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Sculptors and Architects, Vol. 07 (of 10), by Giorgio Vasari**

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**Title:** Lives of the most Eminent Painters Sculptors and Architects, Vol. 07 (of 10)

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**Release Date:** March 31, 2010 [EBook #31845]

**Language:** English

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SCULPTORS AND ARCHITECTS, VOL. 07 (OF 10) \*\*\*

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

**BY**

**GIORGIO VASARI:**

**VOLUME VII.  
TRIBOLO TO IL SODOMA  
1914**

**NEWLY TRANSLATED BY GASTON DU C. DE VERE. WITH FIVE HUNDRED  
ILLUSTRATIONS: IN TEN VOLUMES**

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BY GIORGIO VASARI:  
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1511-1574

LONDON: MACMILLAN AND CO. LD.  
& THE MEDICI SOCIETY, LD. 1912-14

PHILIP LEE WARNER,  
PUBLISHER TO THE MEDICI SOCIETY, LIMITED  
7 GRAFTON ST. LONDON, W. 1912-14

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## NICCOLÒ, CALLED TRIBOLO

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## LIFE OF NICCOLÒ, CALLED TRIBOLO SCULPTOR AND ARCHITECT

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Raffaello the carpenter, surnamed Il Riccio de' Pericoli, who lived near the Canto a Monteloro in Florence, had born to him in the year 1500, as he used to tell me himself, a male child, whom he was pleased to call at baptism, like his own father, Niccolò; and having perceived that the boy had a quick and ready intelligence and a lofty spirit, he determined, although he was but a poor artisan, that he should begin straightway by learning to read and write well and cast accounts. Sending him to school, therefore, it came about, since the child was very vivacious and so high-spirited in his every action, that he was always cramped for room and was a very devil both among the other boys at school and everywhere else, always teasing and tormenting both himself and others, that he lost his own name of Niccolò and acquired that of Tribolo<sup>[2]</sup> to such purpose, that he was called that ever afterwards by everyone.

Now, Tribolo growing, his father, in order both to make use of him and to curb the boy's exuberance, took him into his workshop and taught him his own trade; but having seen in a few months that he was ill suited for such a calling, being somewhat delicate, thin, and feeble in health, he came to the conclusion that if he wished to keep him alive, he must release him from the heavier labours of his craft and set him to wood-carving. Having heard that without design, the father of all the arts, the boy could not become an excellent master therein, Raffaello resolved that he should begin by devoting all his time to design, and therefore made him draw now cornices, foliage, and grotesques, and now other things necessary to such a profession. And having seen that in doing this the boy was well served both by his head and by his hand, and reflecting, like a man of judgment, that with him Niccolò could at best learn nothing else but to work by the square, Raffaello first spoke of this with the carpenter Ciappino, who was the very familiar friend of Nanni Unghero; and with his advice and assistance, he placed Niccolò for three years with the said Nanni, in whose workshop, where both joiner's work and carving were done, there were constantly to be found the sculptor Jacopo Sansovino, the painter Andrea del Sarto, and others, who afterwards became such able masters. Now Nanni, who had in those days a passing good reputation for excellence, was executing many works both in joinery and in carving for the villa of Zanobi Bartolini at Rovezzano, without the Porta alla Croce, for the palace of the Bartolini, which Giovanni, the brother of that Zanobi, was having built at that time on the Piazza di S. Trinita, and for the house and garden of the same man in Gualfonda; and Tribolo, who was made to work by Nanni without discretion, always having to handle saws, planes, and other common tools, and not being capable, by reason of the feebleness of his body, of such exertions, began to feel dissatisfied and to say to Riccio, when he asked for the cause of his discontent, that he did not think that he could remain with Nanni in that craft, and that therefore Raffaello should see to placing him with Andrea del Sarto or Jacopo Sansovino, whom he had come to know in Unghero's workshop, for the reason that with one or the other of them he hoped to do better and to be sounder in health. Moved by these reasons, then, and again with the advice and assistance of Ciappino, Riccio placed Tribolo with Jacopo Sansovino, who took him willingly, because he had known him in the workshop of Nanni Unghero, and had seen that he worked well in design and even better in relief.

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Jacopo Sansovino, when Tribolo, now restored to health, went to work under him, was executing in the Office of Works of S. Maria del Fiore, in competition with Benedetto da Rovezzano, Andrea da Fiesole, and Baccio Bandinelli, the marble statue of S. James the Apostle which is still to be seen at the present day at that place together with the others. And thus Tribolo, with these opportunities of learning, by working in clay and drawing with great diligence, contrived to make such proficience in that art, for which he felt a natural inclination, that Jacopo, growing to love him more and more every day, began to encourage him and to bring him forward by making him execute now one thing and now another. Whereupon, although Sansovino had in his workshop at that time Solosmeo da Settignano and Pippo del Fabro, young men of great promise, seeing that Tribolo, having added skill in the use of chisels to his good knowledge of working in clay and in wax, not only equalled them but surpassed them by a great measure, he began to make much use of him in his works. And after finishing the Apostle and a Bacchus that he made for the house of Giovanni Bartolini in Gualfonda, and undertaking to make for M. Giovanni Gaddi, his intimate friend, a chimney-piece and a water-basin of hard sandstone for his house on the Piazza di Madonna, he caused some large figures of boys in clay, which were to go above the great cornice, to be made by Tribolo, who executed them so extraordinarily well, that M. Giovanni, having seen the beautiful manner and the genius of the young man, commissioned him to execute two medallions of marble, which, finished with great excellence, were afterwards placed over certain doors in the same house.

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Meanwhile there was a commission to be given for a tomb, a work of great magnitude, for the King of Portugal; and since Jacopo had been the disciple of Andrea Contucci of Monte Sansovino, and had the reputation not only of having equalled his master, a man of great renown, but of having a manner even more beautiful, that work, through the good offices of the Bartolini, was allotted to him. Whereupon Jacopo made a most superb model of wood, all covered with scenes and figures of wax, which were executed for the most part by Tribolo; and these proving to be very beautiful, the young man's fame so increased that Matteo di Lorenzo Strozzi—Tribolo having now left Sansovino, thinking that he was by that time able to work by himself—commissioned him to make some children of stone, and shortly afterwards, being much pleased with them, two of marble that are holding a dolphin which pours water into a fish-pond, a work that is now to be seen at San Casciano, a place eight miles distant from Florence, in the villa of that M. Matteo.

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While these works were being executed by Tribolo in Florence, M. Bartolommeo Barbazzi, a Bolognese gentleman who had gone there on some business, remembered that a search was being made in Bologna for a young man who could work well, to the end that he might be set to

making figures and scenes of marble for the façade of S. Petronio, the principal church of that city. Wherefore he spoke to Tribolo, and having seen some of his works, which pleased him, as also did the young man's ways and other qualities, he took him to Bologna, where Tribolo, with great diligence and with much credit to himself, in a short time made the two Sibyls of marble that were afterwards placed in the ornament of that door of S. Petronio which leads to the Della Morte Hospital. These works finished, arrangements were being made to give him greater things to do, and he was receiving many proofs of love and affection from M. Bartolommeo, when the plague of the year 1525 began in Bologna and throughout all Lombardy; whereupon Tribolo, in order to avoid that plague, made his way to Florence. After living there during all the time that this contagious and pestilential sickness lasted, he departed as soon as it had ceased, and returned, in obedience to a summons, to Bologna, where M. Bartolommeo, not allowing him to set his hand to any work for the façade, resolved, seeing that many of his friends and relatives had died, to have a tomb made for himself and for them. And so Tribolo, after finishing the model, which M. Bartolommeo insisted on seeing completed before he did anything else, went in person to Carrara to have the marbles excavated, intending to rough-hew them on the spot and to lighten them in such a manner, that they might not only be easier to transport, as indeed they were, but also that the figures might come out larger. In that place, in order not to waste his time, he blocked out two large children of marble, which were taken to Bologna with beasts of burden, unfinished as they were, together with the rest of the work; and after the death of M. Bartolommeo, which caused such grief to Tribolo that he returned to Tuscany, they were placed, with the other marbles, in a chapel in S. Petronio, where they still are.

Having thus departed from Carrara, Tribolo, on his way back to Florence, stayed in Pisa to visit the sculptor Maestro Stagio da Pietrasanta, his very dear friend, who was executing in the Office of Works of the Duomo in that city two columns with capitals of marble all in open work, which were to stand one on either side of the high-altar and the Tabernacle of the Sacrament; and each of these was to have upon the capital an Angel of marble one braccio and three quarters in height, with a candelabrum in the hand. At the invitation of the said Stagio, having nothing else to do at that time, he undertook to make one of those Angels: which being finished with all the perfection that could be given to a delicate work of that size in marble, proved to be such that nothing more could have been desired, for the reason that the Angel, with the movement of his person, has the appearance of having stayed his flight in order to uphold that light, and the nude form has about it some delicate draperies which are so graceful in their effect, and look so well on every side and from every point of view, that words could not express their beauty. But, having consumed much time in executing this work, since he cared for nothing but his delight in art, and not having received for it from the Warden the payment that he expected, he resolved that he would not make the other Angel, and returned to Florence. There he met with Giovan Battista della Palla, who at that time was not only causing all the sculptures and pictures that he could to be executed for sending to King Francis I in France, but was also buying antiques of all sorts and pictures of every kind, provided only that they were by the hands of good masters; and every day he was packing them up and sending them off. Now, at the very moment when Tribolo returned, Giovan Battista had an ancient vase of granite, of a very beautiful shape, which he wished to arrange in such a manner that it might serve for a fountain for that King. He therefore declared his mind to Tribolo, and what he proposed to have done; and he, setting to work, made him a Goddess of Nature, who, raising one arm, holds that vase, the foot of which she has upon her head, with the hands, the first row of breasts being adorned with some boys standing out entirely detached from the marble, who are in various most beautiful attitudes, holding certain festoons in their hands, while the next range of breasts is covered with quadrupeds, and at her feet are many different kinds of fishes. That figure was finished with such diligence and such perfection, that it well deserved, after being sent to France together with other works, to be held very dear by the King, and to be placed, as a rare thing, in Fontainebleau.

Afterwards, in the year 1529, when preparations were being made for the war against Florence and the siege, Pope Clement VII, wishing to study the exact site of the city and to consider in what manner and in what places his forces could be distributed to the best advantage, ordained that a plan of the city should be made secretly, with all the country for a mile around it—the hills, mountains, rivers, rocks, houses, churches, and other things, and also the squares and streets within, together with the walls and bastions surrounding it, and the other defences. The charge of all this was given to Benvenuto di Lorenzo della Volpaia, an able maker of clocks and quadrants and a very fine astrologer, but above all a most excellent master in taking ground-plans. This Benvenuto chose Tribolo as his companion, and that with great judgment, for the reason that it was Tribolo who suggested that this plan, for the better consideration of the height of the mountains, the depth of the low-lying parts, and all other particulars, should be made in relief; the doing of which was not without much labour and danger, in that, staying out all night to measure the roads and to mark the number of braccia between one place and another, and also to measure the height of the summits of the belfries and towers, drawing intersecting lines in every direction by means of the compass, and going beyond the walls to compare the height of the hills with that of the cupola, which they had marked as their centre, they did not execute such a work save after many months; but they used great diligence, for they made it of cork, for the sake of lightness, and limited the whole plan to the space of four braccia, and measured everything to scale. Having then been finished in this manner, and being made in pieces, that plan was packed up secretly and smuggled out of Florence in some bales of wool that were going to Perugia, being consigned to one who had orders to send it to the Pope, who made use of it continually during the siege of Florence, keeping it in his chamber, and seeing from one day to another, from letters and despatches, where and how the army was quartered, where skirmishes

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took place, and, in short, all the incidents, arguments, and discussions that occurred during that siege; all greatly to his satisfaction, for it was in truth a rare and marvellous work.

The war finished—during the progress of which Tribolo executed some works in clay for his friends, and for Andrea del Sarto, his dearest friend, three figures of wax in the round, of which Andrea availed himself in painting in fresco, on the Piazza, near the Condotta, portraits from nature of three captains who had fled with the pay-chests, depicted as hanging by one foot—Benvenuto, summoned by the Pope, went to Rome to kiss the feet of his Holiness, and was placed by him in charge of the Belvedere, with an honourable salary. In that office, having often conversations with the Pope, Benvenuto, when the occasion arose, did not fail to extol Tribolo as an excellent sculptor and to recommend him warmly; insomuch that, the siege finished, Clement made use of him. For, designing to give completion to the Chapel of Our Lady at Loreto, which had been begun by Leo and then abandoned on account of the death of Andrea Contucci of Monte Sansovino, he ordained that Antonio da San Gallo, who had the charge of executing that fabric, should summon Tribolo and set him to complete some of those scenes that Maestro Andrea had left unfinished. Tribolo, then, thus summoned by San Gallo by order of Clement, went with all his family to Loreto, whither there likewise went Simone, called Mosca, a very rare carver of marble, Raffaello da Montelupo, Francesco da San Gallo the younger, Girolamo Ferrarese the sculptor, a disciple of Maestro Andrea, Simone Cioli, Ranieri da Pietrasanta, and Francesco del Tadda, all invited in order to finish that work. And to Tribolo, in the distribution of the labours, there fell, as the work of the greatest importance, a scene in which Maestro Andrea had represented the Marriage of Our Lady.

Thereupon Tribolo made an addition to that scene, and had the notion of placing among the many figures that are standing watching the Marriage of the Virgin, one who in great fury is breaking his rod, because it had not blossomed; and in this he succeeded so well, that the suitor could not display with greater animation the rage that he feels at not having had the good fortune that he desired. Which work finished, and also that of the others, with great perfection, Tribolo had already made many models of wax with a view to executing some of those Prophets that were to go in the niches of that chapel, which was now built and completely finished, when Pope Clement, after seeing those works and praising them much, and particularly that of Tribolo, determined that they should all return without loss of time to Florence, in order to finish under the discipline of Michelagnolo Buonarroti all those figures that were wanting in the sacristy and library of S. Lorenzo, and the rest of the work, after the models of Michelagnolo and with his assistance, with the greatest possible speed, to the end that, having finished the sacristy, they might all together be able, thanks to the proficience made under the discipline of so great a man, also to finish the façade of S. Lorenzo. And in order that there might be no manner of delay in doing this, the Pope sent Michelagnolo back to Florence, and with him Fra Giovanni Angelo de' Servi, who had executed some works in the Belvedere, to the end that he might assist him in carving the marbles and might make some statues, according as he should receive orders from Michelagnolo, who caused him to make a S. Cosimo, which was to stand on one side of the Madonna, with a S. Damiano, allotted to Montelupo, on the other.

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These commissions given, Michelagnolo desired that Tribolo should make two nude statues, which were to be one on either side of that of Duke Giuliano, which he himself had already made; one was to be a figure of Earth crowned with cypress, weeping with bowed head and with the arms outstretched, and lamenting the death of Duke Giuliano, and the other a figure of Heaven with the arms uplifted, all smiling and joyful, and showing her gladness at the adornment and splendour that the soul and spirit of that lord conferred upon her. But Tribolo's evil fortune crossed him at the very moment when he was about to begin to work on the statue of Earth; for, whether it was the change of air, or his feeble constitution, or because he had been irregular in his way of living, he fell ill of a grievous sickness, which, ending in a quartan fever, hung about him many months, to his infinite vexation, since he was tormented no less by his grief at having had to abandon the work, and at seeing that the friar and Raffaello had taken possession of the field, than by the illness itself. However, wishing to conquer that illness, in order not to be left behind by his rivals, whose name he heard celebrated more and more every day, feeble as he was, he made a large model of clay for the statue of Earth, and, when he had finished it, began to execute the work in marble, with such diligence and assiduity, that the statue could be seen already all cut out in front, when Fortune, who is always ready to oppose herself to any fair beginning, by the death of Clement at a moment when nothing seemed less likely, cut short the aspirations of all those excellent masters who were hoping to acquire under Michelagnolo, besides boundless profits, immortal renown and everlasting fame.

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Stupefied by this misfortune and robbed of all his spirit, and being also ill, Tribolo was living in utter despair, seeming not to be able either in Florence or abroad to hit upon anything that might be to his advantage; but Giorgio Vasari, who was always his friend and loved him from his heart, and helped him all that he could, consoled him, saying that he should not lose heart, because he would so contrive that Duke Alessandro would give him something to do, by means of the favour of the Magnificent Ottaviano de' Medici, into whose service Giorgio had introduced him on terms of no little intimacy. Wherefore Tribolo, having regained a little courage, occupied himself, while measures were being taken to assist him, with copying in clay all the figures of marble in the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo which Michelagnolo had executed—namely, Dawn, Twilight, Day, and Night. And he succeeded in doing them so well, that M. Giovan Battista Figiovanni, the Prior of S. Lorenzo, to whom he presented the Night in return for having the sacristy opened for him, judging it to be a rare work, presented it to Duke Alessandro, who afterwards gave it to Giorgio Vasari, who was living with his Excellency, knowing that Giorgio gave his attention to such

studies; which figure is now in his house at Arezzo, with other works of art. Having afterwards copied, likewise in clay, the Madonna made by Michelagnolo for the same sacristy, Tribolo presented it to the above-named M. Ottaviano de' Medici, who had a most beautiful ornament in squared work made for it by Battista del Cinque, with columns, cornices, brackets, and other carvings very well executed.

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Meanwhile, by the favour of him who was Treasurer to his Excellency, and at the commission of Bertoldo Corsini, the proveditor for the fortress which was being built at that time, out of three escutcheons that were to be made by order of the Duke for placing on the bastions, one on each, one four braccia in height was given to Tribolo to execute, with two nude figures representing Victories; which escutcheon, finished by him with great diligence and promptitude, with the addition of three great masks that support the escutcheon and the figures, so pleased the Duke, that he conceived a very great love for Tribolo. Now shortly afterwards the Duke went to Naples to defend himself before the Emperor Charles V, who had just returned from Tunis, against many calumnies that had been laid upon him by some of his citizens; and, having not only defended himself, but also obtained from his Majesty his daughter Signora Margherita of Austria for wife, he wrote to Florence that four men should be appointed who might cause vast and splendid decorations to be prepared throughout the city, in order to receive the Emperor, who was coming to Florence, with proper magnificence. And I, having to distribute the various works at the commission of his Excellency—who ordained that I should act in company with the said four men, who were Giovanni Corsi, Luigi Guicciardini, Palla Rucellai, and Alessandro Corsini—gave the greatest and most difficult labours for that festival to Tribolo to execute, which were four large statues. The first was a Hercules that has just killed the Hydra, six braccia in height, in the round and overlaid with silver, which was placed at that corner of the Piazza di S. Felice that is at the end of the Via Maggio, with the following inscription in letters of silver on the base: UT HERCULES LABORE ET ÆRUMNIS MONSTRA EDOMUIT, ITA CÆSAR VIRTUTE ET CLEMENTIA, HOSTIBUS VICTIS SEU PLACATIS, PACEM ORBI TERRARUM ET QUIETEM RESTITUIT. Two others were colossal figures eight braccia high, one representing the River Bagrada, which was resting upon the skin of the serpent that was brought to Rome, and the other representing the Ebro, with the horn of Amaltheia in one hand and in the other the helm of a ship; both coloured in imitation of bronze, with inscriptions on the bases; below the Ebro, HIBERUS EX HISPANIA, and below the other, BAGRADAS EX AFRICA. The fourth was a statue five braccia in height, on the Canto de' Medici, representing Peace, who had in one hand an olive branch and in the other a lighted torch, with which she was setting fire to a pile of arms heaped up on the base on which she was placed; with the following words: FIAT PAX IN VIRTUTE TUA. He did not finish, as he had hoped to do, the horse seven braccia in length that was set up on the Piazza di S. Trinita, upon which was to be placed the statue of the Emperor in armour, because Tasso the wood-carver, who was much his friend, did not show any promptitude in executing the base and the other things in the way of wood-carving that were to be included in the work, being a man who let time slip through his fingers in arguing and jesting; and there was only just time to cover the horse alone with tin-foil laid upon the still fresh clay. On the base were to be read the following words:

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IMPERATORI CAROLO AUGUSTO VICTORIOSISSIMO, POST DEVICTOS HOSTES,  
ITALIÆ PACE RESTITUTA ET SALUTATO FERDIN. FRATRE, EXPULSIS ITERUM  
TURCIS AFRICAQUE PERDOMITA, ALEXANDER MED. DUX FLORENTIÆ, D.D.

His Majesty having departed from Florence, a beginning was made with the preparations for the nuptials, in expectation of his daughter, and to the end that she and the Vice-Queen of Naples, who was in her company, might be commodiously lodged according to the orders of his Excellency in the house of M. Ottaviano de' Medici, an addition was made to his old house in four weeks, to the astonishment of everyone; and Tribolo, the painter Andrea di Cosimo, and I, in ten days, with the help of about ninety sculptors and painters of the city, what with masters and assistants, completed the preparations for the wedding in so far as appertained to the house and its decorations, painting the loggie, courtyards, and other spaces in a manner suitable for nuptials of such importance. Among these decorations, Tribolo made, besides other things, two Victories in half-relief that were one on either side of the principal door, supported by two large terminal figures, which also upheld the escutcheon of the Emperor, pendent from the neck of a very beautiful eagle in the round. The same master also made certain boys, likewise in the round, and large in size, which were placed on either side of some heads over the pediments of various doors; and these were much extolled.

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Meanwhile, as the nuptials were in progress, Tribolo received letters from Bologna, in which Messer Pietro del Magno, his devoted friend, besought him that he should consent to go to Bologna, in order to make for the Madonna di Galliera, where a most beautiful ornament of marble was already prepared, a scene likewise of marble three braccia and a half in extent. Whereupon Tribolo, happening to have nothing else to do at that time, went thither, and after making a model of a Madonna ascending into Heaven, with the Apostles below in various attitudes, which, being very beautiful, gave great satisfaction, he set his hand to executing it; but with little pleasure for himself, since the marble that he was carving was that Milanese marble, saline, full of emery, and bad in quality; and it seemed to him that he was wasting his time, without feeling a particle of that delight that men find in working those marbles which are a pleasure to carve, and which in the end, when brought to completion, show a surface that has the appearance of the living flesh itself. However, he did so much that it was already almost finished, when I, having persuaded Duke Alessandro to recall Michelagnolo from Rome, and also the other masters, in order to finish the work of the sacristy begun by Clement, was arranging to give him something to do in Florence; and I would have succeeded, but in the meantime, by reason of the

death of Alessandro, who was murdered by Lorenzo di Pier Francesco de' Medici, not only was this design frustrated, but the greatness and prosperity of art were thrown into utter ruin.

Having heard of the Duke's death, Tribolo condoled with me in his letters, beseeching me, after he had exhorted me to bear with resignation the death of that great Prince, my gracious master, that if I went to Rome, as he had heard that I, being wholly determined to abandon Courts and to pursue my studies, was intending to do, I should obtain some commission for him, for the reason that, if assisted by my friends, he would do whatever I told him. But it so chanced that it became in no way necessary for him to seek commissions in Rome. For Signor Cosimo de' Medici, having been created Duke of Florence, as soon as he had freed himself from the troubles that he had in the first year of his rule by routing his enemies at Monte Murlo, began to take some diversion, and in particular to frequent not a little the villa of Castello, which is little more than two miles distant from Florence. There he began to do some building, in order that he might be able to live there comfortably with his Court, and little by little—being encouraged in this by Maestro Pietro da San Casciano, who was held to be a passing good master in those days, and was much in the service of Signora Maria, the mother of the Duke, and had also always been the master-builder and the former servant of Signor Giovanni—he resolved to conduct to that place certain waters that he had desired long before to bring thither. Whereupon a beginning was made with building an aqueduct that was to receive all the waters from the hill of Castellina, which was at a distance of a quarter of a mile or more from Castello; and the work was pursued vigorously with a good number of men. But the Duke recognizing that Maestro Pietro had neither invention nor power of design enough to make in that place a beginning that might afterwards in time receive that ornamentation which the site and the waters required, one day that his Excellency was on the spot, speaking of this with such men as Messer Ottaviano de' Medici and Cristofano Rinieri, the friend of Tribolo and the old servant of Signora Maria and of the Duke, they extolled Tribolo in such a manner, as a man endowed with all those parts that were requisite in the head of such a fabric, that the Duke gave Cristofano a commission to make him come from Bologna. Which having been straightway done by Rinieri, Tribolo, who could not have received any better news than that he was to serve Duke Cosimo, set out immediately for Florence, and, arriving there, was taken to Castello, where his most illustrious Excellency, having heard from him what he thought should be done in the way of decorative fountains, gave him a commission to make the models. Whereupon he set his hand to these, and was engaged upon them, while Maestro Pietro da San Casciano was executing the aqueduct and bringing the waters to the place, when the Duke, who meanwhile had begun, for the security of the city, to surround with a very strong wall the bastions erected on the hill of San Miniato at the time of the siege after the designs of Michelagnolo, ordained that Tribolo should make an escutcheon of hard stone, with two Victories, for an angle of the summit of a bastion that faces Florence. But Tribolo had scarcely finished the escutcheon, which was very large, and one of those Victories, a figure four braccia high, which was held to be a very beautiful thing, when he was obliged to leave that work incomplete, for the reason that, Maestro Pietro having carried well on the making of the aqueduct and the bringing of the waters, to the full satisfaction of the Duke, his Excellency wished that Tribolo should begin to put into execution, for the adornment of that place, the designs and models that he had already shown to him, ordaining him for the time being a salary of eight crowns a month, the same that was paid to San Casciano.

Now, in order that I may not become confused in describing the intricacies of the aqueducts and of the ornaments of the fountains, it may be well to say briefly some few words about the site and position of Castello. The villa of Castello stands at the roots of Monte Morello, below the Villa della Topaia, which is halfway up the slope; it has before it a plain that descends little by little, for the space of a mile and a half, down to the River Arno, and exactly where the ascent of the mountain begins stands the palace, which was built in past times by Pier Francesco de' Medici, after a very good design. The principal front faces straight towards the south, overlooking a vast lawn with two very large fish-ponds full of running water, which comes from an ancient aqueduct made by the Romans in order to conduct water from Valdimarina to Florence, and provided with a vaulted cistern under the ground; and so it has a very beautiful and very pleasing view. The fish-ponds in front are divided in the middle by a bridge twelve braccia wide, which leads to an avenue of the same width, bounded at the sides and covered above by an unbroken vault of mulberry-trees, ten braccia in height, thus making a covered avenue three hundred braccia in length, delightful for its shade, which opens on to the high road to Prato by a gate placed between two fountains that serve to give water to travellers and animals. On the eastern side the same palace has a very beautiful pile of stable-buildings, and on the western side a private garden into which one goes from the courtyard of the stables, passing straight through the ground-floor of the palace by way of the loggie, halls, and chambers on the level of the ground; from which private garden one can enter by a door on the west side into another garden, very large and all filled with fruit-trees, and bounded by a forest of fir-trees that conceals the houses of the labourers and others who live there, engaged in the service of the palace and of the gardens. Next, that part of the palace which faces north, towards the mountain, has in front of it a lawn as long as the palace, the stables, and the private garden altogether, and from this lawn one climbs by steps to the principal garden, a place enclosed by ordinary walls, which, rising in a gentle slope, stretches so well clear of the palace as it rises, that the mid-day sun searches it out and bathes it all with its rays, as if there were no palace in front; and at the upper end it stands so high that it commands a view not only of the whole palace, but also of the plain that is in front and around it, and likewise about the city. In the middle of this garden is a forest of very tall and thickly-planted cypresses, laurels, and myrtles, which, laid out in a circular shape, have the form of a labyrinth, all surrounded by box-hedges two braccia and a half in height, so even and grown

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with such beautiful order that they have the appearance of a painting done with the brush; in the centre of which labyrinth, at the desire of the Duke, Tribolo, as will be described below, made a very beautiful fountain of marble. At the principal entrance, where there is the first-mentioned lawn with the two fish-ponds and the avenue covered with mulberry-trees, Tribolo wished that the avenue should be so extended that it might stretch for a distance of more than a mile, covered and shaped in like manner, and might reach as far as the River Arno, and that the waters which ran away from all the fountains, flowing gently in pleasant channels at the sides of the avenue, and filled with various kinds of fishes and crayfish, might accompany it down to that river.

As for the palace—to describe what has still to be done as well as that which has been finished—he wished to make a loggia in front of it, which, passing by an open courtyard, was to have on the side where the stables are another palace as large as the old one, with the same proportion of apartments, loggie, private garden, and the rest; which addition would have made it a vast palace, with a most beautiful façade. After passing the court from which one enters into the large garden of the labyrinth, at the main entrance, where there is a vast lawn, after climbing the steps that lead to that labyrinth, there came a level space thirty braccia square, on which there was to be—and has since been made—a very large fountain of white marble, which was to spout upwards above ornaments fourteen braccia in height, while from the mouth of a statue at the highest point was to issue a jet of water rising to the height of six braccia. At either end of the lawn was to be a loggia, one opposite to the other, each thirty braccia in length and fifteen in breadth; and in the middle of each loggia was to be placed a marble table twelve braccia in length, and on the outside a basin of eight braccia, which was to receive the water from a vase held by two figures. In the middle of the above-mentioned labyrinth Tribolo had thought to achieve the most decorative effect with water by means of jets and a very beautiful seat round the fountain, the marble basin of which was to be, even as it was afterwards made, much smaller than that of the large principal fountain; and at the summit it was to have a figure of bronze spouting water. At the end of this garden, in the centre, there was to be a gate with some children of marble on both sides spouting water, with a fountain on either side, and in the corners double niches in which statues were to be placed, as in the others that are in the walls at the sides, at the opposite ends of the avenues that cross the garden, which are all covered with greenery distributed in various ways.

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Through the above-mentioned gate, which is at the upper end of this garden, above some steps, one enters into another garden, as wide as the first, but of no great depth in the direct line, in comparison with the mountain beyond. In this garden were to be two other loggie, one on either side, and in the wall opposite to the gate, which supports the soil of the mountain, there was to be in the centre a grotto with three basins, with water playing into them in imitation of rain. The grotto was to be between two fountains placed in the same wall, and opposite to these, in the lower wall of the garden, were to be two others, one on either side of the gate; so that the fountains of this garden would have been equal in number to those of the other, which is below it, and receives its water from the first, which is higher. And this garden was to be all full of orange-trees, which would have had—and will have, whenever that may be—a most favourable situation, being defended by the walls and by the mountain from the north wind and other harmful winds.

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From this garden one climbs by two staircases of flint, one on either side, to a forest of cypresses, fir-trees, holm-oaks, laurels, and other evergreen trees, distributed with beautiful order, in the middle of which, according to Tribolo's design, there was to be a most lovely fish-pond, which has since been made. And because this part, gradually narrowing, forms an angle, that angle, to the end that it might be made flat, was to be blunted by the breadth of a loggia, from which, after climbing some steps, might be seen in front the palace, the gardens, the fountains, and all the plain below and about them, as far as the Ducal Villa of Poggio a Caiano, Florence, Prato, Siena, and all that is around for many miles.

Now the above-named Maestro Pietro da San Casciano, having carried his work of the aqueduct as far as Castello, and having turned into it all the waters of Castellina, was overtaken by a violent fever, and died in a few days. Whereupon Tribolo, undertaking the charge of directing all the building by himself, perceived that, although the waters brought to Castello were in great abundance, nevertheless they were not sufficient for all that he had made up his mind to do; not to mention that, coming from Castellina, they did not rise to the height that he required for his purposes. Having therefore obtained from the Lord Duke a commission to conduct thither the waters of Petraia, a place more than one hundred and fifty braccia above Castello, which are good and very abundant, he caused a conduit to be made, similar to the other, and so high that one can enter into it, to the end that thus those waters of Petraia might come to the fish-pond through another aqueduct with enough fall for the fish-pond and the great fountain.

This done, Tribolo began to build the above-mentioned grotto, proposing to make it with three niches, in a beautiful architectural design, and likewise the two fountains that were one on either side of it. In one of these there was to be a large statue of stone, representing Monte Asinaio, which, pressing its beard, was to pour water from its mouth into a basin that was to be in front of it; from which basin the water, issuing by a hidden channel, and passing under the wall, was to flow to the fountain that there is at the present day behind the wall, at the end of the slope of the garden of the labyrinth, pouring into the vase on the shoulder of the figure of the River Mugnone, which is in a large niche of grey-stone decorated with most beautiful ornaments, and all covered with sponge-stone. This work, if it had been finished in all its perfection, even as it is in part, would have had great similarity to the reality, since the Mugnone rises from Monte Asinaio.

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For the Mugnone, then, to describe that which has been done, Tribolo made a figure of grey-stone, four braccia in length, and reclining in a very beautiful attitude, which has upon one shoulder a vase that pours water into a basin, and rests the other on the ground, leaning upon it, with the left leg crossed over the right. And behind this river is a woman representing Fiesole, wholly naked, issuing from among the sponge-stones and rocks in the middle of the niche, and holding in the hand a moon which is the ancient emblem of the people of Fiesole. Below this niche is a very large basin supported by two great Capricorns, which are one of the devices of the Duke; from which Capricorns hang some festoons and masks of great beauty, and from their lips issues the water from that basin, which is convex in the middle, and has outlets at the sides; and all the water that overflows pours away from the sides through the mouths of the Capricorns, and then, after falling into the hollow base of the vase, flows through the herb-beds that are round the walls of the garden of the labyrinth, where there are fountains between the niches, and between the fountains espaliers of oranges and pomegranates.

In the second garden described above, where Tribolo had intended that there should be made the Monte Asinaio that was to supply water to the Mugnone, there was to be on the other side, beyond the gate, a similar figure of the Monte della Falterona; and even as this mountain is the source of the River Arno, so the statue representing that river in the garden of the labyrinth, opposite to the Mugnone, was to receive the water from the Falterona. But since neither the figure of that mountain nor its fountain has ever been finished, let us speak of the fountain and figure of the River Arno, which were completed by Tribolo to perfection. This river, then, holds its vase upon one thigh, lying down and leaning with one arm on a lion, which holds a lily in its paw, and the vase receives its water through the perforated wall, behind which there was to be the Falterona, exactly in the manner in which, as has been described, the statue of the River Mugnone also receives its water; and since the long basin is in every way similar to that of the Mugnone, I shall say no more about it, save this, that it is a pity that the art and excellence of these works, which are truly most beautiful, are not embodied in marble.

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Then, continuing the work of the conduit, Tribolo caused the water from the grotto to pass under the orange-garden and then under the next garden, and thus brought it into the labyrinth, where, forming a circle round all the middle of the labyrinth, in a good circumference round the centre, he laid down the central pipe, through which the fountain was to spout water. After which, taking the waters from the Arno and the Mugnone, and bringing them together under the level of the labyrinth by means of certain bronze pipes that were distributed in beautiful order throughout that space, he filled that whole pavement with very fine jets, in such a manner that it was possible by turning a key to drench all those who came near to see the fountain. Nor is one able to escape either quickly or with ease, because Tribolo made round the fountain and the pavement, in which are the jets, a seat of grey-stone supported by lion's paws, between which are sea monsters in low-relief; which was a difficult thing to do, because he chose, since the place was sloping and the square lay on the slant, to make it level, and the same with the seat.

Having then set his hand to the fountain of the labyrinth, he made on the shaft, in marble, an interwoven design of sea monsters cut out in full relief, with tails intertwined so well, that nothing better of that kind could be done. And this finished, he executed the tazza with a piece of marble brought long before to Castello, together with a large table, also of marble, from the Villa dell'Antella, which M. Ottaviano de' Medici formerly bought from Giuliano Salviati. By reason of this opportunity, then, Tribolo made that tazza sooner than he might otherwise have done, fashioning round it a dance of little children attached to the moulding which is beside the lip of the tazza; which children are holding festoons of products of the sea, cut out of the marble with beautiful art. And so also the shaft which he made over the tazza, he executed with much grace, with some very beautiful children and masks to spout water. Upon that shaft it was the intention of Tribolo to place a bronze statue three braccia high, representing Florence, in order to signify that from the above-named Mounts Asinaio and Falterona the waters of the Arno and Mugnone come to Florence; of which figure he had made a most beautiful model which, pressing the hair with the hands, caused water to pour forth. Then, having brought the water as far as the space thirty braccia square, below the labyrinth, he made a beginning with the great fountain, which, made with eight sides, was to receive all the above-mentioned waters into its lowest basin—namely, those from the waterworks of the labyrinth, and likewise those of the great conduit. Each of these eight sides, then, rises above a step one-fifth of a braccio in height, and each angle of the eight sides has a projection, as have also the steps, which, thus projecting, rise at each angle in a great step of two-fifths of a braccio, in such a way that the central face of the steps withdraws into the projections, and their straight line is thus broken, which produces a bizarre effect, and makes the ascent very easy. The edges of the fountain have the shape of a vase, and the body of the fountain—that is, the inner part where the water is—curves in the form of a circle. The shaft begins with eight sides, and continues with eight seats almost up to the base of the tazza, upon which are seated eight children of the size of life, all in the round and in various attitudes, who, linked together with the legs and arms, make a rich adornment and a most beautiful effect. And since the tazza, which is round, projects to the extent of six braccia, the water of the whole fountain, pouring equally over the edge on every side, sends a very beautiful rain, like the drippings from a roof, into the octagonal basin mentioned above, and those children that are on the shaft of the tazza are not wetted, and they appear to be there in order not to be wetted by the rain, almost like real children, full of delight and playing as they shelter under the lip of the tazza, which could not be equalled in its simplicity and beauty. Opposite to the four paths that intersect the garden are four children of bronze lying at play in various attitudes, which are after the designs of Tribolo, although they were executed afterwards by others. Above this tazza begins another shaft, which has at the foot, on some projections, four children of marble in the

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round, who are pressing the necks of some geese that spout water from their mouths; and this water is that of the principal conduit coming from the labyrinth, and rises exactly to this height. Above these children is the rest of the shaft of this pedestal, which is made with certain cartouches which spurt forth water in a most bizarre manner; and then, regaining a quadrangular form, it rises over some masks that are very well made. Above this, then, is a smaller tazza, on the lip of which, on all four sides, are fixed by the horns four heads of Capricorns, making a square, which spout water through their mouths into the large tazza, together with the children, in order to make the rain which falls, as has been told, into the first basin, which has eight sides. Still higher there follows another shaft, adorned with other ornaments and with some children in half-relief, who, projecting outwards, form at the top a round space that serves as base to the figure of a Hercules who is crushing Antæus, which was designed by Tribolo and executed afterwards by others, as will be related in the proper place. From the mouth of this Antæus he intended that, instead of his spirit, there should gush out through a pipe water in great abundance, as indeed it does; which water is that of the great conduit of Petraia, which comes with much force, and rises sixteen braccia above the level where the steps are, and makes a marvellous effect in falling back into the greater tazza. In that same aqueduct, then, come not only those waters from Petraia, but also those that go to the fish-pond and the grotto, and these, uniting with those from Castellina, go to the fountains of the Falterona and Monte Asinaio, and thence to the fountains of the Arno and Mugnone, as has been related; after which, being reunited at the fountain of the labyrinth, they go to the centre of the great fountain, where are the children with the geese. From there, according to the design of Tribolo, they were to flow through two distinct and separate conduits into the basins of the loggie, where the tables are, and then each into a separate private garden. The first of these gardens—that towards the west—is all filled with rare and medicinal plants; wherefore at the highest level of that water, in that garden of simples, in the niche of the fountain, and behind a basin of marble, there was to be a statue of Æsculapius.

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The principal fountain described above, then, was completely finished in marble by Tribolo, and carried to the finest and greatest perfection that could be desired in a work of this kind. Wherefore I believe that it may be said with truth that it is the most beautiful fountain, the richest, the best proportioned, and the most pleasing that has ever been made, for the reason that in the figures, in the vases, in the tazze, and, in short, throughout the whole work, are proofs of extraordinary diligence and industry. After this, having made the model of the above-mentioned statue of Æsculapius, Tribolo began to execute it in marble, but, being hindered by other things, he did not finish that figure, which was completed afterwards by the sculptor Antonio di Gino, his disciple.



**THE HERCULES FOUNTAIN**  
(After Niccolò [Tribolo]. *Florence: Villa Reale di Castello*)

[View larger image](#)

On the side towards the east, in a little lawn without the garden, Tribolo arranged an oak in a most ingenious manner, for, besides the circumstance that it is so thickly covered both above and all around with ivy intertwined among the branches, that it has the appearance of a very dense grove, one can climb up it by a convenient staircase of wood similarly covered with ivy, at the top of which, in the middle of the oak, there is a square chamber surrounded by seats, the backs of

which are all of living verdure, and in the centre is a little table of marble with a vase of variegated marble in the middle, from which, through a pipe, there flows and spurts into the air a strong jet of water, which, after falling, runs away through another pipe. These pipes mount upwards from the foot of the oak so well hidden by the ivy, that nothing is seen of them, and the water can be turned on or off at pleasure by means of certain keys; nor is it possible to describe in full in how many ways that water of the oak can be turned on, in order to drench anyone at pleasure with various instruments of copper, not to mention that with the same instruments one can cause the water to produce various sounds and whistlings.

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Finally, all these waters, after having served so many different purposes, and supplied so many fountains, are collected together, and flow into the two fish-ponds that are without the palace, at the beginning of the avenue, and thence to other uses of the villa.

Nor will I omit to tell what was the intention of Tribolo with regard to the statues that were to be as ornaments in the great garden of the labyrinth, in the niches that may be seen regularly distributed there in various spaces. He proposed, then—acting in this on the judicious advice of M. Benedetto Varchi, who has been in our times most excellent as poet, orator, and philosopher—that at the upper and lower ends there should be placed the four Seasons of the year—Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter—and that each should be set up in that part where its particular season is most felt. At the entrance, on the right hand, beside the Winter, and in that part of the wall which stretches upwards, were to go six figures that were to demonstrate the greatness and goodness of the house of Medici, and to denote that all the virtues are to be found in Duke Cosimo; and these were Justice, Compassion, Valour, Nobility, Wisdom, and Liberality, which have always dwelt in the house of Medici, and are all united together at the present day in the most excellent Lord Duke, in that he is just, compassionate, valorous, noble, wise, and liberal. And because these qualities have made the city of Florence, as they still do, strong in laws, peace, arms, science, wisdom, tongues, and arts, and also because the said Lord Duke is just in the laws, compassionate in peace, valorous in arms, noble through the sciences, wise in his encouragement of tongues and other culture, and liberal to the arts, Tribolo wished that on the other side from the Justice, Compassion, Valour, Nobility, Wisdom, and Liberality, on the left hand, as will be seen below, there should be these other figures: Laws, Peace, Arms, Sciences, Tongues, and Arts. And it was most appropriately arranged that in this manner these statues and images should be placed, as they would have been, above the Arno and Mugnone, in order to signify that they do honour to Florence. It was also proposed that in the pediments there should be placed portrait-busts of men of the house of Medici, one in each—over Justice, for example, the portrait of his Excellency, that being his particular virtue, over Compassion that of the Magnificent Giuliano, over Valour Signor Giovanni, over Nobility the elder Lorenzo, over Wisdom the elder Cosimo or Clement VII, and over Liberality Pope Leo. And in the pediments on the other side it was suggested that there might be placed other heads from the house of Medici, or of persons of the city connected with that house. But since these names make the matter somewhat confused, they have been placed here in the following order:

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SUMMER.	THE MUGNONE.	GATE.	THE ARNO.	SPRING.	
ARTS.	L			LIBERALITY.	
TONGUES.	O			WISDOM.	
SCIENCES.	G			NOBILITY.	
ARMS.	G			VALOUR.	
PEACE.	I			COMPASSION.	
LAWS.	A.			JUSTICE.	
	AUTUMN.	GATE.	LOGGIA.	GATE.	WINTER.

All these ornaments would have made this in truth the richest, the most magnificent, and the most ornate garden in Europe; but these works were not carried to completion, for the reason that Tribolo was not able to take measures to have them finished while the Duke was in the mind to continue them, as he might have done in a short time, having men in abundance and the Duke ready to spend money, and not suffering from those hindrances that afterwards stopped him. The Duke, indeed, not being contented at that time with the great quantity of water that is to be seen there, was thinking of trying to obtain the water of Valcenni, which is very abundant, in order to join it with the rest, and then to conduct it from Castello by an aqueduct similar to the one which he had made to the Piazza in front of his Palace in Florence. And of a truth, if this work had been pressed forward by a man with greater energy and more desire of glory, it would have been carried at least well on; but since Tribolo, besides that he was much occupied with various affairs of the Duke's, had not much energy, nothing more was done. And in all the time that he worked at Castello, he did not execute with his own hand anything save the two fountains, with the two rivers, the Arno and the Mugnone, and the statue of Fiesole; this arising from no other cause, so far as one can see, but his being too much occupied, as has been related, with the many affairs of the Duke.

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Among other things, the Duke caused him to make a bridge over the River Mugnone on the high road that goes to Bologna, without the Porta a S. Gallo. This bridge, since the river crosses the road obliquely, Tribolo caused to be built with an arch likewise oblique, in accordance with its oblique line across the river, which was a new thing, and much extolled, above all because he had the arch put together of stones cut on the slant on every side in such a manner that it proved to

be very strong and very graceful; in short, this bridge was a very beautiful work.

Not long before, the Duke had been seized with a desire to make a tomb for Signor Giovanni de' Medici, his father, and Tribolo, being eager to have the commission, made a very beautiful model for it, in competition with one that had been executed by Raffaello da Montelupo, who had the favour of Francesco di Sandro, the master of arms to his Excellency. And then, the Duke having resolved that the one to be put into execution should be Tribolo's, he went off to have the marble quarried at Carrara, where he also caused to be quarried the two basins for the loggie at Castello, a table, and many other blocks of marble. Meanwhile, Messer Giovan Battista da Ricasoli, now Bishop of Pistoia, being in Rome on business of the Lord Duke's, he was sought out by Baccio Bandinelli, who had just finished the tombs of Pope Leo X and Clement VII in the Minerva; and he was asked by Baccio to recommend him to his Excellency. Whereupon Messer Giovan Battista wrote to the Duke that Bandinelli desired to serve him, and his Excellency wrote in reply that on his return he should bring him in his company. And Bandinelli, having therefore arrived in Florence, so haunted the Duke in his audacity, making promises and showing him designs and models, that the tomb of the above-named Signor Giovanni, which was to have been made by Tribolo, was allotted to him; and so, taking some pieces of marble of Michelagnolo's, which were in the Via Mozza in Florence, he hacked them about without scruple and began the work. Wherefore Tribolo, on returning from Carrara, found that in consequence of his being too leisurely and good-natured, the commission had been taken away from him.

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In the year when bonds of kinship were formed between the Lord Duke Cosimo and the Lord Don Pedro di Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca, at that time Viceroy of Naples, the Lord Duke taking Don Pedro's daughter, Signora Leonora, to wife, preparations were made in Florence for the nuptials, and Tribolo was given the charge of constructing a triumphal arch at the Porta al Prato, through which the bride, coming from Poggio, was to enter; which arch he made a thing of beauty, very ornate with columns, pilasters, architraves, great cornices, and pediments. That arch was to be all covered with figures and scenes, in addition to the statues by the hand of Tribolo; and all those paintings were executed by Battista Franco of Venice, Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, and Michele, his disciple. Now the principal figure that Tribolo made for this work, which was placed at the highest point in the centre of the pediment, on a dado wrought in relief, was a woman five braccia high, representing Fecundity, with five little boys, three clinging to her legs, one on her lap, and another in her arms; and beside her, where the pediment sloped away, were two figures of the same size, one on either side. Of these figures, which were lying down, one was Security, leaning on a column with a light wand in her hand, and the other was Eternity, with a globe in her arms, and below her feet a white-haired old man representing Time, and holding in his arms the Sun and Moon. I shall say nothing as to the works of painting that were on that arch, because everyone may read about them for himself in the description of the festive preparations for those nuptials. And since Tribolo had particular charge of all decorations for the Palace of the Medici, he caused many devices to be executed in the lunettes of the vaulting of the court, with mottoes appropriate to the nuptials, and all those of the most illustrious members of the house of Medici. Besides this, he had a most sumptuous decoration made in the great open court, all full of stories; on one side of the Greeks and Romans, and on the other sides of deeds done by illustrious men of that house of Medici, which were all executed under the direction of Tribolo by the most excellent young painters that there were in Florence at that time—Bronzino, Pier Francesco di Sandro, Francesco Il Bacchiacca, Domenico Conti, Antonio di Domenico, and Battista Franco of Venice.

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On the Piazza di S. Marco, also, upon a vast pedestal ten braccia in height (in which Bronzino had painted two very beautiful scenes of the colour of bronze on the socle that was above the cornices), Tribolo erected a horse of twelve braccia, with the fore-legs in the air, and upon it an armed figure, large in proportion; and this figure, which had below it men dead and wounded, represented the most valorous Signor Giovanni de' Medici, the father of his Excellency. This work was executed by Tribolo with so much art and judgment, that it was admired by all who saw it, and what caused even greater marvel was the speed with which he finished it; among his assistants being the sculptor Santi Buglioni, who was crippled for ever in one leg by a fall, and came very near dying.

Under the direction of Tribolo, likewise, for the comedy that was performed, Aristotile da San Gallo executed marvellous scenery, being truly most excellent in such things, as will be told in his Life; and for the costumes in the interludes, which were the work of Giovan Battista Strozzi, who had charge of the whole comedy, Tribolo himself made the most pleasing and beautiful inventions that it is possible to imagine in the way of vestments, buskins, head-dresses, and other wearing apparel. These things were the reason that the Duke afterwards availed himself of Tribolo's ingenuity in many fantastic masquerades, as in that of the bears, in a race of buffaloes, in the masquerade of the ravens, and in others.

In like manner, in the year when there was born to the said Lord Duke his eldest son, the Lord Don Francesco, there was to be made in the Temple of S. Giovanni in Florence a very magnificent decoration which was to be marvellous in its grandeur, and capable of accommodating one hundred most noble young maidens, who were to accompany the Prince from the Palace as far as the said temple, where he was to receive baptism. The charge of this was given to Tribolo, who, in company with Tasso, adapting himself to the place, brought it about that the temple, which in itself is ancient and very beautiful, had the appearance of a new temple designed very well in the modern manner, with seats all round it richly adorned with pictures and gilding. In the centre, beneath the lantern, he made a great vase of carved woodwork with eight sides, the base of

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which rested on four steps, and at the corners of the eight sides were some large caulicoles, which, springing from the ground, where there were some lions' paws, had at the top of them certain children of large size in various attitudes, who were holding with their hands the lip of the vase, and supporting with their shoulders some festoons which hung like a garland right round the space in the middle. Besides this, Tribolo had made in the middle of the vase a pedestal of wood with beautiful things of fancy round it, upon which, to crown the work, he placed the S. John the Baptist of marble, three braccia high, by the hand of Donatello, which was left by him in the house of Gismondo Martelli, as has been related in the Life of Donatello himself. In short, this temple was adorned both within and without as well as could possibly be imagined, and the only part neglected was the principal chapel, where there is an old tabernacle with those figures in relief that Andrea Pisano made long ago; by reason of which it appeared that, every other part being made new, that old chapel spoilt all the grace that the other things together displayed. Wherefore the Duke, going one day to see those decorations, after praising everything like a man of judgment, and recognizing how well Tribolo had adapted himself to the situation and to every other feature of the place, censured one thing only, but that severely—that no thought had been given to the principal chapel. And then he ordained on the spot, like a person of resolute character and beautiful judgment, that all that part should be covered with a vast canvas painted in chiaroscuro, with S. John the Baptist baptizing Christ, and the people standing all around to see them or to be baptized, some taking off their clothes, and others putting them on again, in various attitudes; and above this was to be a God the Father sending down the Holy Spirit, with two fountains in the guise of river-gods, representing the Jor and the Dan, which, pouring forth water, were to form the Jordan. Jacopo da Pontormo was requested to execute this work by Messer Pier Francesco Riccio, at that time major-domo to the Duke, and by Tribolo, but he would not do it, on the ground that he did not think that the time given, which was only six days, would be enough for him; and the same refusal was made by Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, Bronzino, and many others. Now at this time Giorgio Vasari, having returned from Bologna, was executing for Messer Bindo Altoviti the altar-piece of his chapel in S. Apostolo at Florence, but he was not held in much consideration, although he had friendship with Tribolo and Tasso, because certain persons had formed a faction under the protection of the above-named Messer Pier Francesco Riccio, and whoever was not of that faction had no share in the favours of the Court, although he might be able and deserving. This was the reason that many who, with the aid of so great a Prince, would have become excellent, found themselves neglected, none being employed save those chosen by Tasso, who, being a gay person, got Riccio so well under his thumb with his jokes, that in certain affairs he neither proposed nor did anything save what was suggested by Tasso, who was architect to the Palace and did all the work. These men, then, having a sort of suspicion of Giorgio, who laughed at their vanities and follies, and sought to make a position for himself rather by means of the studies of art than by favour, gave no thought to his claims; but he was commissioned by the Lord Duke to execute that canvas, with the subject described above. This work he executed in chiaroscuro, in six days, and delivered it finished in the manner known to those who saw what grace and adornment it conferred on the whole decoration, and how much it enlivened that part of the temple that stood most in need of it, amid the magnificence of that festival. Tribolo, then (to return to the point whence, I know not how, I digressed), acquitted himself so well, that he rightly won the highest praise; and the Duke commanded that a great part of the ornaments that he placed between the columns should be left there, where they still are, and deservedly.

