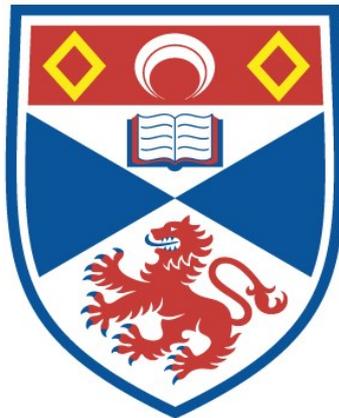


**MEDICAL THEORY AND MEDICI SYMBOLISM  
IN GIORGIO VASARI'S *VITE DE' PIÙ ECCELLENTI PITTORI,  
SCULTORI ED ARCHITETTORI***

**Sara E. Nestor**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews**



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**UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS**

**MEDICAL THEORY AND MEDICI SYMBOLISM  
IN GIORGIO VASARI'S *VITE DE'PIÙ ECCELLENTI PITTORI,  
SCULTORI ED ARCHITETTORI***

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE HUMANITIES  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY**

**BY SARA E. NESTOR**

**4 JUNE, 2001**



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## ABBREVIATIONS

- A. S. F.      Archivio di stato, Florence.
- B. N. C. F.    Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence.
- Le vite*      Vasari, G. *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*.  
Ed. G. Milanesi. Florence, 1868.
- The Lives*    Vasari, G. *Lives of the painters, sculptors and architects*. Trans. G.  
duc C. de Vere. London, reprint 1996.

## ABSTRACT

When Giorgio Vasari wrote the *Vite de'più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, the intended audience of his text not only included the artists of his own time, but also involved his Medici patrons. Indeed, the book was dedicated to Cosimo I de' Medici. The *Vite* were thus intended as a guide for artists and as a means of paying homage to Vasari's patron.

The quest for artistic perfection, through knowledge, was united with courtly principles and iconography, resulting in the raising of the status of the arts above the level of the mechanical. This was most resolutely achieved through the analysis of medicine, and in particular, the theory of the four humours, which not only governed medical practice, but also were of astrological and philosophical significance. While Vasari's vocabulary drew upon the symbolism of the Medici, who were born under the planet of Saturn, which also governed the melancholy humour, his discussion of the diseases suffered by artists was based upon the sciences of Hippocrates, Aristotle, Galen and Avicenna and were mainly caused by melancholy.

Vasari's text also provided the melancholic with his cure, most notably at the Company of the Cazzuola. Here, the artists and their Medici patrons could find repose and amusement. Entertainments were based upon those of the court and included theatrical performances and banqueting.

However, medical knowledge was also of practical significance to the painter and the sculptor. It provided a guide to the internal workings of man and thus, the external appearance of disease in the human body. The alteration in human appearance, as a symptom of disease was fully noted by Vasari in his physiognomic descriptions of the artists' appearances caused by temperament, character and disease and finally, found inclusion in the teachings of the Accademia del Disegno of which Giorgio Vasari had been a founding member.

## INTRODUCTION

When Giorgio Vasari began his compendium of artists' biographies, his plan was quite clear. He did not wish:

to make a list of the craftsmen, and an inventory, so to speak, of their works, nor did I ever judge it a worthy end for these my labours - I will not call them beautiful, but certainly long and fatiguing - to discover their numbers, their names, and their countries, and to tell in what cities, and in what places exactly in those cities, their pictures, or sculptures, or buildings were now to be found; for this I could have done with a simple table, without interposing my own judgment in any part.<sup>1</sup>

Instead, the author had intended to create a history of the arts, using the conventions of writing established by other fifteenth and sixteenth century writers.<sup>2</sup> In the formation of his *Vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, first published in 1550, but appearing in a more refined edition in 1568, Vasari had many predecessors and examples to draw upon and follow. He chose a biographical form of text to present the history of the arts, following such models as Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (ca. 1260), detailing the lives of

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<sup>1</sup> "Fare una nota degli artefici, ed uno inventario, dirò così, dell'opere loro; nè giudicai mai degno fine di queste mie non so come belle, certo lunghe e fastidiose fatiche, ritrovare il numero ed i nomi e le patrie loro, ed insegnare in che città e in che luogo appunto di esse so trovassino al presente le loro pitture o sculture o fabbriche; chè questo io lo avrei potuto fare con una semplice tavola, senza interporre in parte alcuna il giudizio mio" (G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori ed architettori*, ed. G. Milanesi (Florence, 1868), 2: 93; idem, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. G. du C. de Vere (London, 1996; first published 1912), 1: 245). It is Vasari's accuracy that became the focus of attention in the formalist studies presented by Wolfgang Kallab and Julius von Schlosser, at the beginning of the twentieth century, and also entered discussion in later studies by Rud, Boase, and Wohl; see W. Kallab, *Vasaristudien*, ed. J. von Schlosser (Vienna and Leipzig, 1908); J. von Schlosser, *Die Kunstliteratur* (Vienna, 1924); E. Rud, *Vasari's Life and Lives: the First Art Historian* (Princeton, 1963); T. S. R. Boase, *Giorgio Vasari: the Man and the Book*, Bollingen Series (Princeton, 1979); and H. Wohl, "The eye of Vasari," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 30 (1986): 537-568.

<sup>2</sup> Vasari's historical concept of art is examined by Zygmunt Wazbinski in "L'Idée de l'histoire dans la première et la seconde édition des *Vies* de Vasari," in *Il Vasari storiografo e artista: atti del congresso internazionale nel IV centenario della morte* (Florence, 1976), 1-25; and David Cast in "Reading Vasari again: history, philosophy," *Word and Image* 9, no. 1 (January-March, 1993): 29-38.

famous saints, Filippo Villani's *De origine civitatis Florentiae et eiusdem famosis civibus*, written between 1381 and 1382 and Vespasiano da Bisticci's *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo quindicesimo*.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Vasari was familiar with Platina's *Vitae pontificum* (ca. 1485), noting that its author had made mention of Gentile da Fabriano in his Life of Pope Martin V.<sup>4</sup> In the second preface to the *Vite*, Vasari had acknowledged his debt to such writers, commenting that they had produced the "true soul of history" by:

investigating the methods, the means, and the ways that men of mark have used in the management of their enterprises; and seeing that they have striven to touch on their errors, and at the same time on their fine achievements and on the expedients and resolutions sometimes wisely adopted in their government of affairs, and on everything, in short, that these men have effected therein, sagaciously or negligently, or with prudence, or piety, or magnanimity.<sup>5</sup>

Vasari attempts the same, and as Patricia Rubin noted, it is within the light of Renaissance ideals that his text should be viewed.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Vespasiano da Bisticci's *Vite* was first printed from a collection of manuscript biographies called the *Spicilegium Romanum* discovered by Cardinal Angelo Mai in the Vatican Library, Rome, 1839. Various sources for the *Vite* have been suggested; see Rud, 157; R. Krautheimer, "The Beginnings of art historical writing in Italy," in *Studies in Early Christian Medieval and Renaissance Art* (London and New York, 1969), 257-273; M. Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators* (Oxford, 1971), 51-120; G. Becatti, "Plinio e Vasari," in *Studi di storia dell'arte in onore di Valerio Mariani* (Naples, 1972), 173-182; J. Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* (London, 1990), 215; G. Tanturli, "Le biografie d'artisti prima del Vasari," in *Il Vasari storiografo e artista: atti del congresso internazionale nel IV centenario della morte* (Florence, 1976), 275-298; and P. Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History* (New Haven and London, 1995), 155-159.

<sup>4</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 3: 6; and 6: 551.

<sup>5</sup> "investigando i modi ed i mezzi e le vie che hanno usate i valenti uomini nel maneggiare l'impresa; e s'è ingegnati di toccare gli errori, ed appresso i bei colpi e ripari e partiti prudentemente qualche volta presi ne' governi delle faccende: e tutto quello, insomma, che sagacemente o trascuratamente, con prudenza o con pietà o con magnanimità, hanno in esse operato" (Ibid., 2: 93-94).

<sup>6</sup> Rubin, 21-22.

Giorgio Vasari tailored his text to his intended audience of the *Vite*, which not only included the artists of his own time, but also involved his Medici patrons.<sup>7</sup> The quest for artistic perfection, through knowledge, was combined with courtly principles and iconography, raising the status of the arts above the level of the mechanical and at the same time paying homage to his patrons. Thus, it is the intention of this thesis to present several plausible arguments as to how Vasari achieved his aims. Vasari's analysis of medicine and, in particular, the theory of the four humours, which not only governed medical practice, but also were of astrological and philosophical significance, form the core of such discussion.

Vasari's authority regarding this information came from one of three sources. University lectures were generally open to the public and so Vasari could have gained easy access to the information he needed through attendance at these seminars. For example, at the University of Padua, medical theory and practice were taught through a three-year cycle of lectures and the three basic texts studied were the first *fen* of the *Canon* of Avicenna, the *Aphorisms* and *Prognostics* of Hippocrates, and the *Ars medica* of Galen.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In his article, "Reading Vasari again," David Cast stated that Vasari's text was intended for reading by artists; see page 29. However, Melissa Bullard recognised that Vasari also wrote the text for the Medici; see *Lorenzo il Magnifico: Image and Anxiety, Politics and Finance* (Florence, 1994), 109. Patricia Rubin noted the duality of his audience. The *Vite* was written for both artist and patron alike; see page 403.

<sup>8</sup> J. J. Bylebyl, "The School of Padua: humanistic medicine in the sixteenth century," in *Health, medicine and mortality in the sixteenth century*, ed. C. Webster (Cambridge, 1979), 338-339. There is no known date for any of these works. Further discussion of these scholars writings is made in chapter 2.

Moreover, painters were associated with doctors and apothecaries through the guild of the *medici e speciali*, and so, through association with practitioners of medicine, Vasari could have gleaned the information needed for writing the *Vite*.<sup>9</sup> Once again, he would have been able to attend lectures regarding medicine, given by the guild.<sup>10</sup> However, the in-depth knowledge of humoral theory displayed in Vasari's text would indicate that his source was humanistic, highly learned, and involved on a much more personal level with the writing of the *Vite*.

Perhaps the most important figure to influence Vasari's writings on medicine was Paolo Giovio.<sup>11</sup> Not only had he written a *Vite* of famous men, but he was a trained physician and familiar with the symbolism of the Medici. Indeed, Giovio had been responsible for Jacopo Pontormo's decorative scheme at the Medici villa of Poggio a Caiano.<sup>12</sup> Vasari, himself, had also used information supplied by Giovio in his painting of the *Coronation of Charles V by Clement VII*, completed between 1556 and 1561 and located in the Sala di Clemente VII,

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<sup>9</sup> Information regarding the artist members of the guild of the *medici e speciali* can be found in R. V. Wilson's "Collaborations in art and medicine, 1491-1543: the development of anatomical studies in Italian medical treatises" (Ph. D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1988), 34-36.

<sup>10</sup> The guild held public anatomy dissections which were open to artist members. Therefore, it is also likely that artists were also able to attend lectures regarding the cure and cause of disease; see *ibid.*, 38-40.

<sup>11</sup> The influence of Vincenzo Borghini, particularly upon the second edition of the *Vite* has long been recognised by such authors as Giovanni Becatti, 173; Patricia Rubin, 151; and Robert Williams, "Notes by Vincenzo Borghini on works of art in San Gimignano and Volterra: a source for Vasari's *Lives*," *Burlington Magazine* 127 (January, 1985): 17-21. However, Patricia Rubin also noted that Vasari probably used Paolo Giovio's extensive library when compiling the *Vite*; see page 151. Peter Ward-Jackson recognised that Giovio had given significant encouragement to Vasari's writing of the *Vite*, a point which Vasari himself acknowledged; see P. Ward-Jackson, "Vasari the Biographer," *Apollo* 77 (1963): 373.

<sup>12</sup> F. Hartt, *History of Italian Renaissance Art*, 4th ed. (New York, 1994), 553.

Palazzo della Signoria, Florence. In his *Zibaldone*, Vasari had summarised Giovio's account of the coronation given in the *Historiarum sui temporis*.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the *Vite*, Vasari strove to explain the lives of the artists in as much detail as possible. This included not only the descriptions of the works of his subjects, but also details of how the artists actually conducted and lived their lives.<sup>14</sup> Disease, diet and causes of death were all included and Giovio was capable of giving such vital descriptions of disease. Vasari and Giovio were to meet at the Roman home of Cardinal Farnese, although neither were natives of the city, and it was he who most actively encouraged Vasari's endeavour. Giovio had received an education in medicine and philosophy from the schools of Padua and Pavia, and then made his introduction to Rome. His first patron was the Genoese Cardinal Bandinello Sauli, who would later be disgraced as an ally in the plottings of Alfonso Petrucci against Pope Leo X during April 1517. It is likely that through the patronage of Sauli, Giovio was able to enter the University of Rome as lecturer in moral philosophy during 1514.<sup>15</sup> The following year he was appointed as reader in natural philosophy.<sup>16</sup> In his role as humanist and physician to the Cardinal, however, Giovio was well placed to be privy to the goings on of the Roman papal court and thus found more avenues for personal

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<sup>13</sup> Boase, 16. Giovio's *Historiarum* was first published in Florence, 1550, by the Torrentino press.

<sup>14</sup> Svetlana Alpers has provided a thorough account of the ekphrastic method with which Vasari described the works painted by the artists of the *Vite*; see "Ekphrasis and aesthetic attitudes in Vasari's *Lives*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 23 (1960): 190-215.

<sup>15</sup> T. C. P. Zimmerman, *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth Century Italy* (Princeton, 1995), 14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

advancement as well as valuable information for his writings there than at the University of Rome. In 1517 this became even more pronounced under the patronage of his second benefactor, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, who was later to become Pope Clement VII.<sup>17</sup> Giovio was to act as physician and humanist to the Pope for the next decade and it was during this time that he completed his two major written works concerned with the maintenance of health.<sup>18</sup> *De romanis piscibus* was published in Rome, 1524 and its content focused upon the medical and nutritional properties of approximately forty different types of fish available in Rome. Furthermore, Giovio's observations were reinforced by his listing of the findings of Aristotle, Pliny, Hippocrates and Galen, as well as the Arab physician Avicenna, and the fifteenth-century doctor Platina. For example, in Capitolo 13 of the text, regarding the properties of sea bream, Giovio comments that it was the opinion of Avicenna that this variety of fish did not have an abundance of slow and viscous humours and was therefore, the cause of fevers. Furthermore, all fish were by nature cold and wet and in the opinion of both Avicenna and Hippocrates caused illnesses such as fevers.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, according to Giovio, Aristotle had stated that in the month of December eating mullet was dangerous. Galen also commented that this fish was bad for the stomach and digestion.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>19</sup> "percioche, oltre quel, che intese Avicenna di tutti i Sassatili, i Fragolini non hanno alcuna abondanza di humore lento, & viscoso; & per questa ragione si concedono à ' febricitanti; percioche, per essere tutto il genere de' pesci di natura fredda, & humida, si debono dar à tali ammalati anco per opinio ne d'Ippocrate i cibi freddi, & humidi" (P. Giovio, *Libro di Mons. Paolo Giovio de' pesci Romani*, trans. C. Zancaruolo (Venice, 1560), Capitolo 13).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Capitolo 10.

Giovio was also to publish a text entitled *De optima victus ratione*. This 1527 publication was specifically written for Felice Trofino, Clement VII's datary, in the hopes of improving the gentleman's health. It formed a sort of *regimen sanitatis* and promoted diet, exercise and relaxation as the foundations of good health.<sup>21</sup> The groundwork for such a text had, of course, been already made by the likes of Galen and Hippocrates and by later physicians such as Avicenna. However, both this work and that of *De romanis piscibus* demonstrate that Giovio was in a sound position to help Giorgio Vasari in his description of the medical complaints of his artists.

Giovio was also well-versed in the writing of biographies. While not an artist himself, he had written about great artists and was a respected humanist, familiar with writing the histories of famous men. Indeed, it was most probably Giovio who had introduced Vasari to classical examples of biographical works, such as Plutarch's *Lives* and Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of the Philosophers*.<sup>22</sup> He was one of the most prolific biographers of the day, starting during the 1520s, when he had written short treatises concerning the lives of the artists Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael. Later works included *Le vite dei dodici Visconti signori di Milano*, first published in Latin during 1544.<sup>23</sup> The *Elogii* followed, the first part of which was published in 1546, and a biography of Leo X, was

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<sup>21</sup> Zimmerman, *Paolo Giovio*, 16; idem, "Renaissance Symposia," in *Essays Presented to Myron P. Gilmore*, ed. S. Bertelli and G. Ramakus (Florence, 1978), 1: 369.

<sup>22</sup> Rubin, 156.

<sup>23</sup> P. Giovio, *Le vite dei dodici Visconti signori di Milano*, ed. R. Segàla (Milan, 1945), 5.

published in Latin during 1548. The publication of an Italian translation by Lodovico Domenichi followed soon after in 1549.<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, Vasari's mode of description can easily be understood when examined in the context of Giovio's influence. For Vasari, Giovio provided the ideal guide to the medical, astrological and philosophical aspects of the theory of the four humours, which, were major components in Vasari's writing of the *Vite*. Through the patronage of Clement VII, Giovio was well acquainted with the symbolism of the Medici family, its Saturnian ancestry, and its relation to the melancholy humour. In turn, these facets became a means by which Vasari could pay homage to his patrons and elevate the position of the artist in society.

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<sup>24</sup> Rubin, 162-163.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE MEDICINAL MEDICI AND GIORGIO VASARI'S *LE VITE DE'PIÙ ECCELLENTI PITTORI, SCULTORI ED ARCHITETTORI*

The symbolism associated with the Medici family was a dominant aspect of artistic and intellectual activity during the Florentine Renaissance and became a prominent tool in the family's assertion of authority and right to rule over Florence. Each generation of the Medici developed or extended an iconography of leadership. In no generation was the cumulative aspect of this symbolism more acutely asserted than that of Cosimo I's (1519-1574). Consequently, Cosimo's personal history, as well as his family's relationship with Florence, became dictating factors in the formulation of his Medici imagery, and became a prominent aspect of Giorgio Vasari's *Le vite de'più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*.<sup>25</sup>

In 1550, Vasari dedicated his first edition of the *Vite* to Cosimo I and to Pope Julius III.<sup>26</sup> According to Vasari the idea for the book had been conceived at a dinner party given by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, at which the leading literary

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<sup>25</sup> The symbolism associated with the Medici family has been most comprehensively discussed by P. W. Richelson, "Studies in the Personal Imagery of Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence" (Ph. D. diss., Princeton University, Nov. 1973), published by Garland Publishing, Inc. (New York and London, 1978); and J. Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art* (Princeton, 1984). Moreover, in Nicolai Rubinstein's article "The formation of the posthumous image of Lorenzo de' Medici," in *Oxford, China and Italy: Writings in Honour of Sir Harold Acton on his Eightieth Birthday*, eds. E. Chaney and N. Ritchie (London, 1984), 94-106, the author comments upon the continued use of the image and imagery of Lorenzo il Magnifico by successive generations of the Medici family.

<sup>26</sup> Vasari was careful to ensure continued patronage from both the Medici and the Papal court. Cardinal Giovanni Maria del Monte was a former patron of Vasari and on 8 February, 1550 was elected Pope Julius III. The dedication to him was one of the last entries to be printed. See Rubin, 110.

figures of Rome were gathered. One of these scholars, Paolo Giovio, had originally intended to write such a text with the assistance of Vasari, but after seeing Vasari's own literary skills turned the project over to him completely.<sup>27</sup> The *Vite* was the result of ten years of research often conducted while completing commissions for his patrons.<sup>28</sup> For example, in December 1541 Vasari travelled to Venice to produce the set for Pietro Aretino's play, *La Talanta*. His journey took him through the cities of Modena and Parma where he studied the works of Correggio. Giulio Romano's paintings received his attention in Mantua, and in Verona he studied the city's antiquities.<sup>29</sup> Paolo Giovio maintained close ties with the writing of the *Vite*, and in a letter of 27 November, 1546 to Vasari, offered to act as his editor.<sup>30</sup> He continued to encourage Vasari in a letter of April 1547 and congratulated him on the completion of the book in July of that year.<sup>31</sup> In December 1547 Giovio finally received the *Vite* and in January 1548 suggested the title and dedication to Cosimo I.<sup>32</sup> Vincenzo Borghini compiled the index during January 1550 and the text was finally printed in March 1550 by the ducal printer, the Torrentino press.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 681.

<sup>28</sup> G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. R. Bettarini and P. Barocchi (Florence, 1966-1987), 6: 409.

<sup>29</sup> Rubin, 129.

<sup>30</sup> K. Frey, *Der literarische Nachlass Giorgio Vasaris* (Munich, 1923-1940), 1, 175; Rubin, 107, 178.

<sup>31</sup> Frey, 1, 196-197; idem, 1, 198; and Rubin, 107, 108.

<sup>32</sup> Frey, 1, 209; idem, 1, 215; and Rubin, 109-110.

<sup>33</sup> Frey, 1, 254; idem, 1, 280; Rubin, 111, 114; see also Boase, 53.

The 1568 edition of the *Vite* was, in several aspects, different to the first edition. It was three times longer and included not only artists who had died between 1550 and 1567, but also portraits of Vasari's subjects.<sup>34</sup> The influence of a new editor, Vincenzo Borghini was also evident. The anecdotal descriptions of the 1550 edition were now accompanied by historical accuracy and factual information regarding techniques.<sup>35</sup> In a letter dated 24 February, 1564, Borghini advises Vasari of Cennino Cennini's description of oil painting.<sup>36</sup> The second edition of the *Vite* was also different in that it more overtly asserted Medici patronage of the arts.<sup>37</sup> This can perhaps be explained by the fact that Vasari's main commissions had been given by the Medici family during the late 1550s, and it was due to Cosimo I that the Accademia del Disegno had been founded in January 1563.<sup>38</sup>

Vasari's ties to the Medici family were already well-rooted. By the age of thirteen he had entered Medicean circles, introduced through the patronage of his supposed relative Cardinal Silvio Passerini, bishop of Cortona and papal legate to the Medicean Pope Clement VII (1478-1534). Vasari related in the *Vite* that while the Cardinal was passing through Arezzo he heard him recite a passage from Virgil's *Aeneid* and was prompted to invite Antonio Vasari to bring his son,

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<sup>34</sup> Rubin, 187.

<sup>35</sup> The importance of accuracy was stressed by Borghini in a letter dated 14 February, 1564. See Frey, 2, 102; and Rubin, 192-193. The accuracy of Vasari's descriptions is examined by Wohl, 537-568. His historical writing and the influence of Vincenzo Borghini are the subjects of Wazbinski's article "L'idée de l'histoire dans la première et la seconde édition des *Vies* de Vasari," 1-25. Furthermore, Borghini supplied Vasari with notes on paintings which he himself had seen. See Williams, 17-21.

<sup>36</sup> Frey, 2, 26; and Rubin, 219.

<sup>37</sup> Rubin, 201.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

Giorgio, to Florence where the Cardinal could nurture the young boy's intelligence and talent. Cardinal Passerini was governor of Florence, and, perhaps more importantly for the aspiring Vasari, guardian of Alessandro (1511-1537) and Ippolito de' Medici (1509-1535).<sup>39</sup> Fortunately for Vasari, both boys were of the same age as himself, and by order of Cardinal Passerini he spent two hours of study every day with the two Medici charges under the tutelage of Piero Valeriano. This early contact with the Medici was fundamentally important to Giorgio Vasari's development as a courtier and as an artist trained in the imagery and mythology of the Florentine ruling family.<sup>40</sup>

The connection with the Medici family continued throughout the artist's life, at first through the patronage of Ippolito, who introduced him to the Roman papal court of Clement VII, and later, upon Vasari's return to Florence, through service to Alessandro de' Medici, then Duke of Florence.<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, however, he entered the service of Cosimo de' Medici under whom the family imagery cultivated by his ancestors Cosimo Pater Patriae (1389-1464), Lorenzo il Magnifico (1449-1492) and Pope Leo X (1475-1521) was not only adopted and renewed, but extended and increased as a means of legitimising and affirming his own authority.<sup>42</sup> Cosimo had been born to Maria Salviati, the daughter of Giacomo Salviati who had married Leo X's sister, Lucrezia, and Giovanni delle

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<sup>39</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 6-7; and Rubin, 70.

<sup>40</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 7; Rubin, 72-73.

<sup>41</sup> Rubin, 98-99. Ottaviano de' Medici was also a patron of Vasari. See Rubin, 11.

<sup>42</sup> In succeeding generations, Pope Pius IV (r. 1559-1565) was to adopt aspects of the imagery associated with the Florentine Medici.

Bande Nere, a descendant of Cosimo Pater Patriae's brother, Lorenzo (1394-1440). Thus, the birth of Cosimo united both lines of descent from Giovanni di Bicci (1360-1429).<sup>43</sup> However, politically Cosimo was an unknown quantity in Florence. He had grown up with his mother at her villa at Trebbio and had rarely been seen in Florentine society. In addition to this, Cosimo was only a youth of eighteen when, on 9 January, 1537, he became *capo* of the Florentine Republic.<sup>44</sup>

His political position was not helped by the conduct of his Medici predecessors. The family had prospered, both financially and politically, throughout the lifetimes of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici and his son, Cosimo.<sup>45</sup> Lorenzo il Magnifico was also politically astute but his son Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici (1471-1503), had inherited none of his father's diplomacy skills and was generally disliked by the Florentines.<sup>46</sup> This, coupled with the political climate in which Piero found himself, ultimately led to the Medici's expulsion from

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<sup>43</sup> E. Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes* (Chicago and London, 1973), 22-23.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 18; and J. R. Hale, *Florence and the Medici* (London, 1977), 127.

<sup>45</sup> Giovanni di Bicci had not been born a rich man but had become a successful merchant and banker. He accepted political office as a means of advancing his business interests. The Medici bank's success was also due to the influence of Cosimo, his son. He was a shrewd businessman and politician, and far more ambitious than his father. Although he was banished from the city for a period of ten years in September 1433, his continued influence, although absent, resulted in the overthrow of Albizzi control of the Florentine Republic in September 1434. The Medici family thus, became dominant in Florence. See C. Hibbert, *The Rise and Fall of the House of the Medici*, (London, 1979), 12-60 for a full analysis of this period in Medici history; and Hale, 12-42.

<sup>46</sup> Lorenzo il Magnifico is well known for his diplomatic skills. By the age of fifteen he had conducted diplomatic missions to Pisa to meet Federigo, the second son of the King Ferrante of Naples; had travelled to Milan to attend the marriage of Ippolita Sforza and King Ferrante's eldest son; had travelled to Venice to meet the Doge, and in 1466 had gone to Rome to congratulate the new Pope, Paul II. In 1480, he had also negotiated a peace treaty with the King of Naples securing peace for the Florentine Republic. See Hibbert, 103, 154-156; and Hale, 49, 68. For the Florentine's attitude towards Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici, see Hibbert, 177; and Hale, 76-78.

Florence. Girolamo Savonarola, the Dominican monk, had arrived in the city during 1481 and settled permanently at the monastery of San Marco in 1489.<sup>47</sup> By 1491 he had gained a huge following and used his sermons to condemn the tyranny of the Medici regime.<sup>48</sup> Charles VIII of France was also threatening invasion and on 17 November, 1494 entered Florence.<sup>49</sup> Piero di Lorenzo fled and the Medici lived in exile for eighteen years.

The return of the Medici on 1 September, 1512 was at first greeted with jubilation.<sup>50</sup> Piero di Lorenzo's brother, Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici brought back the pageantry and spectacle of his father Lorenzo il Magnifico's time.<sup>51</sup> This was particularly seen in the celebrations after his rise to the papacy on 11 March, 1513.<sup>52</sup> However, the new Pope, Leo X was unable to bring back the regard to which the Florentine people had shown his father. The Medici family were beset with misfortune. Leo X's brother, Giuliano, Duke of Nemours (b. 1478) died of consumption on 17 March, 1516, and his nephew, Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino (b. 1492) died in April 1519 from tuberculosis aggravated by his existing syphilitic condition.<sup>53</sup> Lorenzo's marriage to Madeline de la Tour d'Auvergne had produced a daughter, Catherine de' Medici, but the only male

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<sup>47</sup> Hibbert, 179.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 180-181; and Hale, 75.

