietto of Siena, and Donato having made for the Signoria of Siena some scenes and figures in bronze that were to adorn the baptismal font of their Church of S. Giovanni, the people of Siena, having seen the works of Lorenzo in Florence, came to an agreement with him and caused him to make two scenes from the life of S. John the Baptist. In one he made S. John baptizing Christ, accompanying it with an abundance of figures, both nude and very richly draped; and in the other he made S. John being taken and led before Herod. In these scenes he surpassed and excelled the men who had made the others; wherefore he was consummately praised by the people of Siena, and by all others who have seen them.

The Masters of the Mint in Florence had a statue to make for one of those niches that are round Orsanmichele, opposite to the Guild of Wool, and it was to be a S. Matthew, of the same height as the aforesaid S. John. Wherefore they allotted it to Lorenzo, who executed it to perfection; and it was much more praised than the S. John, for he made it more in the modern manner. This statue brought it about that the Consuls of the Guild of Wool determined that he should make in the same place, for the niche next to that, a statue likewise in bronze, which should be of the same proportions as the other two, representing S. Stephen, their Patron Saint. And he brought it to completion, giving a very beautiful varnish to the bronze; and this statue gave no less satisfaction than the other works already wrought by him.

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The General of the Preaching Friars at that time, Maestro Lionardo Dati, wishing to leave a memorial of himself to his country in S. Maria Novella, where he had taken his vows, caused Lorenzo to construct a tomb of bronze, with himself lying dead thereon, portrayed from nature; and this tomb, which was admired and extolled, led to another being erected by Lodovico degli Albizzi and Niccolò Valori in S. Croce.

After these things, Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici, wishing to honour the bodies and relics of the three martyrs, Protus, Hyacinthus, and Nemesius, had them brought from the Casentino, where they had been held in little veneration for many years, and caused Lorenzo to make a sarcophagus of bronze, in the middle of which are two angels in low-relief who are holding a garland of olive, within which are the names of those martyrs; and they caused the said relics to be put into the said sarcophagus, which they placed in the Church of the Monastery of the Angeli in Florence, with these words below, carved in marble, on the side of the church of the monks:

CLARISSIMI VIRI COSMAS ET LAURENTIUS FRATRES NEGLECTAS DIU  
SANCTORUM RELIQUIAS MARTYRUM RELIGIOSO STUDIO AC FIDELISSIMA  
PIETATE SUIS SUMPTIBUS ÆREIS LOCULIS CONDENDAS COLENDASQUE  
CURARUNT.

And on the outer side, facing the little church in the direction of the street, below a coat of arms of balls, there are these other words carved on marble:

HIC CONDITA SUNT CORPORA SANCTORUM CHRISTI MARTYRUM PROTI ET  
HYACINTHI ET NEMESII, ANN. DOM. 1428.

And by reason of this work, which succeeded very nobly, there came a wish to the Wardens of Works of S. Maria del Fiore to have a sarcophagus and tomb of bronze made to contain the body of S. Zanobi, Bishop of Florence. This tomb was three braccia and a half in length, and two in height; and besides adorning it with diverse varied ornaments, he made therein on the front of the body of the sarcophagus itself a scene with S. Zanobi restoring to life a child which had been left in his charge by the mother, and which had died while she was on a pilgrimage. In a second scene is another child, who has been killed by a wagon, and also the Saint restoring to life one of the two servants sent to him by S. Ambrose, who had been left dead on the Alps; and the other is there, making lamentation in the presence of S. Zanobi, who, seized with compassion, said: "Go, he doth but sleep; thou wilt find him alive." And at the back are six little angels, who are holding a garland of elm-leaves, within which are carved letters in memory and in praise of that Saint. This work he executed and finished with the utmost ingenuity and art, insomuch that it received extraordinary praise as something beautiful.

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The while that the works of Lorenzo were every day adding lustre to his name, by reason of his labouring and serving innumerable persons, working in bronze as well as in silver and gold, it chanced that there fell into the hands of Giovanni, son of Cosimo de' Medici, a very large cornelian containing the flaying of Marsyas by command of Apollo, engraved in intaglio; which cornelian, so it is said, once served the Emperor Nero for a seal. And it being something rare, by reason both of the size of the stone, which was very great, and of the marvellous beauty of the intaglio, Giovanni gave it to Lorenzo, to the end that he might make a gold ornament in relief round it; and he, after toiling at it for many months, finished it completely, making round it a work in relief of a beauty not inferior to the excellence and perfection of the intaglio on the stone; which work brought it about that he wrought many other things in gold and silver, which to-day are not to be found. For Pope Martin, likewise, he made a gold button which he wore in his cope, with figures in full-relief, and among them jewels of very great price—a very excellent work; and likewise a most marvellous mitre of gold leaves in open-work, and among them many little figures in full-relief, which were held very beautiful. And for this work, besides the name, he acquired great profit from the liberality of that Pontiff. In the year 1439, Pope Eugenius came to Florence —where the Council was held—in order to unite the Greek Church with the Roman; and seeing the works of Lorenzo, and being no less pleased with his person than with the works themselves, he caused him to make a mitre of gold, weighing fifteen libbre, with pearls weighing five libbre and a half, which, with the jewels set in the mitre, were estimated at 30,000 ducats of gold. It is said that in this work were six pearls as big as filberts, and it is impossible to imagine, as was seen later in a drawing of it, anything more beautiful and bizarre than the settings of the jewels and the great variety of children and other figures, which served for many varied and graceful ornaments. For this work he received infinite favours from that Pontiff, both for himself and his friends, besides the original payment.

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Florence had received so much praise by reason of the excellent works of this most ingenious craftsman, that the Consuls of the Guild of Merchants determined to commission him to make the third door of S. Giovanni, likewise in bronze. Now, in the door that he had made before, he had followed their directions and had made it with that ornament which goes round the figures, and which encircles the framework of both parts of the door, as in the one of Andrea Pisano; but on seeing how greatly Lorenzo had surpassed him, the Consuls determined to remove that of Andrea from its position in the centre, and to place it in the doorway that is opposite to the Misericordia, and to commission Lorenzo to make a new door to be placed in the centre, looking to him to put forth the greatest effort of which he was capable in that art. And they placed themselves in his hands, saying that they gave him leave to make it as he pleased, and in whatsoever manner he thought it would turn out as ornate, as rich, as perfect, and as beautiful as it could be made or imagined; nor was he to spare time or expense, to the end that, even as he had surpassed all other sculptors up to his own time, he might surpass and excel all his own previous works.

Lorenzo began the said work, putting therein all the knowledge that he could; wherefore he divided the said door into ten squares, five on each side, so that the spaces enclosing the scenes were one braccio and a third in extent, and round them, to adorn the framework that surrounds the scenes, there are niches—upright, in that part of the door—containing figures in almost full-relief, twenty in number and all most beautiful, such as a nude Samson, who, embracing a

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column, with a jawbone in his hand, displays a perfection as great as can be shown by anything made in the time of the ancients, in their figures of Hercules, whether in bronze or in marble; and to this a Joshua bears witness, who, in the act of speaking, appears to be really addressing his army; besides many prophets and sibyls, all of which he adorned with various manners of draperies over their shoulders, and with head-dresses, hair, and other adornments; not to mention twelve figures which are lying down in the niches that go horizontally along the ornament of the scenes. At the intersections of the corners, in certain medallions, he made heads of women, of youths, and of old men, to the number of thirty-four; among which, in the middle of the said door, near the place where he engraved his own name, is the portrait of his father Bartoluccio, who is the oldest of them, while the youngest is his son Lorenzo himself, the master of the whole work; besides an infinite quantity of foliage, mouldings, and other ornaments, made with the greatest mastery. The scenes that are in the said door are from the Old Testament; and in the first is the Creation of Adam, and of Eve, his wife, who are executed most perfectly, it being evident that Lorenzo strove to make their limbs as beautiful as he was able to do, wishing to show that, even as these figures by the hand of God were the most beautiful that were ever made, so these by his own hand should surpass all the others that had been made by him in his other works—truly a very grand intention. In the same scene, likewise, he made them eating the apple, and also being driven out of Paradise; and in these actions the figures express the effect, first of their sin, recognizing their nakedness and covering it with their hands, and then of repentance, when they are made by the Angel to go forth out of Paradise. In the second square are figures of Adam and Eve, with Cain and Abel as little children, born from them; and there, also, is Abel making a sacrifice of his firstlings, with Cain making one not so good, while in the expression of Cain there is shown envy against his brother, and in Abel love towards God. And what is singularly beautiful is to see Cain ploughing the earth with a pair of oxen, which, with their labouring to pull at the yoke of the plough, appear real and natural; and the same is shown in Abel, who is watching his flocks, and Cain puts him to death, when he is seen, in a most impious and cruel attitude, slaughtering his brother with a club, in such a manner that the very bronze shows the limpness of the dead limbs in the most beautiful person of Abel; and in the distance, likewise, there is God asking Cain what he has done with Abel. Each square contains the representation of four stories. In the third square Lorenzo made Noah issuing from the Ark, with his wife, his sons and daughters, and his sons' wives, together with all the animals, both of the air and of the earth, which, each in its kind, are wrought with the greatest perfection wherewith art is able to imitate nature; the Ark is seen open, with the poles in perspective, in very low-relief, insomuch that their grace cannot be expressed; besides that, the figures of Noah and of his kindred could not be more lively or more vivacious, while, as he is offering sacrifice, there is seen the rainbow, a sign of peace between God and Noah. But much more excellent than all the others are the scenes where he is planting the vine, and, having been made drunk by the wine, is showing his nakedness, and his son Ham is deriding him; and in truth a man sleeping could not be imitated better, the limbs being seen outstretched in drunken abandonment, while his other two sons, with consideration and love, are covering him in very beautiful attitudes; not to mention that there are the cask, the vine-leaves, and the other features of the vintage, so carefully made and fitted into certain places, that they do not impede the story, but serve as a most beautiful adornment. In the fourth scene it pleased Lorenzo to make the apparition of the three Angels in the valley of Mamre, giving them a close likeness one to the other, while that most holy patriarch is seen adoring them, with much appropriateness and vivacity in the position of his hands and the expression of his countenance; and, in addition, Lorenzo showed very beautiful feeling in the figures of his servants, who, remaining at the foot of the mountain with an ass, are awaiting Abraham, who had gone to sacrifice his son. Isaac is placed naked on the altar, and his father, with uplifted arm, is about to show his obedience, but he is hindered by the Angel, who is restraining him with one hand, while with the other he is pointing to where is the ram for the sacrifice, and delivering Isaac from death. This scene is truly very beautiful, since, among other things, there is seen a very great difference between the delicate limbs of Isaac and those of the servants, which are more robust; insomuch that there appears to be no touch therein that was not given with the greatest art. In this work, also, Lorenzo showed that he surpassed his own self in the difficulties of making buildings; in the birth-scene of Isaac, Jacob, and Esau; in the scene when Esau is hunting, at the wish of his father; and in that when Jacob, instructed by Rebecca, is offering the cooked kid, with its skin wrapped round his neck, while Isaac is feeling for him and giving him his blessing. In this scene there are some dogs, very beautiful and lifelike, besides the figures, which produce the very same effect that Jacob, Isaac, and Rebecca did by their actions when they were alive.

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**THE FALL OF JERICHO**  
*(Detail, after Lorenzo Ghiberti, from the Paradise Gate of the Baptistery, Florence)*

*Brogi*

[View larger image](#)



**THE CREATION OF EVE**  
*(Detail, after Lorenzo Ghiberti, from the Paradise Gate of the Baptistery, Florence)*

*Brogi*

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Emboldened by his study of the art, which was making it ever easier to him, he tried his genius on matters more complicated and difficult; wherefore, in the sixth square, he made Joseph cast by his brethren into the well, and the scene when they sell him to the merchants, and where he is given by them to Pharaoh, to whom he interprets the dream of the famine; together with the provision against it, and the honours given by Pharaoh to Joseph. Likewise there is Jacob sending his sons for corn into Egypt, and Joseph recognizing them and making them return for their father; in which scene Lorenzo made a round temple, drawn in perspective with great mastery, wherein are figures in diverse manners which are loading corn and flour, together with some marvellous asses. Likewise there is the feast that Joseph gives them, and the hiding of the gold cup in Benjamin's sack, and its discovery, and how he embraces and acknowledges his brethren; which scene, by reason of the many effects and the great variety of incidents, is held the most noble, the most difficult, and the most beautiful of all his works.

And in truth, having so beautiful a genius and so good a grace in this manner of statuary, when there came into his mind the compositions of beautiful scenes, Lorenzo could not but make the figures most beautiful; as it is apparent in the seventh square, where he represents Mount Sinai, and on its summit Moses, who is receiving the Laws from God. Reverently kneeling, half-way up the mountain, is Joshua, who is awaiting him, and at the foot are all the people, terrified by the thunder, lightning, and earthquakes, in diverse attitudes wrought with very great vivacity. After this, he showed diligence and great love in the eighth square, wherein he made Joshua marching against Jericho and turning back the Jordan, and placed there the twelve tents of the twelve Tribes, full of very lifelike figures; but more beautiful are some in low-relief, in the scene when, as they go with the Ark round the walls of the aforesaid city, these walls fall down at the sound of trumpets, and the Hebrews take Jericho; and here the landscape is ever diminished and made lower with great judgment, from the first figures to the mountains, from the mountains to the city, and from the city to the distant part of the landscape, in very low relief, the whole being executed with great perfection. And since Lorenzo became from day to day more practised in that art, there is next seen, in the ninth square, the slaying of the giant Goliath by David, who is cutting off his head in a proud and boyish attitude; and the host of the Lord is routing that of the Philistines, wherein Lorenzo made horses, chariots, and other warlike things. Next, he made David returning with the head of Goliath in his hand, and the people are meeting him, sounding instruments and singing; and these effects are all appropriate and vivacious. It now remained for Lorenzo to do all that he was able in the tenth and last scene, wherein the Queen of Sheba is visiting Solomon, with a very great train; in this part he made a very beautiful building drawn in perspective, with all the other figures similar to the aforesaid scenes; not to mention the ornaments of the architraves, which go round the said doors, wherein are fruits and festoons made with his usual excellence.

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In this work, both in detail and as a whole, it is seen how much the ability and the power of a craftsman in statuary can effect by means of figures, some being almost in the round, some in half-relief, some in low-relief, and some in the lowest, with invention in the grouping of the figures, and extravagance of attitude both in the males and in the females; and by variety in the buildings, by perspectives, and by having likewise shown a sense of fitness in the gracious expressions of each sex throughout the whole work, giving to the old gravity, and to the young elegance and grace. And it may be said, in truth, that this work is in every way perfect, and that it is the most beautiful work which has ever been seen in the world, whether ancient or modern. And right truly does Lorenzo deserve to be praised, seeing that one day Michelagnolo Buonarroti, having stopped to look at this work, and being asked what he thought of it, and whether these doors were beautiful, answered: "They are so beautiful that they would do well for the gates of Paradise": praise truly appropriate, and given by an able judge. And well indeed might Lorenzo complete them, seeing that from the age of twenty, when he began them, he worked at them for forty years, with labour beyond belief.

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Lorenzo was assisted in finishing and polishing this work, after it was cast, by many men, then youths, who afterwards became excellent masters—namely, by Filippo Brunelleschi, Masolino da Panicale, and Niccolò Lamberti, goldsmiths; and by Parri Spinelli, Antonio Filarete, Paolo Uccello, Antonio del Pollaiuolo, who was then quite young, and many others, who, growing intimate together over that work, and conferring one with another, as men do when they work in company, gained no less advantage for themselves than they gave to Lorenzo. To him, besides the payment that he had from the Consuls, the Signoria gave a good farm near the Abbey of Settimo, and no long time elapsed before he was made one of the Signori, and honoured with the supreme magistracy of the city; wherefore the Florentines deserve no less to be praised for their gratitude to him, than they deserve to be blamed for having been little grateful to other excellent men of their city.

After this most stupendous work, Lorenzo made the ornament in bronze for that door of the same church which is opposite to the Misericordia, with that marvellous foliage which he was not able to finish, death coming unexpectedly upon him when he was preparing—having already almost made the model—to reconstruct the said door, which Andrea Pisano had formerly made; which model has now been lost, although I saw it formerly, when a youth, in Borgo Allegri, before it was allowed to be lost by the descendants of Lorenzo.

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Lorenzo had a son called Bonaccorso, who finished with his own hand the frieze and that ornament, which had been left incomplete, with very great diligence; which ornament, I declare, is the rarest and most marvellous work that there is to be seen in bronze. Bonaccorso, dying young, did not afterwards make many works, as he would have done, seeing that he had been left with the secret of making castings in such a way as to make them come out delicate, and also with the knowledge and the method of perforating the metal in that manner which is seen in the works left by Lorenzo. The latter, besides the works by his own hand, bequeathed to his heirs many antiquities both in marble and in bronze, such as the bed of Polycletus, which was something very rare; a leg of bronze as large as life; some heads, both male and female; together with some vases, all procured by him from Greece at no small cost. He left, likewise, some torsi of figures, and many other things; and all were dispersed together with the property of Lorenzo, some being sold to Messer Giovanni Gaddi, then Clerk of the Chamber to the Pope, and among these was the said bed of Polycletus, with the rest of the finer things.

Bonaccorso had a son called Vittorio, who survived him. He applied himself to sculpture, but with little profit, as it is shown by the heads that he made at Naples for the Palace of the Duke of Gravina, which are not very good, since he never applied himself to art with love or with

diligence, but rather to scattering the property and the other things which had been left him by his father and his grandfather. Finally, going to Ascoli as architect under Pope Paul III, he had his throat cut one night by one of his servants, who came to rob him. And thus the family of Lorenzo became extinct, but not so his fame, which will live to all eternity.

But returning to the said Lorenzo: he applied himself, while he lived, to many things, and delighted in painting and in working in glass, and for S. Maria del Fiore he made the round windows that are round the cupola, excepting one, which is by the hand of Donato—namely, the one wherein Christ is crowning Our Lady. Lorenzo likewise made the three that are over the principal door of the same S. Maria del Fiore, and all those of the chapels and of the tribunes, and also the rose-window in the façade of S. Croce. In Arezzo he made a window for the principal chapel of the Pieve, containing the Coronation of Our Lady, with two other figures, for Lazzaro di Feo di Baccio, a very rich merchant; but since they were all of Venetian glass, loaded with colour, they make the places where they were put rather dark than otherwise. Lorenzo was chosen to assist Brunellesco, when the latter was commissioned to make the Cupola of S. Maria del Fiore, but he was afterwards relieved of the task, as it will be told in the Life of Filippo.

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The same Lorenzo wrote a book in the vulgar tongue, wherein he treated of many diverse matters, but in such wise that little profit can be drawn from it. The only good thing in it, in my judgment, is this, that after having discoursed of many ancient painters, and particularly of those cited by Pliny, he makes brief mention of Cimabue, Giotto, and many others of those times; and this he did, with much more brevity than was right, for no other reason but to slip with a good grace into a discourse about himself, and to enumerate minutely, as he did, one by one, all his own works. Nor will I forbear to say that he feigns that his book was written by another, whereas afterwards, in the process of writing—as one who knew better how to draw, to chisel, and to cast in bronze, than how to weave stories—talking of himself, he speaks in the first person, "I made," "I said," "I was making," "I was saying." Finally, having come to the sixty-fourth year of his age, and being assailed by a grievous and continuous fever, he died, leaving immortal fame for himself by reason of the works that he made, and through the pens of writers; and he was honourably buried in S. Croce. His portrait is on the principal bronze door of the Church of S. Giovanni, on the border that is in the middle when the door is closed, in the form of a bald man, and beside him is his father Bartoluccio; and near them may be read these words: LAURENTII CIONIS DE GHIBERTIS MIRA ARTE FABRICATUM. The drawings of Lorenzo were most excellent, being made with much relief, as it is seen in our book of drawings, in an Evangelist by his hand, and in some others in chiaroscuro, which are very beautiful.

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His father Bartoluccio was also a passing good draughtsman, as it is shown by another Evangelist in the said book, which is by his hand, but no little inferior to that of Lorenzo. These drawings, with some by Giotto and by others, I had from Vittorio Ghiberti in the year 1528, when a youth, and I have ever held and still hold them in veneration, both because they are beautiful and as memorials of men so great. And if, when I was living in strait friendship and intimacy with Vittorio, I had known what I know now, it would have been easy for me to obtain many other truly beautiful things by the hand of Lorenzo. Among many verses, both in Latin and in the vulgar tongue, which were written at diverse times in honour of Lorenzo, it will be enough for me, in order not to weary my readers overmuch, to put down these that follow

Dum cernit valvas aurato ex aere nitentes  
In templo Michael Angelus, obstupuit:  
Attonitusque diu, sic alta silentia rupit:  
O divinum opus! O janua digna polo!

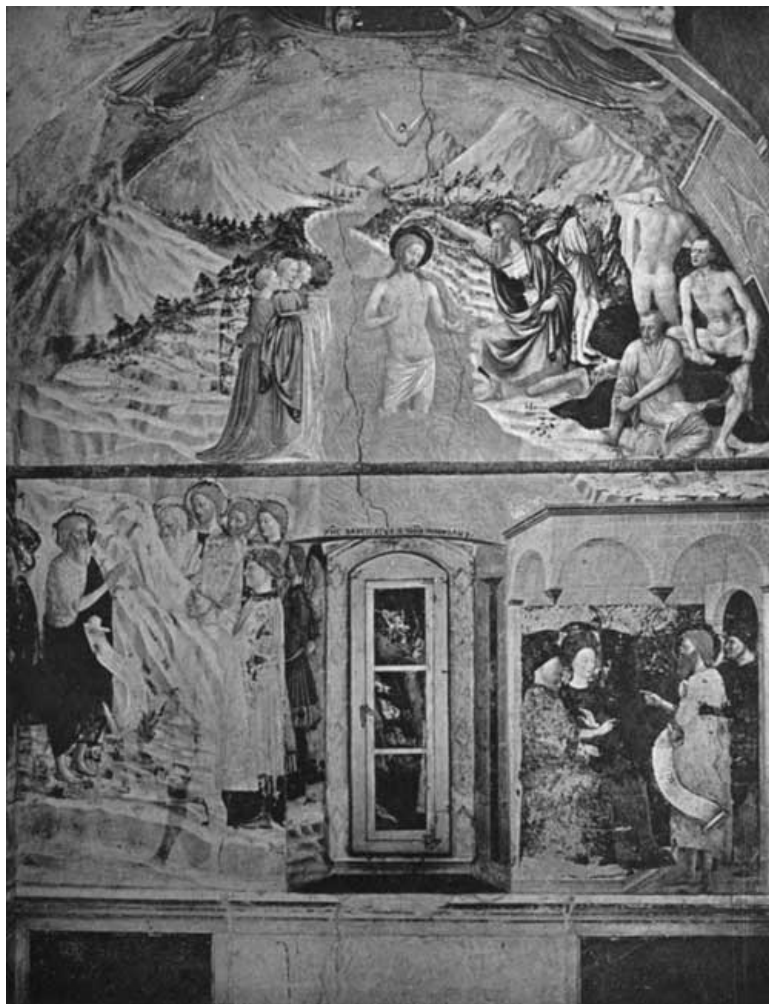
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## MASOLINO DA PANICALE





**S. JOHN THE BAPTIST**  
*(After the fresco by Masolino da Panicale. Castiglione  
d'Olona: Baptistery)*

*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

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## **LIFE OF MASOLINO DA PANICALE**

### **PAINTER**

Truly great, I believe, must be the contentment of those who are approaching the highest rank in the science wherein they are labouring; and those, likewise, who, besides the delight and pleasure that they feel in working valiantly, enjoy some fruit from their labours, without doubt live a quiet and very happy life. And if perchance it comes to pass that one, while advancing towards perfection in any science or art, is overtaken by death in the happy course of his life, his memory does not become wholly spent, if only he has laboured worthily in order to attain to the true end of his art. Wherefore every man should labour the most that he can in order to attain to perfection, since, although he may be hindered in the midst of his course, he will gain praise, if not for the works that he has not been able to finish, at least for the excellent intention and diligent study which are seen in the little that he leaves behind.