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For the Villa of Cristofano Rinieri at Castello, while he was occupied with the fountains of the Duke, Tribolo made for a niche over a fish-pond which is at the head of a fowling-place, a river-god of grey-stone, of the size of life, which pours water into a very large basin of the same stone; which figure is made of pieces, and put together with such diligence and art, that it appears to be all of one block. Tribolo then set his hand, at the command of his Excellency, to attempting to finish the staircase of the library of S. Lorenzo—that, namely, which is in the vestibule before the door; but after he had placed four steps in position, not finding either the plan or the measurements of Michelagnolo, by order of the Duke he went to Rome, not only to hear the opinion of Michelagnolo with regard to that staircase, but also to make an effort to bring him to Florence. But he did not succeed either in the one object or in the other, for Michelagnolo, not wishing to leave Rome, excused himself in a handsome manner, and as for the staircase he declared that he remembered neither the measurements nor anything else. Tribolo, therefore, having returned to Florence, and not being able to continue the work of that staircase, set himself to make the pavement of the said library with white and red bricks, after the manner of some pavements that he had seen in Rome; but he added a filling of red clay to the white clay mixed with bole, in order to produce various effects of carving in those bricks; and thus he made in that pavement a copy of the ceiling and coffered work above—a notion that was highly extolled. He then began, but did not finish, a work that was to be placed on the main tower of the defences of the Porta a Faenza, for Don Giovanni di Luna, the castellan at that time—namely, an escutcheon of grey-stone, and a large eagle in full relief with two heads, which he made in wax to the end that it might be cast in bronze, but nothing more was done with it, and of the escutcheon only the shield was finished.

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Now it was the custom in the city of Florence to have almost every year on the principal piazza, on the evening of the festival of S. John the Baptist, towards nightfall, a girandola—that is, a contrivance full of fire-trumpets, rockets, and other fireworks; which girandola had the form now of a temple, now of a ship, sometimes of rocks, and at times of a city or of an inferno, according as it pleased the designer; and one year the charge of making one was given to Tribolo, who, as will be described below, made it very beautifully. Of the various manners of these fireworks, and

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particularly of set pieces, Vannoccio of Siena and others give an account, and on this subject I shall enlarge no further; but I must say something as to the nature of these girandole. The whole structure, then, is of wood, with broad compartments radiating outwards from the foot, to the end that the rockets, when they have been lighted, may not set fire to the other fireworks, but may rise in due order from their separate places, one after another, filling the heavens in proper succession with the fire that blazes in the girandola both above and below. They are distributed, I say, at wide intervals, to the end that they may not burn all at once, and may produce a beautiful effect; and the same do the mortars, which are bound to the firm parts of the girandola, and make the most beautiful and joyous noises. The fire-trumpets, likewise, are fitted in among the ornaments, and are generally contrived so as to discharge through the mouths of masks and other suchlike things. But the most important point is to arrange the girandola in such a manner that the lights that burn in certain vases may last the whole night, and illuminate the piazza; wherefore the whole work is connected together by a simple match of tow steeped in a mixture of powder full of sulphur and aquavitæ, which creeps little by little with its fire to every part which it has to set alight, one after another, until it has kindled the whole. Now, as I have said, the things represented are various, but all must have something to do with fire, and must be subject to its action; and long before this there had been counterfeited the city of Sodom, with Lot and his daughters flying from it, at another time Geryon, with Virgil and Dante on his back, according as Dante himself relates in the *Inferno*, and even earlier Orpheus bringing Eurydice with him from those infernal regions, with many other inventions. And his Excellency ordained that the work should not be given to any of the puppet-painters, who for many years past had made a thousand absurdities in the girandole, but that an excellent master should produce a work that might have in it something of the good; wherefore the charge of this was given to Tribolo, who, with the ingenuity and art wherewith he had executed all his other works, made one in the form of a very beautiful octagonal temple, rising with its ornaments to the total height of twenty braccia. This temple he represented as the Temple of Peace, placing on the summit an image of Peace, who was setting fire to a great pile of arms which she had at her feet; and these arms, the statue of Peace, and all the other figures that made this structure one of great beauty, were made of pasteboard, clay, and cloth steeped in glue, put together with extraordinary art. They were, I say, of these materials, to the end that the whole work might be the lighter, since it was to be suspended at a great height from the ground by a double rope that crossed the Piazza high in the air. It is true, indeed, that the fireworks having been placed in it too thickly, and the fuses of tow being too near one to another, when they were set alight, such was the fury of the conflagration, and so great and so violent the blaze, that everything caught fire all at once, and was burned in a flash, whereas it should have continued to burn for an hour at least; and what was worse, the fire seizing on the woodwork and on all that should have been preserved, the ropes and every other thing were consumed in a moment, which was no small loss, and gave little pleasure to the people. But with regard to workmanship, it was more beautiful than any other girandola that had ever been made up to that time.

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The Duke, then, resolving to erect the Loggia of the Mercato Nuovo for the convenience of his citizens and merchants, did not wish to lay a greater burden than he could bear on Tribolo, who, as chief engineer to the Capitani di Parte and the commissioners of the rivers and the sewers of the city, was always riding through the Florentine dominions, engaged in bringing back to their proper beds many rivers that did damage by breaking away from them, in repairing bridges, and in other suchlike works; and he gave the charge of this enterprise to Tasso, at the advice of the above-mentioned Messer Pier Francesco, his major-domo, in order to change that Tasso from a carpenter into an architect. This was certainly against the wishes of Tribolo, although he did not show it, and even acted as the close friend of Tasso; and a proof that this is true is that Tribolo perceived many errors in Tasso's model, but, so it is believed, would by no means tell him of them. Such an error, for example, was that of the capitals of the columns that are beside the pilasters, whereby, the columns not leaving enough space, when everything had been drawn up, and the capitals had to be set into position, the corona above those capitals would not go in, so that it was found necessary to cut away so much that the order of the architecture was ruined; besides many other errors, of which there is no need to speak. For the above-named Messer Pier Francesco the same Tasso executed the door of the Church of S. Romolo, and a window with knee-shaped brackets on the Piazza del Duca, in an order of his own, substituting capitals for bases, and doing so many other things without measure or order, that it might have been said that the German Order had begun to return to life in Tuscany by means of this man; to say nothing of the works that he did in the Palace in the way of staircases and apartments, which the Duke has been obliged to have destroyed, because they had no sort of order, measure, or proportion, and were, on the contrary, all shapeless, out of square, and without the least convenience or grace. All these things were not done without some responsibility falling on Tribolo, who, having considerable knowledge in such matters, should not, so it seemed, have allowed his Prince to throw away his money and to do him such an affront to his face; and, what was even more serious, he should not have permitted such things to Tasso, who was his friend. Well did men of judgment recognize the presumption and madness of the one in seeking to exercise an art of which he knew nothing, and the dissimulation of the other, who declared that he was pleased with that which he certainly knew to be bad; and of this a proof may be found in the works that Giorgio Vasari has had to pull down in the Palace, to the loss of the Duke and the great shame of those men.

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But the same thing happened to Tribolo as to Tasso, in that, even as Tasso abandoned wood-carving, a craft in which he had no equal, but never became a good architect, and thus won little honour by deserting an art in which he was very able, and applying himself to another of which

he knew not one scrap, so Tribolo, abandoning sculpture, in which it may be said with truth that he was most excellent and caused everyone to marvel, and setting himself to attempt to straighten out rivers, ceased to win honour by pursuing the one, while the other brought him blame and loss rather than honour and profit. For he did not succeed in his tinkering with rivers, and he made many enemies, particularly in the district of Prato, on account of the Bisenzio, and in many places in the Val di Nievole.

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Duke Cosimo having then bought the Palace of the Pitti, of which there has been an account in another place, and his Excellency desiring to adorn it with gardens, groves, fountains, fish-ponds, and other suchlike things, Tribolo executed all the distribution of the hill in the manner in which it still remains, accommodating everything in its proper place with beautiful judgment, although various things in many parts of the garden have since been changed. Of this Pitti Palace, which is the most beautiful in Europe, mention will be made in another place with a more suitable occasion.

After these things, Tribolo was sent by his Excellency to the island of Elba, not only that he might see the city and port that the Duke had caused to be built there, but also that he might make arrangements for the transport of a round piece of granite, twelve braccia in diameter, from which was to be made a tazza for the great lawn of the Pitti Palace, which might receive the water of the principal fountain. Tribolo, therefore, went thither and caused a boat to be made on purpose for transporting the tazza, and then, after giving the stone-cutters directions for the transportation, he returned to Florence; where he had no sooner arrived, than he found the whole country full of murmurings and maledictions against him, since about that time floods and inundations had done infinite havoc in the neighbourhood of those rivers that he had patched up, although it was, perhaps, not altogether through his fault that this had happened. However that may have been, whether it was the malignity of some of his assistants, or perchance envy, or that the accusation was indeed true, the blame for all that damage was laid on Tribolo, who, being a man of no great spirit, and rather wanting in resolution than otherwise, and doubting that the malice of some enemy might make him lose the favour of the Duke, was in a state of great despondency, when, being of a feeble habit of body, on the 20th of August in the year 1550, there came upon him a most violent fever. At that time Giorgio Vasari was in Florence, for the purpose of having sent to Rome the marbles for the tombs that Pope Julius III caused to be erected in S. Pietro a Montorio; and he, as one who sincerely esteemed the talents of Tribolo, visited and comforted him, beseeching him that he should think of nothing save his health, and that, when cured, he should return to finish the work of Castello, letting the rivers go their own way, for they were more likely to drown his fame than to bring him any profit or honour. This, which he promised to attempt to do, he would, I believe, have done at all costs, if he had not been prevented by death, which closed his eyes on the 7th of September in the same year. And so the works of Castello, begun and carried well forward by him, remained unfinished; for although some work has been done there since his day, now in one part and now in another, nevertheless they have never been pursued with the diligence and resolution that were shown when Tribolo was alive and when the Lord Duke was hot in the undertaking. Of a truth, he who does not press great works forward while those who are having them done are spending money willingly and devoting their best attention to them, brings it about that those works are put on one side and left unfinished, which zeal and solicitude could have carried to perfection. And thus, by the negligence of the workers, the world is left without its adornment, and they without their honour and fame, for the reason that it rarely happens, as it did to this work of Castello, that on the death of the first master he who succeeds to his place is willing to finish it according to his design and model with that modesty with which Giorgio Vasari, at the commission of the Duke, has caused the great fish-pond of Castello to be finished after the directions of Tribolo, even as he will do with the other things according as his Excellency may desire from time to time to have them done.

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Tribolo lived sixty-five years, and was interred by the Company of the Scalzo in their place of burial. He left behind him a son called Raffaello, who has not taken up art, and two daughters, one of whom is the wife of David, Tribolo's assistant in building all the works at Castello, who, being a man of judgment and capable in such matters, is now employed on the aqueducts of Florence, Pisa, and all the other places in the dominion, according as it may please his Excellency.

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## PIERINO (PIERO) DA VINCI

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## LIFE OF PIERINO (PIERO) DA VINCI SCULPTOR

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Although those men are generally the most celebrated who have executed some work excellently well, nevertheless, if the works already accomplished by any man foreshadow those that he did



not achieve as likely to have been numerous and much more rare, if some accident, unforeseen and out of the common use, had not happened to interrupt him, it is certain that such a man, wherever there may be one willing to be just in his appreciation of the talent of another, will be rightly extolled and celebrated both on the one count and on the other, and as much for what he would have done as for what he did. The sculptor Vinci, therefore, should not suffer on account of the short duration of his life, or be robbed thereby of the praise due to him from the judgment of those who shall come after us, considering that he was only in the first bloom both of his life and of his studies at the time when he produced and gave to the world that which everyone admires, and was like to bring forth fruits in greater abundance, if a hostile tempest had not destroyed both the fruits and the tree.

I remember having said in another place that in the township of Vinci, in the lower Valdarno, there lived Ser Piero, the father of Leonardo da Vinci, most famous of painters. To this Ser Piero, after Leonardo, there was born, as his youngest son, Bartolommeo, who, living at Vinci and attaining to manhood, took for his wife one of the first maidens of that township. Bartolommeo was desirous of having a male child, and spoke very often to his wife of the greatness of the genius with which his brother Leonardo had been endowed, praying God that He should make her worthy that from her there might be born in his house another Leonardo, the first being now dead. In a short time, therefore, according to his desire, there was born to him a gracious boy, to whom he wished to give the name of Leonardo; but, being advised by his relatives to revive the memory of his father, he gave him the name of Piero. Having come to the age of three years, the boy had a most beautiful countenance, with curly locks, and showed great grace in every movement, with a quickness of intelligence that was marvellous; insomuch that Maestro Giuliano del Carmine, an excellent astrologer, and with him a priest devoted to chiromancy, who were both close friends of Bartolommeo, having arrived in Vinci and lodged in Bartolommeo's house, looking at the forehead and hand of the boy, revealed to the father, both the astrologer and the chiromancer together, the greatness of his genius, and predicted that in a short time he would make extraordinary proficiencie in the mercurial arts, but that his life would also be very short. And only too true was their prophecy, for both in the one part and in the other (when one would have sufficed), in his life as well as in his art, it needs must be fulfilled.

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Then, continuing to grow, Piero had his father as his master in letters, but of himself, without any master, giving his attention to drawing and to making various little puppets in clay, he showed that the divine inclination of his nature recognized by the astrologer and the chiromancer was already awakening and beginning to work in him. By reason of which Bartolommeo judged that his prayer had been heard by God; and, believing that his brother had been restored to him in his son, he began to think of removing Piero from Vinci and taking him to Florence. Having then done this without delay, he placed Piero, who was now twelve years of age, with Bandinelli in Florence, flattering himself that Baccio, having been once the friend of Leonardo, would take notice of the boy and teach him with diligence; besides which, it seemed to him that Piero delighted more in sculpture than in painting. But afterwards, coming very often to Florence, he recognized that Bandinelli was not answering with deeds to his expectations, and was not taking pains with the boy or showing interest in him, although he saw him to be willing to learn. For which reason Bartolommeo took him away from Bandinelli, and entrusted him to Tribolo, who appeared to him to make more effort to help those who were seeking to learn, besides giving more attention to the studies of art and bearing even greater affection to the memory of Leonardo.

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Tribolo was executing some fountains at Castello, the villa of his Excellency; and thereupon Piero, beginning once more his customary drawing, through having there the competition of the other young men whom Tribolo kept about him, set himself with great ardour of spirit to study day and night, being spurred by his nature, which was desirous of excellence and honour, and being even more kindled by the example of the others like himself whom he saw constantly around him. Wherefore in a few months he made such progress, that it was a marvel to everyone; and, having begun to gain some experience with the chisels, he sought to see whether his hand and his tools would obey in practice the thoughts within him and the designs formed in his brain. Tribolo, perceiving his readiness, and having had a water-basin of stone made at that very time for Cristofano Rinieri, gave to Piero a small piece of marble, from which he was to make for that water-basin a boy that should spurt forth water from the private part. Piero, taking the marble with great gladness, first made a little model of clay, and then executed the work with so much grace, that Tribolo and the others ventured the opinion that he would become one of those who are counted as rare in that art. Tribolo then gave him a Ducal Mazzocchio<sup>[3]</sup> to make in stone, to be placed over an escutcheon with the Medici balls, for Messer Pier Francesco Riccio, the major-domo of the Duke; and he made it with two children with their legs intertwined together, who are holding the Mazzocchio in their hands and placing it upon the escutcheon, which is fixed over the door of a house that the major-domo then occupied, opposite to S. Giuliano, near the Priests of S. Antonio. When this work was seen, all the craftsmen of Florence formed the same judgment that Tribolo had pronounced before.

After this, he carved a boy squeezing a fish that is pouring water from its mouth, for the fountains of Castello. And then, Tribolo having given him a larger piece of marble, Piero made from it two children who are embracing each other and squeezing fishes, causing water to spout from their mouths. These children were so graceful in the heads and in their whole persons, and executed with so beautiful a manner in the legs, arms, and hair, that already it could be seen that he would have been able to execute the most difficult work to perfection. Taking heart, therefore, and buying a piece of grey-stone, two braccia and a half in length, which he took to his house on the

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Canto alla Briga, Piero began to work at it in the evenings, after returning from his labours, at night, and on feast-days, insomuch that little by little he brought it to completion. This was a figure of Bacchus, who had a Satyr at his feet, and with one hand was holding a cup, while in the other he had a bunch of grapes, and his head was girt with a crown of grapes; all after a model made by himself in clay. In this and in his other early works Piero showed a marvellous facility, which never offends the eye, nor is it in any respect disturbing to him who beholds it. This Bacchus, when finished, was bought by Bongianni Capponi, and his nephew Lodovico Capponi now has it in a courtyard in his house.

The while that Piero was executing these works, few persons as yet knew that he was the nephew of Leonardo da Vinci; but his labours making him well known and renowned, by this means his parentage and his birth were likewise revealed. Wherefore ever afterwards, both from his connection with his uncle and from his own happy genius, wherein he resembled that great man, he was called by everyone not Piero, but Vinci.

Now Vinci, while occupied in this manner, had often heard various persons speaking of the things connected with the arts to be seen in Rome, and extolling them, as is always done by everyone; wherefore a great desire had been kindled in him to see them, hoping to be able to derive profit by beholding not only the works of the ancients, but also those of Michelagnolo, and even the master himself, who was then alive and residing in Rome. He went thither, therefore, in company with some friends; but after seeing Rome and all that he wished, he returned to Florence, having reflected judiciously that the things of Rome were as yet too profound for him, and should be studied and imitated not so early in his career, but after a greater acquaintance with art.

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At that time Tribolo had finished a model for the shaft of the fountain in the labyrinth, in which are some Satyrs in low-relief, four masks in half-relief, and four little boys in the round, who are seated upon certain caulicoles. Vinci having then returned, Tribolo gave him this shaft to do, and he executed and finished it, making in it some delicate designs not employed by any other but himself, which greatly pleased all who saw them. Then, having had the whole marble tazza of that fountain finished, Tribolo thought of placing on the edge of it four children in the round, lying down and playing with their arms and legs in the water, in various attitudes; and these he intended to cast in bronze. Vinci, at the commission of Tribolo, made them of clay, and they were afterwards cast in bronze by Zanobi Lastricati, a sculptor and a man very experienced in matters of casting; and they were placed not long since around the fountain, where they make a most beautiful effect.

There was in daily intercourse with Tribolo one Luca Martini, the proveditor at that time for the building of the Mercato Nuovo, who, praising highly the excellence in art and the fine character of Vinci, and desiring to help him, provided him with a piece of marble two-thirds of a braccio in height and one and a quarter in length. Vinci, taking the marble, made with it a Christ being scourged at the Column, in which the rules of low-relief and of design may be seen to have been well observed; and in truth it made everyone marvel, considering that he had not yet reached the age of seventeen, and had made in five years of study that proficiencie in art which others do not achieve save after length of life and great experience of many things.

At this time Tribolo, having undertaken the office of superintendent of the drains in the city of Florence, ordained in that capacity that the drain in the old Piazza di S. Maria Novella should be raised from the ground, in such a way that, becoming more capacious, it might be better able to receive all the waters that ran into it from various quarters. For this work, then, he commissioned Vinci to make the model of a great mask of three braccia, which with its open mouth might swallow all the rain-water. Afterwards, by order of the Ufficiali della Torre, the work was allotted to Vinci, who, in order to execute it more quickly, summoned to his aid the sculptor Lorenzo Marignolli. In company with this master he finished it, making it from a block of hard-stone; and the work is such that it adorns the whole Piazza, with no small advantage to the city.

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It now appeared to Vinci that he had made such proficiencie in art, that it would be a great benefit to him to see the principal works in Rome, and to associate with the most excellent craftsmen living there; wherefore, an occasion to go there presenting itself, he seized it readily. There had arrived from Rome an intimate friend of Michelagnolo Buonarroti, Francesco Bandini, who, having come to know Vinci by means of Luca Martini, and having praised him highly, caused him to make a model of wax for a tomb of marble that he wished to erect in his chapel in S. Croce; and shortly afterwards, on returning to Rome, Vinci having spoken his mind to Luca Martini, Bandini took him in his company. There Vinci remained a year, studying all the time, and executed some works worthy of remembrance. The first was a Christ on the Cross in low-relief, rendering up His spirit to His Father, which was copied from a design done by Michelagnolo. For Cardinal Ridolfi he added to an antique head a breast in bronze, and made a Venus of marble in low-relief, which was much extolled. For Francesco Bandini he restored an ancient horse, of which many pieces were wanting, and made it complete. And in order to give some proof of gratitude, where he could, to Luca Martini, who was writing to him by every courier, and continually recommending him to Bandini, it seemed good to Vinci to make a copy in wax, in the round and two-thirds (of a braccio) in height, of the Moses of Michelagnolo that is on the tomb of Pope Julius II in S. Pietro in Vincula, than which there is no more beautiful work to be seen; and so, having made the Moses of wax, he sent it as a present to Luca Martini.

At the time when Vinci was living in Rome and executing the works mentioned above, Luca Martini was made by the Duke of Florence proveditor of Pisa, and in his office he did not forget his friend, and therefore wrote to him that he was preparing a room for him and was providing a

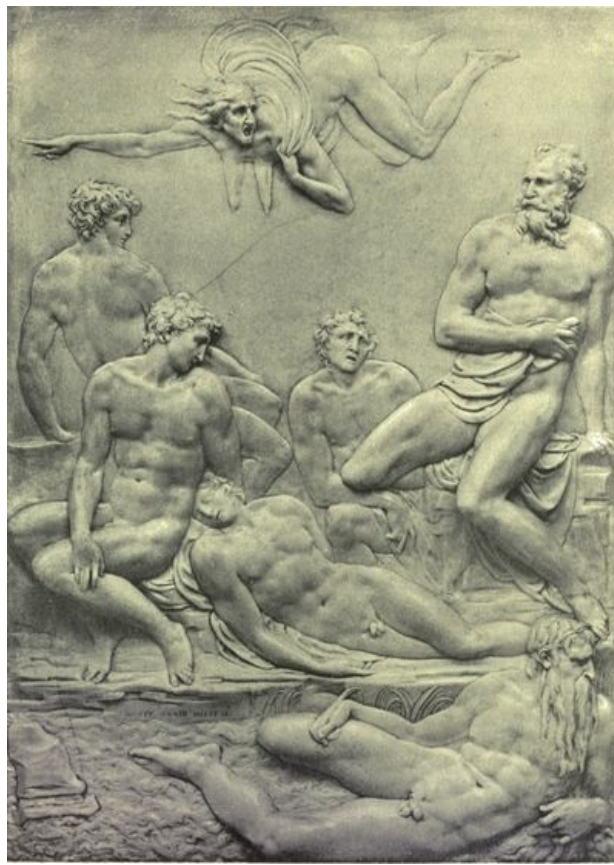
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block of marble of three braccia, so that he might return from Rome at his pleasure, seeing that while with him he should want for nothing. Vinci, attracted by this prospect and by the love that he bore to Luca, resolved to depart from Rome and to take up his abode for some time in Pisa, where he looked to find opportunities of practising his hand and making trial of his ability. Having therefore gone to Pisa, he found that the marble was already in his room, prepared according to the orders of Luca; but, on proceeding to begin to carve from it an upright figure, he perceived that the marble had in it a crack that diminished it by a braccio. Wherefore, having resolved to change it into a recumbent figure, he made a young River God holding a vase that is pouring out water, the vase being upheld by three children, who are assisting the River God to pour the water forth; and beneath his feet runs a copious stream of water, in which may be seen fishes darting about and water-fowl flying in various parts. This River God finished, Vinci made a present of it to Luca, who presented it to the Duchess, to whom it was very dear; and then, her brother Don Garzia di Toledo being at that time in Pisa, whither he had gone by galley, she gave it to that brother, who accepted it with much pleasure for the fountains of his garden in the Chiaia at Naples.

In those days Luca Martini was writing some observations on the *Commedia* of Dante, and he pointed out to Vinci the cruelty described by Dante, which the Pisans and Archbishop Ruggieri showed towards Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, causing him to die of hunger with his four sons in the tower that is therefore called the Tower of Hunger; whereby he offered to Vinci the occasion for a new work and the idea of a new design. Wherefore, while he was still working at the River God described above, he set his hand to making a scene in wax more than a braccio in height and three-quarters in breadth, to be cast in bronze, in which he represented two of the Count's sons already dead, one in the act of expiring, and the fourth overcome by hunger and near his end, but not yet reduced to the last breath; with the father in a pitiful and miserable attitude, blind and heavy with grief, and groping over the wretched bodies of his sons stretched upon the ground. In this work Vinci displayed the excellence of design no less than did Dante the perfection of poetry in his verses, for no less compassion is stirred by the attitudes shaped in wax by the sculptor in him who beholds them, than is roused in him who listens to the words and accents imprinted on the living page by the poet. And in order to mark the place where the event happened, he made at the foot of the scene the River Arno, which occupies its whole width, for the above-named tower is not far distant from the river in Pisa; while upon that tower he placed an old woman, naked, withered, and fearsome, representing Hunger, much after the manner wherein Ovid describes her. The wax model finished, he cast the scene in bronze, and it gave consummate satisfaction, being held by the Court and by everyone to be no ordinary work.

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Duke Cosimo was then intent on enriching and beautifying the city of Pisa, and he had already caused the Piazza del Mercato to be built anew, with a great number of shops around it, and had placed in the centre a column ten braccia high, upon which, according to the design of Luca, was to stand a statue representing Abundance. Martini, therefore, having spoken to the Duke and presented Vinci to his notice, easily obtained for him from his Excellency the commission for that statue, the Duke being always eager to assist men of talent and to bring fine intellects forward. Vinci executed a statue of travertine, three braccia and a half in height, which was much extolled by everyone; for at the feet of the figure he placed a little child, who assists her to support the Cornucopia, carved with much softness and facility, although the stone is rough and difficult to work.



**UGOLINO DELLA GHERARDESCA AND HIS SONS IN THE TOWER OF FAMINE**  
*(After the wax relief by Pierino [Piero] da Vinci. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum)*  
*Reproduced by permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum.*

[View larger image](#)

Luca afterwards sent to Carrara to have a block of marble quarried five braccia in height and three in breadth, from which Vinci, who had once seen some sketches by Michelagnolo of Samson slaying a Philistine with the jawbone of an ass, proposed to make two figures of five braccia from his own fancy, after that subject. Whereupon, while the marble was on its way, he set himself to make several models, all varying one from another, and then fixed on one of them; and after the block had arrived he began to carve it, and carried it well on, imitating Michelagnolo in cutting his conception and design little by little out of the stone, without spoiling it or making any sort of error. He executed all the perforation in this work, whether undercut or at an easy angle, with great facility, laborious as it was, and the manner of the whole work was very delicate. But since the labour was very fatiguing, he sought to distract himself with other studies and works of less importance; and thus he executed during the same time a little tablet of marble in low-relief, in which he represented Our Lady with Christ, S. John, and S. Elizabeth, which was held, as it still is, to be a rare work. This came into the hands of the most illustrious Duchess, and it is now among the choice things in the study of the Duke.

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He then set his hand to a scene of marble, one braccio high and one and a half wide, partly in half-relief and partly in low-relief, in which he represented the restoration of Pisa by the Duke, who is in the work present in person at the restoration of that city, which is being pressed forward by his presence. Round the Duke are figures of his virtues; in particular a Minerva representing his wisdom and also the arts revived by him in that city of Pisa, who is surrounded by many evils and natural defects of the site, which besiege her on every side, and afflict her in the manner of enemies; but from all these that city has since been delivered by the above-mentioned virtues of the Duke. All these virtues round the Duke, with all the evils round Pisa, were portrayed by Vinci in his scene with most beautiful gestures and attitudes; but he left it unfinished, to the great regret of those who saw it, on account of the perfection of the things in it that were completed.

The fame of Vinci having grown and spread abroad by reason of these works, the heirs of Messer Baldassarre Turini da Pescia besought him that he should make a model of a marble tomb for Messer Baldassarre; which finished, it pleased them, whereupon they made an agreement that the tomb should be executed, and Vinci sent Francesco del Tadda, an able master of marble-carving, to have the marble quarried at Carrara. And when that master had sent him a block of marble, Vinci began a statue, and carved out of the stone a figure blocked out in such a manner that one who knew not the circumstances would have said that it was certainly blocked out by Michelagnolo.

The name of Vinci was now very great, and his genius was admired by all, being much more perfect than could have been expected in one so young, and it was likely to grow even more and to become greater, and to equal that of any other man in his art, as his own works bear witness, without any other testimony; when the term prescribed for him by Heaven, being now close at hand, interrupted all his plans, and caused his rapid progress to cease at one blow, not suffering

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that he should climb any higher, and depriving the world of many excellent works of art with which, had Vinci lived, it would have been adorned. It happened at this time, while Vinci was intent on the tomb of another, not knowing that his own was preparing, that the Duke had to send Luca Martini to Genoa on affairs of importance; and Luca, both because he loved Vinci and wished to have him in his company, and also in order to give him some diversion and recreation, and to enable him to see Genoa, took him with him on his journey. There, while Martini was transacting his business, at his suggestion Messer Adamo Centurioni commissioned Vinci to execute a figure of S. John the Baptist, of which he made the model. But soon he was attacked by fever, and, to increase his distress, at the same time his friend was also taken away from him; perchance to provide a way in which fate might be fulfilled in the life of Vinci. For it became necessary that Luca, in the interests of the business entrusted to him, should go to Florence to find the Duke; wherefore he parted from his sick friend, to the great grief of both the one and the other, leaving him in the house of the Abate Nero, to whom he straitly recommended him, although Piero was very unwilling to remain in Genoa. But Vinci, feeling himself growing worse every day, resolved to have himself removed from Genoa; and, having caused an assistant of his own, called Tiberio Cavalieri, to come from Pisa, with his help he had himself carried to Livorno by water, and from Livorno to Pisa in a litter. Arriving in Pisa at the twenty-second hour in the evening, all exhausted and broken by the journey, the sea-voyage, and the fever, during the night he had no repose, and the next morning, at the break of day, he passed to the other life, not having yet reached the age of twenty-three.

The death of Vinci was a great grief to all his friends, and to Luca Martini beyond measure; and it grieved all those who had hoped to see from his hands such works as are not often seen. And Messer Benedetto Varchi, who was much the friend of his abilities and of those of every master, afterwards wrote the following sonnet in memory of his fame:

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Come potrò da me, se tu non presti  
O forza, o tregua al mio gran duolo interno,  
Soffrirlo in pace mai, Signor superno,  
Che fin qui nuova ognor pena mi desti?  
Dunque de' miei più cari or quegli, or questi,  
Verde sen voli all'alto Asilo eterno,  
Ed io canuto in questo basso inferno  
A pianger sempre e lamentarmi resti?  
Sciolgami almen tua gran bontade quinci,  
Or che reo fato nostro, o sua ventura,  
Ch' era ben degno d' altra vita, e gente,  
Per far più ricco il cielo, e la scultura  
Men bella, e me col buon Martin dolente,  
N' ha privi, o pietà, del secondo Vinci.

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## BACCIO BANDINELLI

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## LIFE OF BACCIO BANDINELLI SCULPTOR OF FLORENCE

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In the days when the arts of design flourished in Florence by the favour and assistance of the elder Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent, there lived in the city a goldsmith called Michelagnolo di Viviano of Gaiuole, who worked excellently well at chasing and incavo for enamels and niello, and was very skilful in every sort of work in gold and silver plate. This Michelagnolo had a great knowledge of jewels, and set them very well; and on account of his talents and his versatility all the foreign masters of his art used to have recourse to him, and he gave them hospitality, as well as to the young men of the city, insomuch that his workshop was held to be, as it was, the first in Florence. Of him the Magnificent Lorenzo and all the house of Medici availed themselves; and for the tourney that Giuliano, the brother of that Magnificent Lorenzo, held on the Piazza di S. Croce, he executed with subtle craftsmanship all the ornaments of helmets, crests, and devices. Wherefore he acquired a great name and much intimacy with the sons of the Magnificent Lorenzo, to whom his work was ever afterwards very dear, and no less useful to him their acquaintance and friendship, by reason of which, and also by the many works that he executed throughout the whole city and dominion, he became a man of substance as well as one of much repute in his art. To this Michelagnolo the Medici, on their departure from Florence in the year 1494, entrusted much plate in silver and gold, which was all kept in safe hiding by him and faithfully preserved until their return, when he was much extolled by them for his fidelity, and afterwards recompensed with rewards.

In the year 1487 there was born to Michelagnolo a son, whom he called Bartolommeo, but afterwards, according to the Florentine custom, he was called by everyone Baccio. Michelagnolo, desiring to leave his son heir to his art and connection, took him into his own workshop in

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company with other young men who were learning to draw; for that was the custom in those times, and no one was held to be a good goldsmith who was not a good draughtsman and able to work well in relief. Baccio, then, in his first years, gave his attention to design according to the teaching of his father, being assisted no less to make proficiency by the competition of the other lads, among whom he chose as his particular companion one called Piloto, who afterwards became an able goldsmith; and with him he often went about the churches drawing the works of the good painters, but also mingling work in relief with his drawing, and counterfeiting in wax certain sculptures of Donato and Verrocchio, besides executing some works in clay, in the round.

While still a boy in age, Baccio frequented at times the workshop of Girolamo del Buda, a commonplace painter, on the Piazza di S. Pulinari. There, at one time during the winter, a great quantity of snow had fallen, which had been thrown afterwards by the people into a heap in that piazza; and Girolamo, turning to Baccio, said to him jestingly: "Baccio, if this snow were marble, could we not carve a fine giant out of it, such as a Marforio lying down?" "We could so," answered Baccio, "and I suggest that we should act as if it were marble." And immediately, throwing off his cloak, he set his hands to the snow, and, assisted by other boys, taking away the snow where there was too much, and adding some in other places, he made a rough figure of Marforio lying down, eight braccia in length. Whereupon the painter and all the others stood marvelling, not so much at what he had done as at the spirit with which he had set his hand to a work so vast, and he so young and so small.

Baccio, indeed, having more love for sculpture than for goldsmith's work, gave many proofs of this; and when he went to Pinzirimonte, a villa bought by his father, he would often plant himself before the naked labourers and draw them with great eagerness, and he did the same with the cattle on the farm. At this time he continued for many days to go in the morning to Prato, which was near the villa, where he stayed the whole day drawing in the Chapel of the Pieve from the work of Fra Filippo Lippi, and he did not cease until he had drawn it all, imitating the draperies of that master, who did them very well. And already he handled with great skill the style and the pen, and also chalk both red and black, which last is a soft stone that comes from the mountains of France, and with it, when cut to a point, drawings can be executed with great delicacy.

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These things making clear to Michelagnolo the mind and inclination of his son, he also changed his intention, like the boy himself, and, being likewise advised by his friends, placed him under the care of Giovan Francesco Rustici, one of the best sculptors in the city, whose workshop was still constantly frequented by Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo, seeing the drawings of Baccio and being pleased with them, exhorted him to persevere and to take to working in relief; and he recommended strongly to him the works of Donato, saying also that he should execute something in marble, such as a head or a low-relief. Baccio, encouraged by the comforting advice of Leonardo, set himself to copy in marble an antique head of a woman, of which he had shaped a model from one that is in the house of the Medici. This, for his first work, he executed passing well, and it was held very dear by Andrea Carnesecchi, who received it as a present from Baccio's father and placed it in his house in the Via Larga, over that door in the centre of the court which leads into the garden. Now, Baccio continuing to make other models of figures in clay in the round, his father, wishing not to fail in his duty towards the praiseworthy zeal of his son, sent for some blocks of marble from Carrara, and caused to be built for him, at the end of his house at Pinti, a room with lights arranged for working, which looked out upon the Via Fiesolana. Whereupon he set himself to block out various figures in those marbles, and one, among others, he carried well on from a piece of marble of two braccia and a half, which was a Hercules that is holding the dead Cacus beneath him, between his legs. These sketches were left in the same place in memory of him.

At this time was thrown open to view the cartoon of Michelagnolo Buonarroto, full of nude figures, which Michelagnolo had executed at the commission of Piero Soderini for the Great Council Chamber, and, as has been related in another place, all the craftsmen flocked together to draw it on account of its excellence. Among these came Baccio, and no long time passed before he outstripped them all, for the reason that he understood nudes, and outlined, shaded, and finished them, better than any of the other draughtsmen, among whom were Jacopo Sansovino, Andrea del Sarto, Il Rosso, who was then very young, and Alfonso Berughetta the Spaniard, together with many other famous craftsmen. Baccio frequented the place more than any of the others, and had a counterfeit key; and it happened that, Piero Soderini having been deposed from the government about this time, in the year 1512, and the house of Medici having been restored to power, during the confusion caused in the Palace by the change of government, Baccio entered in secret, all by himself, and tore the cartoon into many pieces. Of which not knowing the reason, some said that Baccio had torn it up in order to have some pieces of the cartoon in his possession for his own convenience, some declared that he wished to deprive the other young men of that advantage, so that they might not be able to profit by it and make themselves a name in art, others said that he was moved to do this by his affection for Leonardo da Vinci, from whom Michelagnolo's cartoon had taken much of his reputation, and others, again, perhaps interpreting his action better, attributed it to the hatred which he felt against Michelagnolo and afterwards demonstrated as long as he lived. The loss of the cartoon was no light one for the city, and very heavy the blame that was rightly laid upon Baccio by everyone, as an envious and malicious person.

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Baccio then executed some pieces of cartoon with lead-white and charcoal, among which was a very beautiful one of a nude Cleopatra, which he presented to the goldsmith Piloto. Having already acquired a name as a great draughtsman, he was desirous of learning to paint in colours,

having a firm belief that he would not only equal Buonarroti, but even greatly surpass him in both fields of art. Now he had executed a cartoon of a Leda, in which Castor and Pollux were issuing from the egg of the swan embraced by her, and he wished to colour it in oils, in such a way as to make it appear that the methods of handling the colours and mixing them together in order to make the various tints, with the lights and shades, had not been taught to him by others, but that he had found them by himself, and, after pondering how he could do this, he thought of the following expedient. He besought Andrea del Sarto, who was much his friend, that he should paint a portrait of him in oils, flattering himself that he would thereby gain two advantages in accordance with his purpose; one was that he would see the method of mixing the colours, and the other was that the painted picture would remain in his hands, which, having seen it executed and understanding it, would assist him and serve him as a pattern. But Andrea perceived Baccio's intention as he made his request, and was angry at his want of confidence and astuteness, for he would have been willing to show him what he desired, if Baccio had asked him as a friend; wherefore, without making any sign that he had found him out, and refraining from mixing the colours into tints, he placed every sort of colour on his palette and mingled them together with the brush, and, taking some now from one and now from another with great dexterity of hand, counterfeited in this way the vivid colouring of Baccio's face. The latter, both through the artfulness of Andrea and because he had to sit still where he was if he wished to be painted, was never able to see or learn anything that he wished: and it was a fine notion of Andrea's, thus at the same time to punish the deceitfulness of his friend and to display with this method of painting, like a well-practised master, even greater ability and experience in art.

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For all this, however, Baccio did not abandon his determination, in which he was assisted by the painter Rosso, whom he afterwards asked more openly for the help that he desired. Having thus learned the methods of colouring, he painted a picture in oils of the Holy Fathers delivered from the Limbo of Hell by the Saviour, and also a larger picture of Noah drunk with wine and revealing his nakedness in the presence of his sons. He tried his hand at painting on the wall, on fresh plaster, and executed on the walls of his house heads, arms, legs, and torsos, coloured in various ways; but, perceiving that this involved him in greater difficulties than he had expected, through the drying of the plaster, he returned to his former study of working in relief. He made a figure of marble, three braccia in height, of a young Mercury with a flute in his hand, with which he took great pains, and it was extolled and held to be a rare work; and afterwards, in the year 1530, it was bought by Giovan Battista della Palla and sent to France to King Francis, who held it in great estimation.

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Baccio devoted himself with great study and solicitude to examining and reproducing the most minute details of anatomy, persevering in this for many months and even years. And certainly one can praise highly in this man his desire for honour and excellence in art, and for working well therein; spurred by which desire, and by the most fiery ardour, with which, rather than with aptitude or dexterity in art, he had been endowed by nature from his earliest years, Baccio spared himself no fatigue, never relaxed his efforts for a moment, was always intent either on preparing for work or on working, always occupied, and never to be found idle, thinking that by continual work he would surpass all others who had ever practised his art, and promising this result to himself as the reward of his incessant study and endless labour. Continuing, therefore, his zealous study, he not only produced a great number of sheets drawn in various ways with his own hand, but also contrived to get Agostino Viniziano, the engraver of prints, to engrave for him a nude Cleopatra and a larger plate filled with various anatomical studies, in order to see whether this would be successful; and the latter plate brought him great praise.

He then set himself to make in wax, in full-relief, a figure one braccio and a half in height of S. Jerome in Penitence, lean beyond belief, which showed on the bones the muscles all withered, a great part of the nerves, and the skin dry and wrinkled; and with such diligence was this work executed by him, that all the craftsmen, and particularly Leonardo da Vinci, pronounced the opinion that there had never been seen a better thing of its kind, nor one wrought with greater art. This figure Baccio carried to Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici and to his brother the Magnificent Giuliano, and by its means he made himself known to them as the son of the goldsmith Michelagnolo; and they, besides praising the work, showed him many other favours. This was in the year 1512, when they had returned to their house and their government. At this same time there were being executed in the Office of Works of S. Maria del Fiore certain Apostles of marble, which were to be set up within the marble tabernacles in those very places in that church where there are the Apostles painted by the painter Lorenzo di Bicci. At the instance of the Magnificent Giuliano there was allotted to Baccio a S. Peter, four braccia and a half in height, which after a long time he brought to completion; and, although it has not the highest perfection of sculpture, nevertheless good design may be seen in it. This Apostle remained in the Office of Works from the year 1513 down to 1565, in which year Duke Cosimo, in honour of the marriage of Queen Joanna of Austria, his daughter-in-law, was pleased to have the interior of S. Maria del Fiore whitewashed, which church had never been touched from the time of its erection down to that day, and to have four Apostles set up in their places, among which was the S. Peter mentioned above.

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Now in the year 1515, Pope Leo X passing through Florence on his way to Bologna, the city, in order to do him honour, ordained, among many other ornaments and festive preparations, that there should be made a colossal figure of nine braccia and a half, which was to be placed under an arch of the Loggia in the Piazza near the Palace; and this was given to Baccio. This colossal figure was a Hercules, and from the premature words of Baccio men expected that it would surpass the David of Buonarroti, which stood there near it; but the act did not correspond to the

word, nor the work to the boast, and it robbed Baccio of much of the estimation in which he had previously been held by the craftsmen and by the whole city.

Pope Leo had allotted the work of the ornamentation in marble that surrounds the Chamber of Our Lady at Loreto, with the statues and scenes, to Maestro Andrea Contucci of Monte Sansovino, who had already executed some of these with great credit to himself, and was then engaged on others. Now at this time Baccio took to Rome, for the Pope, a very beautiful model of a nude David who was holding Goliath under him and was cutting off his head; which model he intended to execute in bronze or in marble for that very spot in the court of the house of the Medici in Florence where there once stood the David of Donato, which, at the spoiling of the Medici Palace, was taken to the Palace that then belonged to the Signori. The Pope, having praised Baccio, but not thinking that the time had come to execute the David, sent him to Loreto to Maestro Andrea, to the end that Andrea might give him one of those scenes to do. Having arrived in Loreto, he was received lovingly by Maestro Andrea and shown much kindness, both on account of his fame and because the Pope had recommended him, and a piece of marble was assigned to him from which he should carve the Nativity of Our Lady. Baccio, after making the model, began the work; but, being a person who was not able to endure a colleague or an equal, and had little praise for the works of others, he also began to speak hardly before the other sculptors who were there of the works of Maestro Andrea, saying that he had no design, and he said the same of the others, insomuch that in a short time he made himself disliked by them all. Whereupon, all that Baccio had said of Maestro Andrea having come to his ears, he, like a wise man, answered him lovingly, saying that works are done with the hands and not with the tongue, that good design is to be looked for not in drawings but in the perfection of the work finished in stone, and, finally, that in future Baccio should speak of him in a different tone. But Baccio answering him arrogantly with many abusive words, Maestro Andrea could endure no more, and rushed upon him in order to kill him; but Bandinelli was torn away from him by some who intervened between them. Being therefore forced to depart from Loreto, Baccio had his scene carried to Ancona; but he grew weary of it, although it was near completion, and he went away leaving it unfinished. This work was finished afterwards by Raffaello da Montelupo, and placed together with the others of Maestro Andrea; but it is by no means equal to them in excellence, although even so it is worthy of praise.

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Baccio, having returned to Rome, obtained a promise from the Pope, through the favour of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, always ready to assist the arts and their followers, that he should be commissioned to execute some statue for the court of the Medici Palace in Florence. Having therefore come to Florence, he made an Orpheus of marble, who with his playing and his singing is charming Cerberus, and moving Hell itself to compassion. He imitated in this work the Apollo of the Belvedere at Rome, and it was very highly praised, and rightly, because, although the Orpheus of Baccio is not in the attitude of the Apollo Belvedere, nevertheless it reproduces very successfully the manner of the torso and of all the members. The statue, when finished, was carried by order of Cardinal Giulio, while he was governing Florence, into the above-mentioned court, and placed on a carved base executed by the sculptor Benedetto da Rovezzano. But since Baccio never paid any attention to the art of architecture, he took no heed of the genius of Donatello, who had made for the David that was there before a simple column on which rested a cleft base in open-work, to the end that one entering from without might see from the street-door the inner door, that of the other court, opposite to him; and, not having such foresight, he caused his statue to be placed on a broad and wholly solid base, of such a kind that it blocks the view of him who enters and covers the opening of the inner door, so that in passing through the first door one does not see whether the palace extends farther inwards or finishes in the first court.

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Cardinal Giulio had caused a most beautiful villa to be erected below Monte Mario at Rome, and wished to set up two giants in this villa; and he had them executed in stucco by Baccio, who was always delighted to make giants. These figures, eight braccia in height, stand one on either side of the gate that leads into the wood, and they were held to be reasonably beautiful. While Baccio was engaged on these works, never abandoning his practice of drawing, he caused Marco da Ravenna and Agostino Viniziano, the engravers of prints, to engrave a scene drawn by him on a very large sheet, in which was the Slaughter of the Innocents, so cruelly done to death by Herod. This scene, which was filled by him with a quantity of nudes, both male and female, children living and dead, and women and soldiers in various attitudes, made known the fine draughtsmanship that he showed in figures and his knowledge of muscles and of all the members, and it won him great fame over all Europe. He also made a most beautiful model of the wood, with the figures in wax, of a tomb for the King of England, which in the end was not carried out by Baccio, but was given to the sculptor Benedetto da Rovezzano, who executed it in metal.

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**THE MARTYRDOM OF S. LORENZO**  
*(After the painting by Baccio Bandinelli. Hereford: W. J. Davies' Collection)*  
 M.S.

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There had recently returned from France Cardinal Bernardo Divizio of Bibbiena, who, perceiving that King Francis possessed not a single work in marble, whether ancient or modern, although he much delighted in such things, had promised his Majesty that he would prevail on the Pope to send him some beautiful work. After this Cardinal there came to the Pope two Ambassadors from King Francis, and they, having seen the statues of the Belvedere, lavished all the praise at their command on the Laocoon. Cardinals de' Medici and Bibbiena, who were with them, asked them whether the King would be glad to have a work of that kind; and they answered that it would be too great a gift. Then the Cardinal said to them: "There shall be sent to his Majesty either this one or one so like it that there shall be no difference." And, having resolved to have another made in imitation of it, he remembered Baccio, whom he sent for and asked whether he had the courage to make a Laocoon equal to the original. Baccio answered that he was confident that he could make one not merely equal to it, but even surpassing it in perfection. The Cardinal then resolved that the work should be begun, and Baccio, while waiting for the marble to come, made one in wax, which was much extolled, and also executed a cartoon in lead-white and charcoal of the same size as the one in marble. After the marble had come and Baccio had caused an enclosure with a roof for working in to be erected for himself in the Belvedere, he made a beginning with one of the boys of the Laocoon, the larger one, and executed this in such a manner that the Pope and all those who were good judges were satisfied, because between his work and the ancient there was scarcely any difference to be seen. But after setting his hand to the other boy and to the statue of the father, which is in the middle, he had not gone far when the Pope died. Adrian VI being then elected, he returned with the Cardinal to Florence, where he occupied himself with his studies in design. After the death of Adrian and the election of Clement VII, Baccio went post-haste to Rome in order to be in time for his coronation, for which he made statues and scenes in half-relief by order of his Holiness. Then, having been provided by the Pope with rooms and an allowance, he returned to his Laocoon, a work which was executed by him in the space of two years with the greatest excellence that he ever achieved. He also restored the right arm of the ancient Laocoon, which had been broken off and never found, and Baccio made one of the full size in wax, which so resembled the ancient work in the muscles, in force, and in manner, and harmonized with it so well, that it showed how Baccio understood his art; and this model served him as a pattern for making the whole arm of his own Laocoon. This work seemed to his Holiness to be so good, that he changed his mind and resolved to send other ancient statues to the King, and this one to Florence; and to Cardinal Silvio Passerino of Cortona, his Legate in Florence, who was then governing the city, he sent orders that he should place the Laocoon at the head of the second court in the Palace of the Medici. This was in the year 1525.

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This work brought great fame to Baccio, who, after finishing the Laocoon, set himself to draw a scene on a sheet of royal folio laid open, in order to carry out a design of the Pope, who wished to have the Martyrdom of S. Cosimo and S. Damiano painted on one wall of the principal chapel of S. Lorenzo in Florence, and on the other that of S. Laurence, when he was put to death by Decius on the gridiron. Baccio then drew with great subtlety the story of S. Laurence, in which he counterfeited with much judgment and art figures both clothed and nude, different attitudes and gestures in the bodies and limbs, and various movements in those who are standing about S. Laurence, engaged in their dreadful office, and in particular the cruel Decius, who with threatening brow is urging on the fiery death of the innocent Martyr, who, raising one arm to Heaven, recommends his spirit to God. With this scene Baccio so satisfied the Pope, that he took steps to have it engraved on copper by Marc'Antonio Bolognese, which was done by Marc'Antonio with great diligence; and his Holiness created Baccio, in order to do honour to his talents, a Chevalier of S. Pietro.

After these things Baccio returned to Florence, where he found that Giovan Francesco Rustici, [Pg 66]

his first master, was painting a scene of the Conversion of S. Paul; for which reason he undertook to make in a cartoon, in competition with his master, a nude figure of a young S. John in the desert, who is holding a lamb with the left arm and raising the right to Heaven. Then, having caused a panel to be prepared, he set himself to colour it, and when it was finished he exposed it to view in the workshop of his father Michelagnolo, opposite to the descent that leads from Orsanmichele to the Mercato Nuovo. The design was praised by the craftsmen, but not so much the colouring, because it was somewhat crude and painted in no beautiful manner. But Baccio sent it as a present to Pope Clement, who had it placed in his guardaroba, where it may still be found.

As far back as the time of Leo X there had been quarried at Carrara, together with the marbles for the façade of S. Lorenzo in Florence, another block of marble nine braccia and a half high and five braccia wide at the foot. With this block of marble Michelagnolo Buonarroti had thought of making a giant in the person of Hercules slaying Cacus, intending to place it in the Piazza beside the colossal figure of David formerly made by him, since both the one and the other, David and Hercules, were emblems of the Palace. He had made several designs and various models for it, and had sought to gain the favour of Pope Leo and of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, saying that the David had many defects caused by the sculptor Maestro Andrea, who had first blocked it out and spoiled it. But by reason of the death of Leo the façade of S. Lorenzo was for a time abandoned, and also this block of marble. Now afterwards, Pope Clement having conceived a desire to avail himself of Michelagnolo for the tombs of the heroes of the house of Medici, which he wished to have constructed in the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo, it became once more necessary to quarry marbles; and the head of these works, keeping the accounts of the expenses, was Domenico Buoninsegni. This man tried to tempt Michelagnolo to make a secret partnership with him in the matter of the stone-work for the façade of S. Lorenzo; but Michelagnolo refused, not consenting that his genius should be employed in defrauding the Pope, and Domenico conceived such hatred against him that he went about ever afterwards opposing his undertakings, in order to annoy and humiliate him, but this he did covertly. He thus contrived to have the façade discontinued and the sacristy pushed forward, which two works, he said, were enough to keep Michelagnolo occupied for many years. And as for the marble for the making of the giant, he urged the Pope that it should be given to Baccio, who at that time had nothing to do; saying that through the emulation of two men so eminent his Holiness would be served better and with more diligence and promptitude, rivalry stimulating both the one and the other in his work. The counsel of Domenico pleased the Pope, and he acted in accordance with it. Baccio, having obtained the marble, made a great model in wax, which was a Hercules who, having fixed the head of Cacus between two stones with one knee, was constraining him with great force with the left arm, holding him crouching under his legs in a distorted attitude, wherein Cacus revealed his suffering and the strain of the weight of Hercules upon him, which was rending asunder every least muscle in his whole body. Hercules, likewise, with his head bent down close against his enemy, grinding and gnashing his teeth, was raising the right arm and with great vehemence giving him another blow with his club, in order to dash his head to pieces.