<sup>49</sup> Hibbert, 189; and Hale, 77-78.

<sup>50</sup> Hibbert, 215.

<sup>51</sup> The pageantry of Lorenzo's age is best displayed in the celebrations for his marriage to Clarice Orsini. A tournament was held on 7 February, 1469 and the celebrations continued in June of that year when the couple actually married. Ibid., 116. See page 49 of thesis.

<sup>52</sup> Hibbert, 217. See pages 33 and 53 of thesis. More celebrations took place on 30 November, 1515 when Leo X entered Florence in triumph. Ibid., 221.

<sup>53</sup> Hibbert, 223, 235.

heirs to the Medici family were illegitimate.<sup>54</sup> The two boys, Alessandro and Ippolito, that Vasari had been educated with, were the illegitimate sons of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino and Giuliano, Duke of Nemours respectively. They were intensely disliked in Florence for their ill manners and unruly behaviour.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, in 1530 the Medici Pope Clement VII gave control of his family's Florentine political concerns to Alessandro de' Medici. He was proclaimed hereditary Duke and provided Florence with an authoritarian rule which went unchecked after the death of the Pope on 22 September, 1534.<sup>56</sup> The city was finally released from his tyranny when Alessandro was murdered by his cousin Lorenzaccio de' Medici, son of Pierfrancesco de' Medici.<sup>57</sup>

Therefore, Cosimo's rule was, at first, precarious, and he required all the symbolism and mythology associated with his ancestors to establish his own supremacy in Florence. While the symbolism associated with Cosimo Pater Patriae and Lorenzo il Magnifico had been personal to the family, and used in the decoration of the family chapel at the church of San Lorenzo for example, the imagery of Cosimo I became the symbolism of the State. Vasari's early education was, therefore, a useful tool in his endeavours under the patronage of his last Medici master, both in his commissions as an artist and in the writing of the *Vite*.

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 248; and Hale, 122.

<sup>56</sup> Hibbert, 253; and Hale, 124.

<sup>57</sup> Hibbert, 255-256; and Hale, 125-126.

Rather than being a commission given, Vasari's dedication of his book to Cosimo I can be seen as an asserted attempt to curry favour with Florence's Medici patriarch. Medici commissions were highlighted throughout the text, the theme of revival of the arts in Florence, and, in particular, under the patronage of the Medici, being drawn upon continuously throughout his book. However, a more covert pattern of Medici symbolism can also be traced throughout the *Vite*. As suggested by the Medici name, it has been proposed that the family were originally doctors or apothecaries, the *palle*, or red balls, on their coat-of-arms representing pills or cupping-glasses.<sup>58</sup> This medical aspect of the Medici became part of the symbolism associated with the family and was manifested in several ways, both in painting and literary commissions and in Vasari's *Vite*.

### **Saints Cosmas and Damian**

Consecutive generations of the Medici family, Cosimo I included, had drawn upon and emphasised the symbolism associated with their patron saints Cosmas and Damian, and this association became an aspect of Medici representation presented throughout the *Vite*. Saints Cosmas and Damian had been early Christian martyrs who, according to legend, had been twin brothers dedicated to the treatment of disease and had provided their services free of charge. In

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<sup>58</sup> Hibbert presents other possible explanations behind the symbolism of the *palle*. See Hibbert, 30. It was said that the Medici were descended from a knight, Averardo, who fought under the leadership of Charlemagne. As he was passing through Tuscany on his way to Rome he saved the peasantry of the Mugello from the wrath of a vicious monster. In his battle against the beast his shield was dented by the mace of his foe. Under the instruction of Charlemagne these dents were represented in Averardo's coat of arms by the *palle*, or red balls, on a golden background. Another suggestion was that the *palle* represented the balls of the pawnbrokers emblem.

particular, they were invoked as guardians against the plague.<sup>59</sup> To the Medici these saintly brothers provided the perfect metaphor. Not only the analogy between the Italian word for 'doctor', *medico*, and the Medici family name was exploited but, just as Saints Damian and Cosmas provided protection for the ill, so too did the Medici act as healers of Florence's woes.

Vasari knew that his inclusion of the imagery of Saints Cosmas and Damian in the *Vite* would be immediately apparent to his patron, Cosimo I. In the *vita* of Tommaso di Stefano, otherwise known as Giottino, he states that the artist painted images of the two Saints for the Frati Ermini in the Canto alla Macine, and also at the Chapel of San Lorenzo de'Giuochi at Santa Maria Novella.<sup>60</sup> Giottino also painted Saints Cosmas and Damian at the Campora, outside the Porta a San Piero Gattolini.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> J. Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, rev. ed. (London, 1992), 76. The discussion of the plague is a recurring theme within several *vite* of the artists. Perino del Vaga, Giovanni Lappoli, Tribolo, Pontormo, Montorsoli and Vasari all fled the plagues in Rome, Florence or Bologna. See Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 588, 608-609; 6: 8; 6: 59; 6: 266; 6: 630; 7: 651. Moreover, Giovanni della Robbia lost three sons, Marco, Lucantonio and Simone, to the plague, and as a member of the Confraternity of Santa Maria della Misericordia, Spinello Aretino had visited those inflicted with the disease. *Ibid.*, 2: 182; 1: 681-683. In the *vita* of Antonio Veneziano the artist is represented as a painter who becomes a medic and eventually dies of the plague, creating a parallel between his *vita* and that of the Medici saints. *Ibid.*, 1: 667.

<sup>60</sup> Francis Hyett has speculated that Vasari may have confused Tommaso di Stefano with Giotto di Stefano who was living in 1368. See *Florence: Her History and Art to the Fall of the Republic* (London, 1903), 144; Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 623 and 1: 625.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 626. Vasari took much of his information regarding the works by Giottino from Antonio Billi's *Libro*, written during the last years of the fifteenth century. See C. von Fabriczy, *Il libro di Antonio Billi* (Florence, 1891), 319; and O. Sirén, *Giottino und seine Stellung in der Gleichzeitigen Florentinischen Malerei* (Leipzig, 1908), 6-7.

The true significance of Vasari's information concerning the painting of these figures is not noted until it is considered within the context of other facts contained within this particular *vita*. In an account of the expulsion of the Duke of Athens from Florence in 1343, Vasari reveals that Giotto was the artist commissioned by the twelve Reformers of the State to paint an image in contempt of the aforementioned Duke and his supporters at the Palace of the Podestà.<sup>62</sup> Agnolo Acciaiuoli, the Archbishop of Florence, prayed for Giotto to complete the work.<sup>63</sup> Significantly, two members of the Medici family had been involved in the overthrow of the Duke, Walter of Brienne. Giovanni di Bernardino de' Medici was executed for his attempts to subjugate the Duke, but, while he failed, his actions provided the catalyst for a further attempt. Salvestro de' Medici played a prominent role in the final and successful attempt to win the Florentine peoples' freedom from the Duke's tyranny, and he also played an important role in the restoration of law and order. Furthermore, he was an architect in the modification of the constitution, giving the artisans and small shopkeepers a greater say in the running of government.<sup>64</sup> In keeping with the Medici family's imagery of the curative effects of their authority in Florence, Vasari creates the image of an artist who rejoices in the defeat of a tyrant and Medici predecessor, the Duke of Athens, and foretells the glorious arrival of the Medici through the

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 625-626. The Palace of the Podestà was built in 1255.

<sup>63</sup> Interestingly, another Agnolo Acciaiuoli was to support Cosimo Pater Patriae approximately one hundred years later, suffering banishment in 1434 for his defence of the Medici. He later became the Florentine Ambassador to France during Cosimo's lifetime. See Hibbert, 55, 84-85.

<sup>64</sup> M. Brion, *The Medici: A Great Florentine Family* (New York, 1969), 14-15.

painting of their patron saints, Cosmas and Damian. The Medici heal Florence's wounds by restoring law and order.

The first of the family to employ this imagery was Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici. He was assigned the Old Sacristy of the church of San Lorenzo and the double chapel in the south transept dedicated to Saints Cosmas and Damian, by the prior and canons of the church.<sup>65</sup> Giovanni, along with seven other principal families, had commissioned Brunelleschi to re-build San Lorenzo (ca. 1425-1446), and the acquisition of these areas of the church undoubtedly announced the arrival of the Medici as a prominent family in Florence. Giovanni's business acumen had founded the Medici fortune and he was the first of the family to hold a truly eminent role in Florentine politics.<sup>66</sup> He was to hold three tenures of office as one of the *Priori*, the first in 1402, and again in 1408 and 1411.<sup>67</sup> An embassy to Bologna was conducted in 1403, and he later appeared as a Florentine representative to the courts of Popes John XXIII and Martin V at Venice. In 1407, Giovanni became governor of Pistoia and a member of the warfare commission in 1419. The position of *Gonfaloniere di giustizia* was given to him

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<sup>65</sup> C. Elam, "Cosimo de' Medici and San Lorenzo," in *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464*, ed. F. Ames-Lewis (Oxford, 1992), 165.

<sup>66</sup> Other Medici had been involved in Florentine politics but unlike Giovanni, none of these figures established a dominant Medici dynasty of leadership. In 1282, Ardingo di Buonagiunta was elected to the *Priori* of Florence. It was over fifty years before another Medici, Giovanni di Bernardino, became involved in the political life of the city, embroiling himself in a plot to overthrow the then governor of Florence, the Duke of Athens. In 1341, Giovanni di Bernardino was unfortunately condemned to death for his efforts but another Medici, Salvestro de' Medici successfully restored law and order to the city after the Duke's eventual demise. In 1370 and again in April 1378, Salvestro was elected *Gonfaloniere*. See Brion, 14-15.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 20; Hibbert, 32.

in 1421, and three years later he was, once again, sent on another embassy to Venice.<sup>68</sup> Politically and financially, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici was a success, and his involvement in the re-building of San Lorenzo and acquisition of the chapel dedicated to Saints Cosmas and Damian proclaimed it.

Giovanni's son, Cosimo, later proclaimed Pater Patriae, was to extend and promulgate the imagery of the Medici patron saints. Indeed, Cosimo had been born on the feast day of Saints Cosmas and Damian, 27 September, 1389, adding a new dimension to the imagery. The decoration of the Old Sacristy at San Lorenzo was extended by the sculptor Donatello, and a figure of Saint Cosmas included in the stucco decoration over the Apostles' Door to the right of the altar (ca. 1428-1443).<sup>69</sup>

Furthermore, Cosimo extended his patronage to the Dominican monastery of San Marco.<sup>70</sup> As its benefactor, Cosimo was responsible for the monastery's restoration, resulting in the reconsecration of the high altar to Saint Mark, the titular saint of the monastery, and also to Saints Cosmas and Damian, the Medici patron saints.<sup>71</sup> In anticipation of this new dedication, a new altarpiece was

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<sup>68</sup> Hale, 13; Hibbert, 32.

<sup>69</sup> Notably, Lorenzo, Cosimo's brother, is represented by the figure of St. Lawrence over the Martyrs' Door on the left of the altar. Giovanni di Bicci's patron saint, St. John the Evangelist appears in the tondi to the pendentives and of the tympanum wall above the altar. Therefore, the composition of saints can be seen to create a family tree suggestive of the beginnings of a Medici dynasty. J. Paoletti, "Fraternal Piety and Family Power," in *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464*, ed. F. Ames-Lewis (Oxford, 1992), 210; F. Ames-Lewis, "Early Medici Devices," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42 (1979): 127.

<sup>70</sup> The founding prior of San Marco was Antonio Pierozzo (1389-1459).

<sup>71</sup> Cosimo commissioned Michelozzo to enlarge the buildings (1437-1452).

commissioned from Fra Angelico, by Cosimo de' Medici and his brother Lorenzo, which, unsurprisingly, included the Saints Cosmas and Damian.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, both Janet Cox-Rearick and Stefano Orlandi have suggested that the figure of Saint Cosmas is a portrait of Cosimo de' Medici.<sup>73</sup> Presented as such, Cosimo in the personification of Saint Cosmas appears as the healer of San Marco's woes. He is the benefactor who pays for the restoration of the monastery. While the Saints Mark, Dominic, Lawrence, John the Evangelist, Francis and Peter Martyr were also present in the altarpiece, significantly, only the lives of the Medici saints, Cosmas and Damian, were portrayed in the *predella* panels for the *San Marco High Altarpiece*.<sup>74</sup> In the *predella*, *The Miracle of the Deacon Justinian*, the amputation of a good limb from a dead Moor and its attachment to a sick man, by the Saints was depicted.<sup>75</sup>

Although the figures of Saints Cosmas and Damian found their places in other Medici commissions of the mid-fifteenth century, reference to them was also made in the business dealings of Cosimo Pater Patriae and his brother Lorenzo.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> The altarpiece was completed ca. 1438-1440. See Paoletti, 213; Ames-Lewis, 127.

<sup>73</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 48; S. Orlandi, *Beato Angelico* (Florence, 1964), 73-74. Paoletti has disputed this hypothesis as all known portraits of Cosimo are in profile which makes them difficult to compare with the full frontal pose of the *San Marco High Altarpiece* Saint Cosmas. See Paoletti, 212.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>75</sup> Hartt, 217. Vasari highlights a similar painting of the Saints by Spinello Aretino. At the hospital of Santo Spirito, a scene depicting the amputation of a good limb from a dead Moor and its attachment to a sick man by the Saints, was depicted underneath the scene of *The Apostles Receiving the Holy Spirit*. See Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 687.

<sup>76</sup> Saints Cosmas and Damian were depicted in Fra Angelico's *Annalena Altarpiece* (ca. 1437-1438), and in the altarpiece of San Buonaventura at Bosco ai Frati (ca. 1440-1445); in Rogier Van der Weyden's *Medici Madonna*, in the Staedelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt (date unknown), and in the stained-glass in the Novitiates' Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence. See Paoletti, 216; Ames-Lewis, 127.

In a business contract, dated 1435, composed after the reorganisation of the Medici bank, it was hoped that the company would worthily represent the honour “of God and of the glorious Virgin Mary, and of the glorious martyrs Saint Lawrence and Saints Cosmas and Damian, and of all the celestial court of Paradise.”<sup>77</sup> Cosimo Pater Patriae was inextricably linked to Saints Cosmas and Damian. Although Cosimo and his brother Lorenzo were the senior partners in the bank, *Cosimo e Lorenzo di Giovanni de’Medici e compagni*, they also had associates, Giovanni d’Amerigo de’Benci and Antonio di Francesco Salutati, whose patron saints were noticeably missing from the dedication of the bank.<sup>78</sup>

While Cosimo Pater Patriae had successfully created a parallel between himself and Saints Cosmas and Damian, it was his grandson Lorenzo il Magnifico and successive generations of Medici who were to further cultivate and enhance the association. The feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian had always been observed during the lifetime of Cosimo, and this festival was continued during Lorenzo il Magnifico’s primacy and later revived by the Medici Pope, Leo X.<sup>79</sup> Leo X incorporated the imagery of the saints with his own personification as healer. The Medici had been expelled from Florence in 1494, and, in the imagery of Leo X, their return in 1512 provided a cure for the city, heralding the arrival of peace and

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<sup>77</sup> “. . . di Dio e della gloriosa vergine Maria e de’gloriosi martiri Santo Lorenzo e Santo Cosimo e Damiano, e di tutta la celestiale corte di Paradiso” (C. Bec, “Firenze mercantile e i Medici,” in *Idee, istituzioni, scienza ed arti nella Firenze dei Medici*, ed. C. Vasoli (Florence, 1980), 25); Paoletti, 211.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>79</sup> For Lorenzo il Magnifico’s celebrations see Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 133; for Pope Leo X’s revival of ‘I Cosmalia’ in Rome and Florence, *ibid.*, 32-33.

good government. This was most immediately presented in the Cappella del Papa, adjacent to Santa Maria Novella. The convent of Santa Maria Novella was traditionally the residence of the Pope. The Cappella del Papa was decorated by Ridolfo Ghirlandaio, Pontormo and Andrea di Cosimo Feltrini for Pope Leo's *entrata* in November, 1515.<sup>80</sup> As a blatant statement of Leo's medicinal imagery, Pontormo painted a fresco of *Saint Veronica with the Sudarium* in a lunette over the entrance to the chapel. The sudarium, or cloth which Veronica had allegedly used to wipe Christ's brow on his way to Calvary, was believed to have healing powers and was preserved in St. Peter's, Rome. Combined with the inscription HEC EST SALV[S] V[E]STRA ("This is your salvation"), and placed within Leo's private chapel, the painting provided the image of Leo X as Florence's healer and saviour.<sup>81</sup>

Furthermore, the metaphor of Pope Leo as healer was echoed in contemporary poetry.

Sweet doctor, so well aware of our sickness,  
 you who have known our illness  
 and are constant remedy to it.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 255-56; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 38; idem, *The Drawings of Pontormo* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), 1: 106. Wrongly cited by Cox-Rearick in *Dynasty and Destiny*, page 38, as page 160.

<sup>81</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 39.

<sup>82</sup> "Dulce medice et saputo  
 per la nostra malattia  
 che il mal nostro ha conosciuto  
 et rimedia tutta via" (R. Ridolfi, "Stampe popolari per il ritorno de' Medici in Firenze l'anno 1512," *La Bibliofilia* 51 (1949): 34; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 39).

Therefore, the decoration of the frontcover of a volume of Hippocrates, dedicated to Leo X in 1515, with the figures of Saints Cosmas and Damian, can also be regarded as part of this Medici Pope's symbolism as healer, particularly as the inscription HINC DOLOR HINC SALVS ("Here suffering, there deliverance") appears with the images.<sup>83</sup> Again, at San Lorenzo, images of the Medici saints were to be depicted, this time in the 1517 planned completion of the façade of the church by Michelangelo. Monumental figures of Saints Cosmas and Damian were to be sculpted, and in a letter to Michelangelo from Domenico Buoninsegni, dated 2 February, 1517 the artist was instructed that "queste due [santi] di sopra bisogna significarli come medici perchè furon medici."<sup>84</sup> The significance of the two saints to the Medici family, was further highlighted by their inclusion in the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo, also designed by Michelangelo between 1520 and 1534.<sup>85</sup> Michelangelo seems to have made models for one, possibly both of them, before leaving for Rome in August 1532. The final sculptures were carved by Montorsoli and Raffaello da Montelupo. Montorsoli's sculpture of *Saint Cosmas* is placed to the right of Michelangelo's *Medici Madonna*, designed in 1521 and carved between 1524 and 1534, and *Saint Damian* by Raffaello da Montelupo is positioned to her left. Montorsoli began working with Michelangelo on the New Sacristy commission in June 1533 and Montelupo probably joined them in August

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<sup>83</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 34.

<sup>84</sup> "... these two [saints] above need to signify doctors because they were doctors" (see Domenico Buoninsegni's letter to Michelangelo quoted in Charles de Tolnay, "Michel-Ange et la façade de San Lorenzo," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 2 (1934): 41; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 34).

<sup>85</sup> H. Hibbard, *Michelangelo: Painter, Sculptor, Architect* (New York, Paris, Lausanne, 1978), 112.

of that year. However, the sculptures of the saints were not placed in their present position until 3 June, 1559.<sup>86</sup>

The birth of a new Cosimo, later to become Duke of Florence and Siena, provided Pope Leo X with further impetus for the use of these saintly doctors imagery. The death of the Duke of Urbino and Duke of Nemours had created a void for a future generation of Medici leaders. So the birth of Cosimo to Maria Salviati de' Medici, on 11 June, 1519, was greeted with great jubilation by Leo X and led to new images of the young Medici as healer of Florence.<sup>87</sup> In a portrait by Ridolfo Ghirlandaio, *Cosimo de' Medici at Age Twelve* (1531) a monogram, COSIMO MEDICO, presents the medicinal powers of the Medici and in particular of the young Cosimo.<sup>88</sup> A pun is made of the Medici name so that Cosimo is presented as a medic.

Furthermore, Cosimo was to refer to his powers as healer of Florence in later portraits of himself which conflated his imagery with that of Saint Cosmas, harking back to the symbolism associated with Cosimo Pater Patriae. In Allori's *Risen Christ with Saints Cosmas and Damian* (ca. 1559-1560), Duke Cosimo appears in the guise of patron saint, holding a book of anatomy, imagery

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<sup>86</sup> C. de Tolnay, *Michelangelo. III. The Medici Chapel* (Princeton, 1948), figs. 65, 66 and 67; and T. Verellen, "Cosmas and Damian in the New Sacristy," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42 (1979): 274.

<sup>87</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 49.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

appropriate to the saintly doctor.<sup>89</sup> The Duke's chapel in the Palazzo Vecchio, decorated by Vasari in 1561, was also dedicated to Saints Cosmas and Damian and housed Raphael's *Madonna dell'Impannata*.<sup>90</sup> Flanking panels portray portraits of Cosimo Pater Patriae as Saint Damian, and the Duke as Saint Cosmas.<sup>91</sup>

Thus, the Medici family fully exploited the imagery of their patron saints as healers. While Saints Cosmas and Damian cared for the sick, and in particular those suffering from the plague, the Medici healed Florence's woes. Vasari made reference to this in the *vita* of Giottino. The painter rejoices at the defeat of the tyrant the Duke of Athens, and foretells the glorious arrival of the Medici through the painting of their patron saints.

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<sup>89</sup> The provenance of this work is somewhat problematic. It was acquired by the Musées Royaux, Brussels in 1855 and at that time was attributed to Francesco Salviati. Detlef Heikamp re-attributed the work to Alessandro Allori in a note on a photograph at the Istituto Germanico di Storia dell' Arte, Florence. His findings were first published by Anna Forlani in *Mostra di disegni dei fondatori dell'Accademia delle Arti del Disegno nel IV centario della fondazione* (Florence, 1963). Simona Lecchini Giovannoni has concluded that the painting was commissioned by the Montauto family and most probably Isidoro da Montauto, the *Spedalingo* of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova. However, it was located in the family chapel at the Roman church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini. The church was originally named the church of Santi Giovanni, Cosimo e Damiano, as cited in a 1559 letter to Cosimo I from the *console* and the *consiglieri* of the Nazione Fiorentina in Rome. See S. Lecchini Giovannoni, *Alessandro Allori* (Turin, 1991), 218.

<sup>90</sup> Raphael's *Madonna dell'Impannata* was originally commissioned by Bindo Altoviti and was completed ca. 1514. It entered the Medici collection in 1554 after being confiscated from the Altoviti family. The painting is now located in the Pitti Palace.

<sup>91</sup> In Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 699, he states that the chapel was dedicated to the Saints Cosmas and Damian; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 249.

### Saturn's Golden Age

While the Medici as healers dominated the imagery of Saints Cosmas and Damian, the medical theory of the four humours can be affiliated with the Medici symbolism of the return of the Golden Age. The principle of the four humours gained a more intellectual and astrological significance through the writings of Marsilio Ficino, who, like Vasari, found a patron in the Medici family. His astrological analysis of the four humours, in particular melancholy, can be seen to have played an important role in the development of the Medici imagery of Lorenzo il Magnifico, Pope Leo X and Cosimo, Duke of Florence and Siena. Although he was a trained physician, Ficino sought a more philosophical explanation for the physiological and psychological imbalances within man. He fully agreed with the doctrines of the Hippocratic Collection, Galen and Aristotle, but he also sought further explanation in determining man's behavioural ambiguities. Between the doctrines of the Hippocratic Collection and Aristotle, the concepts of the four humours, four elements and four temperaments had become inextricably linked. However, it was not until the Renaissance period and the writings of Marsilio Ficino, that any furtherance was made to these principles.

The treatment of the melancholic humour formed the basis of Ficino's treatise entitled *De vita triplici*, published on December 3, 1489, and dedicated to

Lorenzo de' Medici.<sup>92</sup> Trained in the practice of medicine at the University of Bologna, but devoted to philosophy and in particular the works of Plato, Ficino provided an amalgam of traditional Hippocratic medical theory, concerning the treatment of the body, with Neo-Platonic astrological precepts involving the condition of the soul.<sup>93</sup> Aristotle, in *Problems*, Book XXX, had stated that intellectuals were often prone to an excess of black bile and for Ficino this excess of melancholic humour became the natural state for the soul in the body of the scholar, philosopher and, significantly for the Medici, the ruler.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, Ficino was born on October 19, 1433, at 9 P.M., which made for a strong Saturnian influence in his temperament.<sup>95</sup> He furthered the argument by stating that melancholics were born under Saturn. Melancholy is:

The celestial: because both Mercury, who invites us to investigate doctrines, and Saturn, who makes us persevere in investigating doctrines and retain them when discovered, are said by astronomers to be somewhat cold and dry (or if it should happen to be true that Mercury is not cold, he is nonetheless often very dry by virtue of his nearness to the Sun), just like the melancholic nature, according to physicians. And this same nature Mercury and Saturn impart from birth to their followers, learned people, and preserve and augment it day by day.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, ed. and trans. C. V. Kaske and J. R. Clark, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies (Binghamton, 1989), 8.

<sup>93</sup> A complete analysis of Marsilio Ficino's writings concerning Saturn and melancholia is provided by R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky and F. Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (London, 1964), 254-274.

<sup>94</sup> It is certain that Aristotle is not the author of the *Problems* as we know it, although he did write a book of Problems of which some is incorporated in the present work.

<sup>95</sup> Ficino, 20.

<sup>96</sup> "Coelestis quoniam Mercurius, qui ut doctrinas investigemus invitat, et Saturnus qui efficit ut in doctrinis investigemus perseveremus inventasque servemus, frigidi quodammodo siccique ab astronomis esse dicuntur - vel si forte Mercurius non sit frigidus, fit tamen saepe Solis propinquitate siccissimus - qualis est natura apud medicos melancholica; eandemque naturam Mercurius ipse Saturnusque litterarum studiosis eorum sectatoribus impartunt ab initio ac servant augentque quotidie" (Ibid., 1. 4). See the following chapter entitled "Vasari's *Regimen sanitatis*," for a complete discussion of the use of the melancholy humour in the *Vite*.

Horoscopy had become an important component in the determination of temperament, and the astrological charts of Lorenzo il Magnifico and Cosimo I, both dominated by the planet Saturn, became important components in the development of the family imagery.

Born 11 June, 1519, Cosimo's astrological chart was dominated by the planet Saturn and, thus, imagery associated with him focused heavily upon the astrological significance of his birth.<sup>97</sup> As already seen above, Pope Leo X had rejoiced in the birth of Cosimo, during 1519, and imagery commissioned by the Pope reflected the Saturnian influence of this new Medici's chart.<sup>98</sup> In this imagery of Cosimo's horoscope, the planet Saturn was combined with Saturn's other persona as the god who brings about the return of the Golden Age. A new Saturn had been born and the Golden Age of Medici rule would continue in Florence.

For the Medici the ancient legend of the return of the Golden Age could be used with great effectiveness to create a parallel with their own family history. While

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<sup>97</sup> Janet Cox-Rearick has undertaken the most thorough research into the astrological charts of the Duke, using Giuntini's *Speculum astrologiae* of 1581. Cosimo's birth was preceded by a new moon, and as Cox-Rearick explains, "took place under the sign of Gemini, which is ruled by Mercury; that the ascendant [*horoscopus*], which is the indicator of the life of the individual, is located in Capricorn at 24°; and that Mercury is located in Cancer. The other features of the chart are as follows: Scorpio marks the mid-heaven; Saturn is rising in conjunction with the ascendant - only four degrees from it; Venus is in conjunction with Mercury in the seventh house in Cancer, Mars is in Leo, which is an intercepted sign (one not represented on a house cusp); Jupiter is in Libra in the eighth house; and the moon is in Sagittarius in the eleventh house." See Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 206.