Masolino da Panicale of Valdelsa, who was a disciple of Lorenzo di Bartoluccio Ghiberti, was a very good goldsmith in his youth, and the best finisher that Lorenzo had in the labour of the doors; and he was very dexterous and able in making the draperies of the figures, and had very good manner and understanding in the work of finishing. Wherefore with his chisel he made with all the more dexterity certain soft and delicate hollows, both in human limbs and in draperies. He devoted himself to painting at the age of nineteen, and practised it ever afterwards, learning the art of colouring from Gherardo Starnina. And having gone to Rome in order to study, the while that he dwelt there he painted the hall of the old house of the Orsini on Monte Giordano; and then, having returned to Florence by reason of a pain in the head that the air was causing him, he made in the Carmine, beside the Chapel of the Crucifixion, that figure of S. Peter which is still seen there. This figure, being praised by the craftsmen, brought it about that he was commissioned to adorn the Chapel of the Brancacci, in the said church, with the stories of S. Peter; of which chapel, with great diligence, he brought a part to completion, as on the vaulting, where there are the four Evangelists, with Christ taking Andrew and Peter from the nets and then Peter weeping for the sin committed in denying Him, and next to that his preaching in order to convert the Gentiles. He painted there the shipwreck of the Apostles in the tempest, and the

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scene when S. Peter is delivering his daughter Petronilla from sickness; and in the same scene he made him going with S. John to the Temple, where, in front of the portico, there is the lame beggar asking him for alms, and S. Peter, not being able to give him either gold or silver, is delivering him with the sign of the Cross. Throughout all that work the figures are made with very good grace, and they show grandeur in the manner, softness and harmony in the colouring, and relief and force in the draughtsmanship; the work was much esteemed by reason of its novelty and of the methods used in many parts, which were totally different from the manner of Giotto; but, being overtaken by death, he left these scenes unfinished.



**MASOLINO DA PANICALE: MADONNA AND CHILD**  
**(Empoli: S. Stefano. Fresco)**

[View larger image](#)

Masolino was a person of very good powers, with much harmony and facility in his pictures, which are seen to have been executed with diligence and with great love. This zeal and this willingness to labour, which he never ceased to show, brought about in him a bad habit of body, which ended his life before his time and snatched him prematurely from the world. Masolino died young, at the age of thirty-seven, cutting short the expectations that people had conceived of him. His pictures date about the year 1440. And Paolo Schiavo—who painted the Madonna and the figures with their feet foreshortened on the cornice on the Canto de' Gori in Florence—strove greatly to follow the manner of Masolino, from whose works, having studied them many times, I find his manner very different from that of those who were before him, seeing that he added majesty to the figures, and gave softness and a beautiful flow of folds to the draperies. The heads of his figures, also, are much better than those made before his day, for he was a little more successful in making the roundness of the eyes, and many other beautiful parts of the body. And since he began to have a good knowledge of light and shade, seeing that he worked in relief, he made many difficult foreshortenings very well, as is seen in that beggar who is seeking alms from S. Peter; for his leg, which is trailing behind him, is so well proportioned in its outlines, with regard to draughtsmanship, and in its shadows, with regard to colouring, that it appears to be really piercing the wall. Masolino began likewise to give more sweetness of expression to the faces of women, and more loveliness to the garments of young men, than the old craftsmen had done; and he also drew passing well in perspective. But that wherein he excelled, more than in anything else, was colouring in fresco, for this he did so well that his pictures are blended and harmonized with so great grace, that his painting of flesh has the greatest softness which one is able to imagine; wherefore, if he had shown absolute perfection in draughtsmanship, as perchance he might have done if he had lived longer, he might have been numbered among the best, since his works are executed with good grace, and with grandeur in the manner, softness and harmony in the colouring, and much relief and force in the draughtsmanship, although this is not in all parts perfect.

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**MADONNA AND CHILD**  
(*After the panel by Masolino de Panicale.*  
*Bremen: Kunsthalle*)  
*N. P.—G.*  
[View larger image](#)

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## **PARRI SPINELLI**

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### **LIFE OF PARRI SPINELLI**

#### **PAINTER OF AREZZO**

Parri di Spinello Spinelli, painter of Arezzo, having learnt the first principles of art from his own father, was brought to Florence by the agency of Messer Leonardo Bruni of Arezzo, and was received by Lorenzo Ghiberti into his school, where many young men were learning under his discipline: and since the doors of S. Giovanni were then being given their finish, he was put to labour on those figures, in company with many others, as it has been said above. And having, in this work, contracted a friendship with Masolino da Panicale, and being pleased with his method of drawing, he set about imitating him in many respects, as he also imitated in others the manner of Don Lorenzo degli Angeli.

Parri made his figures much longer and more slender than any painter who had lived before him, and whereas the others make them in the proportion of ten heads at most, he gave them eleven, and sometimes twelve; nor did this make them awkward, although they were slender and were ever bent in an arch either to the right side or to the left, for the reason that this, as it appeared to him, and as he himself said, gave them more vigour. The flow of his draperies was very delicate, with abundance of folds, which fell from the arms of his figures right down to the feet. He coloured very well in distemper, and perfectly in fresco, and he was the first who, in working in fresco, ceased to use verdaccio below flesh-colours, to be afterwards washed over with rosy flesh-tints in chiaroscuro, in the manner of water-colours, as Giotto and the other old masters had done. Parri, on the other hand, used body colours in making his grounds and tints, placing them with much discretion where it appeared to him that they would look best—that is, the lights on

the highest points, the middle tints towards the sides, and the darks on the outlines; with which method of painting he showed more facility in his works and gave longer life to pictures in fresco, seeing that, having laid the colours in their places, he would blend them together with a rather thick and soft brush, and would execute his works with so high a finish that nothing better can be desired; and his colouring has no equal.

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Parri, then, having been absent many years from his country, was recalled by his relatives, after the death of his father, to Arezzo, where, besides many works which it would take too long to recount, he made some which do not in any way deserve to be passed over in silence. In the Duomo Vecchio he made in fresco three different figures of Our Lady; and within the principal door of that church, on the left hand as one enters, he painted in fresco a story of the Blessed Tommasuolo, a sack-cloth hermit and a holy man of that time. And since this man was wont to carry in his hand a mirror wherein he saw, so he declared, the Passion of Christ, Parri portrayed him in that story kneeling, with that mirror in his right hand, which he was holding uplifted towards Heaven. And painting Jesus Christ above on a throne of clouds, and round him all the Mysteries of the Passion, with most beautiful art he made them all reflected in that mirror, in such wise that not only the Blessed Tommasuolo but all who beheld that picture could see them, which invention was truly fanciful and difficult, and so beautiful that it taught those who came after him to counterfeit many things by means of mirrors. Nor will I forbear to tell, now that I am dealing with this subject, what this holy man did once in Arezzo; and it is this. Labouring continually, without ever ceasing, to induce the Aretines to live at peace with one another, now preaching, and now foretelling many misadventures, he recognized finally that he was wasting his time. Whereupon, entering one day into the Palace where the Sixty were wont to assemble, the said Blessed Tommasuolo—who saw them every day deliberating, and never coming to any resolution save such as injured the city—when he saw that the Hall was full, placed a quantity of burning coals into a great fold in his robe, and, advancing with these towards the Sixty and all the other magistrates of the city, he threw them boldly at their feet, saying: "My lords, the fire is among you; take heed lest ruin come upon you;" and this said, he went his way. Such was the effect of the simplicity, and, as it pleased God, of the good counsel of that holy man, that the said action completely accomplished what his preachings and threatenings had never been able to do, insomuch that, becoming united among themselves no long time after, they governed that city for many years afterwards with much peace and quiet for all.

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But returning to Parri: after the said work, he painted in fresco in a chapel of the Church and Hospital of S. Cristofano, beside the Company of the Nunziata, for Mona Mattea de' Testi, wife of Carcascion Florinaldi, who left a very good endowment to that little church; and there he made Christ Crucified, with many angels round Him and above Him, flying in a certain dark sky and weeping bitterly. At the foot of the Cross, on one side, are the Magdalene and the other Maries, who are holding the fainting Madonna in their arms; and on the other side are S. James and S. Christopher. On the walls he painted S. Catherine, S. Nicholas, the Annunciation, and Jesus Christ at the Column; and, in an arch over the door of the said church, a Pietà, S. John, and Our Lady. But the paintings within (save those of the chapel) have been spoilt, and the arch was pulled down in the substituting of a modern door of grey-stone, and in the making of a convent for one hundred nuns with the revenues of that Company. For this convent Giorgio Vasari made a most careful model, but it was afterwards altered, nay, reduced to the vilest form, by those who most unworthily had charge of so great a fabric. For it comes to pass very often that one stumbles against certain men, said to be very learned, but for the most part ignorant, who, under pretence of understanding, set themselves arrogantly many times to try to play the architect and to superintend; and more often than not they spoil the arrangements and the models of those who, having spent their lives in the study and practice of building, can act with judgment in works of architecture; and this brings harm to posterity, which is thus deprived of the utility, convenience, beauty, ornament, and grandeur that are requisite in buildings, and particularly in those that are to be used for the public service.

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In the Church of S. Bernardo, also, a monastery of the Monks of Monte Oliveto, Parri painted two chapels, one on either side within the principal door. In that which is on the right hand, dedicated to the Trinity, he made a God the Father, who is supporting Christ Crucified in His arms, and above there is the Dove of the Holy Spirit in the midst of a choir of angels; and on one wall of the same chapel he painted some saints in fresco, perfectly. In the other, dedicated to Our Lady, is the Nativity of Christ, with some women who are washing Him in a little wooden tub, with a womanly grace marvellously well expressed. There are also some shepherds in the distance, who are guarding their sheep, clothed in the rustic dress of those times and very lifelike, and listening attentively to the words of the Angel, who is telling them to go to Nazareth. On the opposite wall is the Adoration of the Magi, with baggage, camels, giraffes, and all the Court of those three Kings, who, reverently offering their treasures, are adoring Christ, who is lying upon the lap of His mother. Besides this, he painted on the vaulting, and in the frontals of some arches outside, some very beautiful scenes in fresco.

It is said that while Parri was executing this work, Fra Bernardino da Siena, a friar of S. Francis and a man of holy life, was preaching in Arezzo, and that having brought many of his brother monks into the true religious life, and having converted many other persons, he caused Parri to make the model for the Church of Sargiano, which he was building for them; and that afterwards, having heard that many evil things were going on in a wood near a fountain, a mile distant from the city, he went there one morning, followed by the whole people of Arezzo, with a great wooden cross in his hand, such as he was wont to carry, and after preaching a solemn sermon he had the fountain destroyed and the wood cut down; and a little later he caused a beginning to be made



with a little chapel which was built there in honour of Our Lady, with the title of S. Maria delle Grazie, wherein he afterwards asked Parri to paint with his own hand, as he did, the Virgin in Glory, who, opening her arms, is covering under her mantle the whole people of Arezzo. This most holy Virgin afterwards worked and still continues to work many miracles in that place. The Commune of Arezzo has since caused a very beautiful church to be built in this place, accommodating within it the Madonna made by Parri, for which many ornaments of marble have been made, with some figures, both round and above the altar, as it has been said in the Lives of Luca della Robbia and of his nephew Andrea, and as it will be said in due succession in the Lives of those whose works adorn that holy place.

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No long time after, by reason of the devotion that he bore to that holy man, Parri portrayed the said S. Bernardino in fresco on a large pilaster in the Duomo Vecchio; in which place, in a chapel dedicated to the same Saint, he also painted him glorified in Heaven and surrounded by a legion of angels, with three half-length figures, one on either side—Patience and Poverty—and one above—Chastity—with which three virtues that Saint held company up to his death. Under his feet he had some Bishops' mitres and Cardinals' hats, in order to show that, laughing at the world, he had despised such dignities; and below these pictures was portrayed the city of Arezzo, such as it was in those times. For the Company of the Nunziata, likewise, in a little chapel, or rather maestà,<sup>[11]</sup> without the Duomo, Parri made a Madonna in fresco, who, receiving the Annunciation from the Angel, is turning away all in terror; and in the sky on the vaulting, which is groined, he made angels, two in each angle, who, flying through the air and making music with various instruments, appear to be playing together, so that one almost hears a very sweet harmony; and on the walls are four saints—namely, two on each side. But the pictures wherein he showed best his power of varying the expression of his conception are seen on the two pilasters that support the arch in front, where the entrance is, for the reason that on one there is a very beautiful Charity, who is affectionately suckling one infant, fondling a second, and holding a third by the hand, while on the other there is Faith, painted in a new manner, holding the Chalice and the Cross in one hand, and in the other a cup of water, which she is pouring over the head of a boy, making him a Christian. All these figures are without doubt the best that Parri ever made in all his life, and even in comparison with the modern they are marvellous.

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Within the city, in the Church of S. Agostino, in the choir of the friars, the same man painted many figures in fresco, which are known by the manner of the draperies, and by their being long, slender, and bent, as it has been said above. In the tramezzo<sup>[12]</sup> of the Church of S. Giustino he painted in fresco a S. Martin on horseback, who is cutting off a piece of his garment to give it to a beggar, and two other saints. In the Vescovado, also, on the face of one wall, he painted an Annunciation, which to-day is half spoilt through having been exposed for many years. In the Pieve of the same city he painted the chapel which is now near the Office of Works; and this has been almost wholly ruined by damp. Truly unfortunate has this poor painter been with his works, seeing that almost the greater part of them have been destroyed, either by damp or by the ruin of the buildings. On a round column in the said Pieve he painted a S. Vincent in fresco; and in S. Francesco he made some saints round a Madonna in half-relief, for the family of the Viviani, with the Apostles on the arch above, receiving the Holy Spirit, and some other saints in the vaulting, and on one side Christ with the Cross on His shoulder, pouring blood from His side into the Chalice, and round Christ some angels very well wrought. Opposite to this, in the Chapel of the Company of Stone-cutters, Masons, and Carpenters, dedicated to the four Crowned Saints, he made a Madonna, and the said Saints with the instruments of those trades in their hands, and below, also in fresco, two scenes of their acts, and the Saints being beheaded and thrown into the sea. In this work there are very beautiful attitudes and efforts in the figures that are raising those bodies, placed in sacks, on their shoulders, in order to carry them to the sea, for there are seen in them liveliness and vivacity. In S. Domenico, also, near the high-altar, on the right-hand wall, he painted in fresco a Madonna, S. Anthony, and S. Nicholas, for the family of the Alberti da Catenaia, of which place they were the Lords before its destruction, when they came to dwell, some in Arezzo and some in Florence. And that they are one and the same family is shown by the arms of both one and the other, which are the same; although it is true that to-day those of Arezzo are called, not "Degli Alberti," but "Da Catenaia," and those of Florence not "Da Catenaia," but "Degli Alberti." And I remember to have seen, and also read, that the Abbey of the Sasso—which was in the mountains of Catenaia, and which has now been pulled down and rebuilt lower down towards the Arno—was erected by the same Alberti for the Congregation of Camaldoli; and to-day it belongs to the Monastery of the Angeli in Florence, which acknowledges it as coming from the said family, which is among the noblest in Florence.

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In the old Audience Chamber of the Fraternity of S. Maria della Misericordia, Parri painted a Madonna who has under her mantle the people of Arezzo, wherein he portrayed from the life those who then ruled that holy place, clothed according to the use of those times; and among them one called Braccio, who is now called, when there is talk of him, Lazzaro Ricco, and who died in the year 1422, leaving all his riches and means to that place, which dispenses them in the service of God's poor, performing the holy works of mercy with much charity. On one side of this Madonna is S. Gregory the Pope, and on the other S. Donatus, Bishop and Protector of the people of Arezzo. And since those who then ruled that Fraternity had been very well served in this work by Parri, they caused him to make on a panel, in distemper, a Madonna with the Child in her arms, with some angels who are opening her mantle, beneath which is the said people; with S. Laurentino and S. Pergentino, the martyrs, below. This panel is brought out every year on the second day of June, and, after it has been borne in solemn procession by the men of the said Company as far as the church of the said Saints, there is placed over it a coffer of silver, wrought

by the goldsmith Forzore, brother of Parri, within which are the bodies of the said SS. Laurentino and Pergentino; it is brought out, I say, and the said altar is made under covering of a tent in the Canto alla Croce, where the said church stands, because, being a small church, it would not hold all the people who assemble for this festival. The predella whereon the said panel rests contains the martyrdom of those two Saints, made with little figures, and so well wrought, that for a small work it is truly a marvel. In Borgo Piano, under the projection of a house, there is a shrine by the hand of Parri, within which is an Annunciation in fresco, which is much extolled; and in S. Agostino, for the Company of the Puraccioli, he made in fresco a very beautiful picture of S. Catherine, virgin and martyr. In the Church of Muriello, likewise, for the Fraternity of the Clerks, he painted a S. Mary Magdalene, three braccia high; and in S. Domenico, at the entrance of the door, where the bell-ropes are, he painted in fresco the Chapel of S. Niccolò, making therein a large Crucifix with four figures, so well wrought that it seems made only yesterday. In the arch he painted two stories of S. Nicholas—namely, his throwing the golden balls to the maidens, and his delivering two from death, while the executioner is seen appalled and ready to cut off their heads, and very well wrought.

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The while that Parri was making this work, he was set upon with weapons by some of his relatives, with whom he had a dispute about some dowry; but, since some other men ran up immediately, he was succoured in a manner that they did him no harm. But nevertheless, so it is said, the fright that he experienced brought it about that, besides making his figures bending over to one side, from that day onward he made them almost always with an expression of terror. And since he found himself many times attacked by slanderous tongues and torn by the tooth of envy, he made in that chapel a scene of tongues burning, with some devils round them that were heaping them with fire; and in the sky was Christ cursing them, and on one side these words: "To the false tongue."

Parri was very studious in the matters of art, and drew very well, as it is shown by many drawings by his hand, which I have seen, and in particular by a border of twenty scenes from the life of S. Donatus, made for a sister of his own, who embroidered very well; and this he is reputed to have done because there was a question of making adornments for the high-altar of the Vescovado. And in our book there are some drawings by his hand, done very well with the pen. Parri was portrayed by Marco da Montepulciano, a disciple of Spinello, in the cloister of S. Bernardo in Arezzo. He lived fifty-six years, and he shortened his life by reason of being by nature melancholic, solitary, and too assiduous in the studies of his art and in his labours. He was buried in S. Agostino, in the same tomb wherein his father Spinello had been laid, and his death caused displeasure to all the men of culture who knew him.

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## MASACCIO

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### LIFE OF MASACCIO

#### PAINTER OF SAN GIOVANNI IN VALDARNO

It is the custom of nature, when she makes a man very excellent in any profession, very often not to make him alone, but at the same time, and in the same neighbourhood, to make another to compete with him, to the end that they may assist each other by their talent and emulation; which circumstance, besides the singular advantage enjoyed by the men themselves, who thus compete with each other, also kindles beyond measure the minds of those who come after that age, to strive with all study and all industry to attain to that honour and that glorious reputation which they hear highly extolled without ceasing in those who have passed away. And that this is true we see from the fact that Florence produced in one and the same age Filippo, Donato, Lorenzo, Paolo Uccello, and Masaccio, each most excellent in his own kind, and thus not only swept away the rough and rude manners that had prevailed up to that time, but incited and kindled so greatly, by reason of the beautiful works of these men, the minds of those who came after, that the work of those professions has been brought to that grandeur and to that perfection which are seen in our own times. Wherefore, in truth, we owe a great obligation to those early craftsmen who showed to us, by means of their labours, the true way to climb to the greatest height; and with regard to the good manner of painting, we are indebted above all to Masaccio, seeing that he, as one desirous of acquiring fame, perceived that painting is nothing but the counterfeiting of all the things of nature, vividly and simply, with drawing and with colours, even as she produced them for us, and that he who attains to this most perfectly can be called excellent. This truth, I say, being recognized by Masaccio, brought it about that by means of

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continuous study he learnt so much that he can be numbered among the first who cleared away, in a great measure, the hardness, the imperfections, and the difficulties of the art, and that he gave a beginning to beautiful attitudes, movements, liveliness, and vivacity, and to a certain relief truly characteristic and natural; which no painter up to his time had ever done. And since he had excellent judgment, he reflected that all the figures that did not stand firmly with their feet in foreshortening on the level, but stood on tip-toe, were lacking in all goodness of manner in the essential points, and that those who make them thus show that they do not understand foreshortening. And although Paolo Uccello had tried his hand at this, and had done something, solving this difficulty to some extent, yet Masaccio, introducing many new methods, made foreshortenings from every point of view much better than any other who had lived up to that time. And he painted his works with good unity and softness, harmonizing the flesh-colours of the heads and of the nudes with the colours of the draperies, which he delighted to make with few folds and simple, as they are in life and nature. This has been of great use to craftsmen, and he deserves therefore to be commended as if he had been its inventor, for in truth the works made before his day can be said to be painted, while his are living, real, and natural, in comparison with those made by the others.



**MASACCIO: THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI  
(Berlin: Kaiser Friedrich Museum, 58A. Panel)**

[View larger image](#)

This man was born at Castello San Giovanni in Valdarno, and they say that one may still see there some figures made by him in his earliest childhood. He was a very absent-minded and careless person, as one who, having fixed his whole mind and will on the matters of art, cared little about himself, and still less about others. And since he would never give any manner of thought to the cares and concerns of the world, or even to clothing himself, and was not wont to recover his money from his debtors, save only when he was in the greatest straits, his name was therefore changed from Tommaso to Masaccio,<sup>[13]</sup> not, indeed, because he was vicious, for he was goodness itself, but by reason of his so great carelessness; and with all this, nevertheless, he was so amiable in doing the service and pleasure of others, that nothing more could be desired.

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He began painting at the time when Masolino da Panicale was working on the Chapel of the Brancacci in the Carmine, in Florence, ever following, in so far as he was able, in the steps of Filippo and Donato, although their branch of art was different, and seeking continually in his work to make his figures very lifelike and with a beautiful liveliness in the likeness of nature. And his lineaments and his painting were so modern and so different from those of the others, that his works can safely stand in comparison with any drawing and colouring of our own day. He was very zealous at his labours, and a marvellous master of the difficulties of perspective, as it is seen in a story painted by him with small figures, which is to-day in the house of Ridolfo del Ghirlandajo. In this story, besides a Christ who is delivering the man possessed by a devil, there are very beautiful buildings in perspective, drawn in a manner that they show at one and the same time both the inside and the outside, by reason of his having chosen the point of view, not of the front, but over the corners, as being more difficult. He sought more than any other master to make his figures nude and foreshortened, which was little done before his day. He had great facility in handling, and, as it has been said, he is very simple in his draperies.

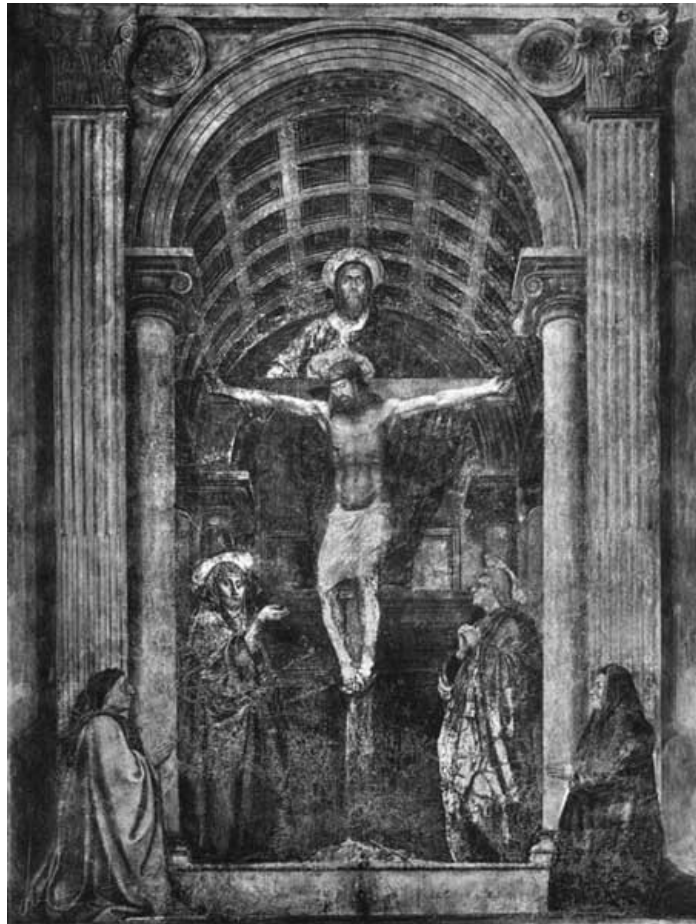
There is a panel by his hand, wrought in distemper, wherein is a Madonna upon the lap of S. Anne, with the Child in her arms. This panel is to-day in S. Ambrogio in Florence, in the chapel that is beside the door that leads to the parlour of the nuns. And in the tramezzo<sup>[14]</sup> of the Church of S. Niccolò, on the other side of the Arno, there is a panel by the hand of Masaccio, painted in distemper, wherein, besides the Madonna, who is receiving the Annunciation from the Angel, there is a building with many columns, drawn in perspective and very beautiful, seeing that, besides the drawing of the lines, which is perfect, he made it recede by means of the colouring, in a manner that little by little, almost imperceptibly, it is lost to view; thus showing clearly his knowledge of perspective. In the Badia of Florence, on a pilaster opposite to one of those that support the arch of the high-altar, he painted in fresco S. Ivo of Brittany, representing him within a niche, in order that the feet might appear foreshortened to the eye below; which device, not having been used so well by others, acquired for him no small praise. And below the said Saint, over another cornice, he made a throng of widows, orphans, and beggars, who receive

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assistance from that Saint in their needs. In S. Maria Novella, also, below the tramezzo<sup>[15]</sup> of the church, he painted a Trinity in fresco, which is placed over the altar of S. Ignazio, with Our Lady on one side and S. John the Evangelist on the other contemplating Christ Crucified. On the sides are two figures on their knees, which, in so far as it can be determined, are portraits of the men who had the picture painted; but little is seen of them, for they have been covered with a gilt ornament. But the most beautiful thing, apart from the figures, is a barrel-shaped vaulting, drawn in perspective and divided into squares filled with rosettes, which are foreshortened and made to diminish so well that the wall appears to be pierced. In S. Maria Maggiore, also, near the side-door that leads to S. Giovanni, on the panel of a chapel, he painted a Madonna, with S. Catherine and S. Julian. On the predella he made some little figures, connected with the life of S. Catherine, with S. Julian murdering his father and mother; and in the middle he made the Nativity of Christ, with that simplicity and vividness which were characteristic of his work.