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Michelagnolo, as soon as he had heard that the marble had been given to Baccio, was very much displeased; but, for all the efforts that he made in this matter, he was never able to turn the Pope from his purpose, so completely had he been satisfied by Baccio's model; to which reason were added his promises and boasts, for he boasted that he would surpass the David of Michelagnolo, and he was also assisted by Buoninsegni, who said that Michelagnolo desired everything for himself. Thus was the city deprived of a rare ornament, such as that marble would undoubtedly have been when shaped by the hand of Buonarroti. The above-mentioned model of Baccio is now to be found in the guardaroba of Duke Cosimo, by whom it is held very dear, and by the craftsmen as a rare work.

Baccio was sent to Carrara to see this marble, and the Overseers of the Works of S. Maria del Fiore were commissioned to transport it by water, along the River Arno, as far as Signa. The marble having been conveyed there, within a distance of eight miles from Florence, when they set about removing it from the river in order to transport it by land, the river being too low from Signa to Florence, it fell into the water, and on account of its great size sank so deep into the sand, that the Overseers, with all the contrivances that they used, were not able to drag it out. For which reason, the Pope wishing that the marble should be recovered at all costs, by order of the Wardens of Works Pietro Rosselli, an old builder of great ingenuity, went to work in such a manner that, having diverted the course of the water into another channel and cut away the bank of the river, with levers and windlasses he moved it, dragged it out of the Arno, and brought it to solid ground, for which he was greatly extolled. Tempted by this accident to the marble, certain persons wrote verses, both Tuscan and Latin, ingeniously ridiculing Baccio, who was detested for his loquacity and his evil-speaking against Michelagnolo and all the other craftsmen. One among them took for his verses the following subject, saying that the marble, after having been approved by the genius of Michelagnolo, learning that it was to be mangled by the hands of Baccio, had thrown itself into the river out of despair at such an evil fate.

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While the marble was being drawn out of the water, a difficult process which took time, Baccio found, on measuring it, that it was neither high enough nor wide enough to enable him to carve the figures of his first model. Whereupon he went to Rome, taking the measurements with him, and made known to the Pope how he was constrained by necessity to abandon his first design and make another. He then made several models, and out of their number the Pope was most pleased with one in which Hercules had Cacus between his legs, and, grasping his hair, was holding him down after the manner of a prisoner; and this one they resolved to adopt and to carry

into execution. On returning to Florence, Baccio found that the marble had been conveyed into the Office of Works of S. Maria del Fiore by Pietro Rosselli, who had first placed on the ground some planks of walnut-wood planed square, and laid lengthways, which he kept changing according as the marble moved forward, under which and upon those planks he placed some round rollers well shod with iron, so that by pulling the marble with three windlasses, to which he had attached it, little by little he brought it with ease into the Office of Works. The block having been set up there, Baccio began a model in clay as large as the marble and shaped according to the last one which he had made previously in Rome; and he finished it, working with great diligence, in a few months. But with all this it appeared to many craftsmen that there was not in this model that spirited vivacity that the action required, nor that which he had given to his first model. Afterwards, beginning to work at the marble, Baccio cut it away all round as far as the navel, laying bare the limbs in front, and taking care all the time to carve the figures in such a way that they might be exactly like those of the large model in clay.

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At this same time Baccio had undertaken to execute in painting an altar-piece of considerable size for the Church of Cestello, and for this he had made a very beautiful cartoon containing a Dead Christ surrounded by the Maries, with Nicodemus and other figures; but, for a reason that we shall give below, he did not paint the altar-piece. He also made at this time, in order to paint a picture, a cartoon in which was Christ taken down from the Cross and held in the arms of Nicodemus, with His Mother, who was standing, weeping for Him, and an Angel who was holding in his hands the Nails and the Crown of Thorns. Setting himself straightway to colour it, he finished it quickly and placed it on exhibition in the workshop of his friend Giovanni di Goro, the goldsmith, in the Mercato Nuovo, in order to hear the opinions of men and particularly what Michelagnolo said of it. Michelagnolo was taken by the goldsmith Piloto to see it, and, after he had examined every part, he said that he marvelled that so good a draughtsman as Baccio should allow a picture so crude and wanting in grace to leave his hands, that he had seen the most feeble painters executing their works in a better manner, and that this was no art for Baccio. Piloto reported Michelagnolo's judgment to Baccio, who, for all the hatred that he felt against him, recognized that he spoke the truth. Certainly Baccio's drawings were very beautiful, but in colours he executed them badly and without grace, and he therefore resolved to paint no more with his own hand; but he took into his service one who handled colours passing well, a young man called Agnolo, the brother of the excellent painter Franciabigio, who had died a few years before. To this Agnolo he desired to entrust the execution of the altar-piece for Cestello, but it remained unfinished, the reason of which was the change of government in Florence, which took place in the year 1527, when the Medici left Florence after the sack of Rome. For Baccio did not think himself safe, having a private feud with a neighbour at his villa of Pinzirimonte, who was of the popular party; and after he had buried at that villa some cameos and little antique figures of bronze, which belonged to the Medici, he went off to live in Lucca. There he remained until the time when the Emperor Charles V came to receive his crown at Bologna; whereupon he presented himself before the Pope and then went with him to Rome, where he was given rooms in the Belvedere, as before.

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While Baccio was living there, his Holiness resolved to fulfil a vow that he had made when he was shut up in the Castello di S. Angelo; which vow was that he would place on the summit of the great round tower of marble, which is in front of the Ponte di Castello, seven large figures of bronze, each six braccia in length, and all lying down in different attitudes, as it were vanquished by an Angel that he wished to have set up on the centre of the tower, upon a column of variegated marble, the Angel being of bronze with a sword in the hand. By this figure of the Angel he wished to represent the Angel Michael, the guardian and protector of the Castle, whose favour and assistance had delivered him and brought him out of that prison; and the seven recumbent figures were to personify the seven Mortal Sins, demonstrating that with the help of the victorious Angel he had conquered and thrown to the ground his enemies, evil and impious men, who were represented by those seven figures of the seven Mortal Sins. For this work his Holiness caused a model to be made; which having pleased him, he ordained that Baccio should begin to make the figures in clay of the size that they were to be, in order to have them cast afterwards in bronze. Baccio began the work, and finished in one of the apartments in the Belvedere one of those figures in clay, which was much extolled. At the same time, also, in order to divert himself, and wishing to see how he would succeed in casting, he made many little figures in the round, two-thirds of a braccio in height, as of Hercules, Venus, Apollo, Leda, and other fantasies of his own, which he caused to be cast in bronze by Maestro Jacopo della Barba of Florence; and they succeeded excellently well. He presented them afterwards to his Holiness and to many lords; and some of them are now in the study of Duke Cosimo, among a collection of more than a hundred antique figures, all very choice, and others that are modern.

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At this same time Baccio had made a scene of the Deposition from the Cross with little figures in low-relief and half-relief, which was a rare work; and he had it cast with great diligence in bronze. When finished, he presented it in Genoa to Charles V, who held it very dear; and a sign of this was that his Majesty gave Baccio a Commandery of S. Jago, and made him a Chevalier. From Prince Doria, also, he received many courtesies; and from the Republic of Genoa he had the commission for a statue of marble six braccia high, which was to be a Neptune in the likeness of Prince Doria, to be set up on the Piazza in memory of the virtues of that Prince and of the extraordinary benefits that his native country of Genoa had received from him. This statue was allotted to Baccio at the price of a thousand florins, of which he received five hundred at that time; and he went straightway to Carrara to block it out at the quarry of Polvaccio.

While the popular government was ruling Florence, after the departure of the Medici,

Michelagnolo Buonarroti was employed on the fortifications of the city; and there was shown to him the marble that Baccio had blocked out, together with the model of the Hercules and Cacus, the intention being that if the marble had not been cut away too much Michelagnolo should take it and carve from it two figures after his own design. Michelagnolo, having examined the block, thought of a different subject; and, abandoning the Hercules and Cacus, he chose the subject of Samson holding beneath him two Philistines whom he had cast down, one being already dead, and the other still alive, against whom he was aiming a blow with the jawbone of an ass, seeking to kill him. But even as it often happens that the minds of men promise themselves at times certain things the opposite of which is determined by the wisdom of God, so it came to pass then, for, war having arisen against the city of Florence, Michelagnolo had other things to think about than polishing marble, and was obliged from fear of the citizens to withdraw from the city. Afterwards, the war being finished and peace made, Pope Clement caused Michelagnolo to return to Florence in order to finish the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo, and sent Baccio to see to the completion of the giant. Baccio, while engaged in this, took up his abode in the Palace of the Medici; and, writing almost every week to his Holiness in order to make a show of devotion, he entered, besides dealing with matters of art, into particulars relating to the citizens and those who were administering the government, with an odious officiousness likely to bring upon him even more ill-will than he had awakened before. Whereupon, when Duke Alessandro returned from the Court of his Majesty to Florence, the citizens made known to him the sinister policy that Baccio was pursuing against them; from which it followed that his work of the giant was hindered and retarded by the citizens by every means in their power.

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### **HERCULES AND CACUS**

*(After the marble by Baccio Bandinelli. Florence: Piazza della Signoria)*

*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

At this time, after the war of Hungary, Pope Clement and the Emperor Charles held a conference at Bologna, whither there went Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici and Duke Alessandro; and it occurred to Baccio to go and kiss the feet of his Holiness. He took with him a panel, one braccio high and one and a half wide, of Christ being scourged at the Column by two nude figures, which was in half-relief and very well executed; and he gave this panel to the Pope, together with a portrait-medal of his Holiness, which he had caused to be made by Francesco dal Prato, his familiar friend, the reverse of the medal being the Flagellation of Christ. This gift was very acceptable to his Holiness, to whom Baccio described the annoyances and impediments that he had experienced in the execution of his Hercules, praying him that he should prevail upon the Duke to give him the means to carry it to completion. He added that he was envied and hated in that city; and, being a very devil with his wit and his tongue, he persuaded the Pope to induce the Duke to see that his work should be brought to completion and set up in its place in the Piazza.

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Death had now snatched away the goldsmith Michelagnolo, the father of Baccio, who during his lifetime had undertaken to make for the Wardens of Works of S. Maria del Fiore, by order of the Pope, a very large cross of silver, all covered with scenes in low-relief of the Passion of Christ. This cross, for which Baccio had made the figures and scenes in wax, to be afterwards cast in silver, Michelagnolo had left unfinished at his death; and Baccio, having the work in his hands,

together with many libbre of silver, sought to persuade his Holiness to have it finished by Francesco dal Prato, who had gone with him to Bologna. But the Pope, perceiving that Baccio wished not only to withdraw from his father's engagements, but also to make something out of the labours of Francesco, gave Baccio orders that the silver and the scenes, those merely begun as well as those finished, should be given to the Wardens of Works, that the account should be settled, and that the Wardens should melt all the silver of that cross, in order to make use of it for the necessities of the church, which had been stripped of its ornaments at the time of the siege; and to Baccio he caused one hundred florins of gold and letters of recommendation to be given, to the end that he might return to Florence and finish the work of the giant.

While Baccio was at Bologna, Cardinal Doria, having heard that he was about to depart, went to the pains of seeking him out, and threatened him with many reproaches and abusive words, for the reason that he had broken his pledge and failed in his duty by neglecting to finish the statue of Prince Doria and leaving it only blocked out at Carrara, after taking five hundred crowns in payment; on which account, said the Cardinal, if Andrea could get Baccio into his hands, he would make him pay for it at the galleys. Baccio defended himself humbly and with soft words, saying that he had been delayed by a sufficient hindrance, but that he had in Florence a block of marble of the same height, from which he had intended to carve that figure, and that when he had carved and finished it he would send it to Genoa. And so well did he contrive to speak and to excuse himself that he succeeded in escaping from the presence of the Cardinal. After this he returned to Florence, and caused the base for the giant to be taken in hand; and, himself working continuously at the figure, in the year 1534 he finished it completely. But Duke Alessandro, on account of the hostile reports of the citizens, did not take steps to have it set up in the Piazza.

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The Pope had returned to Rome many months before this, and desired to erect two tombs of marble in the Minerva, one for Pope Leo and one for himself; and Baccio, seizing this occasion, went to Rome. Thereupon the Pope resolved that Baccio should make those tombs after he had succeeded in setting up the giant on the Piazza; and his Holiness wrote to the Duke that he should give Baccio every convenience for placing his Hercules in position there. Whereupon, after an enclosure of planks had been made all round, the base was built of marble, and at the foot of it they placed a stone with letters in memory of Pope Clement VII, and a good number of medals with the heads of his Holiness and of Duke Alessandro. The giant was then taken from the Office of Works, where it had been executed; and in order to convey it with greater ease, without damaging it, they made round it a scaffolding of wood, with ropes passing under the legs and cords supporting it under the arms and at every other part; and thus, suspended in the air between the beams in such a way that it did not touch the wood, little by little, by means of compound pulleys and windlasses and ten pairs of oxen, it was drawn as far as the Piazza. Great assistance was rendered by two thick, semi-cylindrical beams, which were fixed lengthways along the foot of the scaffolding, in the manner of a base, and rested on other similar beams smeared with soap, which were withdrawn and replaced by workmen in succession, according as the structure moved forward; and with these ingenious contrivances the giant was conveyed safely and without much labour to the Piazza. The charge of all this was given to Baccio d'Agnolo and the elder Antonio da San Gallo, the architects to the Office of Works, who afterwards with other beams and a double system of compound pulleys set the statue securely on its base.

It would not be easy to describe the concourse and multitude that for two days occupied the whole Piazza, flocking to see the giant as soon as it was uncovered; and various judgments and opinions were heard from all kinds of men, every one censuring the work and the master. There were also attached round the base many verses, both Latin and Tuscan, in which it was pleasing to see the wit, the ingenious conceits, and the sharp sayings of the writers; but they overstepped all decent limits with their evil-speaking and their biting and satirical compositions, and Duke Alessandro, considering that, the work being a public one, the indignity was his, was forced to put in prison some who went so far as to attach sonnets openly and without scruple to the statue; which proceeding soon stopped the mouths of the critics.

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When Baccio examined his work in position, it seemed to him that the open air was little favourable to it, making the muscles appear too delicate. Having therefore caused a new enclosure of planks to be made around it, he attacked it again with his chisels, and, strengthening the muscles in many places, gave the figures stronger relief than they had before. Finally, the work was uncovered for good; and by everyone able to judge it has always been held to be not only a triumph over difficulties, but also very well studied, with every part carefully considered, and the figure of Cacus excellently adapted to its position. It is true that the David of Michelagnolo, which is beside Baccio's Hercules, takes away not a little of its glory, being the most beautiful colossal figure that has ever been made; for in it is all grace and excellence, whereas the manner of Baccio is entirely different. But in truth, considering Baccio's Hercules by itself, one cannot but praise it highly, and all the more because it is known that many sculptors have since tried to make colossal statues, and not one has attained to the standard of Baccio, who, if he had received as much grace and facility from nature as he took pains and trouble by himself, would have been absolutely perfect in the art of sculpture.

Desiring to know what was being said of his work, he sent to the Piazza a pedagogue whom he kept in his house, telling him that he should not fail to report to him the truth of what he might hear said. The pedagogue, hearing nothing but censure, returned sadly to the house, and, when questioned by Baccio, answered that all with one voice were abusing the giants, and that they pleased no one. "And you," asked Baccio, "what do you say of them?" "I speak well of them," he replied, "and say, may it please you, that they please me." "I will not have them please you," said

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Baccio, "and you, also, must speak ill of them, for, as you may remember, I never speak well of anyone; and so we are quits." Thus Baccio concealed his vexation, and it was always his custom to act thus, pretending not to care for the censure that any man laid on his works. Nevertheless, it is likely enough that his resentment was considerable, because when a man labours for honour, and then obtains nothing but censure, one cannot but believe, although that censure may be unjust and undeserved, that it afflicts him secretly in his heart and torments him continually. He was consoled in his displeasure by an estate, which was given to him in addition to his payment, by order of Pope Clement. This gift was doubly dear to him, first because it was useful for its revenue and was near his villa of Pinzirimonte, and then because it had previously belonged to Rignadori, his mortal enemy, who had just been declared an outlaw, and with whom he had always been at strife on account of the boundary of this property.

At this time a letter was written to Duke Alessandro by Prince Doria, asking that he should prevail upon Baccio to finish his statue, now that the giant was completely finished, and saying that he was ready to revenge himself on Baccio if he did not do his duty; at which Baccio was so frightened that he would not trust himself to go to Carrara. However, having been reassured by Cardinal Cibo and Duke Alessandro, he went there, and, working with some assistants, proceeded to carry the statue forward. The Prince had himself informed every day as to how much Baccio was doing; wherefore, receiving a report that the statue was not of that excellence which had been promised, he gave Baccio to understand that, if he did not serve him well, he would make him smart for it. Baccio, hearing this, spoke very ill of the Prince; which having come to the Prince's ears, he determined to get him into his hands at all costs, and to take vengeance upon him by putting him in wholesome fear of the galleys. Whereupon Baccio, seeing certain persons spying and keeping a watch upon him, became suspicious, and, being a shrewd and resolute man, left the work as it was and returned to Florence.

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About this time a son was born to Baccio from a woman whom he kept in his house, and to this son, Pope Clement having died in those days, he gave the name of Clemente, in memory of that Pontiff, who had always loved and favoured him. After the death of Pope Clement, he heard that Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici, Cardinal Innocenzio Cibo, Cardinal Giovanni Salviati, and Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi, together with Messer Baldassarre Turini da Pescia, being the executors of the Pope's will, had commissions to give for the two marble tombs of Leo and Clement, which were to be placed in the Minerva. For these tombs Baccio in the past had already made the models; but the work had been promised recently to the Ferrarese sculptor Alfonso Lombardi through the favour of Cardinal de' Medici, whose servant he was. This Alfonso, by the advice of Michelagnolo, had changed the design of the tombs, and he had already made the models for them, but without any contract for the commission, relying wholly on promises, and expecting every day to have to go to Carrara to quarry the marble. While the time was slipping away in this manner, it happened that Cardinal Ippolito died of poison on his way to meet Charles V. Baccio, hearing this, went without wasting any time to Rome, where he was first received by the sister of Pope Leo, Madonna Lucrezia Salviati de' Medici, to whom he strove to prove that no one could do greater honour to the remains of those great Pontiffs than himself, with his ability in art, adding that Alfonso was a sculptor without power of design and without skill and judgment in the handling of marble, and that he was not able to execute so honourable an undertaking save only with the help of others. He also used many other devices, and so went to work in various ways and by various means that he succeeded in changing the purpose of those lords, who finally entrusted to Cardinal Salviati the charge of making an agreement with Baccio.

At this time the Emperor Charles V had arrived in Naples, and in Rome Filippo Strozzi, Anton Francesco degli Albizzi, and the other exiles were seeking to arrange with Cardinal Salviati to go and set his Majesty against Duke Alessandro; and they were with the Cardinal at all hours. Baccio was also all day long in Salviati's halls and apartments, waiting to have the contract made for the tombs, but not able to bring matters to a head, because of the Cardinal's preoccupation with the affairs of the exiles; and they, seeing Baccio in those rooms morning and evening, grew suspicious of this, and, fearing lest he might be there to spy upon their movements and give information to the Duke, some of the young men among them agreed to follow him secretly one evening and put him out of the way. But Fortune, coming to his aid in time, brought it about that the two other Cardinals, with Messer Baldassarre da Pescia, undertook to finish Baccio's business. Knowing that Baccio was worth little as an architect, they had caused a design to be made by Antonio da San Gallo, which pleased them, and had ordained that all the mason's work to be done in marble should be executed under the direction of the sculptor Lorenzetto, and that the marble statues and scenes should be allotted to Baccio. Having arranged the matter in this way, they finally made the contract with Baccio, who therefore appeared no more about the house of Cardinal Salviati, withdrawing himself just in time; and the exiles, the occasion having passed by, thought nothing more about him.

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After these things Baccio made two models of wood, with the statues and scenes in wax. These models had the bases solid, without projections, and on each base were four fluted Ionic columns, which divided the space into three compartments, a large one in the middle, where in each there was a Pope in full pontificals seated upon a pedestal, who was giving the benediction, and smaller spaces, each with a niche containing a figure in the round and standing upright, four braccia high; which figures, representing Saints, stood on either side of those Popes. The order of the composition had the form of a triumphal arch, and above the columns that supported the cornice was a marble tablet three braccia in height and four braccia and a half in width, in which was a scene in half-relief. In the scene above the statue of Pope Leo, which statue had on either side of it in the niches S. Peter and S. Paul, was his Conference with King Francis at Bologna, and this

story of Leo in the middle, above the columns, was accompanied by two smaller scenes, in one of which, that above S. Peter, was the Saint restoring a dead man to life, and in the other, that above S. Paul, that Saint preaching to the people. In the scene above Pope Clement, which corresponded to that mentioned above, was that Pontiff crowning the Emperor Charles at Bologna, and on either side of it are two smaller scenes, in one of which is S. John the Baptist preaching to the people, and in the other S. John the Evangelist raising Drusiana from the dead; and these have below them in the niches the same Saints, four braccia high, standing on either side of the statue of Pope Clement, as with that of Leo.

In this structure Baccio showed either too little religion or too much adulation, or both together, in that he thought fit that the first founders—after Christ—of our religion, men deified and most dear to God, should give way to our Popes, and placed them in positions unworthy of them and inferior to those of Leo and Clement. Certain it is that this design of his, even as it was displeasing to God and to the Saints, so likewise gave no pleasure to the Popes or to any other man, for the reason, it appears to me, that religion—and I mean our own, the true religion—should be placed by mankind before all other interests and considerations. And, on the other hand, he who wishes to exalt and honour any other person, should, I think, be temperate and restrained, and confine himself within certain limits, so that his praise and honour may not become another thing—I mean senseless adulation, which first disgraces the praiser, and also gives no pleasure to the person praised, if he has any proper feeling, but does quite the contrary. Baccio, in doing what I have described, made known to everyone that he had much goodwill and affection indeed towards the Popes, but little judgment in exalting and honouring them in their sepulchres.

The models described above were taken by Baccio to the garden of Cardinal Ridolfi at S. Agata on Monte Cavallo, where his lordship was entertaining Cibo, Salviati, and Messer Baldassarre da Pescia to dinner, they having assembled together there in order to settle all that was necessary in the matter of the tombs. While they were at table, then, there arrived the sculptor Solosmeo, an amusing and outspoken person, who was always ready to speak ill of anyone, and little the friend of Baccio. When the message was brought to those lords that Solosmeo was seeking admittance, Ridolfi ordered that he should be ushered in, and then, turning to Baccio, said to him: "I wish that we should hear what Solosmeo says of our bestowal of these tombs. Raise that door-curtain, Baccio, and stand behind it." Baccio immediately obeyed, and, when Solosmeo had entered and had been invited to drink, they then turned to the subject of the tombs allotted to Baccio; whereupon Solosmeo reproached the Cardinals for having made a bad choice, and went on to speak all manner of evil against Baccio, taxing him with ignorance of art, avarice, and arrogance, and going into many particulars in his criticisms. Baccio, who stood hidden behind the door-curtain, was not able to contain himself until Solosmeo should have finished, and, bursting out scowling and full of rage, said to Solosmeo: "What have I done to you, that you should speak of me with such scant respect?" Dumbfounded at the appearance of Baccio, Solosmeo turned to Ridolfi and said: "What tricks are these, my lord? I want nothing more to do with priests!" and took himself off. The Cardinals had a hearty laugh both at the one and at the other; and Salviati said to Baccio: "You hear the opinion of your brothers in art. Go and give them the lie with your work."



**STATUE OF GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE**  
*(After the marble by Baccio Bandinelli. Florence: Piazza di S. Lorenzo)*

Baccio then began the work of the statues and scenes, but his performances by no means corresponded to his promises and his duty towards those Pontiffs, for he used little diligence in the figures and scenes, and left them badly finished and full of defects, being more solicitous about drawing his money than about working at the marble. Now his patrons became aware of Baccio's procedure, and repented of what they had done; but the two largest pieces of marble remained, those for the two statues that were still to be executed, one of Leo seated and the other of Clement, and these they ordered him to finish, beseeching him that he should do better in them. But Baccio, having already drawn all the money, entered into negotiations with Messer Giovan Battista da Ricasoli, Bishop of Cortona, who was in Rome on business of Duke Cosimo's, to depart from Rome and go to Florence in order to serve Cosimo in the matter of the fountains of his villa of Castello and the tomb of his father, Signor Giovanni. The Duke having answered that Baccio should come, he set off for Florence without a word, leaving the work of the tombs unfinished and the statues in the hands of two assistants. The Cardinals, hearing of this, allotted those two statues of the Popes, which still remained to be finished, to two sculptors, one of whom was Raffaello da Montelupo, who received the statue of Pope Leo, and the other Giovanni di Baccio, to whom was given the statue of Clement. They then gave orders that the masonry and all that was prepared should be put together, and the work was erected; but the statues and scenes were in many parts neither pumiced nor polished, so that they brought Baccio more discredit than fame.

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Arriving in Florence, Baccio found that the Duke had sent the sculptor Tribolo to Carrara to quarry the marble for the fountains of Castello and the tomb of Signor Giovanni; and he so wrought upon the Duke that he wrested the tomb of Signor Giovanni from the hands of Tribolo, demonstrating to his Excellency that the marbles for such a work were already in great measure in Florence. Thus, little by little, he penetrated into the confidence of the Duke, insomuch that both for this reason and for his arrogance everyone was afraid of him. He then proposed to the Duke that the tomb of Signor Giovanni should be erected in the Chapel of the Neroni, a narrow, confined, and mean place, in S. Lorenzo, being too ignorant or not wishing to suggest that for so great a Prince it was proper that a new chapel should be built on purpose. He also prevailed on the Duke to demand from Michelagnolo, on Baccio's behalf, many pieces of marble that he had in Florence; and when the Duke had obtained them from Michelagnolo, and Baccio from the Duke, among those marbles being some blocked out figures and a statue carried well on towards completion by Michelagnolo, Bandinelli, taking them all over, hacked and broke to pieces everything that he could find, thinking that by so doing he was avenging himself on Michelagnolo and causing him displeasure. He found, moreover, in the same room in S. Lorenzo wherein Michelagnolo worked, two statues in one block of marble, representing Hercules crushing Antæus, which the Duke was having executed by the sculptor Fra Giovanni Agnolo. These were well advanced; but Baccio, saying to the Duke that the friar had spoilt that marble, broke it into many pieces.

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In the end, he constructed all the base of the tomb, which is an isolated pedestal about four braccia on every side, and has at the foot a socle with a moulding in the manner of a base, which goes right round, and with a fillet at the top, such as is generally made for pedestals; and above this a cyma three-quarters of a braccio in height, which goes inwards in a concave curve, inverted, after the manner of a frieze, on which are carved some horse's skulls bound one to another with draperies; and above the whole was to be a smaller pedestal, with a seated statue of four braccia and a half, armed in the ancient fashion, and holding in the hand the baton of a condottiere captain of armies, which was to represent the person of the invincible Signor Giovanni de' Medici. This statue was begun by him from a block of marble, and carried well on, but never finished or placed on the base built for it. It is true that on the front of that base he finished entirely a scene of marble in half-relief, with figures about two braccia high, in which he represented Signor Giovanni seated, to whom are being brought many prisoners, soldiers, women with dishevelled hair, and nude figures, but all without invention and without revealing any feeling. At the end of the scene, indeed, there is a figure with a pig on the shoulder, which is said to have been made by Baccio to represent Messer Baldassarre da Pescia, in derision; for Baccio looked upon him as his enemy, since about this time Messer Baldassarre, as has been related above, had allotted the two statues of Leo and Clement to other sculptors, and, moreover, had so gone to work in Rome that Baccio had perforce to restore at great inconvenience the money that he had received beyond his due for those statues and figures.

During this time Baccio had given his attention to nothing else but demonstrating to Duke Cosimo how much the glory of the ancients had lived through their statues and buildings, saying that his Excellency should seek to obtain in the same way immortality for himself and his actions in the ages to come. Then, after he had brought the tomb of Signor Giovanni near completion, he set about planning to make the Duke begin some great and costly work, which might take a very long time. Duke Cosimo had ceased to inhabit the Palace of the Medici, and had returned with his Court to live in the Palace in the Piazza, which was formerly occupied by the Signoria; and this he was daily rearranging and adorning. Now he had said to Baccio that he had a desire to make a public audience-chamber, both for the foreign Ambassadors and for his citizens and the subjects of the State; and Baccio, with Giuliano di Baccio d'Agnolo, went about thinking how to suggest to him that he should erect an ornamental work of Fossato stone and marble, thirty-eight braccia in width and eighteen in height. This ornamental work, they proposed, should serve as the audience-chamber, and should be in the Great Hall of the Palace, at that end which looks towards

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the north. The audience-chamber was to have a space of fourteen braccia in depth, the ascent to which was to be by seven great steps; and it was to be closed in front by a balustrade, excepting the entrance in the middle. At the end of the hall were to be three great arches, two of which were to serve for windows, being divided up by columns, four to each, two of Fossato stone and two of marble; and above this was to curve a round arch with a frieze of brackets, which were to form on the outer side the ornament of the façade of the Palace, and on the inner side to adorn in the same manner the façade of the hall. The arch in the middle, forming not a window, but a niche, was to be accompanied by two other similar niches, which were to be at the ends of the audience-chamber, one on the east and the other on the west, and adorned with four round Corinthian columns, which were to be ten braccia high and to form a projection at the ends. In the central façade were to be four pilasters, which were to serve as supports between one arch and another to the architrave, frieze, and cornice running right round both above the arches and above the columns. These pilasters were to have between one and another a space of about three braccia, and in each of these spaces was to be a niche four braccia and a half in height, to contain statues, by way of accompaniment to the great niche in the middle of the façade and the two at the sides; in each of which niches Baccio wished to place three statues.

Baccio and Giuliano had in mind, in addition to the ornament of the inner façade, another larger ornament of extraordinary cost and grandeur for the outer façade. The hall being awry and out of square, this ornament was to reduce that outer side to a square form; and there was to be a projection of six braccia right round the walls of the Palazzo Vecchio, with a range of columns fourteen braccia high supporting other columns, between which were to be arches, forming a loggia below, right round the Palace, where there are the Ringhiera and the Giants. Above this, again, was to be another range of pilasters, with arches between them in the same manner, running all the way round the windows of the Palazzo Vecchio, so as to make a façade right round the Palace; and above these pilasters was to be yet another range of arches and pilasters, after the manner of a theatre, with the battlements of that Palace, finally, forming a cornice to the whole structure.

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Knowing that this was a work of vast expense, Baccio and Giuliano consulted together that they should not reveal their conception to the Duke, save only with regard to the ornament of the audience-chamber within the hall, and that of the façade of Fossato stone on the side towards the Piazza, stretching to the length of twenty-four braccia, which is the breadth of the hall. Designs and plans of this work were made by Giuliano, and with these in his hand Baccio spoke to the Duke, to whom he pointed out that in the large niches at the sides he wished to place statues of marble four braccia high, seated on pedestals—namely, Leo X in the act of restoring peace to Italy, and Clement VII crowning Charles V, with two statues in smaller niches within the large ones, on either side of the Popes, which should represent the virtues practised and put into action by them. For the niches four braccia high between the pilasters, in the central façade, he wished to make upright statues of Signor Giovanni, Duke Alessandro, and Duke Cosimo, together with many decorations of various fantasies in carving, and a pavement all of variegated marbles of different colours.

This ornament much pleased the Duke, thinking that with this opportunity it should be possible in time to bring to completion, as has since been done, the body of that hall, with the rest of the decorations and the ceiling, in order to make it the most beautiful hall in Italy. And so great was his Excellency's desire that this work should be done, that he assigned for its execution such a sum of money as Baccio wished and demanded every week. A beginning was made with the quarrying and cutting of the Fossato stone, in order to make the ornamentation in the form of the base, columns, and cornices; and Baccio required that all should be done and carried to completion by the stone-cutters of the Office of Works of S. Maria del Fiore. This work was certainly executed by those masters with great diligence; and if Baccio and Giuliano had urged it on, they would have finished and built in all the ornaments of stone very quickly. But Baccio gave his attention to nothing save to having the statues blocked out, finishing few of them entirely, and to drawing his salary, which the Duke gave him every month, besides paying for his assistants and meeting every sort of expense that he incurred in the work, and giving him five hundred crowns for one of the statues finished by him in marble; wherefore the end of this work was never in sight.

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Even so, if Baccio and Giuliano, being engaged on a work of such importance, had brought the head of that hall into square, as they could have done, instead of putting right only half of the eight braccia by which it was awry, and leaving several parts badly proportioned, such as the central niche and the two large ones at the sides, which are squat, and the members of the cornices, which are too slight for so great a body; if, as they might have done, they had gone higher with the columns, thus giving greater grandeur, a better manner, and more invention to that work; and if, also, they had brought the uppermost cornice into touch with the level of the original old ceiling above, they would have shown more art and judgment, nor would all that labour have been spent in vain and wasted so thoughtlessly, as has since been evident to those to whom, as will be related, it has fallen to put it right and finish it. For, in spite of all the pains and thought afterwards devoted to it, there are many defects and errors in the door of entrance and in the relation of the niches in the side-walls, in which it has since been seen to be necessary to change the form of many parts, although it has never yet been found possible, without demolishing the whole, to correct the divergence from the square or to prevent this from being revealed in the pavement and the ceiling. It is true that in the manner in which they arranged it, even as it now stands, there is proof of great craftsmanship and pains, and it deserves no little praise for the many stones worked with the bevel-square, which slant away obliquely by reason of

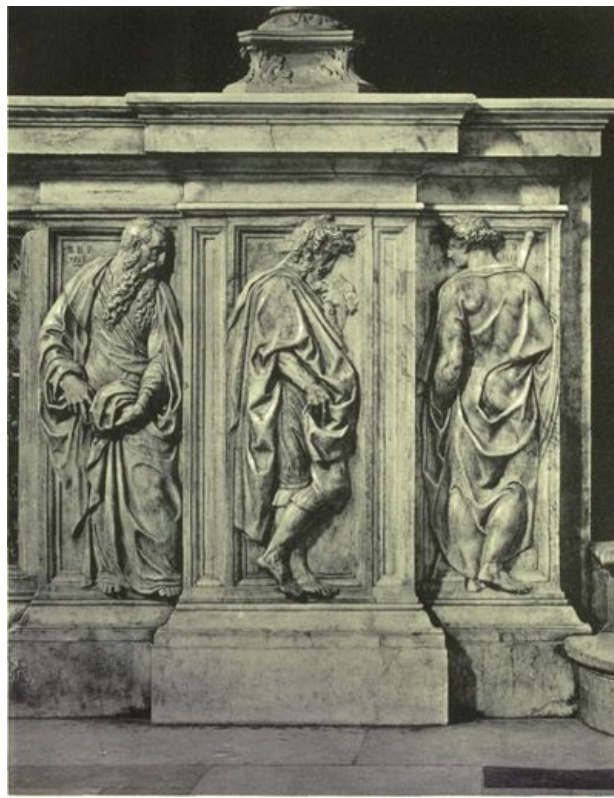
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the hall being awry; and as for diligence and excellence in the working, laying, and joining together of the stones, nothing better could be seen or done. But the whole work would have succeeded much better if Baccio, who never held architecture in any account, had availed himself of some judgment more able than that of Giuliano, who, although he was a good master in wood and had some knowledge of architecture, was yet not the sort of man to be suitable for such a work as that was, as experience has proved. For this reason the work was pursued over a period of many years, without much more than half being built. Baccio finished and placed in the smaller niches the statue of Signor Giovanni and that of Duke Alessandro, both in the principal façade, and on a pedestal of bricks in the great niche the statue of Pope Clement; and he also brought to completion the statue of Duke Cosimo. In the last he took no little pains with the head, but for all this the Duke and the gentlemen of the Court said that it did not resemble him in the least. Wherefore Baccio, having already made one of marble, which is now in one of the upper apartments in the same Palace, and which looked very well and was the best head that he ever made, defended himself and sought to cover up the defects and worthlessness of the new head with the excellence of the old. However, hearing that head censured by everyone, one day in a rage he knocked it off, with the intention of making another and fixing it in its place; but in the end he never made it at all. It was a custom of Baccio's to add pieces of marble both small and large to the statues that he executed, feeling no annoyance in doing this, and making light of it. He did this with one of the heads of Cerberus in the group of Orpheus; in the S. Peter that is in S. Maria del Fiore he let in a piece of drapery; in the case of the Giant of the Piazza, as may be seen, he joined two pieces—a shoulder and a leg—to the Cacus, and in many other works he did the same, holding to such ways as generally damn a sculptor completely.

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Having finished these statues, he set his hand to the statue of Pope Leo for this work, and carried it well forward. Then, perceiving that the work was proving very long, that he was now never likely to attain to the completion of his original design for the façades right round the Palace, that a great sum of money had been spent and much time consumed, and that for all this the work was not half finished and gained little approval from the people, he set about thinking of some new fantasy, and began to attempt to remove from the Duke's mind the thought of the Palace, believing that his Excellency also was weary of that work. Thus, then, having made enemies of the proveditors and of all the stone-cutters in the Office of Works of S. Maria del Fiore, which was under his authority, while the statues that were destined for the audience-chamber were, after his fashion, some only blocked out and others finished and placed in position, and the ornamentation in great part built up, wishing to conceal the many defects that were in the work and little by little to abandon it, he suggested to the Duke that the Wardens of Works of S. Maria del Fiore were throwing away his money and no longer doing anything of any importance. He said that he had therefore thought that his Excellency would do well to divert all that useless expenditure of the Office of Works into making the octagonal choir of the church and the ornaments of the altar, the steps, the daïses of the Duke and the magistrates, and the stalls in the choir for the canons, chaplains, and clerks, according as was proper for so honourable a church. Of this choir Filippo di Ser Brunellesco had left the model in that simple framework of wood which previously served as the choir in the church, intending in time to have it executed in marble, in the same form, but more ornate. Baccio reflected, besides the considerations mentioned above, that in this choir he would have occasion to make many statues and scenes in marble and in bronze for the high-altar and all around the choir, and also for two pulpits of marble that were to be in the choir, and that the base of the outer side of the eight faces might be adorned with many scenes in bronze let into the marble ornamentation. Above this he thought to place a range of columns and pilasters to support the cornice right round, and four arches distributed according to the cross of the church; of which arches one was to form the principal entrance, opposite to another rising above the high-altar, and the two others were to be at the sides, one on the right hand and another on the left, and below these last two were to be placed the pulpits. Over the cornice was to be a range of balusters, curving right round above the eight sides, and over the balusters a garland of candelabra, in order, as it were, to crown the choir with lights according to the seasons, as had always been the custom while the wooden model of Brunelleschi was there.

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**RELIEFS FROM THE CHOIR SCREEN**  
**(After Baccio Bandinelli. *Florence: Duomo*)**  
*Alinari*

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Pointing out all this to the Duke, Baccio said that his Excellency, with the revenues of the Office of Works—namely, of S. Maria del Fiore and of its Wardens—and with that which his liberality might add, in a short time could adorn that temple and give great grandeur and magnificence to the same, and consequently to the whole city, of which it was the principal temple, and would leave an everlasting and honourable memorial of himself in such a structure; and besides all this, he said, his Excellency would be giving him an opportunity of exerting his powers and of making many good and beautiful works, and also, by displaying his ability, of acquiring for himself name and fame with posterity, which should be pleasing to his Excellency, since he was his servant and had been brought up by the house of the Medici. With these designs and these words Baccio so moved the Duke, that, consenting that such a structure should be erected, his Excellency commissioned him to make a model of the whole choir. Departing from the Duke, then, Baccio went to his architect, Giuliano di Baccio d'Agnolo, and discussed the whole matter with him; and, after they had gone to the place and examined everything with diligence, they resolved not to depart from the form of Filippo's model, but to follow it, adding only other ornaments in the shape of columns and projections, and enriching it as much as they could while preserving the original design and form. But it is not the number of parts and ornaments that renders a fabric rich and beautiful, but their excellence, however few they may be, provided also that they are set in their proper places and arranged together with due proportion; it is these that give pleasure and are admired, and, having been executed with judgment by the craftsman, afterwards receive praise from all others. This Giuliano and Baccio do not seem to have considered or observed, for they chose a subject involving much labour and endless pains, but wanting in grace, as experience has proved.

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The design of Giuliano, as may be seen, was to place at the corners of all the eight sides pilasters bent round the angles, the whole work being composed in the Ionic Order; and these pilasters, since in the ground-plan they were made, with all the rest of the work, to diminish towards the centre of the choir and were not even, necessarily had to be broad on the outer side and narrow on the inner, which is a breach of proportionate measurement. And since each pilaster was bent according to the inner angles of the eight sides, the extension-lines towards the centre so diminished it that the two columns that were one on either side of the pilaster at the corner caused it to appear too slender, and produced an ungraceful effect both in it and in the whole work, both on the outer side and likewise on the inner, although the measurements there are correct. Giuliano also made the model of the whole altar, which stood at a distance of one braccio and a half from the ornament of the choir. For the upper part of this Baccio afterwards made in wax a Christ lying dead, with two Angels, one of whom was holding His right arm and supporting His head on one knee, and the other was holding the Mysteries of the Passion; which statue of Christ occupied almost the whole altar, so that there would scarcely have been room to celebrate Mass, and Baccio proposed to make this statue about four braccia and a half in length. He made, also, a projection in the form of a pedestal behind the altar, attached to it in the centre, with a seat upon which he afterwards placed a seated figure of God the Father, six braccia high and giving the benediction, and accompanied by two other Angels, each four braccia high, kneeling at the extreme corners of the predella of the altar, on the level on which rested the feet of God the

Father. This predella was more than a braccio in height, and on it were many stories of the Passion of Jesus Christ, which were all to be in bronze, and on the corners of the predella were the Angels mentioned above, both kneeling and each holding in the hands a candelabrum; which candelabra of the Angels served to accompany eight large candelabra placed between the Angels, and three braccia and a half in height, which adorned that altar; and God the Father was in the midst of them all. Behind God the Father was left a space of half a braccio, in order that there might be room to ascend to kindle the lights.

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Under the arch that stood opposite to the principal entrance of the choir, on the base that ran right round, on the outer side, Baccio had placed, directly under the centre of that arch, the Tree of the Fall, round the trunk of which was wound the Ancient Serpent with a human face, and two nude figures were about the Tree, one being Adam and the other Eve. On the outer side of the choir, to which those figures had their faces turned, there ran lengthways along the base a space about three braccia long, which was to contain the story of their Creation, either in marble or in bronze; and this was to be pursued along the faces of the base of the whole work, to the number of twenty-one stories, all from the Old Testament. And for the further enrichment of this base he had made for each of the socles upon which stood the columns and pilasters, a figure of some Prophet, either draped or nude, to be afterwards executed in marble—a great work, truly, and a marvellous opportunity, likely to reveal all the art and genius of a perfect master, whose memory should never be extinguished by any lapse of time. This model was shown to the Duke, and also a double series of designs made by Baccio, which, both from their variety and their number, and likewise from their beauty—for the reason that Baccio worked boldly in wax and drew very well—pleased his Excellency, and he ordained that the masonry-work should be straightway taken in hand, devoting to it all the expenditure administered by the Office of Works, and giving orders that a great quantity of marble should be brought from Carrara.

Baccio, on his part, also set to work to make a beginning with the statues; and among the first was an Adam who was raising one arm, and was about four braccia in height. This figure was finished by Baccio, but, since it proved to be narrow in the flanks and somewhat defective in other parts, he changed it into a Bacchus, and afterwards gave it to the Duke, who kept it in his Palace many years, in his chamber; and not long ago it was placed in a niche in the ground-floor apartments which his Excellency occupies in summer. He had also made a seated figure of Eve of the same size, which he had half finished: but it was abandoned on account of the Adam, which it was to have accompanied. For, having made a beginning with another Adam, in a different form and attitude, it became necessary for him to change also the Eve, and the original seated figure was converted by him into a Ceres, which he gave to the most illustrious Duchess Leonora, together with an Apollo, which was another nude that he had executed; and her Excellency had them placed in the ornament in front of the fish-pond, the design and architecture of which are by Giorgio Vasari, in the gardens of the Pitti Palace. Baccio worked at these two figures with very great zeal, thinking to satisfy the craftsmen and all the world as well as he had satisfied himself; and he finished and polished them with all the diligence and lovingness that were in him. He then set up these figures of Adam and Eve in their place, but, when uncovered, they experienced the same fate as his other works, and were torn to pieces with savage bitterness in sonnets and Latin verses, one going to the length of suggesting that even as Adam and Eve, having defiled Paradise by their disobedience, deserved to be driven out, so these figures, defiling the earth, deserved to be expelled from the church. Nevertheless the statues are well-proportioned, and beautiful in many parts; and although there is not in them that grace which has been spoken of in other places, and which he was not able to give to his works, yet they display so much art and design, that they deserve no little praise. A lady who had set herself to examine these statues, being asked by some gentlemen what she thought of these naked bodies, answered, "About the man I can give no judgment;" and, being pressed to give her opinion of the woman, she replied that in the Eve there were two good points, worthy of considerable praise, in that she was white and firm; whereby she contrived ingeniously, while seeming to praise, covertly to deal a shrewd blow to the craftsman and his art, giving to the statue the praise proper to the female body, which it is also necessary to apply to the marble, the material, and which is true of it, but not of the work or of the craftsmanship, for by such praise the craftsmanship is not praised. Thus, then, that shrewd lady hinted that in her opinion nothing could be praised in that statue save the marble.

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Baccio afterwards set his hand to the statue of the Dead Christ, which likewise not succeeding as he had expected, he abandoned it when it was already well advanced, and, taking another block of marble, began another Christ in an attitude different from the first, and together with that the Angel who supports the head of Christ on one leg and with one hand His arm; and he did not rest until he had finished entirely both the one figure and the other. When arrangements were made to set it up on the altar, it proved to be so large that it occupied too much space, and there was no room left for the ministrations of the priest; and although this statue was passing good, and even one of Baccio's best, nevertheless the people—the ordinary citizens no less than the priests—could never have their fill of speaking ill of it and picking it to pieces. Recognizing that to uncover unfinished works injures the reputation of a craftsman in the eyes of all those who are not of the profession, or have no knowledge of art, or have not seen the models, Baccio resolved, in order to accompany the statue of Christ and to complete the altar, to make the statue of God the Father, for which a very beautiful block of marble had come from Carrara. And he had already carried it well forward, making it half nude after the manner of a Jove, when, since it did not please the Duke and appeared to Baccio himself to have certain defects, he left it as it was, and even so it is still to be found in the Office of Works.

Baccio cared nothing for the words of others, but gave his attention to making himself rich and

buying property. He bought a most beautiful farm, called Lo Spinello, on the heights of Fiesole, and another with a very beautiful house called Il Cantone, in the plain above San Salvi, on the River Affrico, and a great house in the Via de' Ginori, which he was enabled to acquire by the moneys and favours of the Duke. Having thus secured his own position, Baccio thenceforward cared little to work or to exert himself; and although the tomb of Signor Giovanni was unfinished, the audience-chamber of the Great Hall only begun, and the choir and altar behindhand, he paid little attention to the words of others or to the censure that was laid upon him on that account. However, having erected the altar and set into position the marble base upon which was to stand the statue of God the Father, he made a model for this and finally began it, and, employing stone-cutters, proceeded to carry it slowly forward.

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There came from France in those days Benvenuto Cellini, who had served King Francis in the matter of goldsmith's work, of which he was the most famous master of his day; and he had also executed some castings in bronze for that King. Benvenuto was introduced to Duke Cosimo, who, desiring to adorn the city, showed also to him much favour and affection, and commissioned him to make a statue of bronze about five braccia high, of a nude Perseus standing over a nude woman representing Medusa, whose head he had cut off; which work was to be placed under one of the arches of the Loggia in the Piazza. While he was executing the Perseus, Benvenuto also did other things for the Duke. Now, even as it happens that the potter is always the jealous enemy of the sculptor, and the sculptor of the potter, Baccio was not able to endure the various favours shown to Benvenuto. It appeared to him a strange thing, also, that Benvenuto should have thus changed in a moment from a goldsmith into a sculptor, nor was he able to grasp in his mind how a man who was used to making medals and little things, could now execute colossal figures and giants. Baccio could not conceal his thoughts, but expressed them freely, and he found a man able to answer him; for, Baccio saying many of his biting words to Benvenuto in the presence of the Duke, Benvenuto, who was no less proud than himself, took pains to be even with him. And thus, arguing often on the matters of art and their own works, and pointing out each other's defects, they would utter the most slanderous words of one another in the presence of the Duke, who, because he took pleasure in this and recognized true genius and acuteness in their biting phrases, had given them full liberty and licence to say whatever they pleased about one another before him, provided that they did not remember their quarrel elsewhere.

This rivalry, or rather, enmity, was the reason that Baccio pressed forward his statue of God the Father; but he was no longer receiving from the Duke those favours to which he had been accustomed, and he consoled himself for this by paying court and doing service to the Duchess. One day, among others, that they were railing at one another as usual and laying bare many of each others' actions, Benvenuto, glaring at Baccio and threatening him, said: "Prepare yourself for another world, Baccio, for I mean to send you out of this one." And Baccio answered: "Let me know a day beforehand, so that I may confess and make my will, and may not die like the sort of beast that you are." By reason of which the Duke, who for many months had found amusement in their quarrels, bade them be silent, fearing some evil ending, and caused them to make a portrait-bust of himself from the girdle upwards, both to be cast in bronze, to the end that he who should succeed best should carry off the honours.

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Amid this rivalry and contention Baccio finished his figure of God the Father, which he arranged to have placed in the church on the base beside the altar. This figure was clothed and six braccia high, and he erected and completely finished it. But, in order not to leave it unaccompanied, he summoned from Rome the sculptor Vincenzo de' Rossi, his pupil, wishing to execute in clay for the altar all that remained to be done in marble; and he caused Vincenzo to assist him in finishing the two Angels who are holding the candelabra at the corners, and the greater part of the scenes on the predella and the base. Having then set everything upon the altar, in order to see how his work, when finished, was to stand, he strove to prevail on the Duke to come and see it, before he should uncover it. But the Duke would never go, and, although entreated by the Duchess, who favoured Baccio in this matter, he would never let himself be shaken, and did not go to see it, being angered because among so many works Baccio had never finished one, even after his Excellency had made him rich and had won odium among the citizens by honouring him highly and doing him many favours. For all this his Excellency was disposed to assist Clemente, the natural son of Baccio—a young man of ability, who had made considerable proficiencie in design—because it was likely to fall to him in time to finish his father's works.

At this same time, which was in the year 1554, there came from Rome, where he had been working for Pope Julius III, Giorgio Vasari of Arezzo, in order to serve his Excellency in many works that he was intending to execute, and in particular to decorate the Palace on the Piazza, and to renovate it with new constructions, and to finish the Great Hall, as he was afterwards seen to do. In the following year Giorgio Vasari summoned from Rome and engaged in the Duke's service the sculptor Bartolommeo Ammanati, to the end that he might execute the other façade in the above-named Hall, opposite to the audience-chamber begun by Baccio, and a fountain in the centre of that façade; and a beginning was straightway made with executing a part of the statues that were to go into that work. Baccio, perceiving that the Duke was employing others, recognized that he did not wish to use his services any longer; at which, feeling great displeasure and vexation, he had become so strange and so irritable that no one could have any dealings with him either in his house or out of it, and to his son Clemente he behaved very strangely, keeping him in want of everything. For this reason Clemente, who had made a large head of his Excellency in clay, in order to execute it in marble for the statue of the audience-chamber, sought leave of the Duke to depart and go to Rome, on account of his father's strangeness; and the Duke said that he would not fail him. Baccio, at the departure of Clemente, who had asked leave of

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him, would not give him anything, although the young man had been a great help to him in Florence, and, indeed, Baccio's right hand in every matter; nevertheless, he thought nothing of getting rid of him. The young man, having arrived in Rome at an unfavourable season, died in the same year both from over-study and from wild living, leaving in Florence an example of his handiwork in an almost finished head of Duke Cosimo in marble, which is very beautiful, and was afterwards placed by Baccio over the principal door of his house in the Via de' Ginori. Clemente also left well advanced a Dead Christ who is supported by Nicodemus, which Nicodemus is a portrait from life of Baccio; and these statues, which are passing good, Baccio set up in the Church of the Servites, as we shall relate in the proper place. The death of Clemente was a very great loss to Baccio and to art, and Bandinelli recognized this after he was dead.