<sup>98</sup> Leo X had made great use of Cosimo's horoscopy in the decoration of the Salone at the villa of Poggio a Caiano, specifically in Pontormo's lunette of *Vertumnus and Pomona*.

holding particular significance for Cosimo I, the imagery of the Golden Age had first been alluded to during the lifetime of Cosimo Pater Patriae, most notably in the poetry dedicated to him. Naldo Naldi had written:

Now to me, now, Medici, under your guardianship, returns  
the benign golden age of old Saturn.<sup>99</sup>

Under Cosimo's leadership Florence was rejuvenated, and peace reigned and prospered. This peace and prosperity had been foretold in Ovid's anatomy of the Golden Age. In the *Metamorphoses* he states that the Golden Age was a time of peace, when man lived in harmony with one another and with nature in Saturn's domain.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, in a speech written by Naldi for Cosimo, and given to the Milanese envoy, he eulogized:

The temple of Janus will be closed,  
Frenzied Mars chained,  
Ancient Faith will return and dispense Justice;  
Peace, with her purple wreath, will visit the  
dwellings of Italy,  
And the sheep will graze safely in the fields.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> "Iam mihi, iam, Medices, te consultore redibant

Aurea Saturni saecla benigna senis . . ." (N. Naldi, *Elegiarum libri III*, ed. L. Juhasz (Leipzig, 1934), 89, lines 349-50; E. H. Gombrich, "Renaissance and Golden Age," in *Norm and Form, Studies in the art of the Renaissance*, 4th ed. vol. 1 (Oxford, 1985), 32). Naldo Naldi was born in 1439 and died ca. 1520. The exact date of this text is unknown but it is certain that he wrote it between ca. 1473 and 1492.

<sup>100</sup> A. Bartlett Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (Princeton, 1966), 29-30.

<sup>101</sup> "Hoc duce sic Iani templum claudetur et intus

Mars fremet atque iterum vincla moleta geret.

Tunc et prisca Fides ad nos pariterque redibit,

Quae lances iusta temperat arte pares,

Hinc Pax purpurea frontem redimita corona

Grata per Ausonias ibit amica domos,

Turba nec in Latiis ulli tunc fiet in agris,

Opilio tutas quisque tenebit oves" (Naldi, 49, lines 155-162; Gombrich, "Renaissance and Golden Age," 33-34).

Naldi had made an analogy between Cosimo's authority in Florence and Saturn's rule over the Golden Age, as presented by Macrobius in the *Saturnalia*. Janus was identified as the ruler of Italy, and when Saturn arrived by ship he was said to have welcomed him as his guest. Saturn brought with him the art of husbandry whereby the lives of the inhabitants of Italy were improved.<sup>102</sup> In Cosimo Pater Patriae's Florence the same was true. Medici rule had brought about peace and prosperity for its inhabitants.

This emphasis upon the Golden Age of Medici rule was further enhanced under the direction of Lorenzo il Magnifico, the next great Medici leader of Florence. It was during his rule that this heritage of symbolism was further extended and the astrological significance of his chart emphasised. Like his descendant, Cosimo I, Lorenzo's horoscope was dominated by the planet Saturn. Lorenzo was born on January 1, 1448, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. By the modern clock, Lorenzo would have been born at half past seven in the morning, when the sun and the ascendant are both in Capricorn, making Saturn, the ruler of Capricorn, lord of the ascendant.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.7, 21.

<sup>103</sup> S. Ammirato, *Opusculi* (Florence, 1642) ("Ritratti d'huomini illustri di Casa Medici", 33.); Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 174.

Consequently, poetry devoted to Lorenzo frequently focused upon his Saturnian birth, represented in Saturn's other personification as the god of agriculture.<sup>104</sup>

Bartolomeus Fontius wrote:

Through you the age of Saturn now at last arises . . .  
Now rise the arts, now poets live in honour . . .<sup>105</sup>

The reference to the recurrence of Lorenzo's Saturnian rule was undoubtedly

Virgilian. In Virgil's Fourth *Eclogue* it was stated:

The great line of the centuries begins anew. Now the Virgin returns, the reign of Saturn returns; now a new generation descends from heaven on high. Only do thou, pure Lucina, smile on the birth of the child, under whom the iron brood shall first cease, and a golden race spring up throughout the world! Thine own Apollo now is king!<sup>106</sup>

Further reference to Saturn's Golden Age was made by Virgil in the *Georgics*. In the first *Georgic*, Virgil described the prosperous earth under Saturn and continued in *Georgic* II to locate Italy as Saturn's happy domain, where Spring is the time for Earth's renewal and is associated with the Golden Age.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, Virgil's analysis of the Golden Age allowed for its recurrence. In the *Eclogues*,

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<sup>104</sup> Lorenzo himself wrote several sonnets in regard to the subject of melancholic love. See A. Chastel, "Melancholia in the Sonnets of Lorenzo de' Medici," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 8 (1945): 61-67.

<sup>105</sup> "Tempora nunc tandem per te Saturnia surgunt . . ."

Nunc surgunt artes, nunc sunt in honore poetae . . ." (B. Fontius, *Carmina*, ed. I. Fögel and L. Juhász (Leipzig, 1932); Gombrich, "Renaissance and Golden Age," 31). The date of *Carmina* is unknown.

<sup>106</sup> "magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo.

iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna;

iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.

tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum

desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,

casta fave Lucina: tuus iam regnat Apollo. . ." (Virgil *Eclogues* 4. 5-10); Bartlett Giamatti, 23.

<sup>107</sup> Virgil *Georgics* 1. 125-128; Virgil *Georgics* 2. 140-176; 2. 324-345; and 2. 513-540; also Bartlett Giamatti, 24.

he created a chronology of renewal. The Golden Age is followed by a period of deterioration and will once again be reborn under just and good leadership.<sup>108</sup>

Successive generations of Medici leaders used the imagery of Arcady to underscore their own golden years of rule. The celebrations of Pope Leo X's primacy had begun with the Florentine festivals of February 1513, when the return of Lorenzo's Golden Age of rule was alluded to.<sup>109</sup> Jacopo Nardi was later to recall that the Medici had presented "grandi e belle mascherate col trionfo del secolo d'oro, come per buono augurio della felicità de' futuri tempi."<sup>110</sup>

For Cosimo I, the return of the Golden Age had a two-fold meaning: it referred to the Virgilian notion of return, analogous to his own family's ancestry in the leadership of Florence, and to his own horoscope. As a child born under the planet Saturn, Cosimo could cement his right to rule. The symbolism of the return of the Golden Age took on a greater significance. Cosimo's first major commission was for the loggia at the villa at Castello. The commission was given to Pontormo during the later part of 1537; this was the first overt assertion

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<sup>108</sup> P. A. Johnston, *Vergil's Agricultural Golden Age* (Leiden, 1980), 8-9.

<sup>109</sup> J. Shearman, "Pontormo and Andrea del Sarto, 1513," *Burlington Magazine* 104 (1962): 478-481; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 15-27.

<sup>110</sup> ". . . big and beautiful masquerades with triumphs of the golden age, bringing good auguries of the happiness of future times" (J. Nardi, *Istoria della città di Firenze di Jacopo Nardi*, ed. L. Arbib, vol. 2 (Florence, 1838-1841), 19); Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 15. Nardi's *Istoria* was completed in 1531.

of Cosimo I's predestined right to rule over Florence. A portrait of Cosimo was placed in direct relation to images from his horoscope.<sup>111</sup>

However, it was in the re-decoration of the Palazzo della Signoria, now the Palazzo Vecchio, that Cosimo made a more public assertion of Medici imagery. This began with the decoration of the Chapel of Eleonora, between 1540 and 1564, by Bronzino, and continued in the paintings by Francesco Salviati for the Sala delle Udienze, completed between 1543 and 1545.<sup>112</sup> The Sala dei Dugento also received attention between 1545 and 1553. Twenty tapestries illustrating the life of Joseph were designed by Bronzino, Pontorno and Salviati and woven by the Netherlanders Janni Rost and Nicholas Karcher.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, it is in the decorations by Giorgio Vasari that the Medici imagery of the Golden Age was overtly depicted. Following long negotiations with the Duke, Vasari had left the service of Pope Julius III in December, 1554 to undertake the decorative program of the Palazzo.<sup>114</sup> With the help of Cosimo Bartoli and Vincenzo Borghini, Vasari constructed the symbolism for the planned series of frescoes painted to decorate the Quartiere degli Elementi, located on the second floor in the south-

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<sup>111</sup> Cox-Rearick gives a full analysis of Pontorno's decoration of the loggia in *Dynasty and Destiny*, 258-269.

<sup>112</sup> See J. Cox-Rearick, *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford, 1993) for discussion of the iconographical program of the chapel, and L. Mortari, *Francesco Salviati* (Florence, 1992) for the decoration of the Sala delle Udienze with the story of Camillus; also E. Allegri and A. Cecchi, *Palazzo Vecchio e i Medici* (Florence, 1980), 21-28; 40-47 for examination of all the projects for the Palazzo Vecchio.

<sup>113</sup> G. Smith, "Cosimo I and the Joseph Tapestries for the Palazzo Vecchio," *Renaissance and Reformation* 6, no. 3 (August, 1982): 183; and Allegri and Cecchi, 392-393.

<sup>114</sup> Negotiations had begun during the summer of 1553. See Frey, 2, 871, Ricordi 217; *ibid.*, 1, 361; W. C. Kirwin, "Vasari's Tondo of 'Cosimo I with his architects engineers and sculptors' in the Palazzo Vecchio," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 15 (1971): 105.

east corner of the building.<sup>115</sup> The construction of the rooms had begun in 1551, along with the building of the *intaglio* platforms and the preparation of the boards for the ceiling pictures, under the direction of Battista del Tasso.<sup>116</sup> This area of the Palazzo was divided into nine rooms, each devoted to a different age or offspring of the god Saturn, and each dedicated to a different member of the Medici family, providing a visual analogy between the Golden Age and the family's rule over Florence.<sup>117</sup>

Significantly, it was the terrace attached to the Quartiere degli Elementi, which was devoted to the god Saturn. While the decoration of the rooms had begun in 1555, the execution of the paintings for the ceiling of the Terrace of Saturn did not begin until 1560 and was completed by 1566.<sup>118</sup> The paintings were the work of Giovanni Stradano, although he worked from drawings made by Giorgio Vasari.<sup>119</sup> The central scene of the ceiling depicted *Saturn Devouring his Sons* and was surrounded by images of *Childhood*, *Youth*, *Virility*, and *Old Age* - the Four Ages of Man. Following the Ovidian legend of Saturn, two further scenes

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<sup>115</sup> M. W. Gahtan and P. J. Jacks, *Vasari's Florence* (New Haven, 1994), 29; Vasari himself provided a full description of the decorative cycle of the Palazzo Vecchio and in particular the Quartiere degli Elementi in his *Ragionamenti*. His description fills the first day of conversations with Ferdinand I. See G. Vasari, *Trattato della pittura del S. Cavaliere Giorgio Vasari pittore e architetto, nel quale si contiene, la pratica di essa, divisato in tre giornate et ridotto in ragionamenti, ne quali si spiegano le invenzioni da lui dipinte in Firenze nel Palazzo di loro altezze serenissime* (Florence, 1619), 7-64.

<sup>116</sup> Allegri and Cecchi, 15.

<sup>117</sup> The rooms were the Sala degli Elementi, Terrazzo di Saturno, Sala della Dea Opi, Sala di Cerere, Sala di Giove, Sala d'Ercole, Scrittoio di Calliope, Scrittoio di Minerva, Terrazzo di Giunone. See Allegri and Cecchi, xxiv; Kirwin, 105-106. Cox-Rearick has included discussion of the astrological significance of the Sala degli Elementi, in regard to Cosimo I's horoscope in *Dynasty and Destiny*, 276-278.

<sup>118</sup> Allegri and Cecchi, 105.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

depicted *Saturn's Arrival in Italy* and *Saturn and Janus Creating the Saturnalia*. The *Twelve Hours of the Day* were presented in the border of the ceiling, and rondels of the four elements, *Air, Water, Earth, and Fire*, filled the corners. In the decoration of the frieze below the ceiling, further reference was made to Saturn's rule. Images of the *Age of Gold*, *The Institution of the Public Treasury*, and *Saturn Teaching the Minting of Money* were painted, along with scenes depicting *Saturn and Opi Freeing Jove*, *Janus Instituting the Cult of Saturn*, *Janus Making a Sculpture in the Image of Saturn*, and *The Children Sacrificed to Saturn*. These images had particular meaning to Duke Cosimo, but the true significance cannot be fully explained until analysis is made of the allegorical figures painted as divisions between the stories of the frieze. Here is presented the figure of *Melancholy*.<sup>120</sup> Ficino's examination of the melancholic ruler, born under the planet Saturn, was fully recognised in Vasari's imagery of the Duke, and the symbolism of Saturn, as planet and as the ruler of the Golden Age, were united.<sup>121</sup>

While the Golden Age of Saturn's rule was fundamental to the development of symbolic iconographies for Giorgio Vasari's decoration of the Quartiere degli Elementi, it was also a factor in Vasari's earlier work, also dedicated to Cosimo, the *Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, published in 1550. For

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 106-108; Vasari, *Le vite*, 8: 36-44.

<sup>121</sup> Graham Smith notes a similar symbolism of Florence's well-being under the just leadership of Cosimo I in Bronzino's *Allegory of Happiness*, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, ca. 1567. See G. Smith, "Bronzino's *Allegory of Happiness*," *Art Bulletin* 66, no. 3 (September, 1984): 394.

Giorgio Vasari, the years of rule by Lorenzo il Magnifico had been “truly a golden age for men of intellect.”<sup>122</sup> Likewise did he feel about the rule of the Medici Pope, Leo X. In the *vita* of Polidoro da Caravaggio, Vasari states, “In the last age of gold, as the happy age of Leo X might have been called for all noble craftsmen and men of talent, an honoured place was held among the most exalted spirits by Polidoro da Caravaggio, a Lombard, who had not become a painter after long study, but had been created and produced as such by Nature.”<sup>123</sup> However, a closer examination of the text reveals a deeper reliance and depth of understanding in Vasari’s interpretation of the Medicean iconography of the Return of the Golden Age.

#### Saturn, the God of Agriculture

Saturn, in its guise as a planet, was ruler of great leaders and scholars, as is explained in Marsilio Ficino’s *De vita triplici*. However, in his guise as a god, Saturn was the ruler of agriculture. His position is explained by Macrobius in the *Saturnalia*. Saturn had arrived by ship, and Janus received him as his guest and learned from him the art of husbandry. The quality of life of the population was thus, improved, because Saturn had taught men how to use of the fruits of the earth; Janus rewarded him by sharing his kingdom with Saturn.<sup>124</sup> In Medici

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<sup>122</sup> “veramente per le persone d’ingegno un secol d’oro” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 3: 309; idem, *The Lives* 1: 535).

<sup>123</sup> “Nell’ ultima età dell’oro, che così si potè chiamare, per gli uomini virtuosi ed artisti nobili, la felice età di Leone decimo, fra gli altri spiriti nobilissimi ebbe luogo onorato Pulidoro da Caravaggio di Lombardia, non fattosi per lungo studio, ma stato prodotto e creato dalla natura pittore” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 141-142; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 889).

<sup>124</sup> Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1. 21; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 132. Virgil’s *Georgics* also made reference to Saturn’s rule of agriculture:

imagery Saturn had brought the art of agriculture to Florence, and in the iconography of Lorenzo il Magnifico's reign and that of Cosimo I's, they shared his exalted position.

The imagery of the Return of Time during the spring, as explained by Virgil in *Georgic II* and also in Ovid's *Metamorphoses I*, became an important component of Medicean commissions during Lorenzo il Magnifico's primacy. Saturn had brought agricultural abundance to Italy during the spring and in an analogy with Medici rule, Lorenzo's personal motto *LE TEMPS REVIENT* made specific reference to the Return of Time in spring. The eternal springtime of his rule was referred to in poetry dedicated to him.<sup>125</sup> Poliziano wrote in *Le Stanze*:

Here the years do not turn over their calendar,  
but joyful spring is never absent.<sup>126</sup>

As proposed by Aby Warburg, Poliziano was most probably also responsible for the formulation of the imagery of Botticelli's *Primavera* (ca. 1482).<sup>127</sup>

"salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,  
magna virum: tibi res antiquae laudis et artis  
ingredior, sanctos ausus recludere fontis,  
Ascraeumque cano Romana per oppida carmen"

"Hail, land of Saturn, great mother of earth's fruits,  
great mother of men! 'Tis for thee I essay the  
theme of olden praise and art; for thee I dare to  
unseal the sacred founts, and through Roman towns  
to sing the song of Ascra" (Virgil *Georgics* 2. 173-176); see also Johnston, 64.

<sup>125</sup> Cox- Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 77.

<sup>126</sup> "Ivi non volgon gli anni il lor quaderno,  
ma lieta Primavera mai non manca" (A. Poliziano, *Le Stanze, l'Orfeo, e le Rime di Messer Angelo Poliziano*, ed. G. Carducci (Florence, 1863), trans. D. Quint, as *The "Stanze" of Angelo Poliziano*, Amherst, Mass., 1979), 1. 72); Cox- Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 78. The *Stanze* was written ca. 1480.

<sup>127</sup> Aby Warburg made the first suggestion of Poliziano as author of the program and his proposition was supported by Charles Dempsey in "*MERCURIUS VER: The Sources of Botticelli's*

Commissioned by Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, the *Primavera*, is thought to depict the god of spring, Mercury, with the principal springtime deities, Venus, Flora, Chloris and Zephyr.<sup>128</sup> In this interpretation, the message of the springtime of Medici rule could not have been presented more clearly.

Furthermore, imagery of both Lorenzo's age and that of later Medici generations fostered the imagery of the rustic Ovidian pastorale. At the country villa at Careggi an image of ideal agrarian tranquillity was nurtured, and on the feast of the Medici saints Damian and Cosmas in 1480, a form of Saturnalia was given for the peasant farmers.<sup>129</sup> Similarly, in the decoration of the villa of Poggio a Caiano, Pontormo's fresco of *Vertumnus and Pomona* (ca. 1520-1521) evoked the Golden Age under the rule of Saturn.<sup>130</sup> The glazed, terracotta frieze (ca. 1485), which is presumed to be by Andrea Sansovino, and is placed over the portico of the villa, provided an amalgam of ancient legend regarding Saturn's rule, and images of the seasons and labours of the agricultural year. A union was created between the legend and the Neo-Platonic reality of Lorenzo il Magnifico's rule.<sup>131</sup> The major theme of the frieze is that of Time and it depicts such scenes as *Nature*

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*Primavera*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 31 (1968): 268-269. Janet Cox-Rearick has also supported this attribution of authorship in *Dynasty and Destiny*, 78.

<sup>128</sup> Dempsey, "MERCURIUS VER," 251. Charles Dempsey's analysis of the painting is based upon a seventeenth century text, written by Girolamo Aleandro Jr., entitled *Antiquae tabulae marmoreae solis effigie, symbolisque exculptae, accurata explicatio* (Rome, 1616). In the last chapter of Aleandro's text he discussed the god Mercury. Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco's inventories of 1498 located the painting in his townhouse although it has previously been thought that the work was commissioned for the patron's villa at Castello. See also Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 78; and Dempsey, "MERCURIUS VER," 266.

<sup>129</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 133.

<sup>130</sup> For full analysis of this fresco see *ibid.*, 133

<sup>131</sup> *L'Architettura di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, ed. G. Morolli, C. A. Luchinat and L. Marchetti (Milan, 1992), 98.

*in the Cavern of Eternity*, as described by Claudian in *De Consulatu Stilichonis*. Other scenes represent the *Birth of the Age of Jupiter*, the *Birth of the Year*, and the *Seasons and the Months*.<sup>132</sup>

During Cosimo I's reign, the Palazzo della Signoria became the centre of overt Saturnian imagery. The positioning of the room dedicated to the depiction of Saturn within the Quartiere degli Elementi in the Palazzo is a case-in-point. The terrace overlooking the Florentine countryside was the area chosen for this particular god, once again referring to both Saturn's personification as the Roman god of agriculture, and to Florence's fertile abundance under Medici rule.

Indeed, the imagery of Medici abundance continued into 1560, with the decoration of the Casino of Pius IV in the Vatican gardens, Rome. The Pope's baptismal name was Gian Angelo de' Medici, and although not of Florentine origin, upon his appointment as Cardinal by Paul III, Cosimo I had invited him to adopt the coat-of-arms of the Florentine Medici.<sup>133</sup> Thus, it is in the four scenes located in the coves of the vault of the stairwell, that the biblical parable of the workers in the vineyard is told. However, in each scene one of Pius's vineyards is depicted, presumably indicating the charity of his papacy. The first scene illustrates the owner of the vineyard with a group of labourers in the first *cortile*

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<sup>132</sup> For full analysis of the frieze see Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 68-76; *L'Architettura di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 94-100; and A. Chastel, *Art et humanisme à Florence au temps de Laurent de Magnifique* (Paris, 1959), 218-225.

<sup>133</sup> G. Smith, *The Casino of Pius IV* (Princeton, 1977), 32.

of the Belvedere Court. In the second scene, the second group of labourers is recruited outside the northwest portal of the Casino itself, and the third group finds employment at the site chosen for the Pope's *palazzina* on the Via Flaminia in the third cove of the vault. The final scene of the payment of the workers by the vineyard owner takes place on the Quirinal Hill, where Pius IV had another vineyard.<sup>134</sup>

Likewise, in Vasari's *Vite* the author makes constant reference to agricultural abundance in relation to various artists. Just as all things were said to grow in Italy under the rule of Saturn, so too did the arts of sculpture, painting and architecture in fertile Tuscany. In the first preface to the text Vasari states:

And the men of those times, not being used to seeing other excellence or greater perfection in any work than that which they themselves saw, marvelled and took these for the best, for all that they were vile, until the spirits of the generation then arising, helped in some places by the subtlety of the air, became so greatly purged that about 1250, Heaven, moved to pity for the lovely minds that the Tuscan soil was producing every day, restored them to their first condition.<sup>135</sup>

Therefore, for Vasari it was the earth of Tuscany that bore greatness in the arts of architecture, painting and sculpture.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 87. Pius IV also drew upon the medical symbolism of the Medici name and utilised it in the imagery of his own reign, just as the Florentine branch of the family had done. See M. Fagiolo and M. L. Madonna, "La Roma di Pio IV: La "civitas Pia," La "salus medica," La "custodia angelica,"" *Arte Illustrata* 47-51 (1972): 383-402.

<sup>135</sup> "E gli uomini di quei tempi, non essendo usati a veder altra bontà nè maggior perfezione nelle cose di quella che essi vedevano, si maravigliavano; e quelle, ancorchè baronesche fossero, nondimeno per le migliori apprendevano. Pur gli spiriti di coloro che nascevano, aitati in qualche luogo dalla sottilità dell'aria, si purgarono tanto, che nel 1250 il cielo a pietà mossosi dei begli ingegni che 'l terren toscano produceva ogni giorno, li ridusse alla forma primiera" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 241; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 45).

Vasari continued by referring to other horticultural pursuits of artists throughout the various biographies. This served the dual purposes of emphasising the artist's closeness and affinity with nature but also accentuated Vasari's understanding of Medici symbolism. While Fra Giocondo, Antonio da Sangallo and Andrea Sansovino are described as delighting in the pursuit of agriculture, many other artists owned farms in the surrounding countryside of Florence.<sup>136</sup> Lorenzo Ghiberti owned two farms. The first was given to him by the Signoria of Florence as part-payment for the completion of the *Gates of Paradise* at the Baptistery (1425-1452). The farm was located near the Abbey of Settimo. The second, called Lepriano, was bought by the sculptor and was located at Monte Morello.<sup>137</sup> Brunelleschi is also documented by Vasari as owning a small farm at Settignano which he sold before leaving for Rome on a research journey with Donatello.<sup>138</sup> Another artist to own land was Benedetto da Maiano. He bought a farm in the area of Prato, on the road from the Porta Fiorentina in the direction of Florence.<sup>139</sup> Leonardo da Vinci's uncle, Piero, owned a farm which the artist undoubtedly visited, and Guglielmo da Marcillat was presented with a farm belonging to the Confraternity of Santa Maria della Misericordia, in Arezzo, for use during his lifetime.<sup>140</sup> Domenico Beccafumi reportedly owned a vineyard near Siena, a mile beyond the Porta a Camollia, and there "he cultivated with his own hand as a

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<sup>136</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 290; 4: 521; 5: 272.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 243.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 337.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 3: 343.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 4: 23; 4: 426.

recreation, going there often.”<sup>141</sup> Rustici was also a land owner possessing a farm at San Marco Vecchio, a short distance from Florence.<sup>142</sup> Niccolò Soggi and Fra Giovanni Agnolo Montorsoli were both born into landed families. The Soggi farm was located at Marciano in Valdichiana, and Fra Giovanni’s family farm was located in the village of Montorsoli, three miles from Florence on the road to Bologna.<sup>143</sup>

While these provide more general references to the horticultural activities of the artists described in the *Vite*, Vasari also makes more definite associations with Saturnian Medici iconography. According to Vasari, the Medici family saved the famed sculptor, Donatello, from certain death by starvation.

It is said that Cosimo, being at the point of death, recommended him to the care of his son Piero, who, as a most diligent executor of his father’s wishes, gave him a farm at Cafaggiuolo, which produced enough to enable him to live in comfort. At this Donato made great rejoicing, thinking that he was thus more than secure from the danger of dying of hunger; but he had not held it a year before he returned to Piero and gave it back to him by public contract, declaring that he refused to lose his peace of mind by having to think of household cares and listen to the importunity of the peasant, who kept pestering him every third day . . .<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> “. . . oltre che non era molto avvezzo a far viaggi, perciocchè avendosi murata una casetta in Siena, ed avendo fuor della porta a Camollia un miglio una sua vigna, la quale per suo passatempo facea fare a sua mano, e vi andava spesso” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 649; idem, *The Lives*, 2: 200).

<sup>142</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 605.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 6: 17; 6: 629.

<sup>144</sup> “Dicesi che venendo Cosimo a morte lo lasciò raccomandato a Piero suo figliuolo; il quale, come diligentissimo, esecutore della volontà di suo padre, gli donò un podere in Cafaggiuolo di tanta rendita, che e’ne poteva vivere comodamente. Di che fece Donato festa grandissima, parendogli essere con questo più che sicuro di non avere a morir di fame. Ma non lo tenne però un anno, che ritornato a Piero glielo rinunziò per contratto pubblico, affermando che non voleva perdere la sua quiete per pensare alla cura famigliare ed alla molestia del contadino; il quale ogni terzo di gli era intorno, quando perchè gli erano tolte le bestie dal comune per le gravezze, e quando per la tempesta che gli aveva tolto il vino e le frutta” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 2: 420; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 374-375).

Instead, Piero provided Donatello with a weekly allowance to be paid in cash for the rest of the artist's life.

Moreover, Donatello was not the only artist to be saved from starvation by the Medici family. In his old age Sandro Botticelli was so poor that if it had not been for Lorenzo il Magnifico's generosity, the painter would have died of hunger.<sup>145</sup>

Likewise, Pope Clement VII was to save the lives of Giulio Romano and Giovan Francesco Penni, Perino del Vaga, Giovanni da Udine and Sebastiano Veneziano.

The previous papacy of Adrian VI had proven to be a very lean period for papal patronage of the arts. In the *vita* of Giulio Romano, this was emphasised by

Vasari's accentuation of the generosity of the Medici Popes. Adrian VI is presented as being unenthusiastic in his support for the decoration of the Villa Madama, Rome (ca. 1515-1521), and other papal works commissioned by his predecessor Leo X.

Driven to despair, therefore, Giulio and Giovan Francesco, and with them Perino del Vaga, Giovanni da Udine, Sebastiano Viniziano, and all the other excellent craftsmen, were about to die of hunger during the lifetime of Adrian. But by the will of God, while the Court, accustomed to the magnificence of Leo, was all in dismay, and all the best craftsmen, perceiving that no art was prized any longer, were beginning to consider where they might take refuge, Adrian died, and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici was elected Supreme Pontiff under the name of Clement VII; and with him all the arts of design, together with the other arts, were restored to life in one day.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 3: 318.

<sup>146</sup> "Disperati adunque Giulio e Giovanfrancesco, ed insieme con esso loro Perino del Vaga, Giovanni da Udine, Bastiano Viniziano, e gli altri artefici eccellenti, furono poco meno (vivente Adriano) che per morirsi di fame. Ma, come volle Dio (mentre che la corte, avvezza nelle grandezze di Leone, era tutta sbigottita, e che tutti i migliori artefici andavano pensando dove ricoverarsi, vedendo niuna virtù essere più in pregio), morì Adriano, e fu creato sommo pontefice Giulio Cardinale de' Medici, che fu chiamato Clemente settimo; col quale risuscitarono in un giorno, insieme con l'altre virtù, tutte l'arti del disegno" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 527; idem, *The Lives*, 2: 120).