In the Church of the Carmine in Pisa, on a panel that is in a chapel in the tramezzo,<sup>[16]</sup> there is a Madonna with the Child, by his hand, and at her feet are certain little angels sounding instruments, one of whom, playing on a lute, is listening attentively to the harmony of that sound. On either side of the Madonna are S. Peter, S. John the Baptist, S. Julian, and S. Nicholas, all very lifelike and vivacious figures. In the predella below are scenes from the lives of those Saints, with little figures; and in the centre are the three Magi offering their treasures to Christ. In this part are some horses portrayed from life, so beautiful that nothing better can be desired; and the men of the Court of those three Kings are clothed in various costumes that were worn in those times. And above, as an ornament for the said panel, there are, in several squares, many saints round a Crucifix. It is believed that the figure of a saint, in the robes of a Bishop and painted in fresco, which is in that church, beside the door that leads into the convent, is by the hand of Masaccio; but I hold it as certain that it is by the hand of Fra Filippo, his disciple.

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**THE TRINITY**  
**(After the fresco by Masaccio. Florence: S. Maria Novella)**  
**Anderson**

[View larger image](#)

Returning from Pisa to Florence, he wrought there a panel containing a man and a woman, nude and of the size of life, which is to-day in the Palla Rucellai Palace. Then, not feeling at ease in Florence, and stimulated by his affection and love for art, he determined to go to Rome, in order to learn and to surpass others; and this he did. And having acquired very great fame there, he painted for Cardinal San Clemente a chapel in the Church of S. Clemente, wherein he made in fresco the Passion of Christ, with the Thieves on the Cross, and the stories of S. Catherine the martyr. He also made many panels in distemper, which have been all lost or destroyed in the troublous times of Rome; one being in the Church of S. Maria Maggiore, in a little chapel near the sacristy, wherein are four saints, so well wrought that they appear to be in relief, and in the



midst of them is S. Maria della Neve, with the portrait from nature of Pope Martin, who is tracing out the foundations of that church with a hoe, and beside him the Emperor Sigismund II. Michelagnolo and I were one day examining this work, when he praised it much, and then added that these men were alive in Masaccio's time. To him, while Pisanello and Gentile da Fabriano were labouring in Rome for Pope Martin on the walls of the Church of S. Gianni, these masters had allotted a part of the work, when he returned to Florence, having had news that Cosimo de' Medici, by whom he was much assisted and favoured, had been recalled from exile; and there he was commissioned to paint the Chapel of the Brancacci in the Carmine, by reason of the death of Masolino da Panicale, who had begun it; but before putting his hand to this, he made, by way of specimen, the S. Paul that is near the bell-ropes, in order to show the improvement that he had made in his art. And he demonstrated truly infinite excellence in this picture, for in the head of that Saint, who is Bartolo di Angiolino Angiolini portrayed from life, there is seen an expression so awful that there appears to be nothing lacking in that figure save speech; and he who has not known S. Paul will see, by looking at this picture, his honourable Roman culture, together with the unconquerable strength of that most divine spirit, all intent on the work of the faith. In this same picture, likewise, he showed a power of foreshortening things viewed from below upwards which was truly marvellous, as may still be seen to-day in the feet of the said Apostle, for this was a difficulty that he solved completely, in contrast with the old rude manner, which, as I said a little before, used to make all the figures on tip-toe; which manner lasted up to his day, without any other man correcting it, and he, by himself and before any other, brought it to the excellence of our own day.

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It came to pass, the while that he was labouring at this work, that the said Church of the Carmine was consecrated; and Masaccio, in memory of this, painted the consecration just as it took place, with terra-verde and in chiaroscuro, over the door that leads into the convent, within the cloister. 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, who are all also portrayed by the hand of the same man in the house of Simon Corsi, a gentleman of Florence. He also painted there Lorenzo Ridolfi, who was at that time the ambassador of the Florentine Republic in Venice; and not only did he portray there the aforesaid gentlemen from the life, but also the door of the convent and the porter with the keys in his hand. This work, truly, shows great perfection, for Masaccio was so successful in placing these people, five or six to a file, on the level of that piazza, and in making them diminish to the eye with proportion and judgment, that it is indeed a marvel, and above all because we can recognize there the wisdom that he showed in making those men, as if they were alive, not all of one size, but with a certain discretion which distinguishes those who are short and stout from those who are tall and slender; while they are all standing with their feet firmly on one level, and so well foreshortened along the files that they would not be otherwise in nature.

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After this, returning to the work of the Chapel of the Brancacci, and continuing the stories of S. Peter begun by Masolino, he finished a part of them—namely, the story of the Chair, the healing of the sick, the raising of the dead, and the restoring of the cripples with his shadow as he was going to the Temple with S. John. But the most notable among them all is that one wherein S. Peter, at Christ's command, is taking the money from the belly of the fish, in order to pay the tribute, since (besides the fact that we see there in an Apostle, the last of the group, the portrait of Masaccio himself, made by his own hand with the help of a mirror, so well that it appears absolutely alive) we can recognize there the ardour of S. Peter in his questioning and the attentiveness of the Apostles, who are standing in various attitudes round Christ, awaiting his determination, with gestures so vivid that they truly appear alive. Wonderful, above all, is the S. Peter who, while he is labouring to draw the money from the belly of the fish, has his head suffused with blood by reason of bending down; and he is even more wonderful as he pays the tribute, for here we see his expression as he counts it, and the eagerness of him who is receiving it and looking at the money in his hand with the greatest pleasure. There, also, he painted the resurrection of the King's son, wrought by S. Peter and S. Paul; although by reason of the death of Masaccio the work remained unfinished, and was afterwards completed by Filippino. In the scene wherein S. Peter is baptizing, a naked man, who is trembling and shivering with cold among the others who are being baptized, is greatly esteemed, having been wrought with very beautiful relief and sweet manner; which figure has ever been held in reverence and admiration by all craftsmen, both ancient and modern. For this reason that chapel has been frequented continually up to our own day by innumerable draughtsmen and masters; and there still are therein some heads so lifelike and so beautiful, that it may truly be said that no master of that age approached so nearly as this man did to the moderns. His labours therefore deserve infinite praise, and above all because he gave form in his art to the beautiful manner of our times. And that this is true is proved by the fact that all the most celebrated sculptors and painters, who have lived from his day to our own, have become excellent and famous by exercising themselves and studying in this chapel—namely, Fra Giovanni da Fiesole, Fra Filippo, Filippino, who finished it, Alesso Baldovinetti, Andrea dal Castagno, Andrea del Verrocchio, Domenico del Ghirlandajo, Sandro di Botticello, Leonardo da Vinci, Pietro Perugino, Fra Bartolommeo di San Marco, Mariotto Albertinelli, and the most divine Michelagnolo Buonarroti; likewise Raffaello da Urbino, who owed to this chapel the beginning of his beautiful manner, Granaccio, Lorenzo di Credi, Ridolfo del Ghirlandajo, Andrea del Sarto, Rosso, Franciabigio, Baccio Bandinelli, Alonso Spagnuolo, Jacopo da Pontormo, Pierino del Vaga, and Toto del Nunziata; and in short, all those who have sought to learn that art have ever gone to this chapel to learn and to grasp the

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precepts and the rules for good work from the figures of Masaccio. And if I have not named many foreigners and many Florentines who have gone to that chapel for the sake of study, let it suffice to say that where the heads of art go, the members also follow. But although the works of Masaccio have ever been in so great repute, it is nevertheless the opinion—nay, the firm belief—of many, that he would have produced even greater fruits in his art, if death, which tore him from us at the age of twenty-six, had not snatched him away from us so prematurely. But either by reason of envy, or because good things rarely have any long duration, he died in the flower of his youth, and that so suddenly, that there were not wanting people who put it down to poison rather than to any other reason.



**MASACCIO: THE MADONNA  
ENTHRONED WITH ANGEL  
MUSICIANS**  
*(Collection of Rev. A. F. Sutton. Panel)*  
[View larger image](#)

It is said that Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, hearing of his death, exclaimed, "We have suffered a very great loss in Masaccio," and that it grieved him infinitely, for he had spent much time in demonstrating to Masaccio many rules of perspective and of architecture. He was buried in the same Church of the Carmine in the year 1443, and although, since he had been little esteemed when alive, no memorial was then placed over his tomb, yet after his death there were not wanting men to honour him with these epitaphs:

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**By ANNIBAL CARO.**

PINSI, E LA MIA PITTURA AL VER FU PARI;  
L'ATTEGGIAI, L'AVVIVAI, LE DIEDI IL MOTO,  
LE DIEDI AFFETTO. INSEGNÌ IL BUONARROTO  
A TUTTI GLI ALTRI, E DA ME SOLO IMPARI.

**By FABIO SEGNI.**

INVIDA CUR LACHESIS PRIMO SUB FLORE JUVENTAE  
POLLICE DISCINDIS STAMINA FUNEREO?  
HOC UNO OCCISO INNUMEROS OCCIDIS APELLES;  
PICTURAE OMNIS OBIT, HOC OBEUNTE, LEPOS.  
HOC SOLE EXTINGCTO, EXTINGUUNTUR SIDERA CUNCTA.  
HEU! DECUS OMNE PERIT, HOC PEREUNTE, SIMUL.

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### THE TRIBUTE MONEY

(After the fresco by Masaccio. Florence: S. Maria del Carmine)

Anderson

[View larger image](#)

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## FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI

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### LIFE OF FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI [*FILIPPO DI SER BRUNELLESKO*]

#### SCULPTOR AND ARCHITECT

Many men are created by nature small in person and in features, who have a mind full of such greatness and a heart of such irresistible vehemence, that if they do not begin difficult—nay, almost impossible—undertakings, and bring them to completion to the marvel of all who behold them, they have never any peace in their lives; and whatsoever work chance puts into their hands, however lowly and base it may be, they give it value and nobility. Wherefore no one should turn up his nose when he encounters people who have not, in their aspect, that primal grace or beauty which nature should give, on his coming into the world, to a man who works at any art, seeing that there is no doubt that beneath the clods of the earth are hidden veins of gold. And very often, in those who are most insignificant in form, there are born so great generosity of mind and so great sincerity of heart, that, if nobility be mingled with these, nothing short of the greatest marvels can be looked for from them, for the reason that they strive to embellish the ugliness of the body with the beauty of the intellect; as it is clearly seen in Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, who was no less insignificant in person than Messer Forese da Rabatta and Giotto, but so lofty in intellect that it can be truly said that he was sent to us by Heaven in order to give new form to architecture, which had been out of mind for hundreds of years; for the men of those times had spent much treasure to no purpose, making buildings without order, with bad method, with sorry design, with most strange inventions, with most ungraceful grace, and with even worse ornament. And Heaven ordained, since the earth had been for so many years without any supreme mind or divine spirit, that Filippo should bequeath to the world the greatest, the most lofty, and the most beautiful building that was ever made in modern times, or even in those of the ancients, proving that the talent of the Tuscan craftsmen, although lost, was not therefore dead. Heaven adorned him, moreover, with the best virtues, among which was that of kindness, so that no man was ever more benign or more amiable than he. In judgment he was free from passion, and when he saw worth and merit in others he would sacrifice his own advantage and the interest of his friends. He knew himself, he shared the benefit of his own talent with many, and he was ever succouring his neighbour in his necessities. He declared himself a capital enemy of vice, and a friend of those who practised virtue. He never spent his time uselessly, but would labour to meet the needs of others, either by himself or by the agency of other men; and he would visit his friends on foot and ever succour them.

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It is said that there was in Florence a man of very good repute, most praiseworthy in his way of life and active in his business, whose name was Ser Brunellesco di Lippo Lapi, who had had a grandfather called Cambio, who was a learned person and the son of a physician very famous in

those times, named Maestro Ventura Bacherini. Now Ser Brunellesco, taking to wife a most excellent young woman from the noble family of the Spini, received, as part payment of her dowry, a house wherein he and his sons dwelt to the day of their death. This house stands opposite to one side of S. Michele Berteldi, in a close past the Piazza degli Agli. The while that he was occupying himself thus and living happily, in the year 1398 there was born to him a son, to whom he gave the name Filippo, after his own father, now dead; and he celebrated this birth with the greatest gladness possible. Thereupon he taught him in his childhood, with the utmost attention, the first rudiments of letters, wherein the boy showed himself so ingenious and so lofty in spirit that his brain was often in doubt, as if he did not care to become very perfect in them—nay, it appeared that he directed his thoughts on matters of greater utility—wherefore Ser Brunellesco, who wished him to follow his own vocation of notary, or that of his great-great-grandfather, was very much displeased. But seeing him continually investigating ingenious problems of art and mechanics, he made him learn arithmetic and writing, and then apprenticed him to the goldsmith's art with one his friend, to the end that he might learn design. And this gave great satisfaction to Filippo, who, not many years after beginning to learn and to practise that art, could set precious stones better than any old craftsman in that vocation. He occupied himself with niello and with making larger works, such as some figures in silver, whereof two, half-length prophets, are placed at the head of the altar of S. Jacopo in Pistoia; these figures, which are held very beautiful, were wrought by him for the Wardens of Works in that city; and he made works in low-relief, wherein he showed that he had so great knowledge in his vocation that his intellect must needs overstep the bounds of that art. Wherefore, having made acquaintance with certain studious persons, he began to penetrate with his fancy into questions of time, of motion, of weights, and of wheels, and how the latter can be made to revolve, and by what means they can be set in motion; and thus he made some very good and very beautiful clocks with his own hand.

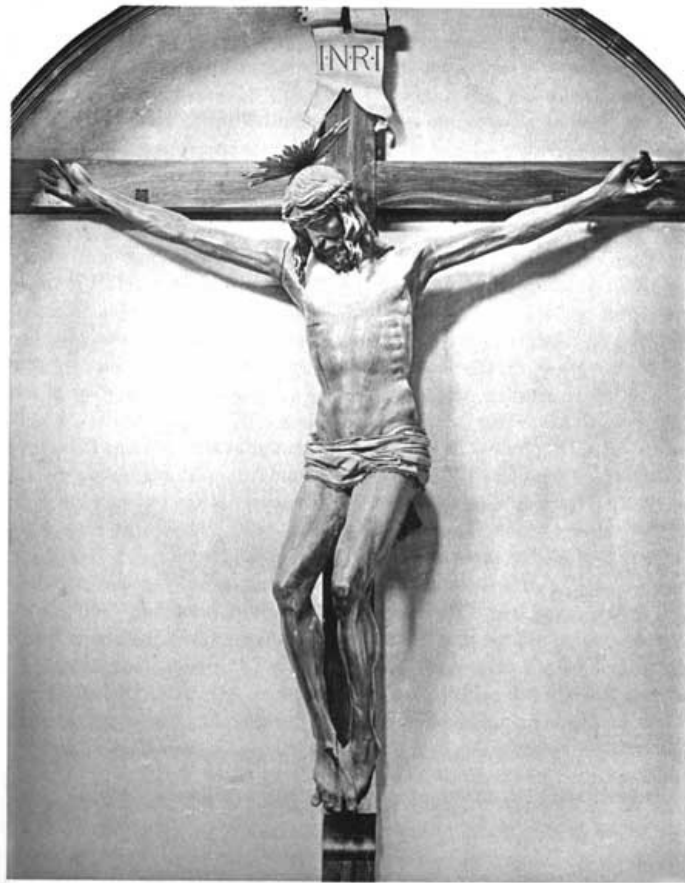
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Not content with this, there arose in his mind a very great inclination for sculpture; and this took effect, for Donatello, then a youth, being held an able sculptor and one of great promise, Filippo began to be ever in his company, and the two conceived such great love for each other, by reason of the talents of each, that one appeared unable to live without the other. Whereupon Filippo, who was most capable in various ways, gave attention to many professions, nor had he practised these long before he was held by persons qualified to judge to be a very good architect, as he showed in many works in connection with the fitting up of houses, such as the house of Apollonio Lapi, his kinsman, in the Canto de' Ciai, towards the Mercato Vecchio, wherein he occupied himself greatly while the other was having it built; and he did the same in the tower and in the house of Petraia, at Castello without Florence. In the Palace that was the habitation of the Signoria, he arranged and distributed all those rooms wherein the officials of the Monte had their office, and he made doors and windows there in the manner copied from the ancient, which was then little used, for architecture was very rude in Tuscany. In Florence, a little later, there was a statue of lime-wood to be made for the Friars of S. Spirito, representing S. Mary Magdalene in Penitence, to be placed in a chapel; and Filippo, who had wrought many little things in sculpture, desiring to show that he was able to succeed in large works as well, undertook to make the said figure, which, when put into execution and finished, was held something very beautiful; but it was destroyed afterwards, together with many other notable works, in the year 1471, when that church was burnt down.

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He gave much attention to perspective, which was then in a very evil plight by reason of many errors that were made therein; and in this he spent much time, until he found by himself a method whereby it might become true and perfect—namely, that of tracing it with the ground-plan and profile and by means of intersecting lines, which was something truly most ingenious and useful to the art of design. In this he took so great delight that he drew with his own hand the Piazza di S. Giovanni, with all the compartments of black and white marble wherewith that church was incrustated, which he foreshortened with singular grace; and he drew, likewise, the building of the Misericordia, with the shops of the Wafer-Makers and the Volta de' Pecori, and the column of S. Zanobi on the other side. This work, bringing him praise from craftsmen and from all who had judgment in that art, encouraged him so greatly that it was not long before he put his hand to another and drew the Palace, the Piazza, and the Loggia of the Signori, together with the roof of the Pisani and all the buildings that are seen round that Piazza; and these works were the means of arousing the minds of the other craftsmen, who afterwards devoted themselves to this with great zeal. He taught it, in particular, to the painter Masaccio, then a youth and much his friend, who did him credit in this art that Filippo showed him, as it is apparent from the buildings in his works. Nor did he refrain from teaching it even to those who worked in tarsia, which is the art of inlaying coloured woods; and he stimulated them so greatly that he was the source of a good style and of many useful changes that were made in that craft, and of many excellent works wrought both then and afterwards, which have brought fame and profit to Florence for many years.





**THE CRUCIFIXION**  
**(After Filippo Brunelleschi. Florence: S. Maria**  
**Novella)**  
**Alinari**

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Now Messer Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli, returning from his studies, and chancing one evening to be at supper in a garden with some of his friends, invited Filippo, who, hearing him discourse on the mathematical arts, formed such an intimacy with him that he learnt geometry from Messer Paolo; and although Filippo had no learning, he reasoned so well in every matter with his instinct, sharpened by practice and experience, that he would many times confound him. And so he went on to give attention to the study of the Christian Scriptures, never failing to be present at the disputations and preachings of learned persons, from which he gained so much advantage, by reason of his admirable memory, that the aforesaid Messer Paolo was wont to extol him and to say that in hearing Filippo argue he appeared to be hearing a new S. Paul. He also gave much attention at this time to the works of Dante, which he understood very well with regard to the places described and their proportions, and he would avail himself of them in his conversations, quoting them often in making comparisons. He did naught else with his thoughts but invent and imagine ingenious and difficult things; nor could he ever find an intellect more to his satisfaction than that of Donato, with whom he was ever holding familiar discourse, and they took pleasure in one another and would confer together over the difficulties of their vocation.

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Now in those days Donato had finished a Crucifix of wood, which was placed in S. Croce in Florence, below the scene of the child being restored to life by S. Francis, painted by Taddeo Gaddi, and he wished to have the opinion of Filippo about this work; but he repented, for Filippo answered that he had placed a ploughman on the Cross; whence there arose the saying, "Take wood and make one thyself," as it is related at length in the Life of Donato. Whereupon Filippo, who would never get angry, whatever might be said to him, although he might have reason for anger, stayed in seclusion for many months until he had finished a Crucifix of wood of the same size, so excellent, and wrought with so much art, design, and diligence, that Donato—whom he had sent to his house ahead of himself, as it were to surprise him, for he did not know that Filippo had made such a work—having an apron full of eggs and other things for their common dinner, let it fall as he gazed at the work, beside himself with marvel at the ingenious and masterly manner that Filippo had shown in the legs, the trunk, and the arms of the said figure, which was so well composed and united together that Donato, besides admitting himself beaten, proclaimed it a miracle. This work is placed to-day in S. Maria Novella, between the Chapel of the Strozzi and that of the Bardi da Vernia, and it is still very greatly extolled by the moderns. Wherefore, the talent of these truly excellent masters being recognized, they received a commission from the Guild of Butchers and from the Guild of Linen-Manufacturers for two figures in marble, to be made for their niches, which are on the outside of Orsanmichele. Having undertaken other work, Filippo left these figures to Donato to make by himself, and Donato executed them to perfection.

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**THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC**  
**(After Lorenzo Ghiberti. Florence: Bargello)**  
**Brogi**

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After these things, in the year 1401, now that sculpture had risen to so great a height, it was determined to reconstruct the two bronze doors of the Church and Baptistery of S. Giovanni, since, from the death of Andrea Pisano to that day, they had not had any masters capable of executing them. This intention being, therefore, communicated to those sculptors who were then in Tuscany, they were sent for, and each man was given a provision and the space of a year to make one scene; and among those called upon were Filippo and Donato, each of them being required to make one scene by himself, in competition with Lorenzo Ghiberti, Jacopo<sup>[17]</sup> della Fonte, Simone da Colle, Francesco di Valdambrina, and Niccolò d'Arezzo. These scenes, being finished in the same year and being brought together for comparison, were all most beautiful and different one from the other; one was well designed and badly wrought, as was that of Donato; another was very well designed and diligently wrought, but the composition of the scene, with the gradual diminution of the figures, was not good, as was the case with that of Jacopo della Quercia; a third was poor in invention and in the figures, which was the manner wherein Francesco di Valdambrina had executed his; and the worst of all were those of Niccolò d'Arezzo and Simone da Colle. The best was that of Lorenzo di Cione Ghiberti, which had design, diligence, invention, art, and the figures very well wrought. Nor was that of Filippo much inferior, wherein he had represented Abraham sacrificing Isaac; and in that scene a slave who is drawing a thorn from his foot, while he is awaiting Abraham and the ass is browsing, deserves no little praise.