Baccio uncovered the altar of S. Maria del Fiore, and the statue of God the Father was criticized. The altar has remained as was described above, nor has anything more been done to it since; but the work of the choir has been continued.

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Many years before, there had been quarried at Carrara a great block of marble ten braccia and a half in height and five braccia in width, of which having received notice, Baccio rode to Carrara and made a contract for it with him to whom it belonged, giving him fifty crowns as earnest-money. He then returned to Florence and so pestered the Duke, that, by the favour of the Duchess, he obtained the commission to make from it a giant, which was to be placed in the Piazza, at the corner where the Lion was; on which spot was to be made a great fountain to spout water, in the middle of which was to be a Neptune in his chariot, drawn by sea-horses, and this figure was to be carved out of the above-mentioned block of marble. For this figure Baccio made more than one model, and showed them to his Excellency; but the matter stood thus, without anything more being done, until the year 1559, at which time the owner of the marble, having come from Carrara, asked to be paid the rest of the money, saying that otherwise he would give back the fifty crowns and break it into several pieces, in order to sell it, since he had received many offers. Orders were given by the Duke to Giorgio Vasari that he should have the marble paid for; which having been heard throughout the world of art, and also that the Duke had not yet made a free gift of the marble to Baccio, Benvenuto, and likewise Ammanati, bestirring themselves, each besought the Duke that he should be allowed to make a model in competition with Baccio, and that his Excellency should deign to give the marble to him who had shown the greatest ability in his model. The Duke did not deny to either of them the right to make a model, or deprive them of the hope that he who should acquit himself the best might be chosen to execute the statue. His Excellency knew that in ability, judgment, and design Baccio was still better than any of the sculptors who were in his service, if only he would consent to take pains, and he welcomed this competition, in order to incite Baccio to acquit himself better and to do the most that he could. Bandinelli, having seen this competition on his shoulders, was greatly troubled by it, fearing the loss of the Duke's favour more than any other thing, and once more he set himself to making models. He was most assiduous in waiting on the Duchess, and so wrought upon her, that he obtained leave to go to Carrara in order to make arrangements for having the marble brought to Florence. Having arrived in Carrara, he had the marble so reduced in size—as he had planned to do—that he made it a sorry thing, and robbed both himself and the others of a noble opportunity and of the hope of ever making from it a beautiful and magnificent work. On returning to Florence, there was a long contention between Benvenuto and him, Benvenuto saying to the Duke that Baccio had spoil the marble before it had been assigned to him. Finally the Duchess so went to work that the marble became Baccio's; and orders were given that it should be taken from Carrara to the sea-shore, and a boat was made ready with the proper appliances, which was to convey it up the Arno as far as Signa. Baccio also caused a room to be built up in the Loggia of the Piazza, wherein to work at the marble.

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In the meantime he had set his hand to executing cartoons, in order to have some pictures painted which were to adorn the apartments of the Pitti Palace. These pictures were painted by a young man called Andrea del Minga, who handled colour passing well. The stories painted in the pictures were the Creation of Adam and Eve, and their Expulsion from Paradise by the Angel, a Noah, and a Moses with the Tables; which finished, he then presented them to the Duchess, seeking to obtain her favour in his difficulties and contentions. And, in truth, if it had not been for that lady, who loved him for his abilities and held him on his feet, Baccio would have fallen headlong down and would have lost completely the favour of the Duke. The Duchess also made much use of Baccio in the Pitti garden, where she had caused to be constructed a grotto full of tufa and sponge-stone formed by the action of water, and containing a fountain; and for this Baccio had caused his pupil, Giovanni Fancelli, to execute in marble a large basin and some goats of the size of life, which spout forth water, and likewise, for a fish-pond, after a model made by himself, a countryman who is emptying a barrel full of water. For these reasons the Duchess was constantly helping and favouring Baccio with the Duke, who finally gave him leave to begin the great model of the Neptune; on which account he once more sent to Rome for Vincenzo de' Rossi, who had previously departed from Florence, with the intention of making him help to execute it.

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While these preparations were in progress, Baccio was seized with a desire to finish the statue of the Dead Christ supported by Nicodemus, which his son Clemente had carried well forward; for he had heard that Buonarroti was finishing one in Rome that he had begun to carve from a large block of marble, containing five figures, which was to be placed on his tomb in S. Maria Maggiore. Out of emulation with him Baccio set to work on his group with the greatest assiduity, with assistants, until he had finished it. And meanwhile he was going about among the principal churches of Florence, seeking for a place where he might set up that work and also make a tomb

for himself; but for long he found no place for the tomb that could content him, until he resolved on a chapel in the Church of the Servites which belongs to the family of the Pazzi. The owners of this chapel, at the request of the Duchess, granted the place to Baccio, without divesting themselves of the rights of ownership and of the devices of their house that were there; and they granted him only this, that he should erect an altar of marble and place upon it the statues mentioned above, and make his tomb at the foot of it. Afterwards, also, he came to an agreement with the friars of that convent with regard to the other matters appertaining to the celebration of Mass. During this time, then, Baccio was causing the altar and the marble base to be built, in order to place upon it the above-named statues; and, when he had finished it, he proposed to lay in that tomb, in which he wished to be laid himself together with his wife, the bones of his father Michelagnolo, which, at his death, he had caused to be placed in a vault in the same church. These bones of his father he chose to lay piously in that tomb with his own hands; whereupon it happened that either because he felt sorrow and a shock to his mind in handling his father's bones, or because he exerted himself too much in transferring those bones with his own hands and in rearranging the marbles, or from both reasons together, he was so overcome that he felt ill and had to go home, and, his malady growing daily worse, in eight days he died, at the age of seventy-two, having been up to that time robust and vigorous, and without having ever suffered much illness during the whole of his life. He was buried with honourable obsequies, and laid beside his father's bones in the above-mentioned tomb constructed by himself, on which is this epitaph:—

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D. O. M.  
BACCIUS BANDINELL. DIVI JACOBI EQUES  
SUB HAC SERVATORIS IMAGINE,  
A SE EXPRESSA, CUM JACOBA DONIA  
UXORE QUIESCIT, AN. S. MDLIX.

He left behind him both sons and daughters, who were the heirs to his many possessions in lands, houses, and money, which he bequeathed to them; and to the world he left the works in sculpture described by us, and designs in great numbers, which are in the possession of his family, and in our book there are some executed with the pen and with chalk, than which it is certain that nothing better could be done.

The marble for the giant was left more in dispute than ever, because Benvenuto was always about the Duke, and wished, in virtue of a little model that he had made, that the Duke should give it to him. On the other hand, Ammanati, being a sculptor of marbles and more experienced in such works than Benvenuto, considered for many reasons that this work belonged to him. Now it happened that Giorgio Vasari had to go to Rome with the Cardinal, the son of the Duke, when he went to receive his hat, and Ammanati gave to Vasari a little model of wax showing the shape in which he desired to carve that figure from the marble, and a piece of wood reproducing the exact proportions—the length, breadth, thickness, and inclination from the straight—of the marble, to the end that Giorgio might show them in Rome to Michelagnolo Buonarroti and persuade him to declare his opinion in the matter, and so move the Duke to give him the marble. All this Giorgio did most willingly, and it was the reason that the Duke gave orders that an arch should be partitioned off in the Loggia of the Piazza, and that Ammanati should make a great model as large as the giant was to be. Having heard this, Benvenuto rode in a great fury to Pisa, where the Duke was, and said to him that he could not suffer that his genius should be trampled underfoot by one who was inferior to himself, and that he desired to make a great model in competition with Ammanati, in the same place; and the Duke, wishing to pacify him, granted him leave to have another arch of the Loggia partitioned off, and caused to be given to him materials for making, as he desired, a large model in competition with Ammanati.

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While these masters were engaged in making their models, after having made fast their enclosures in such a manner that neither the one nor the other could see what his rival was doing, although these enclosures were attached to each other, there rose up the Flemish sculptor Maestro Giovan Bologna, a young man not inferior in ability or in spirit to either of the others. This master, being in the service of the Lord Don Francesco, Prince of Florence, asked his Excellency to enable him to make a giant which might serve as a model, of the same size as the marble; and the Prince granted him this favour. Maestro Giovan Bologna had as yet no thought of having the giant to execute in marble, but he wished at least to display his ability and to make himself known for what he was worth; and, having received permission from the Prince, he, also, began a model in the Convent of S. Croce. Nor was Vincenzo Danti, the sculptor of Perugia, a younger man than any of the others, willing to fail to compete with these three masters, not in the hope of obtaining the marble, but in order to demonstrate his spirit and genius. And so, having set to work on his own account in the house of Messer Alessandro, the son of M. Ottaviano de' Medici, he executed a model good in many parts and as large as the others.

The models finished, the Duke went to see those of Ammanati and of Benvenuto; and, being more pleased with that of Ammanati than with that of Benvenuto, he resolved that Ammanati should have the marble and make the giant, because he was younger than Benvenuto and more practised in marble. The disposition of the Duke was strengthened by Giorgio Vasari, who did many good offices with his Excellency for Ammanati, having perceived that, in addition to his knowledge, he was ready to endure any labour, and hoping that from his hands there would issue an excellent work finished in a short time. The Duke would not at that time see the model of Maestro Giovan Bologna, because, not having seen any work by him in marble, it did not seem to him that he could entrust to that master, as his first work, so great an undertaking, although he heard from many craftsmen and other men of judgment that Giovan Bologna's model was in many

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parts better than the others. But if Baccio had been alive, there would not have been all that contention among those masters, because without a doubt it would have fallen to him to make the model of clay and the giant of marble. This work, then, was snatched from Baccio by death, but the same circumstance brought him no little glory, in that it revealed by means of those four models—the reason of the making of which was that Baccio was not alive—how much better were the design, judgment and ability of him who placed on the Piazza the Hercules and Cacus, as it were living in the marble; the excellence of which work has been made evident and brought to light even more by the works that have been executed since Baccio's death by those others, who, although they have acquitted themselves in a manner worthy of praise, have yet not been able to attain to the beauty and excellence that he placed in his work.

Afterwards Duke Cosimo, for the marriage of Queen Joanna of Austria, his daughter-in-law, seven years after the death of Baccio, caused the audience-chamber in the Great Hall, begun by Baccio, of which we have spoken above, to be finished; and he chose that the head of this work of completion should be Giorgio Vasari, who has sought with all diligence to put right the many defects that would have been in it if it had been continued and finished after the original design followed in the beginning by Baccio. Thus that imperfect work has now been carried with the help of God to completion, and is enriched on its side faces by the addition of niches and pilasters, and statues set in their places. Moreover, since it was laid out awry and out of square, we have taken pains to make it even in so far as has been possible, and have raised it considerably with a corridor of Tuscan columns at the top; and as for the statue of Leo begun by Baccio, his pupil Vincenzo de' Rossi has finished it. Besides this, that work has been adorned with friezes full of stucco-work, with many figures large and small, and with devices and other ornaments of various kinds, and under the niches and in the partitions of the vaulting have been made many and various designs in stucco and many beautiful inventions in carving; all which things have enriched the work in such a manner, that it has changed its form and has gained not a little in beauty and grace. For whereas, according to the first design, the ceiling of the Hall being twenty-one braccia above the floor, the audience-chamber did not rise higher than eighteen braccia, so that between it and the old ceiling there was a space of only three braccia; now, after our design, the ceiling of the Hall has been raised so much that it has risen twelve braccia above the old ceiling and fifteen above the audience-chamber of Baccio and Giuliano, so that the ceiling is now thirty-three braccia above the floor of the Hall. And it certainly showed great spirit in his Excellency, that he should resolve to cause to be finished in the space of five months for the above-named nuptials the whole of a work of which more than a third still remained to do, although it had taken more than fifteen years to arrive at the condition in which it was at that time; so eager was he to carry it to completion. But it was not only Baccio's work that his Excellency caused to be completely finished, but also all the rest of what Giorgio Vasari had designed; beginning again from the base that runs over the whole of that work, with a border of balusters in the open spaces, which forms a corridor that passes above the work in the Hall, and commands a view on the outer side of the Piazza and on the inner side of the whole Hall. Thus the Princes and other lords will be able to see, without being seen, all the festivals that may be held there, with much pleasure and convenience for themselves, and then to retire to their apartments, passing by the private and public staircases through all the rooms in the Palace. Nevertheless, to many it has caused dissatisfaction that in a work of such beauty and grandeur that structure was not made square, and many would have liked to have it pulled down and then rebuilt true to square. But it has been judged to be better to continue the work in that way, in order not to appear presumptuous and malign towards Baccio, and also because otherwise we would have seemed not to have the power to correct the errors and defects found by us but committed by others.

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But, returning to Baccio, we must say that his abilities were always recognized during his lifetime, yet will be recognized and regretted much more now that he is dead. And even more would he have been acknowledged for what he was, when alive, and beloved, if he had been so favoured by nature as to be more amiable and more courteous, because his being the contrary, and very rough with his tongue, robbed him of the goodwill of other persons, obscured his talents, and brought it about that his works were regarded with ill will and a prejudiced eye, and therefore could never please anyone. And although he served one nobleman after another, and was enabled by his talent to serve them well, nevertheless he rendered his services with such bad grace, that there was no one who felt grateful to him for them. Moreover, his always decrying and maligning the works of others brought it about that no one could endure him, and, whenever another was able to pay him back in his own coin, it was returned to him with interest; and before the magistrates he spoke all manner of evil without scruple about the other citizens, and received from them as good as he gave. He brought suits and went to law about everything with the greatest readiness, living in one long succession of law-suits, and appearing to triumph in them. But since his drawing, to which it is evident that he gave his attention more than to any other thing, was of such a kind and of such excellence that it atones for his every natural defect and makes him known as a rare master of our art, we therefore not only count him among the greatest craftsmen, but also have always paid respect to his works, and have sought not to destroy but to finish them and do them honour, for the reason that it appears to us that Baccio was in truth one of those who deserve honourable praise and everlasting fame.

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We have deferred to the end the mention of his family name, because it was not always the same, but varied, Baccio having himself called now De' Brandini, and now De' Bandinelli. In his early prints the name De' Brandini may be seen engraved after that of Baccio; but afterwards he preferred the name De' Bandinelli, which he retained to the end and still retains, and he used to say that his ancestors were of the Bandinelli of Siena, who once removed to Gaiuole, and from



## GIULIANO BUGIARDINI

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**GIULIANO BUGIARDINI: PORTRAIT OF A LADY**  
*(Florence: Pitti, 140. Panel)*

[View larger image](#)

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## LIFE OF GIULIANO BUGIARDINI PAINTER OF FLORENCE

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Before the siege of Florence the population had multiplied in such great numbers that the widespread suburbs which lay without every gate, together with the churches, monasteries, and hospitals, formed as it were another city, inhabited by many honourable persons and by good craftsmen of every kind, although for the most part they were less wealthy than those of the city, and lived there with less expense in the way of customs-dues and the like. In one of these suburbs, then, without the Porta a Faenza, was born Giuliano Bugiardini, who lived there, even as his ancestors had done, until the year 1529, when all the suburbs were pulled down. But before that, when still a mere lad, he began his studies in the garden of the Medici on the Piazza di S. Marco, in which, attending to the study of art under the sculptor Bertoldo, he formed such strait friendship and intimacy with Michelagnolo Buonarroti, that he was much beloved by Buonarroti ever afterwards; which Michelagnolo did not so much because of any depth that he saw in Giuliano's manner of drawing, as on account of the extraordinary diligence and love that he showed towards art. There was in Giuliano, besides this, a certain natural goodness and a sort of simplicity in his mode of living, free from all envy and malice, which vastly pleased Buonarroti; nor was there any notable defect in him save this, that he loved too well the works of his own hand. For, although all men are wont to err in this respect, Giuliano in truth passed all due bounds, whatever may have been the reason—either the great pains and diligence that he put into executing them, or some other cause. Wherefore Michelagnolo used to call him blessed, since he appeared to be content with what he knew, and himself unhappy, in that no work of his ever fully satisfied him.

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After Giuliano had studied design for some time in the above-named garden, he worked, together with Buonarroti and Granacci, under Domenico Ghirlandajo, at the time when he was painting the chapel in S. Maria Novella. Then, having made his growth and become a passing good

master, he betook himself to work in company with Mariotto Albertinelli in Gualfonda; in which place he finished a panel-picture that is now at the door of entrance of S. Maria Maggiore in Florence, containing S. Alberto, a Carmelite friar, who has under his feet the Devil in the form of a woman, a work that was much extolled.

It was the custom in Florence before the siege of 1530, at the burial of dead persons of good family and noble blood, to carry in front of the bier a string of pennons fixed round a panel that a porter bore on his head; which pennons were afterwards left in the church in memory of the deceased and of his family. Now, when the elder Cosimo Rucellai died, Bernardo and Palla, his sons, in order to have something new, thought of having not pennons, but in place of them a quadrangular banner four braccia wide and five braccia high, with some pennons at the foot containing the arms of the Rucellai. These men therefore giving this work to Giuliano to execute, he painted on the body of the said banner four great figures, executed very well—namely, S. Cosimo, S. Damiano, S. Peter, and S. Paul, which were truly most beautiful paintings, and done with more diligence than had ever been shown in any other work on cloth.

These and other works of Giuliano's having been seen by Mariotto Albertinelli, he recognized how careful Giuliano was in following the designs that were put before him, without departing from them by a hair's breadth, and, since he was preparing in those days to abandon art, he gave him to finish a panel-picture that Fra Bartolommeo di San Marco, his friend and companion, had formerly left only designed and shaded with water-colours on the gesso of the panel, as was his custom. Giuliano, then, setting his hand to this work, executed it with supreme diligence and labour, and it was placed at that time in the Church of S. Gallo, without the gate of that name. The church and convent were afterwards pulled down on account of the siege, and the picture was carried into the city and placed in the Priests' Hospital in the Via di S. Gallo, and then from there into the Convent of S. Marco, and finally into S. Jacopo tra Fossi on the Canto degli Alberti, where it stands at the present day on the high-altar. In this picture is the Dead Christ, with the Magdalene, who is embracing His feet, and S. John the Evangelist, who is holding His head and supporting it on one knee. There, likewise, are S. Peter, who is weeping, and S. Paul, who, stretching out his arms, is contemplating his Dead Master; and, to tell the truth, Giuliano executed this picture with so much lovingness and so much consideration and judgment, that he will be always very highly extolled for it, even as he was at that time, and that rightly. And after this he finished for Cristofano Rinieri a picture with the Rape of Dina that had been likewise left incomplete by the same Fra Bartolommeo; and he painted another picture like it, which was sent to France.

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Not long afterwards, having been drawn to Bologna by certain friends, he executed some portraits from life, and, for a chapel in the new choir of S. Francesco, an altar-piece in oils containing Our Lady and two Saints, which was held at that time in Bologna, from there not being many masters there, to be a good work and worthy of praise. Then, having returned to Florence, he painted for I know not what person five pictures of the life of Our Lady, which are now in the house of Maestro Andrea Pasquali, physician to his Excellency and a man of great distinction.

Messer Palla Rucellai having commissioned him to execute an altar-piece that was to be placed on his altar in S. Maria Novella, Giuliano began to paint in it the Martyrdom of S. Catharine the Virgin. Mountains in labour! He had it in hand for twelve years, but never carried it to completion after all that time, because he had no invention and knew not how to paint the many various things that had a part in that martyrdom; and, although he was always racking his brain as to how those wheels should be made, and how he should paint the lightning and the fire that consumed them, constantly changing one day what he had done the day before, in all that time he was never able to finish it. It is true that in the meantime he executed many works, and among others, for Messer Francesco Guicciardini—who had returned from Bologna and was then living in his villa at Montici, writing his history—a portrait of him, which was a passing good likeness and pleased him much. He took the portrait, likewise, of Signora Angela de' Rossi, the sister of the Count of Sansecondo, for Signor Alessandro Vitelli, her husband, who was then on garrison-duty in Florence. For Messer Ottaviano de' Medici he painted in a large picture, copied from one by Fra Sebastiano del Piombo, two full-length portraits, Pope Clement seated and Fra Niccolò della Magna standing; and in another picture, likewise, with incredible pains and patience, he portrayed Pope Clement seated, and before him Bartolommeo Valori, who is kneeling and speaking to him.

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#### THE MARTYRDOM OF S. CATHARINE

*(After the painting by Giuliano Bugiardini. Florence: S. Maria Novella, Rucellai Chapel)  
Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

Next, the above-named Messer Ottaviano de' Medici having besought Giuliano privately that he should take for him the portrait of Michelagnolo Buonarroti, he set his hand to it; and, after he had kept Michelagnolo, who used to take pleasure in his conversation, sitting for two hours, Giuliano said to him: "Michelagnolo, if you wish to see yourself, get up and look, for I have now fixed the expression of the face." Michelagnolo, having risen and looked at the portrait, said to Giuliano, laughing: "What the devil have you been doing? You have painted me with one of my eyes up in the temple. Give a little thought to what you are doing." Hearing this, Giuliano, after standing pensive for a while and looking many times from the portrait to the living model, answered in serious earnest: "To me it does not seem so, but sit you down again, and I shall see a little better from the life whether it be true." Buonarroti, who knew whence the defect arose and how small was the judgment of Bugiardini, straightway resumed his seat, grinning. And Giuliano looked many times now at Michelagnolo and now at the picture, and then finally, rising to his feet, declared: "To me it seems that the thing is just as I have drawn it, and that the life is in no way different." "Well, then," answered Buonarroti, "it is a natural deformity. Go on, and spare neither brush nor art." And so Giuliano finished the picture and gave it to Messer Ottaviano, together with the portrait of Pope Clement by the hand of Fra Sebastiano, as Buonarroti desired, who had sent to Rome for it.

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Giuliano afterwards made for Cardinal Innocenzio Cibo a copy of the picture in which Raffaello da Urbino had formerly painted portraits of Pope Leo, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, and Cardinal de' Rossi; but in place of Cardinal de' Rossi he painted the head of Cardinal Cibo, in which he acquitted himself very well, and he executed the whole picture with great diligence and labour. At that time, likewise, he took the portrait of Cencio Guasconi, who was then a very beautiful youth. And after this he painted at the villa of Baccio Valori, at Olmo a Castello, a tabernacle in fresco, which, although it had not much design, was well and very carefully executed.

Meanwhile Palla Rucellai was pressing him to finish his altar-piece, of which mention has been made above, and Giuliano resolved to take Michelagnolo one day to see it. And so, after he had brought him to the place where he kept it, and had described to him with what pains he had executed the lightning-flash, which, coming down from Heaven, shivers the wheels and kills those who are turning them, and also a sun, which, bursting from a cloud, delivers S. Catharine from death, he frankly besought Michelagnolo, who could not keep from laughing as he heard poor Bugiardini's lamentations, that he should tell him how to make eight or ten principal figures of soldiers in the foreground of this altar-piece, drawn up in line after the manner of a guard, and in the act of flight, some being prostrate, some wounded, and others dead; for, said Giuliano, he did not know for himself how to foreshorten them in such a manner that there might be room for them all in so narrow a space, in the fashion that he had imagined, in line. Buonarroti, then, having compassion on the poor man and wishing to oblige him, went up to the picture with a

piece of charcoal and outlined with a few strokes, lightly sketched in, a line of marvellous nude figures, which, foreshortened in different attitudes, were falling in various ways, some backward and others forward, with some wounded or dead, and all executed with that judgment and excellence that were peculiar to Michelagnolo. This done, he went away with the thanks of Giuliano, who not long afterwards took Tribolo, his dearest friend, to see what Buonarroti had done, telling him the whole story. But since, as has been related, Buonarroti had drawn his figures only in outline, Bugiardini was not able to put them into execution, because there were neither shadows in them nor any other help; whereupon Tribolo resolved to assist him, and thus made some sketch-models in clay, which he executed excellently well, giving them that boldness of manner that Michelagnolo had put into the drawing, and working them over with the gradine, which is a toothed instrument of iron, to the end that they might be somewhat rough and might have greater force; and, thus finished, he gave them to Giuliano. However, since that manner did not please the smooth fancy of Bugiardini, no sooner had Tribolo departed than he took a brush and, dipping it from time to time in water, so smoothed them that he took away the gradine-marks and polished them all over, insomuch that, whereas the lights should have served as contrasts to make the shadows stronger, he contrived to destroy all the excellence that made the work perfect. Which having afterwards heard from Giuliano himself, Tribolo laughed at the foolish simplicity of the man; and Giuliano finally delivered the work finished in such a manner that there is nothing in it to show that Michelagnolo ever looked at it.

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In the end, being old and poor, and having very few works to do, Giuliano applied himself with extraordinary and even incredible pains to make a Pietà in a tabernacle that was to go to Spain, with figures of no great size, and executed it with such diligence, that it seems a strange thing to think of an old man of his age having the patience to do such a work for the love that he bore to art. On the doors of that tabernacle, in order to depict the darkness that fell at the death of the Saviour, he painted a Night on a black ground, copied from the one by the hand of Michelagnolo which is in the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo. But since that statue has no other sign than an owl, Giuliano, amusing himself over his picture of Night by giving rein to his fancy, painted there a net for catching thrushes by night, with the lantern, and one of those little vessels holding a candle, or rather, a candle-end, that are carried about at night, with other suchlike things that have something to do with darkness and gloom, such as night-caps, coifs, pillows, and bats; wherefore Buonarroti was like to dislocate his jaw with laughing when he saw this work and considered with what strange caprices Bugiardini had enriched his Night.

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Finally, after having always been that kind of man, Giuliano died at the age of seventy-five, and was buried in the Church of S. Marco at Florence, in the year 1556.

Giuliano once relating to Bronzino how he had seen a very beautiful woman, after he had praised her to the skies, Bronzino said, "Do you know her?" "No," answered Giuliano, "but she is a miracle of beauty. Just imagine that she is a picture by my hand, and there you have her."

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## **CRISTOFANO GHERARDI, CALLED DOCENO**

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### **LIFE OF CRISTOFANO GHERARDI [CALLED DOCENO] OF BORGO SAN SEPOLCRO PAINTER**

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While Raffaello dal Colle of Borgo San Sepolcro, who was a disciple of Giulio Romano and helped him to paint in fresco the Hall of Constantine in the Papal Palace at Rome, and the apartments of the Te in Mantua, was painting, after his return to the Borgo, the altar-piece of the Chapel of SS. Gilio e Arcanio (in which, imitating Giulio and Raffaello da Urbino, he depicted the Resurrection of Christ, a work that was much extolled), with another altar-piece of the Assumption for the Frati de' Zoccoli without the Borgo, and some other works for the Servite Friars at Città di Castello; while, I say, Raffaello was executing these and other works in the Borgo, his native place, acquiring riches and fame, a young man sixteen years of age, called Cristofano, and by way of by-name, Doceno, the son of Guido Gherardi, a man of honourable family in that city, was attending from a natural inclination and with much profit to painting, drawing and colouring so well and with such grace, that it was a marvel. Wherefore the above-named Raffaello, having seen some animals by the hand of this Cristofano, such as dogs, wolves, hares, and various kinds of birds and fishes, executed very well, and perceiving that he was most agreeable in his conversation and very witty and amusing, although he lived a life apart, almost like a philosopher, was well pleased to form a friendship with him and to have him frequent his workshop in order to learn.

Now, after Cristofano had spent some time drawing under the discipline of Raffaello, there arrived in the Borgo the painter Rosso, with whom he contracted a friendship, and received some of his drawings; and these Doceno studied with great diligence, considering, as one who had seen

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no others but those by the hand of Raffaello, that they were very beautiful, as indeed they were. But these studies were broken off by him, for, when Giovanni de' Turrini of the Borgo, at that time Captain of the Florentines, went with a band of soldiers from the Borgo and from Città di Castello to the defence of Florence, which was besieged by the armies of the Emperor and of Pope Clement, Cristofano went thither among the other soldiers, having been led away by his many friends. It is true that he did this no less in the hope of having some occasion to study the works in Florence than with the intention of fighting; but in this he failed, for his captain, Giovanni, had to guard not a place within the city, but the bastions on the hill without. That war finished, and the guard of Florence being commanded not long afterwards by Signor Alessandro Vitelli of Città di Castello, Cristofano, drawn by his friends and by his desire to see the pictures and sculptures of the city, enlisted as a soldier in that guard. And while he was in that service, Signor Alessandro, having heard from Battista della Bilia, a painter and soldier from Città di Castello, that Cristofano gave his attention to painting, and having obtained a beautiful picture by his hand, determined to send him with that same Battista della Bilia and with another Battista, likewise of Città di Castello, to decorate with sgraffiti and paintings a garden and loggia that he had begun at Città di Castello. But the one Battista having died while that garden was being built up, and the other Battista having taken his place, for the time being, whatever may have been the reason, nothing more was done.

Meanwhile Giorgio Vasari had returned from Rome, and was passing his time with Duke Alessandro in Florence, until his patron Cardinal Ippolito should return from Hungary; and he had received rooms in the Convent of the Servites, that he might make a beginning with the execution of certain scenes in fresco from the life of Cæsar in the chamber at the corner of the Medici Palace, where Giovanni da Udine had decorated the ceiling with stucco-work and pictures. Now Cristofano, having made Giorgio's acquaintance at the Borgo in the year 1528, when he went to see Rosso in that place, where he had shown him much kindness, resolved that he would attach himself to Vasari and thus find much more opportunity for giving attention to art than he had done in the past. Giorgio, then, after a year's intercourse with him as his companion, finding that he was likely to make an able master, and that he was pleasant and gentle in manners and a man after his own heart, conceived an extraordinary affection for him. Wherefore, having to go not long afterwards, at the commission of Duke Alessandro, to Città di Castello, in company with Antonio da San Gallo and Pier Francesco da Viterbo (who had been in Florence to build the castle, or rather, citadel, and on their return were taking the road by Città di Castello), in order to repair the walls of the above-mentioned garden of Vitelli, which were threatening to fall, he took Cristofano with him, to the end that after Vasari himself had designed and distributed in their due order the friezes that were to be executed in certain apartments, and likewise the scenes and compartments of a bath-room, and other sketches for the walls of the loggia, Gherardi and the above-named Battista might carry the whole to completion. All this they did so well and with such grace, and particularly Cristofano, that a past master in art, well practised in his work, could not have done so much; and, what is more, experimenting in that work, he became facile and able to a marvel in drawing and colouring.

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Then, in the year 1536, the Emperor Charles V coming to Italy and to Florence, as has been related in other places, the most magnificent festive preparations were ordained, among which Vasari, by order of Duke Alessandro, received the charge of the decorations of the Porta a S. Piero Gattolini, of the façade at S. Felice in Piazza, at the head of the Via Maggio, and of the pediment that was erected over the door of S. Maria del Fiore; and, in addition, of a standard of cloth for the castle, fifteen braccia in depth and forty in length, into the gilding of which there went fifty thousand leaves of gold. Now the Florentine painters and others who were employed in these preparations, thinking that Vasari was too much in favour with Duke Alessandro, and wishing to leave him disgraced in that part of the decorations—a part truly great and laborious—which had fallen to him, so went to work that he was not able to enlist the services of any master of architectural painting, whether young or old, among all those that were in the city, to assist him in any single thing. Of which having become aware, Vasari sent for Cristofano, Raffaello dal Colle, and Stefano Veltroni of Monte Sansovino, his kinsman; and with their assistance and that of other painters from Arezzo and other places, he executed the works mentioned above, in which Cristofano acquitted himself in such a manner, that he caused everyone to marvel, doing honour to himself and also to Vasari, who was much extolled for those works. After they were finished, Cristofano remained many days in Florence, assisting the same Vasari in the preparations that were made in the Palace of Messer Ottaviano de' Medici for the nuptials of Duke Alessandro; wherein, among other things, Cristofano executed the coat of arms of the Duchess Margherita of Austria, with the balls, upheld by a most beautiful eagle, with some boys, very well done.

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Not long afterwards, when Duke Alessandro had been assassinated, a compact was made in the Borgo to hand over one of the gates of the city to Piero Strozzi, when he came to Sestino, and letters were therefore written to Cristofano by some soldiers exiled from the Borgo, entreating him that he should consent to help them in this: which letters received, although Cristofano did not grant their request, yet, in order not to do a mischief to the soldiers, he chose rather to tear them up, as he did, than to lay them, as according to the laws and edicts he should have done, before Gherardo Gherardi, who was then Commissioner for the Lord Duke Cosimo in the Borgo. When the troubles were over and the matter became known, many citizens of the Borgo were exiled as rebels, and among them Doceno; and Signor Alessandro Vitelli, who knew the truth of this affair and could have helped him, did not do so, to the end that Cristofano might be as it were forced to serve him in the work of his garden at Città di Castello, of which we have spoken above.

After having consumed much time in this service, without any profit or advantage, Cristofano finally took refuge, almost in despair, with other exiles, in the village of S. Giustino in the States of the Church, a mile and a half distant from the Borgo and very near the Florentine frontier. In that place, although he stayed there at his peril, he painted for Abbot Bufolini of Città di Castello, who has most beautiful and commodious apartments there, a chamber in a tower, with a pattern of little boys and figures very well foreshortened to be seen from below, and with grotesques, festoons, and masks, the most lovely and the most bizarre that could be imagined. This chamber, when finished, so pleased the Abbot that he caused him to do another, in which, desiring to make some ornaments of stucco, and not having marble to grind into powder for mixing it, for this purpose he found a very good substitute in some stones from a river-bed, veined with white, the powder from which took a good and very firm hold. And within these ornaments of stucco Cristofano then painted some scenes from Roman history, executing them so well in fresco that it was a marvel.

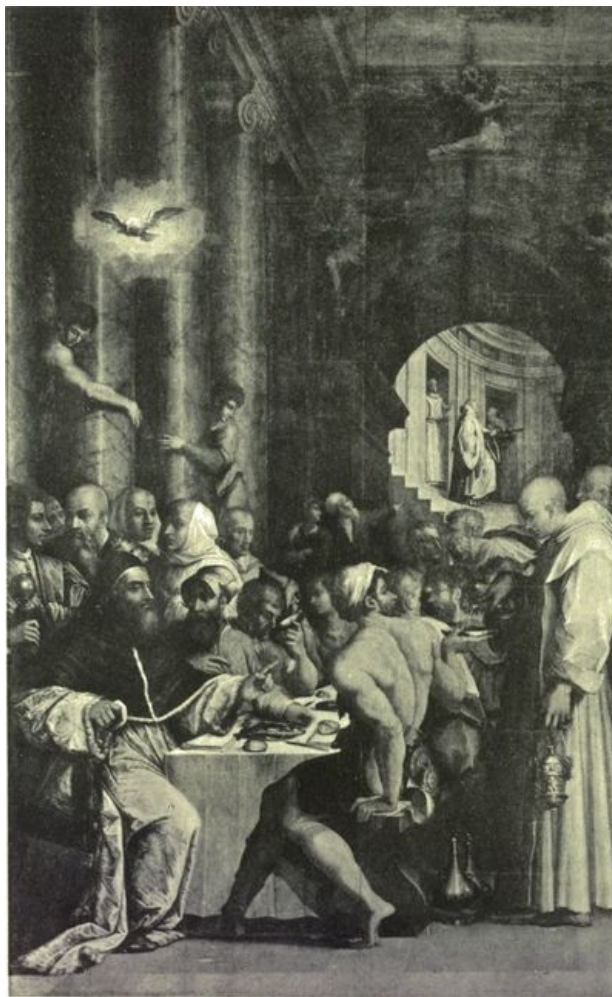
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At that time Giorgio Vasari was painting in fresco the upper part of the tramezzo<sup>[4]</sup> of the Abbey of Camaldoli, and two panel-pictures for the lower part; and, wishing to make about these last an ornament in fresco full of scenes, he would have liked to have Cristofano with him, no less to restore him to the favour of the Duke than to make use of him. But, although Messer Ottaviano de' Medici pleaded strongly with the Duke, it proved impossible to bend him, so ugly was the information that had been given to him about the behaviour of Cristofano. Not having succeeded in this, therefore, Vasari, as one who loved Cristofano, set himself to contrive to remove him at least from S. Giustino, where he, with other exiles, was living in the greatest peril. In the year 1539, then, having to execute for the Monks of Monte Oliveto, for the head of a great refectory in the Monastery of S. Michele in Bosco without Bologna, three panel-pictures in oils with three scenes each four braccia in length, and a frieze in fresco three braccia high all round with twenty stories of the Apocalypse in little figures, and all the monasteries of that Order copied from the reality, with partitions of grotesques, and round each window fourteen braccia of festoons with fruits copied from nature, Giorgio wrote straightway to Cristofano that he should go from S. Giustino to Bologna, together with Battista Cungi of the Borgo, his compatriot, who had also

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served Vasari for seven years. These men, therefore, having gone to Bologna, where Giorgio had not yet arrived—for he was still at Camaldoli, where, having finished the tramezzo, he was drawing the cartoon for a Deposition from the Cross, which was afterwards executed by him and set up on the high-altar in that same place—set themselves to prime the said three panels with gesso and to lay on the ground, until such time as Giorgio should arrive.

Now Vasari had given a commission to Dattero, a Jew, the friend of Messer Ottaviano de' Medici, who was then a banker in Bologna, that he should provide Cristofano and Battista with everything that they required. And since this Dattero was very obliging and most courteous, he did them a thousand favours and courtesies; wherefore those two at times went about Bologna in his company in very familiar fashion, and, Battista having prominent eyes and Cristofano a great speck in one of his, they were thus taken for Jews, as Dattero was in fact. One morning, therefore, a shoemaker, who had to bring a pair of new shoes at the commission of the above-named Jew to Cristofano, arriving at the monastery, said to Cristofano himself, who was standing at the gate looking on at the distribution of alms, "Sir, could you show me the rooms of those two Jew painters who are working in there?" "Jews or no Jews," said Cristofano, "what have you to do with them?" "I have to give these shoes," he answered, "to one of them called Cristofano." "I am he," replied Cristofano, "an honest man and a better Christian than you are." "You may be what you please," answered the shoemaker. "I called you Jews, because, besides that you are held and known as Jews by everyone, that look of yours, which is not of our country, convinced me of it." "Enough," said Cristofano, "you shall see that we do the work of Christians."



**THE SUPPER OF S. GREGORY THE GREAT**  
*(After the panel by Giorgio Vasari, with details by Cristofano Gherardi [Doceno].  
Bologna: Accademia, 198)*  
**Poppi**

[View larger image](#)

But to return to the work: Vasari having arrived in Bologna, not a month had passed before, Giorgio designing, and Cristofano and Battista laying in the panels in colour, all three were completely laid in, with great credit to Cristofano, who acquitted himself in this excellently well. The laying in of the panels being finished, work was begun on the frieze, in which Cristofano had a companion, although he was to have executed it all by himself; for there came from Camaldoli to Bologna the cousin of Vasari, Stefano Veltroni of Monte Sansovino, who had laid in the panel-picture of the Deposition, and the two executed that work together, and that so well, that it proved a marvel. Cristofano painted grotesques so well, that there was nothing better to be seen, but he did not give them that particular finish that would have made them perfect; and Stefano, on the contrary, was wanting in resolution and grace, for the reason that his brush-strokes did not fix his subjects in their places at one sweep, but, since he was very patient, in the end, although he endured greater labour, he used to execute his grotesques with more neatness and delicacy. Labouring in competition, then, at the work of this frieze, these two took such pains, both the one and the other, that Cristofano learned to finish from Stefano, and Stefano learned from Cristofano to be more resolute and to work like a master.

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Work being then begun on the broad festoons that were to run in clusters round the windows, Vasari made one with his own hand, keeping real fruits in front of him, that he might copy them from nature. This done, he ordained that Cristofano and Stefano should go on with the rest, holding to the same design, one on one side of the window, and the other on the other side, and should thus, one by one, proceed to finish them all; promising to him who might prove at the end of the work to have acquitted himself best a pair of scarlet hose. And so, competing lovingly for both honour and profit, they set themselves to copy everything, from the large things down to the most minute, such as millet-seed, hemp-seed, bunches of fennel, and the like, in such a manner that those festoons proved to be very beautiful; and both of them received from Vasari the prize of the scarlet hose.

Giorgio took great pains to persuade Cristofano to execute by himself part of the designs for the scenes that were to go into the frieze, but he would never do it. Wherefore, the while that Giorgio was drawing them himself, Gherardi executed the buildings in two of the panel-pictures, with much grace and beauty of manner, and such perfection, that a master of great judgment, even if he had had the cartoons before him, could not have done what Cristofano did. And, in truth, there never was a painter who could do by himself, and without study, the things that he contrived to do. After having finished the execution of the buildings in the two panel-pictures, the while that Vasari was carrying to completion the twenty stories from the Apocalypse for the above-

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mentioned frieze, Cristofano, taking in hand the panel-picture in which S. Gregory (whose head is a portrait of Pope Clement VII) is eating with his twelve poor men, executed the whole service of the table, all very lifelike and most natural. Then, a beginning having been made with the third panel-picture, while Stefano was occupied with the gilding of the ornamental frames of the other two, a staging was erected upon two trestles of wood, from which, while Vasari was painting on one side, in a glory of sunlight, the three Angels that appeared to Abraham in the Valley of Mamre, Cristofano painted some buildings on the other side. But he was always making some contraption with stools and tables, and at times with basins and pans upside down, on which he would climb, like the casual creature that he was; and once it happened that, seeking to draw back in order to look at what he had done, one of his feet gave way under him, the whole contraption turned topsy-turvy, and he fell from a height of five braccia, bruising himself so grievously that he had to be bled and properly nursed, or he would have died. And, what was worse, being the sort of careless fellow that he was, one night there slipped off the bandages that were on the arm from which the blood had been drawn, to the great danger of his life, so that, if Stefano, who was sleeping with him, had not noticed this, it would have been all up with him; and even so Stefano had something to do to revive him, for the bed was a lake of blood, and he himself was reduced almost to his last gasp. Vasari, therefore, taking him under his own particular charge, as if he had been his brother, had him tended with the greatest possible care, than which, indeed, nothing less would have sufficed; and with all this he was not restored until that work was completely finished. After that, returning to S. Giustino, Cristofano completed some of the apartments of the Abbot there, which had been left unfinished, and then executed at Città di Castello, all with his own hand, an altar-piece that had been allotted to Battista, his dearest friend, and a lunette that is over the side-door of S. Fiorido, containing three figures in fresco.

Giorgio being afterwards summoned to Venice at the instance of Messer Pietro Aretino, in order to arrange and execute for the nobles and gentlemen of the Company of the Calza the setting for a most sumptuous and magnificent festival, and the scenery of a comedy written by that same Messer Pietro Aretino for those gentlemen, Giorgio, I say, knowing that he was not able to carry out so great a work by himself alone, sent for Cristofano and the above-mentioned Battista Cungi. And they, having finally arrived in Venice after being carried by the chances of the sea to Sclavonia, found that Vasari not only had arrived there before them, but had already designed everything, so that there was nothing for them to do but to set hand to painting. Now the said gentlemen of the Calza had taken at the end of the Canareio a large house which was not finished—it had nothing, indeed, save the main walls and the roof—and in a space forming an apartment seventy braccia long and sixteen braccia wide, Giorgio caused to be made two ranges of wooden steps, four braccia in height from the floor, on which the ladies were to be seated. The walls at the sides he divided each into four square spaces of ten braccia, separated by niches each four braccia in breadth, within which were figures, and these niches had each on either side a terminal figure in relief, nine braccia high; insomuch that the niches on either side were five and the terminal figures ten, and in the whole apartment there were altogether ten niches, twenty terminal figures, and eight square pictures with scenes. In the first of these pictures (which were all in chiaroscuro), that on the right hand, next the stage, there was, representing Venice, a most beautiful figure of Adria depicted as seated upon a rock in the midst of the sea, with a branch of coral in the hand. Around her stood Neptune, Thetis, Proteus, Nereus, Glaucus, Palæmon, and other sea gods and nymphs, who were presenting to her jewels, pearls, gold, and other riches of the sea; and besides this there were some Loves that were shooting arrows, and others that were flying through the air and scattering flowers, and the rest of the field of the picture was all most beautiful palms. In the second picture were the Rivers Drava and Sava naked, with their vases. In the third was the Po, conceived as large and corpulent, with seven sons, representing the seven branches which, issuing from the Po, pour into the sea as if each of them were a kingly river. In the fourth was the Brenta, with other rivers of Friuli. On the other wall, opposite to the Adria, was the Island of Candia, wherein was to be seen Jove being suckled by the Goat, with many Nymphs around. Beside this, and opposite to the Drava, were the River Tagliamento and the Mountains of Cadore. Beyond this, opposite to the Po, were Lake Benacus and the Mincio, which were pouring their waters into the Po; and beside them, opposite to the Brenta, were the Adige and the Tesino, falling into the sea. The pictures on the right-hand side were divided by these Virtues, placed in the niches—Liberality, Concord, Compassion, Peace, and Religion; and opposite to these, on the other wall, were Fortitude, Civic Wisdom, Justice, a Victory with War beneath her, and, lastly, a Charity. Above all, then, were a large cornice and architrave, and a frieze full of lights and of glass globes filled with distilled waters, to the end that these, having lights behind them, might illuminate the whole apartment. Next, the ceiling was divided into four quadrangular compartments, each ten braccia wide in one direction and eight braccia in the other; and, with a width equal to that of the niches of four braccia, there was a frieze which ran right round the cornice, while in a line with the niches there came in the middle of all the spaces a compartment three braccia square. These compartments were in all twenty-three, without counting one of double size that was above the stage, which brought the number up to twenty-four; and in them were the Hours, twelve of the night, namely, and twelve of the day. In the first of the compartments ten braccia in length, which was above the stage, was Time, who was arranging the Hours in their places, accompanied by Æolus, God of the Winds, by Juno, and by Iris. In another compartment, at the door of entrance, was the Car of Aurora, who, rising from the arms of Tithonus, was scattering roses, while the Car itself was being drawn by some Cocks. In the third was the Chariot of the Sun; and in the fourth was the Chariot of Night, drawn by Owls, and Night had the Moon upon her head, some Bats in front of her, and all around her darkness.

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Of these pictures Cristofano executed the greater part, and he acquitted himself so well, that everyone stood marvelling at them: particularly in the Chariot of Night, wherein he did in the way of oil-sketches that which was, in a manner of speaking, not possible. And in the picture of Adria, likewise, he painted those monsters of the sea with such beauty and variety, that whoever looked at them was struck with astonishment that a craftsman of his rank should have shown such knowledge. In short, in all this work he bore himself beyond all expectation like an able and well-practised painter, and particularly in the foliage and grotesques.

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After finishing the preparations for that festival, Vasari and Cristofano stayed some months in Venice, painting for the Magnificent Messer Giovanni Cornaro the ceiling, or rather, soffit, of an apartment, into which there went nine large pictures in oils. Vasari being then entreated by the Veronese architect, Michele San Michele, to stay in Venice, he might perhaps have consented to remain there for a year or two; but Cristofano always dissuaded him from it, saying that it was not a good thing to stay in Venice, where no account was taken of design, nor did the painters in that city make any use of it, not to mention that those painters themselves were the reason that no attention was paid there to the labours of the arts; and he declared that it would be better to return to Rome, the true school of noble arts, where ability was recognized much more than in Venice. The dissuasions of Cristofano being thus added to the little desire that Vasari had to stay there, they went off together. But, since Cristofano, being an exile from the State of Florence, was not able to follow Giorgio, he returned to S. Giustino, where he did not remain long, doing some work all the time for the above-mentioned Abbot, before he went to Perugia on the first occasion when Pope Paul III went there after the war waged with the people of that city. There, in the festive preparations that were made to receive his Holiness, he acquitted himself very well in several works, and particularly in the portal called after Frate Rinieri, where, at the wish of Monsignore della Barba, who was then governor there, Cristofano executed a large Jove in Anger and another Pacified, which are two most beautiful figures, and on the other side he painted an Atlas with the world on his back, between two women, one of whom had a sword and the other a pair of scales. These works, with many others that Cristofano executed for those festivities, were the reason that afterwards, when the citadel had been built in Perugia by order of the same Pontiff, Messer Tiberio Crispo, who was governor and castellan at that time, when causing many of the rooms to be painted, desired that Cristofano, in addition to that which Lattanzio, a painter of the March, had executed in them up to that time, should also work there. Whereupon Cristofano not only assisted the above-named Lattanzio, but afterwards executed with his own hand the greater part of the best works that are painted in the apartments of that fortress, in which there also worked Raffaello dal Colle and Adone Doni of Assisi, an able and well-practised painter, who has executed many things in his native city and in other places. Tommaso Papacello also worked there; but the best that there was among them, and the one who gained most praise there, was Cristofano, on which account he was recommended by Lattanzio to the favour of the said Crispo, and was ever afterwards much employed by him.

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Meanwhile, that same Crispo having built in Perugia a new little church known as S. Maria del Popolo, but first called Del Mercato, Lattanzio had begun for it an altar-piece in oils, and in this Cristofano painted with his own hand all the upper part, which is indeed most beautiful and worthy of great praise. Then, Lattanzio having been changed from a painter into the Constable of Perugia, Cristofano returned to S. Giustino, where he stayed many months, again working for the above-named Lord Abbot Bufolini.

After this, in the year 1543, Giorgio Vasari, having to execute a panel-picture in oils for the Great Cancellaria by order of the most illustrious Cardinal Farnese, and another for the Church of S. Agostino at the commission of Galeotto da Girone, sent for Cristofano, who went very willingly, as one who had a desire to see Rome. There he stayed many months, doing little else but go about seeing everything; but nevertheless he thus gained so much, that, after returning once more to S. Giustino, he painted in a hall some figures after his own fancy which were so beautiful, that it appeared that he must have studied at them twenty years. Then, in the year 1545, Vasari had to go to Naples to paint for the Monks of Monte Oliveto a refectory involving much more work than that of S. Michele in Bosco at Bologna, and he sent for Cristofano, Raffaello dal Colle, and Stefano, already mentioned as his friends and pupils; and they all came together at the appointed time in Naples, excepting Cristofano, who remained behind because he was ill. However, being pressed by Vasari, he made his way to Rome on his journey to Naples; but he was detained by his brother Borgognone, who was likewise an exile, and who wished to take him to France to enter the service of the Colonel Giovanni da Turrino, and so that occasion was lost. But when Vasari returned from Naples to Rome in the year 1546, in order to execute twenty-four pictures that were afterwards sent to Naples and placed in the Sacristy of S. Giovanni Carbonaro, in which he painted stories from the Old Testament, and also from the life of S. John the Baptist, with figures of one braccio or little more, and also in order to paint the doors of the organ of the Piscopio, which were six braccia in height, he availed himself of Cristofano, who was of great assistance to him and executed figures and landscapes in those works excellently well. Giorgio had also proposed to make use of him in the Hall of the Cancellaria, which was painted after cartoons by his hand, and entirely finished in a hundred days, for Cardinal Farnese, but in this he did not succeed, for Cristofano fell ill and returned to S. Giustino as soon as he had begun to mend. And Vasari finished the Hall without him, assisted by Raffaello dal Colle, the Bolognese Giovan Battista Bagnacavallo, the Spaniards Roviale and Bizzerra, and many others of his friends and pupils.

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After returning from Rome to Florence and setting out from that city to go to Rimini, to paint a chapel in fresco and an altar-piece in the Church of the Monks of Monte Oliveto for Abbot Gian

Matteo Faettani, Giorgio passed through S. Giustino, in order to take Cristofano with him: but Abbot Bufolini, for whom he was painting a hall, would not let him go for the time being, although he promised Giorgio that he should send Cristofano to him soon all the way to Romagna. But, notwithstanding such a promise, the Abbot delayed so long to send him, that Cristofano, when he did go, found that Vasari had not only finished all the work for the other Abbot, but had also executed an altar-piece for the high-altar of S. Francesco at Rimini, for Messer Niccolò Marcheselli, and another altar-piece in the Church of Classi, belonging to the Monks of Camaldoli, at Ravenna, for Don Romualdo da Verona, the Abbot of that abbey.