Baccio Bandinelli was also generously patronised by Clement VII. As consolation for the public ridicule which Bandinelli suffered following the completion of his statue of *Hercules and Cacus*, Pope Clement VII gave him a country estate in addition to his regular payment.<sup>147</sup> Furthermore, the artist profited during Cosimo I's rule. "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."<sup>148</sup>

Under Medici Saturnian rule starvation was eliminated, and, as in the ancient texts, bounty was brought to Florence and Rome. The Medici not only saved the artists from starvation, but they also regenerated the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture.

### The Regenerating *Broncone*

In the symbolism of the Golden Age of Medici dominance in Florence, the imagery of the *broncone*, was a recurring theme. The specific episode chosen was that of the breaking of the golden bough by Aeneas, from Virgil's *Aeneid* VI.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 6: 161. The sculpture is dated 1534 and was placed in the Piazza della Signoria, Florence.

<sup>148</sup> "Non si curava del dire delle genti, ma attendera a farsi ricco, ed a comprare possessioni. Nel poggio di Fiesole comperò un bellissimo podere chiamato lo Spinello; e nel piano sopra San Salvi, sul fiume d'Affrico, un altro con bellissimo casamento chiamato il Cantone; e nella via de' Ginori, una gran case, la quale il duca con danari e favori gli fece avere" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 182; idem, *The Lives*, 2: 299).

<sup>149</sup> Virgil *Aeneid* 6. 143; P. Giovio, *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose* (Lyons, 1559), 52; G. Ladner, "Vegetation Symbolism and the Concept of the Renaissance," in *De Artibus Opuscula XL*, ed. M. Meiss (1961), 1: 304-305.

As one branch was broken away a new shoot would generate. In Medici imagery an analogy was made between the regeneration of the branch and successive generations of the Medici family, and in the *Vite*, Giorgio Vasari uses the imagery to discuss dynasties of artists.

In the *vite* of Agostino and Agnolo of Siena, the concept of the regenerating tree is highlighted. Vasari writes:

And in truth it is clear that very often the seeds of talent germinate in the houses where they have lain for some time, and throw shoots which afterwards produce greater and better fruits than the first plants had done. Agostino and Agnolo, then, adding great betterment to the manner of Giovanni and Niccola of Pisa, enriched the art with better design and invention, as their works clearly demonstrate.<sup>150</sup>

A similar passage is found in the *vita* of Giovanni Antonio Lappoli. Vasari begins this painter's *vita* by stating:

Rarely does it happen that from old stock there fails to sprout some good shoot, which, growing with time, revives and reclothes with its leaves that desolate stem, and reveals with its fruits to those who taste them the same savour that was once known in the ancient tree.<sup>151</sup>

Giovanni Antonio followed in the footsteps of his father, Matteo, who had also been a painter, and Vasari replicates the image of the Medicean *broncone*.

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<sup>150</sup> "E nel vero, si vede che i semi della virtù molte volte, nelle case dove sono stati per alcun tempo, germogliano e fanno rampolli che poi producono maggiori e migliori frutti che le prime piante fatto non avevano. Agostino, dunque, ed Agnolo, aggiugnendo molto miglioramento alla maniera di Giovanni e Niccola pisani, arricchirono l'arte di miglior disegno ed invenzione, come l'opere loro chiaramente ne dimostrano" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 430; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 118-119).

<sup>151</sup> "Rade volte avviene che d'un ceppo vecchio non germogli alcun rampollo buono, il quale col tempo crescendo, non rinnovi e colle sue frondi rivesta quel luogo spogliato, e faccia medesimo sapore che già si senti del primo albero" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 5; idem, *The Lives*, 2: 203).

However, it is in Vasari's biography of Piero di Cosimo that a direct analogy with the Medici dynasty is made. Piero had been born the son of Lorenzo, a goldsmith but received his name after joining the workshop of Cosimo Rosselli. Therefore, through the devices of naming Vasari creates an analogy with the Medici family. Successive generations of the Medici family had used the names Lorenzo, Piero and Cosimo in the naming of their children. Cosimo Pater Patriae's brother carried the name Lorenzo, and it was from both these branches of the family that Cosimo I, Vasari's patron, was descended. In the most direct analogy between Vasari's description of Piero di Cosimo and the Medici family tree, Cosimo Pater Patriae's son and heir was named Piero (1416-1469). Lorenzo il Magnifico's heir and son was also named Piero, and he, in turn, was father to Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino.

In the imagery of Medici regeneration, the pruning knife was an important companion to the symbolism of the *broncone*. In the ancient legend of the return of the Golden Age under the rule of Saturn, the Roman god of agriculture, Virgil writes of Saturn's pruning hook.

And already, whenever the vineyard has shed her autumn leafage, and the North-wind has shaken their glory from the woods - already then the keen farmer extends his care to the coming year, and pursues the vine he had left, lopping it with Saturn's crooked knife and pruning it into shape.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> "ac iam olim seras posuit cum vinea frondes,  
frigidus et silvis Aquilo decussit honorem,  
iam tum acer curas venientem extendit in annum  
rusticus, et curvo Saturni dente relictam  
persequitur vitem attondens fingitque putando" (Virgil *Georgics* 2. 403-407).

Moreover, in Macrobius's *Saturnalia*, Saturn was credited with bringing the art of grafting to Italy.

Saturn is credited with the invention of the art of grafting, with the cultivation of fruit trees, and with instructing men in everything that belongs to the fertilizing of the fields. Furthermore, at Cyrene his worshipers, when they offer sacrifice to him, crown themselves with fresh figs and present each other with cakes, for they hold that he discovered honey and fruits.<sup>153</sup>

Thus, in Vespasiano da Bisticci's memoir of Cosimo Pater Patriae, he wrote of Cosimo's Saturnian love for agriculture and in particular pruning.

Of agriculture he had the most intimate knowledge, and he would discourse thereupon as if he had never followed any other calling. . . In all his possessions there were few farming operations that were not directed by him. . . moreover, when the peasants came into Florence, he would ask them about the fruit trees and where they were planted. He loved to do grafting and lopping with his own hand. One day I had some talk with him when, being then a young man, he had gone from Florence - where there was sickness - to Careggi. It was then February, when they prune the vines, and I found him engaged in two most excellent tasks. One was to prune the vines every morning for two hours. . .<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> "huic deo insertiones surculorum pomorum que educationes et omnium cuiuscemodi fertiliū tribuunt disciplinas. Cyrenenses etiam, cum rem divinam ei faciunt, ficis recentibus coronantur placentasque mutuo missitant, mellis et fructuum repertorem Saturnum aestimantes" (Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1. 7, 25).

<sup>154</sup> "D'agricoltura, egli n'era intendentissimo, e ragionavane, come s'egli non avessi mai fatto altro. . . Il simile a tute le sua possessioni, vi sono poche cose circa alla agricultura che non fussino ordinate da lui. . . e quando venivano a Firenze i contadini, ne gli domandava del frutto e del luogo dov'egli era; di sua mano si diletto di nestare e di potare; in modo, che mi trovai uno di a ragionare con lui, che sendo in Firenze il morbo, sendo lui di non molta età, si partirono da Firenze, e andorono a Careggi; e sendo di febraio, che è nel tempo che si potano le viti, faceva dua degni exercizi: l'uno, com'egli si levava, andava a potare delle viti, e per dua ore non faceva altro" (V. da Bisticci, *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo XV*, ed. P. D'Ancona and E. Aeschlimann (Milan, 1951), 419; idem, *Renaissance Princes, Popes and Prelates: The Vespasiano Memoirs Lives of Illustrious Men of the Fifteenth Century*, trans. W. George and E. Waters (New York, Evanston and London, 1963), 224-225); and Hale, 25.

Vespasiano continues by stating that Cosimo owned a pruning knife with two-silver rings, in memory of Pope Boniface.<sup>155</sup>

The *broncone* was also a significant part of the symbolism associated with Lorenzo il Magnifico. The device was first presented in the centre of Lorenzo's banner for his *Giostra* of 1469. A lady was seen to wind a wreath from the leaves of a laurel tree which otherwise had dry branches.<sup>156</sup> The analogy between Lorenzo's name and the laurel, as well as the symbolic significance of the regenerating branch made specific reference to the continuation of the Medici dynasty. Giorgio Vasari referred to this symbolism in the *Vite*. In his biography of Valerio Vicentino, Vasari describes how the art of engraving in *intaglio* was brought to Florence by Lorenzo il Magnifico. The art had apparently remained lost since Antiquity and only saw a revival under Medici patronage.<sup>157</sup> The regeneration of engraving is presented in the same manner as the symbolism of the regenerating laurel of the *broncone*.

During the Renaissance the symbolism of pruning became associated with the emblems of 'folly' and 'reform.' It was used in Andrea Alciati's *Emblemata*,

<sup>155</sup> Da Bisticci, *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo XV*, 419.

<sup>156</sup> Ed. from the Codex Magliabechiano VIII, 1503, by P. Fanfani in "Ricordi d' una Giostra fatta a Firenze a di 7 di Febbrajo 1468 nella Piazza di Santa Croce," *Il Borghini: Giornale di filologia e di lettere Italiane*, ser. 1, 2, (1864), 475, 530; L. Pulci, *La giostra fatta in Fiorenza dal Magnifico Lorenzo de Medici il Vecchio l'anno MCCCCLXVIII* (ed. together with Luca Pulci's *Ciriffo Calvaneo*), (Florence, 1572), 81; Ladner, 315-316; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 19-20.

<sup>157</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 368.

started in 1517 and first published in 1531.<sup>158</sup> In his description of 'Folly',

Alciato wrote:

Whatever explanation has been given for the custom of calling country-dwellers, that rustic race, cuckoos? - When spring is new, the cuckoo calls, and anyone who has not pruned his vines by this time is rightly blamed for being idle. The cuckoo deposits its eggs in other birds' nests, like the man on whose account a wife betrays her marriage bed in adultery.<sup>159</sup>

The reference to the idle man failing to prune his vines came from Pliny's *Natural History* and the *Saturnalia* by Horace.<sup>160</sup> Furthermore, in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, first published in Rome in 1593, he stated that the image of *Riforma* should be that of an old woman wearing a simple dress and holding in her right hand a pair of clippers or a pruning knife (fig. 1). The knife cut away the unnecessary branches, which weakened the tree and prevented the growth of fruit, and was representative of the removal of abuses and transgressions, which hampered good government.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> A. Alciato, *Emblemata*, Lyons, 1550, trans. and annotated B. I. Knott (Aldershot, 1999), x.

<sup>159</sup> The Latin inscription reads:

"Ruricolae, agreste genus, plerique cuculos  
Cur uocitent, quænam prodita causa fuit?  
Vere nouo cantat coccyx, quo tempore uites  
Qui non absoluit, iure notatur iners.  
Fert oua in nidos alienos, qualiter ille

Cui thalamum prodit uxor adulterio" (Ibid., 30).

<sup>160</sup> Pliny *Natural History* 18. 66. 249; Horace *Saturnalia* 1. 7. 31.

<sup>161</sup> C. Ripa, *Iconologia*, ed. P. Buscaroli (Turin, 1988), 2: 148; idem, *Iconologia*, ed. E. A. Maser (New York, 1971), 97; and Ladner, 1: 303. The symbolism of pruning was also included in the *impresa* of various seventeenth-century academies. For example, the *impresa* of the Roman Accademia degli Inariditi showed a vine, cut short, but reviving. See M. Maylender, *Storia delle accademie d'Italia* (Bologna, 1926-1930), 3: 183. The *impresa* of the Accademia de'Rin vigoriti, founded in 1629 by Angelo Cesi, depicted a vine being pruned with a knife. Ibid., 5: 8. See also J. Montagu, *An Index of Emblems of the Italian Academies: Based on Michele Maylender's Storie delle accademie d'Italia* (London, 1988), 75.

This symbolism was expressed in Vasari's *vita* of Piero di Cosimo, where he creates an analogy between the artist and the sons' of Cosimo Pater Patriae and Lorenzo il Magnifico. He writes that upon the death of Cosimo Roselli, Piero:

Would not have his rooms swept, he would only eat when hunger came to him, and he would not let his garden be worked or his fruit-trees pruned; nay, he allowed his vines to grow, and the shoots to trail over the ground, not were his fig-trees ever trimmed, or any other trees, for it pleased him to see everything wild, like his own nature; and he declared that Nature's own things should be left to her to look after, without lifting a hand to them.<sup>162</sup>

The imagery of the unkempt vines corresponds to that of Andrea Alciato's description of 'Folly' and of Cesare Ripa's image of 'Reform'. Piero the Gouty, son of Cosimo Pater Patriae, and Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici had been less than effective as Medici leaders of Florence, and under them the government of Florence had suffered. In fact, it was in 1494, during the rule of the later Piero that the family was expelled from Florence. The Golden Age of Medici rule had suffered during these times and it is to this Saturnian symbolism that Vasari refers. Couched in Medicean Saturnian imagery, Vasari's personification of the grief-stricken Piero, unable to tend his garden, is analogous to the two Pieros' leadership of Florence. As an ardent Medici supporter, Vasari implies that the grief of the fathers' deaths prevents their sons' good government of Florence.

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<sup>162</sup> "Non voleva che le stanze si spazzassino; voleva mangiare allora che la fame veniva; e non voleva che si zappasse o potasse i frutti dell'orto, anzi lasciava crescere le viti e andare i tralci per terra; ed i fichi non si potavano mai nè gli altri alberi, anzi si contentava veder salvatico ogni cosa, come la sua natura; allegando che le cose d'essa natura; allegando che le cose d'essa natura bisogna lassarle custodire a lei, senza farvi altro" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 133-134; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 651-652).

The return of the Medici to Florence in 1512, after their expulsion in 1494, also heralded the return of the Laurentian image of the regenerating laurel.<sup>163</sup>

Reference to the Medici *broncone* was made in Attavante's miniature of the *Monte di Scienze* (fig. 2). As an allegory of Pope Leo's primacy and the continuation of the Medici line, it formed part of Tommaso Sardi's *L'Anima Pellegrina*, presented to Leo in 1513. The central image of the work depicts a mountain upon which is growing a laurel with three branches. The central green thriving branch supports a medallion of the Pope as cardinal. The other two branches are cut-off stumps from which water flows into a basin. An accompanying verse explains the image:

As the spring never loses its sweetness,  
the trunk will never lose its green when  
autumn deprives the thick forest of greenness.<sup>164</sup>

A similar message of dynastic continuance was displayed on the title page to Niccolò Valori's *Vita Laurentii Medicis*, which had been dedicated to Pope Leo X in 1518 (fig. 3). The image was created by Monte di Giovanni and depicts *bronconi* framing the title. A portrait medallion of Lorenzo il Magnifico grows from dead stumps.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> The laurel plant also had medical significance as the sacred plant of the god, Apollo. Thus further analogies could be made between the Medici name and the healing properties of the plant. See Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 17-19. Cox-Rearick goes on to list many more examples of the use of the laurel in commissions given by Lorenzo il Magnifico.

<sup>164</sup> "Già mai fu la dolcezza al fonte tolta  
Al tronco virdita non manca mai,

Spogliando l'autunno salva folta" (Rome, Biblioteca Corsiniana 55. K. I.; P. D'Ancona, *La miniatura fiorentina*, 2 vols. (Florence, 1914), no. 1572); Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 29).

<sup>165</sup> Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, MS Plut. 61, 3, f. 2r; D'Ancona, no. 1395; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 29.

The *broncone* also became a part of the imagery of the young Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, and under his leadership the *Compagnia del broncone* staged an elaborate pageant during March of 1513. The program for the decorations had been composed by Nardi and carried the theme of a cycle of Time. The first float depicted the Golden Age of Saturn, followed by five eras of Roman history, and finished with the Golden Age of the Medici return.<sup>166</sup>

Furthermore, in Pontormo's *Portrait of Cosimo Pater Patriae*, the *broncone* is, once again, presented.<sup>167</sup> The commission was given by Goro Gheri. He was secretary to Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino who is believed to have been the most likely patron.<sup>168</sup> To the left of the image of the seated Cosimo, Pontormo painted a laurel tree with its left branch cut off and its right branch thriving. Accompanying the portrait was the Virgilian motto, taken from the *Aeneid*: VNO AVVLSO. NO[N]. DEFIC[IT] ALTER ("as one is torn away, another takes its place").<sup>169</sup>

For the Medici, the pruning knife and the *broncone* became associated with the fortunes of the family after the death of the Duke of Nemours and Duke of

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<sup>166</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 254; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 26-27.

<sup>167</sup> The dating of the portrait has been problematic with various suggestions made by different scholars, many suggesting a date closer to 1519. However, Sparrow has suggested the later date of 1539-1539 because of the Virgilian motto accompanying the image which was used by Cosimo I as part of his *impresa*. See J. Sparrow, "Pontormo's Cosimo il Vecchio: A New Dating," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 30 (1967): 163-75. For a full discussion of the datings see Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 45-47.

<sup>168</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 44-45.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

Urbino. In Pontormo's fresco of *Vertumnus and Pomona*, at the villa of Poggio a Caiano, the figures of Apollo and Pomona both originally held pruning devices. During the later part of the sixteenth century, Allori had been responsible for the cleaning of the fresco and the repainting of the sky, and it was perhaps at this time that Pomona's pruning-hook was partly effaced and Apollo's knife completely removed.<sup>170</sup> The central theme of Pontormo's scene was taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>171</sup> In a description of the goddess Pomona he wrote:

She cared nothing for woods and rivers, but only for the fields and branches laden with delicious fruits. She carried no javelin in her hand, but the curved pruning-hook with which she repressed the too luxuriant growth and cut back the branches spreading out on ever side, and now, making an incision in the bark, would engraft a twig and give juices to an adopted bough.<sup>172</sup>

In Pontormo's lunette, Pomona lies ready to prune the thriving laurel tree, while Apollo reaches for the branches so as to cut them. The cutting of the branches will encourage the growth of new and verdant branches, which will result in a healthy laurel tree. Read as an image of Medici dynastic continuation, the fresco

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<sup>170</sup> “. . . il quale [la lunette] ho rinetto e lavato e rifatto l'aria,” in A. Allori, “I ricordi di Alessandro Allori,” ed. I. B. Supino, *Biblioteca della rivista d'arte* (Florence, 1908), 29. See also Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 139-140.

<sup>171</sup> This belief was mainly formulated upon Vasari's description of the image in his *Le vite*, 6: 265. Traditional interpretations of the image were presented by Cox-Rearick, *Drawings of Pontormo*, 1: 4; J. Shearman, *Andrea del Sarto*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1965), 79; Chastel, *Art et humanisme à Florence*, 156 has provided a slightly different interpretation suggesting that the scene might be a variation on the themes of the Seasons and the Ages. However, Cox-Rearick, in *Dynasty and Destiny*, has provided a very thorough investigation of the image, attaching Medici astrological and dynastic significance to the image.

<sup>172</sup> “Non silvas illa nec amnes,  
rus amat et ramos felicia poma ferentes;  
nec iaculo gravis est, sed adunca dextera falce,  
qua modo luxuriam premit et spatiantia passim  
bracchia conpescit, fisso modo cortice virgam  
inserit et sucos alieno praestat alumno” (Ovid *Metamorphoses* 14. 626-631); Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 121.

represents the continuation of the family line through a new branch of the Medici family. The birth of the new Cosimo after the death of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino and Giuliano, Duke of Nemours, had provided renewed hope for Pope Leo X and it is this renewed prosperity that is depicted in the painting of *Vertumnus and Pomona*.<sup>173</sup>

The images of the pruning-knife and hook were also presented in Franciabigio's *Portrait of a Medici Steward* (1523), commissioned by Pierfrancesco the younger.<sup>174</sup> In this painting, the pruning implements hang unused on the wall behind the steward. The Duke of Urbino had died during 1519, and the death of Leo X during the later part of 1521 heralded a reversal of the Medici family's fortunes. Cardinal Giulio de' Medici had been unsuccessful in being elevated to the papacy after Leo X's death, and the family were without legitimate heirs of an age to take control of the leadership of Florence. Although Cosimo had been born in 1519, he was obviously too young to be involved in Medici politics. The unused implements reflected these changes of fate. The laurel tree would not sprout any new branches after pruning.

However, renewed hope for the revival of the Medici family fortunes arrived when Alessandro de' Medici became *capo* of the Florentine Republic. The *broncone* was once again to be used in the imagery of Medici regeneration.

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<sup>173</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 137-138.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

Vasari was the author of the portrait of *Duke Alessandro de' Medici*, painted during the first half of 1534, and in a letter dated, 18 August, 1534, he included an explanation of the painting. The laurel had been placed on the left of the Duke signifying the return of the Medici. Vasari was to write, "That dry laurel branch which puts forth that erect and fresh leafy twig is the Medici house, once extinguished, which must grow with infinite progeny in the person of Duke Alessandro."<sup>175</sup>

At the commencement of Cosimo I's reign of Florence and Siena, he chose for the motto of his *impresa* an adaptation of the Virgilian verse from the *Aeneid* VI, PRIMO AVULSO NON DEFICIT ALTER AUREUS.<sup>176</sup> This was depicted in Cosimo's *impresa* by the symbol of a tree with a broken branch, which was instantly replaced by another branch, signifying the replacement of one Medici, with another member of the family, namely Cosimo.<sup>177</sup> For Cosimo the *broncone* contained added significance, for he represented the union of two branches of the family.

The *broncone* image of the regenerating tree was frequently utilised by the new Medici ruler. In a medal by Domenico di Polo (ca. 1537-1538), the new Duke

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<sup>175</sup> "Quel tronco secco di lauro che manda fuori quella vermena diritta e fresca di fronde è la casa de' Medici, già spenta, che per la persona del duca Alessandro deve crescer di prole infinitamente" (Vasari's letter of 18 August refers to the imagery of the painting, Frey, 1, 27-29; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 235).

<sup>176</sup> This motto accompanies Pontormo's *Portrait of Cosimo Pater Patriae*. See page 53.

<sup>177</sup> Virgil *Aeneid* 6. 143; Giovio, *Dialogo dell' imprese militari et amorose*, 52; Ladner, 304-305.

appears on one side, while the laurel tree with one broken branch, is presented on the other.<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, the *broncone* was used in the wedding decorations for Cosimo's marriage to Eleanora of Toledo in June 1539,<sup>179</sup> and was included in Bronzino's portrait of the Duke (1545), versions of which exist in Kassel, Florence, New York and Toledo, Ohio.<sup>180</sup> Bronzino included the laurel tree growing beside the Duke.<sup>181</sup> The image of the *broncone* also found a place within Francesco Salviati's decorative cycle for the Sala delle Udienze, in the Palazzo Vecchio. In the artist's painting of the *Triumph of Camillus*, painted during the mid-1540s, the tree is represented as vigorously thriving, representing Cosimo's equally successful leadership of Florence. The motif also appears in a drawing by Salviati at the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Graham Smith has identified the scene as possibly being that of Joseph sold into Egypt, and representing an unexecuted composition for one of the tapestries in the Sala delle Udienze, at the Palazzo Vecchio.<sup>182</sup>

The *broncone* was a crucial aspect of imagery and symbolism associated with Vasari's patron, and therefore it is perhaps unsurprising that this imagery of regeneration also found a place within the *Vite*. Vasari's understanding of the symbolism of the *broncone* was unequivocal. Coated in regenerative vocabulary,

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<sup>178</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 238.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>180</sup> G. Smith, "Bronzino's Portrait of Stefano Colonna: A Note on its Florentine Provenance," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 40 (1977): 268.

<sup>181</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 240; and Smith, "Bronzino's Portrait of Stefano Colonna," 268.

<sup>182</sup> A. P. Tofani and G. Smith, *Sixteenth-Century Tuscan Drawings from the Uffizi* (Oxford and New York, 1988), 76-77.

the dedication to Cosimo I provides the primary example of this. In the opening paragraph of both the 1550 dedication and 1568 edition, Vasari stresses the debt of artists to the House of Medici. While, for Vasari, almost all the great masters of the arts had come from Tuscany and most were Florentines, he continued, “it may be said that in your state, nay in your most blessed house the arts were born anew, and that through the generosity of your ancestors the world has recovered these most beautiful arts, through which it has been ennobled and embellished.”<sup>183</sup>

Within the *Vite*, Vasari continuously alluded to the rebirth or restoration of the arts under Cosimo’s patronage. In the *vita* of Margheritone, contained within the first part of the text, Cosimo I is described as replacing the old with the new. He “pulled down many buildings and the old walls,” including the city walls of Arezzo and the fortress. The Duke’s rebuilding or ‘rebirth’ of the fortress was in order to build “connecting wings and bastions, much stronger and smaller than they were, and in consequence more easy to guard and with few men.”<sup>184</sup> Vasari

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<sup>183</sup> “E perciöcche questi tali sono stati quasi tutti Toscani, e la più parte suoi Fiorentini, e molti d’essi degli illustrissimi antichi suoi con ogni sorte di premii e di onori incitati et aiutati a mettere in opera, si può dire che nel suo stato, anzi nella sua felicissima casa, siano rinate, e per beneficio de’ suoi medesimi abbia il mondo queste bellissime arte ricuperate, e che per esse nobilitato e rimbellito si gia” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 1-2; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 3). The compliments Vasari showered upon Cosimo in the dedication of the *Vite* were perhaps customary between author and patron, for Baldassare Castiglione had held the court of Urbino as a shining example of courtly culture in *Il libro del cortegiano*. It was in the service of the first of his Urbino patrons, Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, that Castiglione found the inspiration to write his text. See B. Kempers, *Painting, Power and Patronage: the Rise of the Professional Artist in the Italian Renaissance* (Harmondsworth, 1992), 219.

<sup>184</sup> “. . . per rifarle con fianchi e baluardi intorno intorno, molto più gagliarde e minori di quello che erano, e per conseguente più atte a guardarsi e da poca gente” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 360; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 93).

therefore emphasised the fact that under Cosimo greater feats of architectural engineering were achieved, and that by replacing the old style with the new a regeneration of the arts was achieved.

Furthermore, it is in Florence that the Confraternity of San Luca is founded and ultimately under the reign of Cosimo I that it receives “benign protection.”<sup>185</sup>

Vasari writes, “in the year 1350, there was founded the Company and Confraternity of Painters; for the masters who were then living, both those of the old Greek manner and those of the new manner of Cimabue, being a great number, and reflecting that the arts of design had had their new birth in Tuscany - nay, rather, in Florence itself.”<sup>186</sup> Once again, we see that the birthplace of the Renaissance is Florence and it is the Medici who provide succour for the confraternity.

Lack of Medici patronage resulted in the decay of the arts. The life of Girolamo della Robbia, found within the pages of the *vita* of Luca della Robbia, is a case-in-point. Girolamo had been working in the service of the King of France, Francis I, with his brother, Luca. Upon the death of Luca, Girolamo decided to return to Florence and find employment in the service of Cosimo I. Upon his return in

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<sup>185</sup> “. . . protettore benignissimo di queste arte del disegno” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 675; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 214).

<sup>186</sup> “. . . l’anno 1350, la Compagnia e Fraternalita de’ Pittori; perchè i maestri che allora vivevano, così della vecchia maniera greca, come della nuova di Cimabue, ritrovandosi in gran numero, e considerando che l’arti del disegno avevano in Toscana, anzi in Fiorenza propria . . .” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 673; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 213).

1553, however, he discovered that the Duke was occupied with the war against the Sienese and decided to return to France. In consequence, the Robbia family became extinct, and according to Vasari, “art was deprived of the true method of making glazed work, for the reason that, although there have been some after them who have practised that sort of sculpture, nevertheless they have all failed by a great measure to attain to the excellence of the elder Luca, Andrea, and the others of the family.”<sup>187</sup> Conclusively, due to Cosimo’s preoccupation with the Sienese wars, the art of glazed ceramics suffered and died.

Throughout Vasari’s text, the similarity to Medici *broncone* imagery is strikingly obvious. In his discussion of commissions, the Medici are presented as regenerators of the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture. In his presentation of artist’s lives, dynastic continuation is stressed and presented in terms of the vegetative symbolism of the *broncone*.