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**THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC**  
**(After Filippo Brunelleschi. Florence: Bargello)**  
**Anderson**

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The scenes, then, being exhibited, Filippo and Donato were not satisfied with any save with that of Lorenzo, and they judged him to be better qualified for that work than themselves and the others who had made the other scenes. And so with good reasons they persuaded the Consuls to allot the work to Lorenzo, showing that thus both the public and the private interest would be best served; and this was indeed the true goodness of friendship, excellence without envy, and a sound judgment in the knowledge of their own selves, whereby they deserved more praise than if they had executed the work to perfection. Happy spirits! who, while they were assisting one another, took delight in praising the labours of others. How unhappy are those of our own day, who, not sated with injuring each other, burst with envy while rending others. The Consuls besought Filippo to undertake the work in company with Lorenzo, but he refused, being minded rather to be first in an art of his own than an equal or a second in that work. Wherefore he presented the scene that he had wrought in bronze to Cosimo de' Medici, who after a time had it placed on the dorsal of the altar in the old Sacristy of S. Lorenzo, where it is to be found at present; and that of Donato was placed in the Guild of the Exchange.

The commission being given to Lorenzo Ghiberti, Filippo and Donato, who were together, resolved to depart from Florence in company and to live for some years in Rome, to the end that Filippo might study architecture and Donato sculpture; and this Filippo did from his desire to be superior both to Lorenzo and to Donato, in proportion as architecture is held to be more necessary for the practical needs of men than sculpture and painting. After he had sold a little farm that he had at Settignano, they departed from Florence and went to Rome, where, seeing the grandeur of the buildings and the perfection of the fabrics of the temples, Filippo would stand in a maze like a man out of his mind. And so, having made arrangements for measuring the cornices and taking the ground-plans of those buildings, he and Donato kept labouring continually, sparing neither time nor expense. There was no place, either in Rome or in the Campagna without, that they left unvisited, and nothing of the good that they did not measure, if only they could find it. And since Filippo was free from domestic cares, he gave himself over body and soul to his studies, and took no thought for eating or sleeping, being intent on one thing only—namely, architecture, which was now dead (I mean the good ancient Orders, and not the barbarous German, which was much in use in his time). And he had in his mind two vast conceptions, one being to restore to light the good manner of architecture, since he believed that if he could recover it he would leave behind no less a name for himself than Cimabue and Giotto had done; and the other was to find a method, if he could, of raising the Cupola of S. Maria del Fiore in Florence, the difficulties of which were such that after the death of Arnolfo Lapi there had been no one courageous enough to think of raising it without vast expenditure for a wooden framework. Yet he did not impart this his invention to Donato or to any living soul, nor did he rest in Rome till he had considered all the difficulties connected with the Ritonda, wondering how the vaulting was raised. He had noted and drawn all the ancient vaults, and was for ever studying



them; and if peradventure they had found pieces of capitals, columns, cornices, and bases of buildings buried underground, they would set to work and have them dug out, in order to examine them thoroughly. Wherefore a rumour spread through Rome, as they passed through the streets, going about carelessly dressed, so that they were called the "treasure-seekers," people believing that they were persons who studied geomancy in order to discover treasure; and this was because they had one day found an ancient earthenware vase full of medals. Filippo ran short of money and contrived to make this good by setting jewels of price for certain goldsmiths who were his friends; and thus he was left alone in Rome, for Donato returned to Florence, while he, with greater industry and labour than before, was for ever investigating the ruins of those buildings. Nor did he rest until he had drawn every sort of building—round, square, and octagonal temples, basilicas, aqueducts, baths, arches, colosseas, amphitheatres, and every temple built of bricks, from which he copied the methods of binding and of clamping with ties, and also of encircling vaults with them; and he noted the ways of making buildings secure by binding the stones together, by iron bars, and by dove-tailing; and, discovering a hole hollowed out under the middle of each great stone, he found that this was meant to hold the iron instrument, which is called by us the ulivella,<sup>[18]</sup> wherewith the stones are drawn up; and this he reintroduced and brought into use afterwards. He then distinguished the different Orders one from another—Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian; and so zealous was his study that his intellect became very well able to see Rome, in imagination, as she was when she was not in ruins. In the year 1407 the air of that city gave Filippo a slight indisposition, wherefore, being advised by his friends to try a change of air, he returned to Florence. There many buildings had suffered by reason of his absence; and for these, on his arrival, he gave many designs and much advice.

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In the same year a congress of architects and engineers of the country was summoned by the Wardens of Works of S. Maria del Fiore and by the Consuls of the Guild of Wool, to discuss methods for raising the cupola. Among these appeared Filippo, giving it as his advice that it was necessary, not to raise the fabric directly from the roof according to the design of Arnolfo, but to make a frieze fifteen braccia in height, with a large round window in the middle of each of its sides, since not only would this take the weight off the supports of the tribunes, but it would become easier to raise the cupola; and models were made in this way, and were put into execution. Filippo, being restored to health after some months, was standing one morning in the Piazza di S. Maria del Fiore with Donato and other craftsmen, when they began to talk of antiquities in connection with sculpture, and Donato related how, when he was returning from Rome, he had made the journey through Orvieto, in order to see that marble façade of the Duomo, a work greatly celebrated, wrought by the hands of diverse masters and held to be something notable in those times; and how, in passing afterwards by Cortona, he entered the Pieve and saw a very beautiful ancient sarcophagus, whereon there was a scene in marble—a rare thing then, when there had not been unearthed that abundance which has been found in our own day. And as Donato went on to describe the method that the master of that work had used in its execution, and the finish that was to be seen therein, together with the perfection and the excellence of the workmanship, Filippo became fired with an ardent desire to see it, and went off on foot just as he was, in his mantle, cap, and wooden shoes, without saying where he was going, and allowed himself to be carried to Cortona by the devotion and love that he bore to art. And having seen the sarcophagus, and being pleased with it, he made a drawing of it with the pen, and returned with that to Florence, without Donato or any other person knowing that he had been away, for they thought he must have been drawing or inventing something.

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Having thus returned to Florence, he showed him the drawing of the sarcophagus, which he had made with great patience, whereat Donato marvelled not a little, seeing how much love Filippo bore to art. After this he stayed many months in Florence, where he kept making models and machines in secret, all for the work of the cupola, exchanging jokes the while with his fellow-craftsmen—for it was then that he played the jest of "the Fat Man and Matteo"—and going very often, for recreation, to assist Lorenzo Ghiberti in polishing some part of his doors. But hearing that there was some talk of providing engineers for the raising of the cupola, and being taken one morning with the idea of returning to Rome, he went there, thinking that he would be in greater repute and would be more sought for from abroad than he would be if he stayed in Florence. When he was in Rome, therefore, the work came to be considered, and so, too, the great acuteness of his intellect, for he had shown in his discourse such confidence and such courage as had not been found in the other masters, who, together with the builders, were standing paralyzed and helpless, thinking that no way of raising the cupola could ever be found, nor beams to make a bridge strong enough to sustain the framework and the weight of so great an edifice; and having determined to make an end of the matter, they wrote to Filippo in Rome, praying him to come to Florence. He, desiring nothing better, returned with great readiness; and the Wardens of Works of S. Maria del Fiore and the Consuls of the Guild of Wool, assembling on his arrival, explained to Filippo all the difficulties, from the greatest to the smallest, which were being raised by the masters, who were in his presence at the audience together with them. Whereupon Filippo spoke these words: "My Lords the Wardens, there is no doubt that great enterprises ever present difficulties in their execution, and if any ever did so, this of yours presents them, and even greater than perchance you are aware of, for the reason that I do not know whether even the ancients ever raised a vault so tremendous as this will be; and although I have often pondered over the framework necessary both within and without, and how it may be possible to work at it securely, I have never been able to come to any resolution, and I am aghast no less at the breadth than at the height of the edifice, for the reason that, if it could be made round, we might use the method used by the Romans in raising the dome over the Pantheon in Rome, that is, the Ritonda, whereas here we must follow the eight sides, and bind the stones together with ties and by dove-

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tailoring them, which will be something very difficult. But remembering that this is a temple consecrated to God and to the Virgin, I am confident, since this is being done in memory of her, that she will not fail to infuse knowledge where it is lacking, and to give strength, wisdom, and genius to him who is to be the author of such a work. But how can I help you in this matter, since the task is not mine? I tell you, indeed, that if the work fell to me, I would have resolution and courage enough to find the method whereby the vault might be raised without so many difficulties; but as yet I have given no thought to it, and you would have me tell you the method! And when at last your Lordships determine to have it raised, you will be forced not only to make trial of me, for I do not think myself able to be the sole adviser in so great a matter, but also to spend money and to ordain that within a year and on a fixed day many architects shall come to Florence, not merely Tuscans and Italians, but Germans, French, and of every other nation; and to propose this work to them, to the end that, after discussing and deciding among so many masters, it may be begun, being entrusted to him who shall give the most direct proof of ability or possess the best method and judgment for such an undertaking. Nor could I give you other counsel or a better plan than this."

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The plan and the counsel of Filippo pleased the Consuls and the Wardens of Works, but they would have liked him in the meanwhile to have made a model and to have given thought to the matter. But he showed that he cared nothing for it; nay, taking leave of them, he said that he had received letters soliciting him to return to Rome. Whereupon the Consuls, perceiving that their prayers and those of the Wardens did not avail to detain him, caused many of his friends to entreat him; but Filippo would not give way, and one morning (on May 26, 1417) the Wardens decreed him a present of money, which is found entered to the credit of Filippo in the books of the Office of Works; and all this was to conciliate him. But he, steadfast in his resolution, took his departure none the less from Florence and returned to Rome, where he studied continuously for that undertaking, making arrangements and preparing himself for the completion of the work, thinking, as was true, that no other than himself could carry it out. And as for his counsel that new architects should be summoned, Filippo had advanced it for no other reason but that they might serve to prove the greatness of his own intellect, and not because he thought that they would be able to vault that tribune or to undertake such a charge, which was too difficult for them. And thus much time was consumed before those architects arrived from their countries, whom they had caused to be summoned from afar by means of orders given to Florentine merchants who dwelt in France, in Germany, in England, and in Spain, and who were commissioned to spend any sum of money, if only they could obtain the most experienced and able intellects that there were in those regions from the Princes of those countries, and send them to Florence.

By the year 1420, all these ultramontane masters were finally assembled in Florence, and likewise those of Tuscany and all the ingenious craftsmen of design in Florence; and so Filippo returned from Rome. They all assembled, therefore, in the Office of Works of S. Maria del Fiore, in the presence of the Consuls and of the Wardens, together with a select body of the most ingenious citizens, to the end that these might hear the mind of each master on the question and might decide on a method of vaulting this tribune. Having called them, then, into the audience, they heard the minds of all, one by one, and the plan that each architect had devised for that work. And a fine thing it was to hear their strange and diverse opinions about the matter, for the reason that some said that piers must be built up from the level of the ground, which should have the arches turned upon them and should uphold the wooden bridges for sustaining the weight; others said that it was best to make the cupola of sponge-stone, to the end that the weight might be less; and many were agreed that a pier should be built in the centre, and that the cupola should be raised in the shape of a pavilion, like that of S. Giovanni in Florence. Nor were there wanting men who said that it would have been a good thing to fill it with earth mingled with small coins, to the end that, when it had been raised, anyone who wanted some of that earth might be given leave to go and fetch it, and thus the people would carry it away in a moment without any expense. Filippo alone said that it could be raised without so much wood-work, without piers, without earth, without so great expenditure on so many arches, and very easily without any framework.

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It appeared to the Consuls, who were expecting to hear of some beautiful method, and to the Wardens of Works and to all those citizens, that Filippo had talked like a fool; and deriding him with mocking laughter, they turned away, bidding him talk of something else, seeing that this was the plan of a madman, as he was. Whereupon Filippo, feeling himself affronted, answered: "My Lords, rest assured that it is not possible to raise the cupola in any other manner than this; and although you laugh at me, you will recognize, unless you mean to be obstinate, that it neither must nor can be done in any other way. And it is necessary, if you wish to erect it in the way that I have thought of, that it should be turned with the curve of a quarter-acute arch, and made double, one vault within, and the other without, in such wise that a man may be able to walk between the one and the other. And over the corners of the angles of the eight sides the fabric must be bound together through its thickness by dove-tailing the stones, and its sides, likewise, must be girt round with oaken ties. And it is necessary to think of the lights, the staircases, and the conduits whereby the rain-water may be able to run off; and not one of you has remembered that you must provide for the raising of scaffoldings within, when the mosaics come to be made, together with an infinite number of difficulties. But I, who see the vaulting raised, know that there is no other method and no other way of raising it than this that I am describing." And growing heated as he spoke, the more he sought to expound his conception, to the end that they might understand it and believe in it, the greater grew their doubts about his proposal, so that they believed in him less and less, and held him to be an ass and a babbler. Whereupon, having

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been dismissed several times and finally refusing to go, he was carried away bodily from the audience by their servants, being thought to be wholly mad; and this affront was the reason that Filippo could afterwards say that he did not dare to pass through any part of the city, for fear lest someone might say: "There goes that madman."

The Consuls remained in the Audience Chamber all confused, both by the difficult methods of the original masters and by this last method of Filippo's, which they thought absurd, for it appeared to them that he would ruin the work in two ways: first, by making the vaulting double, which would have made it enormous and unwieldy in weight; and secondly, by making it without a framework. On the other hand, Filippo, who had spent so many years in study in order to obtain the commission, knew not what to do and was often tempted to leave Florence. However, wishing to prevail, he was forced to arm himself with patience, having insight enough to know that the brains of the men of that city did not abide very firmly by any one resolution. Filippo could have shown a little model that he had in his possession, but he did not wish to show it, having recognized the small intelligence of the Consuls, the envy of the craftsmen, and the instability of the citizens, who favoured now one and now another, according as it pleased each man best; and I do not marvel at this, since every man in that city professes to know as much in these matters as the experienced masters know, although those who truly understand them are but few; and let this be said without offence to those who have the knowledge. What Filippo, therefore, had not been able to achieve before the tribunal, he began to effect with individuals, talking now to a Consul, now to a Warden, and likewise to many citizens; and showing them part of his design, he induced them to determine to allot this work either to him or to one of the foreigners. Wherefore the Consuls, the Wardens of Works, and those citizens, regaining courage, assembled together, and the architects disputed concerning this matter, but all were overcome and conquered by Filippo with many arguments; and here, so it is said, there arose the dispute about the egg, in the following manner. They would have liked Filippo to speak his mind in detail, and to show his model, as they had shown theirs; but this he refused to do, proposing instead to those masters, both the foreign and the native, that whosoever could make an egg stand upright on a flat piece of marble should build the cupola, since thus each man's intellect would be discerned. Taking an egg, therefore, all those masters sought to make it stand upright, but not one could find the way. Whereupon Filippo, being told to make it stand, took it graciously, and, giving one end of it a blow on the flat piece of marble, made it stand upright. The craftsmen protested that they could have done the same; but Filippo answered, laughing, that they could also have raised the cupola, if they had seen the model or the design. And so it was resolved that he should be commissioned to carry out this work, and he was told that he must give fuller information about it to the Consuls and the Wardens of Works.

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Going to his house, therefore, he wrote down his mind on a sheet of paper as clearly as he was able, to give to the tribunal, in the following manner: "Having considered the difficulties of this structure, Magnificent Lords Wardens, I find that it is in no way possible to raise the cupola perfectly round, seeing that the surface above, where the lantern is to go, would be so great that the laying of any weight thereupon would soon destroy it. Now it appears to me that those architects who have no regard for the durability of their structures, have no love of lasting memorials, and do not even know why they are made. Wherefore I have determined to turn the inner part of this vault in pointed sections, following the outer sides, and to give to these the proportion and the curve of the quarter-acute arch, for the reason that this curve, when turned, ever pushes upwards, so that, when it is loaded with the lantern, both will unite to make the vaulting durable. At the base it must be three braccia and three quarters in thickness, and it must rise pyramidically, narrowing from without, until it closes at the point where the lantern is to be; and at this junction the vaulting must be one braccio and a quarter in thickness. Then on the outer side there must be another vault, which must be two braccia and a half thick at the base, in order to protect the inner one from the rain. This one must also diminish pyramidically in due proportion, so that it may come together at the foot of the lantern, like the other, in such wise that at the summit it may be two-thirds of a braccio in thickness. At each angle there must be a buttress, making eight in all: and in the middle of every side there must be two buttresses, making sixteen in all: and between the said angles, on every side, both within and without, there must be two buttresses, each four braccia thick at the base. The two said vaults, built in the form of a pyramid, must rise together in equal proportion up to the height of the round window closed by the lantern. There must then be made twenty-four buttresses with the said vaults built round them, and six arches of grey-stone blocks, stout and long, and well braced with irons, which must be covered with tin; and over the said blocks there must be iron ties, binding the said vaulting to its buttresses. The first part of the masonry, up to the height of five braccia and a quarter, must be solid, leaving no vacant space, and then the buttresses must be continued and the two vaults separated. The first and second courses at the base must be strengthened throughout with long blocks of grey-stone laid horizontally across them, in such wise that both vaults of the cupola may rest on the said blocks. At the height of every nine braccia in the said vaults there must be little arches between one buttress and another, with thick ties of oak, to bind together the said buttresses, which support the inner vault; and then the said ties of oak must be covered with plates of iron, for the sake of the staircases. The buttresses must be all built of grey-stone and hard-stone, and all the sides of the cupola must be likewise of hard-stone and bound with the buttresses up to the height of twenty-four braccia; and from there to the top the material must be brick, or rather, spongestone, according to the decision of the builder, who must make the work as light as he is able. A passage must be made on the outside above the windows, forming a gallery below, with an open parapet two braccia in height, proportionately to those of the little tribunes below; or rather, two passages, one above the other, resting on a richly adorned cornice,

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with the upper passage uncovered. The rain water must flow from the cupola into a gutter of marble, a third of a braccio wide, and must run off through outlets made of hard-stone below the gutter. Eight ribs of marble must be made at the angles in the outer surface of the cupola, of such thickness as may be required, rising one braccio above the cupola, with a cornice above by way of roof, two braccia wide, to serve as gable and eaves to the whole; and these ribs must rise pyramidically from their base up to the summit. The two vaults of the cupola must be built in the manner described above, without framework, up to the height of thirty braccia, and from that point upwards in the manner recommended by those masters who will have the building of them, since practice teaches us what course to pursue."

Filippo, having finished writing all that is above, went in the morning to the tribunal and gave them that paper, which they studied from end to end. And although they could not grasp it all, yet, seeing the readiness of Filippo's mind, and perceiving that not one of the other architects had better ground to stand on—for he showed a manifest confidence in his speech, ever repeating the same thing in such wise that it appeared certain that he had raised ten cupolas—the Consuls, drawing aside, were minded to give him the work, saying only that they would have liked to see something to show how this cupola could be raised without framework, for they approved of everything else. To this desire fortune was favourable, for Bartolommeo Barbadori having previously resolved to have a chapel built in S. Felicita and having spoken of this to Filippo, the latter had put his hand to the work and had caused that chapel to be vaulted without framework, at the right hand of the entrance into the church, where the holy-water basin is, also made by his hand. In those days, likewise, he caused another to be vaulted beside the Chapel of the High Altar in S. Jacopo sopra Arno, for Stiatta Ridolfi; and these works were the means of bringing him more credit than his words. And so the Consuls and the Wardens of Works, being assured by the writing and by the work that they had seen, gave him the commission for the cupola, making him principal superintendent by the vote with the beans. But they did not contract with him for more than twelve braccia of the whole height, saying to him that they wished to see how the work succeeded, and that if it succeeded as well as he promised they would not fail to commission him to do the rest. It appeared a strange thing to Filippo to see so great obstinacy and distrust in the Consuls and Wardens, and, if it had not been that he knew himself to be the only man capable of executing the work, he would not have put his hand to it. However, desiring to gain the glory of its construction, he undertook it, and pledged himself to bring it to perfect completion. His written statement was copied into a book wherein the provveditore kept the accounts of the debtors and creditors for wood and marble, together with the aforesaid pledge; and they undertook to make him the same allowance of money as they had given up to then to the other superintendents.

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The commission given to Filippo becoming known among the craftsmen and the citizens, some thought well of it and others ill, as it has ever been the case with the opinions of the populace, of the thoughtless, and of the envious. The while that the preparations for beginning to build were being made, a faction was formed among craftsmen and citizens, and they appeared before the Consuls and the Wardens, saying that there had been too much haste in the matter, and that such a work as this should not be carried out by the counsel of one man alone; that they might be pardoned for this if they had been suffering from a dearth of excellent masters, whereas they had them in abundance; and that it was not likely to do credit to the city, because, if some accident were to happen, as is wont to come to pass sometimes in buildings, they might be blamed, as persons who had laid too great a charge on one man, without considering the loss and the shame that might result to the public interest; wherefore it would be well to give Filippo a companion, in order to restrain his rashness.

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Now Lorenzo Ghiberti had come into great repute, by reason of having formerly given proof of his genius in the doors of S. Giovanni; and that he was beloved by certain men who were very powerful in the Government was proved clearly enough, since, seeing the glory of Filippo waxing so great, they wrought on the Consuls and the Wardens so strongly, under the pretext of love and affection towards that building, that he was united to Filippo as his colleague in the work. How great were the despair and the bitterness of Filippo, on hearing what the Wardens had done, may be seen from this, that he was minded to fly from Florence; and if it had not been for Donato and Luca della Robbia, who comforted him, he would have lost his reason. Truly impious and cruel is the rage of those who, blinded by envy, put into peril the honours and the beautiful works of others in their jealous emulation! It was no fault of theirs, in truth, that Filippo did not break his models into pieces, burn his designs, and throw away in less than half an hour all that labour which had occupied him for so many years. The Wardens at first made excuses to Filippo and exhorted him to proceed, saying that he himself and no other was the inventor and the creator of so noble a building; but at the same time they gave the same salary to Lorenzo as to Filippo. The work was pursued with little willingness on the part of Filippo, who saw that he must endure the labours that it entailed, and must then divide the honour and the fame equally with Lorenzo. Making up his mind, however, that he would find means to prevent Lorenzo from continuing very long in the work, he went on pursuing it in company with him, in the manner suggested by the writing given to the Wardens. Meanwhile, there arose in the mind of Filippo the idea of making such a model as had not yet been made; wherefore, having put his hand to this, he had it wrought by one Bartolommeo, a carpenter, who lived near the Studio. In this model, which had all the exact proportions measured to scale, he made all the difficult parts, such as staircases both lighted and dark, and every sort of window, door, tie, and buttress, together with a part of the gallery. Lorenzo, hearing of this, wished to see it, but Filippo refused to let him, whereupon he flew into a rage and ordered another model to be made for himself, to the end that he might not appear to be drawing his salary for nothing and to be of no account in the work. With regard to

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these models, Filippo was paid fifty lire and fifteen soldi for his, as we see from an order in the book of Migliore di Tommaso, dated October 3, 1419, whereas three hundred lire are entered as paid to Lorenzo Ghiberti for the labour and expense of his model, more in consequence of the friendship and favour that he enjoyed than of any profit or need that the building had of it.

This torment lasted before the eyes of Filippo until 1426, the friends of Lorenzo calling him the inventor equally with Filippo; and this annoyance disturbed the mind of Filippo so greatly that he was living in the utmost restlessness. Now, having thought of various new devices, he determined to rid himself entirely of Lorenzo, recognizing that he was of little account in the work. Filippo had already raised the cupola right round, what with the one vault and the other, to the height of twelve braccia, and he had now to place upon them the ties both of stone and of wood; and as this was a difficult matter, he wished to discuss it with Lorenzo, in order to see if he had considered this difficulty. And he found Lorenzo so far from having thought of such a matter, that he replied that he referred it to Filippo as the inventor. Lorenzo's answer pleased Filippo, since it appeared to him that this was the way to get him removed from the work, and to prove that he did not possess that intelligence which was claimed for him by his friends, and to expose the favour that had placed him in that position. Now the masons engaged on the work were at a standstill, waiting to be told to begin the part above the twelve braccia, and to make the vaults and bind them with ties. Having begun the drawing in of the cupola towards the top, it was necessary for them to make the scaffoldings, to the end that the masons and their labourers might be able to work without danger, seeing that the height was such that merely looking down brought fear and terror into the stoutest heart. The masons and the other master-builders were standing waiting for directions as to the ties and the scaffoldings; and since no decision was made either by Lorenzo or by Filippo, there arose a murmuring among the masons and the other master-builders, who saw no signs of the solicitude that had been shown before; and because, being poor people, they lived by the work of their hands, and suspected that neither one nor the other of the architects had enough courage to carry the work any further, they went about the building occupying themselves, to the best of their knowledge and power, with filling up and finishing all that had as yet been built.