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In the year 1550, not long before this, Giorgio had just executed the story of the Marriage of Esther in the Black Friars' Abbey of S. Fiore, that is, in the refectory, at Arezzo, and also, at Florence, for the Chapel of the Martelli in the Church of S. Lorenzo, the altar-piece of S. Gismondo, when, Julius III having been elected Pope, he was summoned to Rome to enter the service of his Holiness. Thereupon he thought for certain that by means of Cardinal Farnese, who went at that time to stay in Florence, he would be able to reinstate Cristofano in his country and restore him to the favour of Duke Cosimo. But this proved to be impossible, so that poor Cristofano had to stay as he was until 1554, at which time, Vasari having been invited into the service of Duke Cosimo, there came to him an opportunity of delivering Cristofano. Bishop da' Ricasoli, who knew that he would be doing a thing pleasing to his Excellency, had set to work to have the three façades of his palace, which stands on the abutment of the Ponte alla Carraja, painted in chiaroscuro, when Messer Sforza Almeni, Cup-bearer as well as first and favourite Chamberlain to the Duke, resolved that he also would have his house in the Via de' Servi painted in chiaroscuro, in emulation of the Bishop. But, not having found in Florence any painters according to his fancy, he wrote to Giorgio Vasari, who had not then arrived in Florence, that he should think out the inventions and send him designs of all that it might seem to him best to paint on that façade of his. Whereupon Giorgio, who was much his friend, for they had known each other from the time when they were both in the service of Duke Alessandro, having thought out the whole according to the measurements of the façade, sent him a design of most beautiful invention, which embellished the windows and joined them together with a well-varied decoration in a straight line from top to bottom, and filled all the spaces in the façade with rich scenes. This design, I say, which contained, to put it briefly, the whole life of man from birth to death, was sent by Vasari to Messer Sforza; and it so pleased him, and likewise the Duke, that, in order that it might have all its perfection, they resolved that they would not have it taken in hand until such time as Vasari himself should have arrived in Florence. Which Vasari having at last come and having been received by his most illustrious Excellency and by the above-named Messer Sforza with great friendliness, they began to discuss who might be the right man to execute that façade. Whereupon Giorgio, not allowing the occasion to slip by, said to Messer Sforza that no one was better able to carry out that work than Cristofano, and that neither in that nor in the works that were to be executed in the Palace, could he do without Cristofano's aid. And so, Messer Sforza having spoken of this to the Duke, after many inquiries it was found that Cristofano's crime was not so black as it had been painted, and the poor fellow was at last pardoned by his Excellency. Which news having been received by Vasari, who was at Arezzo, revisiting his native place and his friends, he sent a messenger expressly to Cristofano, who knew nothing of the matter, to give him that good news; and when he heard it, he was like to faint with joy. All rejoicing, therefore, and confessing that no one had ever been a better friend to him than Vasari, he went off next morning from Città di Castello to the Borgo, where, after presenting his letters of deliverance to the Commissioner, he made his way to his father's house, where his mother and also his brother, who had been recalled from exile long before, were struck with astonishment. Then, after passing two days there, he went off to Arezzo, where he was received by Giorgio with more rejoicing than if he had been his own brother, and recognized that he was so beloved by Vasari that he resolved that he would spend the rest of his life with him.

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They then went from Arezzo to Florence together, and Cristofano went to kiss the hands of the Duke, who received him readily and was struck with amazement, for the reason that, whereas he had thought to see some great bravo, he saw the best little man in the world. Cristofano was likewise made much of by Messer Sforza, who conceived a very great affection for him; and he then set his hand to the above-mentioned façade. In that work, Giorgio, because it was not yet possible to work in the Palace, assisted him, at his own request, to execute some designs for the scenes in the façade, also designing at times during the progress of the work, on the plaster, some of the figures that are there. But, although there are in it many things retouched by Vasari, nevertheless the whole façade, with the greater part of the figures and all the ornaments, festoons, and large ovals, is by the hand of Cristofano, who in truth, as may be seen, was so able in handling colours in fresco, that it may be said—and Vasari confesses it—that he knew more about it than Giorgio himself. And if Cristofano, when he was a lad, had exercised himself continuously in the studies of art—for he never did a drawing save when he had afterwards to carry it into execution—and had pursued the practice of art with spirit, he would have had no equal, seeing that his facility, judgment and memory enabled him to execute his works in such a way, without any further study, that he used to surpass many who in fact knew more than he. Nor could anyone believe with what facility and resolution he executed his labours, for, when he set himself to work, no matter how long a time it might take, he so delighted in it that he would never lift his eyes off his painting; wherefore his friends might well expect the greatest things from him. Besides this, he was so gracious in his conversation and his jesting as he worked, that Vasari would at times stay working in his company from morning till night, without ever growing weary.

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Cristofano executed this façade in a few months, not to mention that he sometimes stayed away

some weeks without working there, going to the Borgo to see and enjoy his home. Now I do not wish to grudge the labour of describing the distribution and the figures of this work, which, from its being in the open air and much exposed to the vagaries of the weather, may not have a very long life; scarcely, indeed, was it finished, when it was much injured by a terrible rain and a very heavy hail-storm, and in some places the wall was stripped of plaster. In this façade, then, there are three compartments. The first, to begin at the foot, is where the principal door and the two windows are; the second is from the sill of those windows to that of the second range of windows; and the third is from those last windows to the cornice of the roof. There are, besides this, six windows in each range, which give seven spaces; and the whole work was divided according to this plan in straight lines from the cornice of the roof down to the ground. Next to the cornice of the roof, then, there is in perspective a great cornice, with brackets that project over a frieze of little boys, six of whom stand upright along the breadth of the façade—namely, one above the centre of the arch of each window; and these support with their shoulders most beautiful festoons of fruits, leaves, and flowers, which run from one to another. Those fruits and flowers are arranged in due succession according to the seasons, symbolizing the periods of our life, which is there depicted; and on the middle of the festoons, likewise, where they hang down, are other little boys in various attitudes. This frieze finished, between the upper windows, in the spaces that are there, there were painted the seven Planets, with the seven celestial Signs above them as a crown and an ornament. Beneath the sill of these windows, on the parapet, is a frieze of Virtues, who, two by two, are holding seven great ovals; in which ovals are seven distinct stories representing the Seven Ages of Man, and each Age is accompanied by two Virtues appropriate to her, and beneath the ovals in the spaces between the lower windows there are the three Theological and the four Moral Virtues. Below this, in the frieze that is above the door and the windows supported by knee-shaped brackets, are the seven Liberal Arts, each of which is in a line with the oval in which is the particular story of the Life of Man appropriate to it; and in the same straight lines, continued upwards, are the Moral Virtues, Planets, Signs, and other corresponding symbols. Next, between the windows with knee-shaped brackets, there is Life, both the active and the contemplative, with scenes and statues, continued down to Death, Hell, and our final Resurrection.

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In brief, Cristofano executed almost all by himself the whole cornice, the festoons, the little boys, and the seven Signs of the Planets. Then, beginning on one side, he painted first the Moon, and represented her by a Diana who has her lap full of flowers, after the manner of Proserpine, with a moon upon her head and the Sign of Cancer above her. Below, in the oval wherein is the story of Infancy, there are present at the Birth of Man some nurses who are suckling infants, and newly-delivered women in bed, executed by Cristofano with much grace; and this oval is supported by Will alone, who is a half-nude young woman, fair and beautiful, and she is sustained by Charity, who is also suckling infants. And beneath the oval, on the parapet, is Grammar, who is teaching some little boys to read.

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Beginning over again, there follows Mercury with the Caduceus and with his Sign, who has below him in the oval some little boys, some of whom are going to school and some playing. This oval is supported by Truth, who is a nude little girl all pure and simple, who has on one side a male figure representing Falsehood, with a variety of girt-up garments and a most beautiful countenance, but with the eyes much sunken. Beneath the oval of the windows is Faith, who with the right hand is baptizing a child in a conch full of water, and with the left hand is holding a cross; and below her, on the parapet, is Logic covered by a veil, with a serpent.

Next follows the Sun, represented by an Apollo who has the lyre in his hand, with his Sign in the ornament above. In the oval is Adolescence, represented by two boys of equal age, one of whom, holding a branch of olive, is ascending a mountain illumined by the sun, and the other, halting halfway up to admire the beauties that Fraud displays from the middle upwards, without perceiving that her hideous countenance is concealed behind a smooth and beautiful mask, is caused by her and her wiles to fall over a precipice. This oval is supported by Sloth, a gross and corpulent man, who stands all sleepy and nude in the guise of a Silenus; and also by Toil, in the person of a robust and hard-working peasant, who has around him the implements for tilling the earth. These are supported by that part of the ornament that is between the windows, where Hope is, who has the anchors at her feet; and on the parapet below is Music, with various musical instruments about her.

There follows in due order Venus, who has clasped Love to her bosom, and is kissing him; and she, also, has her Sign above her. In the oval that she has beneath her is the story of Youth; that is, in the centre a young man seated, with books, instruments for measuring, and other things appertaining to design, and in addition maps of the world and cosmographical globes and spheres; and behind him is a loggia, in which are young men who are merrily passing the time away with singing, dancing, and playing, and also a banquet of young people all given over to enjoyment. On one side this oval is supported by Self-knowledge, who has about her compasses, armillary spheres, quadrants, and books, and is gazing at herself in a mirror; and, on the other side, by Fraud, a hideous old hag, lean and toothless, who is mocking at Self-knowledge, and in the act of covering her face with a smooth and beautiful mask. Below the oval is Temperance, with a horse's bridle in her hand, and beneath her, on the parapet, is Rhetoric, who is in a line with the other similar figures.

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Next to these comes Mars in armour, with many trophies about him, and with the Sign of the Lion above him. In his oval, which is below him, is Virility, represented by a full-grown man, standing between Memory and Will, who are holding before him a basin of gold containing a pair

of wings, and are pointing out to him the path of deliverance in the direction of a mountain; and this oval is supported by Innocence, who is a maiden with a lamb at her side, and by Hilarity, who, all smiling and merry, reveals herself as what she really is. Beneath the oval, between the windows, is Prudence, who is making herself beautiful before a mirror; and she has below her, on the parapet, a figure of Philosophy.

Next there follows Jove, with his thunderbolt and his bird, the Eagle, and with his Sign above him. In the oval is Old Age, who is represented by an old man clothed as a priest and kneeling before an altar, upon which he is placing the basin of gold with the two wings; and this oval is supported by Compassion, who is covering some naked little boys, and by Religion, enveloped in sacerdotal vestments. Below these is a Fortitude in armour, who, planting one of her legs in a spirited attitude on a fragment of a column, is placing some balls in the mouth of a lion; and beneath her, on the parapet, she has a figure of Astrology.

The last of the seven Planets is Saturn, depicted as an old man heavy with melancholy, who is devouring his own children, with a great serpent that is seizing its own tail with its teeth; which Saturn has above him the Sign of Capricorn. In the oval is Decrepitude, and here is depicted Jove in Heaven receiving a naked and decrepit old man, kneeling, who is watched over by Felicity and Immortality, who are casting his garments into the world. This oval is supported by Beatitude, who is upheld by a figure of Justice in the ornament below, who is seated and has in her hand the sceptre and upon her shoulders the stork, with arms and laws around her; and on the parapet below is Geometry.

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In the lowest part at the foot, which is about the windows with knee-shaped brackets and the door, is Leah in a niche, representing the Active Life, and on the other side of the same place is Industry, who has a Cornucopia and two goads in her hands. Near the door is a scene in which many masters in wood and stone, architects, and stone-cutters have before them the gate of Cosmopolis, a city built by the Lord Duke Cosimo in the island of Elba, with a representation of Porto-Ferrajo. Between this scene and the frieze in which are the Liberal Arts, is Lake Trasimene, round which are Nymphs who are issuing from the water with tench, pike, eels, and roach, and beside the lake is Perugia, a nude figure holding with her hands a dog, which she is showing to a figure of Florence corresponding to her, who stands on the other side, with a figure of Arno beside her who is embracing and fondling her. And below this is the Contemplative Life in another scene, in which many philosophers and astrologers are measuring the heavens, appearing to be casting the horoscope of the Duke; and beside this, in the niche corresponding to that of Leah, is her sister Rachel, the daughter of Laban, representing the Contemplative Life. The last scene, which is likewise between two niches and forms the conclusion of the whole invention, is Death, who, mounted on a lean horse and holding the scythe, and accompanied by War, Pestilence, and Famine, is riding over persons of every kind. In one niche is the God Pluto, and beneath him Cerberus, the Hound of Hell; and in the other is a large figure rising again from a sepulchre on the last day. After all these things Cristofano executed on the pediments of the windows with knee-shaped brackets some nude figures that are holding the devices of his Excellency, and over the door a Ducal coat of arms, the six balls of which are upheld by some naked little boys, who twine in and out between each other as they fly through the air. And last of all, in the bases at the foot, beneath all the scenes, the same Cristofano painted the device of M. Sforza; that is, some obelisks, or rather triangular pyramids, which rest upon three balls, with a motto around that reads—*Immobilis*.

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This work, when finished, was vastly extolled by his Excellency and by Messer Sforza himself, who, like the courteous gentleman that he was, wished to reward with a considerable present the art and industry of Cristofano; but he would have none of it, being contented and fully repaid by the goodwill of that lord, who loved him ever afterwards more than I could say. While the work was being executed, Vasari had Cristofano with him, as he had always done in the past, in the house of Signor Bernardetto de' Medici, who much delighted in painting; which having perceived, Cristofano painted two scenes in chiaroscuro in a corner of his garden. One was the Rape of Proserpine, and in the other were Vertumnus and Pomona, the deities of agriculture; and besides this Cristofano painted in this work some ornaments of terminal figures and children of such variety and beauty, that there is nothing better to be seen.

Meanwhile arrangements had been made for beginning to paint in the Palace, and the first thing that was taken in hand was a hall in the new apartments, which, being twenty braccia wide, and having a height, according as Tasso had constructed it, of not more than nine braccia, was raised three braccia with beautiful ingenuity by Vasari, that is, to a total height of twelve braccia, without moving the roof, which was half a pavilion roof.

But because in doing this, before it could become possible to paint, much time had to be devoted to reconstructing the ceilings and to other works in that apartment and in others, Vasari himself obtained leave to go to Arezzo to spend two months there together with Cristofano. However, he did not succeed in being able to rest during that time, for the reason that he could not refuse to go in those days to Cortona, where he painted in fresco the vaulting and the walls of the Company of Jesus with the assistance of Cristofano, who acquitted himself very well, and particularly in the twelve different sacrifices from the Old Testament which they executed in the lunettes between the spandrels of the vaulting. Indeed, to speak more exactly, almost the whole of this work was by the hand of Cristofano, Vasari having done nothing therein beyond making certain sketches, designing some parts on the plaster, and then retouching it at times in various places, according as it was necessary.

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This work finished, which is not otherwise than grand, worthy of praise, and very well executed, by reason of the great variety of things that are in it, they both returned to Florence in the month of January of the year 1555. There, having taken in hand the Hall of the Elements, while Vasari was painting the pictures of the ceiling, Cristofano executed some devices that bind together the friezes of the beams in perpendicular lines, in which are heads of capricorns and tortoises with the sail, devices of his Excellency. But the works in which he showed himself most marvellous were some festoons of fruits that are in the friezes of the beams on the under side, which are so beautiful that there is nothing better coloured or more natural to be seen, particularly because they are separated one from another by certain masks, that hold in their mouths the ligatures of the festoons, than which one would not be able to find any more varied or more bizarre; in which manner of work it may be said that Cristofano was superior to any other who has ever made it his principal and particular profession. This done, he painted some large figures on that part of the walls where there is the Birth of Venus, but after the cartoons of Vasari, and many little figures in a landscape, which were executed very well. In like manner, on the wall where there are the Loves as tiny little children, fashioning the arrows of Cupid, he painted the three Cyclopes forging thunderbolts for Jove. Over six doors he executed in fresco six large ovals with ornaments in chiaroscuro and containing scenes in the colour of bronze, which were very beautiful; and in the same hall, between the windows, he painted in colours a Mercury and a Pluto, which are likewise very beautiful.

Work being then begun in the Chamber of the Goddess Ops, which is next to that described above, he painted the four Seasons in fresco on the ceiling, and, in addition to the figures, some festoons that were marvellous in their variety and beauty, for the reason that, even as those of Spring were filled with a thousand kinds of flowers, so those of Summer were painted with an infinite number of fruits and cereals, those of Autumn were of leaves and bunches of the grape, and those of Winter were of onions, turnips, radishes, carrots, parsnips, and dried leaves, not to mention that in the central picture, in which is the Car of Ops, he coloured so beautifully in oils four lions that are drawing the Car, that nothing better could be done; and, in truth, in painting animals he had no equal.

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Then in the Chamber of Ceres, which is beside the last-named, he executed in certain angles some little boys and festoons that are beautiful to a marvel. And in the central picture, where Vasari had painted Ceres seeking for Proserpine with a lighted pine torch, upon a car drawn by two serpents, Cristofano carried many things to completion with his own hand, because Vasari was ill at that time and had left that picture, among other things, unfinished.

Finally, when it came to decorating a terrace that is beyond the Chamber of Jove and beside that of Ops, it was decided that all the history of Juno should be painted there; and so, after all the ornamentation in stucco had been finished, with very rich carvings and various compositions of figures, wrought after the cartoons of Vasari, the same Vasari ordained that Cristofano should execute that work by himself in fresco, desiring, since it was a work to be seen from near, and of figures not higher than one braccio, that Gherardi should do something beautiful in this, which was his peculiar profession. Cristofano, then, executed in an oval on the vaulting a Marriage with Juno in the sky, and in a picture on one side Hebe, Goddess of Youth, and on the other Iris, who is pointing to the rainbow in the heavens. On the same vaulting he painted three other quadrangular pictures, two to match the others, and a larger one in a line with the oval in which is the Marriage, and in the last-named picture is Juno seated in a car drawn by peacocks. In one of the other two, which are on either side of that one, is the Goddess of Power, and in the other Abundance with the Cornucopia at her feet. And in two other pictures on the walls below, over the openings of two doors, are two other stories of Juno—the Transformation of Io, the daughter of the River Inachus, into a Cow, and of Callisto into a Bear.

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During the execution of that work his Excellency conceived a very great affection for Cristofano, seeing him zealous and diligent in no ordinary manner at his work; for the morning had scarcely broken into day when Cristofano would appear at his labour, of which he had such a love, and it so delighted him, that very often he would not finish dressing before setting out. And at times, nay, frequently, it happened that in his haste he put on a pair of shoes—all such things he kept under his bed—that were not fellows, but of two kinds; and more often than not he had his cloak wrong side out, with the hood on the inside. One morning, therefore, appearing at an early hour at his work, where the Lord Duke and the Lady Duchess were standing looking at it, while preparations were being made to set out for the chase, and the ladies and others of the Court were making themselves ready, they noticed that Cristofano had as usual his cloak wrong side out and the hood inside. At which both laughing, the Duke said: "What is your idea in always wearing your cloak inside out?" "I know not, my Lord," answered Cristofano, "but I mean to find some day a kind of cloak that shall have neither right side nor wrong side, and shall be the same on both sides, for I have not the patience to think of wearing it in any other way, since in the morning I generally dress and go out of the house in the dark, besides that I have one eye so feeble that I can see nothing with it. But let your Excellency look at what I paint, and not at my manner of dressing." The Duke said nothing in answer, but within a few days he caused to be made for him a cloak of the finest cloth, with the pieces sewn and drawn together in such a manner that there was no difference to be seen between outside and inside, and the collar worked with braid in the same manner both inside and out, and so also the trimming that it had round the edges. This being finished, he sent it to Cristofano by a lackey, commanding the man that he should give it to him on the part of the Duke. Having therefore received the cloak very early one morning, Cristofano, without making any further ceremony, tried it on and then said to the lackey: "The Duke is a man of sense. Tell him that it suits me well."

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Now, since Cristofano was thus careless of his person and hated nothing more than to have to put on new clothes or to go about too tightly constrained and confined in them, Vasari, who knew this humour of his, whenever he observed that he was in need of any new clothes, used to have them made for him in secret, and then, early one morning, used to place these in his chamber and take away the old ones; and so Cristofano was forced to put on those that he found. But it was marvellous sport to stand and hear him raging with fury as he dressed himself in the new clothes. "Look here," he would say, "what devilments are these? Devil take it, can a man not live in his own way in this world, without the enemies of comfort giving themselves all this trouble?" One morning among others, Cristofano having put on a pair of white hose, the painter Domenico Benci, who was also working in the Palace with Vasari, contrived to persuade him to go with himself, in company with other young men, to the Madonna dell'Impruneta. There they walked, danced, and enjoyed themselves all day, and in the evening, after supper, they returned home. Then Cristofano, who was tired, went off straightway to his room to sleep; but, when he set himself to take off his hose, what with their being new and his having sweated, he was not able to pull off more than one of them. Now Vasari, having gone in the evening to see how he was, found that he had fallen asleep with one leg covered and the other bare; whereupon, one servant holding his leg and the other pulling at the stocking, they contrived to draw it off, while he lay cursing clothes, Giorgio, and him who invented such fashions as—so he said—kept men bound in chains like slaves. Nay, he grumbled that he would take leave of them all and by hook or by crook return to S. Giustino, where he was allowed to live in his own way and had not all these restraints; and it was the devil's own business to pacify him.

It pleased him to talk seldom, and he loved that others also should be brief in speaking, insomuch that he would have gone so far as to have men's proper names very short, like that of a slave belonging to M. Sforza, who was called "M." "These," said Cristofano, "are fine names, and not your Giovan Francesco and Giovanni Antonio, which take an hour's work to pronounce;" and since he was a good fellow at heart, and said these things in his own jargon of the Borgo, it would have made the Doleful Knight himself laugh. He delighted to go on feast-days to the places where legends and printed pictures were sold, and he would stay there the whole day; and if he bought some, more often than not, while he went about looking at the others, he would leave them at some place where he had been leaning. And never, unless he was forced, would he go on horseback, although he was born from a noble family in his native place and was rich enough.

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Finally, his brother Borgognone having died, he had to go to the Borgo; and Vasari, who had drawn much of the money of his salary and had kept it for him, said to him: "See, I have all this money of yours, it is right that you should take it with you and make use of it in your requirements." "I want no money," answered Cristofano, "take it for yourself. For me it is enough to have the luck to stay with you and to live and die in your company." "It is not my custom," replied Vasari, "to profit by the labour of others. If you will not have it, I shall send it to your father Guido." "That you must not do," said Cristofano, "for he would only waste it, as he always does." In the end, he took the money and went off to the Borgo, but in poor health and with little contentment of mind; and after arriving there, what with his sorrow at the death of his brother, whom he had loved very dearly, and a cruel flux of the reins, he died in a few days, after receiving the full sacraments of the Church and distributing to his family and to many poor persons the money that he had brought. He declared a little before his death that it grieved him for no other reason save that he was leaving Vasari too much embarrassed by the great labours to which he had set his hand in the Palace of the Duke. Not long afterwards, his Excellency having heard of the death of Cristofano, and that with true regret, he caused a head of him to be made in marble and sent it with the underwritten epitaph from Florence to the Borgo, where it was placed in S. Francesco:

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D. O. M.  
CHRISTOPHORO GHERARDO BURGENSEI  
PINGENDI ARTE PRÆSTANTISS.  
QUOD GEORGIUS VASARIUS ARETINUS HUIUS  
ARTIS FACILE PRINCEPS  
IN EXORNANDO  
COSMI FLORENTIN. DUCIS PALATIO  
ILLIUS OPERAM QUAM MAXIME  
PROBAVERIT,  
PICTORES HETRUSCI POSUERE.  
OBIIT A.D. MDLVI.  
VIXIT AN. LVI, M. III, D. VI.

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**JACOPO DA PONTORMO**

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**THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI**  
*(After the painting by Jacopo da Pontormo. Siena: S. Agostino)*  
**Anderson**  
[View larger image](#)

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## **LIFE OF JACOPO DA PONTORMO**

### **PAINTER OF FLORENCE**

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The ancestors—or rather, the elders of Bartolommeo di Jacopo di Martino, the father of Jacopo da Pontormo, whose Life we are now about to write—had their origin, so some declare, in Ancisa, a township in the Upper Valdarno, famous enough because from it the ancestors of Messer Francesco Petrarca likewise derived their origin. But, whether it was from there or from some other place that his elders came, the above-named Bartolommeo, who was a Florentine, and, so I have been told, of the family of the Carrucci, is said to have been a disciple of Domenico Ghirlandajo, and, after executing many works in the Valdarno, as a painter passing able for those times, to have finally made his way to Empoli to carry out certain labours, living there and in the neighbouring places, and taking to wife at Pontormo a most virtuous girl of good condition, called Alessandra, the daughter of Pasquale di Zanobi and of his wife Monna Brigida. To this Bartolommeo, then, there was born in the year 1493 our Jacopo. But the father having died in the year 1499, the mother in the year 1504, and the grandfather in the year 1506, Jacopo was left to the care of his grandmother, Monna Brigida, who kept him for several years at Pontormo, and had him taught reading, writing, and the first rudiments of Latin grammar; and finally, at the age of thirteen, he was taken by the same guardian to Florence, and placed with the Pupilli, to the end that his small property might be safeguarded and preserved by that board, as is the custom. And after settling the boy himself in the house of one Battista, a shoemaker distantly related to him, Monna Brigida returned to Pontormo, taking with her a sister of Jacopo's. But not long after that, Monna Brigida herself having died, Jacopo was forced to bring that sister to Florence, and to place her in the house of a kinsman called Niccolao, who lived in the Via de' Servi; and the girl, also, following the rest of her family, died in the year 1512, before ever she was married.

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But to return to Jacopo; he had not been many months in Florence when he was placed by Bernardo Vettori with Leonardo da Vinci, and shortly afterwards with Mariotto Albertinelli, then with Piero di Cosimo, and finally, in the year 1512, with Andrea del Sarto, with whom, likewise, he did not stay long, for the reason that, after Jacopo had executed the cartoons of the little arch for the Servites, of which there will be an account below, it appears that Andrea never again looked favourably upon him, whatever may have been the reason. The first work, then, that Jacopo executed at that time was a little Annunciation for one his friend, a tailor; but the tailor having died before the work was finished, it remained in the hands of Jacopo, who was at that time with Mariotto, and Mariotto took pride in it, and showed it as a rare work to all who entered his workshop. Now Raffaello da Urbino, coming in those days to Florence, saw with infinite marvel the work and the lad who had done it, and prophesied of Jacopo that which was afterwards seen to come true. Not long afterwards, Mariotto having departed from Florence and gone to Viterbo to execute the panel-picture that Fra Bartolommeo had begun there, Jacopo, who was young, solitary, and melancholy, being thus left without a master, went by himself to work under Andrea del Sarto, at the very moment when Andrea had finished the stories of S. Filippo in the court of the Servites, which pleased Jacopo vastly, as did all his other works and his whole manner and design. Jacopo having then set himself to make every effort to imitate him, no long time passed before it was seen that he had made marvellous progress in drawing and colouring, insomuch that from his facility it seemed as if he had been many years in art.

Now Andrea had finished in those days a panel-picture of the Annunciation for the Church of the Friars of S. Gallo, which is now destroyed, as has been related in his Life; and he gave the predella of that panel-picture to Jacopo to execute in oils. Jacopo painted in it a Dead Christ, with two little Angels who are weeping over Him and illuminating Him with two torches, and, in two round pictures at the sides, two Prophets, which were executed by him so ably, that they have the appearance of having been painted not by a mere lad but by a practised master; but it may

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also be, as Bronzino says, that he remembers having heard from Jacopo da Pontormo himself that Rosso likewise worked on this predella. And even as Andrea was assisted by Jacopo in executing the predella, so also was he aided by him in finishing the many pictures and works that Andrea continually had in hand.

In the meantime, Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici having been elected Supreme Pontiff under the title of Leo X, there were being made all over Florence by the friends and adherents of that house many escutcheons of the Pontiff, in stone, in marble, on canvas, and in fresco. Wherefore the Servite Friars, wishing to give some sign of their service and devotion to that house and Pontiff, caused the arms of Leo to be made in stone, and placed in the centre of the arch in the first portico of the Nunziata, which is on the piazza; and shortly afterwards they arranged that it should be overlaid with gold by the painter Andrea di Cosimo, and adorned with grotesques, of which he was an excellent master, and with the devices of the house of Medici, and that, in addition, on either side of it there should be painted a Faith and a Charity. But Andrea di Cosimo, knowing that he was not able to execute all these things by himself, thought of giving the two figures to some other to do; and so, having sent for Jacopo, who was then not more than nineteen years of age, he gave him those two figures to execute, although he had no little trouble to persuade him to undertake to do it, seeing that, being a mere lad, he did not wish to expose himself at the outset to such a risk, or to work in a place of so much importance. However, having taken heart, although he was not as well practised in fresco as in oil-painting, Jacopo undertook to paint those two figures. And, withdrawing—for he was still working with Andrea del Sarto—to draw the cartoons at S. Antonio by the Porta a Faenza, where he lived, in a short time he carried them to completion; which done, one day he took his master Andrea to see them. Andrea, after seeing them with infinite marvel and amazement, praised them vastly; but afterwards, as has been related, whether it was from envy or from some other reason, he never again looked with a kindly eye on Jacopo; nay, Jacopo going several times to his workshop, either the door was not opened to him or he was mocked at by the assistants, insomuch that he retired altogether by himself, beginning to live on the least that he could, for he was very poor, and to study with the greatest assiduity.

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**DUKE COSIMO I. DE' MEDICI**  
*(After the painting by Jacopo da Pontormo. Florence: Uffizi, 1270)*  
*Anderson*

[View larger image](#)

When Andrea di Cosimo, then, had finished gilding the escutcheon and all the eaves, Jacopo set to work all by himself to finish the rest; and being carried away by the desire to make a name, by his joy in working, and by nature, which had endowed him with extraordinary grace and fertility of genius, he executed that work with incredible rapidity and with such perfection as could not have been surpassed by an old, well-practised, and excellent master. Wherefore, growing in courage through this experience, and thinking that he could do a much better work, he took it into his head that he would throw to the ground all that he had done, without saying a word to



anyone, and paint it all over again after another design that he had in his brain. But in the meantime the friars, having seen that the work was finished and that Jacopo came no more to his labour, sought out Andrea, and so pestered him that he resolved to uncover it. Having therefore looked for Jacopo, in order to ask him whether he wished to do any more to the work, and not finding him, for the reason that he stayed shut up over his new design and would not answer to anyone, Andrea had the screen and scaffolding removed and the work uncovered. The same evening Jacopo, having issued from his house in order to go to the Servite convent, and, when it should be night, to throw to the ground the work that he had done, and to put into execution the new design, found the scaffolding taken away and everything uncovered, and a multitude of people all around gazing at the work. Whereupon, full of fury, he sought out Andrea, and complained of his having uncovered it without his consent, going on to describe what he had in mind to do. To which Andrea answered, laughing: "You are wrong to complain, because the work that you have done is so good that, if you had it to do again, you may take my word for it that you would not be able to do it better. You will not want for work, so keep these designs for another occasion." That work, as may be seen, was of such a kind and so beautiful, what with the novelty of the manner, the sweetness in the heads of those two women, and the loveliness of the graceful and lifelike children, that it was the most beautiful work in fresco that had ever been seen up to that time; and, besides the children with the Charity, there are two others in the air holding a piece of drapery over the escutcheon of the Pope, who are so beautiful that nothing better could be done, not to mention that all the figures have very strong relief and are so executed in colouring and in every other respect that one is not able to praise them enough. And Michelagnolo Buonarroti, seeing the work one day, and reflecting that a youth of nineteen had done it, said: "This young man, judging from what may be seen here, will become such that, if he lives and perseveres, he will exalt this art to the heavens." This renown and fame being heard by the men of Pontormo, they sent for Jacopo, and commissioned him to execute in their stronghold, over a gate placed on the main road, an escutcheon of Pope Leo with two little boys, which was very beautiful; but already it has been little less than ruined by rain.

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### THE VISITATION

*(After the fresco by Jacopo da Pontormo. Florence: SS. Annunziata, Cloister)*

*Anderson*

[View larger image](#)

At the Carnival in the same year, all Florence being gay and full of rejoicing at the election of the above-named Leo X, many festive spectacles were ordained, and among them two of great beauty and extraordinary cost, which were given by two companies of noblemen and gentlemen of the city. One of these, which was called the Diamante,<sup>[5]</sup> had for its head the brother of the Pope, Signor Giuliano de' Medici, who had given it that name because the diamond had been a device of his father, the elder Lorenzo; and the head of the other, which had as name and device the Broncone,<sup>[6]</sup> was Signor Lorenzo, the son of Piero de' Medici, who had for his device a Broncone—that is, a dried trunk of laurel growing green again with leaves, as it were to signify that he was reviving and restoring the name of his grandfather.

By the Company of the Diamante, then, a commission was given to M. Andrea Dazzi, who was then lecturing on Greek and Latin Letters at the Studio in Florence, to look to the invention of a triumphal procession; whereupon he arranged one similar to those that the Romans used to have

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for their triumphs, with three very beautiful cars wrought in wood, and painted with rich and beautiful art. In the first was Boyhood, with a most beautiful array of boys. In the second was Manhood, with many persons who had done great things in their manly prime. And in the third was Old Age, with many famous men who had performed great achievements in their last years. All these persons were very richly apparelled, insomuch that it was thought that nothing better could be done. The architects of these cars were Raffaello delle Vivole, Il Carota the wood-carver, the painter Andrea di Cosimo, and Andrea del Sarto; those who arranged and prepared the dresses of the figures were Ser Piero da Vinci, the father of Leonardo, and Bernardino di Giordano, both men of beautiful ingenuity; and to Jacopo da Pontormo alone it fell to paint all the three cars, wherein he executed various scenes in chiaroscuro of the Transformations of the Gods into different forms, which are now in the possession of Pietro Paolo Galeotto, an excellent goldsmith. The first car bore, written in very clear characters, the word "Erimus," the second "Sumus," and the third "Fuimus"—that is, "We shall be," "We are," and "We have been." The song began, "The years fly on...."

Having seen these triumphal cars, Signor Lorenzo, the head of the Company of the Broncone, desiring that they should be surpassed, gave the charge of the whole work to Jacopo Nardi, a noble and most learned gentleman, to whom, for what he afterwards became, his native city of Florence is much indebted. This Jacopo prepared six triumphal cars, in order to double the number of those executed by the Diamante. The first, drawn by a pair of oxen decked with herbage, represented the Age of Saturn and Janus, called the Age of Gold; and on the summit of the car were Saturn with the Scythe, and Janus with the two heads and with the key of the Temple of Peace in the hand, and at his feet a figure of Fury bound, with a vast number of things around appertaining to Saturn, all executed most beautifully in different colours by the genius of Pontormo. Accompanying this car were six couples of Shepherds, naked but for certain parts covered by skins of marten and sable, with footwear of various kinds after the ancient manner, and with their wallets, and on their heads garlands of many kinds of leaves. The horses on which these Shepherds sat were without saddles, but covered with skins of lions, tigers, and lynxes, the paws of which, overlaid with gold, hung at their sides with much grace and beauty. The ornaments of their croups and of the grooms were of gold cord, the stirrups were heads of rams, dogs, and other suchlike animals, and the bridles and reins made with silver cord and various kinds of verdure. Each Shepherd had four grooms in the garb of shepherd-boys, dressed more simply in other skins, with torches fashioned in the form of dry trunks and branches of pine, which made a most beautiful sight.

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Upon the second car, drawn by two pairs of oxen draped in the richest cloth, with garlands on their heads and great paternosters hanging from their gilded horns, was Numa Pompilius, the second King of Rome, with the books of religion and all the sacerdotal instruments and the things appertaining to sacrifices, for the reason that he was the originator and first founder of religion and sacrifices among the Romans. This car was accompanied by six priests on most beautiful she-mules, their heads covered with hoods of linen embroidered with silver and gold in a masterly pattern of ivy-leaves; and on their bodies they had sacerdotal vestments in the ancient fashion, with borders and fringes of gold all round, and in the hands one had a thurible, another a vase of gold, and the rest other similar things. At their stirrups they had attendants in the guise of Levites, and the torches that these had in their hands were after the manner of ancient candelabra, and wrought with beautiful artistry.

The third car represented the Consulate of Titus Manlius Torquatus, who was Consul after the end of the first Carthaginian war, and governed in such a manner, that in his time there flourished in Rome every virtue and every blessing. That car, upon which was Titus himself, with many ornaments executed by Pontormo, was drawn by eight most beautiful horses, and before it went six couples of Senators clad in the toga, on horses covered with cloth of gold, accompanied by a great number of grooms representing Lictors, with the fasces, axes, and other things appertaining to the administration of justice.

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The fourth car, drawn by four buffaloes disguised as elephants, represented Julius Cæsar in Triumph for the victory gained over Cleopatra, the car being all painted by Pontormo with his most famous deeds. That car was accompanied by six couples of men-at-arms clad in rich and brightly shining armour all bordered with gold, with their lances on their hips; and the torches that the half-armed grooms carried had the form of trophies, designed in various ways.

The fifth car, drawn by winged horses that had the form of gryphons, bore upon it Cæsar Augustus, the Lord of the Universe, accompanied by six couples of Poets on horseback, all crowned, as was also Cæsar, with laurel, and dressed in costumes varying according to their provinces; and these were there because poets were always much favoured by Cæsar Augustus, whom they exalted with their works to the heavens. And to the end that they might be recognized, each of them had across his forehead a scroll after the manner of a fillet, on which was his name.

On the sixth car, drawn by four pairs of heifers richly draped, was Trajan, that just Emperor, before whom, as he sat on the car, which was painted very well by Pontormo, there rode upon beautiful and finely caparisoned horses six couples of Doctors of Law, with togas reaching to their feet and with capes of miniver, such as it was the ancient custom for Doctors to wear. The grooms who carried their torches, a great number, were scribes, copyists, and notaries, with books and writings in their hands.

After these six came the car, or rather, triumphal chariot, of the Age or Era of Gold, wrought with

the richest and most beautiful artistry, with many figures in relief executed by Baccio Bandinelli, and very beautiful paintings by the hand of Pontormo; among those in relief the four Cardinal Virtues being highly extolled. From the centre of the car rose a great sphere in the form of a globe of the world, upon which there lay prostrate on his face, as if dead, a man clad in armour all eaten with rust, who had the back open and cleft, and from the fissure there issued a child all naked and gilded, who represented the new birth of the age of gold and the end of the age of iron, from which he was coming forth into that new birth by reason of the election of that Pontiff; and this same significance had the dry trunk putting forth new leaves, although some said that the matter of that dry trunk was an allusion to the Lorenzo de' Medici who became Duke of Urbino. I should mention that the gilded boy, who was the son of a baker, died shortly afterwards through the sufferings that he endured in order to gain ten crowns.

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The chant that was sung in that masquerade, as is the custom, was composed by the above-named Jacopo Nardi, and the first stanza ran thus:

Colui che da le leggi alla Natura  
E i varii stati e secoli dispone,  
D'ogni bene è cagione;  
E il mal, quanto permette, al Mondo dura;  
Onde questa figura  
Contemplando si vede,  
Come con certo piede  
L'un secol dopo l'altro al Mondo viene  
E muta il bene in male, e 'l male in bene.

From the works that he executed for this festival Pontormo gained, besides the profit, so much praise, that probably few young men of his age ever gained as much in that city; wherefore, Pope Leo himself afterwards coming to Florence, he was much employed in the festive preparations that were made, for he had attached himself to Baccio da Montelupo, a sculptor advanced in years, who made an arch of wood at the head of the Via del Palagio, at the steps of the Badia, and Pontormo painted it all with very beautiful scenes, which afterwards came to an evil end through the scant diligence of those who had charge of them. Only one remained, that in which Pallas is tuning an instrument into accord with the lyre of Apollo, with great grace and beauty; from which scene one is able to judge what excellence and perfection were in the other works and figures. For the same festivities Ridolfo Ghirlandajo had received the task of fitting up and embellishing the Sala del Papa, which is attached to the Convent of S. Maria Novella, and was formerly the residence of the Pontiffs in the city of Florence; but being pressed for time, he was forced to avail himself in some things of the work of others, and thus, after having adorned all the other rooms, he laid on Jacopo da Pontormo the charge of executing some pictures in fresco in the chapel where his Holiness was to hear Mass every morning. Whereupon, setting his hand to the work, Jacopo painted there a God the Father with many little Angels, and a Veronica who had the Sudarium with the image of Jesus Christ; which work, thus executed by Jacopo in so short a time, was much extolled.

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He then painted in fresco, in a chapel of the Church of S. Ruffillo, behind the Archbishop's Palace in Florence, Our Lady with her Son in her arms between S. Michelagnolo and S. Lucia, and two other Saints kneeling; and, in the lunette of the chapel, a God the Father with some Seraphim about Him. Next, having been commissioned by Maestro Jacopo, a Servite friar, as he had greatly desired, to paint a part of the court of the Servites, because Andrea del Sarto had gone off to France and left the work of that court unfinished, he set himself with much study to make the cartoons. But since he was poorly provided with the things of this world, and was obliged, while studying in order to win honour, to have something to live upon, he executed over the door of the Hospital for Women—behind the Church of the Priest's Hospital, between the Piazza di S. Marco and the Via di S. Gallo, and exactly opposite to the wall of the Sisters of S. Catharine of Siena—two most beautiful figures in chiaroscuro, with Christ in the guise of a pilgrim awaiting certain women in order to give them hospitality and lodging; which work was deservedly much extolled in those days, as it still is, by all good judges. At this same time he painted some pictures and little scenes in oils for the Masters of the Mint, on the Carro della Moneta, which goes every year in the procession of S. John; the workmanship of which car was by the hand of Marco del Tasso. And over the door of the Company of Cecilia, on the heights of Fiesole, he painted a S. Cecilia with some roses in her hand, coloured in fresco, and so beautiful and so well suited to that place, that, for a work of that kind, it is one of the best paintings in fresco that there are to be seen.

These works having been seen by the above-named Servite friar, Maestro Jacopo, he became even more ardent in his desire, and he determined at all costs to cause Jacopo to finish the work in that court of the Servites, thinking that in emulation of the other masters who had worked there he would execute something of extraordinary beauty in the part that remained to be painted. Having therefore set his hand to it, from a desire no less of glory and honour than of gain, Jacopo painted the scene of the Visitation of the Madonna, in a manner a little freer and more lively than had been his wont up to that time; which circumstance gave an infinite excellence to the work, in addition to its other extraordinary beauties, in that the women, little boys, youths, and old men are executed in fresco with such softness and such harmony of colouring, that it is a thing to marvel at, and the flesh-colours of a little boy who is seated on some steps, and, indeed, those likewise of all the other figures, are such that they could not be done better or with more softness in fresco. This work, then, after the others that Jacopo had executed, gave a sure earnest of his future perfection to the craftsmen, comparing them with those of Andrea del Sarto and Franciabigio. Jacopo delivered the work finished in the year 1516,

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and received in payment sixteen crowns and no more.

Having then been allotted by Francesco Pucci, if I remember rightly, the altar-piece of a chapel that he had caused to be built in S. Michele Bisdomini in the Via de' Servi, Jacopo executed the work in so beautiful a manner, and with a colouring so vivid, that it seems almost impossible to credit it. In this altar-piece Our Lady, who is seated, is handing the Infant Jesus to S. Joseph, in whose countenance there is a smile so animated and so lifelike that it is a marvel; and very beautiful, likewise, is a little boy painted to represent S. John the Baptist, and also two other little children, naked, who are upholding a canopy. There may be seen also a S. John the Evangelist, a most beautiful old man, and a S. Francis kneeling, who is absolutely alive, for, with the fingers of one hand interlocked with those of the other, and wholly intent in contemplating fixedly with his eyes and his mind the Virgin and her Son, he appears really to be breathing. And no less beautiful is the S. James who may be seen beside the others. Wherefore it is no marvel that this is the most beautiful altar-piece that was ever executed by this truly rare painter.

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I used to believe that it was after this work, and not before, that the same Jacopo had painted in fresco the two most lovely and graceful little boys who are supporting a coat of arms over a door within a passage on the Lungarno, between the Ponte S. Trinita and the Ponte alla Carraja, for Bartolommeo Lanfredini; but since Bronzino, who may be supposed to know the truth about these matters, declares that they were among the first works that Jacopo executed, we must believe that this is so without a doubt, and praise Pontormo for them all the more, seeing that they are so beautiful that they cannot be matched, and yet were among the earliest works that he did.

But to resume the order of our story: after these works, Jacopo executed for the men of Pontormo an altar-piece wherein are S. Michelagnolo and S. John the Evangelist, which was placed in the Chapel of the Madonna in S. Agnolo, their principal church. At this time one of two young men who were working under Jacopo—that is, Giovan Maria Pichi of Borgo a S. Sepolcro, who was acquitting himself passing well, and who afterwards became a Servite friar, and executed some works in the Borgo and in the Pieve a S. Stefano—while still working, I say, under Jacopo, painted in a large picture a nude S. Quentin in martyrdom, in order to send it to the Borgo. But since Jacopo, like a loving master to his disciple, desired that Giovan Maria should win honour and praise, he set himself to retouch it, and so, not being able to take his hands off it, and retouching one day the head, the next day the arms, and the day after the body, the retouching became such that it may almost be said that the work is entirely by his hand. Wherefore it is no marvel that this picture, which is now in the Church of the Observantine Friars of S. Francis in the Borgo, is most beautiful.



**JOSEPH AND HIS KINDRED IN EGYPT**  
*(After the painting by Jacopo da Pontormo. London: National Gallery, 1131)*

*Hanfstaengl*

[View larger image](#)

The second of the two young men, who was Giovanni Antonio Lappoli of Arezzo, of whom there has been an account in another place, like a vain fellow had taken a portrait of himself with a mirror, also while he was working under Jacopo. But his master, thinking that the portrait was a poor likeness, took it in hand himself, and executed a portrait that is so good that it has the appearance of life; which portrait is now at Arezzo, in the house of the heirs of that Giovanni Antonio.

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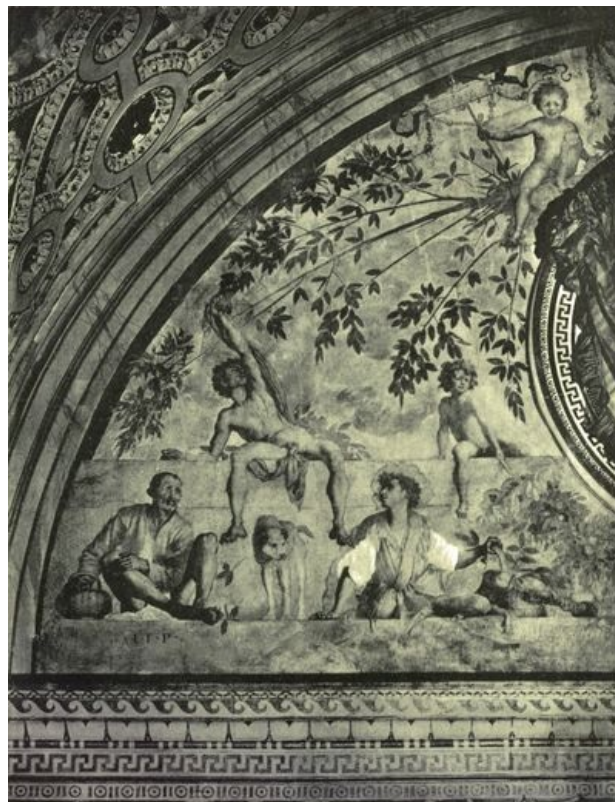
Pontormo also portrayed in one and the same picture two of his dearest friends—one the son-in-law of Beccuccio Bicchieraio, and another, whose name likewise I do not know; it is enough that the portraits are by the hand of Pontormo. He then executed for Bartolommeo Ginori, in anticipation of his death, a string of pennons, according to the custom of the Florentines; and in the upper part of all these, on the white taffeta, he painted a Madonna with the Child, and on the coloured fringe below he painted the arms of that family, as is the custom. For the centre of the string, which was of twenty-four pennons, he made two all of white taffeta without any fringe, on

which he painted two figures of S. Bartholomew, each two braccia high. The size of all these pennons and their almost novel manner caused all the others that had been made up to that time to appear poor and mean; and this was the reason that they began to be made of the size that they are at the present day, with great grace and much less expense for gold.

At the head of the garden and vineyard of the Friars of S. Gallo, without the gate that is called after that Saint, in a chapel that is in a line with the central entrance, he painted a Dead Christ, a Madonna weeping, and two little Angels in the air, one of whom was holding the Chalice of the Passion in his hands, and the other was supporting the fallen head of Christ. On one side was S. John the Evangelist, all tearful, with the arms stretched out, and on the other S. Augustine in episcopal robes, who, leaning with the left hand on the pastoral staff, stood in an attitude truly full of sorrow, contemplating the Dead Saviour. And for Messer Spina, the familiar friend of Giovanni Salviati, he executed in a courtyard, opposite to the principal door of his house, the coat of arms of that Giovanni (who had been made a Cardinal in those days by Pope Leo), with the red hat above and two little boys standing—works in fresco which are very beautiful, and much esteemed by Messer Filippo Spina, as being by the hand of Pontormo.

Jacopo also worked, in competition with other masters, on the ornamentation in wood that was formerly executed in a magnificent manner, as has been related elsewhere, in some apartments of Pier Francesco Borgherini; and, in particular, he painted there with his own hand on two coffers some stories from the life of Joseph in little figures, which were truly most beautiful. And whoever wishes to see the best work that he ever did in all his life, in order to consider how able and masterly was Jacopo in giving liveliness to heads, in grouping figures, in varying attitudes, and in beauty of invention, let him look at a scene of some size, likewise in little figures, in the corner on the left hand as one enters through the door, in the chamber of Borgherini, who was a nobleman of Florence; in which scene is Joseph in Egypt, as it were a Prince or a King, in the act of receiving his father Jacob with all his brethren, the sons of that Jacob, with extraordinary affection. Among these figures he portrayed at the foot of the scene, seated upon some steps, Il Bronzino, who was then a boy and his disciple—a figure with a basket, which is lifelike and beautiful to a marvel. And if this scene were on a greater scale, on a large panel or a wall, instead of being small, I would venture to say that it would not be possible to find another picture executed with the grace, excellence, and even perfection wherewith this one was painted by Jacopo; wherefore it was rightly regarded by all craftsmen as the most beautiful picture that Pontormo ever executed. Nor is it to be wondered at that Borgherini should have prized it as he did, and should have been besought to sell it by great persons as a present for mighty lords and princes.

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#### VERTUMNUS FRESCO (DETAIL)

(After Jacopo da Pontormo. *Poggio a Caiano: Villa Reale*)

*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

On account of the siege of Florence Pier Francesco retired to Lucca, and Giovan Battista della Palla, who desired to obtain, together with other things that he was transporting into France, the decorations of this chamber, so that they might be presented to King Francis in the name of the Signoria, received such favours, and went to work so effectively with both words and deeds, that

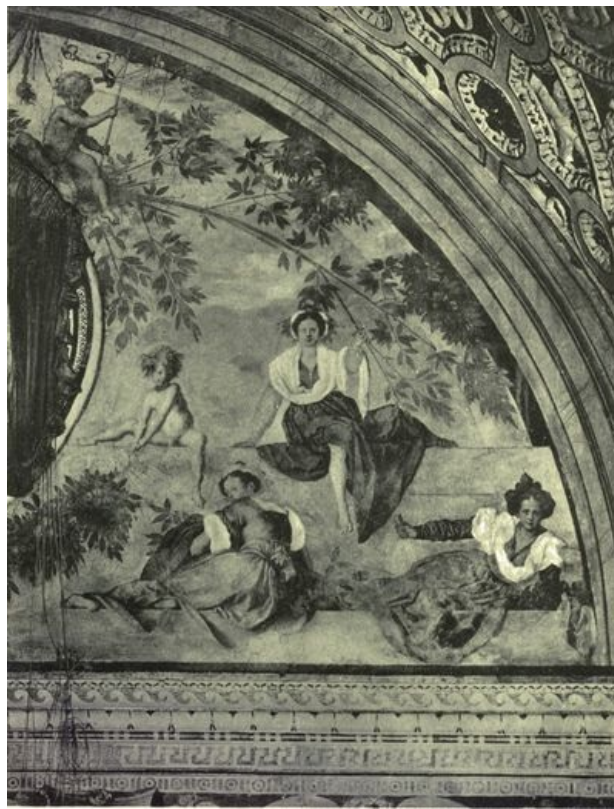
the Gonfalonier granted a commission that they should be taken away after payment to the wife of Pier Francesco. Whereupon some others went with Giovan Battista to execute the will of the Signori; but, when they arrived at the house of Pier Francesco, his wife, who was in the house, poured on Giovan Battista the greatest abuse that was ever spoken to any man. "So you make bold, Giovan Battista," said she, "you vile slop-dealer, you little twopenny pedlar, to strip the ornaments from the chambers of noblemen and despoil our city of her richest and most honoured treasures, as you have done and are always doing, in order to embellish with them the countries of foreigners, our enemies! At you I do not marvel, you, a base plebeian and the enemy of your country, but at the magistrates of this city, who aid and abet you in these shameful rascalities. This bed, which you would seize for your own private interest and for greed of gain, although you keep your evil purpose cloaked with a veil of righteousness, this is the bed of my nuptials, in honour of which my husband's father, Salvi, made all these magnificent and regal decorations, which I revere in memory of him and from love for my husband, and mean to defend with my very blood and with life itself. Out of this house with these your cut-throats, Giovan Battista, and go to those who sent you with orders that these things should be removed from their places, for I am not the woman to suffer a single thing to be moved from here. If they who believe in you, a vile creature of no account, wish to make presents to King Francis of France, let them go and strip their own houses, and take the ornaments and beds from their own chambers, and send them to him. And you, if you are ever again so bold as to come to this house on such an errand, I will make you smart sorely for it, and teach you what respect should be paid by such as you to the houses of noblemen." Thus spoke Madonna Margherita, the wife of Pier Francesco Borgherini, and the daughter of Ruberto Acciaiuoli, a most noble and wise citizen; and she, a truly courageous woman and a worthy daughter of such a father, with her noble ardour and spirit, was the reason that those gems are still preserved in that house.