#### Saturnian gods and their Artistic Personifications and Protégés

Vasari’s text can be seen to present a Medicean Saturnian world of abundance for the artist and his craft. The Arcadian imagery of the Golden Age ruled by Saturn, which formed the subject matter of many Medicean commissions, found representation within the pages of the *Vite*. Thus, the Medici, in the

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<sup>187</sup> “. . . ma restò l’arte priva del vero modo di lavorare gl’invetriati: perciocchè, sebbene dopo loro si è qualcuno esercitato in quella sorta di scultura, non è però niuno giammai a gran pezza arrivato all’eccellenza di Luca vecchio, d’Andrea, e degli altri di quella famiglia” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 2: 183-184; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 280).

personification of Saturn, had saved various artists from starvation through the generosity of land, patronage and money, and the regeneration of the arts was achieved under their leadership of Florence. The artists themselves were incarnations of Roman gods or found protection within Saturn's domain.

Consequently, the god Pan found representation within Vasari's text. He was the Greek god of woods and fields, flocks and herds and was important to the imagery of Lorenzo il Magnifico. Lorenzo had founded a cult of Pan at the villa at Careggi, and on the feast day of Saints Cosmas and Damian on 27 September, 1480, a form of Medicean Saturnalia was held at the villa for the peasants.<sup>188</sup> In the imagery of Lorenzo's rule of Florence, Pan represented the universal god of nature ruling not only the cycle of life but also the time of death. In the poetry of *L'Altercazione*, Lorenzo il Magnifico wrote:

Pan, whom every shepherd honors and reveres,  
whose name in Arcady is celebrated,  
who holds sway over that which decays or generates.<sup>189</sup>

According to Cox-Rearick, Lorenzo is presented as the personification of the god in Signorelli's *Triumph of Pan* (ca. 1490).<sup>190</sup> The older shepherd of Signorelli's

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<sup>188</sup> Chastel, *Art et humanisme à Florence*, 227; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 133.

<sup>189</sup> "Pan, quale ogni pastore onora e venera,  
Il cui nome in Arcadia si celebra,

Che impera a quel che si corrompe o genera" (Lorenzo de' Medici's *L'Altercazione*, cited in Lorenzo de' Medici il Magnifico, *Opere*, ed. A. Simioni, vol. 2 (Bari, 1914), Capitolo 4, lines 4-6; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 84). The date of the *Altercazione* is unknown.

<sup>190</sup> Cox-Rearick bases her claim upon H. H. Brummer's article, "Pan Platonius," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* 33 (1964): 57, 64-65 who identified the youth to the right as Lorenzo. Chastel and Cox-Rearick gave the dating of the work as ca. 1490. See Chastel, *Art et humanisme à Florence*, 226; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 83. However, in W. Welliver's article, "Signorelli's 'Court of Pan'," *The Art Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1961), 334, he dated the work ca. 1484-1497. Furthermore, it was Vasari who provided the source of the patronage of Signorelli's painting in Vasari, *Le vite*, 3: 689.

scene presented the depiction of Cosimo Pater Patriae. The young nude to the right of the painting, was Lorenzo's brother, Giuliano (1453-1478), who had been killed in the Pazzi conspiracy.<sup>191</sup> The decay and generation of Pan's realm which forms the subject of Lorenzo's *L'Altercazione* is echoed in *The Triumph of Pan*. While Cosimo and his son, Giuliano, are dead, the legacy of Medici rule is regenerated through the image of Cosimo's other son, Lorenzo.

The symbolism of Pan was also utilised by other Medici patrons. After the restoration of the Medici, in 1512, the young Duke of Urbino, Lorenzo, was identified with the Pan of his name-sake's Golden Age. In an *Eclogue* by Severus Minervius, dated 1516 and dedicated to Lorenzo, it was written:

For Lydian Pan, sprung from the healing race [Medici],  
 now provides leisure for them [dwellers and flocks of the grove],  
 to whom [laurel] handsome Apollo gave divinity and a name.  
 Whence let my Lorenzos assemble at the song of the Muses.<sup>192</sup>

Cosimo I was also to refer to the imagery of Pan, both at the villa at Castello and at the Palazzo della Signoria. Between 1538 and his death in 1550, Tribolo created plans for the garden at Castello.<sup>193</sup> These included a grotto of Pan at the upper end of the central axis of the villa's garden.<sup>194</sup> In a drawing for one of the

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<sup>191</sup> Welliver, 334-345; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 83.

<sup>192</sup> "... nam Lydius illis

Pan Medica de gente satus nunc ocia praestat:

Cui numen, nomenque dedit formosus Apollo.

Vnde mihi Lauri veniant ad carmina Musae" (*Lauretum, sive carmina in laudem Laurentii Medicis*, ed. D. Moreni (Florence, 1820), 39; cited in Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 85).

<sup>193</sup> L. Châtelet-Lange, "The Grotto of the Unicorn and the Garden of the Villa di Castello," *Art Bulletin* 50 (1968): 51.

<sup>194</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 75-76. Vasari does not mention the Pan subject for the grotto; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 269.

fountains, which was not executed, Tribolo depicted Pan sitting upon the crossed *bronconi*.<sup>195</sup> The idea for the grotto might have stemmed from the Pan grotto behind Poggio a Caiano, which had provided an obvious source for the Pan fountain at the Casino of Pius IV.<sup>196</sup> At the Palazzo della Signoria, Pan again appeared in a tapestry, in the Sala di Opi of the Quartiere degli Elementi. The image presented is of the *Sacrifice of Pan* and was designed by Giovanni Stradano.<sup>197</sup>

With these images in mind, it is interesting to re-examine some of the Vasarian stories told about various artists' upbringings. Vasari creates his own Medicean Arcady within the pages of the *Vite*. In Virgil's *Eclogue II*, the author wrote, "Pan cares for the sheep and the shepherds of the sheep."<sup>198</sup> While Saturn provides the artists with sustenance and agricultural abundance, the god Pan is guardian to several artists. Therefore, it was under his guardianship that Giotto and other artists in Vasari's *Vite* found protection.

Giotto's story tells of a young boy growing up in the village of Vespignano, in the district of Florence, as the son of a tiller of the soil. His greatness in art was found while tending his flock of sheep.

Now Bondone gave some sheep into his charge, and he, going about the holding, now in one part and now in another, to graze them, and impelled by a natural inclination to the art of design, was for ever drawing, on

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<sup>195</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 269.

<sup>196</sup> Smith, *Casino of Pius IV*, 28.

<sup>197</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 85.

<sup>198</sup> "Pan curat ovis oviumque magistros" (Virgil *Eclogues* 2. 33).

stones, on the ground, or on sand, something from nature, or in truth anything that came into his fancy. Wherefore, Cimabue, going one day on some business of his own from Florence to Vespignano, found Giotto, while his sheep were browsing, portraying a sheep from nature on a flat and polished slab, with a stone slightly pointed, without having learnt any method of doing this from others, but only from nature.<sup>199</sup>

Almost the exact same story is told in the life of another artist, Andrea del Castagno and is used again in regard to the beginnings of Andrea dal Monte Sansovino and Domenico Beccafumi. Andrea del Castagno was born in the Mugello but was adopted by his Florentine uncle after the death of his father during his early childhood. His uncle employed him to watch his herds. But Andrea's real passion for painting was aroused after one day taking shelter from the rain and sharing his refuge with an artist.<sup>200</sup> Similarly, Andrea dal Monte Sansovino was discovered by Simone Vespucci while modelling in clay some animals he was tending. The boy's father gave permission for his son to be taken to Florence and taught the art of painting with Antonio del Pollaiuolo.<sup>201</sup> Domenico Beccafumi was guarding sheep for his father and was discovered by Lorenzo Beccafumi drawing in the sand of a stream. With the permission of the boy's father, Lorenzo took the young Domenico to Siena where he learnt how to paint.<sup>202</sup> Andrea Mantegna was also a shepherd-artist and although more

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<sup>199</sup> “. . . gli diede Bondone in guardia alcune pecore, le quali egli andando pel podere, quando in un luogo e quando in un altro pasturando, spinto dall' inclinazione della natura all' arte del disegno, per le lastre ed in terra. O in su l' arena del continuo disegnava alcuna cosa di naturale, ovvero che gli venisse in fantasia. Onde andando un giorno Cimabue per sue bisogne da Fiorenza a Vespignano, trovò Giotto che, mentre le sue pecore pascevano, sopra una lastra piana e pulita, con un sasso un poco appuntato, ritraeva una pecora di naturale, senza avere imparato modo nessuno di ciò fare da altri che dalla natura” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 370-371; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 96).

<sup>200</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 2: 668.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 4: 510.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 5: 633.

commonly associated with the art of Venice and Padua, Vasari strongly emphasises Mantegna's debt to Florentine painting.<sup>203</sup>

While these artists were presented by Vasari as earthbound protégés of Pan, in the Medici imagery of a Florentine Arcady, Perino del Vaga was presented as Jove nursed by the goat of Amalthea, subject matter painted by Giorgio Vasari in the Quartiere degli Elementi in the Palazzo della Signoria. According to Vasari, Perino was the son of Giovanni Buonaccorsi, "and this son, after being left as an infant of two months old without his mother, who died of plague, was reared in the greatest misery at a farm, being suckled by a goat, until his father, having gone to Bologna, took as his second wife a woman whose husband and children had died of plague; and she, with her plague-infected milk, finished nursing Piero, who was now called Pierino, and retained that name ever afterwards."<sup>204</sup>

As a deity associated with the return of the Golden Age under Saturn, the story found representation in the portico frieze at Poggio a Caiano, on the façade of the northwest end of the loggia, at the Casino of Pius IV, and in Giorgio Vasari's decoration of the Quartiere degli Elementi.<sup>205</sup> In the Room of Jove, Vasari

<sup>203</sup> Vasari writes that Mantegna was a shepherd in his youth, *ibid.*, 3: 384; He learnt the art of painting from antique sculpture and paintings from Tuscany, *ibid.*, 3: 385-386.

<sup>204</sup> "A costui nacque un figliuolo, il cui nome fu Piero, che, rimasto piccolo di due mesi per la madre morta di peste, fu con grandissima miseria allattata da una capra in una villa; infino che il padre andato a Bologna riprese una seconda donna, alla quale erano morti di peste i figliuoli ed il marito. Costei con il latte appestato fini di nutrire Piero, chiamato Pierino per vezzi, come chiamare i fanciulli: il qual nome se gli mantenne poi tuttavia" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 588; *idem*, *The Lives*, 2: 153).

<sup>205</sup> See Smith, *Casino of Pius IV*, 47 for the depiction of Infancy of Jove at the Casino of Pius IV.

painted the *Infancy of Jove* in the central panel of the ceiling.<sup>206</sup> In a parallel story to that of Perino del Vaga, Jove, son of Saturn, had been saved from death by his mother. It had been prophesied that Saturn would be usurped by one of his children and so as to save her unborn son, Jove's mother fled to Crete. There she gave birth to her son and left him in the care of the nymphs on the slopes of Mount Ida. As is written in Ovid's *Fasti*:

The Naiad Amalthea, famous on the Cretan Mount Ida, is said to have hidden Jove in the woods. She owned a she-goat, conspicuous among the Dictaeon flocks, the fair dam of two kids; her airy horns bent over of her back; her udder was such as the nurse of Jove might have. She suckled the god.<sup>207</sup>

Perino del Vaga is therefore, presented as the Jove of Vasari's Medicean Arcady, just as Giotto, Andrea dal Castagno, Andrea dal Monte Sansovino and Domenico Beccafumi live lives as the god Pan.

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In the imagery of Florence's ruling family, the theme of 'healer' held a prominent position. The Medici had chosen the medical saints, Cosmas and Damian, as their patrons and in the imagery of the return of Saturn's Golden Age,

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<sup>206</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 8: 62-68. The decoration of the room was completed during 1555 and 1556 and so was later in date than Vasari's first edition of the *Vite*.

<sup>207</sup> "Naïs Amalthea, Cretaea nobilis Ida,  
dicitur in silvis occuluisse Iovem.  
huic fuit haedorum mater formosa duorum,  
inter Dictaeos conspicienda greges,  
cornibus aeriis atque in sua terga recurvis,  
ubere, quod nutrix posset habere Iovis.  
lac dabat illa deo" (Ovid *Fasti* 5. 115-121); Hall, 183.

regeneration and cure were alluded to. Marsilio Ficino had tied the melancholic humour to the planet Saturn and in turn this had been allied to the return of the Golden Age of Saturnian rule. The Medici fully exploited the astrological significance of this linking between their family and the return of the Golden Age in decorative cycles for Poggio a Caiano and the Palazzo Vecchio, in the garden iconography of their villas, and the literature dedicated to their rule. This imagery, in turn was exploited by Vasari, in an attempt to show loyalty to his patron, Cosimo I. Whether it was in the painting of the Medici saints or in the artists' salvation under the generosity of Medici Saturnian rule, the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture flourished. Artistic dynastic continuation was couched in the vegetative terms of the *broncone*, just as it had been in Medici family imagery, and the gods of Saturn's realm found their personifications and their disciples in the pages of Giorgio Vasari's *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*.

## CHAPTER 2

### VASARI'S *REGIMEN SANITATIS* - A REGIMEN OF HEALTH FOR PAINTERS, SCULPTORS AND ARCHITECTS

The preservation of health through the regulation of the four humours was a fundamental principle of the theory and practice of medicine from antiquity to the Renaissance. For Vasari it became an essential tool in the establishment of Medici medicinal symbolism in the *Vite*, allowing him to pay homage to his patron and elevate the status of the artists to that of the learned. Vasari had utilised the Medici dynastic imagery of the plague and Medici saints Cosmas and Damian, as well as the symbolism associated with Saturn which, astrologically, ruled those afflicted by the melancholy humour. Thus, the afflictions of the melancholic were also to become a focus for attention throughout the *Vite*.

Biographical authors from the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries often included medical information within their texts and Vasari's book was no different.<sup>208</sup> Their models were the *tacuinum sanitatis* and *regimen sanitatis*, which were both modern forms of text, providing a generalised and simplified version of humoral theory, and focusing upon the regimen of health to prevent disease. Perhaps the most famous of these, and most influential to Vasari, was

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<sup>208</sup> For example, Filippo Villani's, *De origine civitatis Florentiae et eiusdem famosis civibus*, Vespasiano da Bisticci's, *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo quindicesimo* and Paolo Giovio's, *Le vite dei dodici Visconti signori di Milano*, all included medical observations about their subjects within each biography. The influence of biographical works upon the writing of the *Vite* has been included in much of the literature concerning Vasari. See the introduction for bibliographic references.

Marsilio Ficino's *De vita triplici*, which specifically discussed the cure and prevention of melancholy, and, significantly, was dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici.<sup>209</sup> It, like other contemporary medical handbooks, relied heavily upon its antique and Arabic predecessors. Of the latter, Avicenna (980-1037 C.E.) provided the most comprehensive guide to medicine. He was, by profession, a physician whose treatise, entitled *al-Qanun-fi't-Tibb*, presents a systematic catalogue of diseases and their treatments. Latin translations of Avicenna's Arabic work allowed for its easy assimilation into the teaching programs at European universities, where it was more commonly called the *Canon of Medicine*.<sup>210</sup> While Avicenna included his own personal observations, as well as those of other modern physicians, his text is primarily based upon the doctrines presented by Hippocrates (460-370 B.C.E.), Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.), and Galen (131-210 C.E.).<sup>211</sup> Vasari's text did the same, and thus, the *Vite* reflects his wide knowledge of the theory of medicine and its practice.

Of the ancients, Galen and Hippocrates were the most influential figures in medicine. Galen's method of treatment originated in the system of Hippocrates, and his treatises on medicine are extensive and wide-ranging, covering such subjects as physiology, hygiene, etiology, semiotics, pharmacy, instruments and

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<sup>209</sup> Ficino's text has been discussed in relation to Medici symbolism in the previous chapter.

<sup>210</sup> M. H. Shar, *The General Principles of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine* (Karachi, 1966), ix.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. The writings of Hippocrates are generally termed the Hippocratic Collection as not all can be attributed to Hippocrates himself and some treatises were undoubtedly written by close followers of his ideas. As such, it is difficult to date any of his works as is the case with those by Aristotle and Galen. The date of Avicenna's *Canon* is also uncertain.

therapeutics, topics all of use to the author of a *regimen sanitatis*.<sup>212</sup> A broad corpus of Hippocrates's and Galen's texts was translated during the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance. Hippocratic works were preserved and transmitted through monastic establishments during this time.<sup>213</sup> During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries such texts as the *Aphorisms*, *Prognostics*, and *Regimen for acute diseases* entered the medical teaching programs at the Universities of Paris and Oxford.<sup>214</sup> Hippocratic texts were also prescribed for the license in medicine from the University of Montpellier in 1309 and also at the University of Bologna.<sup>215</sup> Moreover, the Medici agent, Janus Lascaris, purchased several Hippocratic works for the Medici library. On his return from Peloponnesus in 1490, Lascaris carried with him a *Collection of the sayings of Hippocrates*, the *Regimen in acute diseases*, a commentary by Stephanus on the *Prognostics*, Galen's commentary *On the nature of man*, and his commentaries *On the elements according to Hippocrates* and *Against Julian for the aphorisms of Hippocrates*.<sup>216</sup> Therefore, the works of Galen and Hippocrates were well known within the Medici circles through which Vasari moved.

Translations and commentaries of Galen's own works also provided popular sources for the Middle Ages and Renaissance *regimen sanitatis*. The sixth

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<sup>212</sup> R. E. Siegel, *Galen's System of Physiology and Medicine* (Basel and New York, 1968), 19.

<sup>213</sup> P. Kibre, "Hippocratic Writings in the Middle Ages," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 18 (1945): 372.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 376-377.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.

century brought the first Latin translations of Galen's Greek works and the *Ad Glauconem de methodo medendi* became available at this time in Europe.<sup>217</sup> By the fourteenth century the Galenic works *De complexionibus*, *De malicia complexionis diverse*, *De crisi et criticis diebus*, *De morbo et accidenti*, *De differentiis februm*, *De ingenio sanitatis* and *De arte curativa ad Glauconem* were required texts for the obtainment of a bachelor's degree at the University of Montpellier.<sup>218</sup> Other popular Galenic texts were the *Ars medica*, *In Hippocratis aphorismos*, *De ossibus*, *De curandi ratione per venae sectionem*, *De locis affectis*, *De temperamentis*, *De simplicium medicamentorum facultatibus* and *Methodus medendi*.<sup>219</sup>

While Italian versions of the Galenic corpus were not available until the 1540s, the broad dissemination of Hippocrates's and Galen's texts did extend into the artistic community and ultimately into Vasari's *Vite*.<sup>220</sup> In Leon Battista Alberti's treatise *De re aedificatoria*, presented to Pope Nicholas V in ca. 1450, he refers to an aphorism by Hippocrates.<sup>221</sup> Alberti writes:

It is the Opinion of the Physician *Hipocrates*, that they who drink Water not well purged, but heavy and ill-tasted, grow Cholicky, and to have large swelled Bellies, while the rest of their Members, their Arms, their

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<sup>217</sup> R. J. Durling, "A Chronological Census of Renaissance Editions and Translations of Galen," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 24 (1961): 232.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 234-235.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>221</sup> The publication of Alberti's treatise was not until 4 January, 1485. Nevertheless, manuscript versions of the Latin text were certainly circulated before publication of the first printed edition and Italian manuscript editions quickly followed. The first translation was completed by Pietro Lauro of Siena and published in 1546 by Vincenzo Valgrisi of Venice. However, it was Cosimo Bartoli's edition, published shortly after that of Pietro Lauro's, that remained the most faithful and complete translation of Alberti's text until the mid-twentieth century.

Shoulders and their Faces become thin and extenuated. Add to this, that through the Fault of the Spleen ill digesting of the Blood, they fall into several Kinds of Distempers, some even pestilential. In Summer, Fluxes of the Belly by the stirring of the Cholera, and the dissolving of the Humours waste all their Strength; and all the Year round they are continually liable to heavy and tedious Infirmities, such as the Dropsy, Asthma and Pleurisy. The young lose their Senses by melancholy Bile; the old are burnt by the Inflammation of the Humours; the Women with Difficulty conceive, and with more Difficulty bring forth: In a Word, every Age and every Sex will fall by early and untimely Deaths, destroyed and worn away by Diseases; nor will they enjoy a single Day while they live, without being tormented with Melancholy or black Humours, and fretted with Spleen and Vapours; so that their Minds will never be free from Vexation and Uneasiness.<sup>222</sup>

Moreover, in the *vita* of Leonardo da Vinci, Vasari tells of Leonardo's work with Marco Antonio della Torre. The physician wanted Leonardo to provide drawings for his book on anatomy.<sup>223</sup> However, Leonardo's experiments, as explained by

<sup>222</sup> "Extat Hippocratis physici sententia: aquam non depuratam sed gravem et sapore non decenti qui biberint, hi ventre aestuoso et tumentis fient; caetera corporis membra, cubiti spatulae facies, reddentur penitus extenuata et mirum in modum gracilia. Adde quod vitio splenis male concreto sanguine in morbos incident varios et pestilentes; aestate proluvio ventris fluente bile et dissolutis humoribus deficient; tum et morbis gravioribus atque diutinis integrum per annum laborabunt; aqua intercus et praecordiorum angustia et anxietatibus laterum urgebuntur. Iuniores bili atra insanient, senes humorum incendio flagrabunt, foeminae aegre concipient et perquam difficiles partus enitentur, omnis denique aetas et sexus morte immatura intempestive cadet acta morbis atque assumpta. Dies vero vitae istorum aget nullus non tristes et coinquinatos malis humoribus atque omnium perturbationum genere vexatos; tum et animo exagitati semper erunt in moerore atque luctu" (L. B. Alberti, *L'architettura [De re aedificatoria]*, trans. G. Orlandi, vol. 1 (Milan, 1966), Book 1, Chapter 4, 39; idem, *The Ten Books of Architecture. The 1755 Leoni Edition* (New York, 1986), Book 1, Chapter 4, 6); and Hippocrates *Airs, waters, places* 7.4.

<sup>223</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 34-35; and A. Castiglioni, *The Renaissance of Medicine in Italy* (Baltimore, 1934), 22. Leonardo's anatomical research encompassed more than the discovery of the position of bones, sinews and nerves and included medical answers for human disease and their subsequent external effects upon the human body's appearance. His investigations covered such areas as the nervous system, in which he tried to ascertain the causes of paralysis and epilepsy; see *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, trans. E. MacCurdy (London, 1954), 1: 115. He also examined the effects of aging on the human body and its accompanying ailments; see Institut de France, Paris, *M.S. Ashburnham II*, 28v; Vatican, *Codex Urbinas Latinus* 1270, 126v-127r; *Treatise on Painting by Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. and trans. A. McMahon (Princeton, 1956), 32395; *Leonardo on Painting*, ed. and trans. M. Kemp (New Haven and London, 1989), 132; and *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, 112. Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks indicate that these observations were to be presented in a text entitled *Of the Human Figure*. It may be assumed that this book was intended for the use of artists, physicians and anatomists. The work was to include the conception and progression of human life. Complexion and physiognomy were to be recorded and themes

Vasari, show that his knowledge of Galen's texts was extensive and related to more than pure anatomy. Vasari writes:

He went to Rome with Duke Giuliano de' Medici, at the election of Pope Leo, who spent much of his time on philosophical studies, and particularly on alchemy; where, forming a paste of a certain kind of wax, as he walked he shaped animals very thin and full of wind, and, by blowing into them, made them fly through the air, but when the wind ceased they fell to the ground. . . . He used often to have the guts of a wether completely freed of their fat and cleaned, and thus made so fine that they could have been held in the palm of the hand; and having placed a pair of blacksmith's bellows in another room, he fixed to them one end of these, and, blowing into them, filled the room, which was very large, so that whatever was in it was obliged to retreat into a corner; showing how, transparent and full of wind, from taking up little space at the beginning they had come to occupy much, and likening them to virtue.<sup>224</sup>

A similar extract is found in Galen's *On the natural faculties* where it is explained:

Children take the bladder of pigs, fill them with air, and then rub them on ashes near the fire, so as to warm, but not to injure them. This is a common game in the district of Ionia, and among not a few other nations. As they rub, they sing songs, to a certain measure, time and rhythm, and all their words are an exhortation to the bladder to increase in size. When it appears to them fairly well distended, they again blow air into it and expand it further; then they rub it again. This they do several times, until the bladder seems to them to have become large enough. Now, clearly, in these doings of the children, the more the interior cavity of the bladder increases in size, the thinner, necessarily, does its substance become.<sup>225</sup>

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regarding epilepsy, fever and the formation of gravel and stone were also included, subjects which he further elaborated upon in his notebooks, and which are noted above. The list was revised, on 2 April, 1489, and epilepsy, spasm and paralysis included as themes in anatomy and physiology; see *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, 126-128; and *ibid.*, 152-153.

<sup>224</sup> "Andò a Roma col duca Giuliano de' Medici nella creazione di papa Leone, che attendeva molto a cose filosofiche, e massimamente alla alchimia; dove formando una pasta di una cera, mentre che camminava, faceva animali sottilissimi pieni di vento, nei quali soffiando, gli faceva volare per l'aria; ma cessando il vento, cadevano in terra. . . Usava spesso far minutamente digrassare e purgare le budella d'un castrato e talmente venir sottili, che si sarebbero tenuto in palma di mano; e aveva messo in un'altra stanza un paio di mantici da fabbro, ai quali metteva un capo delle dette budella, e gonfiandole ne riempiva la stanza, la quale era grandissima; dove bisognava che si recasse in un canto chi v'era, mostrando quelle trasparenti e piene di vento dal tenere poco luogo in principio, esser venute a occuparne molto, agguagliandole alla virtù" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 46-47; *idem*, *The Lives*, 1: 638).

<sup>225</sup> Galen *On the natural faculties* 1. 7.

Thus, Vasari's text followed after a long line of scientific investigation by artists. For Alberti and Leonardo, the ancients provided methods of biological discovery, but for Vasari it extended beyond this to provide a medical affinity, and thus, a rise in status, with his patron's imagery, as well as homage to Cosimo I's family. His biographies form a *regimen sanitatis* for the melancholy painter, the sculptor and the architect, just as Ficino's *De vita triplici* had done for his melancholy patron Lorenzo il Magnifico. The analogy could not have escaped the notice of Cosimo I, as through the example of the artists' melancholy lives, Vasari demonstrates the principles behind the preservation of health, as set out by Hippocrates, Aristotle, Galen and Avicenna.

#### **The Principle of the Four Humours in the Preservation of Health**

The basic premise for describing the causes and effects of disease, utilised by the *regimen sanitatis*, is based upon the fundamental principle of the four humours. Since the later part of the fifth century B.C.E., the medical principle that man in normal circumstances contains a natural balance of the four humours of phlegm, blood, black bile and yellow bile existed. Empedocles, Philistion and Philolaos state that health is maintained by an equal balance of humours, and disease is the result of imbalance.<sup>226</sup> Hippocrates adopted this concept but added that the dominance of one humour would cause disease.<sup>227</sup> In the Hippocratic discourse, *Nature of man*, it is stated:

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<sup>226</sup> Siegel, 216.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 216.