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One morning Filippo did not appear at the work, but bound up his head and went to bed, and caused plates and cloths to be heated with great solicitude, groaning continually and pretending to be suffering from colic. The master-builders, who were standing waiting for orders as to what they were to do, on hearing this, asked Lorenzo what they were to go on with: but he replied that it was for Filippo to give orders, and that they must wait for him. There was one who said, "What, dost thou not know his mind?" "Yes," answered Lorenzo, "but I would do nothing without him"; and this he said to excuse himself, because, not having seen the model of Filippo, and having never asked him what method he intended to follow, he would never commit himself in talking of the matter, in order not to appear ignorant, and would always make a double-edged answer, the more so as he knew that he was employed in the work against the will of Filippo. The illness of the latter having already lasted for more than two days, the provveditore and many of the master-masons went to see him and asked him repeatedly to tell them what they were to do. And he replied, "You have Lorenzo, let him do something"; nor could they get another word out of him. Whereupon, this becoming known, there arose discussions and very adverse judgments with regard to the work: some saying that Filippo had gone to bed in his vexation at finding that he had not the courage to raise the cupola, and that he was repenting of having meddled with the matter; while his friends defended him, saying that his anger, if anger it was, came from the outrage of having been given Lorenzo as colleague, but that his real trouble was colic, caused by fatiguing himself overmuch at the work. Now, while this noise was going on, the building was at a standstill, and almost all the work of the masons and stone-cutters was suspended; and they murmured against Lorenzo, saying, "He is good enough at drawing the salary, but as for directing the work, not a bit of it! If we had not Filippo, or if he were ill for long, what would the other do? Is it Filippo's fault that he is ill?" The Wardens of Works, seeing themselves disgraced by this state of things, determined to go and find Filippo; and after arriving and sympathizing with him first about his illness, they told him in how great confusion the building stood and what troubles his illness had brought upon them. Whereupon Filippo, speaking with great heat both under the cloak of illness and from love of the work, replied, "Is not that Lorenzo there? Can he do nothing? And I marvel at you as well." Then the Wardens answered, "He will do naught without thee"; and Filippo retorted, "But I could do well without him." This retort, so acute and double-edged, was enough for them, and they went their way, convinced that Filippo was ill from nothing but the desire to work alone. They sent his friends, therefore, to get him out of bed, with the intention of removing Lorenzo from the work. Wherefore Filippo returned to the building, but, seeing that Lorenzo was still strongly favoured and that he would have his salary without any labour whatsoever, he thought of another method whereby he might disgrace him and demonstrate conclusively his little knowledge in that profession; and he made the following discourse to the Wardens in the presence of Lorenzo: "My Lords the Wardens of Works, if the time that is lent to us to live were as surely ours as the certainty of dying, there is no doubt whatsoever that many things which are begun would be completed instead of remaining unfinished. The accident of this sickness from which I have suffered might have cut short my life and put a stop to the work; wherefore I have thought of a plan whereby, if I should ever fall sick again, or Lorenzo, which God forbid, one or the other may be able to pursue his part of the work. Even as your Lordships have divided the salary between us, let the work also be divided, to the end that each of us, being spurred to show his knowledge, may be confident of acquiring honour and profit from our Republic. Now there are two most difficult things which have to be put into execution at the present time: one is the making of the scaffoldings to enable the masons to do

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their work, which have to be used both within and without the building, where they must support men, stones, and lime, and sustain the crane for lifting weights, with other instruments of that kind; the other is the chain of ties which has to be placed above the twelve braccia, surrounding and binding together the eight sides of the cupola, and clamping the fabric together, so that it may bind and secure all the weight that is laid above, in such a manner that the weight may not force it out or stretch it, and that the whole structure may rest firmly on its own basis. Let Lorenzo, then, take one of these two works, whichever he may think himself best able to execute; and I will undertake to accomplish the other without difficulty, to the end that no more time may be lost." Hearing this, Lorenzo was forced for the sake of his honour to accept one of these tasks, and, although he did it very unwillingly, he resolved to take the chain of ties, as being the easier, relying on the advice of the masons and on the remembrance that in the vaulting of S. Giovanni in Florence there was a chain of stone ties, wherefrom he might take a part of the design, if not the whole. And so one put his hand to the scaffoldings and the other to the ties, and each carried out his work. The scaffoldings of Filippo were made with so great ingenuity and industry, that the very opposite opinion was held in this matter to that which many had previously conceived, for the builders stood on them, working and drawing up weights, as securely as if they had been on the surface of the ground; and the models of the said scaffoldings were preserved in the Office of Works. Lorenzo had the chain of ties made on one of the eight sides with the greatest difficulty; and when it was finished, the Wardens caused Filippo to look at it. To them he said nothing, but he discoursed thereon with some of his friends, saying that it was necessary to have some form of fastening different from that one, and to apply it in a better manner than had been done, and that it was not strong enough to withstand the weight that was to be laid above, for it did not bind the masonry together firmly enough; adding that the supplies given to Lorenzo, as well as the chain that he had caused to be made, had been simply thrown away. The opinion of Filippo became known, and he was charged to show what was the best way of making such a chain. Whereupon, having already made designs and models, he immediately showed them, and when they had been seen by the Wardens and the other masters, it was recognized into what great error they had fallen by favouring Lorenzo; and wishing to atone for this error and to show that they knew what was good, they made Filippo overseer and superintendent of the whole fabric for life, saying that nothing should be done in that work without his command. And as a proof of approbation they gave him one hundred florins, decreed by the Consuls and Wardens under date of August 13, 1423, by the hand of Lorenzo Paoli, notary to the Office of Works, and under the name of Gherardo di Messer Filippo Corsini; and they voted him an allowance of one hundred florins a year as a provision for life. Wherefore, giving orders for the building to be pushed on, he pursued it with such scrupulous care and so great attention, that not a stone could be put into place without his having wished to see it. Lorenzo, on the other hand, finding himself vanquished, and, as it were, put to shame, was favoured and assisted by his friends so powerfully that he went on drawing his salary, claiming that he could not be dismissed until three years had passed.

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**THE DOME OF THE CATHEDRAL**  
**(After Filippo Brunelleschi. Florence)**

Filippo was for ever making, on the slightest occasion, designs and models of stages for the builders and of machines for lifting weights. But this did not prevent certain malicious persons, friends of Lorenzo, from putting Filippo into despair by spending their whole time in making models in opposition to his, insomuch that some were made by one Maestro Antonio da Verzelli and other favoured masters, and were brought into notice now by one citizen and now by another, demonstrating their inconstancy, their little knowledge, and their even smaller understanding, since, having perfection in their grasp, they brought forward the imperfect and the useless.

The ties were now finished right round the eight sides, and the masons, being encouraged, were labouring valiantly; but being pressed more than usual by Filippo, and resenting certain reprimands received with regard to the building and other things that were happening every day, they had conceived a grievance against him. Wherefore, moved by this and by envy, the foremen leagued themselves together into a faction and declared that the work was laborious and dangerous, and that they would not build the cupola without great payment—although their pay had been raised higher than usual—thinking in this way to take vengeance on Filippo and to gain profit for themselves. This affair displeased the Wardens and also Filippo, who, having pondered over it, made up his mind one Saturday evening to dismiss them all. They, seeing themselves dismissed and not knowing how the matter would end, were very evilly disposed; but on the following Monday Filippo set ten Lombards to work, and by standing ever over them and saying, "Do this here," and, "Do that there," he taught them so much in one day that they worked there for many weeks. The masons, on the other hand, seeing themselves dismissed, deprived of their work, and thus disgraced, and having no work as profitable as this, sent mediators to Filippo, saying that they would willingly return, and recommending themselves to him as much as they were able. Filippo kept them for many days in suspense as to his willingness to take them back; then he reinstated them at lower wages than they had before; and thus where they thought to gain they lost, and in taking vengeance on Filippo they brought harm and disgrace on themselves.

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The murmurings were now silenced, and meanwhile, on seeing that building being raised so readily, men had come to recognize the genius of Filippo; and it was already held by those who were not prejudiced that he had shown such courage as perchance no ancient or modern architect had shown in his works. This came to pass because he brought out his model, wherein all could see how much thought he had given to the planning of the staircases and of the lights both within and without, in order that no one might be injured in the darkness by reason of fear, and how many diverse balusters of iron he had placed where the ascent was steep, for the staircases, arranging them with much consideration. Besides this, he had even thought of the irons for fixing scaffoldings within, in case mosaics or paintings had ever to be wrought there; and in like manner, by placing the different kinds of water-conduits, some covered and some uncovered, in the least dangerous positions, and by duly accompanying these with holes and diverse apertures, to the end that the force of the winds might be broken and that neither exhalations nor the tremblings of the earth might be able to do any harm, he showed how great assistance he had received from his studies during the many years that he stayed in Rome. And in addition, when men considered what he had done in the way of dove-tailing, joining, fixing, and binding together the stones, it made them marvel and tremble to think that one single mind should have been capable of all that the mind of Filippo had proved itself able to execute. So greatly did his powers continue to increase that there was nothing, however difficult and formidable, that he did not render easy and simple; and this he showed in the lifting of weights by means of counterweights and wheels, so that one ox could raise what six pairs could scarcely have raised before.

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The building had now risen to such a height that it was a very great inconvenience for anyone who had climbed to the top to descend to the ground, and the builders lost much time in going to eat and drink, and suffered great discomfort in the heat of the day. Filippo therefore made arrangements for eating-houses with kitchens to be opened on the cupola, and for wine to be sold there, so that no one had to leave his labour until the evening, which was convenient for the men and very advantageous for the work. Seeing the work making great progress and succeeding so happily, Filippo had grown so greatly in courage that he was continually labouring, going in person to the furnaces where the bricks were being shaped and demanding to see the clay and to feel its consistency, and insisting on selecting them with his own hand when baked, with the greatest diligence. When the stonemasons were working at the stones, he would look at them to see if they showed flaws and if they were hard, and he would give the men models in wood or wax, or<sup>[19]</sup> made simply out of turnips; and he would also make iron tools for the smiths. He invented hinges with heads, and hinge-hooks, and he did much to facilitate architecture, which was certainly brought by him to a perfection such as it probably had never enjoyed among the Tuscans.

In the year 1423 the greatest possible happiness and rejoicing were prevailing in Florence, when Filippo was chosen as one of the Signori for the quarter of San Giovanni, for May and June, Lapo Niccolini being chosen as Gonfalonier of Justice for the quarter of Santa Croce. And if he is found registered in the Priorista as "Filippo di Ser Brunellesco Lippi," no one need marvel, seeing that he was called thus after his grandfather Lippo, and not "de' Lapi," as he should have been; which method is seen from the said Priorista to have been used in innumerable other cases, as is well

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known to all who have seen it or who know the custom of those times. Filippo exercised that office and also other magisterial functions that he obtained in his city, wherein he ever bore himself with most profound judgment.

Seeing that the two vaults were beginning to close in on the round window where the lantern was to rise, it now remained to Filippo (who had made many models of clay and of wood for both the one and the other in Rome and in Florence, without showing them) to make up his mind finally which of these he would put into execution. Wherefore, having determined to finish the gallery, he made diverse designs, which remained after his death in the Office of Works; but they have since been lost by reason of the negligence of those officials. In our own day, to the end that the whole might be completed, a part of it was made on one of the eight sides, but by the advice of Michelagnolo Buonarroti it was abandoned and not carried further, because it clashed with the original plan. Filippo also made with his own hand a model for the lantern; this was octagonal, with proportions in harmony with those of the cupola, and it turned out very beautiful in invention, variety, and adornment. He made therein the staircase for ascending to the ball, which was something divine, but, since Filippo had stopped up the entrance with a piece of wood let in below, no one save himself knew of this staircase. And although he was praised and had now overcome the envy and the arrogance of many, he could not prevent all the other masters who were in Florence from setting themselves, at the sight of this model, to make other in various fashions, and finally a lady of the house of Gaddi had the courage to compete with the one made by Filippo. But he, meanwhile, kept laughing at their presumption, and when many of his friends told him that he should not show his model to any craftsmen, lest they should learn from it, he would answer that there was but one true model and that the others were of no account. Some of the other masters had used some of the parts of Filippo's model for their own, and Filippo, on seeing these, would say, "The next model that this man makes will be my very own." Filippo's model was infinitely praised by all; only, not seeing therein the staircase for ascending to the ball, they complained that it was defective. The Wardens determined, none the less, to give him the commission for the said work, but on the condition that he should show them the staircase. Whereupon Filippo, removing the small piece of wood that there was at the foot of the model, showed in a pilaster the staircase that is seen at the present day, in the form of a hollow blow-pipe, having on one side a groove with rungs of bronze, whereby one ascends to the top, putting one foot after another. And because he could not live long enough, by reason of his old age, to see the lantern finished, he left orders in his testament that it should be built as it stood in the model and as he had directed in writing; protesting that otherwise the structure would collapse, since it was turned with the quarter-acute arch, so that it was necessary to burden it with this weight in order to make it stronger. He was not able to see this edifice finished before his death, but he raised it to the height of several braccia, and caused almost all the marbles that were going into it to be well wrought and prepared; and the people, on seeing them prepared, were amazed that it should be possible for him to propose to lay so great a weight on that vaulting. It was the opinion of many ingenious men that it would not bear the weight, and it appeared to them great good-fortune that he had carried it so far, and a tempting of Providence to burden it so heavily. Filippo, ever laughing to himself, and having prepared all the machines and all the instruments that were to be used in building it, spent all his time and thought in foreseeing, anticipating, and providing for every detail, even to the point of guarding against the chipping of the dressed marbles as they were drawn up, insomuch that the arches of the tabernacles were built with wooden protections; while for the rest, as it has been said, there were written directions and models.

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How beautiful is this building it demonstrates by itself. From the level of the ground to the base of the lantern it is one hundred and fifty-four braccia in height; the body of the lantern is thirty-six braccia; the copper ball, four braccia; the cross, eight braccia; and the whole is two hundred and two braccia. And it can be said with confidence that the ancients never went so high with their buildings, and never exposed themselves to so great a risk as to try to challenge the heavens, even as this structure truly appears to challenge them, seeing that it rises to such a height that the mountains round Florence appear no higher. And it seems, in truth, that the heavens are envious of it, since the lightning keeps on striking it every day. The while that this work was in progress, Filippo made many other buildings, which we will enumerate below in their order.

With his own hand he made the model of the Chapter-house of S. Croce in Florence, a varied and very beautiful work, for the family of the Pazzi; and the model of the house of the Busini, for the habitation of two families; and also the model of the house and loggia of the Innocenti, the vaulting of which was executed without framework, a method that is still followed by all in our own day. It is said that Filippo was summoned to Milan in order to make the model of a fortress for Duke Filippo Maria, and that he left this building of the Innocenti in charge of Francesco della Luna, who was very much his friend. This Francesco made an architrave-ornament running downward from above, which is wrong according to the rules of architecture. Wherefore Filippo, on returning, reproved him for having done such a thing, and he answered that he copied it from the Church of S. Giovanni, which is ancient. "There is one sole error," said Filippo, "in that edifice, and thou hast followed it." The model of this building, by the hand of Filippo, was for many years in the hands of the Guild of Por Santa Maria, being held in great account because a part of the fabric was still unfinished; but it is now lost. He made the model of the Abbey of the Canons-Regular of Fiesole, for Cosimo de' Medici, the architecture being ornate, commodious, fanciful, and, in short, truly magnificent. The church is lofty, with the vaulting barrel-shaped, and the sacristy, like all the rest of the monastery, has its proper conveniences. But what is most important and most worthy of consideration is that, having to place that edifice on the downward

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slope of that mountain and yet on the level, he availed himself of the part below with great judgment, making therein cellars, wash-houses, bread-ovens, stables, kitchens, rooms for storing firewood, and so many other conveniences, that it is not possible to see anything better; and thus he laid the base of the edifice on the level. Wherefore he was afterwards able to make the loggie, the refectory, the infirmary, the noviciate, the dormitory, and the library, with the other principal rooms proper to a monastery, on one plane. All this was carried out by the Magnificent Cosimo de' Medici at his own expense, partly through the piety that he showed in all matters in connection with the Christian faith, and partly through the affection that he bore to Don Timoteo da Verona, a most excellent preacher of that Order, whose conversation he was so anxious to enjoy that he also built many rooms for himself in that monastery and lived there at his own convenience. On this edifice Cosimo spent one hundred thousand crowns, as may be seen in an inscription. Filippo also designed the model for the fortress of Vico Pisano; and he designed the old Citadel of Pisa, and fortified the Ponte a Mare, and also gave the design for the new Citadel, closing the bridge with the two towers. In like manner, he made the model for the fortress of the port of Pesaro. Returning to Milan, he made many designs for the Duke, and some for the masters of the Duomo of that city.

The Church of S. Lorenzo had been begun in Florence at this time by order of the people of that quarter, who had made the Prior superintendent of that building. This person made profession of much knowledge in architecture, and was ever amusing himself therewith by way of pastime. And they had already begun the building by making piers of brick, when Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, who had promised the people of that quarter and the Prior to have the sacristy and a chapel made at his own expense, invited Filippo one morning to dine with him, and after much discourse asked him what he thought of the beginning of S. Lorenzo. Filippo was constrained by the entreaties of Giovanni to say what he thought, and being compelled to speak the truth, he criticized it in many respects, as something designed by a person who had perchance more learning than experience of buildings of that sort. Whereupon Giovanni asked Filippo if something better and more beautiful could be made: to which Filippo replied, "Without a doubt, and I marvel that you, being the chief in the enterprise, do not devote a few thousand crowns to building a body of a church with all its parts worthy of the place and of so many noble owners of tombs, who, seeing it begun, will proceed with their chapels to the best of their power; above all, because there remains no memorial of us save walls, which bear testimony for hundreds and thousands of years to those who built them." Giovanni, encouraged by the words of Filippo, determined to build the sacristy and the principal chapel, together with the whole body of the church, although only seven families were willing to co-operate, since the others had not the means: these seven were the Rondinelli, Ginori, Dalla Stufa, Neroni, Ciai, Marignolli, Martelli, and Marco di Luca, and these chapels were to be made in the cross. The sacristy was the first part to be undertaken, and afterwards the church, little by little. The other chapels along the length of the church came to be granted afterwards, one by one, to other citizens of the quarter. The roofing of the sacristy was not finished when Giovanni de' Medici passed to the other life, leaving behind him his son Cosimo, who, having a greater spirit than his father and delighting in memorials, caused this one to be carried on. It was the first edifice that he erected, and he took so great delight therein that from that time onwards up to his death he was for ever building. Cosimo pressed this work forward with greater ardour, and while one part was being begun, he would have another finished. Looking on the work as a pastime, he was almost always there, and it was his solicitude that caused Filippo to finish the sacristy, and Donato to make the stucco-work, with the stone ornaments for those little doors and the doors of bronze. In the middle of the sacristy, where the priests don their vestments, he had a tomb made for his father Giovanni, under a great slab of marble supported by four little columns; and in the same place he made a tomb for his own family, separating that of the women from that of the men. In one of the two little rooms that are on either side of the altar in the said sacristy he made a well in one corner, with a place for a lavatory. In short, everything in this fabric is seen to have been built with much judgment. Giovanni and the others had arranged to make the choir in the middle, below the tribune; but Cosimo changed this at the wish of Filippo, who made the principal chapel—which had been designed at first as a smaller recess—so much greater, that he was able to make the choir therein, as it is at present. This being finished, there remained to be made the central tribune and the rest of the church; but this tribune, with the rest, was not vaulted until after the death of Filippo. This church is one hundred and forty-four braccia in length, and many errors are seen therein, one being that the columns are placed on the level of the ground instead of being raised on a dado, which should have been as high as the level of the bases of the pilasters which stand on the steps, so that, as one sees the pilasters shorter than the columns, the whole of that work appears badly proportioned. All this was caused by the counsels of his successors, who were jealous of his name and had made models in opposition to his during his lifetime. For these they had been put to shame with sonnets written by Filippo, and after his death they took vengeance on him in this manner, not only in this work but in all those that remained to be carried out by them. He left the model for the presbytery of the priests of S. Lorenzo, and part of the building finished, wherein he made the cloister one hundred and forty-four braccia in length.

The while that this edifice was building, Cosimo de' Medici determined to have a palace made for himself, and therefore revealed his intention to Filippo, who, putting aside every other care, made him a great and very beautiful model for the said palace, which he wished to place opposite to S. Lorenzo, on the Piazza, entirely isolated on every side. In this the art of Filippo had achieved so much that Cosimo, thinking it too sumptuous and great a fabric, refrained from putting it into execution, more to avoid envy than by reason of the cost. While the model was making, Filippo used to say that he thanked his fortune for such an opportunity, seeing that he had such a house

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to build as he had desired for many years, and because he had come across a man who had the wish and the means to have it built. But, on learning afterwards the determination of Cosimo not to put this project into execution, in disdain he broke the design into a thousand pieces. Deeply did Cosimo repent, after he had made that other palace, that he had not adopted the design of Filippo; and this Cosimo was wont to say that he had never spoken to a man of greater intelligence and spirit than Filippo. He also made the model of the most bizarre Temple of the Angeli, for the family of the Scolari; but it remained unfinished and in the condition wherein it is now to be seen, because the Florentines spent the money which lay in the Monte for this purpose on certain requirements of their city, or, as some say, in the war that they waged formerly against the people of Lucca, wherein they also spent the money that had been left in like manner by Niccolò da Uzzano for building the Sapienza, as it has been related at length in another place. And in truth, if this Temple of the Angeli had been finished according to the model of Brunellesco, it would have been one of the rarest things in Italy, for the reason that what is seen of it cannot be sufficiently extolled. The drawings by the hand of Filippo for the ground-plan and for the completion of this octagonal temple are in our book, with other designs by the same man.

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**THE OLD SACRISTY OF S. LORENZO  
(After Filippo Brunelleschi. Florence)**

*Alinari*

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Filippo also designed a rich and magnificent palace for Messer Luca Pitti at a place called Ruciano, without the Porta a San Niccolò in Florence, but this failed by a great measure to equal the one that he began in Florence for the same man, carrying it to the second range of windows, with such grandeur and magnificence that nothing more rare or more magnificent has yet been seen in the Tuscan manner. The doors of this palace are double, with the opening sixteen braccia in length and eight in breadth; the windows both of the first and second range are in every way similar to these doors, and the vaultings double; and the whole edifice is so masterly in design, that any more beautiful or more magnificent architecture cannot be imagined. The builder of this palace was Luca Fancelli, an architect of Florence, who erected many buildings for Filippo, and one for Leon Batista Alberti, namely, the principal chapel of the Nunziata in Florence, by order of Lodovico Gonzaga, who took him to Mantua, where he made many works and married a wife and lived and died, leaving heirs who are still called the Luchi from his name. This palace was bought not many years ago by the most Illustrious Lady Leonora di Toledo, Duchess of Florence, on the advice of the most Illustrious Lord Duke Cosimo, her consort; and she increased the grounds all round it so greatly that she made a very large garden, partly on the plain, partly on the top of the hill, and partly on the slope, filling it with all the sorts of trees both of the garden and of the forest, most beautifully laid out, and making most delightful little groves with innumerable sorts of evergreens, which flourish in every season; to say nothing of the waters, the fountains, the conduits, the fishponds, the fowling-places, the espaliers, and an infinity of other things worthy of a magnanimous prince, about which I will be silent, because it is not possible, without seeing them, ever to imagine their grandeur and their beauty. And in truth Duke Cosimo could have chanced upon nothing more worthy of the power and greatness of his mind than this palace, which might truly appear to have been erected by Messer Luca Pitti, from the design of Brunellesco, for his most Illustrious Excellency. Messer Luca left it unfinished by reason of his cares in connection with the State, and his heirs, having no means wherewith to complete it, and being unwilling to let it go to ruin, were content to make it over to the Duchess, who was ever spending money on it as long as she lived, but not so much as to give hope that it would be soon finished. It is true, indeed, according to what I once heard, that she was minded to spend 40,000 ducats in one year alone, if she lived, in order to see it, if not finished, at least well on the way to

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completion. And because the model of Filippo has not been found, his Excellency has caused Bartolommeo Ammanati, an excellent sculptor and architect, to make another, according to which the work is being carried on; and a great part of the courtyard is already completed in rustic work, similar to the exterior. And in truth, if one considers the grandeur of this work, one marvels how the mind of Filippo could conceive so great an edifice, which is truly magnificent not only in the external façade, but also in the distribution of all the apartments. I say nothing of the view, which is most beautiful, and of the kind of theatre formed by the most lovely hills that rise round the palace in the direction of the walls, because, as I have said, it would take too long to try to describe them in full, nor could anyone, without seeing this palace, imagine how greatly superior it is to any other royal edifice whatsoever.