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Giovan Maria Benintendi, about this same time, had adorned an antechamber in his house with many pictures by the hands of various able men; and after the work executed for Borgherini, incited by hearing Jacopo da Pontormo very highly praised, he caused a picture to be painted by him with the Adoration of the Magi, who went to Bethlehem to see Christ; which work, since Jacopo devoted to it much study and diligence, proved to be well varied and beautiful in the heads and in every other part, and to be truly worthy of all praise. Afterwards he executed for Messer Goro da Pistoia, then Secretary to the Medici, a picture with the portrait of the Magnificent Cosimo de' Medici, the elder, from the knees upwards, which is indeed worthy to be extolled; and this portrait is now in the house of Messer Ottaviano de' Medici, in the possession of his son, Messer Alessandro, a young man—besides the distinction and nobility of his blood—of most upright character, well lettered, and the worthy son of the Magnificent Ottaviano and of Madonna Francesca, the daughter of Jacopo Salviati and the maternal aunt of the Lord Duke Cosimo.

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By means of this work, and particularly this head of Cosimo, Pontormo became the friend of Messer Ottaviano; and the Great Hall at Poggio a Caiano having then to be painted, there were given to him to paint the two ends where the round openings are that give light—that is, the windows—from the vaulting down to the floor. Whereupon, desiring to do himself honour even beyond his wont, both from regard for the place and from emulation of the other painters who were working there, he set himself to study with such diligence, that he overshot the mark, for the reason that, destroying and doing over again every day what he had done the day before, he racked his brains in such a manner that it was a tragedy; but all the time he was always making new discoveries, which brought credit to himself and beauty to the work. Thus, having to execute a Vertumnus with his husbandmen, he painted a peasant seated with a vine-pruner in his hand, which is so beautiful and so well done that it is a very rare thing, even as certain children that are there are lifelike and natural beyond all belief. On the other side he painted Pomona and Diana, with other Goddesses, enveloping them perhaps too abundantly with draperies. However, the work as a whole is beautiful and much extolled; but while it was being executed Leo was overtaken by death, and so it remained unfinished, like many other similar works at Rome, Florence, Loreto, and other places; nay, the whole world was left poor, being robbed of the true Mæcenas of men of talent.



**VERTUMNUS FRESCO (DETAIL)**  
*(After Jacopo da Pontormo. Poggio a Caiano: Villa Reale)*  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

Having returned to Florence, Jacopo painted in a picture a seated figure of S. Augustine as a Bishop, who is giving the benediction, with two little nude Angels flying through the air, who are very beautiful; which picture is over an altar in the little Church of the Sisters of S. Clemente in the Via di S. Gallo. He carried to completion, likewise, a picture of a Pietà with certain nude Angels, which was a very beautiful work, and held very dear by certain merchants of Ragusa, for whom he painted it; but most beautiful of all in this picture was a landscape taken for the most part from an engraving by Albrecht Dürer. He also painted a picture of Our Lady with the Child in her arms, and some little Angels about her, which is now in the house of Alessandro Neroni; and for certain Spaniards he executed another like it—that is, of the Madonna—but different from the one described above and in another manner, which picture, being for sale in a second-hand dealer's shop many years after, was bought by Bartolommeo Panciatichi at the suggestion of Bronzino.

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Then, in the year 1522, there being a slight outbreak of plague in Florence, and many persons therefore departing in order to avoid that most infectious sickness and to save themselves, an occasion presented itself to Jacopo of flying the city and removing himself to some distance, for a certain Prior of the Certosa, a place built by the Acciaiuoli three miles away from Florence, had to have some pictures painted in fresco at the corners of a very large and beautiful cloister that surrounds a lawn, and Jacopo was brought to his notice; whereupon the Prior had him sought out, and he, having accepted the work very willingly at such a time, went off to Certosa, taking with him only Bronzino. There, after a trial of that mode of life, that quiet, that silence, and that solitude—all things after the taste and nature of Jacopo—he thought with such an occasion to make a special effort in the matters of art, and to show to the world that he had acquired greater perfection and a different manner since those works that he had executed before. Now not long before there had come from Germany to Florence many sheets printed from engravings done with great subtlety with the burin by Albrecht Dürer, a most excellent German painter and a rare engraver of plates on copper and on wood; and, among others, many scenes, both large and small, of the Passion of Jesus Christ, in which was all the perfection and excellence of engraving with the burin that could ever be achieved, what with the beauty and variety of the vestments and the invention. Jacopo, having to paint at the corners of those cloisters scenes from the Passion of the Saviour, thought to avail himself of the above-named inventions of Albrecht Dürer, in the firm belief that he would satisfy not only himself but also the greater part of the craftsmen of Florence, who were all proclaiming with one voice and with common consent and agreement the beauty of those engravings and the excellence of Albrecht. Setting himself therefore to imitate that manner, and seeking to give to the expressions of the heads of his figures that liveliness and variety which Albrecht had given to his, he caught it so thoroughly, that the charm of his own early manner, which had been given to him by nature, all full of sweetness and grace, suffered a great change from that new study and labour, and was so impaired through his stumbling on that German manner, that in all these works, although they are all beautiful, there is but a sorry remnant to be seen of that excellence and grace that he had given up to that time to all his figures.

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At the entrance to the cloister, then, in one corner, he painted Christ in the Garden, counterfeiting so well the darkness of night illumined by the light of the moon, that it appears almost like daylight; and while Christ is praying, not far distant are Peter, James, and John sleeping, executed in a manner so similar to that of Dürer, that it is a marvel. Not far away is Judas leading the Jews, likewise with a countenance so strange, even as the features of all those soldiers are depicted in the German manner with bizarre expressions, that it moves him who beholds it to pity for the simplicity of the man, who sought with such patience to learn that which others avoid and seek to lose, and all to lose the manner that surpassed all others in excellence and gave infinite pleasure to everyone. Did not Pontormo know, then, that the Germans and Flemings came to these parts to learn the Italian manner, which he with such effort sought to abandon as if it were bad?

Beside this scene is one in which is Christ led by the Jews before Pilate, and in the Saviour he painted all the humility that could possibly be imagined in the Person of Innocence betrayed by the sins of men, and in the wife of Pilate that pity and dread for themselves which those have who fear the divine judgment; which woman, while she pleads the cause of Christ before her husband, gazes into His countenance with pitying wonder. Round Pilate are some soldiers so characteristic in the expressions of the faces and in the German garments, that one who knew not by whose hand was that work would believe it to have been executed in reality by ultramontanes. It is true, indeed, that in the distance in this scene there is a cup-bearer of Pilate's that is descending some steps with a basin and a ewer in his hands, carrying to his master the means to wash the hands, who is lifelike and very beautiful, having in him something of the old manner of Jacopo.

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Having next to paint the Resurrection of Christ in one of the other corners, the fancy came to Jacopo, as to one who had no steadfastness in his brain and was always cogitating new things, to change his colouring; and so he executed that work with a colouring in fresco so soft and so good, that, if he had done the work in another manner than that same German, it would certainly have been very beautiful, for in the heads of those soldiers, who are in various attitudes, heavy with sleep, and as it were dead, there may be seen such excellence, that one cannot believe that it is possible to do better.

Then, continuing the stories of the Passion in another of the corners, he painted Christ going with the Cross upon His shoulder to Mount Calvary, and behind Him the people of Jerusalem, accompanying Him; and in front are the two Thieves, naked, between the ministers of justice, who are partly on foot and partly on horseback, with the ladders, the inscription for the Cross, hammers, nails, cords, and other suchlike instruments. And in the highest part, behind a little hill, is the Madonna with the Maries, who, weeping, are awaiting Christ, who has fallen to the ground in the middle of the scene, and has about Him many Jews that are smiting Him, while Veronica is offering to Him the Sudarium, accompanied by some women both young and old, all weeping at the outrage that they see being done to the Saviour. This scene, either because he was warned by his friends, or perhaps because Jacopo himself at last became aware, although tardily, of the harm that had been done to his own sweet manner by the study of the German, proved to be much better than the others executed in the same place, for the reason that certain naked Jews and some heads of old men are so well painted in fresco, that it would not be possible to do more, although the same German manner may be seen constantly maintained in the work as a whole.

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After these he was to have gone on with the Crucifixion and the Deposition from the Cross in the other corners; but, putting them aside for a time, with the intention of executing them last, he painted in their stead Christ taken down from the Cross, keeping to the same manner, but with great harmony of colouring. In this scene, besides that the Magdalene, who is kissing the feet of Christ, is most beautiful, there are two old men, representing Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus, who, although they are in the German manner, have the most beautiful expressions and heads of old men, with beards feathery and coloured with marvellous softness, that there are to be seen.

Now Jacopo, besides being generally slow over his works, was pleased with the solitude of the Certosa, and he therefore spent several years on these labours; and, after the plague had finished and he had returned to Florence, he did not for that reason cease to frequent that place constantly, and was always going and coming between the Certosa and the city. Proceeding thus, he satisfied those fathers in many things, and, among others, he painted in their church, over one of the doors that lead into the chapels, in a figure from the waist upwards, the portrait of a lay-brother of that monastery, who was alive at that time and one hundred and twenty years old, executing it so well and with such finish, such vivacity, and such animation, that through it alone Pontormo deserves to be excused for the strange and fantastic new manner with which he was saddled by that solitude and by living far from the commerce of men.

Besides this, he painted for the Prior of that place a picture of the Nativity of Christ, representing Joseph as giving light to Jesus Christ in the darkness of the night with a lantern, and this in pursuit of the same notions and caprices which the German engravings put into his head. Now let no one believe that Jacopo is to blame because he imitated Albrecht Dürer in his inventions, for the reason that this is no error, and many painters have done it and are continually doing it; but only because he adopted the unmixed German manner in everything, in the draperies, in the expressions of the heads, and in the attitudes, which he should have avoided, availing himself only of the inventions, since he had the modern manner in all the fullness of its beauty and grace. For the Stranger's Apartment of the same monks he painted a large picture on canvas and in oil-colours, without straining himself at all or forcing his natural powers, of Christ at table with

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Cleophas and Luke, figures of the size of life; and since in this work he followed the bent of his own genius, it proved to be truly marvellous, particularly because he portrayed among those who are serving at that table some lay-brothers of the convent, whom I myself have known, in such a manner that they could not be either more lifelike or more animated than they are.

Bronzino, meanwhile (that is, while his master was executing the works described above in the Certosa), pursuing with great spirit the studies of painting, and encouraged all the time by Pontormo, who was very loving with his disciples, executed on the inner side over an arch above the door of the cloister that leads into the church, without having ever seen the process of painting in oil-colours on the wall, a nude S. Laurence on the gridiron, which was so beautiful that there began to be seen some indication of that excellence to which he has since attained, as will be related in the proper place; which circumstance gave infinite satisfaction to Jacopo, who already saw whither that genius would arrive.

Not long afterwards there returned from Rome Lodovico di Gino Capponi, who had bought that chapel in S. Felicita, on the right hand of the entrance into the church, which the Barbadori had formerly caused to be built by Filippo di Ser Brunellesco; and he resolved to have all the vaulting painted, and then to have an altar-piece executed for it, with a rich ornament. Having therefore consulted in the matter with M. Niccolò Vespucci, knight of Rhodes, who was much his friend, the knight, who was also much the friend of Jacopo, and knew, into the bargain, the talent and worth of that able man, did and said so much that Lodovico allotted that work to Pontormo. And so, having erected an enclosure, which kept that chapel closed for three years, he set his hand to the work. On the vaulted ceiling he painted a God the Father, who has about Him four very beautiful Patriarchs; and in the four medallions at the angles he depicted the four Evangelists, or rather, he executed three of them with his own hand, and Bronzino one all by himself. And with this occasion I must mention that Pontormo used scarcely ever to allow himself to be helped by his assistants, or to suffer them to lay a hand on that which he intended to execute with his own hand; and when he did wish to avail himself of one of them, chiefly in order that they might learn, he allowed them to do the whole work by themselves, as he allowed Bronzino to do here.

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In the works that Jacopo executed in the said chapel up to this point, it seemed almost as if he had returned to his first manner; but he did not follow the same method in painting the altar-piece, for, thinking always of new things, he executed it without shadows, and with a colouring so bright and so uniform, that one can scarcely distinguish the lights from the middle tints, and the middle tints from the darks. In this altar-piece is a Dead Christ taken down from the Cross and being carried to the Sepulchre. There is the Madonna who is swooning, and the Maries, all executed in a fashion so different from his first work, that it is clearly evident that his brain was always busy investigating new conceptions and fantastic methods of painting, not being content with, and not fixing on, any single method. In a word, the composition of this altar-piece is altogether different from the figures on the vaulting, and likewise the colouring; and the four Evangelists, which are in the medallions on the spandrels of the vaulting, are much better and in a different manner.



**THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS**  
*(After the painting by Jacopo da Pontormo. Florence: S. Felicita)*  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

On the wall where the window is are two figures in fresco, on one side the Virgin, and on the other the Angel, who is bringing her the Annunciation, but so distorted, both the one and the other, that it is evident that, as I have said, that bizarre and fantastic brain was never content with anything. And in order to be able to do as he pleased in this, and to avoid having his attention distracted by anyone, all the time that he was executing this work he would never allow even the owner of the chapel himself to see it, insomuch that, having painted it after his own fancy, without any of his friends having been able to give him a single hint, when it was finally uncovered and seen, it amazed all Florence. For the same Lodovico he executed a picture of Our Lady in that same manner for his chamber, and in the head of a S. Mary Magdalene he made the portrait of a daughter of Lodovico, who was a very beautiful young woman.

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Near the Monastery of Boldrone, on the road that goes from there to Castello, and at the corner of another that climbs the hill and goes to Cercina (that is, at a distance of two miles from Florence), he painted in fresco in a shrine Christ Crucified, Our Lady weeping, S. John the Evangelist, S. Augustine, and S. Giuliano; all which figures, his caprice not being yet satisfied, and the German manner still pleasing him, are not very different from those that he executed at the Certosa. He did the same, also, in an altar-piece that he painted for the Nuns of S. Anna, at the Porta a S. Friano, in which altar-piece is Our Lady with the Child in her arms, and S. Anne behind her, with S. Peter, S. Benedict, and other Saints, and in the predella is a small scene with little figures, which represent the Signoria of Florence as it used to go in procession with trumpeters, pipers, mace-bearers, messengers, and ushers, with the rest of the household; and this he did because the commission for that altar-piece was given to him by the Captain and the household of the Palace.

The while that Jacopo was executing this work, Alessandro and Ippolito de' Medici, who were both very young, having been sent to Florence by Pope Clement VII under the care of the Legate, Silvio Passerini, Bishop of Cortona, the Magnificent Ottaviano, to whom the Pope had straitly recommended them, had the portraits of both of them taken by Pontormo, who served him very well, and made them very good likenesses, although he did not much depart from the manner that he had learned from the Germans. In the portrait of Ippolito he also painted a favourite dog of that lord, called Rodon, and made it so characteristic and so natural, that it might be alive. He took the portrait, likewise, of Bishop Ardinghelli, who afterwards became a Cardinal; and for Filippo del Migliore, who was much his friend, he painted in fresco in his house on the Via Larga, in a niche opposite to the principal door, a woman representing Pomona, from which it appeared that he was beginning to seek to abandon in part his German manner.

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Now Giovan Battista della Palla perceived that by reason of many works the name of Jacopo was becoming every day more celebrated; and, since he had not succeeded in sending to King Francis the pictures executed by that same master and by others for Borgherini, he resolved, knowing that the King had a desire for them, at all costs to send him something by the hand of Pontormo. Whereupon he so went to work that he persuaded Jacopo to execute a most beautiful picture of the Raising of Lazarus, which proved to be one of the best works that he ever painted and that was ever sent by Giovan Battista, among the vast number that he sent, to King Francis of France. For, besides that the heads were most beautiful, the figure of Lazarus, whose spirit as he returned to life was re-entering his dead flesh, could not have been more marvellous, for about the eyes he still had the hue of corruption, and the flesh cold and dead at the extremities of the hands and feet, where the spirit had not yet come.



**THE MARTYRDOM OF THE FORTY SAINTS**  
*(After the panel by Jacopo da Pontormo. Florence: Pitti, 182)*  
*Alinari*

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In a picture of one braccio and a half he painted for the Sisters of the Hospital of the Innocenti, with an infinite number of little figures, the story of the eleven thousand Martyrs who were condemned to death by Diocletian and all crucified in a wood. In this Jacopo represented a battle of horsemen and nude figures, very beautiful, and some most lovely little Angels flying through the air, who are shooting arrows at the ministers of the crucifixion; and in like manner, about the Emperor, who is pronouncing the condemnation, are some most beautiful nude figures who are going to their death. This picture, which in every part is worthy to be praised, is now held in great price by Don Vincenzio Borghini, the Director of that Hospital, who once was much the friend of Jacopo. Another picture similar to that described above he painted for Carlo Neroni, but only with the Battle of the Martyrs and the Angel baptizing them; and then the portrait of Carlo himself. He also executed a portrait, at the time of the siege of Florence, of Francesco Guardi in the habit of a soldier, which was a very beautiful work; and on the cover of this picture Bronzino afterwards painted Pygmalion praying to Venus that his statue, receiving breath, might spring to life and become—as, according to the fables of the poets, it did—flesh and blood. At this time, after much labour, there came to Jacopo the fulfilment of a desire that he had long had, in that, having always felt a wish to have a house that might be his own, so that he should no longer live in the house of another, but might occupy his own and live as pleased himself, finally he bought one in the Via della Colonna, opposite to the Nuns of S. Maria degli Angeli.

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The siege finished, Pope Clement commanded Messer Ottaviano de' Medici that he should cause the hall of Poggio a Caiano to be finished. Whereupon, Franciabigio and Andrea del Sarto being dead, the whole charge of this was given to Pontormo, who, after having the staging and the screens made, began to execute the cartoons; but, for the reason that he went off into fantasies and cogitations, beyond that he never set a hand to the work. This, perchance, would not have happened if Bronzino had been in those parts, who was then working at the Imperiale, a place belonging to the Duke of Urbino, near Pesaro; which Bronzino, although he was sent for every day by Jacopo, nevertheless was not able to depart at his own pleasure, for the reason that, after he had executed a very beautiful naked Cupid on the spandrel of a vault in the Imperiale, and the cartoons for the others, Prince Guidobaldo, having recognized the young man's genius, ordained that his own portrait should be taken by him, and, seeing that he wished to be portrayed in some armour that he was expecting from Lombardy, Bronzino was forced to stay with that Prince longer than he could have wished. During that time he painted the case of a harpsichord, which much pleased the Prince, and finally Bronzino executed his portrait, which was very beautiful, and the Prince was well satisfied with it.

Jacopo, then, wrote so many times, and employed so many means, that in the end he brought Bronzino back; but for all that the man could never be induced to do any other part of this work

than the cartoons, although he was urged to it by the Magnificent Ottaviano and by Duke Alessandro. In one of these cartoons, which are now for the most part in the house of Lodovico Capponi, is a Hercules who is crushing Antæus, in another a Venus and Adonis, and in yet another drawing a scene of nude figures playing football.

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In the meantime Signor Alfonso Davalos, Marchese del Vasto, having obtained from Michelagnolo Buonarroti by means of Fra Niccolò della Magna a cartoon of Christ appearing to the Magdalene in the garden, moved heaven and earth to have it executed for him in painting by Pontormo, Buonarroti having told him that no one could serve him better than that master. Jacopo then executed that work to perfection, and it was accounted a rare painting by reason both of the grandeur of Michelagnolo's design and of Jacopo's colouring. Wherefore Signor Alessandro Vitelli, who was at that time Captain of the garrison of soldiers in Florence, having seen it, had a picture painted for himself from the same cartoon by Jacopo, which he sent to Città di Castello and caused to be placed in his house. It thus became evident in what estimation Michelagnolo held Pontormo, and with what diligence Pontormo carried to completion and executed excellently well the designs and cartoons of Michelagnolo, and Bartolommeo Bettini so went to work that Buonarroti, who was much his friend, made for him a cartoon of a nude Venus with a Cupid who is kissing her, in order that he might have it executed in painting by Pontormo and place it in the centre of a chamber of his own, in the lunettes of which he had begun to have painted by Bronzino figures of Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio, with the intention of having there all the other poets who have sung of love in Tuscan prose and verse. Jacopo, then, having received this cartoon, executed it to perfection at his leisure, as will be related, in the manner that all the world knows without my saying another word in praise of it. These designs of Michelagnolo's were the reason that Pontormo, considering the manner of that most noble craftsman, took heart of grace, and resolved that by hook or by crook he would imitate and follow it to the best of his ability. And then it was that Jacopo recognized how ill he had done to allow the work of Poggio a Caiano to slip through his hands, although he put the blame in great measure on a long and very troublesome illness that he had suffered, and finally on the death of Pope Clement, which brought that undertaking completely to an end.

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Jacopo having executed after the works described above a picture with the portrait from life of Amerigo Antinori, a young man much beloved in Florence at that time, and that portrait being much extolled by everyone, Duke Alessandro had him informed that he wished to have his portrait taken by him in a large picture. And Jacopo, for the sake of convenience, executed his portrait for the time being in a little picture of the size of a sheet of half-folio, and with such diligence and care, that the works of the miniaturists do not in any way come up to it; for the reason that, besides its being a very good likeness, there is in that head all that could be desired in the rarest of paintings. From that little picture, which is now in the guardaroba of Duke Cosimo, Jacopo afterwards made a portrait of the same Duke in a large picture, with a style in the hand, drawing the head of a woman; which larger portrait Duke Alessandro afterwards presented to Signora Taddea Malespina, the sister of the Marchesa di Massa. Desiring at all costs to reward liberally the genius of Jacopo for these works, the Duke sent him a message by Niccolò da Montaguto, his servant, that he should ask whatever he wished, and it would be granted to him. But such was the poor spirit or the excessive respect and modesty of the man, I know not which to call it, that he asked for nothing save as much money as would suffice him to redeem a cloak that he had pledged; which having heard, the Duke, not without laughing at the character of the man, commanded that fifty gold crowns should be given and a salary offered to him; and even then Niccolò had much ado to make him accept it.

Meanwhile Jacopo had finished painting the Venus from the cartoon belonging to Bettini, which proved to be a marvellous thing, but it was not given to Bettini at the price for which Jacopo had promised it to him, for certain tuft-hunters, in order to do Bettini an injury, took it almost by force from the hands of Jacopo and gave it to Duke Alessandro, restoring the cartoon to Bettini. Which having heard, Michelagnolo felt much displeasure for love of the friend for whom he had drawn the cartoon, and he bore a grudge against Jacopo, who, although he received fifty crowns for it from the Duke, nevertheless cannot be said to have defrauded Bettini, seeing that he gave up the Venus at the command of him who was his lord. But of all this some say that Bettini himself was in great measure the cause, from his asking too much.

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**JACOPO DA PONTORMO: PORTRAIT OF AN ENGRAVER**  
**(Paris: Louvre, 1241. Panel)**

[View larger image](#)

The occasion having thus presented itself to Pontormo, by means of these moneys, to set his hand to the fitting up of his house, he made a beginning with his building, but did nothing of much importance. Indeed, although some persons declare that he had it in mind to spend largely, according to his position, and to make a commodious dwelling and one that might have some design, it is nevertheless evident that what he did, whether this came from his not having the means to spend or from some other reason, has rather the appearance of a building erected by an eccentric and solitary creature than of a well-ordered habitation, for the reason that to the room where he used to sleep and at times to work, he had to climb by a wooden ladder, which, after he had gone in, he would draw up with a pulley, to the end that no one might go up to him without his wish or knowledge. But that which most displeased other men in him was that he would not work save when and for whom he pleased, and after his own fancy; wherefore on many occasions, being sought out by noblemen who desired to have some of his work, and once in particular by the Magnificent Ottaviano de' Medici, he would not serve them; and then he would set himself to do anything in the world for some low and common fellow, at a miserable price. Thus the mason Rossino, a person of no small ingenuity considering his calling, by playing the simpleton, received from him in payment for having paved certain rooms with bricks, and for having done other mason's work, a most beautiful picture of Our Lady, in executing which Jacopo toiled and laboured as much as the mason did in his building. And so well did the good Rossino contrive to manage his business, that, in addition to the above-named picture, he got from the hands of Jacopo a most beautiful portrait of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, copied from one by the hand of Raffaello, and, into the bargain, a very beautiful little picture of a Christ Crucified, which, although the above-mentioned Magnificent Ottaviano bought it from the mason Rossino as a work by the hand of Jacopo, nevertheless is known for certain to be by the hand of Bronzino, who executed it all by himself while he was working with Jacopo at the Certosa, although it afterwards remained, I know not why, in the possession of Pontormo. All these three pictures, won by the industry of the mason from the hands of Jacopo, are now in the house of M. Alessandro de' Medici, the son of the above-named Ottaviano.

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Now, although this procedure of Jacopo's and his living solitary and after his own fashion were not much commended, that does not mean that if anyone wished to excuse him he would not be able, for the reason that for those works that he did we should acknowledge our obligation to him, and for those that he did not choose to do we should not blame or censure him. No craftsman is obliged to work save when and for whom he pleases; and, if he suffered thereby, the loss was his. As for solitude, I have always heard say that it is the greatest friend of study; and, even if it were not so, I do not believe that much blame is due to him who lives in his own fashion without offence to God or to his neighbour, dwelling and employing his time as best suits his nature.

But to return, leaving these matters on one side, to the works of Jacopo: Duke Alessandro had caused to be restored in some parts the Villa of Careggi, formerly built by the elder Cosimo de' Medici, at a distance of two miles from Florence, and had carried out the ornamentation of the fountain and the labyrinth, which wound through the centre of an open court, into which there opened two loggie, and his Excellency ordained that those loggie should be painted by Jacopo,

but that company should be given him, to the end that he might finish them the quicker, and that conversation with others, keeping him cheerful, might be a means of making him work without straying so much into vagaries and distilling away his brains. Nay, the Duke himself sent for Jacopo and besought him that he should strive to deliver that work completely finished as soon as possible. Jacopo, therefore, having summoned Bronzino, caused him to paint a figure on each of five spandrels of the vaulting, these being Fortune, Justice, Victory, Peace, and Fame; and on the other spandrel, for they are in all six, Jacopo with his own hand painted a Love. Then, having made the design for some little boys that were going in the oval space of the vaulting, with various animals in their hands, and all foreshortened to be seen from below, he caused them all, with the exception of one, to be executed in colour by Bronzino, who acquitted himself very well. And since, while Jacopo and Bronzino were painting these figures, the ornaments all around were executed by Jacone, Pier Francesco di Jacopo, and others, the whole of that work was finished in a short time, to the great satisfaction of the Lord Duke. His Excellency wished to have the other loggia painted, but he was not in time, for the reason that the above-named work having been finished on the 13th of December in the year 1536, on the 6th of the January following that most illustrious lord was assassinated by his kinsman Lorenzino; and so this work and others remained without their completion.

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The Lord Duke Cosimo having then been elected, and the affair of Montemurlo having passed off happily, a beginning was made with the works of Castello, according as has been related in the Life of Tribolo, and his most illustrious Excellency, in order to gratify Signora Donna Maria, his mother, ordained that Jacopo should paint the first loggia, which one finds on the left hand in entering the Palace of Castello. Whereupon, setting to work, Jacopo first designed all the ornaments that were to be painted there, and had them executed for the most part by Bronzino and the masters who had executed those of Careggi. Then, shutting himself up alone, he proceeded with that work after his own fancy and wholly at his leisure, studying with all diligence, to the end that it might be much better than that of Careggi, which he had not executed entirely with his own hand. This he was able to do very conveniently, having eight crowns a month for it from his Excellency, whom he portrayed, young as he was, in the beginning of that work, and likewise Signora Donna Maria, his mother. Finally, after that loggia had been closed for five years, no one being able to have even a glance at what Jacopo had done, one day the above-named lady became enraged against him, and commanded that the staging and the screen should be thrown to the ground. But Jacopo, having begged for grace and having obtained leave to keep it covered for a few days more, first retouched it where it seemed to him to be necessary, and then caused a cloth of his own contriving to be made, which should keep that loggia covered when those lords were not there, to the end that the weather might not, as it had done at Careggi, eat away those pictures, which were executed in oils on the dry plaster; and at last he uncovered it, amid the lively expectation of everyone, all thinking that in that work Jacopo must have surpassed himself and done something altogether stupendous. But the effect did not correspond completely to the expectations, for the reason that, although many parts of the work are good, the general proportion of the figures appears very poor in form, and certain distorted attitudes that are there seem to be wanting in measure and very strange. But Jacopo excused himself by saying that he had never worked very willingly in that place, for the reason that, being without the city, it seemed much exposed to the fury of the soldiery and to other suchlike dangers; but there was no need for him to be afraid of that, seeing that time and the weather, from the work having been executed in the manner already described, are eating it away little by little.

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In the centre of the vaulting, then, he painted a Saturn with the Sign of Capricorn, and a Hermaphrodite Mars in the Sign of the Lion and of the Virgin, and some little Angels who are flying through the air, like those of Careggi. He then painted in certain gigantic women, almost entirely nude, Philosophy, Astrology, Geometry, Music, Arithmetic, and a Ceres; with some little scenes in medallions, executed with various tints of colour and appropriate to the figures. Although this work, so fatiguing and so laboured, did not give much satisfaction, or, if a certain measure of satisfaction, much less than was expected, yet his Excellency declared that it pleased him, and availed himself of Jacopo on every occasion, chiefly because that painter was held in great veneration by the people on account of the very good and beautiful works that he had executed in the past.

The Lord Duke then brought to Florence the Flemings, Maestro Giovanni Rosso and Maestro Niccolò, excellent masters in arras-tapestries, to the end that the art might be learned and practised by the Florentines, and he ordained that tapestries in silk and gold should be executed for the Council Hall of the Two Hundred at a cost of 60,000 crowns, and that Jacopo and Bronzino should make the cartoons with the stories of Joseph. But, when Jacopo had made two of them, in one of which is the scene when the death of Joseph is announced to Jacob and the bloody garments are shown to him, and in the other the Flight of Joseph from the wife of Potiphar, leaving his garment behind, they did not please either the Duke or those masters who had to put them into execution, for they appeared to them to be strange things and not likely to be successful when executed in woven tapestries. And so Jacopo did not go on to make any more cartoons, but returned to his usual labours and painted a picture of Our Lady, which was presented by the Duke to Signor Don ..., who took it to Spain.

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Now his Excellency, following in the footsteps of his ancestors, has always sought to embellish and adorn his city; and he resolved, the necessity having come to his notice, to cause to be painted all the principal chapel of the magnificent Temple of S. Lorenzo, formerly built by the great Cosimo de' Medici, the elder. Whereupon he gave the charge of this to Jacopo da Pontormo,

either of his own accord, or, as was said, at the instance of Messer Pier Francesco Ricci, his major-domo; and Jacopo was very glad of that favour, for the reason that, although the greatness of the work, he being well advanced in years, gave him food for thought and perhaps dismayed him, on the other hand he reflected how, in a work of such magnitude, he had a fair field to show his ability and worth. Some say that Jacopo, finding that the work had been allotted to him notwithstanding that Francesco Salviati, a painter of great fame, was in Florence and had brought to a happy conclusion the painting of that hall in the Palace which was once the audience-chamber of the Signoria, must needs declare that he would show the world how to draw and paint, and how to work in fresco, and, besides this, that the other painters were but ordinary hacks, with other words equally insolent and overbearing. But I myself always knew Jacopo as a modest person, who spoke of everyone honourably and in a manner proper to an orderly and virtuous craftsman, such as he was, and I believe that these words were imputed to him falsely, and that he never let slip from his mouth any such boastings, which are for the most part the marks of vain men who presume too much upon their merits, in which manner of men there is no place for virtue or good breeding. And, although I might have kept silent about these matters, I have not chosen to do so, because to proceed as I have done appears to me the office of a faithful and veracious historian; it is enough that, although these rumours went around, and particularly among our craftsmen, nevertheless I have a firm belief that they were the words of malicious persons, Jacopo having always been in the experience of everyone modest and well-behaved in his every action.

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Having then closed up that chapel with walls, screens of planks, and curtains, and having given himself over to complete solitude, he kept it for a period of eleven years so well sealed up, that excepting himself not a living soul entered it, neither friend nor any other. It is true, indeed, that certain lads who were drawing in the sacristy of Michelagnolo, as young men will do, climbed by its spiral staircase on to the roof of the church, and, removing some tiles and the plank of one of the gilded rosettes that are there, saw everything. Of which having heard, Jacopo took it very ill, but took no further notice beyond closing up everything with greater care; although some say that he persecuted those young men sorely, and sought to make them regret it.

Imagining, then, that in this work he would surpass all other painters, and perchance, so it was said, even Michelagnolo, he painted in the upper part, in a number of scenes, the Creation of Adam and Eve, the Eating of the Forbidden Fruit, their Expulsion from Paradise, the Tilling of the Earth, the Sacrifice of Abel, the Death of Cain, the Blessing of the Seed of Noah, and the same Noah designing the plan and the measurements of the Ark. Next, on one of the lower walls, each of which is fifteen braccia in each direction, he painted the inundation of the Deluge, in which is a mass of dead and drowned bodies, and Noah speaking with God. On the other wall is painted the Universal Resurrection of the Dead, which has to take place on the last and final day; with such variety and confusion, that the real resurrection will perhaps not be more confused, or more full of movement, in a manner of speaking, than Pontormo painted it. Opposite to the altar and between the windows—that is, on the central wall—there is on either side a row of nude figures, who, clinging to each other's bodies with hands and legs, form a ladder wherewith to ascend to Paradise, rising from the earth, where there are many dead in company with them, and at the end, on either side, are two dead bodies clothed with the exception of the legs and also the arms, with which they are holding two lighted torches. At the top, in the centre of the wall, above the windows, he painted in the middle Christ on high in His Majesty, who, surrounded by many Angels all nude, is raising those dead in order to judge them.

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But I have never been able to understand the significance of this scene, although I know that Jacopo had wit enough for himself, and also associated with learned and lettered persons; I mean, what he could have intended to signify in that part where there is Christ on high, raising the dead, and below His feet is God the Father, who is creating Adam and Eve. Besides this, in one of the corners, where are the four Evangelists, nude, with books in their hands, it does not seem to me that in a single place did he give a thought to any order of composition, or measurement, or time, or variety in the heads, or diversity in the flesh-colours, or, in a word, to any rule, proportion, or law of perspective; for the whole work is full of nude figures with an order, design, invention, composition, colouring, and painting contrived after his own fashion, and with such melancholy and so little satisfaction for him who beholds the work, that I am determined, since I myself do not understand it, although I am a painter, to leave all who may see it to form their own judgment, for the reason that I believe that I would drive myself mad with it and would bury myself alive, even as it appears to me that Jacopo in the period of eleven years that he spent upon it sought to bury himself and all who might see the painting, among all those extraordinary figures. And although there may be seen in this work some bit of a torso with the back turned or facing to the front and some attachments of flanks, executed with marvellous care and great labour by Jacopo, who made finished models of clay in the round for almost all the figures, nevertheless the work as a whole is foreign to his manner, and, as it appears to almost every man, without proportion, the torsos for the most part being large and the legs and arms small, to say nothing of the heads, in which there is not a trace to be seen of that singular excellence and grace that he used to give to them, so greatly to the satisfaction of those who examine his other pictures. Wherefore it appears that in this work he paid no attention to anything save certain parts, and of the other more important parts he took no account whatever. In a word, whereas he had thought in this work to surpass all the paintings in the world of art, he failed by a great measure to equal his own works that he had executed in the past; whence it is evident that he who seeks to strive beyond his strength and, as it were, to force nature, ruins the good qualities with which he may have been liberally endowed by her. But what can we or ought we to do save have compassion upon him, seeing that the men of our arts are as much liable to

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error as others? And the good Homer, so it is said, even he sometimes nods; nor shall it ever be said that there is a single work of Jacopo's, however he may have striven to force his nature, in which there is not something good and worthy of praise.

He died shortly before finishing the work, and some therefore declare that he died of grief, ending his life very much dissatisfied with himself; but the truth is that, being old and much exhausted by making portraits and models in clay and labouring so much in fresco, he sank into a dropsy, which finally killed him at the age of sixty-five. After his death there were found in his house many designs, cartoons, and models in clay, all very beautiful, and a picture of Our Lady executed by him excellently well and in a lovely manner, to all appearance many years before, which was sold by his heirs to Piero Salviati. Jacopo was buried in the first cloister of the Church of the Servite Friars, beneath the scene of the Visitation that he had formerly painted there; and he was followed to the grave by an honourable company of the painters, sculptors, and architects.

Jacopo was a frugal and sober man, and in his dress and manner of life he was rather miserly than moderate; and he lived almost always by himself, without desiring that anyone should serve him or cook for him. In his last years, indeed, he kept in his house, as it were to bring him up, Battista Naldini, a young man of fine spirit, who took such care of Jacopo's life as Jacopo would allow him to take; and under his master's discipline he made no little proficiency in design, and became such, indeed, that a very happy result is looked for from him. Among Pontormo's friends, particularly in this last period of his life, were Pier Francesco Vernacci and Don Vincenzio Borghini, with whom he took his recreation, sometimes eating with them, but rarely. But above all others, and always supremely beloved by him, was Bronzino, who loved him as dearly, being grateful and thankful for the benefits that he had received from him.

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Pontormo had very beautiful manners, and he was so afraid of death, that he would not even hear it spoken of, and avoided having to meet dead bodies. He never went to festivals or to any other places where people gathered together, so as not to be caught in the press; and he was solitary beyond all belief. At times, going out to work, he set himself to think so profoundly on what he was to do, that he went away without having done any other thing all day but stand thinking. And that this happened to him times without number in the work of S. Lorenzo may readily be believed, for the reason that when he was determined, like an able and well-practised craftsman, he had no difficulty in doing what he desired and had resolved to put into execution.

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## **SIMONE MOSCA**

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### **LIFE OF SIMONE MOSCA SCULPTOR AND ARCHITECT**

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From the times of the ancient Greek and Roman sculptors to our own, no modern carver has equalled the beautiful and difficult works that they executed in their bases, capitals, friezes, cornices, festoons, trophies, masks, candelabra, birds, grotesques, or other carved cornice-work, save only Simone Mosca of Settignano, who in our own days has worked in such a manner in those kinds of labour, that he has made it evident by his genius and art that all the diligence and study of the modern carvers who had come before him had not enabled them up to that time to imitate the best work of those ancients or to adopt the good method in their carvings, for the reason that their works incline to dryness, and the turn of their foliage to spikiness and crudeness. He, on the other hand, has executed foliage with great boldness, rich and abundant in new curves, the leaves being carved in various manners with beautiful indentations and with the most lovely flowers, seeds and creepers that there are to be seen, not to speak of the birds that he has contrived to carve so gracefully in various forms among his foliage and festoons, insomuch that it may be affirmed that Simone alone—be it said without offence to the others—has been able to remove from the marble that hardness which craftsmen are wont very often to leave in their sculptures, and has brought his works by his handling of the chisel to such a point that they have the appearance of things real to the touch, and the same may be said of the cornices and other suchlike labours, executed by him with most beautiful grace and judgment.

This Simone, having given his attention to design in his childhood with much profit, and having then become well-practised in carving, was taken by Maestro Antonio da San Gallo, who recognized his genius and noble spirit, to Rome, where he caused him to execute, as his first works, some capitals and bases and several friezes of foliage for the Church of S. Giovanni de' Fiorentini, and some works for the Palace of Alessandro, the first Cardinal Farnese. Simone meanwhile devoting himself, particularly on feast-days, and whenever he could snatch the time, to drawing the antiquities of that city, no long time passed before he was drawing and tracing ground-plans with more grace and neatness than did Antonio himself, insomuch that, having applied himself heart and soul to the study of designing foliage in the ancient manner, of giving a bold turn to the leaves, and of perforating his works in such a way as to make them perfect,

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taking the best from the best examples, one thing from one and one from another, in a few years he formed a manner of composition so beautiful and so catholic, that afterwards he did everything well, whether in company or by himself. This may be seen in some coats of arms that were to be placed in the above-named Church of S. Giovanni in the Strada Giulia; in one of which coats of arms, making a great lily, the ancient emblem of the Commune of Florence, he carved upon it some curves of foliage with creepers and seeds executed so well that they made everyone gasp with wonder. Nor had any long time passed when Antonio da San Gallo—who was directing for Messer Agnolo Cesis the execution of the marble ornaments of a chapel and tomb for himself and his family, which were afterwards erected in the year 1550 in the Church of S. Maria della Pace—caused part of certain pilasters and socles covered with friezes, which were going into that work, to be wrought by Simone, who executed them so well and with such beauty, that they make themselves known among the others, without my saying which they are, by their grace and perfection; nor is it possible to see any altars for the offering of sacrifices after the ancient use more beautiful and fanciful than those that he made on the base of that work. Afterwards the same San Gallo, who was superintending the execution of the mouth of the well in the cloister of S. Pietro in Vincula, caused Mosca to make the borders with some large masks of great beauty.

Not long afterwards he returned one summer to Florence, having a good name among craftsmen, and Baccio Bandinelli, who was making the Orpheus of marble that was placed in the court of the Medici Palace, after having the base for that work carried out by Benedetto da Rovezzano, caused Simone to execute the festoons and other carvings therein, which are very beautiful, although one festoon is unfinished and only worked over with the gradine. Having then done many works in grey sandstone, of which there is no need to make record, he was planning to return to Rome, when in the meantime the sack took place, and he did not go after all. But, having taken a wife, he was living in Florence with little to do: wherefore, being obliged to support his family, and having no income, he was occupying himself with any work that he could obtain. Now in those days there arrived in Florence one Pietro di Subisso, a master-mason of Arezzo, who always had under him a good number of workmen, for the reason that all the building in Arezzo passed through his hands; and he took Simone, with many others, to Arezzo. There he set Simone to making a chimney-piece of grey sandstone and a water-basin of no great cost, for a hall in the house of the heirs of Pellegrino da Fossombrone, a citizen of Arezzo; which house had been formerly erected by M. Piero Geri, an excellent astrologer, after the design of Andrea Sansovino, and had been sold by his nephews. Setting to work, therefore, and beginning with the chimney-piece, Simone placed it upon two pilasters, making two niches in the thickness of the wall, in the direction of the fire, and laying upon those pilasters architrave, frieze, and great cornice, and over all a pediment with festoons and with the arms of that family. And thus, proceeding with it, he executed it with carvings of such a kind and so well varied, and with such subtle craftsmanship, that, although that work was of grey sandstone, under his hands it became more beautiful than if it had been of marble, and more astounding; which, indeed, came to pass the more readily because that stone is not as hard as marble and, if anything, rather sandy. Putting extraordinary diligence, therefore, into the work, he executed on the pilasters trophies in half-relief and low-relief, than which nothing more bizarre or more beautiful could be done, with helmets, buskins, shields, quivers, and various other arms; and he likewise made there masks, sea monsters, and other graceful fantasies, all so well figured and cut out that they have the appearance of silver. The frieze that is between the architrave and the great cornice, he made with a most beautiful turn of foliage, all pierced through and full of birds that are executed so well, that they seem to be flying through the air; and it is a marvellous thing to see their little legs, no larger than life, and yet completely in the round and detached from the stone in such a way as one cannot believe to be possible; and, in truth, the work seems rather a miracle than a product of human art. Besides all this, he made there in a festoon some leaves and fruits so well cut out, and wrought with such delicacy and care, that in a certain sense they surpass the reality. Lastly, the work is finished off by some great masks and candelabra, which are truly most beautiful. Although Simone need not have given such care to a work of that kind, for which he was to be but poorly paid by those patrons, who could not afford much, yet, drawn by the love that he bore to art and by the pleasure that a man feels in working well, he chose to do so; but he did not do the same with the water-basin for the same patrons, for he made it beautiful enough, but simple.

At the same time he assisted Pietro di Subisso, who did not know much, to make many designs of buildings and plans of houses, doors, windows, and other things appertaining to that profession. On the Canto degli Albergotti, below the school and university of the Commune, there is a window of considerable beauty constructed after his design; and there are two of them in the house of Ser Bernardino Serragli in the Pelliceria. On the corner of the Palazzo de' Priori there is a large escutcheon of Pope Clement VII in grey sandstone, by the hand of the same master; and under his direction, and partly by his hand, was executed for Bernardino di Cristofano da Giuovi a chapel of grey sandstone in the Corinthian Order, which was erected in the Abbey of S. Fiore, a passing handsome monastery of Black Friars in Arezzo. For this chapel the patron wished to have the altar-piece painted by Andrea del Sarto, and then by Rosso, but in this he never succeeded, seeing that, being hindered now by one thing and now by another, they were not able to serve him. Finally Bernardino turned to Giorgio Vasari, but with him also he had difficulties, and there was much trouble in finding a way of arranging the matter, for the reason that, the chapel being dedicated to S. James and S. Christopher, he wished to have in the picture Our Lady with the Child in her arms, and also the giant S. Christopher with another little Christ on his shoulder; which composition, besides that it appeared monstrous, could not be accommodated, nor was it possible to paint a giant of six braccia in an altar-piece of four braccia. Giorgio, then, being

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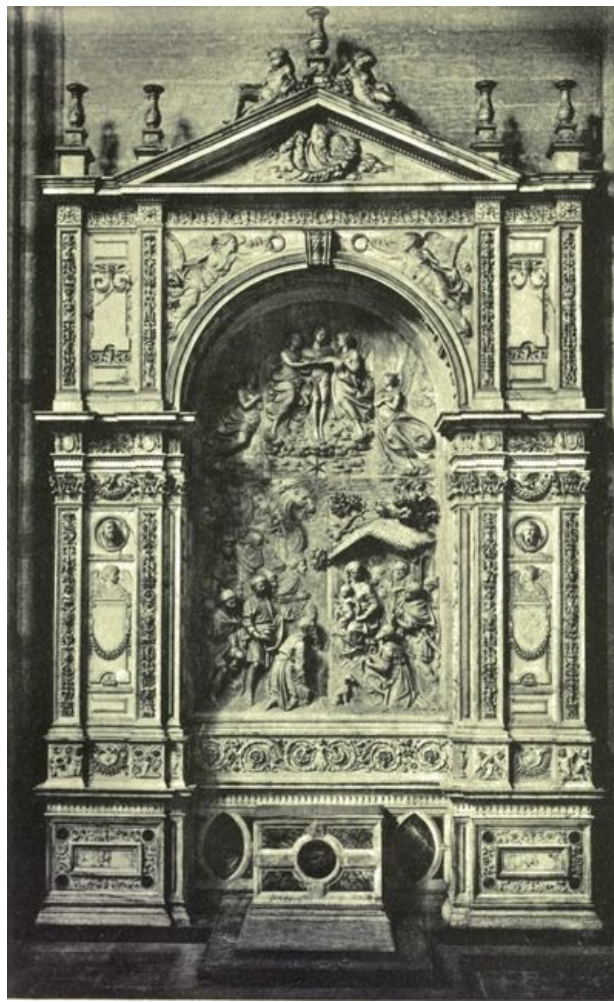
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desirous to serve Bernardino, made him a design in this manner: he placed Our Lady upon some clouds, with a sun behind her back, and on the ground he painted S. Christopher kneeling on one side of the picture, with one leg in the water, and with the other in the act of moving in order to rise, while Our Lady is placing upon his shoulders the Infant Christ with the globe of the world in His hands. In the rest of the altar-piece, also, were to be S. James and the other Saints, accommodated in such a manner that they would not have been in the way; and this design, pleasing Bernardino, would have been put into execution, but Bernardino in the meantime died, and the chapel was left in that condition to his heirs, who have not done anything more.

Now, while Simone was labouring at that chapel, there passed through Arezzo Antonio da San Gallo, who was returning from the work of fortifying Parma and was going to Loreto to finish the work of the Chapel of the Madonna, to which he had sent Tribolo, Raffaello da Montelupo, the young Francesco da San Gallo, Girolamo da Ferrara, Simone Cioli, and other carvers, masons, and stone-cutters, in order to finish that which Andrea Sansovino at his death had left incomplete; and he contrived to take Simone to work there. He ordained that Simone should have charge not only of the carvings, but also of the architecture and of the other ornaments of that work; in which commissions Mosca acquitted himself very well, and, what is more, executed many things perfectly with his own hands, particularly some little boys of marble in the round, which are on the pediments of the doors; and although there are also some by the hand of Simone Cioli, the best—and rare indeed they are—are all by Mosca. He made, likewise, all the festoons of marble that are around all that work, with most beautiful artistry and carvings full of grace and worthy of all praise; wherefore it is no marvel that these works are so esteemed and admired, that many craftsmen from distant parts have set off in order to go to see them.

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Antonio da San Gallo, then, recognizing how much Mosca was worth, made use of him in any undertaking of importance, with the intention of remunerating him some day when the occasion might present itself, and of giving him to know how much he loved him for his abilities. When, therefore, after the death of Pope Clement, a new Supreme Pontiff had been elected in Paul III of the Farnese family, who ordained that, the mouth of the well at Orvieto having remained unfinished, Antonio should have charge of it, Antonio took Mosca thither, to the end that he might carry that work to completion, which presented some difficulties, and particularly in the ornamentation of the doors, for the reason that, the curve of the mouth being round, convex without and concave within, those two circles conflicted with each other and caused a difficulty in accommodating the squared doors with the ornaments of stone. But the virtue of that singular genius of Simone's solved every difficulty, and executed the whole work with such grace and perfection, that no one could see that there had ever been any difficulty. He finished off the mouth and border of the well in grey sandstone, filled in with bricks, together with some very beautiful inscriptions on white stone and other ornaments, making the doors correspond with one another. He also made there in marble the arms of the above-named Pope Paul Farnese, or rather, where they had previously been made of balls for Pope Clement, who had carried out that work, Mosca was forced—and he succeeded excellently well—to make lilies out of the balls in relief, and thus to change the arms of the Medici into those of the house of Farnese; notwithstanding, as I have said (for so do things go in this world), that the author of that vast, regal, and magnificent work was Pope Clement VII, of whom in this last and most imposing part no mention whatever was made.



**THE ALTAR OF THE THREE KINGS**  
*(After Simone Mosca and Michele San Michele. Orvieto: Duomo)*  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

While Simone was engaged in finishing this well, the Wardens of Works of S. Maria, the Duomo of Orvieto, desiring to give completion to the chapel of marble that had been carried as far as the socle under the direction of Michele San Michele of Verona, with some carvings, besought Simone, whom they had come to know as a master of true excellence, that he should attend to it. Whereupon they came to terms, and Simone, liking the society of the people of Orvieto, brought his family thither, in order to live in greater comfort; and then he set himself to work with a quiet and composed mind, being greatly honoured by everyone in that place. When, therefore, as it were by way of sample, he had made a beginning with some pilasters and friezes, the excellence and ability of Simone were recognized by those men, and there was assigned to him a salary of two hundred crowns of gold a year, and with this, continuing to labour, he carried that work well forward. Now in the centre, to fill up the ornaments, there was to go a scene of marble in half-relief, representing the Adoration of the Magi; and there was summoned at the suggestion of Simone his very dear friend Raffaello da Montelupo, the Florentine sculptor, who, as has been related, executed half of that scene in a very beautiful manner. In the ornamentation of this chapel, then, are certain socles, each two and a half braccia in breadth, which are on either side of the altar, and upon these are pilasters five braccia high, two on either side, between which is the story of the Magi; and on the pilasters next to the story, of which two of the faces are seen, are carved some candelabra, with friezes of grotesques, masks, little figures, and foliage, which are things divine. In the predella at the foot, which runs right over the altar from pilaster to pilaster, is a little half-length Angel who is holding an inscription with his hands, with festoons over all, between the capitals of the pilasters, where the architrave, frieze and great cornice project to the extent of the depth of the pilasters. Above those in the centre, in a space equal to their breadth, curves an arch that serves as an ornament to the above-named story of the Magi, and in this, namely, in the lunette, are many Angels; and above the arch is a cornice, which runs from one pilaster to another, that is, from those on the outside, which form a frontispiece to the whole work. In this part is a God the Father in half-relief; and at the sides, where the arch rises over the pilasters, are two Victories in half-relief. All this work, then, is so well composed, and executed with such a wealth of carvings, that one cannot have enough of examining the minute details of the perforations and the excellence of all the things that are in the capitals, cornices, masks, festoons, and candelabra in the round, which form the completion of a work truly worthy to be admired as something rare.