The body of man has in itself blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile; these make up the nature of his body, and through these he feels pain or enjoys health. Now he enjoys the most perfect health when these elements are duly proportioned to one another in respect of compounding, power and bulk, and when they are perfectly mingled. Pain is felt when one of these elements is in defect or excess, or is isolated in the body without being compounded with all the others.<sup>228</sup>

Moreover, maintenance of health and prevention of disease are provided by complexion theory, which governs that each humour contains the properties of hot or cold, dry or moist, and through the regulation of these properties health is maintained. Phlegm is regarded as cold and moist, blood as hot and moist, black bile is considered cold and dry, and yellow bile is hot and dry. Thus, complexion theory involves treatment by opposites. This theory was invoked by Hippocrates in his discourse entitled *Nature of man*. Regimen is regarded as the primary cause of disease, however, and complexion theory provided the cure. It is stated:

But when diseases of all sorts occur at one and the same time, it is clear that in each case the particular regimen is the cause, and that the treatment carried out should be that opposed to the cause of the disease, as has been set forth by me elsewhere also, and should be by change of regimen. For it is clear that, of the regimen the patient is wont to use, either all, or the greater part, or some one part, is not suited to him.<sup>229</sup>

Hippocrates's notion of complexion theory, in regard to the nourishment of the body, was further explained by Galen. In his treatise *On the natural faculties*, he notes:

What I say is that we must cool the over-heated stomach and warm the chilled one; so also we must moisten the one which has become dried up, and conversely; so, too, in combinations of these conditions; if the stomach becomes at the same time warmer and drier than normally, the first principle of treatment is at once to chill and moisten it; and if it

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<sup>228</sup> Hippocrates *Nature of man* 4.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

become colder and moister, it must be warmed and dried; so also in other cases.<sup>230</sup>

Aristotle accepted the analysis of Hippocrates and Galen but also explained that complexion theory is related to the seasons. Phlegm was regarded as the humour most closely related to winter, blood related to spring, yellow bile to summer and black bile to autumn. He recognised that opposite qualities of season and disease would prevent continuation of the ailment.<sup>231</sup>

However, Aristotle also recognised that each humour and season could also bring about temperamental changes in man.<sup>232</sup> Thus, the theory of the four humours was divided into two sections: natural philosophy and pure medicine.<sup>233</sup> While the latter formed the basis for treatment and cure of disease, natural philosophy paved the way for the development of the theory behind the disease, namely an imbalance of the humours, causing psychological differentiation between character types. Accordingly, those who suffered from an excess of blood were classified as sanguine, those with an excess of yellow bile choleric, an excess of black bile caused the melancholic temperament, and the phlegmatic were those afflicted by phlegm. In Vasari's *Vite*, Taddeo Zuccaro is classified as having a sanguine temperament, and Torrigiano and Salviati are considered choleric.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Galen *On the natural faculties* 2. 9; see also Galen *On the therapeutic method* 2. 4, 17.

<sup>231</sup> Aristotle *Problems* 1. 3.

<sup>232</sup> M. W. Adamson, *Medieval Dietetics: Food and Drink in Regimen sanitatis Literature from 800 to 1400* (Frankfurt and New York, 1995), 12.

<sup>233</sup> Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxl, 10.

<sup>234</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 103; 4: 259; 7: 25; Even though Torrigiano and Salviati are described as choleric, Vasari noted that they became melancholic, corresponding to Hippocrates pronouncement that "the bilious and sanguineous body is melancholic when it lacks evacuation" (Hippocrates *Epidemics* 6. 6, 14); see also Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 263; 7: 42.

The most important temperament to the Renaissance artist of Vasari's *Vite* was that of melancholy. Aristotle had questioned in *Problems*:

Why is it that all those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts are clearly of an atrabilious temperament, and some of them to such an extent as to be affected by diseases caused by black bile, as is said to have happened to Heracles among the heroes?<sup>235</sup>

In an attempt for recognition of the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture, Vasari had equated their practitioners with the philosophers, politicians and poets of Aristotle's text, and most importantly, with Cosimo I, his patron. Cennino Cennini had previously attempted the same elevation of the arts in *Il libro dell'arte*, completed during the last decade of the fourteenth century or during the first half of the fifteenth century, at a date no later than 31 July, 1437.<sup>236</sup> He appeals to the artist to lead his life as if he were a theologian or a philosopher and, in chapter one of the work, makes a case for the placement of painting within the liberal arts.<sup>237</sup> While Cennini acknowledges painting's practical basis, he manufactures a case for its status rising to that of poetry. He postulates:

that the poet, with his theory, though he have but one, it makes him worthy, is free to compose and bind together, or not, as he pleases,

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<sup>235</sup> Aristotle *Problems* 30. 1

<sup>236</sup> The date of Cennini's text is uncertain. Linda and Peter Murray's *The Penguin Dictionary of Art and Artists* (page 73) and *Art in the Making: Italian Painting before 1400* (page 2, and 210) cite a date of ca. 1390. However, there is no conclusive evidence of this. D. V. Thompson's translation entitled, *The Craftsman's Handbook: "Il libro dell'arte"* (New York, 1954), states that the date of 31 July, 1437 only applies to that particular transcription of the manuscript and not to the actual writing of the text; see page 131. There are three extant manuscripts of Cennini's text: Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS. 23. P. 78. This is the earliest and is dated 31 July, 1437 as so stated above. It is said to have been transcribed by an inmate of the *Stinche*, the debtors' prison in Florence and is in an incomplete state. It is also highly unlikely to be a copy by Cennino Cennini himself. The second, Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS. 2190, is the most complete copy and dates from the second half of the sixteenth century. Rome, Vatican, MS. Ottoboniensis 2974 was derived from the Laurenziana MS. and is the most modern of the three manuscript editions. It too is incomplete; see D. Bomford, J. Dunkerton, D. Gordon, A. Roy, *Art in the Making: Italian Painting before 1400* (London, 1990), 212.

<sup>237</sup> C. Cennini, *Il libro dell'arte*, ed. D. V. Thompson (New Haven, 1932), 2; 16.

according to his inclination. In the same way, the painter is given freedom to compose a figure, standing, seated, half-man, half-horse, as he pleases, according to his imagination.<sup>238</sup>

Accordingly, Cennini's argument for the recognition of painting as a liberal art was based upon the painter's skill of imagination, which he equates to that of the poet's.<sup>239</sup>

Vasari followed Cennini's example, but made more specific reference to Aristotle's text. Various painters and sculptors are presented as poets, philosophers or orators, Rosso Fiorentino achieving all three skills.<sup>240</sup> Bramante and Bartolommeo Genga are described as poets, and Sebastiano del Piombo, Girolamo da Carpi, Timoteo da Urbino, and Girolamo Genga are recognised by Vasari for their skills as orators.<sup>241</sup> Moreover, Rustici and Andrea Sansovino are described as philosophers.<sup>242</sup> Giorgio Vasari extended his argument, however, to include the bilious diseases which Aristotle claimed the politician, poet and philosopher were susceptible to. He planned to elevate the manual craftsman to

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<sup>238</sup> "che'l poeta con la scienza, per una che a il fa dengnio, ellibero di potere conporre ellegiare insieme, si e non, come gli piace, secondo suo volonta. Per lo simile, al dipintore data e liberta potere conporre una figura ritta, a sedere, mezzo huomo, mezzo cavallo, si chome gli piace, secondo suo fantasia" (Ibid., 2; idem, *The Craftsman's Handbook*, 2).

<sup>239</sup> This standpoint drastically broke with previous thought concerning the placement of the art of painting. Gregory the Great's decree, written at the end of the sixth century, had stated that: "Paintings should be employed in churches for this reason, that those who are ignorant of letters, may, on seeing them, read on walls what they are not able to acquire from books" (Gregory I, *Registrum Epistolarum, MGH. Ep.*, ii, 195, 269-272; quoted from J. Larner, "The Artist and the Intellectuals in Fourteenth Century Italy," *History*, no. 180 (February, 1969): 14). Gregory's statement implied that painting was only suitable for the mind of the illiterate and uneducated, and remained a dominant thought until the mid-thirteenth century. Cennini's text presented a radical break with this tradition.

<sup>240</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 155-156.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 4: 164; 6: 330; 5: 566; 6: 479; 4: 498; 6: 322.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 6: 601; 4: 523.

that of liberal artist, using the melancholic's ailments and temperament as a means of achieving his aim, a tactic which had also been employed by his patron, Cosimo I. Therefore, for the artists of Vasari's text, disease was commonly caused by the offending humour of black bile. The *Vite* provides a register of melancholy complaints, the treatment of which was by attention to regimen and observance of complexion theory through the observation of the 'non-naturals'.

### The 'Non-naturals' and the Treatment of Disease

From antiquity to the Renaissance, concepts of treatment were based primarily upon the prevention of ailments rather than relying upon cures. The treatments given by physicians were often regarded with scepticism, and comments regarding medical treatment were unfavorable. One such artist to voice his opinions in this regard was Piero di Cosimo. Vasari writes:

He spoke evil of physicians, apothecaries, and those who nurse the sick, saying that they cause them to die of hunger; besides the tortures of syrups, medicines, clysters, and other martyrdoms, such as not being allowed to sleep when you are drowsy, making your will, seeing your relatives round you, and staying in a dark room.<sup>243</sup>

Therefore, the regulation of the 'non-naturals' was the primary means by which human health was governed. They presented preventative measures against disease and were commonly defined as air, food and drink, sleeping and waking,

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<sup>243</sup> "Diceva male de' medici, degli speciali e di coloro che guardano gli ammalati e che gli fanno morire di fame; oltre i tormenti degli sciloppi, medicine, cristieri, e altri martori, come il non essere lasciato dormire quando tu hai sonno, il fare testamento, il veder piagnere i parenti, e lo stare in camera al buio" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 143; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 658).

evacuation and retention, rest and movement, and passions of the mind.<sup>244</sup> The concept was Galenic but originated in Hippocrates's doctrine of medicine.

Hippocrates considered that the body is nourished by solid food, drink and wind.

The latter could be defined in two ways: when inside the human body wind is defined as breath and when in the surrounding environment as air.<sup>245</sup> Thus, in

Galen's *Medical art* he states:

Of necessity we are immersed in the surrounding air, and we eat, drink, wake, and sleep. We are not necessarily thrust against swords and beasts. Hence in the first category of causes but not in the second there is an art devoted to the protection of the body. Now that these matters have been set forth, we shall find, in each of these items which necessarily alter the body, its own kind of healthful causes. One comes from contact with the surrounding air, another from movement and rest of the whole body or its parts, a third from sleep and waking, a fourth from things taken into the body, a fifth from those that are excreted and retained, a sixth from affections of the mind.<sup>246</sup>

Moreover, the antique concept of the 'non-naturals' formed the basis of fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth-century medical texts. Their importance to the prevention of disease is amply demonstrated in the *Tacuinum sanitatis* codex, in the Municipal Library of Rouen, completed during the early 1400s. The foreward states:

The *tacuinum sanitatis* is about the six things that are necessary for every man in the daily preservation of his health, about their correct uses and their effects. The first is the treatment of air, which concerns the heart. The second is the right use of foods and drinks. The third is the correct use of movement and rest. The fourth is the problem of prohibition of the

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<sup>244</sup> In Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxl, 85 food and drink were viewed as separate categories and passions of the mind were omitted; see also L. J. Rather, "The 'Six Things Non-Natural': A Note on the Origins and Fate of a Doctrine and a Phrase," *Clio Medica* 3 (1968): 337.

<sup>245</sup> Hippocrates *Breaths* 3.

<sup>246</sup> Adamson, 19.

body from sleep, or excessive wakefulness. The fifth is the correct use of elimination and retention of humours. The sixth is the regulating of the person by moderating joy, anger, fear, and distress. The secret of the preservation of health, in fact, will be in the proper balance of all these elements, since it is the disturbance of this balance that causes the illnesses which the glorious and most exalted God permits.<sup>247</sup>

The author continues by commenting that the advice of the ancients would not be neglected.<sup>248</sup> The same is to be said of the *regimen sanitatis* by Marsilio Ficino.

*De vita triplici* followed the same format of concentration upon the 'non-naturals' as the antique examples by Hippocrates and Galen.

However, these principles were not solely confined to medical texts. The inclusion of information regarding the humours, diseases and their treatment by observation of the 'non-naturals', was also a facet of the biographical text. Filippo Villani and Vespasiano da Bisticci had detailed such facts in *De origine civitatis Florentiae et eiusdem famosis civibus* and the *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo quindicesimo*, respectively.<sup>249</sup> Paolo Giovio, Vasari's mentor and editor of the 1550 edition, had also included medical information in his biographical works which included the *Vite dei dodici Visconti signori di Milano*.<sup>250</sup> The example had also been set by the artists Cennino Cennini, Lorenzo Ghiberti and Benvenuto

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<sup>247</sup> L. C. Arano, *The Medieval Health Handbook - Tacuinum sanitatis*, trans. O. Ratti and A. Westbrook (New York, 1976), 6.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>249</sup> Villani had mainly provided physiognomic descriptions. Vespasiano was more specific in his discussion of diseases, their prevention and cures. His comments have been included in the relevant sections of this chapter.

<sup>250</sup> Giovio's descriptions are included in the relevant sections of this chapter.

Cellini amongst others.<sup>251</sup> While Cennini's handbook, *Il libro dell'arte*, mainly concentrated upon techniques of painting, he also included brief mention of how an artist should conduct his life so as to maintain his health. Alberti's treatise, *De re aedificatoria*, provided the architect with information regarding town planning and he advises as to the healthiest sites for building. The autobiography of Cellini, written between 1558 and 1562, focused upon the sculptor's own medical complaints, their cures and preventions.<sup>252</sup>

It is upon this rich heritage of medical and biographical texts that Vasari draws, and it is within this context that the *Vite* will be examined. Just as Ficino had created a *regimen sanitatis* for his melancholy Medici lord, so too did Vasari for the melancholic artist, prone to excesses of black bile. Vasari thus honoured his patron and, through association, elevated the position of the artist in society.

#### The 'Non-natural' of Air

The concept that air could produce variations in human temperament and health was one shared by antique physicians and artists alike. Galen states in his commentary upon Hippocrates's *Airs, waters, places*, "universal diseases come from waters, winds, air and the situation of the city," and the Augustan architect, Vitruvius, fully utilised this theory in his treatise on architecture, entitled *De*

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<sup>251</sup> Leon Battista Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti and Jacopo Pontormo all produced treatises, notes and sketches, letters and diaries, respectively, which included medical and dietetic entries. These are discussed in the relevant sections of this chapter.

<sup>252</sup> The advice contained within each of these works is discussed in the relevant sections of this chapter.

*architectura*.<sup>253</sup> He recognised the importance of the architect in the selection of healthy sites for the building of cities. Climate was a major component in the decision process with notation being made of air and water conditions. In the case of the fortified town, Vitruvius notes:

First, the choice of the most healthy site. Now this will be high and free from clouds and hoar frost, with an aspect neither hot nor cold, but temperate. Besides, in this way a marshy neighbourhood shall be avoided. For when the morning breezes come with the rising sun to a town, and clouds rising from these shall be conjoined, and with their blast, shall sprinkle on the bodies of the inhabitants the poisoned breaths of marsh animals, they will make the site pestilential.<sup>254</sup>

The ill effects of marshy land were well noted in Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography where he comments that his syphilis worsened in the wind and water of the marshlands.<sup>255</sup> However, it is in Leon Battista Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* that the influence of ancient thought can be truly seen. The classical example for his text was provided by Vitruvius and, in both *De re aedificatoria* and *De architectura*, the authors utilised Aristotelian, Hippocratic and Galenic concepts. Alberti's text recognised that clean air maintained an important role in the preservation of life and that climate was crucial to generation, growth, nourishment and the provision of health. Disease is generated by pollution, which is characterised as "a continued Collection of thick Clouds and stinking Vapours, and which always hangs like a great Weight upon the Eyes, and obstructs the

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<sup>253</sup> Galen, *Galen's Commentary on the Hippocratic treatise airs, waters, places*, trans. A. Wasserstein (Jerusalem, 1982), 19.

<sup>254</sup> "Primum electio loci saluberrimi. Is autem erit excelsus et non nebulosus, non pruinosus regionesque caeli spectans neque aestuosas neque frigidas sed temperatas, deinde sic vitabitur palustris vicinitas. Cum enim aurae matutinae cum sole oriente ad oppidum pervenient et his ortae nebulae adiungentur spiritusque bestiarum palustrium venenatos cum nebula mixtos in habitatorum corpora flatu spargent, efficient locum pestilentem" (Vitruvius *De architectura* 1. 4, 1).

<sup>255</sup> B. Cellini, *Le vita, i trattati, i discorsi*, ed. P. Scarpellini (Turin, 1967), 107.

Sight.”<sup>256</sup> His analysis, like that of Vitruvius, extended to its effect upon cities.

He states:

The Form of the Place therefore in which we intend to build, ought to be graceful and pleasant, not mean and low, as if it were buried below the rest of the Earth, but lofty, and as it were a Hawk to look clear round about, and constantly refreshed on every Side with delightful Breezes. Besides this, let there be Plenty of every thing necessary, either to the Convenience or Pleasure of Life, as Water, Fire and Provisions: But Care must be taken, that there is nothing in any of these Things prejudicial to the Health. The Springs must be opened and tasted, and the Water tried by Fire, that there be no Mixture in it of mucous, viscous or crude Particles, that may affect the Constitutions of the Inhabitants.<sup>257</sup>

Therefore, the application of medical thought to artistic treatises is well documented, and it is with little surprise that one finds Vasari’s application of the concept within the *Vite*. Its utilisation had a dual function. The first was the elevation of the arts, and the second, to pay homage to his Medici patron.

#### *The Elevation of the Arts Within the Domain of the Medici*

In Giorgio Vasari’s *Vite* air was used as a means by which Tuscan artistry could be elevated. In the preface to part one he comments:

And the men in those times, not being used to see other excellence or greater perfection in any work than that which they themselves saw, marvelled and took these for the best, for all that they were vile, until the

<sup>256</sup> “L’addensamento di nebbie o l’esalazione di vapori rende densa e fetida, onde una sorta di gravezza incombe sull’occhio ostacolando la vista” (Alberti, *L’architettura*, Book 1, Chapter 3, 26; idem, *The Ten Books of Architecture*, Book 1, Chapter 3, 3).

<sup>257</sup> “Itaque erit quidem loci forma et digna et amoena, quae nequaquam humilis et quasi immersa, sed quae celsa et admodum speculatrix siet et quo laetissimus aer assiduo aliquo spiritu moveatur. Habebit praeterea earum rerum copiam, quae usui et voluptati usque futura sint, aquam ignem escam. Sed in his servandum erit, nequid inde salutis et rebus hominum officiat. Aperiendi gustandique fontes, spectandae et ignibus aquae, nequid viscosi mucidi crudulente in se admixtum habeant, quo incolae in morbos incidant” (Alberti, *L’architettura*, Book 1, Chapter 4, 37; idem, *The Ten Books of Architecture*, Book 1, Chapter 4, 6).

spirits of the generation then arising, helped in some places by the subtlety of the air, became so greatly purged that about 1250, Heaven, moved to pity for the lovely minds that the Tuscan soil was producing every day, restored them to their first condition.<sup>258</sup>

Moreover, the restorative effects of Tuscan air are further noted in the *vita* of Jacopo Sansovino. The artist had to return to Florence upon two occasions of ill health in order to enjoy a change of air.<sup>259</sup> Giotto's disciple, Stefano, is also described as suffering from the changes in air quality. Stefano had travelled to Milan to complete commissions given to him by Matteo Visconti. Illness befell him due to the change of air and he was forced to return to Florence.<sup>260</sup> Lorenzo di Bicci found a cure for his pleurisy, which he had contracted while working in Arezzo, by returning to Florence where a change of location brought about his recovery.<sup>261</sup> Masolino da Panicale returned to Florence from Rome because the air gave him a headache, and for Brunelleschi the air of Rome gave him a slight indisposition.<sup>262</sup> Birth in the region of Tuscany was to be celebrated, and Michelangelo was to rejoice at his birth in the pure air of Arezzo.<sup>263</sup> Change of location brought about ill health, and in the case of Rosso Fiorentino, his skills in drawing and painting were to suffer as a result of his move to Rome. Vasari reasons that:

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<sup>258</sup> "E gli uomini di quei tempi, non essendo usati a veder altra bontà nè maggior perfezione nelle cose di quella che essi vedevano, si maravigliavano; e quelle, ancorchè baronesche fossero, nondimeno per le migliori apprendevano. Pur gli spiriti di coloro che nascevano, aitati in qualche luogo dalla sottilità dell'aria, si purgarono tanto, che nel 1250 il cielo a pietà mossosi dei begli ingegni che 'l terren toscano produceva ogni giorno, li ridusse alla forma primiera" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 241; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 45).

<sup>259</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 490-491.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 1: 450.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 2: 56-57.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 2: 264; 2: 339.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 7: 137.

He who changes his country or place of habitation seems to change his nature, talents, character, and personal habits, insomuch that sometimes he seems to be not the same man but another, all dazed and stupefied. This may have happened to Rosso in the air of Rome, and on account of the stupendous works of architecture and sculpture that he saw there, and the paintings and statues of Michelangelo, which may have thrown him off his balance.<sup>264</sup>

Furthermore, in Vasari's biography of Marco Cardisco, called "il Calabrese", he further elaborates on the effects of air upon human disposition and temperament.

Vasari notes:

When the world possesses some great light in any science, every least part is illuminated by its rays, some with greater brightness and some with less; and the miracles that result are also greater or less according to differences of air and place. Constantly, in truth, do we see a particular country producing a particular kind of intellect fitted for a particular kind of work, for which others are not fitted, nor can they even attain, whatever labours they may endure, to the goal of supreme excellence.<sup>265</sup>

Vasari's analysis agreed with that of the ancients. In Aristotle's *Problems*, the philosopher categorised different regions as producing different human traits, and in the case of Rosso Fiorentino and "il Calabrese" this can be seen to be exactly the case.<sup>266</sup> However, Vasari's analysis of air extended beyond the celebration of Tuscan artistry to include the melancholy diseases carried by this 'non-natural'.

<sup>264</sup> "Che chi muta paese o luogo, pare che muti natura, virtù, costumi, ed abito di persona, intanto che talora non pare quel medesimo, ma un altro, e tutto stordito e stupefatto. Il che potè intervenire al Rosso nell'aria di Roma, e per le stupende cose che egli vi vide d'architettura e scultura, e per le pitture e statue di Michelagnolo, che forse lo cavarono di sè" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 161-162; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 903).

<sup>265</sup> "Quando il mondo ha un lume in una scienza, che sia grande, universalmente ne risplende ogni parte, e dove maggior fiamma e dove minore; e secondo i siti e l'arie, sono i miracoli ancora maggiori e minori. E nel vero, di continuo certi ingegni in certe provincie sono a certe cose atti, ch'altri non possono essere: nè per fatiche che eglino durino, arrivano però mai al segno di grandissima eccellenza" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 211; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 930).

<sup>266</sup> Aristotle stated that those living in warmer regions were wiser but more cowardly than those living in cold districts; see Aristotle *Problems* 14. 15; 14. 16.

*The 'Non-natural' of Air and the Transmission of Bilious Diseases*

In his autobiography, Benvenuto Cellini comments that the open air of the countryside, which he enjoyed when shooting, was of great benefit to his melancholic constitution.<sup>267</sup> Air also had an adverse effect as a carrier of disease, however, and in Giorgio Vasari's analysis of the artist he predominantly describes the diseases caused by an increase in black bile. Hippocrates states in the *Aphorisms* that autumn, the month in which black bile was at its highest, brought the diseases of quartan fever, irregular fevers, enlarged spleen, dropsy, consumption, strangury, lientery, dysentery, sciatica, angina, asthma, ileus, epilepsy, madness and melancholia, and Avicenna's *Canon* agreed.<sup>268</sup> The bilious were susceptible to irregular fevers, quartan fevers, insanity, consumption and dysuria during the months of autumn.<sup>269</sup> Thus, the melancholic artists of the *Vite* were prone to these medical conditions.

The biographies of the *Vite* provided examples of disease caused by exposure to this 'non-natural'. Mariotto Albertinelli suffered from the cold air, which ended his life, and the artist Tribolo was also to suffer from illness, which, Vasari speculated, was due to a change of air.<sup>270</sup> Fra Bartolommeo was sent to a different monastery by his Prior for a change in climate, and Maestro Claudio died due to over-consumption of food and drink, which was considered deadly in

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<sup>267</sup> Cellini, 44.

<sup>268</sup> Hippocrates *Aphorisms* 3. 22.

<sup>269</sup> Shar, 166-167.

<sup>270</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 225; 6: 65.

the air of Rome.<sup>271</sup> Indeed, in the introduction to Jacopo Pontormo's diary, written between 1554 and 1556, the painter carefully noted that incorrect diet in relation to the seasons could produce disease. He recommended fasting and the meagre consumption of liquids during the month of September so as to prepare for autumn.<sup>272</sup>

This analysis was based upon ancient thought. Air provided for seasonal variations and, as defined by Hippocrates, was the cause of both winter and summer. The severity of the seasons therefore, depended on it.<sup>273</sup> Avicenna was to state:

Man remains healthy as long as the inspired air is well balanced, pure and free from admixture with substances injurious to the vital force; but no sooner air is vitiated, he becomes ill.

Air is subject to three types of variations, namely; (a) normal, (b) abnormal but harmless and (c) abnormal and harmful. Normal variations are the seasonal changes because air undergoes a characteristic change of temperament during each season.<sup>274</sup>

Accordingly, disease could be induced by an imbalance of seasonal conditions and human temperament. Certain seasons would increase the offending humour so that the seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter each brought about an

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 4: 190; 4: 420.

<sup>272</sup> J. Pontormo, *Il libro mio*, ed. S. S. Nigro (Genoa, 1984), 45.

<sup>273</sup> Hippocrates *Breaths* 3.

<sup>274</sup> Shar, 157; Avicenna's analysis was based upon the writings of Hippocrates and Galen. In the opening to Hippocrates *Airs, waters, places*, it states, "Whoever wishes to pursue properly the science of medicine must proceed thus. First he ought to consider what effects each season of the year can produce; for the seasons are not at all alike, but differ widely both in themselves and at their changes. The next point is the hot winds and the cold, especially those that are universal, but also those that are peculiar to each particular region" (Hippocrates *Airs, waters, places* 1). Galen's explanation of this statement was, "Hippocrates means that the bodies are like the air surrounding us, for the bodies are likely to be hot and dry in the summer season and cold and moist in the winter, and cold and dry in the autumn, and, in the spring, hot and moist" (Galen *Galen's commentary on the Hippocratic treatise airs, waters, places* 11).

increase in blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm respectively.<sup>275</sup> These increases were immaterial to the healthy person, but to those with an imbalanced temperament “a season is injurious if its qualities are the same as of the temperament.”<sup>276</sup> Therefore, for the melancholic artists of the *Vite*, attention to diseases caused by black bile was essential.

### The Disease of Fever

It can be found that fever is one of the bilious complaints most frequently mentioned by Vasari and an ailment commonly suffered during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Vespasiano da Bisticci noted that Archbishop Antonino; Federigo, Duke of Urbino; Francesco Filelfo; Timoteo de’Maffei, Bishop of Raugia; the Bishop of the Cinque Chiese; Pandolfo Pandolfini; and Agnolo Acciaiuoli all suffered from this particular ailment, and according to Paolo Giovio, fever was also suffered by several members of the Visconti family.<sup>277</sup> Matteo Magno, Gian Galeazzo and Filippo Maria were all afflicted with the complaint.<sup>278</sup> Furthermore, in Ascanio Condivi’s 1553 biography of the life of Michelangelo, he alludes to two serious illnesses which probably occurred during the summer of 1544 and again in 1546.<sup>279</sup> In both instances Michelangelo was

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<sup>275</sup> Hippocrates *Nature of man* 7; Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxl, 10.

<sup>276</sup> Shar, 161.

<sup>277</sup> Vespasiano da Bisticci, 134; 222-223; 351; 474, 484; 499. In Federigo, Duke of Urbino’s biography, Vespasiano notes that the Duke became ill in the bad air of Ferrara and is advised to travel to Bologna where the air is better. See 222-223.

<sup>278</sup> Giovio, *Le vite dei dodici Visconti signori di Milano*, 68, 129 and 141.

<sup>279</sup> A. Condivi, *Michelangelo: La vita*, ed. P. D’Ancona (Milan, 1928), 198.

suffering from fevers which were considered life-threatening.<sup>280</sup> Benvenuto Cellini also suffered from the fever, and he includes a long and detailed account of his ailment and its treatment within the pages of his autobiography.<sup>281</sup> In the *Vite* Giovanni Lappoli died of a fever during 1552, as did Francesco Granacci who died in 1544.<sup>282</sup> Death was also the consequence of a fever suffered by Piero da Vinci.<sup>283</sup> Malignant fever befell Michele San Michele, resulting in his death during 1559, and Francesco Parmigianino and Francesco Bonsignori both lost their lives to the complaint.<sup>284</sup>

Vasari's descriptions of the disease correlate to the diagnoses of Galen, Hippocrates and Avicenna. Hippocrates had noted that air is the chief carrier of fever, and Galen agreed, stating, "many fevers arise from inhalation when the outside air is contaminated by putrefying defiled vapours."<sup>285</sup> The effect of fever was an increase in black bile caused by the increased heat in the body. The spleen, traditionally associated with black bile, became damaged and resulted in the liberation of more black bile than the spleen could absorb. Respiration became impaired and as Galen notes:

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<sup>280</sup> E. H. Ramsden, *The Letters of Michelangelo (1537-1563)* (London, 1963), 2, nos., 238, 291, appendix 27, 34; G. Milanesi, *Le Lettere di M. B. edite e inedite, coi ricordi e contratti artistici* (Florence, 1875), cxlix, cxcv.