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It is also said that the machinery for the "Paradise" of S. Felice in Piazza, in the said city, was invented by Filippo in order to hold the Representation, or rather, the Festival of the Annunciation, in the manner wherein the Florentines were wont to hold it in that place in olden times. This was truly something marvellous, demonstrating the genius and the industry of him who was its inventor, for the reason that there was seen on high a Heaven full of living figures in motion, with an infinity of lights appearing and disappearing almost in a flash. Now I do not wish to grudge the labour of giving an exact description of the machinery of that engine, seeing that it has all disappeared and that the men who could speak of it from personal knowledge are dead, so that there is no hope of its being reconstructed, that place being inhabited no longer by the Monks of Camaldoli, but by the Nuns of S. Pier Martire; and above all since the one in the Carmine has been destroyed, because it was pulling down the rafters that support the roof.

For this purpose, then, Filippo had suspended, between two of the beams that supported the roof of the church, the half of a globe in the shape of an empty bowl, or rather, of a barber's basin, with the rim downwards; this half-globe was made of thin and light planks fastened to a star of iron which radiated round the curve of the said half-globe, and these planks narrowed towards the point of equilibrium in the centre, where there was a great ring of iron round which there radiated the iron star that secured the planks of the half-globe. The whole mass was upheld by a stout beam of pine-wood, well shod with iron, which lay across the timbers of the roof; and to this beam was fastened the ring that sustained and balanced the half-globe, which from the ground truly appeared like a Heaven. At the foot of the inner edge it had certain wooden brackets, large enough for one person to stand on and no more, and at the height of one braccio there was also an iron fastening, likewise on the inner edge; on each of these brackets there was placed a boy about twelve years old, who was girt round with the iron fastening one braccio and a half high, in such wise that he could not have fallen down even if he had wanted to. These boys, who were twelve in all, were placed on the brackets, as it has been said, and dressed like angels, with gilded wings and hair made of gold thread; and when it was time they took one another by the hand and waved their arms, so that they appeared to be dancing, and the rather as the half-globe was ever moving and turning round. Within it, above the heads of the angels, were three circles or garlands of lights, contained in certain little lamps that could not be overturned. From the ground these lights appeared like stars, and the brackets, being covered with cotton-wool, appeared like clouds. From the aforesaid ring there issued a very stout bar of iron, which had at the end another ring, to which there was fastened a thin rope reaching to the ground, as it will be told later. The said stout bar of iron had eight arms, spreading out in an arc large enough to fill the space within the hollow half-globe, and at the end of each arm there was a stand about the size of a trencher; on each stand was a boy about nine years old, well secured by an iron soldered on to the upper part of the arm, but loosely enough to allow him to turn in every direction. These eight angels, supported by the said iron, were lowered from the space within the half-globe by means of a small windlass that was unwound little by little, to a depth of eight braccia below the level of the square beams that support the roof, in such a manner that they were seen without concealing the view of the angels who were round the inner edge of the half-globe. In the midst of this cluster of eight angels—for so was it rightly called—was a mandorla of copper, hollow within, wherein were many holes showing certain little lamps fixed on iron bars in the form of tubes; which lamps, on the touching of a spring which could be pressed down, were all hidden within the mandorla of copper, whereas, when the spring was not pressed down, all the lamps could be seen alight through some holes therein. When the cluster of angels had reached its place, this mandorla, which was fastened to the aforesaid little rope, was lowered very gradually by the unwinding of the rope with another little windlass, and arrived at the platform where the Representation took place; and on this platform, precisely on the spot where the mandorla was to rest, there was a raised place in the shape of a throne with four steps, in the centre of which there was a hole wherein the iron point of the mandorla stood upright. Below the said throne was a man who, when the mandorla had reached its place, made it fast with a bolt without being seen, so that it stood firmly on its base. Within the mandorla was a youth about fifteen years of age in the guise of an angel, girt round the middle with an iron, and secured by a bolt to the foot of the mandorla in a manner that he could not fall; and to the end that he might be able to kneel, the said iron was divided into three parts, whereof one part entered readily into another as he knelt. Thus, when the cluster of angels had descended and the mandorla was resting on the throne, the man who fixed the mandorla with the bolt also unbolted the iron that supported the angel; whereupon he issued forth and walked across the platform, and, having come to where the Virgin was, saluted her and made the Annunciation. He then returned into the mandorla, and the lights, which had gone out on his issuing forth, being rekindled, the iron that supported him was once more bolted by the man who was concealed below, the bolt that held the mandorla firm was removed, and it was drawn up again; while the singing of the angels in the cluster, and of those in the Heaven, who kept circling round, made it appear truly a Paradise, and the rather because,

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in addition to the said choir of angels and to the cluster, there was a God the Father on the outer edge of the globe, surrounded by angels similar to those named above and supported by irons, in such wise that the Heaven, the God the Father, the cluster, and the mandorla, with innumerable lights and very sweet music, truly represented Paradise. In addition to this, in order to be able to open and close that Heaven, Filippo had made two great doors, each five braccia both in length and breadth, which had rollers of iron, or rather, of copper, in certain grooves running horizontally; and these grooves were oiled in a manner that when a thin rope, which was on either side, was pulled by means of a little windlass, any one could open or close the Heaven at his pleasure, the two parts of the door coming together or drawing apart horizontally along the grooves. And these two doors, made thus, served for two purposes: when they were moved, being heavy, they made a noise like thunder; and when they were closed, they formed a platform for the apparelling of the angels and for the making of the other preparations which it was necessary to carry out within. These engines, made thus, together with many others, were invented by Filippo, although others maintain that they had been invented long before. However this may be, it was well to speak of them, seeing that they have gone completely out of use.

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But to return to Filippo himself; his renown and his name had grown so great that he was sent for from far distant places by all who wished to erect buildings, in their desire to have designs and models by the hand of so great a man; and to this end the most powerful means and friendships were employed. Wherefore the Marquis of Mantua, among others, desiring to have him, wrote with great insistence to the Signoria of Florence, by whom he was sent to that city, where he gave designs for dykes on the Po and certain other works according to the pleasure of that Prince, who treated him very lovingly, being wont to say that Florence was as worthy to have Filippo as a citizen as he was to have so noble and beautiful a city for his birthplace. In Pisa, likewise, Count Francesco Sforza and Niccolò da Pisa, being surpassed by him in the making of certain fortifications, commended him in his presence, saying that if every State possessed a man like Filippo it would be possible to live in security without arms. In Florence, also, Filippo gave the design for the house of the Barbadori, near the tower of the Rossi in the Borgo San Jacopo, but it was not put into execution; and he also made the design for the house of the Giuntini on the Piazza d'Ognissanti, on the Arno. Afterwards, the Captains of the Guelph party in Florence, wishing to build an edifice containing a hall and an audience-chamber for that body, gave the commission to Francesco della Luna, who began the work, and he had already raised it to the height of ten braccia above the ground, making many errors therein, when it was put into the hands of Filippo, who brought the said palace to that magnificent form which we see. In this work he had to compete with the said Francesco, who was favoured by many. Even so did he spend his whole life, competing now with one man and now with another; for many were ever making war against him and harassing him, and very often seeking to gain honour for themselves with his designs, so that he was reduced in the end to showing nothing and trusting no one. The hall of this palace is no longer used by the said Captains of the Guelphs, because the flood of the year 1557 did so great damage to the papers of the Monte, that the Lord Duke Cosimo, for the greater security of the said papers, which are of the greatest importance, removed them to the said hall together with the institution itself. And to the end that the old staircase of this palace might serve for the said body of Captains—who gave up that hall in favour of the Monte and retired to another part of that palace—Giorgio Vasari was commissioned by his Excellency to make the very commodious staircase that now ascends to the said hall of the Monte. In like manner, from a design by the same man there was made a coffer-work ceiling which was placed, after the plans of Filippo, on certain fluted pillars of grey-stone.

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One year the Lenten sermons in S. Spirito had been preached by Maestro Francesco Zoppo, who was then very dear to the people of Florence, and he had strongly recommended the claims of that convent, of the school for youths, and particularly of the church, which had been burnt down about that time. Whereupon the chief men of that quarter, Lorenzo Ridolfi, Bartolommeo Corbinelli, Neri di Gino Capponi, and Goro di Stagio Dati, with very many other citizens, obtained an order from the Signoria for the rebuilding of the Church of S. Spirito, and made Stoldo Frescobaldi provveditore. This man, by reason of the interest that he had in the old church, the principal chapel and the high-altar of which belonged to his house, took very great pains therewith; nay, at the beginning, before the money had been collected from the taxes imposed on the owners of burial-places and chapels, he spent many thousands of crowns of his own, for which he was repaid.

Now, after the matter had been discussed, Filippo was sent for and asked to make a model with all the features, both useful and honourable, that might be possible and suitable to a Christian church. Whereupon he urged strongly that the ground-plan of that edifice should be turned right round, because he greatly desired that the square should extend to the bank of the Arno, to the end that all those who passed that way from Genoa, from the Riviera, from the Lunigiana, and from the districts of Pisa and Lucca, might see the magnificence of that building. But since certain citizens objected, refusing to have their houses pulled down, the desire of Filippo did not take effect. He made the model of the church, therefore, with that of the habitation of the monks, in the form wherein it stands to-day. The length of the church was one hundred and sixty-one braccia, and the width fifty-four braccia, and it was so well planned, both in the ordering of the columns and in the rest of the ornaments, that it would be impossible to make a work richer, more lovely, or more graceful than that one. And in truth, but for the malevolence of those who are ever spoiling the beautiful beginnings of any work in order to appear to have more understanding than others, this would now be the most perfect church in Christendom; and even as it stands it is more lovely and better designed than any other, although it has not been carried out according to the model, as may be seen from certain parts begun on the outside, wherein the

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design observed within has not been followed, as it appears from the model that the doors and the borders round the windows were meant to do. There are some errors, attributed to him, about which I will be silent, for it is believed that if he had completed the building he would not have endured them, seeing that he had brought all his work to perfection with so much judgment, discrimination, intellect, and art; and this work likewise established him as a genius truly divine.

Filippo was very humorous in his discourse and very acute in repartee, as he showed when he wished to hit at Lorenzo Ghiberti, who had bought a farm on Monte Morello, called Lepriano, on which he spent twice as much as he gained by way of income, so that he grew weary of this and sold it. Some one asked Filippo what was the best thing that Lorenzo had ever done, thinking perchance, by reason of the enmity between them, that he would criticize Lorenzo; and he replied, "The selling of Lepriano." Finally, having now grown very old—he was sixty-nine years of age—he passed to a better life on April 16, in the year 1446, after having exhausted himself greatly in making the works that enabled him to win an honoured name on earth and to obtain a place of repose in Heaven. His death caused infinite grief to his country, which recognized and esteemed him much more when dead than it had done when he was alive; and he was buried with the most honourable obsequies and distinctions in S. Maria del Fiore, although his burial-place was in S. Marco, under the pulpit opposite to the door, where there is a coat of arms with two fig-leaves and certain green waves on a field of gold, because his family came from the district of Ferrara, that is, from Ficaruolo, a township on the Po, as it is shown by the leaves, which denote the place, and by the waves, which signify the river. He was mourned by innumerable brother-craftsmen, and particularly by the poorer among them, whom he was ever helping. Thus then, living the life of a Christian, he left to the world the sweet savour of his goodness and of his noble talents. It seems to me that it can be said for him that from the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans to our own there has been no rarer or more excellent master than Filippo; and he is all the more worthy of praise because in his times the German manner was held in veneration throughout all Italy and practised by the old craftsmen, as it may be seen in innumerable edifices. He recovered the ancient mouldings and restored the Tuscan, Corinthian, Doric and Ionic Orders to their original forms. He had a disciple from Borgo a Buggiano, called Il Buggiano, who made the lavatory of the Sacristy of S. Reparata, with certain boys who pour out water; and he made a head of his master in marble, taken from the life, which was placed after the death of Filippo in S. Maria del Fiore, beside the door on the right hand as one enters the church, where there is also the following epitaph, placed there by public decree in order to honour him after his death, even as he had honoured his country when alive:

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D.S.

QUANTUM PHILIPPUS ARCHITECTUS ARTE DÆDALEA VALUERIT, CUM HUIUS  
CELEBERRIMI TEMPLI MIRA TESTUDO, TUM PLURES ALIÆ DIVINO INGENIO  
AB EO ADINVENTÆ MACHINÆ DOCUMENTO ESSE POSSUNT; QUAPROPTER  
OB EXIMIAS SUI ANIMI DOTES SINGULARESQUE VIRTUTES XV KAL. MAIAS  
ANNO MCCCCXLVI EJUS B.M. CORPUS HAC HUMO SUPPOSITA GRATA PATRIA  
SEPELIRI JUSSIT.

To do him even greater honour, others have gone so far as to add these two other inscriptions:

PHILIPPO BRUNELLESKO ANTIQUÆ ARCHITECTURÆ INSTAURATORI S.P. Q.F.  
CIVI SUO BENE MERENTI.

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Giovan Battista Strozzi made the second:

TAL SOPRA SASSO SASSO  
DI GIRO IN GIRO ETERNAMENTE IO STRUSSI;  
CHE COSÌ PASSO PASSO  
ALTO GIRANDO AL CIEL MI RICONDUSSI.

Other disciples of Filippo were Domenico dal Lago di Lugano; Geremia da Cremona, who worked very well in bronze, together with a Sclavonian who made many works in Venice; Simone, who died at Vicovaro while executing a great work for the Count of Tagliacozzo, after having made the Madonna in Orsanmichele for the Guild of the Apothecaries; Antonio and Niccolò, both Florentines, who, working in metal at Ferrara, made a horse of bronze for Duke Borso in the year 1461; and many others, of whom it would take too long to make particular mention. Filippo was unfortunate in certain respects, for, besides the fact that he ever had some one to contend with, some of his buildings were not completed in his time and are still unfinished. To mention only one, it was a great pity that the Monks of the Angeli, as it has been said, could not finish the temple begun by him, since, after they had spent on the portion that is now seen more than three thousand crowns, drawn partly from the Guild of Merchants and partly from the Monte, where their money was kept, the capital was squandered and the building remained, as it still remains, unfinished. Wherefore, as it was said in the life of Niccolò da Uzzano, if a man desires to leave such memorials behind him, let him do it for himself the while that he lives, and let him not put his trust in anyone; and what has been said of this edifice could be said of many others designed by Filippo Brunelleschi.

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# DONATO

## LIFE OF DONATO [DONATELLO]

### SCULPTOR OF FLORENCE

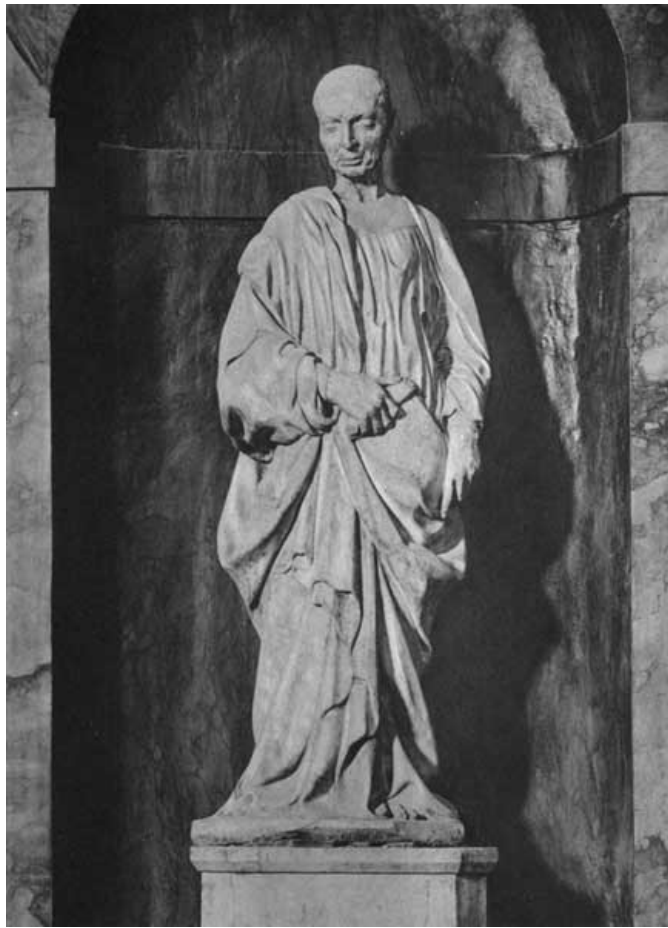
Donato, who was called Donatello by his relatives and wrote his name thus on some of his works, was born in Florence in the year 1403. Devoting himself to the arts of design, he was not only a very rare sculptor and a marvellous statuary, but also a practised worker in stucco, an able master of perspective, and greatly esteemed as an architect; and his works showed so great grace, design, and excellence, that they were held to approach more nearly to the marvellous works of the ancient Greeks and Romans than those of any other craftsman whatsoever. Wherefore it is with good reason that he is ranked as the first who made a good use of the invention of scenes in low-relief, which he wrought so well that it is recognized from the thought, the facility, and the mastery that he showed therein, that he had a true understanding of them, making them with a beauty far beyond the ordinary; for not only did no craftsman in this period ever surpass him, but no one even in our own age has equalled him.

Donatello was brought up from his early childhood in the house of Ruberto Martelli, where, by his good qualities and by his zealous talent, he won the affection not only of Martelli himself but of all that noble family. As a youth he wrought many things, which were not held in great account, by reason of their number; but what made him known for what he was and gave him a name was an Annunciation in grey-stone, which was placed close to the altar of the Chapel of the Cavalcanti, in the Church of S. Croce in Florence. For this he made an ornament composed in the grotesque manner, with a base of varied intertwined work and a decoration of quadrantal shape, adding six boys bearing certain festoons, who appear to be holding one another securely with their arms in their fear of the height. But the greatest genius and art that he showed was in the figure of the Virgin, who, alarmed by the unexpected apparition of the Angel, is making a most becoming reverence with a sweet and timid movement of her person, turning with most beautiful grace towards him who is saluting her, in a manner that there are seen in her countenance that humility and gratitude which are due to one who presents an unexpected gift, and the more when the gift is a great one. Besides this, Donato showed a masterly flow of curves and folds in the draperies of that Madonna and of the Angel, demonstrating with the suggestion of the nude forms below how he was seeking to recover the beauty of the ancients, which had lain hidden for so many years; and he displayed so great facility and art in this work, that nothing more could be desired, in fact, with regard to design, judgment, and mastery in handling the chisel.

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In the same church, below the tramezzo,<sup>[20]</sup> and beside the scene painted by Taddeo Gaddi, he made a Crucifix of wood with extraordinary care; and when he had finished this, thinking that he had made a very rare work, he showed it to Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, who was very much his friend, wishing to have his opinion. Filippo, whom the words of Donato had led to expect something much better, smiled slightly on seeing it. Donato, perceiving this, besought him by all the friendship between them to tell him his opinion; whereupon Filippo, who was most obliging, replied that it appeared to him that Donato had placed a ploughman on the Cross, and not a body like that of Jesus Christ, which was most delicate and in all its parts the most perfect human form that was ever born. Donato, hearing himself censured, and that more sharply than he expected, whereas he was hoping to be praised, replied, "If it were as easy to make this figure as to judge it, my Christ would appear to thee to be Christ and not a ploughman; take wood, therefore, and try to make one thyself." Filippo, without another word, returned home and set to work to make a Crucifix, without letting anyone know; and seeking to surpass Donato in order not to confound his own judgment, after many months he brought it to the height of perfection. This done, he invited Donato one morning to dine with him, and Donato accepted the invitation. Whereupon, as they were going together to the house of Filippo, they came to the Mercato Vecchio, where Filippo bought some things and gave them to Donato, saying, "Do thou go with these things to the house and wait for me there, I am coming in a moment." Donato, therefore, entering the house and going into the hall, saw the Crucifix of Filippo, placed in a good light; and stopping short to study it, he found it so perfectly finished, that, being overcome and full of amazement, like one distraught, he spread out his hands, which were holding up his apron; whereupon the eggs, the cheese, and all the other things fell to the ground, and everything was broken to pieces. But he was still marvelling and standing like one possessed, when Filippo came up and said with a laugh, "What is thy intention, Donato, and what are we to have for dinner, now that thou hast upset everything?" "For my part," answered Donato, "I have had my share for this morning: if thou must have thine, take it. But enough; it is thy work to make Christ and mine to make ploughmen."

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**POGGIO BRACCIOLINI**  
*(After Donatello. Florence: Duomo)*  
*Alinari*

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In the Church of S. Giovanni in the same city Donato made a tomb for Pope Giovanni Coscia, who had been deposed from the Pontificate by the Council of Constance. This tomb he was commissioned to make by Cosimo de' Medici, who was very much the friend of the said Coscia. He wrought therein with his own hand the figure of the dead man in gilded bronze, together with the marble statues of Hope and Charity that are there; and his pupil Michelozzo made the figure of Faith. In the same church, opposite to this work, there is a wooden figure by the hand of Donato of S. Mary Magdalene in Penitence, very beautiful and excellently wrought, showing her wasted away by her fastings and abstinence, insomuch that it displays in all its parts an admirable perfection of anatomical knowledge. On a column of granite in the Mercato Vecchio there is a figure of Abundance in hard grey-stone by the hand of Donato, standing quite by itself, so well wrought that it is consummately praised by craftsmen and by all good judges of art. The column on which this statue is placed was formerly in S. Giovanni, where there are the others of granite supporting the gallery within; it was removed and its place was taken by a fluted column, on which, in the middle of that temple, there once stood the statue of Mars which was taken away when the Florentines were converted to the faith of Jesus Christ. The same man, while still a youth, made a figure of the Prophet Daniel in marble for the façade of S. Maria del Fiore, and afterwards one of S. John the Evangelist seated, four braccia high, and clothed in a simple garment: which figure is much extolled. On one corner of the same place, on the side that faces towards the Via del Cocomero, there is an old man between two columns, more akin to the ancient manner than any other work that there is to be seen by the hand of Donato, the head revealing the thoughts that length of years brings to those who are exhausted by time and labour. Within the said church, likewise, he made the ornament for the organ, which stands over the door of the old sacristy, with those figures so boldly sketched, as it has been said, that they appear to the eye to have actual life and movement. Wherefore it may be said of this man that he worked as much with his judgment as with his hands, seeing that many things are wrought which appear beautiful in the rooms where they are made, and afterwards, on being taken thence and set in another place, in a different light or at a greater height, present a different appearance, and turn out the contrary to what they appeared; whereas Donato made his figures in such a manner, that in the room where he was working they did not appear half as good as they turned out to be in the positions where they were placed. For the new sacristy of the same church he made the design for those boys who uphold the festoons that go round the frieze, and likewise the design for the figures that were wrought in the glass of the round window which is below the cupola, namely, that one which contains the Coronation of Our Lady; which design is greatly superior to those of the other round windows, as it is clearly evident. For S. Michele in Orto in the said city he wrought the marble statue of S. Peter which is to be seen there, a most masterly and admirable figure, for the Guild of Butchers; and for the Guild of Linen-manufacturers he wrought the figure of S. Mark the Evangelist, which, after being commissioned to make it in company with Filippo Brunelleschi, he finished by himself with the consent of Filippo. This figure was wrought

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by Donato with so great judgment that its excellence was not recognized, while it stood on the ground, by those who had no judgment, and the Consuls of that Guild were inclined to refuse to have it put into place; whereupon Donato besought them to let him set it on high, saying that he wished to work on it and to show them a different figure as the result. His request being granted, he covered it up for a fortnight, and then uncovered it without having otherwise touched it, filling everyone with wonder.