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Simone Mosca thus dwelling in Orvieto, a son of his called Francesco, and as a bye-name Il Moschino, a boy fifteen years of age, who had been produced by nature with chisels in his hand, as it were, and with so beautiful a genius, that he did with supreme grace whatsoever thing he

desired to do, executed in this work under the discipline of his father, miraculously, so to speak, the Angels that are holding the inscriptions between the pilasters, then the God the Father in the pediment, as well as the Angels that are in the lunette of that work, above the Adoration of the Magi executed by Raffaello da Montelupo, and finally the Victories at the sides of the lunette; by which works he caused everyone to wonder and marvel. All this was the reason that, when the chapel was finished, Simone was commissioned by the Wardens of Works of the Duomo to make another similar to it, on the other side, to the end that the space of the Chapel of the High-Altar might be suitably set off, on the understanding that the figures should be varied without varying the architecture, and that in the centre there should be the Visitation of Our Lady, which was allotted to the above-named Moschino. Then, having made an agreement about every matter, the father and son set their hands to the work; and, while they were engaged upon it, Mosca was very helpful and useful to that city, making for many citizens architectural designs of houses and many other edifices. Among other things, he executed in that city the ground-plan and façade of the house of Messer Raffaello Gualtieri, father of the Bishop of Viterbo, and of Messer Felice, both noblemen and lords of great excellence and reputation; and likewise the ground-plans of some houses for the honourable Counts della Cervara. He did the same in many places near Orvieto, and made, in particular, the models of many structures and buildings for Signor Pirro Colonna da Stripicciano.



**THE SALUTATION**  
*(After Simone Mosca. Orvieto: Duomo)*  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

The Pope then causing the fortress to be built in Perugia where there had stood the houses of the Baglioni, Antonio da San Gallo, having sent for Mosca, gave him the charge of making the ornaments; where there were executed after his designs all the doors, windows, chimney-pieces, and other suchlike things, and in particular two large and very beautiful escutcheons of his Holiness. In that work Simone formed a connection with M. Tiberio Crispo, who was Castellan there; and he was sent by M. Tiberio to Bolsena, where, on the highest point of that stronghold, overlooking the lake, he arranged a large and beautiful habitation, partly on the old structure and partly founding anew, with a very handsome flight of steps and many ornaments of stone. Nor did any long time pass before Messer Tiberio, having been made Castellan of the Castello di S. Angelo, caused Mosca to go to Rome, where he made use of him in many matters in renovating the apartments of that castle; and, among other things, he caused him to make over the arches that rise over the new loggia, which faces towards the meadows, two escutcheons of the above-named Pope in marble, which are so well wrought and perforated in the mitre, or rather, triple crown, in the keys, and in certain festoons and little masks, that they are marvellous.

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Having then returned to Orvieto in order to finish the work of the chapel, he laboured there continuously all the time that Pope Paul was alive, executing it in such a manner that it proved to

be, as may be seen, no less excellent than the first, and perhaps even better. For Mosca, as has been said, bore such love to art, and took such pleasure in working, that he could never have enough of it, almost striving after the impossible, and that rather from a desire for glory than from any wish to accumulate gold, for he was more pleased to work well at his profession than to acquire property.

Finally, Julius III having been elected Pope in the year 1550, and all men thinking that work would be begun in earnest on the building of S. Pietro, Mosca went off to Rome and sought to obtain at a fixed price from the superintendents of that building the commission for some capitals of marble, but more to accommodate Gian Domenico, his son-in-law, than for any other reason. Now Giorgio Vasari, who always bore love to Mosca, found him in Rome, whither he also had been summoned to the service of the Pope, and he thought that without fail he would have some work to offer him, for the reason that the old Cardinal dal Monte, when he died, had left directions with his heirs that a tomb of marble should be built for him in S. Pietro a Montorio, and the above-named Pope Julius, his nephew and heir, had ordained that this should be done, and had given the charge of the matter to Vasari; and Giorgio wished that in that tomb Mosca should execute some extraordinary work in carving. But, after Giorgio had made some models for that tomb, the Pope discussed the whole matter with Michelagnolo Buonarroti before he would make up his mind; whereupon Michelagnolo told his Holiness that he should not involve himself with carvings, saying that, although they enrich a work, they confuse the figures, whereas squared work, when it is well done, is much more beautiful than carving and is a better accompaniment for the figures, for the reason that figures do not brook other carvings about them: and even so did his Holiness order the work to be done. Wherefore Vasari was not able to give Mosca anything to do in that work, and he was dismissed; and the tomb was finished without any carvings, which made it much better than it would have been with them.

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Simone having then returned to Orvieto, arrangements were made to erect after his designs, in the cross at the head of the church, two great tabernacles of marble, works truly graceful, beautiful, and well-proportioned, for one of which Raffaello da Montelupo made in marble a nude Christ with the Cross on His shoulder in a niche, and for the other Moschino made a S. Sebastian, likewise nude. Work being then continued on the execution of the Apostles for the church, Moschino made a S. Peter and a S. Paul of the same size, which were held to be creditable statues. Meanwhile the work of the above-mentioned Chapel of the Visitation was not abandoned, and it was carried so far forward during the lifetime of Mosca, that there was nothing left to do save two birds, and even these would not have been wanting, had not M. Bastiano Gualtieri, Bishop of Viterbo, as has been related, kept Simone occupied with an ornament of marble in four pieces, which, when finished, he sent to France to the Cardinal of Lorraine, who held it very dear, for it was beautiful to a marvel, all full of foliage and wrought with such diligence, that it is believed to have been one of the best that Simone ever executed.

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Not long after he had finished that work, in the year 1554, Simone died, at the age of fifty-eight, to the no small loss of that church of Orvieto, in which he was buried with honour.

Francesco Moschino was then elected to his father's place by the Wardens of Works of that same Duomo, but, thinking nothing of it, he left it to Raffaello da Montelupo, and went to Rome, where he finished for M. Ruberto Strozzi two very graceful figures in marble, the Mars and Venus, namely, which are in the court of his house in the Banchi. Afterwards he executed a scene with little figures, almost in full-relief, in which is Diana bathing with her Nymphs, who changes Actæon into a stag, and he is devoured by his own hounds; and then Francesco came to Florence, and gave the work to the Lord Duke Cosimo, whom he much desired to serve. Whereupon his Excellency, having accepted and much commended it, did not disappoint the desire of Moschino, even as he has never disappointed anyone who has sought to work valiantly in any calling. For he was attached to the Works of the Duomo at Pisa, and has laboured up to the present day with great credit to himself in the Chapel of the Nunziata, formerly built by Stagio da Pietrasanta, executing the Angel and the Madonna in figures of four braccia, together with the carvings and every other thing; in the centre, Adam and Eve, who have the apple-tree between them; and a large God the Father with certain little boys on the vaulting of that chapel, which is all of marble, as are also the two statues, which have gained for Moschino no little fame and honour. And since that chapel is little less than finished, his Excellency has given orders that the chapel opposite to it should be taken in hand, which is called the Chapel of the Incoronata and stands immediately at the entrance of the church, on the left hand. The same Moschino, in connection with the nuptial festivities of her most serene Majesty Queen Joanna and the most illustrious Prince of Florence, has acquitted himself very well in those works that were given him to do.

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## **GIROLAMO AND BARTOLOMMEO GENGA, AND GIOVAN BATTISTA SAN MARINO, SON-IN-LAW OF GIROLAMO**

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## OF GIOVAN BATTISTA SAN MARINO, SON-IN-LAW OF GIROLAMO

Girolamo Genga, who was of Urbino, was apprenticed by his father at the age of ten to the wool trade, but he followed it with the greatest ill-will, and, according as he could find time and place, he was for ever drawing in secret with charcoal or an ordinary pen. Which circumstance being observed by some friends of his father, they exhorted him to remove the boy from that trade and to set him to painting; wherefore he placed Girolamo with certain masters of little reputation in Urbino. But, having seen his beautiful manner, and that he was like to make proficience, when the boy was fifteen years of age the father apprenticed him to Maestro Luca Signorelli of Cortona, an excellent master in painting of that time; with whom he stayed many years, following him to the March of Ancona, to Cortona, and to many other places where he executed works, and in particular to Orvieto, in the Duomo of which city, as has been related, Luca painted a chapel of Our Lady with an infinite number of figures. At this our Girolamo worked continually, and he was always one of the best disciples that Luca had.

Then, having parted from Signorelli, he placed himself with Pietro Perugino, a much esteemed painter, with whom he stayed about three years, giving considerable attention to perspective, which was so well grasped and understood by him, that it may be said that he became very excellent therein, even as is evident from his works in painting and architecture. This was at the same time that there was with Pietro the divine Raffaello da Urbino, who was much the friend of Girolamo.

After leaving Pietro, he went off to live in Florence, where he studied for some considerable time. Then, having gone to Siena, he stayed there for months and even years with Pandolfo Petrucci, in whose house he painted many rooms, which, from their being very well designed and coloured in a pleasing manner, were rightly admired and praised by all the people of Siena, and particularly by the above-named Pandolfo, by whom he was always looked upon with great favour and cherished most dearly. Pandolfo having died, he then returned to Urbino, where Guidobaldo, the second Duke, retained him for a considerable time, causing him to paint horse's caparisons, such as were used in those times, in company with Timoteo da Urbino, a painter of passing good name and much experience, together with whom he painted a chapel of S. Martino in the Vescovado for Messer Giovan Piero Arrivabene of Mantua, then Bishop of Urbino. In this, both the one and the other of them gave proof of very beautiful genius, as the work itself demonstrates, in which is a portrait of the above-named Bishop, which has all the appearance of life. Genga was also particularly employed by the same Duke to execute scenery and settings for comedies, which, since he had a very good understanding of perspective and was well-grounded in architecture, he made marvellously beautiful.

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He then departed from Urbino and went to Rome, where he executed in painting, in S. Caterina da Siena on the Strada Giulia, a Resurrection of Christ, wherein he made himself known as a rare and excellent master, having done it with good design and with figures foreshortened in beautiful attitudes and well coloured, to which those who are of the profession and have seen it are able to bear ample testimony. While living in Rome, he gave much attention to measuring the antiquities there, as is proved by writings in the possession of his heirs.



**MADONNA AND CHILD WITH SAINTS**  
*(After the painting by Girolamo Genga. Milan: Brera, 202)*  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

At this time, Duke Guido having died, and having been succeeded by Francesco Maria, third Duke of Urbino, Girolamo was recalled from Rome by Francesco Maria, and constrained to return to Urbino at the time when the above-named Duke took to wife and brought into his dominions Leonora Gonzaga, the daughter of the Marquis of Mantua; and he was employed by his Excellency in making triumphal arches, festive preparations, and scenery for comedies, which were all so well arranged and carried into execution by him, that Urbino could be likened to a Rome in triumph; from which he gained very great fame and honour. Afterwards, in due course, the Duke was expelled from his state for the last time, when he went to Mantua, and Girolamo followed him, even as he had already done in his other periods of exile, always sharing one and the same fortune with him; and he retired with his family to Cesena. There he painted for the high-altar of S. Agostino an altar-piece in oils, at the top of which is an Annunciation, and below that a God the Father, and still lower down a Madonna with the Child in her arms, between the four Doctors of the Church—a work truly beautiful and worthy to be esteemed. He then painted in fresco a chapel on the right hand in S. Francesco at Forlì, containing the Assumption of the Madonna, with many Angels and other figures—Prophets, namely, and Apostles—around; in this, also, it is evident how admirable was his genius, and the work was judged to be very beautiful. He also painted there the story of the Holy Spirit, which he finished in the year 1512, for Messer Francesco Lombardi, a physician; and other works throughout Romagna, for all which he gained honour and rewards.

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The Duke having then returned to his state, Girolamo also returned, and was retained by him and employed as architect in restoring an old palace on the Monte dell'Imperiale, above Pesaro, and adding to it another tower. That palace was adorned with scenes in painting from the actions of the Duke, after the directions and designs of Girolamo, by Francesco da Forlì and Raffaello dal Borgo, painters of good repute, and by Camillo Mantovano, a very rare master in painting landscapes and verdure; and the young Florentine Bronzino also worked there, among others, as has been related in the Life of Pontormo. Thither, likewise, were summoned the Dossi of Ferrara, and a room was assigned to them to paint; but since, when they had finished that room, it did not please the Duke, he had it thrown down and repainted by the masters mentioned above. Girolamo then erected the tower there, one hundred and twenty feet in height, with thirteen flights of wooden steps whereby to ascend to the top, so well fitted and concealed in the walls, that they can be withdrawn with ease from story to story, which renders that tower very strong and marvellous. A desire afterwards came to the Duke to fortify Pesaro, and he caused Pier Francesco da Viterbo, a most excellent architect, to be sent for; and Girolamo always taking part in the discussions that arose about the fortifications, his discourse and his opinions were held to be good and full of judgment. Wherefore, if I may be allowed to say it, the design of that fortress came rather from Girolamo than from any other, although that sort of architecture was always little esteemed by him, appearing to him to be of small value and dignity.

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The Duke, then, perceiving how rare a genius he had at his command, determined to build on the above-named Monte dell'Imperiale, near the old palace, a new palace; and so he built that to be seen there at the present day, which being a very beautiful and well-planned fabric, and full of apartments, colonnades, courts, loggie, fountains, and most delightful gardens, there is no Prince passes that way that does not go to see it. Wherefore it was right fitting that Pope Paul III, on his way to Bologna with all his Court, should go to see it and find it entirely to his satisfaction. From the design of this same master, the Duke caused the Palace at Pesaro to be restored, and also the little park, making within it a house representing a ruin, which is a very beautiful thing to see. Among other things, there is a staircase similar to that of the Belvedere in Rome, which is very handsome. By means of him the Duke had the fortress of Gradara restored, and likewise the Palace at Castel Durante, insomuch that all that is good in those works came from that admirable genius. Girolamo also built the corridor of the Palace at Urbino, above the garden, and he enclosed a courtyard on one side with perforated stone-work executed with great diligence.

From the design of the same master, likewise, were begun the Convent of the Frati Zoccolanti at Monte Baroccio and S. Maria delle Grazie at Sinigaglia, which in the end remained unfinished by reason of the death of the Duke. And about the same time was begun after his directions and design the Vescovado of Sinigaglia, of which the model, made by him, is still to be seen. He also executed some works in sculpture and figures of clay and wax in the round, beautiful enough, which are in the house of his family at Urbino. For the Imperiale he made some Angels in clay, which he afterwards caused to be cast in bronze and placed over the doors of the rooms decorated with stucco-work in the new palace; and these are very beautiful. For the Bishop of Sinigaglia he executed some fantasies in wax in the form of drinking-cups, which were afterwards to be made in silver; and with greater diligence he made some others, most beautiful, for the Duke's credence. He showed fine invention in masquerades and costumes, as was seen in the time of the above-named Duke, by whom he was passing well rewarded, as he deserved, for his rare parts and good qualities.

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His son, Guidobaldo, who reigns at the present day, having then succeeded him as Duke, caused a beginning to be made by the above-named Genga with the Church of S. Giovan Battista at Pesaro, which, having been carried out according to the model of Girolamo by his son Bartolommeo, is of very beautiful architecture in every part, for he imitated the antique considerably, and made it in such a manner that it is the most beautiful temple that there is in those parts, as the work itself clearly demonstrates, being able to challenge comparison with the most famous buildings in Rome. After his designs and directions, likewise, there was executed in S. Chiara at Urbino by the Florentine sculptor Bartolommeo Ammanati, who was then very young, the tomb of Duke Francesco Maria, which, for a simple work of little cost, proved to be very beautiful. In like manner, the Venetian painter Battista Franco was summoned by him to paint the great chapel of the Duomo at Urbino, at the time when there was being made after his design the ornament of the organ of that Duomo, which is not yet finished.

Shortly afterwards, the Cardinal of Mantua having written to the Duke that he should send him Girolamo, because he wished to restore the Vescovado of that city, Girolamo went thither and fitted it up very well with lights and with all that the above-named lord desired. Besides this, the Cardinal, wishing to make a beautiful façade for the Duomo, caused him to prepare a model for it, which was executed by him in such a manner, that it may be said that it surpassed all the architectural works of his time, for the reason that in it may be seen grandeur, proportion, grace, and great beauty of composition.

Having then returned from Mantua, now an old man, he went to live at a villa of his own, called Le Valle, in the territory of Urbino, in order to rest and enjoy the fruits of his labours; in which place, not wishing to remain idle, he executed in chalk a Conversion of S. Paul with figures and horses of considerable size and in very beautiful attitudes, which was finished by him with such patience and diligence, that no greater could be either described or seen, as is evident from the work itself, now in the possession of his heirs, by whom it is treasured as a very dear and precious thing. There, while living with a tranquil mind, he was attacked by a terrible fever, and, after he had received all the Sacraments of the Church, finished the course of his life, to the infinite grief of his wife and children, on the 11th of July in the year 1551, at the age of about seventy-five. Having been carried from that place to Urbino, he was buried with honour in the Vescovado, in front of the Chapel of S. Martino formerly painted by him; and his death caused extraordinary sorrow to his relatives and to all the citizens.

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Girolamo was always an excellent man, insomuch that nothing was ever heard of any bad action committed by him. He was not only a painter, sculptor, and architect, but also a good musician and a fine talker, and his society was very agreeable. He was full of courtesy and lovingness towards his relatives and friends; and, what entitles him to no little praise, he laid the foundation of the house of Genga at Urbino with his good name and property. He left two sons, one of whom followed in his footsteps and gave his attention to architecture, in which, if he had not been hindered by death, he was like to become most excellent, as his beginnings demonstrate; and the other, who devoted himself to the cares of the family, is still alive at the present day.

A disciple of Girolamo, as has been related, was Francesco Menzochi of Forlì, who first began to draw by himself when still a child, imitating and copying an altar-piece in the Duomo of Forlì, by the hand of Marco Parmigiano<sup>[7]</sup> of Forlì, containing a Madonna, S. Jerome, and other Saints, and held at that time to be the best of the modern pictures; and he occupied himself likewise with imitating the works of Rondinino<sup>[8]</sup> da Ravenna, a painter more excellent than Marco, who a little

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time before had placed on the high-altar of the above-named Duomo a most beautiful altar-piece, in which was painted Christ giving the Communion to the Apostles, and in a lunette above it a Dead Christ, and in the predella of that altar-piece very graceful scenes with little figures from the life of S. Helen. These works brought him forward in such a manner, that, when Girolamo Genga went, as we have said, to paint the chapel in S. Francesco at Forlì for M. Bartolommeo Lombardino, Francesco at that time went to live with Genga, seizing that opportunity of learning, and did not cease to serve him as long as he lived. There, and also at Urbino and in the work of the Imperiale at Pesaro, he laboured continually, as has been related, esteemed and beloved by Genga, because he acquitted himself very well, as many altar-pieces by his hand bear witness that are dispersed throughout the city of Forlì, and particularly three of them which are in S. Francesco, besides that there are some scenes of his in fresco in the hall of the Palace.

He painted many works throughout Romagna; and at Venice, also, for the very reverend Patriarch Grimani, he executed four large pictures in oils that were placed in the ceiling of a little hall in his house, round an octagon that Francesco Salviati painted; in which pictures are the stories of Psyche, held to be very beautiful. But the place where he strove to do his utmost and to put forth all his powers, was the Chapel of the most holy Sacrament in the Church of Loreto, in which he painted some Angels round a tabernacle of marble wherein rests the Body of Christ, and two scenes on the walls of that chapel, one of Melchizedek and the other of the Manna raining down, both executed in fresco; and over the vaulting he distributed fifteen little scenes of the Passion of Jesus Christ, nine of which he executed in painting, and six in half-relief. This was a rich work and well conceived, and he won for it such honour, that he was not suffered to depart until he had decorated another chapel of equal size in the same place, opposite to the first, and called the Chapel of the Conception, with the vaulting all wrought with rich and very beautiful stucco-work; in which he taught the art of stucco-work to his son Pietro Paolo, who has since done him honour and has become a well-practised master in that field. Francesco, then, painted in fresco on the walls the Nativity and the Presentation of Our Lady, and over the altar he painted S. Anne and the Virgin with the Child in her arms, and two Angels that are crowning her. And, in truth, his works are much extolled by the craftsmen, and likewise his ways and his life, which was that of a true Christian; and he lived in peace, enjoying that which he had gained with his labours.

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A pupil of Genga, also, was Baldassarre Lancia of Urbino, who, having given his attention to many ingenious matters, has since practised his hand in fortifications, at which he worked on a salary for the Signoria of Lucca, in which place he stayed for some time. He then attached himself to the most illustrious Duke Cosimo de' Medici, whom he came to serve in the fortifications of the states of Florence and Siena; and the Duke has employed and still employs him in many ingenious works, in which Baldassarre has laboured valiantly and with honour, winning remunerations from that grateful lord.

Many others also served Girolamo Genga, of whom, from their not having attained to any great excellence, there is no need to speak.

To the above-named Girolamo, at Cesena, in the year 1518, the while that he was accompanying the Duke his master in exile, there was born a son called Bartolommeo, who was brought up by him very decently, and then, when he was well grown, placed to learn grammar, in which he made more than ordinary proficiencie. Afterwards, when he was eighteen years of age, the father, perceiving that he was inclined more to design than to letters, caused him to study design under his own discipline for about two years: which finished, he sent him to study design and painting in Florence, where he knew that the true study of that art was to be found, on account of the innumerable works by excellent masters that are there, both ancient and modern. Living in that place, and attending to design and to architecture, Bartolommeo formed a friendship with Giorgio Vasari, the painter and architect of Arezzo, and with the sculptor Bartolommeo Ammanati, from whom he learned many things appertaining to art. Finally, after having been three years in Florence, he returned to his father, who was then attending to the building of S. Giovanni Battista at Pesaro. Whereupon, the father having seen the designs of Bartolommeo, it appeared to him that he acquitted himself much better in architecture, for which he had a very good inclination, than in painting; wherefore, keeping him under his own care some months, he taught him the methods of perspective. And afterwards he sent him to Rome, to the end that he might see the marvellous buildings, both ancient and modern, that are there, of which, in the four years that he stayed there, he took the measurements, and made therein very great proficiencie. Then, on his way back to Urbino, passing through Florence in order to see Francesco<sup>[9]</sup> San Marino, his brother-in-law, who was living there as engineer to the Lord Duke Cosimo, Signor Stefano Colonna da Palestrina, at that time general to that lord, having heard of his ability, sought to engage him with himself, with a good salary. But he, being much indebted to the Duke of Urbino, would not attach himself to others, and returned to Urbino, where he was received by that Duke into his service, and ever afterwards held very dear.

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Not long afterwards, the Duke taking to wife Signora Vittoria Farnese, Bartolommeo received from the Duke the charge of executing the festive preparations for those nuptials, which he did in a truly honourable and magnificent manner. Among other things, he made a triumphal arch in the Borgo di Valbuona, so beautiful and so well wrought, that there is none larger or more beautiful to be seen; whence it became evident how much knowledge of architecture he had acquired at Rome. Then the Duke, having to go into Lombardy, as General to the Signoria of Venice, to inspect the fortresses of that dominion, took with him Bartolommeo, of whom he availed himself much in preparing designs and sites of fortresses, and in particular at the Porta

S. Felice in Verona. Now, while Bartolommeo was in Lombardy, the King of Bohemia, who was returning from Spain to his kingdom, passed through that province and was received with honour by the Duke at Verona; and he saw those fortresses. And, since they pleased him, after he had become acquainted with Bartolommeo, he wished to take him to his kingdom, in order to make use of him in fortifying his territories, with a good salary; but the Duke would not give him leave, and the matter went no further.

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When they had returned to Urbino, no long time passed before Girolamo, the father, came to his death; whereupon Bartolommeo was set by the Duke in the place of his father over all the buildings of the state, and sent to Pesaro, where he continued the building of S. Giovanni Battista, after the model of Girolamo. During that time he built in the Palace of Pesaro, over the Strada de' Mercanti, a suite of rooms which the Duke now occupies; a fine work, with most beautiful ornaments in the form of doors, staircases, and chimney-pieces, of which things he was an excellent architect. Which having seen, the Duke desired that in the Palace of Urbino as well he should make another suite of apartments, almost entirely on the façade that faces towards S. Domenico; and this, when finished, proved to be the most beautiful suite in that court, or rather, palace, and the most ornate that is there. Not long afterwards, the Signori of Bologna having asked for him for some days from the Duke, his Excellency granted him to them very readily; and he, having gone, served them in what they desired in such a manner, that they remained very well satisfied and showed him innumerable courtesies.

He then made for the Duke, who desired to construct a sea-port at Pesaro, a very beautiful model; and this was taken to Venice, to the house of Count Giovan Giacomo Leonardi, at that time the Duke's Ambassador in that place, to the end that it might be seen by many of the profession who often assembled, with other choice spirits, to hold discussions and disputations on various matters in the house of the above-named Count, who was a truly remarkable man. There, then, after that model had been seen and the fine discourse of Genga had been heard, the model was held by all without exception to be masterly and beautiful, and the master who had made it a man of the rarest genius. But, when he had returned to Pesaro, the model after all was not carried into execution, because new circumstances of great importance drove that project out of the Duke's mind.

About that time Genga made the design of the Church of Monte L'Abbate, and also that of the Church of S. Piero in Mondavio, which was carried into execution by Don Pier Antonio Genga in such a manner, that, for a small work, I do not believe that there is anything better to be seen.

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These works finished, no long time passed before, Pope Julius III having been elected, and the Duke of Urbino having been created by him Captain General of Holy Church, his Excellency went to Rome, and Genga with him. There, his Holiness wishing to fortify the Borgo, at the request of the Duke Genga made some very beautiful designs, which, with a number of others, are in the collection of his Excellency at Urbino. For these reasons the fame of Bartolommeo spread abroad, and the Genoese, while he was living with the Duke in Rome, asked for him from his Excellency, in order to make use of him in some fortifications of their own; but the Duke would not grant him to them, either at that time or on another occasion when they again asked for him, after his return to Urbino.

In the end, when he was near the close of his life, there were sent to Pesaro by the Grand Master of Rhodes two knights of that Order of Jerusalem, to beseech his Excellency that he should deign to lend them Bartolommeo, to the end that they might take him to the Island of Malta, in which they wished to construct not only very large fortifications wherewith to defend themselves against the Turks, but also two cities, so as to unite many villages that were there into one or two places. Whereupon the Duke, whom the above-named knights in two months had not been able to induce to grant them Bartolommeo, although they had availed themselves of the good services of the Duchess and others, finally complied with their request for a fixed period, at the entreaty of a good Capuchin father, to whom his Excellency bore a very great affection, and refused nothing that he asked; and the artifice that was used by that holy man, who made it a matter of conscience with the Duke, saying that it was in the interest of the Christian Republic, was not otherwise than highly commendable and worthy of praise. And thus Bartolommeo, who had never received any favour greater than this, departed with the above-named knights from Pesaro on the 20th of January, 1558; but they lingered in Sicily, being delayed by the fortune of the sea, and they did not reach Malta, where they were received with rejoicing by the Grand Master, until the 11th of March. Having then been shown what he was to do, he acquitted himself so well in those fortifications, that it could not be expressed in words; insomuch that to the Grand Master and all those noble knights it appeared that they had found another Archimedes, and this they proved by making him most honourable presents and holding him, as a rare master, in supreme veneration. Then, after having made the models of a city, of some churches, and of the palace and residence of the same Grand Master, with most beautiful invention and design, he fell sick of his last illness, for, having set himself one day in the month of July, the heat in that island being very great, between two doors to refresh himself, he had not been there long when he was assailed by insufferable pains of the body and by a cruel flux, which killed him in seventeen days, to the infinite sorrow of the Grand Master and all those most honourable and valiant knights, to whom it appeared that they had found a man after their own hearts, when he was snatched from them by death. The Lord Duke of Urbino, having been advised of this sad news, felt indescribable sorrow, and bewailed the death of poor Genga; and then, having resolved to demonstrate to the five children whom he had left behind him the love that he bore to him, he took them under his particular and loving protection.

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Bartolommeo showed beautiful invention in masquerades, and was a rare master in making scenic settings for comedies. He delighted to write sonnets and other compositions in verse and prose, and in none was he better than in the ottava rima, in which manner of writing he was an author of passing good renown. He died at the age of forty, in the year 1558.

Giovan Battista Bellucci of San Marino having been the son-in-law of Girolamo Genga, I have judged that it would not be well to withhold what I have to say of him, after the Lives of Girolamo and Bartolommeo Genga, and particularly in order to show that men of fine intellect, if only they be willing, succeed in everything, even if they set themselves late in life to difficult and honourable enterprises; for study, when added to natural inclination, has often been seen to accomplish marvellous things. Giovan Battista, then, was born in San Marino on the 27th of September, 1506, to Bartolommeo Bellucci, a person of passing good family in that place; and after he had learned the first rudiments of the humanities, when eighteen years of age, he was sent by that same Bartolommeo, his father, to Bologna, to attend to the pursuit of commerce under Bastiano di Ronco, a merchant of the Guild of Wool. Having been there about two years, he returned to San Marino sick of a quartan fever, which hung upon him two years; of which being finally cured, he set up a wool business of his own, with which he continued up to the year 1535, at which time his father, perceiving that Giovan Battista was in good circumstances, gave him for a wife in Cagli a daughter of Guido Peruzzi, a person of considerable standing in that city. But she died not long afterwards, and Giovan Battista went to Rome to seek out Domenico Peruzzi, his brother-in-law, who was equerry to Signor Ascanio Colonna; and by means of him Giovan Battista lived for two years with that lord as a gentleman. He then returned home; and it came about that, as he frequented Pesaro, Girolamo Genga, having come to know him as an excellent and well-behaved young man, gave him a daughter of his own for wife and took him into his house. Whereupon Giovan Battista, being much inclined to architecture, and giving his attention with much diligence to the architectural works that his wife's father was executing, began to gain a very good grasp of the various manners of building, and to study Vitruvius; and thus, what with that which he acquired by himself and that which Genga taught him, he became a good architect, and particularly in the matter of fortifications and other things relating to war.

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Then, in the year 1541, his wife died, leaving him two boys; and he remained until 1543 without coming to any further resolution about his life. At that time, in the month of September, there appeared in San Marino one Signor Gustamante, a Spaniard, sent by his Imperial Majesty to that Republic on some affairs. Giovan Battista was recognized by him as an excellent architect, and at his instance he entered not long afterwards into the service of the most illustrious Lord Duke Cosimo, as engineer. And thus, having arrived in Florence, his Excellency made use of him for all the fortifications of his dominion, according to the necessities that arose every day; and, among other things, the fortress of the city of Pistoia having been begun many years before, San Marino, by the desire of the Duke, completely finished it, with great credit to himself, although it is no great work. Then, under the direction of the same architect, a very strong bastion was built at Pisa. Wherefore, his method of work pleasing the Duke, his Excellency caused him to construct—where, as has been related, there had been built on the hill of S. Miniato, without Florence, the wall that curves from the Porta S. Niccolò to the Porta S. Miniato—the fortification that encloses a gate by means of two bastions, and guards the Church and Monastery of S. Miniato; making on the summit of that hill a fortress that dominates the whole city and looks on the outer side towards the east and the south, a work that was vastly extolled. The same Giovan Battista made many designs and ground-plans of various fortifications for places in the states of his Excellency, and also various rough models in clay, which are in the possession of the Lord Duke. And since San Marino was a man of fine genius and very studious, he wrote a little book on the methods of fortifications; which work, a beautiful and useful one, is now in the possession of Messer Bernardo Puccini, a gentleman of Florence, who learned many things with regard to the matters of architecture and fortification from San Marino, who was much his friend.

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Giovan Battista, after having designed in the year 1554 many bastions that were to be built round the walls of the city of Florence, some of which were begun in earth, went with the most illustrious lord, Don Garzia di Toledo, to Monte Alcino, where, having made some trenches, he mined under a bastion and so shattered it, that he threw down the breastwork; but as it was falling to the ground a harquebus-ball struck San Marino in the thigh. Not long afterwards, his wound being healed, he went secretly to Siena and took the ground-plan of that city, and of the earthworks that the people of Siena had made at the Porta Camollia; which plan of fortifications he then showed to the Lord Duke and to the Marchese di Marignano, making it clear to them that the work was not difficult to capture or to secure afterwards on the side towards Siena. That this was true was proved by the fact, the night that it was taken by the above-named Marquis, with whom Giovan Battista had gone by order and commission of the Duke. On that account, then, the Marquis, having conceived an affection for him and knowing that he had need of his judgment and ability in the field (that is, in the war against Siena), so went to work with the Duke, that his Excellency sent Giovan Battista off as captain of a strong company of foot-soldiers; whereupon he served from that day onward in the field, as a valiant soldier and an ingenious architect. Finally, having been sent by the Marquis to Aiuola, a fortress in the Chianti, while disposing the artillery he was wounded in the head by a harquebus-ball; wherefore he was taken by his soldiers to the Pieve di S. Paolo, which belongs to Bishop da Ricasoli, and died in a few days, and was carried to San Marino, where he received honourable burial from his children.

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Giovan Battista deserves to be highly extolled, for the reason that, besides having been excellent in his profession, it is a marvellous thing that, having set himself to give attention to it late in life, at the age of thirty-five, he should have made in it the proficience that he did make; and it may be

believed that if he had begun younger, he would have become a very rare master. Giovan Battista was something obstinate, so that it was a serious undertaking to move him from any opinion. He took extraordinary pleasure in reading stories, and turned them to very great advantage, writing down with great pains the most notable things in them. His death much grieved the Duke and his innumerable friends; wherefore his son Gian Andrea, coming to kiss his Excellency's hands, was received kindly by him and welcomed most warmly with very generous offers, on account of the ability and fidelity of the father, who died at the age of forty-eight.

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## MICHELE SAN MICHELE

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**PAOLO VERONESE: INDUSTRY**  
(*Venice: Doges' Palace, Sala Anticollegio. Ceiling Painting*)

[View larger image](#)

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## LIFE OF MICHELE SAN MICHELE ARCHITECT OF VERONA

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Michele San Michele, who was born at Verona in the year 1484, and learned the first principles of architecture from his father Giovanni and his uncle Bartolommeo, both excellent architects, went off at sixteen years of age to Rome, leaving his father and two brothers of fine parts, one of whom, called Jacopo, devoted himself to letters, and the other, named Don Camillo, was a Canon Regular and General of that Order. Having arrived there, he studied the ancient remains of architecture in such a manner, and with such diligence, observing and measuring everything minutely, that in a short time he became renowned and famous not only in Rome, but throughout all the places that are around that city. Moved by his fame, the people of Orvieto summoned him as architect to their celebrated temple, with an honourable salary; and while he was employed in their service, he was summoned for the same reason to Monte Fiascone, as architect for the building of their principal temple; and thus, serving both the one and the other of these places, he executed all that there is to be seen in these two cities in the way of good architecture. Among other works, a most beautiful tomb was built after his design in S. Domenico at Monte Fiascone—I believe, for one of the Petrucci, a nobleman of Siena—which cost a great sum of money, and proved to be marvellous. Besides all this, he made an infinite number of designs for private houses in those places, and made himself known as a man of great judgment and excellence.

Thereupon Pope Clement VII, proposing to make use of him in the most important operations of the wars that were stirring at that time throughout all Italy, gave him as a companion to Antonio da San Gallo, with a very good salary, to the end that they might go together to inspect all the places of greatest importance in the States of the Church, and, wherever necessary, might see to the construction of fortifications; above all, at Parma and Piacenza, because those two cities were most distant from Rome, and nearest and most exposed to the perils of war. Which duty having been executed by Michele and Antonio to the full satisfaction of the Pontiff, there came to Michele a desire, after all those years, to revisit his native city and his relatives and friends, and even more to see the fortresses of the Venetians. Wherefore, after he had been a few days in Verona, he went to Treviso to see the fortress there, and then to Padua for the same purpose; but the Signori of Venice, having been warned of this, became suspicious that San Michele might be going about inspecting those fortresses with a hostile intent. Having therefore been arrested at

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Padua at their command and thrown into prison, he was examined at great length; but, when it was found that he was an honest man, he was not only liberated by them, but also entreated that he should consent to enter the service of those same Signori of Venice, with honourable rank and salary. He excused himself by saying that he was not able to do that for the present, being engaged to his Holiness; but he gave them fair promises, and then took his leave of them. Now he had not been away long, when he was forced to depart from Rome—to such purpose did those Signori go to work in order to secure him—and to go, with the gracious leave of the Pope, whom he first satisfied in full, to serve those most illustrious noblemen, his natural lords. Abiding with them, he gave soon enough a proof of his judgment and knowledge by making at Verona (after many difficulties which the work appeared to present) a very strong and beautiful bastion, which gave infinite satisfaction to those Signori and to the Lord Duke of Urbino, their Captain General. After these things, the same Signori, having determined to fortify Legnago and Porto, places most important to their dominion, and situated upon the River Adige, one on one side and the other on the opposite side, but joined by a bridge, commissioned San Michele to show them by means of a model how it appeared to him that those places could and should be fortified. Which having been done by him, his design gave infinite satisfaction to the Signori and to the Duke of Urbino. Whereupon, arrangements having been made for all that had to be done, San Michele executed the fortifications of those two places in such a manner, that among works of that kind there is nothing better to be seen, or more beautiful, or more carefully considered, or stronger, as whoever has seen them well knows.

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This done, he fortified in the Bresciano, almost from the foundations, Orzinuovo, a fortress and port similar to Legnago. San Michele being then sought for with great insistence by Signor Francesco Sforza, last Duke of Milan, the Signori consented to grant him leave, but for three months only. Having therefore gone to Milan, he inspected all the fortresses of that State, and gave directions in every place for all that it seemed to him necessary to do, and that with such credit and so much to the satisfaction of the Duke, that his Excellency, besides thanking the Signori of Venice, presented five hundred crowns to San Michele. And with this occasion, before returning to Venice, Michele went to Casale di Monferrato, in order to see that very strong and beautiful fortress and city, the architecture of which was the work of Matteo San Michele, an excellent architect, his cousin; and also an honoured and very beautiful tomb of marble erected in S. Francesco in the same city, likewise under the direction of Matteo.

Having then returned home, he had no sooner arrived than he was sent with the above-named Duke of Urbino to inspect La Chiusa, a fortress and pass of much importance, above Verona, and then all the places in Friuli, Bergamo, Vicenza, Peschiera, and others, of all which, and of what seemed to him to be required, he gave minute information in writing to the Signori. Having next been sent by the same Signori to Dalmatia, to fortify the cities and other places of that province, he inspected everything, and carried out restorations with great diligence wherever he saw the necessity to be greatest; and, since he could not himself despatch all the work, he left there Gian Girolamo, his kinsman, who, after fortifying Zara excellently well, erected from the foundations the marvellous fortress of S. Niccolò, over the mouth of the harbour of Sebenico.

Meanwhile Michele was sent in great haste to Corfu, and restored the fortress there in many parts; and he did the same in all the places in Cyprus and Candia. Even so, not long afterwards—on account of a fear that the island might be lost, by reason of the war with the Turks, which was imminent—he was forced to return there, after having inspected the fortresses of the Venetian dominion in Italy, to fortify, with incredible rapidity, Canea, Candia, Retimo, and Settia, but particularly Canea and Candia, which he rebuilt from the foundations and made impregnable. Napoli di Romania being then besieged by the Turks, what with the diligence of S. Michele in fortifying it and furnishing it with bastions, and the valour of Agostino Chisoni of Verona, a very valiant captain, in defending it with arms, it was not after all taken by the enemy or forced to surrender.

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These wars finished, San Michele went with the Magnificent M. Tommaso Mozzenigo, Captain General of the Fleet, to fortify Corfu once again; and they then returned to Sebenico, where the diligence of Gian Girolamo, shown by him in constructing the above-mentioned fortress of S. Niccolò, was much commended. San Michele having then returned to Venice, where he was much extolled for the works executed in the Levant in the service of that Republic, the Signori resolved to build a fortress on the Lido, at the mouth of the port of Venice. Wherefore, giving the charge of this to San Michele, they said to him that, if he had done such great things far away from Venice, he should think how much it was his duty to do in a work of such importance, which was to lie for ever under the eyes of the Senate and of so many great lords; and that in addition, besides beauty and strength in the work, there was expected of him particular industry in founding truly and well in a marshy spot, which was surrounded on all sides by the sea and exposed to the ebb and flow of the tide, a pile of such importance. San Michele having therefore not only made a very beautiful and solid model, but also considered the method of laying the foundations and carrying it into effect, orders were given to him that he should set his hand to the work without delay. Whereupon, after receiving from those Signori all that was required, he prepared the materials for filling in the foundations, and, besides this, caused great numbers of piles to be sunk in double rows, and then, with a vast number of persons well acquainted with those waters, he set himself to make the excavations, and to contrive by means of pumps and other instruments to keep the water pumped out, which was seen continually rising from below, because the site was in the sea. One morning, finally, resolving to make a supreme effort to begin the foundations, and assembling as many men fit for the purpose as could be obtained, with all the porters of Venice, and many of the Signori being present, in a moment, with incredible

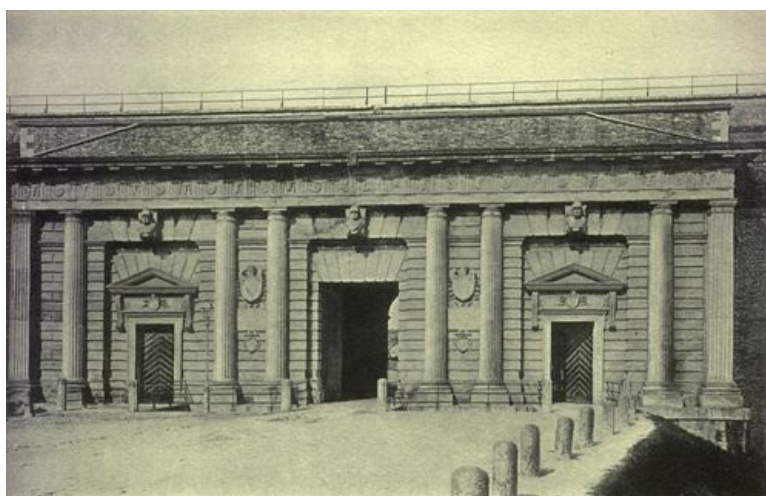
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assiduity and promptitude, the waters were mastered for a little to such purpose, that the first stones of the foundations were thrown instantly upon the piles already driven in; which stones, being very large, took up much space and made an excellent foundation. And so, continuing to keep the water pumped out without losing any time, almost in a flash those foundations were laid, contrary to the expectation of many who had looked upon that work as absolutely impossible. The foundations, when finished, were allowed sufficient time to settle, and then Michele erected upon them a mighty and marvellous fortress, building it on the outer side all in rustic work, with very large stones from Istria, which are of an extreme hardness and able to withstand wind, frost, and the worst of weather. Wherefore that fortress, besides being marvellous with regard to the site on which it is built, is also, from the beauty of the masonry and from its incredible cost, one of the most stupendous that there are in Europe at the present day, rivalling the grandeur and majesty of the most famous edifices erected by the greatness of the Romans; for, besides other things, it appears as if made all from one block, and as though a mountain of living rock had been carved and given that form, so large are the blocks of which it is built, and so well joined and united together, not to speak of the ornaments and other things that are there, seeing that one would never be able to say enough to do them justice. Within it Michele afterwards made a piazza, divided by pilasters and arches of the Rustic Order, which would have proved to be a very rare work, if it had not been left unfinished.

This vast pile having been carried to the condition that has been described, some malign and envious persons said to the Signoria that, although it was very beautiful and built with every possible consideration, nevertheless it would be useless for any purpose, and perhaps even dangerous, for the reason that on discharging the artillery—on account of the great quantity and weight of artillery that the place required—it was almost inevitable that the edifice should split open and fall to the ground. It therefore appeared to those prudent Signori that it would be well to make certain of this, the matter being one of great importance; and they caused to be taken there a vast quantity of artillery, the heaviest that could be found in the Arsenal. Then, all the embrasures both above and below having been filled with cannon, and the cannon charged more heavily than was usual, they were all fired off together; whereupon such were the noise, the thunder, and the earthquake that resulted, that it seemed as if the world had burst to pieces, and the fortress, with all those flaming cannon, had the appearance of a volcano and of Hell itself. But for all that the building stood firm in its former strength and solidity, whereby the Senate was convinced of the great worth of San Michele, and the evil-speakers were put to scorn as men of little judgment, although they had put such terror into everyone, that the ladies then pregnant, fearing some great disaster, had withdrawn from Venice.

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Not long afterwards a place of no little importance on the coast near Venice, called Marano, having returned under the dominion of the Venetians, was restored and fortified with promptitude and diligence under the direction of San Michele. And about the same time, the fame of Michele and of his kinsman, Gian Girolamo, spreading ever more widely, they were requested many times, both the one and the other, to go to live with the Emperor Charles V and with King Francis of France; but, although they were invited under most honourable conditions, they would not leave their own masters to enter into the service of foreigners. Indeed, continuing in their offices, they went about inspecting and restoring every year, wherever it was necessary, all the cities and fortresses of the State of Venice.



**PORTA DEL PALIO**  
**(After Michele San Michele. Verona)**  
*Alinari*

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But more than all the rest did Michele fortify and adorn his native city of Verona, making there, besides other things, those most beautiful gates of the city, which have no equal in any other place. One was the Porta Nuova, all in the Dorico-rustic Order, which in its solidity and massive firmness corresponds to the strength of the site, being all built of tufa and pietra viva,<sup>[10]</sup> and having within it rooms for the soldiers who mount guard there, and many other conveniences,

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never before added to that kind of building. That edifice, which is quadrangular and open above, serving with its embrasures as a cavalier, defends two great bastions, or rather, towers, which stand one on either side of the gate at proper distances; and all is done with so much judgment, cost, and magnificence, that no one thought that for the future there could be executed any work of greater grandeur or better design, even as none such had been seen in the past. But a few years afterwards the same San Michele founded and carried upwards the gate commonly called the Porta dal Palio, which is in no way inferior to that described above, but equally beautiful, grand, and magnificent, or even more so, and designed excellently well. And, in truth, in these two gates the Signori of Venice may be seen to have equalled, by means of the genius of this architect, the edifices and fabrics of the ancient Romans.

This last gate, then, is on the outer side of the Doric Order, with immense projecting columns, all fluted according to the manner of that Order; and these columns, which are eight in all, are placed in pairs. Four serve to enclose the gate, with the arms of the Rectors of the city, between one and another, on either side, and the other four, likewise in pairs, make a finish to the angles of the gate, the façade of which is very wide and all of bosses, or rather, blocks, not rough, but made smooth, with very beautiful ornamentation; and the opening, or rather passage, through the gate, is left quadrangular, but of an architecture that is new, bizarre, and most beautiful. Above it is a great and very rich Doric cornice, with all its appurtenances, over which, as may be seen from the model, was to go a fronton with all its ornaments, forming a parapet for the artillery, since this gate, like the other, was to serve as a cavalier. Within the gate are very large rooms for the soldiers, with other apartments and conveniences. On the front that faces towards the city, San Michele made a most beautiful loggia, all of the Dorico-rustic Order on the outer side, and on the inner all in rustic work, with very large piers. that have as ornaments columns round on the outside and on the inside square and projecting to the half of their thickness, and all made of pieces in rustic masonry, with Doric capitals without bases; and at the top is a great cornice, likewise Doric, and carved, passing along the whole loggia, which is of great length, both within and without. In a word, this work is marvellous; wherefore it was well and truly spoken by the most illustrious Signor Sforza Pallavicino, Captain General of the Venetian forces, when he said that there was not to be found in all Europe any structure that could in any way compare with it. This was the last of Michele's marvels, for the reason that he had scarcely erected the whole of the first range described above, when he finished the course of his life. Wherefore the work remained unfinished, nor will it ever be finished at all, for there are not wanting certain malignant persons—as always happens with great works—who censure it, striving to diminish the glory of others by their malignity and evil-speaking, since they fail by a great measure to achieve similar things with their own powers.

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The same master built another gate at Verona, called the Porta di S. Zeno, which is very beautiful; in any other place, indeed, it would be marvellous, but in Verona its beauty and artistry are obscured by the two others described above. A work of Michele's, likewise, is the bastion, or rather rampart, that is near this gate, and also another that is lower down, opposite to S. Bernardino, and another between them, called Dell'Acquaio, which is opposite to the Campo Marzio; and also that surpassing all the others in size, which is placed by the Chain, where the Adige enters the city.



**CAPPELLA DE' PELLEGRINI**  
**(After Michele San Michele. Verona: S. Bernardino)**  
**Alinari**

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At Padua he built the bastion called the Cornaro, and likewise that of S. Croce, which are both of marvellous size, and constructed in the modern manner, according to the order invented by Michele himself. For the method of making bastions with angles was the invention of Michele, and before his day they were made round; and whereas that kind of bastion was very difficult to defend, at the present day, having an obtuse angle on the outer side, they can be defended with ease, either from the cavalier erected between the two bastions and near to them, or, indeed, from the other bastion, provided that it be near the one attacked and the ditch wide. His invention, also, was the method of making bastions with three platforms, whereby the two at the sides guard and defend the ditch and the curtains, with their open embrasures, and the merlon in the centre defends itself and attacks the enemy in front. This method of fortification has since been imitated by everyone, causing the abandonment of the ancient fashion of subterranean embrasures, called casemates, in which, on account of the smoke and other impediments, the artillery could not be well handled; not to mention that they often weakened the foundations of the towers and walls.

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The same Michele built two very beautiful gates at Legnago. He directed at Peschiera the work of the first foundation of that fortress, and likewise many works at Brescia; and he always did everything with such diligence and such good foundations, that not one of his buildings ever showed a crack. Finally, he restored the fortress of La Chiusa above Verona, making it possible for persons to pass by without entering the fortress, but yet in such a manner that, on the raising of a bridge by those who are within, no one can pass by against their will, or even show himself on the road, which is very narrow and cut out of the rock. He also built at Verona, just after he had returned from Rome, the very beautiful bridge over the Adige, called the Ponte Nuovo, doing this at the commission of Messer Giovanni Emo, at that time Podestà of that city; which bridge was on account of its strength, as it still is, a marvellous thing.

Michele was excellent not only in fortifications, but also in private buildings and in temples, churches, and monasteries, as may be seen from many buildings at Verona and other places, and particularly from the most ornate and beautiful Chapel of the Guareschi in S. Bernardino, which is round after the manner of a temple, and in the Corinthian Order, with all the ornaments which that manner admits. That chapel, I say, he built all of that white pietra viva, which, from the sound that it makes when it is being worked, is called in that city "Bronzo"; and, in truth, that kind of stone, after fine marble, is the most beautiful that has been found down to our own times, being absolutely solid and without holes or spots that might spoil it. Since that chapel, then, is built on the inside all of that most beautiful stone, and wrought by excellent masters of carving, and put together very well, it is considered that among works of that kind there is at the present day no other more beautiful in all Italy. For Michele made the whole work curve in a circle in such a manner, that three altars which are in it, with their pediments and cornices, and likewise the space of the door, all turn in a perfect round, almost after the likeness of the entrances that Filippo Brunelleschi made in the Chapels of the Temple of the Angeli in Florence; which is a very difficult thing to do. Michele then made therein a gallery over the first range of columns, which circles right round the chapel, and there are to be seen most beautiful carvings in the form of columns, capitals, foliage, grotesques, little pilasters, and other things, carved with incredible diligence. The door of that chapel he made quadrangular on the outer side, of the Corinthian Order and very beautiful, and similar to an ancient door that he saw, so he used to say, in some place at Rome. It is true, indeed, that this work, after having been left unfinished by Michele, I know not for what reason, was given, either from avarice or from lack of judgment, to certain others to be finished, who spoiled it, to the infinite vexation of Michele, who in his lifetime saw it ruined before his very eyes, without being able to prevent it; wherefore he used to complain at times to his friends, but only on this account, that he had not thousands of ducats wherewith to buy it from the avaricious hands of a woman who, by spending less than she was able, was shamefully spoiling it.

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A work of Michele's was the design of the round Temple of the Madonna di Campagna, near Verona, which was very beautiful, although the parsimony, weakness, and little judgment of the Wardens of that building have since disfigured it in many parts; and even worse would they have done, if Bernardino Brugnuoli, a kinsman of Michele, had not had charge of it and made a complete model, after which the building of that temple, as well as of many others, is now being carried forward. For the Friars of S. Maria in Organo, or rather, the Monks of Monte Oliveto in Verona, he made a design of the Corinthian Order, which was most beautiful, for the façade of their church. This façade, after being carried to a certain height by Paolo San Michele, was left not long since in that condition, on account of many expenses that were incurred by those monks in other matters, but even more by reason of the death of him who had begun it, Don Cipriano of Verona, a man of saintly life and of much authority in that Order, of which he was twice General. At S. Giorgio in Verona, a convent of the Regular Priests of S. Giorgio in Alega, the same Michele directed the building of the cupola of that church, which was a very beautiful work, and succeeded against the expectations of many who did not think that the structure would ever remain standing, on account of the weakness of its supports; but these were then so strengthened by Michele, that there is no longer anything to fear. In the same convent he made the design and laid the foundations of a very beautiful campanile of hewn stone, partly tufa and partly pietra viva, which was carried well forward by him, and is now being continued by the

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above-mentioned Bernardino, his nephew, who is employed in carrying it to completion.