<sup>281</sup> See Cellini, 151-157.

<sup>282</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 16; 5: 345.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 130.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 364; 5: 233; 5: 305.

<sup>285</sup> Hippocrates *Breaths* 5; and Hippocrates *Breaths* 6; both Galen and Hippocrates regarded fever as an individual disease rather than as a symptom. Galen writes:

"Fevers which arise under the influence of the humours are called fevers in the stricter sense of the word. They are not the symptoms of a disease, but diseases in themselves. Some patients do not present any other symptoms or their symptoms are moderate" (Siegel, 274); and Siegel, 274-275.

When biting breaths and sharp humours are spread through a sensitive body, they will cause shivering and chills. The pores of the skin will contract, exhalation through the skin will be stifled, and fever will arise. . . In biliary constitution still more humours are turned into bile, especially after a long abstinence from food.<sup>286</sup>

However, the diagnosis and cure of fever was also governed by astronomy.

Hippocrates comments that it is crucial for the physician to be trained in this art.

He states:

For knowing the changes of the seasons, and the rising and settings of the stars, with the circumstances of each of these phenomena, he will know beforehand the nature of the year that is coming. Through these considerations and by learning the times beforehand, he will have full knowledge of each particular case, will succeed best in securing health, and will achieve the greatest triumphs in the practice of his art.<sup>287</sup>

Vasari duly followed his advice, as did Jacopo Pontormo. For the year 1555,

Pontormo notes that the new moon, which began in March and ended on the 21

April, had caused many cases of the plague as well as numerous blood disorders.

He recommended moderate food intake and exercise to the point of perspiring as cautionary measures.<sup>288</sup>

The Hippocratic concept of astronomical calculation is further elaborated upon in

Galen's texts *On crisis* and *On critical days*. Acute diseases are said to have a

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<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>287</sup> Hippocrates *Airs, waters, places* 2; Hippocrates's principle of periodicity was continued in Galen's treatises *On crisis* and *On critical days* and in *Galen's commentary of the Hippocratic treatise Airs, waters, places* 68-69. In the latter of these texts Galen devoted much time to an explanation of astronomical calculation of the seasons according to Euclid, 75. He explained:

"Astronomy acquaints us with the seasons and their changes, and with the risings of stars which effect the changes in the seasons; and that is why it is needed in medical sciences" (*Galen's commentary of the Hippocratic treatise Airs, waters, places* 21).

<sup>288</sup> Pontormo, 47.

crisis, or turning point, which would indicate the beginning of recovery or the onset of death. Of chief importance to the outcome for the patient is the day on which the crisis occurs and the condition of his or her body at this time. As a result, astrology was critically important to the calculation of critical days. The motions of the moon and calculation of favourable calendar dates had to be estimated to establish the critical days for acute diseases.<sup>289</sup> This dependency upon critical days perhaps explains why Vasari notes that the illness suffered by Bartolomeo Genga, while working in Malta, killed him in seventeen days.<sup>290</sup> The Hippocratic Collection had categorised the seriousness of fevers by the days on which they reached crisis. In *Prognostic* it is stated:

Fevers come to a crisis on the same days, both those from which patients recover and those from which they die. The mildest fevers, with the most favourable symptoms, cease on the fourth day or earlier. The most malignant fevers, with the most dangerous symptoms, end fatally on the fourth day or earlier. The first assault of fevers ends at this time; the second lasts until the seventh day, the third until the eleventh, the fourth until the fourteenth, the fifth until the seventeenth, and the sixth until the twentieth day. So in the most acute diseases keep on adding periods of four days, up to twenty, to find the time when the attacks end. None of them, however, can be exactly calculated in whole days; neither can whole days be used to measure the solar year and the lunar month.<sup>291</sup>

Furthermore, when the fevers ended with neither signs of recovery nor on critical days, the fever would relapse.<sup>292</sup> Indeed, the fever suffered by Fra Bartolommeo corresponded exactly to Hippocrates's diagnosis that malignant fevers caused death on the fourth day.<sup>293</sup> Other artists's complaints were cured or longer in

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<sup>289</sup> N. G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine* (Chicago and London, 1990), 135.

<sup>290</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 330.

<sup>291</sup> Hippocrates *Prognostic* 20.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>293</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 199.

duration. Taddeo Zuccaro's assistant and brother, Federico, suffered a slight bout of fever while working in Orvieto, but its duration was for two months, and Michelangelo was to suffer from a slow fever which eventually took his life.<sup>294</sup>

The constitution of quartan fevers followed the same order of critical days as that of other fevers.<sup>295</sup> This variant, most closely associated with the melancholic, was to befall Ascanio, Benvenuto Cellini's assistant, during a visit to France, but was also described by Vasari in the *Vite*.<sup>296</sup> Tribolo endured quartan fever, and Giovan Battista Bellucci was also to suffer from the complaint for a period of two years.<sup>297</sup> In Hippocrates's discourse *Nature of man* it is noted:

The quartans are in general similar, but they are more protracted than the tertians in so far as their portion is less of the bile that causes heat, while the intervals are greater in which the body cools. It is from black bile that this excessive obstinacy arises. For black bile is the most viscous of humours in the body, and that which sticks fast the longest. Hereby you will know that quartan fevers participate in the atrabilious element, because it is mostly in autumn that men are attacked by quartans, and between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five. This age is that which of all ages is most under the mastery of black bile, just as autumn is the season of all seasons which is most under its mastery. Such as are attacked by a quartan fever outside this period and this age you may be sure will not suffer from a long fever, unless the patient be the victim of another malady as well.<sup>298</sup>

Moreover, summer quartans were generally considered to be short in duration, but those of autumn were long in length.<sup>299</sup> Aristotle's treatment for quartan fever

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<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 7: 87; 7: 268.

<sup>295</sup> Hippocrates *Prognostic* 20.

<sup>296</sup> Cellini, 182.

<sup>297</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 65; 6: 331.

<sup>298</sup> Hippocrates *Nature of man* 15.

<sup>299</sup> Hippocrates *Aphorisms* 2. 25.

encouraged increased exercise, and, on the day of the expected attack, the patient was to bathe himself and avoid sleep.<sup>300</sup>

Another cause of fever was heat. Extreme internal heat was blamed by Vasari as a cause of the fever that killed Sebastiano del Piombo at the age of sixty-two.<sup>301</sup>

External heat had also caused the death of Antonio da San Gallo. Vasari writes:

But it came to pass by reason of the heat, which was great, and other hardships, that Antonio, being now old and feeble, fell sick of a fever at Terni, and rendered up his spirit not long after.<sup>302</sup>

In medical texts, heat was also recognised as an inducement to fever. Galen notes:

We recognise not a single mode which would produce or increase the heat of the body, since there is not only one type of fever, but there are those which are caused by motion, those caused by putrefaction, or by association with other heat, or even by suppression of heat loss. . . . One has also to relate each fever to its proper class: whether overheating is due to exposure to the sun as the word indicates [Greek: *egkausis*, burning-in], or to a somatic affection which is just arising or has existed before.<sup>303</sup>

In Vasari's analysis of the fevers suffered by the artists of the *Vite*, he looked to the writings of the ancients for knowledge and inspiration. They provided the diagnosis, symptoms and treatment in a complex analysis which Vasari then modified to form a simple regimen for the architect, sculptor and painter. The 'non-natural' of air was the chief carrier of fever, and therefore the melancholy

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<sup>300</sup> Aristotle *Problems* 1. 56.

<sup>301</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 585.

<sup>302</sup> "Onde avvenne, per lo caldo che era grande ed altri disagi, essendo Antonio pur vecchio e cagionevole, che si ammalò di febbre in Terni, e non molto dopo rendè l'anima" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 469; idem, *The Lives*, 2: 115).

<sup>303</sup> Siegel, 274.

artist, already prone to an excess of black bile, was a prime candidate for contracting the disease.

### The Disease of Insanity

Insanity, a disease which Avicenna and Hippocrates had forecast to occur during the bilious autumn months, may explain Vasari's bizarre tales of artistic eccentricities.<sup>304</sup> In the *Sacred disease*, from the Hippocratic Collection, it is noted that corruption of the brain was caused by bile, which would engender madness.<sup>305</sup> Furthermore, in the Hippocratic *Breaths*, it is stated:

Now I hold that no constituent of the body in anyone contributes more to intelligence than does blood. So long as the blood remains in its normal condition, intelligence too remains normal; but when the blood alters, the intelligence also changes. . . I hold that the sacred disease is caused in the following way. When much wind has combined throughout the body with all the blood, many barriers arise in many places in the veins. Whenever therefore much air weighs, and continues to weigh, upon the thick, blood-filled veins, the blood is prevented from passing on. So in one place it stops, in another it passes sluggishly, in another more quickly. The progress of the blood through the body proving irregular, all kinds of irregularities occur.<sup>306</sup>

Therefore, insanity was airborne and in the *Vite* was an ailment suffered by various artists. Silvio Cosini is believed to have made a jerkin from human skin, which he wore over his shirt, and Graffione used his own cartoons as tablecloths, and he slept in a chest filled with straw.<sup>307</sup> While pursuing his quest for the full

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<sup>304</sup> The Neo-Platonic concept of creative insanity is discussed in R. and M. Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn; the Character and Conduct of Artists: a Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (London, 1963), 98.

<sup>305</sup> Hippocrates *The sacred disease* 28.

<sup>306</sup> Hippocrates *Breaths* 14. The sacred disease is generally supposed to refer to epilepsy but certain forms of insanity have not been excluded by Hippocratic scholars.

<sup>307</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 483; 2: 598.

understanding of human anatomy, Bartolommeo Torri kept human limbs under his bed and all over his room.<sup>308</sup> The increase in black bile caused by the 'non-natural' of air therefore, created insanity in the artist.

#### The Diseases of Paralysis and Apoplexy

While black bile caused the complaints of fever and insanity in the air of autumn, it could also result in illness during the spring. This season was the most evenly balanced time of year, according to Avicenna's *Canon*, but tended towards being warm and moist, the exact opposite of autumn. Chronic diseases were frequently activated by the movement and flow of dormant humours during the spring, however, bringing about the related illnesses of apoplexy and paralysis.<sup>309</sup> The latter was caused by black bile, and Fra Bartolommeo, Donatello and Jacone all suffered from the illness.<sup>310</sup> However, Hippocrates states that apoplexy was caused by air. He notes:

For when they [i.e. breaths] pass through the flesh and puff it up, the parts of the body affected lose the power of feeling. So if copious breaths rush through the whole body, the whole patient is affected with apoplexy. If the breaths reach only a part, only that part is affected. If the breaths go away, the disease comes to an end; if they remain, the disease too remains.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 16.

<sup>309</sup> *Shar*, 164.

<sup>310</sup> Hippocrates *Aphorisms* 7. 40; Hippocrates *Diseases* 1. 3; Fra Bartolommeo's paralysis took the form of stroke along one side of his body, caused by the sun beating on his back. Donatello's attack of palsy at the age of eighty-three, was so severe that he could no longer work and was confined to his bed, eventually dying on 13 December, 1466. The fate of Jacone was little better. Suffering from paralysis of the legs, he died in poverty and misery in the year 1553; see Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 199; 2: 421; 6: 454.

<sup>311</sup> Hippocrates *Breaths* 13; Galen defined apoplexy as "the loss of all mental and peripheral nerve functions of the body," caused by the stagnation of viscous humours, mainly phlegm and black bile, which obstructed the flow of pneuma or blood through the blood vessels and air ducts of the brain, Siegel, 304; Aristotle was also to assert that apoplexy resulted from black bile; see Aristotle *Problems* 30. 5.

Furthermore, the symptoms were described by Galen in the *Therapeutic method*. The whole body suffers a violent seizure and loses sensation and the power of movement.<sup>312</sup> Moreover, apoplexy was likely to occur between the ages of forty and sixty.<sup>313</sup> Two artists suffered from these complaints, and Vasari's descriptions of them correlated exactly with the ancients. Perino del Vaga died from an apoplectic seizure at the age of forty-seven.<sup>314</sup> Vasari explains that Ercole Ferrarese's apoplexy was caused by his copious consumption of wine, corresponding to Aristotle's comments in *Problems*, where he notes:

Why is it that drunkards take a particular delight in the warmth of the sun? Is it because they need concoction? Another reason is the fact that they are cooled by the wine; which is also a reason why apoplectic seizures and torpidity very readily occur after drinking.<sup>315</sup>

Therefore, paralysis and apoplexy were airborne, and neglect of this 'non-natural' resulted in disease for the melancholic artist.

### The Disease of Blindness

Blindness was regarded by ancient physicians as a disease caused by black bile and, when carried by the 'non-natural' of air, was an illness suffered by the melancholic. Benvenuto Cellini was to complain of blindness, caused by cataracts, and in the *Vite* three of the artists were to endure the condition.<sup>316</sup>

L'Ingegno, an assistant to Pietro Perugino, was to suffer from the complaint, as

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<sup>312</sup> Galen *On the therapeutic method* 1. 9. 8.

<sup>313</sup> Siegel, 307.

<sup>314</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 630.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 3: 146-147; Aristotle *Problems* 3. 29

<sup>316</sup> Cellini, 105-107.

were Piero della Francesca and Benvenuto Garofalo.<sup>317</sup> Piero della Francesca's affliction began at the age of sixty, and Benvenuto Garofalo's blindness of the right eye occurred at the age of forty-eight, total blindness befalling him at sixty-nine years of age.<sup>318</sup> Old age was the period in which the humour of black bile was most prevalent, and, therefore, it was also a time when the airborne disease of blindness was most likely suffered.<sup>319</sup> In Hippocrates's *Aphorisms* it is stated:

In melancholic affections the melancholy humour is likely to be determined in the following ways: apoplexy of the whole body, convulsions, madness or blindness.<sup>320</sup>

Blindness was regarded as just another facet of the melancholy humour, caused by black bile, and carried in the 'non-natural' of air.

#### The Disease of Consumption

Consumption also was a bilious complaint of the autumn months, the cold but dry air being a perfect vehicle for the transmission of this particular disease.<sup>321</sup> The symptoms were as follows:

Thick sweet yellow-green sputum is coughed up, the teeth chatter, and pain occupies the chest and back; the throat whistles quietly and becomes stiff, the areas under the eyes become red, and the voice is deep; the feet swell up, and the nails become curved; these patients become very thin, and the upper parts of their bodies are wasted.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 3: 595.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 500; 6: 466, 468.

<sup>319</sup> See Hippocrates *Regimen* 1. 279 and Ficino, 2. 8 in which he comments that Saturn is the god of the aged. Saturn was also associated with melancholy and black bile.

<sup>320</sup> Hippocrates *Aphorisms* 6. 56.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. 10; 3. 13; 3. 22.

<sup>322</sup> Hippocrates *Diseases* 2. 48; see also Hippocrates *Internal affections* 10-13.

Its sufferers included Perino del Vaga and Giottino. In the case of Perino del Vaga, his ailment began as asthma, which sapped his strength so as to cause consumption.<sup>323</sup> Giottino's illness was caused by fatigue and living poorly, which resulted in his death from consumption at the age of thirty-two.<sup>324</sup> Giottino's case of consumption therefore correlated with Hippocrates's assertion that consumption occurred chiefly between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five.<sup>325</sup> The fatigue suffered by both would certainly have made them susceptible to this airborne infection.

#### Diseases of the Bladder

The air of autumn also brought about bladder complaints in those suffering from an excess of black bile. Of these gall-stone was the primary urinary disease suffered by the artists of the *Vite*, and was also a complaint documented by ancient and Arabic authors. Aristotle comments in *Problems*:

Why is it that no animal except man suffers from gall-stones? Is it because in beasts of burden and cloven-hoofed animals the ducts of the bladder are wide? Those animals which produce their young alive not immediately but after an interval, like certain of the fishes, never have bladders, but the sediment which might form gall-stones is forced into the bowels (as happens also in birds), and so easily passes out with the excrement. But man has a bladder and a stalk to the bladder, which is narrow in proportion to his size; so, because he has this part, the earthly matter is forced into the bladder (and so chamber-pots become discoloured by it) and, owing to the heat in that region, it becomes concocted and thickens still more and remains there and increases owing to the narrowness of the urethra; for the earthly sediment, being unable to make its way out easily, coheres together and forms a gall-stone.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 630.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 628-629.

<sup>325</sup> Hippocrates *Aphorisms* 5. 9.

<sup>326</sup> Aristotle *Problems* 10. 43.

In the *Vite* Vasari documents Francesco Bonsignori's ailments of the bladder and discusses the gall-stone complaints of Michelangelo and Sogliani.<sup>327</sup> Sogliani's stones were only discovered after his death when an autopsy revealed three, each as big as an egg.<sup>328</sup>

Vasari states that Michelangelo's ailment started as dysuria and later developed into stones.<sup>329</sup> Avicenna writes that dysuria is more prevalent during the autumn, when wide fluctuations of heat and cold affected the temperament of the bladder.<sup>330</sup> In the artist's own documents, the first reference to the ailment occurs in a letter of 15 September, 1548, sent from Rome to Lionardo di Buonarroto Simoni in Florence. Michelangelo states that his depression was caused by being unable to urinate.<sup>331</sup> By the following March the artist's complaint had considerably worsened and remained a concern during the whole of 1549. Again, in a letter to Lionardo di Buonarroto he writes:

As regards my malady - being unable to urinate - I have been very ill with it since then, groaning day and night, unable to sleep or to get any rest whatever. As far as they can make out, the doctors say I'm suffering from the stone. They're still not certain. However, they continue to treat me for the said malady and are very hopeful. Nevertheless, as I'm an old man suffering from such a cruel malady, they're not making me any promises. I'm advised to go and take the baths at Viterbo, but one cannot go until the beginning of May. In the meantime I'll manage as best I can and perhaps it will turn out, mercifully, that the malady will prove not to be

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<sup>327</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 305.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 5: 132. Vasari's comments in regard to Sogliani's gall-stones may have originated in Vespasiano da Bisticci's text. He was to comment that both Pope Nicholas V's and Cardinal Albergati's gall-stones were as big as the eggs of a goose and weighed eighteen ounces each. See pages 29 and 77.

<sup>329</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 284-285.

<sup>330</sup> Shar, 166-167.

<sup>331</sup> Ramsden, no. 312; Milanesi, ccv.

the stone, or that a cure will be found. I am therefore in need of God's help.<sup>332</sup>

Michelangelo's complaint of stone seems to have remained for the rest of his life, and in combination with the fever suffered as an old man, proved deadly.<sup>333</sup> The association of bladder complaint and fever was considered fatal by ancient scholarly physicians, and in the Hippocratic treatise *Prognostics*, it is stated:

Hardness and pain in the bladder are always serious, and whenever attended with continuous fever, fatal. In fact, the pains from the bladder alone are enough to cause death, and in such cases the bowels are not moved, except with hard and forced stools. The disease is resolved by the passing of purulent urine, with a white smooth sediment. If, however, neither the urine becomes favourable nor the bladder be softened, while the fever is continuous, expect the patient to die in the first periods of the illness.<sup>334</sup>

Once again, Vasari illustrates for the melancholy artists of the Renaissance the diseases they are prone to in the 'non-natural' of air. Furthermore, he pays homage to his Medici patron by describing the bilious diseases which festered under Saturn's reign of autumn.

#### The Medical Condition of Gout

Gouty complaints became active in spring and autumn, according to Hippocrates, and Avicenna agreed that spring was a dangerous season for the sufferer of

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<sup>332</sup> "Circa il male mio del non potere orinare, io ne sono stato poi molto male, muggiato di e notte senza dormire e senza riposo nessuno, e per quello che giudicano e' medici, dicono che io ò il mal della pietra. Ancora none son certo: pure mi vo medicando per detto male, e èmi data buona speranza. Nondimeno per essere io vecchio e con un sì crudelissimo male, non ò da promettermela. Io son consigliato d'andare al bagno di Viterbo, e non si può prima che al principio di maggio; e in questo mezzo andrò temporeggiando il meglio che potrò, e forse àrò grazia che tal male non sarà desso, o di qualche buon riparo: però ò bisogno dell'aiuto di Dio" (Ramsden, no. 323; Milanesi, ccxiv).

<sup>333</sup> Vasari tells of Michelangelo's deadly fever; see Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 268.

<sup>334</sup> Hippocrates *Prognostic* 19.

gout.<sup>335</sup> Thus, the melancholic artist of Vasari's *Vite* was a prime candidate for contraction of the disease. Giovan Maria Falconetto was to suffer from gout until his death in 1534, as was Ridolfo Ghirlandaio, who was confined to a chair because of the crippling disease.<sup>336</sup> Indeed, Michelangelo also suffered from gout. It is likely that Ascanio Condivi's description of cramp was in fact gout, which had caused extreme pain in one of Michelangelo's feet.<sup>337</sup> The Master's doctors had diagnosed the pain as being a "kind of gout," and in a letter to Lionardo di Buonarroto, dated 5 July, 1555, he writes that the pain "prevented me from going out and has been a nuisance to me in a number of ways."<sup>338</sup> Aristotle speculated that the swelling of the feet in the bilious was caused by a lack of nourishment.<sup>339</sup> This could be relieved by copious infusions of cold water, according to Hippocrates.<sup>340</sup> Other treatments included the evacuation of the contents of the cavity with an enema or a suppository. If pain remained in the large toes, Hippocrates advised the physician to cauterise the vessels of the toe a little above the knuckle.<sup>341</sup> Galen also recommended venesection, but cautioned that phlebotomy would not help those whose gout was the result of devotion to

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<sup>335</sup> Ibid., 6. 55; Shar, 374.

<sup>336</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 325; 6: 546.

<sup>337</sup> Condivi, 194-195.

<sup>338</sup> The text of the letter, concerning Michelangelo's gout, reads, "Tu mi scrivi per l'ultima tua esser d'accordo con lo Spedalingo di Bonifazio delle terre mia da Santa Caterina, cioè di dargniene per trecento venti scudi, e che io ti mandi la procura. Io te la manderò di questa settimana che viene a ogni modo. Non ò potuto prima per ragione di crudelissimo male che io ò avuto in un piede, che non m'è lasciato uscir fuori e àmi dato noia a più cose: dicono ch'è spezie di gotte: non mi manca altro in mia vechiezza!" (Ramsden, 2: no. 403; Milanese, cclxxx). The pain that gout caused was also noted in Vespasiano's *vite* of Pope Nicholas V and San Bernardino da Massa. See pages 45 and 140. Paolo Giovio noted that Azzone and Galeazzo II suffered from the affliction, in *Le vite dei dodici Visconti signori di Milano*, 100 and 117.

<sup>339</sup> Aristotle *Problems* 1. 5.

<sup>340</sup> Hippocrates *Aphorisms* 6. 55.

<sup>341</sup> Hippocrates *Affections* 31.

drinking. They would accumulate a mass of unbalanced humours due to intemperate living.<sup>342</sup> Thus, Vasari, once again, provided examples of melancholy diseases suffered by the artists of the *Vite*, and continued by discussing a related condition, dropsy.

### The Disease of Dropsy

The related disease of dropsy was caused by an excess of black bile in the blood and was considered a disease of autumn by Hippocrates.<sup>343</sup> In the Hippocratic text

*Prognostics* it is stated:

Dropsies that result from acute diseases are all unfavourable, for they do not get rid of the fever and they are very painful and fatal. Most of them begin at the flanks and loins, though some begin also at the liver. Now whenever they begin in the flanks and loins the feet swell, and chronic diarrhoeas afflict the patient, which neither relieve the pains in the flanks and loins nor soften the belly. But whenever the dropsies begin in the liver, the patient experiences a desire to cough without bringing up any sputum worth speaking of, while the feet swell and the bowels pass no excreta except such as are hard, painful and forced and swellings arise around the belly, some of the right and some to the left, growing and subsiding.<sup>344</sup>

Air was considered to be a primary cause of this disease and, in the treatise

*Breaths* from the Hippocratic Collection, it is noted:

If the breaths by passing through the flesh dilate the passages of the body, and these breaths are followed by moisture, the way for which is prepared by the air, then, when the body has become sodden, the flesh melts away and swellings descend to the legs. A disease of this kind is called dropsy.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Galen *On Treatment by venesection* 7.

<sup>343</sup> Hippocrates *Aphorisms* 3. 22.

<sup>344</sup> Hippocrates *Prognostic* 8; see also Hippocrates *Diseases* 2. 61.

<sup>345</sup> Hippocrates *Breaths* 12; see also Hippocrates *Affections* 22 for description of the effects of the disease upon the human body.

However, dropsy was only prevalent when the liver and spleen were both affected. Galen comments:

We may not observe hydrops when the spleen alone is considerably enlarged. When the liver is also involved hydrops will appear.<sup>346</sup>

Dropsy, or hydrops as it was called by Galen, was suffered by Guglielmo da Marcillat and Jacopo Pontormo, who were both afflicted by the dampness of painting frescoes.<sup>347</sup> They became swollen with the disease and died. Vasari's description of the dropsy suffered by the two artists corresponds to Hippocrates's description of the symptoms. Too much water in the body was considered the major cause of the disease and in the Hippocratic Collection the symptoms were described as:

. . . a dry cough; the throat seems to whistle; chills and fever set in, and orthopnoea; the skin is puffy; the feet are very swollen; the nails become curved.<sup>348</sup>

Pietro Cavallini's colic was also the result of dampness from standing and working in fresco.<sup>349</sup> Hippocrates recommended purging as its cure; he predicted that if this was not carried out, the colic would develop into dropsy.<sup>350</sup> The 'non-natural' of air therefore provided dangers for the melancholic artists of the Renaissance, in that it was the carrier of dropsy and its related complaint of colic.

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<sup>346</sup> Siegel, 273.

<sup>347</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 429; 6: 288.

<sup>348</sup> Hippocrates *Internal affections* 23.

<sup>349</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 542; Michelangelo also suffered from colic; see Ramsden, no. 435, 474, 475; Milanesi, cciv, cccxxxv, cccxxxvi.

<sup>350</sup> Hippocrates *Aphorisms* 4. 11; 4. 20.

### The Medical Condition of Venal Hemorrhaging

The disease of flux of the veins, which in modern terms most probably indicates hemorrhages of the veins, was documented by Vasari in the *vita* of Cristofano Gherardi.<sup>351</sup> Air was the primary cause for the ailment and in the Hippocratic *Breaths*, it is explained:

When the veins about the head are loaded with air, at first the head becomes heavy through the breaths that press against it. Then the blood is compressed, the passages being unable, on account of their narrowness, to pour it through. The thinnest part of the blood is pressed out through the veins, and when a great accumulation of this liquid has been formed, it flows through other channels.<sup>352</sup>

Thus, Giorgio Vasari's description of Gherardi's hemorrhaging was yet another instance of disease caused by the 'non-natural' of air.

Vasari's *regimen sanitatis* provided a catalogue of airborne bilious diseases from which the melancholy artist was prone to suffer if caution was not exercised. In the air of Tuscany, architecture, painting and sculpture had been revived through the efforts of its artists and its ruler. Through the melancholy humour the artist had reached the level of the poet, politician and philosopher of Aristotle's *Problems*. The role of Vasari's text as a *regimen sanitatis* for the melancholy artist continued, however, and included the 'non-naturals' of food and drink.

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<sup>351</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 244.

<sup>352</sup> Hippocrates *Breaths* 10.