**JUDITH**  
**(After the bronze by**  
**Donatello. Florence:**  
**Loggia dei Lanzi)**  
**Alinari**

[View larger image](#)

For the Guild of Armourers he made a most spirited figure of S. George in armour, in the head of which there may be seen the beauty of youth, courage and valour in arms, and a proud and terrible ardour; and there is a marvellous suggestion of life bursting out of the stone. It is certain that no modern figure in marble has yet shown such vivacity and such spirit as nature and art produced in this one by means of the hand of Donato. In the base that supports the shrine enclosing that figure he wrought in marble the story of the Saint killing the Dragon, in low-relief, wherein there is a horse that is much esteemed and greatly extolled; and in the frontal he made a half-length figure of God the Father in low-relief. Opposite to the church of the said oratory he wrought the marble shrine for the Mercatanzia, following the ancient Order known as Corinthian, and departing entirely from the German manner; this shrine was meant to contain two statues, but he refused to make them because he could not come to an agreement about the price. After his death these figures were made in bronze by Andrea del Verrocchio, as it will be told. For the main front of the Campanile of S. Maria del Fiore he wrought four figures in marble, five braccia in height, of which the two in the middle are portrayed from life, one being Francesco Soderini as a youth, and the other Giovanni di Barduccio Cherichini, now called Il Zuccone.<sup>[21]</sup> The latter was held to be a very rare work and the most beautiful that Donato ever made, and when he wished to take an oath that would command belief he was wont to say, "By the faith that I place in my Zuccone"; and the while that he was working on it, he would keep gazing at it and saying, "Speak, speak, plague take thee, speak!" Over the door of the campanile, on the side facing the Canon's house, he made Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac, with another Prophet: and these figures were placed between two other statues.

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For the Signoria of that city he made a casting in metal which was placed under an arch of their Loggia in the Piazza, representing Judith cutting off the head of Holofernes; a work of great excellence and mastery, which, if one considers the simplicity of the garments and aspect of Judith on the surface, reveals very clearly below the surface the great spirit of that woman and the assistance given to her by God, even as one sees the effect of wine and sleep in the expression of Holofernes, and death in his limbs, which have lost all life and are shown cold and limp. This work was so well executed by Donato that the casting came out delicate and very beautiful, and it was afterwards finished so excellently that it is a very great marvel to behold. The base, likewise, which is a baluster of granite, simple in design, appears full of grace and presents an aspect pleasing to the eye. He was so well satisfied with this work that he deigned to place his name on it, which he had not done on the others; and it is seen in these words,

"Donatelli opus." In the courtyard of the Palace of the said Signori there is a life-size David, nude and in bronze. Having cut off the head of Goliath, he is raising one foot and placing it on him, holding a sword in his right hand. This figure is so natural in its vivacity and its softness, that it is almost impossible for craftsmen to believe that it was not moulded on the living form. This statue once stood in the courtyard of the house of the Medici, but it was transported to the said place on the exile of Cosimo. In our own day Duke Cosimo, having made a fountain on the spot occupied by this statue, had it removed, and it is being kept for a very large courtyard that he intends to make at the back of the palace, that is, where the lions formerly stood. In the hall where there is the clock of Lorenzo della Volpaia, on the left, there is a very beautiful David in marble; between his legs, under his feet, he has the head of the dead Goliath, and in his hand he holds the sling wherewith he slew him. In the first courtyard of the house of the Medici there are eight medallions of marble, wherein there are copies of ancient cameos and of the reverse sides of medals, with certain scenes, all made by him and very beautiful, which are built into the frieze between the windows and the architrave above the arches of the loggie. In like manner he restored an ancient statue of Marsyas in white marble, which was placed at the entrance of the garden; and a great number of ancient heads, which were placed over the doors, were restored and embellished by him with wings and diamonds (the emblem of Cosimo), wrought very well in stucco. He made a very lovely vessel of granite, which poured forth water, and he wrought a similar one, which also pours forth water, for the garden of the Pazzi in Florence. In the said Palace of the Medici there are Madonnas of marble and bronze made in low-relief, besides some scenes in marble with most beautiful figures, marvellous in their flat-relief. So great was the love that Cosimo bore to the talent of Donato that he kept him continually at work, and Donato, on the other hand, bore so great love to Cosimo that he could divine his patron's every wish from the slightest sign, and obeyed him in all things.

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It is said that a Genoese merchant caused Donato to make a lifesize head of bronze, which was very beautiful and also very light, because it had to be carried to a great distance; and that the commission for this work came to him through the recommendation of Cosimo. Now, when the head was finished and the merchant came to pay for it, it appeared to him that Donato was asking too much; wherefore the matter was referred to Cosimo, who had the head carried to the upper court of the palace and placed between the battlements that overlook the street, to the end that it might be seen better. When Cosimo sought to settle the difference, he found the offer of the merchant very far from the demand of Donato, and he turned round and said that it was too little. Whereupon the merchant, thinking it too much, said that Donato had wrought it in a month or little more, and that this meant a gain of more than half a florin a day. Donato, thinking this too much of an insult, turned round in anger and said to the merchant that in the hundredth part of an hour he would have been able to spoil the value of a year's labour; and giving the head a push, he sent it flying straightway into the street below, where it broke into a thousand pieces; saying to him that this showed that he was more used to bargaining for beans than for statues. Wherefore the merchant, regretting his meanness, offered to give him double the sum if he would make another; but neither his promises nor the entreaties of Cosimo could induce Donato to make it again. In the houses of the Martelli there are many scenes in marble and in bronze; among others, a David three braccia high, with many other works presented by him as a free gift to that family in proof of the devotion and love that he bore them; above all, a S. John of marble, made by him in the round and three braccia high, a very rare work, which is to-day in the house of the heirs of Ruberto Martelli. With regard to this work, a legal agreement was made to the effect that it should be neither pledged, nor sold, nor given away, without heavy penalties, as a testimony and token of the affection shown by them to Donato, and by him to them out of gratitude that he had learnt his art through the protection and the opportunities that he received from them.

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He also made a tomb of marble for an Archbishop, which was sent to Naples and is in S. Angelo di Seggio di Nido; in this tomb there are three figures in the round that support the sarcophagus with their heads, and on the sarcophagus itself is a scene in low-relief, so beautiful that it commands infinite praise. In the house of the Count of Matalone, in the same city, there is the head of a horse by the hand of Donato, so beautiful that many take it for an antique. In the township of Prato he wrought the marble pulpit where the Girdle is shown, in which, in several compartments, he carved a dance of children so beautiful and so admirable, that he may be said to have demonstrated the perfection of his art no less in this work than in his others. To support this pulpit, moreover, he made two capitals of bronze, one of which is still there, while the other was carried away by the Spaniards who sacked that district.





**GENERAL GATTAMELATA**  
*(After the bronze by Donatello. Padua: Piazza di S. Antonio)*  
**Anderson**

[View larger image](#)

It came to pass about this time that the Signoria of Venice, hearing of his fame, sent for him to the end that he might make the monument of Gattamelata in the city of Padua; wherefore he went there right willingly and made the bronze horse that is on the Piazza di S. Antonio, wherein are perceived the panting and neighing of the horse, with great spirit and pride, most vividly expressed by his art, in the figure of the rider. And Donato proved himself such a master in the proportions and excellence of so great a casting, that he can truly bear comparison with any ancient craftsman in movement, design, art, proportion, and diligence; wherefore it not only astonished all who saw it then, but continues to astonish every person who sees it at the present day. The Paduans, moved by this, did their utmost to make him their fellow-citizen, and sought to detain him with every sort of endearment. In order to keep him in their midst, they commissioned him to make the stories of S. Anthony of Padua on the predella of the high-altar in the Church of the Friars Minor, which are in low-relief, wrought with so great judgment, that the most excellent masters of that art stand marvelling and amazed before them, as they consider their beautiful and varied compositions, with the great abundance of extraordinary figures and diminishing perspectives. Very beautiful, likewise, are the Maries that he made on the altar-dossal, lamenting the Dead Christ. In the house of one of the Counts Capodilista he wrought the skeleton of a horse in wood, which is still to be seen to-day without the neck; wherein the various parts are joined together with so much method, that, if one considers the manner of this work, one can judge of the ingenuity of his brain and the greatness of his mind. In a convent of nuns he made a S. Sebastian in wood at the request of a chaplain, a Florentine, who was their friend and an intimate of his own. This man brought him a figure of that Saint that they had, old and clumsy, beseeching him to make the new one like it. Wherefore Donato strove to imitate it in order to please the chaplain and the nuns, but, although he imitated it, clumsy as it was, he could not help showing in his own the usual excellence of his art. Together with this figure he made many others in clay and in stucco, and on one end of an old piece of marble that the said nuns had in their garden he carved a very beautiful Madonna. Throughout that whole city, likewise, there are innumerable works by his hand, by reason of which he was held by the Paduans to be a marvel and was praised by every man of understanding; but he determined to return to Florence, saying that if he remained any longer in Padua he would forget everything that he knew, being so greatly praised there by all, and that he was glad to return to his own country, where he would gain nothing but censure, since such censure would urge him to study and would enable him to attain to greater glory. Having departed from Padua, therefore, he returned by way of Venice, where, as a mark of his friendliness towards the Florentine people, he made them a present of a S. John the Baptist, wrought by him in wood with very great diligence and study, for their chapel in the Church of the Friars Minor. In the city of Faenza he carved a S. John and a S. Jerome in wood, which are no less esteemed than his other works.

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Afterwards, having returned to Tuscany, he made a marble tomb, with a very beautiful scene, in the Pieve of Montepulciano, and a lavatory of marble, on which Andrea Verrocchio also worked, in the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo in Florence; and in the house of Lorenzo della Stufa he wrought some heads and figures that are very spirited and vivacious. Then, departing from Florence, he betook himself to Rome, in order to try to imitate the antiques to the best of his ability; and during this time, while studying these, he made a tabernacle of the Sacrament in stone, which is to be seen in S. Pietro at the present day. Passing through Siena on his way back to Florence, he undertook to make a door of bronze for the Baptistery of S. Giovanni; and he had already made the wooden model, and the wax moulds were almost finished and successfully covered with the

outer mould, ready for the casting, when there arrived, on his way back from Rome, one Bernardetto di Mona Papera, a Florentine goldsmith and an intimate friend of Donato, who wrought upon him so strongly both with words and in other ways, either for some business of his own or for some other reason, that he brought him back to Florence; wherefore that work remained unfinished, nay, not begun. There only remained in the Office of Works of the Duomo in that city a S. John the Baptist in bronze by his hand, with the right arm missing from the elbow downwards; and this Donato is said to have done because he had not been paid in full.



**MADONNA AND CHILD**  
**(After the bronze by Donatello. Padua: S.**  
**Antonio)**  
**Anderson**

[View larger image](#)

Having returned to Florence, therefore, he wrought the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo in stucco for Cosimo de' Medici, making four medallions on the pendentives of the vault containing stories of the Evangelists, with grounds in perspective, partly painted and partly in low-relief. And in the said place he made two very beautiful little doors of bronze in low-relief, with the Apostles, Martyrs, and Confessors; and above these he made some flat niches, one containing a S. Laurence and a S. Stephen, and the other S. Cosimo and S. Damiano. In the transept of the church he executed four saints in stucco, each five braccia high, which are wrought in a masterly manner. He also designed the bronze pulpits that contain the Passion of Christ, a work displaying design, force, invention, and an abundance of figures and buildings; but these his old age prevented him from executing, and his pupil Bertoldo finished them and brought them to the utmost perfection. For S. Maria del Fiore he made two colossal figures of brick and stucco, which are placed by way of ornament without the church, at the corners of the chapels. Over the door of S. Croce there is still to be seen a S. Louis wrought by him in bronze, five braccia high; for this someone criticized him, saying that it was stupid and perhaps the least excellent work that he had ever made, and he answered that he had made it so of set purpose, seeing that the Saint had been stupid to give up his throne and become a monk. The same man made the head of the wife of the said Cosimo de' Medici in bronze, and this head is preserved in the guardaroba of the Lord Duke Cosimo, wherein there are many other works in bronze and marble by the hand of Donato; among others, a Madonna with the Child in her arms, sunk in the marble in flat-relief, which is the most beautiful work that it is possible to see, and the rather as it is surrounded by a border of scenes done in miniature by Fra Bartolommeo,<sup>[22]</sup> which are admirable, as it will be told in the proper place. The said Lord Duke has a very beautiful, nay, miraculous Crucifix in bronze, by the hand of Donato, in his study, wherein there are innumerable rare antiquities and most beautiful medals. In the same guardaroba there is a bronze panel containing the Passion of Our Lord in low-relief, with a great number of figures; and in another panel, also in metal, there is another Crucifixion. In like manner, in the house of the heirs of Jacopo Capponi, who was an excellent citizen and a true gentleman, there is a marble panel with the Madonna in half-relief, which is

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held to be a very rare work. Messer Antonio de' Nobili, who was Treasurer to his Excellency, had in his house a marble panel by the hand of Donato, in which there is a half-length Madonna in low-relief, so beautiful that the said Messer Antonio valued it as much as all his possessions; nor is it less valued by his son Giulio, a youth of singular goodness and judgment, a friend to lovers of art and to all men of excellence. In the house of Giovan Battista d'Agnol Doni, a gentleman of Florence, there is a Mercury of metal in the round by the hand of Donato, one braccio and a half in height and clothed in a certain bizarre manner; which work is truly very beautiful, and no less rare than the others that adorn his most beautiful house. Bartolommeo Gondi, of whom we have spoken in the Life of Giotto, has a Madonna in half-relief by the hand of Donato, wrought with so great love and diligence that it is not possible to see anything better, or to imagine the fancifulness which he gave to her headdress and the loveliness that he put into the garments which she is wearing. In like manner, Messer Lelio Torelli, First Auditor and Secretary to our Lord the Duke, and no less devoted a lover of all the honourable sciences, arts, and professions, than he is excellent as a jurist, has a marble panel of Our Lady by the hand of the same Donatello.

But if one were to give a complete account of his life and of the works that he made, it would be a far longer story than it is our intention to give in writing the Lives of our craftsmen, seeing that he put his hand not only to great things, of which there has been enough said, but also to the smallest things of art, making the arms of families on the chimneypieces and on the fronts of the houses of citizens, a most beautiful example of which may be seen in the house of the Sommai, which is opposite to that of the baker Della Vacca. For the family of the Martelli, moreover, he made a coffin in the form of a cradle wrought of wicker-work, to serve for a tomb; but it is beneath the Church of S. Lorenzo, because no tombs of any kind are to be seen above, save only the epitaph of the tomb of Cosimo de' Medici, and even that one has its entrance below, like the others.

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**THE ENTOMBMENT**  
**(After the relief by Donatello. Padua: S. Antonio)**  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

It is said that Simone, the brother of Donato, having wrought the model for the tomb of Pope Martin V, sent for Donato to the end that he might see it before it was cast. Going to Rome, therefore, Donato found himself in that city at the very moment when the Emperor Sigismund was there to receive the crown from Pope Eugenius IV; wherefore he was forced, in company with Simone, to occupy himself with making the magnificent preparations for that festival, whereby he acquired very great fame and honour.

In the guardaroba of Signor Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, there is a very beautiful head of marble by the hand of the same man, and it is believed that it was given to the ancestors of the said Duke by the Magnificent Giuliano de' Medici, at the time when he was staying at that Court, which was full of most cultured gentlemen. In short, the talent of Donato was such, and he was so admirable in all his actions, that he may be said to have been one of the first to give light, by his practice, judgment, and knowledge, to the art of sculpture and of good design among the moderns; and he deserves all the more commendation, because in his day, apart from the columns, sarcophagi, and triumphal arches, there were no antiquities revealed above the earth. And it was through him, chiefly, that there arose in Cosimo de' Medici the desire to introduce into Florence the antiquities that were and are in the house of the Medici; all of which he restored with his own hand. He was most liberal, gracious, and courteous, and more careful for his friends than for

himself; nor did he give thought to money, but kept his in a basket suspended by a cord from the ceiling, wherefore all his workmen and friends could take what they needed without saying a word to him. He passed his old age most joyously, and, having become decrepit, he had to be succoured by Cosimo and by others of his friends, being no longer able to work. It is said that Cosimo, being at the point of death, recommended him to the care of his son Piero, who, as a most diligent executor of his father's wishes, gave him a farm at Cafaggiuolo, which produced enough to enable him to live in comfort. At this Donato made great rejoicing, thinking that he was thus more than secure from the danger of dying of hunger; but he had not held it a year before he returned to Piero and gave it back to him by public contract, declaring that he refused to lose his peace of mind by having to think of household cares and listen to the importunity of the peasant, who kept pestering him every third day—now because the wind had unroofed his dovecote, now because his cattle had been seized by the Commune for taxes, and now because a storm had robbed him of his wine and his fruit. He was so weary and disgusted with all this, that he would rather die of hunger than have to think of so many things. Piero laughed at the simplicity of Donato; and in order to deliver him from this torment, he accepted the farm (for on this Donato insisted), and assigned him an allowance of the same value or more from his own bank, to be paid in cash, which was handed over to him every week in the due proportion owing to him; whereby he was greatly contented. Thus, as a servant and friend of the house of Medici, he lived happily and free from care for the rest of his life. When he had reached the age of eighty-three, however, he was so palsied that he could no longer work in any fashion, and took to spending all his time in bed in a poor little house that he had in the Via del Cocomero, near the Nunnery of S. Niccolò; where, growing worse from day to day and wasting away little by little, he died on December 13, 1466. He was buried in the Church of S. Lorenzo, near the tomb of Cosimo, as he had himself directed, to the end that his dead body might be near him, even as he had been ever near him in spirit when alive.

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His death caused great grief to his fellow-citizens, to the craftsmen, and to all who knew him when living. Wherefore, in order to honour him more after death than they had done in his life, they gave him most honourable obsequies in the aforesaid church, and he was accompanied to the grave by all the painters, architects, sculptors, and goldsmiths, and by almost all the people of that city, which continued for a long time to compose in his honour various kinds of verses in diverse tongues, whereof it must suffice us to cite the few that are to be read below.

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But before I come to the epitaphs, it will not be amiss to relate the following story of him as well. When he had fallen sick, and only a little before his death, certain of his relatives went to visit him; and after they had greeted him, as is customary, and condoled with him, they said that it was his duty to leave them a farm that he had in the district of Prato, although it was small and produced a very meagre income; and they prayed him straitly to do it. Hearing this, Donato, who showed something of the good in all that he did, said to them, "I cannot satisfy you, my kinsmen, because I intend to leave it—as it appears to me reasonable—to the peasant, who has always worked it and endured great labour thereby, and not to you, who, without having bestowed upon it anything more profitable than the thought of possessing it, expect me to leave it to you because of this your visit! Go, and may God bless you!" Of a truth such relatives, who have no love unconnected with advantage or with the hope of it, should be ever treated in this fashion. Sending therefore for a notary, he left the said farm to the labourer who had always worked it, and who perchance had behaved better to him in his need than those relatives had done. His art-possessions he left to his pupils, namely, Bertoldo, a sculptor of Florence, who imitated him closely enough, as may be seen from a very beautiful battle between men on horseback, wrought in bronze, which is now in the guardaroba of the Lord Duke Cosimo; Nanni d'Antonio di Banco, who died before him; and Rossellino, Desiderio, and Vellano da Padova. In short, it may be said that every man who has sought to do good work in relief since the death of Donato, has been his disciple. He was resolute in draughtsmanship, and he made his drawings with such mastery and boldness that they have no equals, as may be seen in my book, wherein I have figures drawn by his hand, both clothed and nude, animals that make all who see them marvel, and other most beautiful things of that kind. His portrait was made by Paolo Uccello, as it has been said in his Life. The epitaphs are as follows:

SCULTURA H.M. A FLORENTINIS FIERI VOLUIT DONATELLO, UTPOTE  
HOMINI, QUI EI, QUOD JAMDIU OPTIMIS ARTIFICIBUS MULTISQUE SÆCULIS  
TUM NOBILITATIS TUM NOMINIS ACQUISITUM FUERAT, INJURIAVE TEMPOR.  
PERDIDERAT IPSA, IPSE UNUS UNA VITA INFINITISQUE OPERIBUS CUMULATISS.  
RESTITUERIT: ET PATRIÆ BENEMERENTI HUIUS RESTITUTÆ  
VIRTUTIS PALMAM REPORTARIT.

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EXCUDIT NEMO SPIRANTIA MOLLIUS ÆRA;  
VERA CANO; CERNES MARMORA VIVA LOQUI.  
GRÆCORUM SILEAT PRISCA ADMIRABILIS ÆTAS  
COMPEDIBUS STATUAS CONTINUISSE RHODON.  
NECTERE NAMQUE MAGIS FUERANT HÆC VINCOLA  
DIGNA  
ISTIUS EGREGIAS ARTIFICIS STATUAS.  
QUANTO CON DOTTA MANO ALLA SCULTURA  
GIÀ FECER MOLTI, OR SOL DONATO HA FATTO;  
RENDUTO HA VITA A' MARMI, AFFETTO, ED ATTO;  
CHE PIÙ, SE NON PARLAR, PUÒ DAR NATURA?



The world remained so full of his works, that it may be affirmed right truly that no craftsman ever worked more than he did. For, delighting in every kind of work, he put his hand to anything, without considering whether it was of little or of great value. Nevertheless it was indispensable to sculpture, this vast activity of Donato in making figures in every kind of relief, full, half, low, and the lowest; because, whereas in the good times of the ancient Greeks and Romans it was by means of many that it became perfect, he alone by the multitude of his works brought it back to marvellous perfection in our own age. Wherefore craftsmen should trace the greatness of this art rather to him than to any man born in modern times, seeing that, besides rendering the difficulties of the art easy, in the multitude of his works he combined together invention, design, practice, judgment, and every other quality that ever can or should be looked for in a divine genius. Donato was very resolute and ready, executing all his works with consummate facility, and he always accomplished much more than he had promised.

He left all his work to be completed by his pupil Bertoldo, and particularly the bronze pulpits of S. Lorenzo, which were afterwards finished in great part by him, and brought to the state in which they are seen in the said church.

I will not forbear to say that the most learned and very reverend Don Vincenzo Borghini, of whom mention has been made above with regard to some other matter, has collected into a large book innumerable drawings by excellent painters and sculptors, both ancient and modern; and on the ornamental borders of two leaves opposite to each other, which contain drawings by the hand of Donato and of Michelagnolo Buonarroti, he has written, with much judgment, these two Greek epigrams; on Donato's, "[Greek: ê Dônatos Bonarhrôtizei]," and on Michelagnolo's, "[Greek: ê Bonarhrôtos Dônâtizei]"; which mean in Latin, "Aut Donatus Bonarroto exprimit et refert; aut Bonarroto Donatum," and in our own tongue, "Either the spirit of Donato works in Buonarroto, or that of Buonarroto began by working in Donato."

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## MICHELOZZO MICHELOZZI

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### LIFE OF MICHELOZZO MICHELOZZI

#### SCULPTOR AND ARCHITECT OF FLORENCE

If every man who lives in this world were to realize that he may have to live when he is no longer able to work, there would not be so many reduced to begging in their old age for that which they consumed without any restraint in their youth, when their large and abundant gains, blinding their true judgment, made them spend more than was necessary and much more than was expedient. For, seeing how coldly a man is looked upon who has fallen from wealth to poverty, every man should strive—honestly, however, and maintaining the proper mean—to avoid having to beg in his old age. And whosoever will act like Michelozzo—who did not imitate his master Donato in this respect, although he did in his virtues—will live honourably all the course of his life, and will not be forced in his last years to go about miserably hunting for the wherewithal to live.

Now Michelozzo applied himself in his youth to sculpture under Donatello, and also to design; and although he realized their difficulties, nevertheless he went on ever practising so diligently with clay, with wax, and with marble, that he ever showed ability and great talent in the works that he made afterwards. There was one art in which he surpassed many and even his own self, for, after Brunellesco, he was held to be the most methodical architect of his times, and the one who was best able to arrange and contrive palaces, convents, and houses for human habitation, and who designed them with the greatest judgment, as will be told in the proper place. Of this man Donatello availed himself for many years, because he was very well practised in working marble and in the business of casting in bronze; of which we have proof in a tomb in S. Giovanni at Florence (which was made by Donatello, as it has been said, for Pope Giovanni Coscia), since the greater part was executed by Michelozzo; and there we can see a very beautiful marble statue by his hand, two braccia and a half in height, representing Faith (in company with one of Hope and one of Charity made by Donatello, of the same size), which does not suffer by comparison with the others. Moreover, above the door of the sacristy and the Office of Works, opposite to S. Giovanni, Michelozzo made a little S. John in full-relief, wrought with diligence, which was much extolled.