Monsignor Luigi Lippomani, Bishop of Verona, having resolved to carry to completion the campanile of his church, which had been begun a hundred years before, caused a design for this to be made by Michele, who did it very beautifully, taking into consideration the preserving of the old part and the expense that the Bishop was able to incur. But a certain Messer Domenico Porzio, a Roman, and his vicar, a person with little knowledge of building, although otherwise a worthy man, allowed himself to be imposed upon by one who also knew little about it, and gave him the charge of carrying on that fabric. Whereupon that person built it of unprepared stone from the mountains, and made the stairs in the thickness of the walls, doing all this in such a manner, that everyone who was even slightly conversant with architecture foretold that which afterwards happened—namely, that the structure would not remain standing. And, among others, the very reverend Fra Marco de' Medici of Verona, who, in addition to his other more serious studies, has always delighted in architecture, as he still does, predicted what would happen to such a building; but he was answered thus: "Fra Marco counts for much in his own profession of letters, philosophy, and theology, wherein he is public lecturer, but in architecture he does not fish so deeply as to command belief." Finally, that campanile, having risen to the level where the bells were to be, opened out in four parts in such a manner, that, after having spent many thousands of crowns in building it, they had to give three hundred crowns to the builders to throw it to the ground, lest it should fall by itself, as it would have done in a few days, and destroy everything all around. And it is only right that this should happen to those who desert good and eminent masters, and mix themselves up with bunglers. The above-named Monsignor Luigi having afterwards been chosen Bishop of Bergamo, Monsignor Agostino Lippomani was made Bishop of Verona in his place, and he commissioned Michele to reconstruct almost anew the model of that campanile, and to set to work. And after him, according to the same model, Monsignor Girolamo Trivisani, a friar of S. Dominic, who succeeded the last-named Lippomani in the bishopric, has caused that work to be continued, which is now progressing passing slowly. The model is very beautiful, and the stairs are being accommodated within the tower in such a manner, that the fabric remains stable and very strong.

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For the noble Counts della Torre of Verona, Michele built a very beautiful chapel in the manner of a round temple, with the altar in the centre, at their villa of Fumane. And in the Church of the Santo, at Padua, a very handsome tomb was built under his direction for Messer Alessandro Contarini, Procurator of S. Mark, who had been Proveditor to the Venetian forces; in which tomb it would seem that Michele sought to show in what manner such works should be done, departing from a kind of commonplace method which, in his opinion, had in it more of the altar or chapel than of the tomb. This work, which is very rich in ornamentation, solid in composition, and warlike in character, has as ornaments a Thetis and two prisoners by the hand of Alessandro Vittoria, which are held to be good figures, and a head, or rather, effigy from life of the above-named lord, with armour on the breast, executed in marble by Danese da Carrara. There are, in addition, other ornaments in abundance; prisoners, trophies, spoils of war, and others, of which there is no need to make mention.

In Venice he made the model of the Convent of the Nuns of S. Biagio Catoldo, which was much extolled. It was then resolved at Verona to rebuild the Lazzaretto, a dwelling, or rather, hospital, which serves for the sick in times of plague, the old one having been destroyed together with other edifices that had been in the suburbs; and Michele was commissioned to make a design for this (which proved to be beautiful beyond all expectations), to the end that it might be put into execution on a spot near the river, at some distance from the city and beyond the esplanade. But this design, truly most beautiful and excellently well considered in every part, which is now in the possession of the heirs of Luigi Brugnuoli, Michele's nephew, was not carried completely into execution by certain persons, by reason of their little judgment and poverty of spirit, but much restricted, curtailed, and reduced to mean proportions by those persons, who used the authority that they had received in the matter from the public in disfiguring the work, in consequence of the untimely death of some gentlemen who were in charge of it at the beginning, and who had a greatness of spirit equal to their nobility of blood.

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A work of Michele's, likewise, was the very beautiful palace that the noble Counts of Canossa have at Verona, which was built at the commission of the very reverend Monsignor di Bajus, who once was Count Lodovico Canossa, a man so much celebrated by all the writers of his time. For the same Monsignor Michele built another magnificent palace in the Villa of Grezzano, in the Veronese territory. Under the direction of the same architect the façade of the Counts Bevilacqua was reconstructed, and all the apartments were restored in the castle of those lords, called La Bevilacqua. And at Verona, likewise, he built the house and façade of the Lavezzoli, which were much extolled.

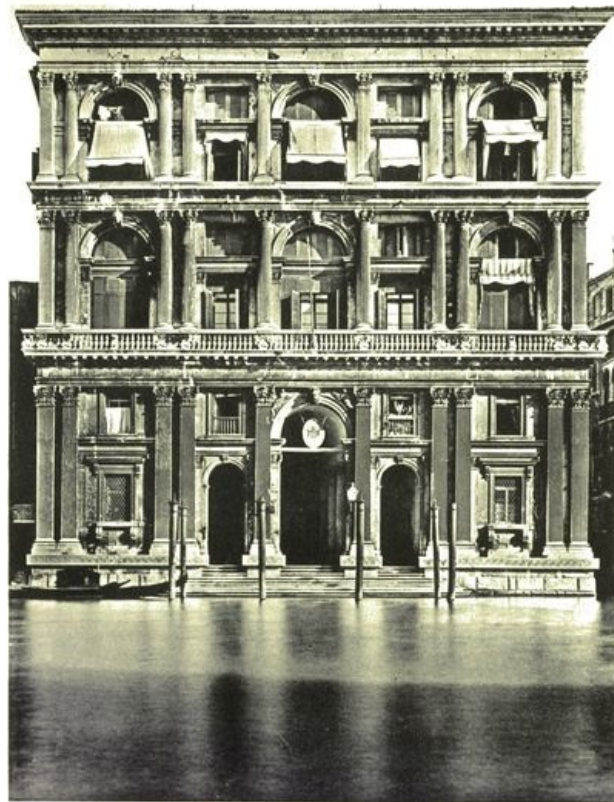
In Venice he built from the foundations the very rich and magnificent palace of the Cornaro family, near S. Polo, and restored another palace, also of the Cornaro family, which is by S. Benedetto all'Albore, for M. Giovanni Cornaro, of whom Michele was much the friend; and this led to Giorgio Vasari painting nine pictures in oils for the ceiling of a magnificent apartment, all adorned with woodwork carved and richly overlaid with gold, in that palace. In like manner, he restored the house of the Bragadini, opposite to S. Marina, and made it very commodious and ornate. And in the same city he founded and raised above the ground after a model of his own, at incredible cost, the marvellous palace of the most noble M. Girolamo Grimani, near S. Luca, on the Grand Canal; but Michele, being overtaken by death, was not able to carry it to completion himself, and the other architects chosen in his stead by that nobleman altered his design and

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model in many parts.

Near Castelfranco, on the borders of the territories of Padua and Treviso, there was built under the direction of the same Michele the most famous Palace of the Soranzi, called by that family La Soranza; which palace is held to be, for a country residence, the most beautiful and the most commodious that had been built in those parts up to that time. He also built the Casa Cornara at Piombino, in that territory, and so many other private houses, that it would make too long a story to attempt to speak of them all; let it be enough to have made mention of the most important. I will not, indeed, refrain from recording that he made most beautiful gates for two palaces, one of which was that of the Rectors and of the Captain, and the other that of the Palazzo del Podestà, both in Verona and worthy of the highest praise, although the latter, which is in the Ionic Order, with double columns and very ornate intercolumniations, and some Victories at the angles, has a somewhat dwarfed appearance by reason of the lowness of the site where it stands, particularly because it is without pedestals and very wide on account of the double columns; but such was the wish of Messer Giovanni Delfini, who had it made.

While Michele was enjoying a tranquil ease in his native place, and the reputation and renown that his honourable labours had brought him, there came to him a piece of news that so afflicted him, that it finished the course of his life. But to the end that the whole may be better understood, and that all the beautiful works of the San Michele family may be made known in this Life, I shall say something of Gian Girolamo, the kinsman of Michele.



**PALAZZO GRIMANI**  
**(After Michele San Michele. Venice)**  
**Anderson**

[View larger image](#)

This Gian Girolamo, then, was the son of Paolo, the cousin of Michele, and, being a young man of very beautiful genius, was instructed with such diligence by Michele in the matters of architecture, and so beloved by him, that he would always have the young man with him in all undertakings of importance, and particularly in fortifications. Having therefore become in a short time so excellent, with the help of such a master, that the most difficult work of fortification could be entrusted to him, in which manner of architecture he took particular delight, his ability was recognized by the Signori of Venice, and he was placed with a good salary among the number of their architects, although he was very young, and then sent now to one place and now to another, to inspect and restore the fortresses of their dominion, and at times to carry into execution the designs of his kinsman Michele. And, among other places, he took part with much judgment and labour in the fortification of Zara, and in the marvellous fortress of S. Niccolò at Sebenico, placed, as has been mentioned, at the mouth of the port; which fortress, erected by him from the very foundations, is held to be, for a private fortress, one of the strongest and best designed that there are to be seen. He also reconstructed after his own designs, with the advice of his kinsman, the great fortress of Corfu, which is considered the key of Italy on that side. In this fortress, I say, Gian Girolamo rebuilt the two great towers that face towards the land, making them much larger

and stronger than they were before, with open embrasures and platforms that flank the ditch in the modern manner, after the invention of his kinsman. He then caused the ditches to be made much wider than they were before, and had a hill levelled, which, being near the fortress, appeared to command it. But, besides the many other works that he did there with great consideration, what gave most satisfaction was that in one corner of the fortress he made a place of great size and strength, in which in time of siege the people of that island can stay in safety without any danger of being captured by the enemy.

On account of these works Gian Girolamo came into such credit with the above-named Signori, that they ordained him a salary equal to that of his kinsman, judging him to be not inferior to Michele, and even superior in that work of fortification: which gave the greatest contentment to San Michele, who saw his own art advancing in the person of his relative in proportion as old age was taking away from himself the power to go further. Gian Girolamo, besides his great judgment in recognizing the nature of different sites, showed much industry in having them represented by designs and models in relief, insomuch that he enabled his patrons to see even the most minute details of his fortifications in very beautiful models of wood that he would cause to be made; which diligence pleased them vastly, for without leaving Venice they saw every day how matters were proceeding in the most distant parts of their State. In order that they might be the more readily seen by everyone, these models were kept in the Palazzo del Principe, in a place where the Signori could examine them at their convenience; and to the end that Gian Girolamo might continue to pursue that course, they not only reimbursed him the expenses that he incurred in making the above-mentioned models, but also showed him many other courtesies.

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Gian Girolamo could have gone to serve many lords, with large salaries, but he would never leave his Venetian Signori; nay, at the advice of his father and his kinsman Michele, he took a wife in Verona, a noble young woman of the Fracastoro family, with the intention of always living in those parts. But he had been not more than a few days with his beloved bride, who was called Madonna Ortensia, when he was summoned by his patrons to Venice, and thence sent in great haste to Cyprus to inspect every place in that island, orders having been given to all the officials that they should provide him with all that he might require for any purpose. Having then arrived in that island, in three months Gian Girolamo went all round it and diligently inspected everything, putting every detail into writing and drawing, in order to be able to give an account of the whole to his masters. But, while he was attending with too much care and solicitude to his office, paying little regard to his own life, in the burning heat which prevailed at that time in the island he fell sick of a pestilential fever, which robbed him of life in six days; although some said that he had been poisoned. However that may have been, he died content in being in the service of his masters and employed by them in works of importance, knowing that they had trusted more in his fidelity and his skill in fortification than in those of any other man. The moment that he fell sick, knowing that he was dying, he gave all the drawings and writings that he had prepared on the works in that island into the hands of the architect Luigi Brugnuoli, his kinsman by marriage (who was then engaged in the fortification of Famagosta, which is the key of that kingdom), to the end that he might carry them to his masters.

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When the news of Gian Girolamo's death arrived in Venice, there was not one of the Senate who did not feel indescribable sorrow at the loss of such a man, who had been so devoted to that Republic. Gian Girolamo died at the age of forty-five, and received honourable burial from his above-named kinsman in S. Niccolò at Famagosta. Then, having returned to Venice, Brugnuoli presented Gian Girolamo's drawings and writings; which done, he was sent to give completion to the fortifications of Legnago, where he had spent many years in executing the designs and models of his uncle. But he had not been long in that place when he died, leaving two sons, who are men of passing good ability in design and in the practice of architecture. Bernardino, the elder, has now many undertakings on his hands, such as the building of the campanile of the Duomo, that of S. Giorgio, and that of the church called the Madonna di Campagna, in which and other works that he is directing at Verona and other places, he is succeeding excellently well; and particularly in the ornamental work of the principal chapel of S. Giorgio at Verona, which is of the composite order, and such that in size, design, and workmanship, the people of Verona declare that they do not believe that there is one equal to it to be found in Italy. This work, which follows the curve of the recess, is of the Corinthian Order, with composite capitals and double columns in full relief, and pilasters behind. In like manner, the frontispiece which surmounts the whole also curves in very masterly fashion according to the shape of the recess, and has all the ornaments which that Order embraces. Wherefore Monsignor Barbaro, Patriarch-elect of Aquileia, a man with a great knowledge of the profession, who has written of it, on his return from the Council of Trent saw not without marvel all that had been done in that work, and that which was being done every day; and, after considering it several times, he had to say that he had never seen the like, and that nothing better could be done. And let this suffice as a proof of what may be expected from the genius of Bernardino, who was born on the mother's side from the San Michele family.

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But let us return to Michele, from whom we digressed, not without reason, some little time back. He was struck by such grief at the death of Gian Girolamo, in whom he saw the house of San Michele become extinct, since his kinsman left no children, that, although he strove to conquer or conceal it, in a few days he was overcome by a malignant fever, to the inconsolable sorrow of his country and of his most illustrious patrons. Michele died in the year 1559, and was buried in S. Tommaso, a church of Carmelite Friars, where there is the ancient burial-place of his forefathers; and at the present day Messer Niccolò San Michele, a physician, has set his hand to erecting him an honourable tomb, which is even now being carried into execution.

Michele was a man of most upright life, and most honourable in his every action. He was a cheerful person, yet with an admixture of seriousness. He feared God, and was very religious, insomuch that he would never set himself to do anything in the morning without having first heard Mass devoutly and said his prayers; and at the beginning of any undertaking of importance, in the morning, before doing any other thing, he would always have the Mass of the Holy Spirit or of the Madonna solemnly chanted. He was very liberal, and so courteous with his friends, that they were as much masters of his possessions as he was himself. And I will not withhold a proof of his great loyalty and goodness, which I believe few others know besides myself. When Giorgio Vasari, of whom, as has been told, he was much the friend, parted from him for the last time in Venice, Michele said to him: "I would have you know, Messer Giorgio, that, when I was in my youth at Monte Fiascone, I became enamoured, as fortune would have it, of the wife of a stone-cutter, and received from her complaisance all that I desired; but no one ever heard of it from me. Now, having heard that the poor woman has been left a widow, with a daughter ready for a husband, whom she says she conceived by me, I wish—although it may well be that this is not true, and such is my belief—that you should take to her these fifty crowns of gold and give them to her on my part, for the love of God, to the end that she may use them for her advantage and settle her daughter according to her station." Giorgio, therefore, going to Rome, and arriving at Monte Fiascone, although the good woman freely confessed to him that the girl was not the daughter of Michele, insisted, in obedience to Michele's command, on paying her the fifty crowns, which were as welcome to that poor woman as five hundred would have been to another.

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Michele, then, was courteous beyond the courtesy of any other man, insomuch that he no sooner heard of the needs and desires of his friends, than he sought to gratify them, even to the spending of his life; nor did any person ever do him a service that was not repaid many times over. Giorgio Vasari once made for him in Venice, with the greatest diligence at his command, a large drawing in which the proud Lucifer and his followers, vanquished by the Angel Michael, could be seen raining headlong down from Heaven into the horrible depths of Hell; and at that time Michele did not do anything but thank Giorgio for it when he took leave of him. But not many days after, returning to Arezzo, Giorgio found that San Michele had sent long before to his mother, who lived at Arezzo, a quantity of presents beautiful and honourable enough to be the gifts of a very rich nobleman, with a letter in which he did her great honour for love of her son.

Many times the Signori of Venice offered to increase his salary, but he refused, always praying that they should increase his kinsmen's salaries instead of his own. In short, Michele was in his every action so gentle, courteous, and loving, that he made himself rightly beloved by innumerable lords; by Cardinal de' Medici, who became Pope Clement VII, while he was in Rome; by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, who became Paul III; by the divine Michelagnolo Buonarroti; by Signor Francesco Maria, Duke of Urbino; and by a vast number of noblemen and senators of Venice. At Verona he was much the friend of Fra Marco de' Medici, a man of great learning and infinite goodness, and of many others of whom there is no need at present to make mention.

Now, in order not to have to turn back in a short time to speak of the Veronese, taking the opportunity presented by the masters mentioned above, I shall make mention in this place of some painters from that country, who are still alive and worthy to be named, and by no means to be passed over in silence. The first of these is Domenico del Riccio, who has painted in fresco, mostly in chiaroscuro and partly in colour, three façades of the house of Fiorio della Seta at Verona, on the Ponte Nuovo—that is, the three that do not look out upon the bridge, the house standing by itself. In one, over the river, are battles of sea-monsters, in another the battles of the Centaurs and many rivers, and in the third two pictures in colour. In the first of these, which is over the door, is the Table of the Gods, and in the other, over the river, is the fable of the nuptials between the Benacus, called the Lake of Garda, and the Nymph Caris, in the person of Garda, from whom is born the River Mincio, which in fact issues from that lake. In the same house is a large frieze wherein are some Triumphs in colour, executed in a beautiful and masterly manner. In the house of Messer Pellegrino Ridolfi, also at Verona, the same master painted the Coronation of the Emperor Charles V, and the scene when, after being crowned in Bologna, he rides with the Pope through the city in great pomp. In oils he has painted the principal altar-piece of the church that the Duke of Mantua has built recently near the Castello, in which is the Beheading and Martyrdom of S. Barbara, painted with much diligence and judgment. And what moved the Duke to have that altar-piece executed by Domenico was his having seen and much liked his manner in an altar-piece that Domenico had painted long before for the Chapel of S. Margherita in the Duomo of Mantua, in competition with Paolino,<sup>[11]</sup> who painted that of S. Antonio, with Paolo Farinato, who executed that of S. Martino, and with Battista del Moro, who painted that of the Magdalene; all which four Veronese had been summoned thither by Cardinal Ercole of Mantua, in order to adorn that church, which had been reconstructed by him after the design of Giulio Romano. Other works has Domenico executed in Verona, Vicenza, and Venice, but it must suffice to have spoken of those named. He is an honest and excellent craftsman, and, in addition to his painting, he is a very fine musician, and one of the first in the most noble Philharmonic Academy of Verona.

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Not inferior to him will be his son Felice, who, although still young, has proved himself a painter out of the ordinary in an altar-piece that he has executed for the Church of the Trinita, in which are the Madonna and six other Saints, all of the size of life. Nor is this any marvel, for the young man learned his art in Florence, living in the house of Bernardo Canigiani, a Florentine gentleman and a crony of his father Domenico.

In the same Verona, also, lives Bernardino, called L'India, who, besides many other works, has painted the Fable of Psyche in most beautiful figures on the ceiling of a chamber in the house of Count Marc'Antonio del Tiene. And he has painted another chamber, with beautiful inventions and a lovely manner of painting, for Count Girolamo of Canossa.

A much extolled painter, also, is Eliodoro Forbicini, a young man of most beautiful genius and of considerable skill in every manner of painting, but particularly in making grotesques, as may be seen in the two chambers mentioned above and in other places where he has worked.

In like manner Battista da Verona, who is called thus, and not otherwise, out of his own country, after having learned the first rudiments of painting from an uncle at Verona, placed himself with the excellent Tiziano in Venice, under whom he has become a very good painter. When a young man, this Battista painted in company with Paolino a hall in the Palace of the Paymaster and Assessor Portesco at Tiene in the territory of Vicenza; where they executed a vast number of figures, which acquired credit and repute for both the one and the other. With the same Paolino he executed many works in fresco in the Palace of the Soranza at Castelfranco, both having been sent to work there by Michele San Michele, who loved them as his sons. And with him, also, he painted the façade of the house of M. Antonio Cappello, which is on the Grand Canal in Venice; and then, still together, they painted the ceiling, or rather, soffit in the Hall of the Council of Ten, dividing the pictures between them. Not long afterwards, having been summoned to Vicenza, Battista executed many works there, both within and around the city; and recently he has painted the façade of the Monte della Pietà, wherein he has executed an infinite number of nude figures in various attitudes, larger than life, with very good design, and all in so few months, that it has been a marvel. And if he has done so much at so early an age (for he is not yet past thirty), everyone may imagine what may be expected of him in the course of his life.

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A Veronese, likewise, is one Paolino, a painter who is in very good repute in Venice at the present day, in that, although he is not yet more than thirty years of age, he has executed many works worthy of praise. This master, who was born at Verona to a stone-cutter, or, as they say in those parts, a stone-hewer, after having learned the rudiments of painting from Giovanni Caroto of Verona, painted in fresco, in company with the above-named Battista, the hall of the Paymaster and Assessor Portesco at Tiene, in the Vicentino; and afterwards at the Soranza, with the same companion, many works executed with good design and judgment and a beautiful manner. At Masiera, near Asolo in the Trevisano, he has painted the very beautiful house of Signor Daniello Barbaro, Patriarch-elect of Aquileia. At Verona, for the Refectory of S. Nazzaro, a monastery of Black Friars, he has painted in a large picture on canvas the supper that Simon the Leper gave to Our Lord, when the woman of sin threw herself at His feet, with many figures, portraits from life, and very rare perspective-views; and under the table are two dogs so beautiful that they appear real and alive, and further away certain cripples executed excellently well.



**THE FEAST IN THE HOUSE OF LEVI**  
**(After the painting by Paolo Veronese [Paolino or Caliari]. Venice: Accademia, 203)**  
**Anderson**

[View larger image](#)

By the hand of Paolino, in the Hall of the Council of Ten at Venice, in an oval that is larger than certain others that are there, placed, as the principal one, in the centre of the ceiling, is a Jove who is driving away the Vices, in order to signify that that supreme and absolute tribunal drives away vice and chastises wicked and vicious men. The same master painted the soffit, or rather, ceiling of the Church of S. Sebastiano, which is a very rare work, and the altar-piece of the principal chapel, together with some pictures that serve to adorn it, and likewise the doors of the organ; which are all pictures truly worthy of the highest praise. In the Hall of the Grand Council he painted a large picture of Frederick Barbarossa presenting himself to the Pope, with a good number of figures varied in their costumes and vestments, all most beautiful and representing worthily the Court of a Pope and an Emperor, and also a Venetian Senate, with many noblemen and Senators of that Republic, portrayed from life. In short, this work is such in its grandeur and design, and in the beauty and variety of the attitudes, that it is rightly extolled by everyone. After this scene, Paolino painted the ceilings of certain chambers, which are used by that Council of Ten, with figures in oils, which are much foreshortened and very rare.

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In like manner, he painted in fresco the façade of the house of a merchant, which was a very beautiful work, on the road from S. Maurizio to S. Moisè; but the wind from the sea is little by little destroying it. For Camillo Trevisani, at Murano, he painted a loggia and an apartment in fresco, which were much extolled. And in S. Giorgio Maggiore at Venice, at the head of a large apartment, he painted in oils the Marriage of Cana in Galilee, which was a marvellous work for its grandeur, the number of figures, the variety of costumes, and the invention; and, if I remember right, there are to be seen in it more than one hundred and fifty heads, all varied and executed with great diligence.

The same Paolino was commissioned by the Procurators of S. Mark to paint certain angular medallions that are in the ceiling of the Nicene Library, which was left to the Signoria by Cardinal Bessarion, with a vast treasure of Greek books. Now the above-named lords, when they had the painting of that library begun, promised a prize of honour, in addition to the ordinary payment, to him who should acquit himself best in painting it; and the pictures were divided among the best painters that there were at that time in Venice. When the work was finished and the pictures painted had been very well considered, a chain of gold was placed round the neck of Paolino, he being the man who was judged to have done better than all the others. The picture that gave him the victory and the prize of honour was that wherein he painted Music, in which are depicted three very beautiful young women, one of whom, the most beautiful, is playing a great bass-viol, looking down at the fingerboard of the instrument, the attitude of her person showing that her ear and her voice are fixed intently on the sound; and of the other two, one is playing a lute, and the other singing from a book. Near these women is a Cupid without wings, who is playing a harpsichord, signifying that Love is born from Music, or rather, that Love is always in company with Music; and, because he never parts from her, Paolino made him without wings. In the same picture he painted Pan, the God, according to the poets, of shepherds, with certain pipes made of the bark of trees, as it were consecrated to him as votive offerings by shepherds who have been victorious in playing them. Two other pictures Paolino painted in the same place; in one is Arithmetic, with certain Philosophers dressed in the ancient manner, and in the other is Honour, seated on a throne, to whom sacrifices are being offered and royal crowns presented. But, seeing that this young man is at this very moment at the height of his activity and not yet in his thirty-second year, I shall say nothing more of him for the present.

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**VENICE ENTHRONED, WITH JUSTICE AND PEACE**  
**(After the painting by Paolo Veronese [Paolino or Caliari]. Venice: Ducal Palace)**  
**Anderson**

[View larger image](#)

Likewise a Veronese is Paolo Farinato, an able painter, who, after having been a disciple of Niccolò Ursino,<sup>[12]</sup> has executed many works at Verona. The most important are a hall in the house of the Fumanelli, which he filled with various scenes in fresco-colours at the desire of Messer Antonio, a gentleman of that family, most famous as physician over all Europe, and two very large pictures in the principal chapel of S. Maria in Organo. In one of these is the story of the Innocents, and in the other is the scene when the Emperor Constantine causes a number of children to be brought before him, intending to kill them and to bathe in their blood, in order to

cure himself of his leprosy. Then in the recess of that chapel are two pictures, large, but smaller than the others, in one of which is Christ receiving S. Peter, who is walking towards Him on the water, and in the other the dinner that S. Gregory gives to certain poor men. In all these works, which are much to be extolled, is a vast number of figures, executed with good design, study, and diligence. By the hand of the same master is an altar-picture of S. Martino that was placed in the Duomo of Mantua, which he executed in competition with others his compatriots, as has just been related.

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And let this be the end of the Lives of the excellent Michele San Michele and of those other able men of Verona, so truly worthy of all praise on account of their excellence in the arts and their great talents.

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## GIOVANNI ANTONIO BAZZI, CALLED IL SODOMA

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**GIOVANNI ANTONIO (IL SODOMA): THE VISION OF S. CATHARINE**  
*(Siena: S. Domenico. Fresco)*

[View larger image](#)

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## LIFE OF GIOVANNI ANTONIO BAZZI, CALLED IL SODOMA PAINTER OF VERCELLI

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If men were to recognize their position when Fortune presents to them the opportunity to become rich, obtaining for them the favour of great persons, and were to exert themselves in their youth to make their merit equal to their good fortune, marvellous results would be seen to issue from their actions; whereas very often the contrary is seen to happen, for the reason that, even as it is true that he who trusts only in Fortune generally finds himself deceived, so it is very clear, as experience teaches us every day, that merit alone, likewise, if not accompanied by Fortune, does not do great things. If Giovanni Antonio of Vercelli, even as he had good fortune, had possessed an equal dower of merit, as he could have done if he had studied, he would not have been reduced to madness and miserable want in old age at the end of his life, which was always eccentric and beastly.

Now Giovanni Antonio was taken to Siena by some merchants, agents of the Spannocchi family, and his good fortune, or perhaps his bad fortune, would have it that, not finding any competition for a time in that city, he should work there alone; which, although it was some advantage to him,

was in the end injurious, for the reason that he went to sleep, as it were, and never studied, but did most of his work by rule of thumb. And, if he did study a little, it was only in drawing the works of Jacopo della Fonte, which were much esteemed, and in little else. In the beginning he executed many portraits from life with that glowing manner of colouring which he had brought from Lombardy, and he thus made many friendships in Siena, more because that people is very kindly disposed towards strangers than because he was a good painter; and, besides this, he was a gay and licentious man, keeping others entertained and amused with his manner of living, which was far from creditable. In which life, since he always had about him boys and beardless youths, whom he loved more than was decent, he acquired the by-name of Sodoma; and in this name, far from taking umbrage or offence, he used to glory, writing about it songs and verses in terza rima, and singing them to the lute with no little facility. He delighted, in addition, to have about the house many kinds of extraordinary animals; badgers, squirrels, apes, marmosets, dwarf asses, horses, barbs for running races, little horses from Elba, jays, dwarf fowls, Indian turtle-doves, and other suchlike animals, as many as he could lay his hands on. But, besides all these beasts, he had a raven, which had learned from him to speak so well, that in some things it imitated exactly the voice of Giovanni Antonio, and particularly in answering to anyone who knocked at the door, doing this so excellently that it seemed like Giovanni Antonio himself, as all the people of Siena know very well. In like manner, the other animals were so tame that they always flocked round anybody in the house, playing the strangest pranks and the maddest tricks in the world, insomuch that the man's house looked like a real Noah's Ark.

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#### SCENE FROM THE LIFE OF S. BENEDICT

(After the fresco by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi [Il Sodoma]. *Monte Oliveto Maggiore*)  
*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

Now this manner of living and his eccentric ways, with his works and pictures, wherein he did indeed achieve something of the good, caused him to have such a name among the people of Siena—that is, among the populace and the common herd, for the people of quality knew him better—that he was held by many to be a great man. Whereupon, Fra Domenico da Lecco, a Lombard, having been made General of the Monks of Monte Oliveto, Sodoma went to visit him at Monte Oliveto di Chiusuri, the principal seat of that Order, distant fifteen miles from Siena; and he so contrived with his persuasive words, that he was commissioned to finish the stories of the life of S. Benedict, part of which had been executed on a wall by Luca Signorelli of Cortona. This work he finished for a small enough price, besides the expenses that he incurred, and those of certain lads and colour-grinders who assisted him; nor would it be possible to describe the amusement that he gave while he was labouring at that place to those fathers, who called him Il Mattaccio,<sup>[13]</sup> in the mad pranks that he played.

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### SCENE FROM THE LIFE OF S. BENEDICT

(After the fresco by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi [Il Sodoma]. *Monte Oliveto Maggiore*)

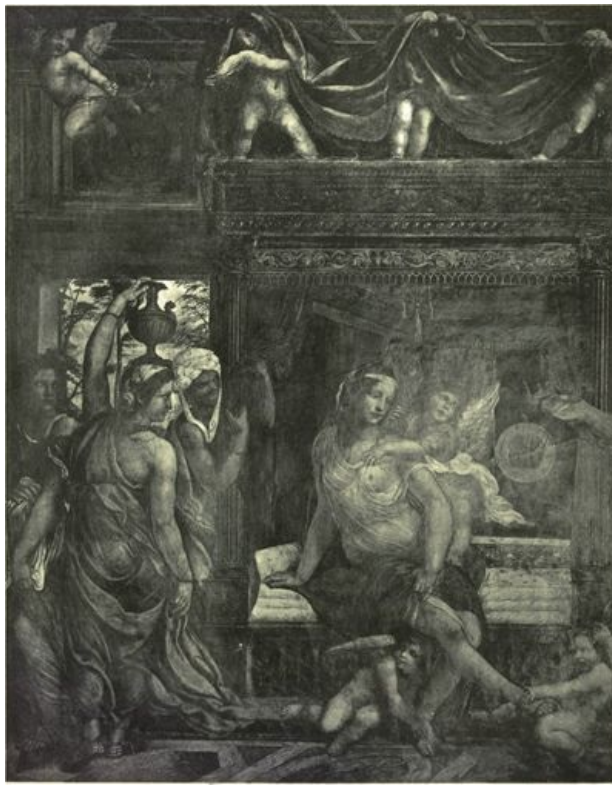
*Alinari*

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But to return to the work. Having executed there certain scenes, which he hurried over mechanically and without diligence, and the General complaining of this, Mattaccio said that he worked as he felt inclined, and that his brush danced to the tune of money, so that, if the General consented to spend more, he was confident that he could do much better. The General having therefore promised that he would pay him better for the future, Giovanni Antonio painted three scenes, which still remained to be executed in the corners, with so much more study and diligence than he had shown in the others, that they proved to be much finer. In one of these is S. Benedict departing from Norcia and from his father and mother, in order to go to study in Rome; in the second, S. Mauro and S. Placido as children, presented to him and offered to God by their fathers; and in the third, the Goths burning Monte Cassino. For the last, in order to do despite to the General and the Monks, he painted the story of the priest Fiorenzo, the enemy of S. Benedict, bringing many loose women to dance and sing around the monastery of that holy man, in order to tempt the purity of those fathers. In this scene Sodoma, who was as shameless in his painting as in his other actions, painted a dance of nude women, altogether lewd and shameful; and, since he would not have been allowed to do it, as long as he was at work he would never let any of the monks see it. Wherefore, when the scene was uncovered, the General wished by hook or by crook to throw it to the ground and utterly destroy it; but Mattaccio, after much foolish talk, seeing that father in anger, clothed all the naked women in that work, which is one of the best that are there. Under each of these scenes he painted two medallions, and in each medallion a friar, to represent all the Generals who had ruled that congregation. And, since he had not their portraits from life, Mattaccio did most of the heads from fancy, and in some he portrayed old friars who were in the monastery at that time, and in the end he came to paint the head of the above-named Fra Domenico da Lecco, who was their General in those days, as has been related, and was causing him to execute that work. But, after some of those heads had lost the eyes, and others had been damaged, Fra Antonio Bentivogli, the Bolognese, caused them all to be removed, for good reasons.

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Now, while Mattaccio was executing these scenes, there had gone thither, to assume the habit of a monk, a Milanese nobleman, who had a yellow cloak trimmed with black cords, such as was worn at that time; and, after he had put on the monk's habit, the General gave that cloak to Mattaccio, who, by means of a mirror, painted a portrait of himself with it on his back in one of the scenes, wherein S. Benedict, still almost a child, miraculously puts together and mends the corn-measure, or rather, tub, of his nurse, which she had broken. At the feet of the portrait he painted a raven, an ape, and others of his animals. This work finished, he painted the story of the five loaves and two fishes, with other figures, in the Refectory of the Monastery of S. Anna, a seat of the same Order, distant five miles from Monte Oliveto; which work completed, he returned to Siena. There, at the Postierla, he painted in fresco the façade of the house of M. Agostino de' Bardi of Siena, in which were some things worthy of praise, but for the most part they have been consumed by time and the weather.



### THE MARRIAGE OF ALEXANDER AND ROXANA

*(Detail, after the fresco by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi [Il Sodoma]. Rome: Villa Farnesina)*  
*Braun*

[View larger image](#)

During this time there arrived in Siena Agostino Chigi, a very rich and famous merchant of that city, and he became acquainted with Giovanni Antonio, both on account of his follies and because he had the name of a good painter. Wherefore he took him in his company to Rome, where Pope Julius II was then causing the Papal apartments in the Palace of the Vatican, which Pope Nicholas V had formerly erected, to be painted; and Chigi so went to work with the Pope, that some painting was given also to Sodoma. Now Pietro Perugino, who was painting the ceiling of an apartment that is beside the Borgia Tower, was working at his ease, like the old man that he was, and was not able to set his hand to anything else, as he had been at first commanded to do: and there was given to Giovanni Antonio to paint another apartment, which is beside the one that Perugino was painting. Having therefore set his hand to it, he made the ornamentation of that ceiling with cornices, foliage, and friezes; and then, in some large medallions, he executed certain passing good scenes in fresco. But this animal, devoting his attention to his beasts and his follies, would not press the work forward; and therefore, after Raffaello da Urbino had been brought to Rome by the architect Bramante, and it had become known to the Pope how much he surpassed the others, his Holiness ordained that neither Perugino nor Giovanni Antonio should work any more in the above-named apartments; indeed, that everything should be thrown to the ground. But Raffaello, who was goodness and modesty in person, left standing all that had been done by Perugino, who had once been his master; and of Mattaccio's he destroyed nothing save the inner work and the figures of the medallions and scenes, leaving the friezes and the other ornaments, which are still round the figures that Raffaello painted there, which were Justice, Universal Knowledge, Poetry, and Theology.

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But Agostino, who was a gentleman, without paying any attention to the affront that Giovanni Antonio had received, commissioned him to paint in one of his principal apartments, which opens into the great hall in his Palace in the Trastevere, the story of Alexander going to sleep with Roxana. In that work, besides other figures, he painted a good number of Loves, some of whom are unfastening Alexander's cuirass, some are drawing off his boots, or rather, buskins, some are removing his helmet and dress, and putting them away; others scattering flowers over the bed, and others, again, doing other suchlike offices. Near the chimney-piece he painted a Vulcan forging arrows, which was held at that time to be a passing good and praiseworthy work; and if Mattaccio, who had beautiful gifts and was much assisted by Nature, had given his attention, after that reversal of fortune, to his studies, as any other man would have done, he would have made very great proficiencie. But he had his mind always set on his amusements, and he worked by caprice, caring for nothing so earnestly as for dressing in pompous fashion, wearing doublets of brocade, cloaks all adorned with cloth of gold, the richest caps, necklaces, and other suchlike fripperies only fit for clowns and charlatans; in which things Agostino, who liked the man's humour, found the greatest amusement in the world.

Julius II having then come to his death, and Leo X having been elected, who took pleasure in eccentric and light-headed figures of fun such as our painter was, Mattaccio felt the greatest possible joy, particularly because he had an ill-will against Julius, who had done him that affront, wherefore, having set to work in order to make himself known to the new Pontiff, he painted in a picture the Roman Lucrece, nude, who was stabbing herself with a dagger; and, since Fortune

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takes care of madmen and sometimes aids the thoughtless, he succeeded in executing a most beautiful female body, and a head that was breathing. Which work finished, at the instance of Agostino Chigi, who was on terms of strait service with the Pope, he presented it to his Holiness, by whom he was made a Chevalier and rewarded for so beautiful a picture. Whereupon Giovanni Antonio, believing that he had become a great man, began to be disinclined to work any more, save when he was driven by necessity. But, after Agostino had gone on some business to Siena, taking Giovanni Antonio with him, while staying there he was forced, being a Chevalier without an income, to set himself to painting; and so he painted an altar-piece containing a Christ taken down from the Cross, on the ground Our Lady in a swoon, and a man in armour who, having his back turned, shows his front reflected in a helmet that is on the ground, bright as a mirror. This work, which was held to be, as it is, one of the best that he ever executed, was placed in S. Francesco, on the right hand as one enters the church. Then in the cloister that is beside the above-named church, he painted in fresco Christ scourged at the Column, with many Jews around Pilate, and with a range of columns drawn in perspective after the manner of wing-walls; in which work Giovanni Antonio made a portrait of himself without any beard—that is, shaven—and with the hair long, as it was worn at that time.

Not long afterwards he executed some pictures for Signor Jacopo VI of Piombino, and, while living with him at that place, some other works on canvas. Wherefore by his means, besides many courtesies and presents that he received from him, Giovanni Antonio obtained from his island of Elba many little animals such as that island produces, all of which he took to Siena.



### S. SEBASTIAN

*(After the painting by Giovanni Antonio [Il Sodoma]. Florence: Uffizi, 1279)*

*Anderson*

[View larger image](#)

Arriving next in Florence, a monk of the Brandolini family, Abbot of the Monastery of Monte Oliveto, which is without the Porta a S. Friano, caused him to paint some pictures in fresco on the wall of the refectory; but since, like a careless fellow, he did them without study, they proved to be such that he was derided and mocked at for his follies by those who were expecting that he would do some extraordinary work. Now, while he was engaged on that work, having taken a Barbary horse with him to Florence, he set it to run in the race of S. Barnaba; and, as fortune would have it, the horse ran so much better than the others, that it won. Whereupon, the boys having, as is the custom, to call out the name or by-name of the owner of the horse that had won, after the running of the race and the fanfare of trumpets, Giovanni Antonio was asked what name they were to call out; and, after he had replied, "Sodoma, Sodoma," the boys called out that name. But some honest old men, having heard that filthy name, began to protest against it and to say, "What filthy thing is this, and what ribaldry, that so vile a name should be cried through our city?" Insomuch that, a clamour arising, poor Sodoma came within an ace of being stoned by the boys and the populace, with his horse and the ape that he had with him on the crupper. Having in the space of many years got together many prizes, won in the same way by his horses, he took the greatest pride in the world in them, and showed them to all who came into his house; and

very often he made a show of them at his windows.

But to return to his works: he painted for the Company of S. Bastiano in Camollia, beyond the Church of the Umiliati, on a banner of cloth which is carried in processions, in oils, a nude S. Sebastian, bound to a tree, who is standing on the right leg, with the left in foreshortening, and raises the head towards an Angel who is placing a crown upon it. This work is truly beautiful, and much to be praised. On the reverse side is Our Lady with the Child in her arms, and below her are S. Gismondo, S. Rocco, and some Flagellants kneeling on the ground. It is said that some merchants of Lucca offered to give three hundred crowns of gold to the men of that Company for that picture, but did not obtain it, because the others did not wish to deprive their Company and the city of so rare a painting. And, in truth, in certain works—whether it was study, or good fortune, or chance—Sodoma acquitted himself very well; but of such he did very few. In the Sacristy of the Friars of the Carmine is a picture by the hand of the same master, wherein is a very beautiful Nativity of Our Lady, with some nurses; and on the corner near the Piazza de' Tolomei he painted in fresco, for the Guild of Shoemakers, a Madonna with the Child in her arms, S. John, S. Francis, S. Rocco, and S. Crispino, the Patron Saint of the men of that Guild, who has a shoe in his hand. In the heads of these figures, and in all the rest, Giovanni Antonio acquitted himself very well.

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In the Company of S. Bernardino of Siena, beside the Church of S. Francesco, he executed some scenes in fresco in competition with Girolamo del Pacchia, a Sienese painter, and Domenico Beccafumi—namely, the Presentation of Our Lady in the Temple, when she goes to visit S. Elizabeth, her Assumption, and when she is crowned in Heaven. In the angles of the same Company he painted a Saint in episcopal robes, S. Louis, and S. Anthony of Padua; but the best figure of all is a S. Francis, who, standing on his feet and raising his head, is gazing at a little Angel, who appears to be in the act of speaking to him; the head of which S. Francis is truly marvellous. In the Palazzo de' Signori at Siena, likewise, in a hall, he painted some little tabernacles full of columns and little children, with other ornaments; and within these tabernacles are various figures. In one is S. Vittorio armed in the ancient fashion, with the sword in his hand; near him, in the same manner, is S. Ansano, who is baptizing certain persons; in another is S. Benedict; and all are very beautiful. In the lower part of that Palace, where salt is sold, he painted a Christ who is returning to life, with some soldiers about the Sepulchre, and two little Angels, held to be passing beautiful in the heads. Farther on, over a door, is a Madonna with the Child in her arms, painted by him in fresco, and two Saints.



**S. ANSANO**

**(After the fresco by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi [Il Sodoma]. Siena: Palazzo Pubblico)  
Alinari**

[View larger image](#)

In S. Spirito he painted the Chapel of S. Jacopo, which he did at the commission of the men of the Spanish colony, who have their place of burial there; depicting there an image of the Madonna after the ancient manner, with S. Nicholas of Tolentino on the right hand, and, on the left, the Archangel S. Michael, who is slaying Lucifer. Above these, in a lunette, he painted Our Lady placing the sacerdotal habit upon a Saint, with some Angels around. Over all these figures, which are in oils on panel, there is painted in fresco, in the semicircle of the vaulting, a S. James in

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armour on a galloping horse, who has grasped his sword with a fiery gesture, and below him are many Turks, dead and wounded. Below all this, on the sides of the altar, are painted in fresco S. Anthony the Abbot and a nude S. Sebastian at the Column, which are held to be passing good works.



**S. FRANCIS**

**(After the fresco by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi [Il Sodoma]. Siena: S. Bernardino, Oratory)  
Alinari**

[View larger image](#)

In the Duomo of the same city, on the right hand as one enters the church, there is upon an altar a picture in oils by his hand, in which there are Our Lady with the Child on her knee, S. Joseph on one side, and S. Calixtus on the other; which work is likewise held to be very beautiful, because it is evident that in colouring it Sodoma showed much more diligence than he used to devote to his works. He also painted for the Company of the Trinity a bier for carrying the dead to burial, which was very beautiful; and he executed another for the Company of Death, which is held to be the most beautiful in Siena; and I believe that the latter is the finest that there is to be seen, for, besides that it is indeed much to be extolled, it is very seldom that such works are executed at much cost or with much diligence. In the Church of S. Domenico, in the Chapel of S. Caterina da Siena, where there is in a tabernacle the head of that Saint, enclosed in one of silver, Giovanni Antonio painted two scenes, which are one on either side of that tabernacle. In one, on the right hand, is that Saint when, having received the Stigmata from Jesus Christ, who is in the air, she lies half-dead in the arms of two of her sisters, who are supporting her; of which work Baldassarre Peruzzi, the painter of Siena, after considering it, said that he had never seen anyone represent better the expression of persons fainting and half-dead, or with more similitude to the reality, than Giovanni Antonio had contrived to do. And in truth it is so, as may be seen, apart from the work itself, from the design by Sodoma's own hand which I have in my book of drawings. On the left hand, in the other picture, is the scene when the Angel of God carries to the same Saint the most Holy Communion, and she, raising her head to Heaven, sees Jesus Christ and Mary the Virgin, while two of her sisters, her companions, stand behind her. In another scene, which is on the wall on the right hand, is painted the story of a criminal, who, going to be beheaded, would not be converted or commend himself to God, despairing of His mercy; when, the above-named Saint praying for him on her knees, her prayers were so acceptable to the goodness of God, that, when the felon's head was cut off, his soul was seen ascending to Heaven; such power with the mercy of God have the prayers of those saintly persons who are in His grace. In this scene is a very great number of figures, as to which no one should marvel if they are not of the highest perfection, for the reason that I have heard as a fact that Giovanni Antonio had sunk to such a pitch in his negligence and slothfulness, that he would make neither designs nor cartoons when he had any work of that kind to execute, but would attack the work by designing it with the brush directly on the plaster, which was a strange thing; in which method it is evident that this scene was executed by him. The same master also painted the arch in front of that chapel, making therein a God the Father. The other scenes in that chapel were not finished by him, partly from his own fault, he not choosing to work save by caprice, and

partly because he had not been paid by him who was having the chapel painted. Below this is a God the Father, who has beneath Him a Virgin in the ancient manner, on panel, with S. Dominic, S. Gismondo, S. Sebastian, and S. Catharine.



### THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

*(After the painting by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi [Il Sodoma]. Siena: S. Agostino)  
Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

For S. Agostino, in an altar-piece that is on the right hand at the entrance into the church, he painted the Adoration of the Magi, which was held to be, and is, a good work, for the reason that, besides the Madonna, which is much extolled, the first of the three Magi, and certain horses, there is a head of a shepherd between two trees which has all the appearance of life. Over a gate of the city, called the Porta di S. Viene, he painted in fresco, in a large tabernacle, the Nativity of Jesus Christ, with some Angels in the air; and on the arch of that gate a child in foreshortening, very beautiful and in strong relief, which is intended to signify that the Word has been made Flesh. In this work Sodoma made a portrait of himself, with a beard, being now old, and with a brush in his hand, which is pointing to a scroll that says "Feci."

He painted likewise in fresco the Chapel of the Commune at the foot of the Palace, in the Piazza, representing there Our Lady with the Child in her arms, upheld by some little Angels, S. Ansano, S. Vittorio, S. Augustine, and S. James; and above this, in a triangular lunette, he painted a God the Father with some Angels about Him. From this work it is evident that when he executed it he was beginning, as it were, to have no more love for art, having lost that certain quality of excellence that he used to have in his better days, by means of which he gave a certain air of beauty to his heads, which made them graceful and lovely. And this is manifestly true, for some works that he executed long before this one have quite another grace and another manner, as may be seen above the Postierla, from a wall in fresco over the door of the Captain Lorenzo Mariscotti, where there is a Dead Christ in the lap of His Mother, who has a marvellous divinity and grace. In like manner, a picture in oils of Our Lady, which he painted for Messer Enea Savini della Costerella, is much extolled, and also a canvas that he executed for Assuero Rettori of S. Martino, in which is the Roman Lucrece stabbing herself, while she is held by her father and her husband, all painted with much beauty of attitude and marvellous grace in the heads.

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Finally, perceiving that the devotion of the people of Siena was all turned to the talents and excellent works of Domenico Beccafumi, and possessing neither house nor revenues in Siena, and having by that time consumed almost all his property and become old and poor, Giovanni Antonio departed from Siena almost in despair and went off to Volterra. And there, as his good fortune would have it, chancing upon Messer Lorenzo di Galeotto de' Medici, a rich and honoured

nobleman, he proceeded to live under his protection, with the intention of staying there a long time. And so, dwelling in the house of that nobleman, he painted for him on a canvas the Chariot of the Sun, which, having been badly guided by Phaëthon, is falling into the Po; but it is easy to see that he did that work to pass the time, and hurried through it by rule of thumb, without giving any thought to it, so entirely commonplace is it and so ill-considered. Then, having grown weary of living at Volterra and in the house of that nobleman, as one who was accustomed to being free, he departed and went off to Pisa, where, at the instance of Battista del Cervelliera, he executed two pictures for Messer Bastiano della Seta, the Warden of Works of the Duomo, which were placed in the recess behind the high-altar of that Duomo, beside those of Sogliani and Beccafumi. In one is the Dead Christ with Our Lady and the other Maries, and in the other Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac; but since these pictures did not succeed very well, the Warden, who had intended to make him paint some altar-pieces for the church, dismissed him, knowing that men who do not study, once they have lost in old age the quality of excellence that they had in their youth from nature, are left with a kind of facility of manner that is generally little to be praised. At that same time Giovanni Antonio finished an altar-piece that he had previously begun in oils for S. Maria della Spina, painting in it Our Lady with the Child in her arms, with S. Mary Magdalene and S. Catharine kneeling before her, and S. John, S. Sebastian, and S. Joseph standing at the sides; in all which figures he acquitted himself much better than in the two pictures for the Duomo.

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Then, having nothing more to do at Pisa, he made his way to Lucca, where, at S. Ponziano, a seat of the Monks of Monte Oliveto, an Abbot of his acquaintance caused him to paint a Madonna on the ascent of a staircase that leads to the dormitory. That work finished, he returned weary, old, and poor to Siena, where he did not live much longer; for he fell ill, through not having anyone to look after him or any means of sustenance, and went off to the Great Hospital, and there in a few weeks he finished the course of his life.



#### THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

*(After the painting by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi [Il Sodoma]. Pisa: Duomo)*

*Alinari*

[View larger image](#)

Giovanni Antonio, when young and in good repute, took for his wife in Siena a girl born of a very good family, and had by her in the first year a daughter. But after that, having grown weary of her, because he was a beast, he would never see her more; and she, therefore, withdrawing by herself, lived always on her own earnings and on the interest of her dowry, bearing with great and endless patience the beastliness and the follies of that husband of hers, who was truly worthy of the name of Mattaccio which, as has been related, the Monks of Monte Oliveto gave him.

Riccio of Siena, the disciple of Giovanni Antonio, a passing able and well-practised painter, having taken as his wife his master's daughter, who had been very well and decently brought up by her mother, became the heir to all the possessions connected with art of his wife's father. This

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Riccio, I say, has executed many beautiful and praiseworthy works at Siena and elsewhere, and has decorated with stucco and pictures in fresco a chapel in the Duomo of the above-named city, on the left hand as one enters the church; and he now lives at Lucca, where he has done, as he still continues to do, many beautiful works worthy to be extolled.

A pupil of Giovanni Antonio, likewise, was a young man who was called Giomo del Sodoma; but, since he died young, and was not able to give more than a small proof of his genius and knowledge, there is no need to say more about him.

Sodoma lived seventy-five years, and died in the year 1554.

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## FOOTNOTES

- [1] Illustrated with *Two Angels*, by Madonna Properzia de' Rossi, vol. v., p. 126.
- [2] Teasel.
- [3] See note on p. 132, Vol. II.
- [4] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [5] Diamond.
- [6] Trunk or branch.
- [7] Palmezzani.
- [8] Rondinello.
- [9] Giovan Battista.
- [10] Any kind of stone that is easily split.
- [11] Paolo Caliari or Veronese.
- [12] Giolfino.
- [13] Madcap or buffoon.

Transcriber's note: Obvious printer's errors have been  
corrected. Hyphenation and accentuation have been  
standardised, all other inconsistencies are as in the original.  
The author's spelling has been maintained.

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