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Michelozzo was so intimate with Cosimo de' Medici that the latter, recognizing his genius, caused him to make the model for the house and palace at the corner of the Via Larga, beside S. Giovannino; for he thought that the one made by Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, as it has been said, was too sumptuous and magnificent, and more likely to stir up envy among his fellow-citizens

than to confer grandeur or adornment on the city, or bring comfort to himself. Wherefore, being pleased with the model that Michelozzo had made, he had the building brought to completion under his direction in the manner that we see at the present day, with all the beautiful and useful arrangements and graceful adornments that are seen therein, which have majesty and grandeur in their simplicity; and Michelozzo deserves all the greater praise in that this was the first palace which was built in that city on modern lines, and which was divided up into rooms both useful and most beautiful. The cellars are excavated to more than half their depth underground, namely, four braccia below, with three above for the sake of light; and there are also wine-cellars and store-rooms. On the ground-floor there are two courtyards with magnificent loggie, on which open saloons, chambers, antechambers, studies, closets, stove-rooms, kitchens, wells, and staircases both secret and public, all most convenient. On each floor there are apartments with accommodation for a whole family, with all the conveniences that are proper not only to a private citizen, such as Cosimo then was, but even to the most splendid and most honourable of Kings; wherefore in our own times Kings, Emperors, Popes, and all the most illustrious Princes of Europe have been comfortably lodged there, to the infinite credit both of the magnificence of Cosimo and of the excellent ability of Michelozzo in architecture.

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In the year 1433, when Cosimo was driven into exile, Michelozzo, who loved him very greatly and was most faithful to him, accompanied him of his own free will to Venice and insisted on remaining with him all the time that he stayed there; and in that city, besides many designs and models that he made for private dwellings and public buildings and decorations for the friends of Cosimo and for many gentlemen, he built, at the command and expense of Cosimo, the library of the Monastery of S. Giorgio Maggiore, a seat of the Black Friars of S. Justina; and this was not only finished with regard to walls, book-shelves, wood-work, and other adornments, but was also filled with many books. Such was the occupation and amusement of Cosimo during that exile, from which he was recalled to his country in the year 1434; whereupon he returned almost in triumph, and Michelozzo with him. Now, while Michelozzo was in Florence, the Palazzo Pubblico della Signoria began to threaten to collapse, for some columns in the courtyard were giving way, either because there was too much weight pressing on them, or because their foundations were weak and awry, or even perchance because they were made of pieces badly joined and put together. Whatever may have been the reason, the matter was put into the hands of Michelozzo, who accepted the undertaking willingly, because he had provided against a similar peril near S. Barnaba in Venice, in the following manner. A gentleman had a house that was in danger of falling down, and he entrusted the matter to Michelozzo; wherefore he—according to what Michelagnolo Buonarroti once told me—caused a column to be made in secret, and prepared a number of props; and hiding everything in a boat, into which he entered together with some builders, in one night he propped up the house and replaced the column. Michelozzo, therefore, emboldened by this experience, averted the danger from the palace, doing honour both to himself and to those by whose favour he had received such a charge; and he refounded and rebuilt the columns in the manner wherein they stand to-day. First he made a stout framework of props and thick beams standing upright to support the centres of the arches, made of nut-wood, and upholding the vaulting, so that this came to support equally the weight that was previously borne by the columns; then, little by little removing those that were made of pieces badly joined together, he replaced them with others made of pieces and wrought with diligence, in such a manner that the building did not suffer in any way and has never moved a hair's breadth. And in order that his columns might be known from the others, he made some of them at the corners with eight sides, with capitals that have the foliage carved in the modern fashion, and some round; and all are very easily distinguished from the old columns that Arnolfo made formerly. Afterwards, by the advice of Michelozzo, it was ordained by those who then governed the city that the arches of those columns should be unburdened and relieved of the weight of the walls that rested upon them; that the whole courtyard should be rebuilt from the arches upwards, with a row of windows in modern fashion, similar to those that he had made for Cosimo in the courtyard of the Palace of the Medici; and that designs in rustic-work should be carved on the walls, for the reception of those golden lilies that are still seen there at the present day. All this Michelozzo did with great promptitude; and on the second tier, directly above the windows of the said courtyard, he made some round windows (so as to have them different from the aforesaid windows), to give light to the rooms on that floor, which are over those of the first floor, where there is now the Sala de' Dugento. The third floor, where the Signori and the Gonfalonier lived, he made more ornate, and on the side towards S. Piero Scheraggio he arranged a series of apartments for the Signori, who had previously slept all together in one and the same room. These apartments consisted of eight for the Signori and a larger one for the Gonfalonier, and they all opened on a corridor which had windows overlooking the courtyard. Above this he made another series of commodious rooms for the household of the Palace, in one of which, used to-day as the Treasury, there is a portrait by the hand of Giotto of Charles, Duke of Calabria, son of King Robert, kneeling before a Madonna. There, also, he made apartments for the bailiffs, ushers, trumpeters, musicians, pipers, mace-bearers, court-servants, and heralds, with all the other apartments that are required in such a palace. On the upper part of the gallery, moreover, he made a stone cornice that went right round the courtyard, and beside it a water-cistern that was filled by the rains, to make some artificial fountains play at certain times. Michelozzo also directed the restoration of the chapel wherein Mass is heard, and beside it many rooms, with very rich ceilings painted with golden lilies on a ground of blue. He had other ceilings made both for the upper and the lower rooms of the Palace, covering up all the old ceilings that had been made before in the ancient manner. In short, he gave it all the perfection that was demanded by so great a building; and he contrived to convey the water from the wells right up to the highest floor, to which it could be drawn up by means of a wheel more easily than was usual. One thing

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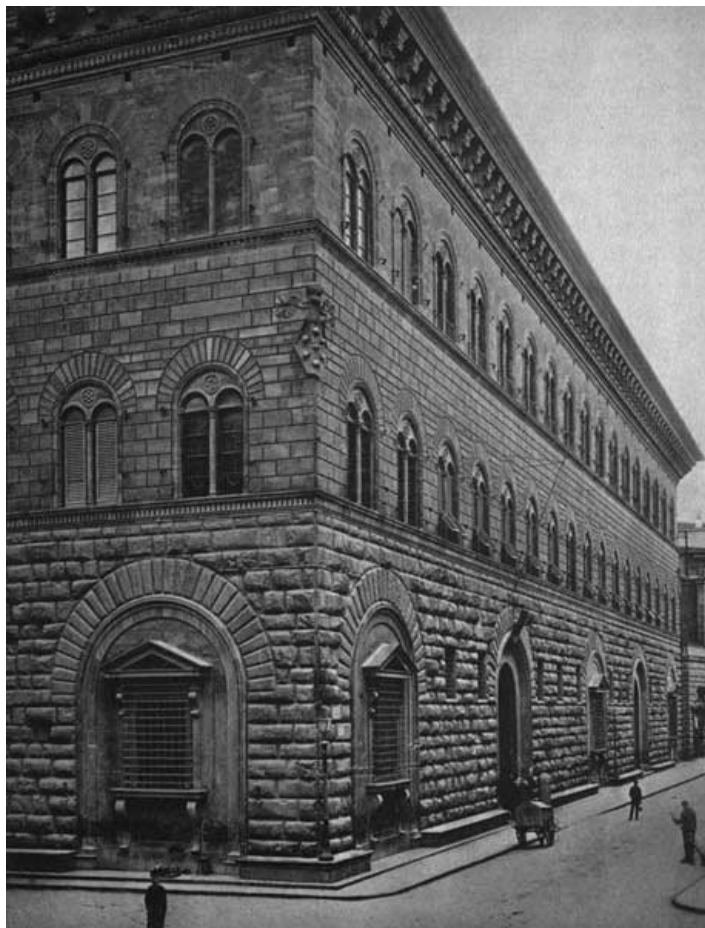
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alone the genius of Michelozzo could not remedy, namely, the public staircase, because it was badly conceived from the beginning, badly situated, awkwardly built, steep, and without lights, while from the first floor upwards the steps were of wood. He laboured to such purpose, however, that he made a flight of round steps at the entrance of the courtyard, and a door with pilasters of hard-stone and most beautiful capitals carved by his hand, besides a well-designed cornice with a double architrave, in the frieze of which he placed all the arms of the Commune. And what is more, he made the whole staircase of hard-stone up to the floor where the Signori lived, fortifying it at the top and half-way up with a portcullis at each point, in case of tumults; and at the head of the staircase he made a door which was called the "catena,"<sup>[23]</sup> beside which there was ever standing an usher, who opened or closed it according as he was commanded by those in authority. He strengthened the tower of the campanile, which had cracked by reason of the weight of that part which stands out over space on corbels on the side towards the Piazza, with very stout bands of iron. Finally, he improved and restored that Palace so greatly, that he was therefore commended by the whole city and made, besides other rewards, a member of the College, which is one of the most honourable magistracies in Florence. And if it should appear to anyone that I have perchance spoken at greater length about this building than was needful, I deserve to be excused, because—after having shown in the Life of Arnolfo, in connection with its original erection, which was in the year 1298, that it was built out of the square and wholly wanting in reasonable proportion, with unequal columns in the courtyard, arches both large and small, inconvenient stairs, and rooms awry and badly proportioned—it was necessary for me to show also to what condition it was brought by the intellect and judgment of Michelozzo; although even he did not arrange it in such a manner that it could be inhabited comfortably, without very great inconvenience and discomfort. Finally, when the Lord Duke Cosimo came to occupy it in the year 1538, his Excellency began to bring it into better form; but since those architects who served the Duke for many years in that work were never able to grasp or to carry out his conception, he determined to see whether he could effect the restoration without spoiling the old part, in which there was no little of the good; giving better order, convenience, and proportion, according to the plan that he had in mind, to the awkward and inconvenient stairs and apartments.

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Sending to Rome, therefore, for Giorgio Vasari, painter and architect of Arezzo, who was working for Pope Julius III, he commissioned him not only to put in order the rooms that he had caused to be begun in the upper part of the side opposite to the Corn Market, which were out of the straight with regard to the ground-plan, but also to consider whether the interior of the Palace could not, without spoiling the work already done, be brought to such a form that it might be possible to go all over it, from one part to another and from one apartment to another, by means of staircases both secret and public, with an ascent as easy as possible. Thereupon, while the said rooms, already begun, were being adorned with gilded ceilings and scenes painted in oil, and with pictures in fresco on the walls, and others were being wrought in stucco, Giorgio took a tracing of the ground-plan right round the whole of the Palace, both the new part and the old; and then, having arranged with no small labour and study for the execution of all that he intended to do, he began to bring it little by little into a good form, and to unite, almost without spoiling any of the work already done, the disconnected rooms, which previously varied in height even on the same floor, some being high and others low. But in order that the Duke might see the design of the whole, in the space of six months he had made a well-proportioned wooden model of the whole of that pile, which has the form and extent rather of a fortress than of a palace. According to this model, which gained the approval of the Duke, the building was united and many commodious rooms were made, as well as convenient staircases, both public and secret, which give access to all the floors; and in this manner a burden was removed from the halls, which were formerly like public streets, for it had been impossible to ascend to the upper floors without passing through them. The whole was magnificently adorned with varied and diverse pictures, and finally the roof of the Great Hall was raised twelve braccia above its former height; insomuch that if Arnolfo, Michelozzo, and the others who laboured on the building from its first foundation onwards, were to return to life, they would not recognize it—nay, they would believe that it was not theirs but a new erection and a different edifice.

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**PALAZZO RICCARDI**  
*(After Michelozzo Michelozzi. Florence)*  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

But let us now return to Michelozzo; the Church of S. Giorgio had just been given to the Friars of S. Domenico da Fiesole, but they only remained there from about the middle of July to the end of January, for Cosimo de' Medici and his brother Lorenzo obtained for them from Pope Eugenius the Church and Convent of S. Marco, which was previously the seat of Silvestrine Monks, to whom the said S. Giorgio was given in exchange. And Cosimo and Lorenzo, being very devoted to religion and to divine service and worship, ordained that the said Convent of S. Marco should be rebuilt entirely anew after the design and model of Michelozzo, and should be made very vast and magnificent, with all the conveniences that the said friars could possibly desire. This work was begun in the year 1437, and the first part to be built was that opening out above the old refectory, opposite to the ducal stables, which Duke Lorenzo de' Medici formerly caused to be built. In this place twenty cells were built, the roof was put on, and the wooden furniture was made for the refectory, the whole being finished in the manner wherein it still stands to-day. But for some time the work was carried no further, for they had to wait to see what would be the end of a law-suit that one Maestro Stefano, General of the said Silvestrines, had brought against the Friars of S. Marco with regard to that convent. This suit having concluded in favour of the said Friars of S. Marco, the building was once more continued. But since the principal chapel, which had been built by Ser Pino Bonaccorsi, had afterwards come into the hands of a lady of the Caponsacchi family, and from her to Mariotto Banchi, some law-suit was fought out over this, and Mariotto, having upheld his rights and having taken the said chapel from Agnolo della Casa, to whom the said Silvestrines had given or sold it, presented it to Cosimo de' Medici, who gave Mariotto 500 crowns in return for it. Later, after Cosimo had likewise bought from the Company of the Spirito Santo the site where the choir now stands, the chapel, the tribune, and the choir were built under the direction of Michelozzo, and completely furnished in the year 1439. Afterwards the library was made, eighty braccia in length and eighteen in breadth, and vaulted both above and below, with sixty-four shelves of cypress wood filled with most beautiful books. After this the dormitory was finished, being brought to a square shape; and finally the cloister was completed, together with all the truly commodious apartments of that convent, which is believed to be the best designed, the most beautiful, and the most commodious that there is in Italy, thanks to the talent and industry of Michelozzo, who delivered it completely finished in the year 1452. It is said that Cosimo spent 36,000 ducats on this fabric, and that while it was building he gave the monks 366 ducats every year for their maintenance. Of the construction and consecration of this holy place we read in an inscription on marble over the door that leads into the sacristy, in the following words:

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CUM HOC TEMPLUM MARCO EVANGELISTÆ DICATUM MAGNIFICIS  
 SUMPTIBUS  
 CL. V. COSMI MEDICIS TANDEM ABSOLUTUM ESSET, EUGENIUS  
 QUARTUS



ROMANUS PONTIFEX MAXIMA CARDINALIUM, ARCHIEPISCOPORUM,  
 EPISCOPORUM,  
 ALIORUMQUE SACERDOTUM FREQUENTIA COMITATUS, ID  
 CELEBERRIMO  
 EPIPHANIÆ DIE, SOLEMNI MORE SERVATO, CONSECRAVIT. TUM  
 ETIAM QUOTANNIS OMNIBUS, QUI EODEM DIE FESTO ANNUAS  
 STATASQUE  
 CONSECRATIONIS CEREMONIAS CASTE PIEQUE CELEBRARINT  
 VISERINTVE,  
 TEMPORIS LUENDIS PECCATIS SUIS DEBITI SEPTEM ANNOS  
 TOTIDEMQUE  
 QUADRAGESIMAS APOSTOLICA REMISIT AUCTORITATE, A. MCCCCXLII.

In like manner, Cosimo erected from the design of Michelozzo the noviciate of S. Croce in Florence, with the chapel of the same, and the entrance that leads from the church to the sacristy, to the said noviciate, and to the staircase of the dormitory. These works are not inferior in beauty, convenience, and adornment to any building whatsoever of all those which the truly magnificent Cosimo de' Medici caused to be erected, or which Michelozzo carried into execution; and besides other parts, the door that leads from the church to the said places, which he made of grey-stone, was much extolled in those times by reason of its novelty and of its beautifully made frontal, for it was then very little the custom to imitate the good manner of antique work, as this door does. Cosimo de' Medici also built, with the advice and design of Michelozzo, the Palace of Cafaggiuolo in Mugello, giving it the form of a fortress with ditches round it; and he laid out farms, roads, gardens, fountains with groves round them, fowling-places, and other appurtenances of a villa, all very splendid; and at a distance of two miles from the said palace, in a place called the Bosco a' Frati, with the advice of Michelozzo, he carried out the building of a convent for the Frati de' Zoccoli of the Order of S. Francis, which is something very beautiful. At Trebbio, likewise, he made many other improvements which are still to be seen; and at a distance of two miles from Florence, also, he built the palatial Villa of Careggi, which was very rich and magnificent; and thither Michelozzo brought the water for the fountain that is seen there at the present day. For Giovanni, son of Cosimo de' Medici, the same master built another magnificent and noble palace at Fiesole, sinking the foundations for the lower part in the brow of the hill, at great expense but not without great advantage, for in that lower part he made vaults, cellars, stables, vat-stores, and many other beautiful and commodious offices; and above, besides the chambers, halls, and other ordinary rooms, he made some for books and certain others for music. In short, Michelozzo showed in this building how great was his skill in architecture, for, besides what has been mentioned, it was constructed in such a manner that, although it stands on that hill, it has never moved a hair's breadth. This palace finished, he built above it, almost on the summit of the hill, the Church and Convent of the Friars of S. Girolamo, at the expense of the same man. The same Michelozzo made the design and model which Cosimo sent to Jerusalem for the hospice that he caused to be erected there, for the pilgrims who visit the Sepulchre of Christ. He also sent the design for six windows in the façade of S. Pietro in Rome, which were made there afterwards with the arms of Cosimo de' Medici; but three of them were removed in our own day and replaced by Pope Paul III with others bearing the arms of the house of Farnese. After this, hearing that there was a lack of water at S. Maria degli Angeli in Assisi, to the very great discomfort of the people who go there every year on August 1 to receive Absolution, Cosimo sent thither Michelozzo, who brought the water of a spring, which rose half-way up the brow of the hill, to the fountain, which he covered with a very rich and lovely loggia resting on some columns made of separate pieces and bearing the arms of Cosimo. Within the convent, also at the commission of Cosimo, he made many useful improvements for the friars; and these the magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici afterwards renewed with more adornment and at greater expense, besides presenting to that Madonna the image of her in wax which is still to be seen there. Cosimo also caused the road that leads from the said Madonna degli Angeli to the city to be paved with bricks; nor did Michelozzo take his leave of those parts before he had made the design for the old Citadel of Perugia. Having finally returned to Florence, he built a house on the Canto de' Tornaquinci for Giovanni Tornabuoni, similar in almost every way to the palace that he had made for Cosimo, save that the façade is not in rustic-work and has no cornices above, but is quite plain.

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After the death of Cosimo, by whom Michelozzo had been loved as much as a dear friend can be loved, his son Piero caused him to build the marble Chapel of the Crucifix in S. Miniato sul Monte; and in the half-circle of the arch at the back of the said chapel Michelozzo carved in low-relief a Falcon with the Diamond (the emblem of Cosimo, father of Piero), which was truly a very beautiful work. After these things, the same Piero de' Medici, intending to build the Chapel of the Nunziata, in the Church of the Servi, entirely of marble, besought Michelozzo, now an old man, to give him his advice in the matter, both because he greatly admired his talents and because he knew how faithful a friend and servant he had been to his father Cosimo. This Michelozzo did, and the charge of constructing it was given to Pagno di Lapo Partigiani, a sculptor of Fiesole, who, as one who wished to include many things in a small space, showed many ideas in this work. This chapel is supported by four marble columns about nine braccia high, made with double flutings in the Corinthian manner, with the bases and capitals variously carved and with double members. On the columns rest the architrave, frieze, and cornice, likewise with double members and carvings and wrought with various things of fancy, and particularly with foliage and the emblems and arms of the Medici. Between these and other cornices made for another range of lights, there is a large inscription, very beautifully carved in marble. Below, between the four

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columns, forming the ceiling of the chapel, there is a coffer-work canopy of marble all carved, full of enamels fired in a furnace and of various fanciful designs in mosaic wrought with gold colour and precious stones. The surface of the pavement is full of porphyry, serpentine, variegated marbles, and other very rare stones, put together and distributed with beautiful design. The said chapel is enclosed by a grille made of bronze ropes, with candelabra above fixed into an ornament of marble, which makes a very beautiful finish to the bronze and to the candelabra; and the door which closes the chapel in front is likewise of bronze and very well contrived. Piero left orders that the chapel should be lighted all round by thirty silver lamps, and this was done. Now, as these were ruined during the siege, the Lord Duke gave orders many years ago that new ones should be made, and the greater part of them are already finished, while the work still goes on; but in spite of this there has never been a moment when there has not been that full number of lamps burning, according to the instructions of Piero, although, from the time when they were destroyed, they have not been of silver. To these adornments Pagno added a very large lily of copper, issuing from a vase which rests on the corner of the gilt and painted cornice of wood which holds the lamps; but this cornice does not support so great a weight by itself, for the whole is sustained by two branches of the lily, which are of iron painted green, and are fixed with lead into the corner of the marble cornice, holding those that are of copper suspended in the air. This work was truly made with judgment and invention; wherefore it is worthy of being much extolled as something beautiful and bizarre. Beside this chapel, he made another on the side towards the cloister, which serves as a choir for the friars, with windows which take their light from the court and give it both to the said chapel and also (since they stand opposite to two similar windows) to the room containing the little organ, which is by the side of the marble chapel. On the front of this choir there is a large press, in which the silver vessels of the Nunziata are kept; and on all these ornaments and throughout the whole are the arms and emblem of the Medici. Without the Chapel of the Nunziata and opposite to it, the same man made a large chandelier of bronze, five braccia in height, as well as the marble holy-water font at the entrance of the church, and a S. John in the centre, which is a very beautiful work. Above the counter where the friars sell the candles, moreover, he made a half-length Madonna of marble with the Child in her arms, in half-relief, of the size of life and very devout; and a similar work in the Office of the Wardens of Works of S. Maria del Fiore.

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Pagno also wrought some figures in S. Miniato al Tedesco in company with his master Donato, while a youth; and he made a tomb of marble in the Church of S. Martino in Lucca, opposite to the Chapel of the Sacrament, for Messer Piero di Nocera, who is portrayed there from nature. Filarete relates in the twenty-fifth book of his work that Francesco Sforza, fourth Duke of Milan, presented a very beautiful palace in Milan to the Magnificent Cosimo de' Medici, and that Cosimo, in order to show the Duke how pleased he was with such a gift, not only adorned it richly with marbles and with carved wood-work, but also enlarged it under the direction of Michelozzo, making it eighty-seven braccia and a half, whereas it had previously been only eighty-four braccia. Besides this, he had many pictures painted there, particularly the stories of the life of the Emperor Trajan in a loggia, wherein, among certain decorations, he caused Francesco Sforza himself to be portrayed, with the Lady Bianca, his consort, Duchess of Milan, and also their children, with many other noblemen and great persons, and likewise the portraits of eight Emperors; and to these portraits Michelozzo added that of Cosimo, made by his own hand. Throughout all the apartments he placed the arms of Cosimo in diverse fashions, with his emblem of the Falcon and Diamond. The said pictures were all by the hand of Vincenzo di Zoppa, a painter of no small repute at that time and in that country.

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It is recorded that the money that Cosimo spent in the restoration of this palace was paid by Pigello Portinari, a citizen of Florence, who then directed the bank and the accounts of Cosimo in Milan and lived in the said palace. There are some works in marble and bronze by the hand of Michelozzo in Genoa, and many others in other places, which are all known by the manner; but what we have already said about him must suffice. He died at the age of sixty-eight, and he was buried in his own tomb in S. Marco at Florence. His portrait, by the hand of Fra Giovanni, is in the Sacristy of S. Trinita, in the figure of an old man with a cap on his head, representing Nicodemus, who is taking Christ down from the Cross.

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## FOOTNOTES

- [1] *I.e.*, Emperor.
- [2] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [3] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [4] The Tribunal of commerce.
- [5] Church of the Hermits.
- [6] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [7] Treasury of public funds.
- [8] The Ape of Nature.
- [9] *I.e.*, Donatello.
- [10] Mazzocchi are probably coronets placed on the arms of noble families; also caps of a peculiar shape, such as those worn by Taddeo Gaddi and others in the portraits placed by Vasari at the beginning of each *Life*; and possibly, also, the wooden hoops placed inside these caps to keep them in shape.
- [11] A street-shrine, generally containing a picture of the Virgin in Glory.
- [12] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [13] Careless Tom, or Hulking Tom (not necessarily in disapproval).

- [14] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [15] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [16] See note above.
- [17] *I.e.*, Jacopo della Quercia.
- [18] This was probably something like the modern lewis.
- [19] To make this passage intelligible, the word "or" has been added in the later editions.
- [20] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [21] *I.e.*, Bald-head.
- [22] Vasari says Fra Ber.... Fra Bernardo has been suggested, but nothing is known of him. It is more reasonable to read Fra Bartolommeo (della Porta).
- [23] Chain.

## END OF VOL. II.

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