### The 'Non-naturals' of Food and Drink

A large portion of the Hippocratic and Galenic corpus was devoted to the preservation of health through attention to diet. Indeed, in the Hippocratic treatise *Ancient medicine* regimen in food and drink were cited as the primary means of preserving health.<sup>353</sup> For Giorgio Vasari and the antique and Arabic medical authors, this began with the preservation of a child's health through a mother's milk. Avicenna advises:

Baby should be fed, as far as possible, on mother's milk as it is nearest to the blood from which the baby has grown up as the foetus and which is naturally more suitable for its further growth and development. The blood in mother's breast is converted into milk. This is beneficial for the baby and more attractive and acceptable to its constitution.<sup>354</sup>

Advice was also provided as to the suitability of wet-nurses. The appropriate age of the woman was considered to be between twenty-five and thirty-five, when her constitution was at its healthiest and strongest. She should have a good complexion and her body should be muscular, her neck strong and her chest broad. The disposition of the wet-nurse should be cheerful and her morals unquestionable. Emotional outbursts, such as anger, grief and fear, were forbidden, as these could adversely affect the development of the baby's character and emotional stability. Moreover, mentally deranged women were not considered suitable wet-nurses.<sup>355</sup> Avicenna continues:

A nurse of immoral character cannot be trusted to give conscientious care to the baby and her behaviour would adversely affect the child's character. Her breasts should be moderately large and firm but not soft, flabby, long and loosely hanging. The most important and basic condition is that her

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<sup>353</sup> Hippocrates *Ancient medicine* 3.

<sup>354</sup> Shar, 286.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, 286-287.

milk should be of moderate quantity and consistency. It should be absolutely white and free from the slightest trace of black, green, yellow or red colour. Its odour should be most agreeable and without any trace of acidity or putrefaction. The taste should be slightly sweet but not bitter, salty or sour. It should be plentiful and homogeneous and not too thin, thick, cheesy, frothy or lumpy.<sup>356</sup>

This advice is fully understood and repeated in Vasari's *Vite*. Perino del Vaga's mother was to die of plague while he was an infant of two months, and after being suckled by a goat for a time, his father's second wife, whose family had also died of plague, was to continue the nursing of the young Perino. Consequently, the baby consumed her plague-infected milk, and his life was continuously spent in the avoidance of the pestilence.<sup>357</sup> In a similar manner, Michelangelo's wet-nurse was the wife of a stone-carver. He, therefore, was infused by this craft resulting in his excellence as a sculptor.<sup>358</sup> In contrast, Raphael was nursed by his own mother, a practice that his father knew would instil in him grace, industry, beauty, modesty and excellence of character.<sup>359</sup>

Regimen of food and drink continued into adulthood, however, and it was also recognised that different constitutions required different diets.<sup>360</sup> In the Hippocratic *Regimen in health* it was noted that the physician should pay attention to age, season, habit, land and physique in fixing regimen.<sup>361</sup> Galen's commentary upon Hippocrates's *Airs, waters, places* noted that peculiar diseases

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<sup>356</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>357</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 588; the significance of plague in Vasari's *Vite* was discussed in chapter one.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 7: 137.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., 4: 316.

<sup>360</sup> Hippocrates, *Ancient medicine* 3.

<sup>361</sup> Hippocrates *Regimen in health* 2.

were derived from each man's diet.<sup>362</sup> Galen further clarified the doctrine, which had previously been established by Hippocrates and Aristotle, amongst others, in the treatise *On the nature of man*. He states:

These men demonstrated that when the nutriment becomes altered in the veins by the innate heat, blood is produced when it is in moderation, and the other humours when it is not in proper proportion. And all the observed facts agree with this argument. Thus, those articles of food, which are by nature warmer are more productive of bile, while those which are colder produce more phlegm. . . . Also colder diseases result from phlegm, and warmer ones from yellow bile. There is not a single thing to be found which does not bear witness to the truth of this account.<sup>363</sup>

Avicenna had fully assimilated the notion of food being the source of the four humours. Digestion was aided by the heat of the stomach and its surrounding organs.<sup>364</sup> Foods contained different quantities of hot and cold, dryness and moisture and could, therefore, affect the balance of humours in the body when consumed.

The importance of healthy food and drink was duly noted by antique and Renaissance artists alike. The architect Vitruvius and his Renaissance descendant, Leon Battista Alberti, were particularly concerned with the selection of sites for human habitation. Vitruvius cites the case of his ancestors, who observed the livers of cattle that had grazed on land allocated to building military encampments. Livers which were dark-coloured or abnormal indicated that the food and water supply were contaminated, and thus, the land would be unhealthy

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<sup>362</sup> Galen *Galen's commentary on the Hippocratic treatise airs, waters, places* 19.

<sup>363</sup> Galen *On the natural faculties* 2. 8.

<sup>364</sup> Shar, 43-44.

for human habitation.<sup>365</sup> Alberti's text repeated the same information.<sup>366</sup>

Moreover, Cennino Cennini provided sound advice, regarding food and drink, in *Il libro dell'arte*. In the chapter entitled, "How you should regulate your life in the interests of decorum and the condition of your hand and in what company," Cennini recommends:

Your life should always be arranged just as if you were studying theology, or philosophy, or other theories, that is to say, eating and drinking moderately, at least twice a day, electing digestible and wholesome dishes, and light wine.<sup>367</sup>

The observation of diet achieved excessive levels, however, in the case of the painter, Jacopo Pontormo. In his diary, he carefully itemised food and drink consumption in relation to his physical well-being. Therefore, on 5 November, 1554, he notes that he is suffering from pains in his sides, stomach, legs, arms and teeth. Furthermore, he has a headache. His personal cure was to fast as he felt food and drink aggravated the condition.<sup>368</sup> On days when he consumed food he notes the amount of each item. Pontormo's diary includes excerpts such as:

Saturday fasting.

Sunday evening, which was the evening of olives [Palm Sunday], I had dinner, a small amount of boiled mutton and I ate a small salad and ate three quarters of bread.

Monday evening, after dinner, I felt very strong and well disposed: I ate a salad of lettuce, a soup of good mutton and four quarters of bread.<sup>369</sup>

<sup>365</sup> Vituvius 1. 9.

<sup>366</sup> Alberti, *L'architettura*, Book 1, Chapter 6, 49.

<sup>367</sup> "La tua vita huole essere sempre hordinata siccome avessi a studiare in teologia, o filosofia, o altre scienze, cioe del mangiare e del bere tenperatamente, almen duo volte il di, usando pasti leggieri e di valore, usando vini piccholi" (Cennini, *Il libro dell'arte*, 16; idem, *The Craftsman's Handbook*, 16).

<sup>368</sup> Pontormo, 46.

<sup>369</sup> "Sabato digiuno.

Domenica sera, che fu la sera dell'ulivo, cenai uno poco di castrone lessa e mangiai uno poco d'insalata e dovetti mangiare da tre quatrini di pani.

While obsessive in his observations, Pontormo was simply following the guidelines of the *regimen sanitatis*. The ‘non-naturals’ of food and drink needed close attention to preserve health. Benvenuto Cellini’s autobiography makes further note of this. Physicians had prescribed a particular diet for Cellini’s cataracts, and it would seem to have been somewhat effective, for, after a bout of syphilis and fever, he again returned to it to restore his health.<sup>370</sup>

This concept of observation of diet was similarly noted by Giorgio Vasari. He focused predominantly upon the foods and drinks which caused bilious ailments, once again fortifying the association between melancholy and the artist. While the frugality of Michelangelo’s and Giulio Romano’s eating habits is commented upon, an excess of eating was partly blamed for the death of Perino del Vaga.<sup>371</sup>

Other artists were more fortunate in their constitutions. In the *vita* of Mariotto Albertinelli, Vasari comments that the artist had a “good liver in the matter of eating.”<sup>372</sup> Vasari makes similar observations in regard to Jacopo Sansovino. He had a strong constitution, and his stomach could withstand every type of food so that the artist made “no distinction between food that might be good and food that

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Lunedì sera dopo cena mi senti’ molto gagliardo e ben disposto: mangiai una insalata di lattuga, una minestrina di buono castrone e 4 quatrini di pane” (Ibid., 49).

<sup>370</sup> Cellini, 107-108. Another biographical work to include discussion of diet was that of Vespasiano da Bisticci’s. In the *vita* of Pope Eugenius IV, the author explains that the Pope drank only water with sugar and cinnamon and never partook of wine. Moreover, he was particularly fond of fruit and vegetables and all his meals were boiled. See page 18. Furthermore, Cardinal Branda of Piacenza ate only a spoonful of soft bread with chicken broth seasoned with pepper, and would drink two half glasses of wine. See page 120.

<sup>371</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 275; 5: 556; 5: 630.

<sup>372</sup> “di buon tempo nelle cose del vivere” (Ibid., 4: 222; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 683).

might be harmful.”<sup>373</sup> During the summer he consumed vast quantities of fruit.

Avicenna notes:

Juicy fruits suit only those persons who do hard work and have bilious temperaments and even that only during summer and before meals. These fruits are apricots, mulberry, water-melon, melon, peaches and plums etc. It is however better that even these persons should take some corrective because juice from the fruit merely dilutes the blood and ferments inside the body just as fruit juice does outside. Although such things temporarily benefit, in the long run, they tend to produce putrefaction in the body.

Sansovino’s diet also included cucumbers, and he would eat as many as three at one time.<sup>374</sup> Avicenna gave advice regarding consumption of this fruit, stating:

Similar is the case with cucumber which though cooling for hot temperaments increase the quantity of partially matured humours. This is the reason why persons inclined to be liberal in eating such things are predisposed to fever although such fruits are initially cooling. It should also be remembered that by stagnating in the blood vessels even a watery humour putrefies from the lack of proper dispersion. . . .<sup>375</sup>

Thus, if care was not taken, fruit had the ability of causing disease in a person with the melancholy humour. The ill-effects of figs were fully noted by Vasari. In the *vita* of Fra Bartolommeo, he states that the painter was “a great lover of fruit, which pleased his palate mightily, although it was ruinous to his health.”<sup>376</sup>

Avicenna had noted that excessive consumption of fruit during autumn caused “derangement of humours,” and Fra Bartolommeo was to lose his life as a consequence of eating too many figs.<sup>377</sup> The fruit induced a violent fever which

<sup>373</sup> “non facendo distinzione più da un buon cibo che da un altro nocivo” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 509; idem, *The Lives*, 2: 834).

<sup>374</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 509.

<sup>375</sup> Shar, 317-318.

<sup>376</sup> “Era Fra Bartolommeo delle frutte amicissimo, ed alla bocca molto gli dilettaivano, benchè alla salute dannosissime gli fossero” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 199; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 680).

<sup>377</sup> Shar, 166.

resulted in his death.<sup>378</sup> Vasari's description correlates to Avicenna's pronouncements regarding fruit. In the *Canon of Medicine* he writes:

Fruits which produce excess of watery, thick, viscid and bilious humours cause fever. The liquid portion of fruit gets easily putrefied; the thick and viscid matter causes obstructions, the bilious humour produces heat in the body and the blood formed from it is of an agitated kind.<sup>379</sup>

Therefore, Fra Bartolommeo's fatal fever was caused by the consumption of figs.

Other food stuffs contained beneficial properties for the melancholy artist. Most frequently mentioned by Vasari were the dairy products of cheese and eggs.

These formed a staple of the sixteenth-century diet, but could prove to be somewhat monotonous. This is emphasised in the biography of Paolo Uccello.

According to Vasari, the painter refused to complete the work at a cloister of San Miniato until the Abbot provided alternatives to foods containing cheese. All the meals provided for Uccello, whether it be soup or a pie, contained the dairy

product.<sup>380</sup> In Ficino's *De vita triplici*, eggs were recommended as a cure for

black bile.<sup>381</sup> In the *vita* of Donatello, Vasari describes the occasion in which

Brunelleschi's *Crucifixion* (ca. 1410-1415) was first seen by Donatello. The

author writes:

Donatello, therefore, entering the house and going into the hall, saw the Crucifix of Filippo, placed in a good light; and stopping short to study it, he found it so perfectly finished, that, being overcome and full of

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<sup>378</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 199.

<sup>379</sup> Shar, 317-318; In the Hippocratic treatise *Regimen* fruit was considered to be generally relaxing and figs moistening. They warmed the body and passed well by stool. The juiciness of the fruit accounted for its moistening qualities and its sweet juice provided for its warmth and laxative characteristics; see Hippocrates *Regimen* 2. 55.

<sup>380</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 2: 207.

<sup>381</sup> Ficino, 1. 11 and 2. 6.

amazement, like one distraught, he spread out his hands, which were holding up his apron; whereupon the eggs, the cheese and all the other things fell to the ground, and everything was broken to pieces.<sup>382</sup>

The properties of eggs and cheese were discussed in Hippocrates *Regimen* where it was suggested:

Birds' eggs are strong, nourishing and windy. An egg is strong because it is the origin of an animal; nourishing because it is the milk of the animal; windy, because from small bulk it expands to a great one.<sup>383</sup>

Cheese meanwhile, was considered to be strong, heating, nourishing and binding.<sup>384</sup>

The importance of diet and observation of the 'non-naturals' of food and drink were, therefore, noted by Vasari. Whether it be the milk of wet-nurses or the consumption of dairy products and fruit, each received attention in the *Vite*. Fruit had the ability to produce an excess of black bile, and eggs contained the opposite effect and were considered beneficial to the melancholic. While the character of the artist was explained in relation to childhood rearing, in Vasari's discussion of the foodstuffs consumed he once again reinforced the elevated position of the artist and made reference to the Saturnian symbolism of the Medici family.

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<sup>382</sup> "Entrato dunque Donato in casa, giunto che fu in terreno, vide il Crocifisso di Filippo a un buon lume; e fermatosi a considerarlo, lo trovò così perfettamente finito, che vinto e tutto pieno di stupore, come fuor di sé, aperse le mani che tenevano il grembiule; onde, cascatogli l'uova, il formaggio e l'altre robe tutte, si versò e fracassò ogni cosa" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 2: 399; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 365) The same tale is told in the *vita* of Brunelleschi, although no mention of the cheese is made; see Vasari, *Le vite*, 2: 334.

<sup>383</sup> Hippocrates *Regimen* 2. 50.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. 51.

### The 'Non-naturals' of Rest and Movement

The artists of the *Vite* did not have to pay close attention to the 'non-natural' of exercise as a means of preserving health, because the rigours of their profession were enough in themselves. Benvenuto Garofalo did pursue the sport of fencing, which was classified as strenuous exercise by Avicenna, but few other artists took part in recreational activities.<sup>385</sup> The ailments that did befall artists required exercise as an aid to their cure, however, and while these were not described by Vasari, they were an important part of the treatments of black bile, supplied by physicians. Hippocrates states that food and exercise possess opposite qualities but work together to produce health, and Aristotle recommended an increase in exercise and decrease in diet as a cure for disease.<sup>386</sup>

Avicenna prescribed swinging as a cure for those suffering from fever, such as Antonio da San Gallo, Sebastiano del Piombo, Giovanni Lappoli and Taddeo Zuccaro amongst others.<sup>387</sup> This exercise was also recommended for the treatment of pleurisy, gout and blindness, as the movement helped to dislodge waste matters.<sup>388</sup> Riding a carriage with the face downwards was also believed to prevent blindness, as were fleeting glances at bright objects and gazing at minute

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<sup>385</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 468; Shar, 302.

<sup>386</sup> Hippocrates *Regimen* 1. 2; Aristotle *Problems* 1. 46.

<sup>387</sup> Shar, 303. See the above section on "Airs" for further details as to this ailment.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, 303. Lorenzo di Bicci suffered from the complaint of pleurisy, Ridolfo Ghirlandaio and Giovan Maria suffered from gout, and Benvenuto Garofalo, Piero della Francesca and Pietro Perugino became blind.

objects.<sup>389</sup> Therefore, the melancholy afflictions of the artists could be diminished through exercise.

#### The 'Non-naturals' of Sleeping and Waking

The antique authors had stressed the importance of the regulation of sleep to preserve health, and in Vasari's text of the *Vite* these aspects of the doctrine of 'non-naturals' were also exposed. While Michelangelo required little sleep and would arise during the night to continue his work, other artists suffered greatly from fatigue.<sup>390</sup> In the biography of Perino del Vaga, Vasari states that his life was ended by the fatigues of his art.<sup>391</sup> Lack of rest and sleep, coupled with constant toil, were contributing factors in his death. Likewise, Piero da Vinci died partly from fever but also from the fatigues of his journey. After falling ill in Genoa, Piero wished to be taken back to Pisa to recover. Piero's assistant, Tiberio Cavalieri, brought him from Genoa to Livorno by sea, and in a litter from Livorno to Pisa. The long journey and late arrival in Pisa meant that Piero was unable to rest; this resulted in his death.<sup>392</sup> Moreover, Vasari himself suffered from fatigue. This, however, was induced by the coldness of winter and heat of summer.<sup>393</sup>

The benefits of sleep were recognised by Avicenna. He commented:

Here it is necessary to emphasise that moderate sleep aids the functioning of physical faculty, gives rest and sedation to the nervous faculty and

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<sup>389</sup> Ibid., 303-304.

<sup>390</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 276.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid., 5: 630.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid., 6: 130-131.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid., 7: 655.

increases the strength of their vital forces. Since during sleep, there is rest and inactivity dispersion of all vital forces stops.<sup>394</sup>

He continued by stating that sleep was mild, warming and moistening when the quantity and quality of humours are normal.<sup>395</sup> Therefore, if the melancholy artists of the *Vite* had found more time for resting, their ailments might have been avoided.

### The 'Non-naturals' of Evacuation and Retention

The evacuation and retention of unfavorable humours was prescribed by the *regimen sanitatis* as a preventative measure against the vagaries of ill health, but also became the primary means of cure should an ailment occur. In the Hippocratic treatise *Nature of man* it was stated, "diseases due to repletion are cured by evacuation, and those due to evacuation are cured by repletion."<sup>396</sup> For the artists of the *Vite*, evacuation provided the method of treatment for their medical complaints.

Venesection was one of the means by which the elimination of humours could be achieved. It was employed if the patient was considered to have too much blood which carried the excess in bad humours.<sup>397</sup> The physician had to take the patient's age, the season, the nature of the location, and the stamina of the patient into account before performing the surgery. Furthermore, decisions in regard to

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<sup>394</sup> Shar, 325.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., 325.

<sup>396</sup> Hippocrates *Nature of man* 9.

<sup>397</sup> Shar, 391.

how much blood should be withdrawn and how frequently also had to be made.<sup>398</sup>

The veins most commonly used were the median cubital vein located in the centre of the forearm, the basilic vein in the arm, the accessory cephalic and cephalic veins located in the head, and the third dorsal metacarpal vein located in the right side.<sup>399</sup> Avicenna writes:

Venesection of the cephalic vein is safe. The other three veins [median, cubital, basilic and the median vein of forearm] should not be venesected below, or at the level of the elbow joint, but only above the joint so that blood may spurt out freely as if from a syringe and the risk of injuring the nerves and arteries decreased. Venesection of the cephalic vein should always be from above the joint. Because of its proximity to the joint, a longitudinal incision in any one of these four veins takes a longer time to heal. The case with the accessory cephalic and the third dorsal metacarpal veins is however different. In puncturing the cephalic vein the vessel should be pulled away from the muscular tendons and allowed to rest of the soft parts and a sufficiently long incision made.<sup>400</sup>

Moreover, this treatment was regarded as useful in the treatment of wounds and contusions as a prophylactic against inflammation, and was therefore given to

Cristofano Gherardi after suffering a fall.<sup>401</sup> Vasari writes that Cristofano 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

<sup>398</sup> Galen *On treatment by venesection* 1.

<sup>399</sup> Shar, 397.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, 397-398.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

something to do to revive him, for the bed was a lake of blood, and he himself was reduced almost to his last gasp.<sup>402</sup>

The successful performance of such an operation was explained in Hippocrates *In the surgery*, where it is noted:

In case of bruising, crushings, ruptures of muscles or swellings without inflammation, blood is expressed from the injured part [by bandaging] mostly upwards, but some little downwards. This is done (with neither arm nor leg in a pendent position) by beginning the bandage at the wound and making most pressure there, least at the ends and moderate in between; the final turns being brought upwards. By bandaging, by compression - but here, too, pressure must be got by quantity of bandage rather than by force. In these cases especially, the linen bandages should be thin, light, soft, clean, broad and sound, as one would use without splints.<sup>403</sup>

It would seem that Cristofano's physician had not taken these precautions when bleeding his patient. However, other doctors were more cautious. In Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography, he had requested to be bled by his physician, Francesco da Norcia, while suffering from the fever. Francesco refused, stating that his illness was too far advanced.<sup>404</sup> Nevertheless, venesection could be used in the treatment of other melancholy diseases, such as paralysis.<sup>405</sup> Galen also recommended phlebotomy at the beginning of spring for the prevention of

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<sup>402</sup> "Ma perchè egli faceva sempre qualche trabiccola di predelle, deschi, e talvolta di catinelle a rovescio e pentole, sopra le quali saliva, come uomo a caso che egli era; avvenne che, volendo una volta di scostarsi per vedere quello che avea fatto, che mancatogli sotto un piede ed andate sottosopra le trabiccole, cascò d'alto cinque braccia, e si pestò in modo, che bisognò trargli sangue e curarlo da dovero, altrimenti si sarebbe morto: e che fu peggio, essendo egli un uomo così fatto e trascurato, se gli sciolsero una notte le fasce del braccio, per lo quale si era tratto sangue, con tanto suo pericolo, che se di ciò non s'accorgeva Stefano, che era a dormire seco, era spacciato; e con tutto ciò si ebbe che fare a rinvenirlo, avendo fatto un lago di sangue nel letto, e sè stesso condotto quasi all'estremo" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 222-223; idem, *The Lives* 2: 321-322).

<sup>403</sup> Hippocrates *In the surgery* 22; In the Galenic work, *On treatment by venesection*, the curative properties of phlebotomy for a blow or pain were likewise noted. The result of the blow would be a plethos of blood which would require venesection; see Galen *On treatment by venesection* 8.

<sup>404</sup> Cellini, 151.

<sup>405</sup> Shar, 193.

epilepsy, apoplexy, haemorrhoids, and diseases of the eyes, particularly if the patient was melancholic. His explanation for this action was:

This is because some accumulate the bilious humour more than the rest, others the melancholic or phlegmatic variety, while others again accumulate all of them equally; in these, blood is said to be in excess. You will evacuate all these, as you will also your gouty and arthritic patients, at the beginning of spring, either by purging or by phlebotomising. I have cured many who had already been troubled on and off for two or three years with pains in the feet, either purging away the excessive humour at the beginning of spring, or removing blood. It is clear that such people are of the sort who are temperate in their way of life, because you will not help the immoderate winebibbers and gluttons much by purging and phlebotomising them; they quickly accumulate a mass of crude humours through intemperate living.<sup>406</sup>

Therefore, for the artists of the *Vite*, venesection formed a means of relief from their melancholy ailments.

However, other forms of evacuation were also available to the artists of the *Vite*.

Herbal remedies or simples were sometimes prescribed by the physician, and, as seen in the *vite* of Leonardo da Vinci and Antonio Veneziano, their distillation found interest amongst the artistic community.<sup>407</sup> In Benvenuto Cellini's

autobiography, part of the cure for his cataracts is provided by a distillation.

Fleur-de-luces, stalk, blossom and root were mixed together to form a lotion.

This was then applied to the eyes several times a day.<sup>408</sup> Herbal cures could also take the form of emetics which would purge the body of the offending humour.

Purgation had been advised in the case of Cellini's cataracts, before application of

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<sup>406</sup> Ibid., 7; Avicenna had also recommended venesection for the cure of gout and melancholia; see Shar, 391.

<sup>407</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 22; 1: 667.

<sup>408</sup> Cellini, 107.

the herbal lotion.<sup>409</sup> Emesis was thought to benefit those suffering from dropsy, melancholia, and gout, all diseases suffered by the artists of the *Vite*. Drugs such as hellebore were used to purge the upper part of the stomach and scammony to evacuate the lower part of this organ.<sup>410</sup> However, emetics were regarded as preservers of health as well as cures. Avicenna explains in the *Canon*, that Hippocrates recommended that emesis should be taken on two consecutive days every month exactly for this purpose.<sup>411</sup>

Another commonly prescribed preservation of health was the taking of baths to cure ailments. In the *Regimen in acute diseases*, from the Hippocratic Collection, baths were recommended as being beneficial to the patient.<sup>412</sup> It was further stated in the Hippocratic *Regimen*:

As to baths, their properties are these. Drinkable [i.e. fresh] water moistens and cools, as it gives moisture to the body. A salt bath warms and dries, as having a natural heat it draws the moisture from the body. Hot baths, when taken fasting, reduce and cool, for they carry the moisture from the body owing to their warmth, while as the flesh is emptied of its moisture the body is cooled. Taken after a meal they warm and moisten, as they expand to a greater bulk the moisture already existing in the body. Cold baths have an opposite effect. To an empty body they give a certain amount of heat; after a meal they take away moisture and fill with their dryness, which is cold.<sup>413</sup>

This method of cure was also used in the treatment of diseases of the melancholy humour. Avicenna recommended nitrous, sulphurous, sea-water, alkaline or

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<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>410</sup> Shar, 387; Aristotle *Problems* 1. 41.

<sup>411</sup> Shar, 388.

<sup>412</sup> Hippocrates *Regimen in acute diseases* 65.

<sup>413</sup> Hippocrates *Regimen* 2. 57.

saline baths medicated with boiling alum, laurel or stavesacre for the treatment of dropsy. These baths would help to reduce the discharge from associated wounds. Waters containing copper, iron or salt were used in the treatment of gout, paralysis, asthma and kidney disease.<sup>414</sup> In the *vita* of Fra Bartolommeo, Vasari tells of Fra Bartolommeo's search at the baths of San Filippo for a cure for the stroke along the side of his body.<sup>415</sup> The *Regimen in acute diseases*, by Hippocrates, stated that bathing soothed pain in the sides, chest and back.<sup>416</sup>

Likewise, the physicians of Francesco Bonsignori and Michelangelo were to prescribe the same treatment for their bladder complaints. Michelangelo was advised to travel to the baths at Viterbo.<sup>417</sup> In his letters to Lionardo di Buonarroto, Michelangelo later commented that the waters, which he had been given to drink, had provided some relief, causing him "to discharge so much thick white matter in the urine, together with some fragments of the stone."<sup>418</sup> Bonsignori travelled to the Baths of Caldero, near Verona for treatment, but died from consumption of water after bathing.<sup>419</sup> The Hippocratic *Regimen in acute*

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<sup>414</sup> Shar, 197.

<sup>415</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 199.

<sup>416</sup> Hippocrates *Regimen in acute diseases* 66.

<sup>417</sup> Ramsden, no. 323; Milanesi, ccxiv.

<sup>418</sup> "Dipoi sendomi stato dato a bere una certa acqua, m'è fatto gittar tanta materia grossa e bianca per orina con qualche pezzo della scorza della pietra" (Ramsden, no. 324; Milanesi, ccxv); discussion of his malady also occurs in Ramsden, no. 325, 326, 327, 330, 334; Milanesi, ccxvi, ccxvii, ccxviii, ccxx, ccxxiv. Hippocrates had stated, in *Prognostics*, that the passing of sediment would provide relief; see footnote 334, page 101.

<sup>419</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 305.

*diseases* stated that food and drink should not be given before or after bathing.<sup>420</sup>

This was verified by Avicenna who commented:

During the bath, or immediately afterwards, cold drinks should not be taken as pores of body are, then, open and the cold would not take very long to reach the vital organs and weaken them. Similarly hot drinks, especially hot water, should be avoided for fear of injuring the vital organs and producing consumption and phthisis.<sup>421</sup>

Therefore, the 'non-natural' of retention and evacuation called for venesection, herbal remedies and bathing as its primary relief of disease, and the *Vite* demonstrated their use in the biographies of the artists. Vasari presented the cures as well as the ailments of the melancholy humour.

#### The 'Non-natural' of Care of the Passions of the Mind

The final 'non-natural' that needed attention for the preservation of health was the elimination of mental and psychological afflictions which could harm the rest of the human body. In the *Vite* these afflictions were caused primarily by the melancholy humour. In the biography of Giovanni Antonio Sogliani he comments:

Very often do we see in the sciences of learning and in the more liberal of the manual arts, that those men who are melancholy are the most assiduous in their studies and show the greatest patience in supporting the burden of their labours; so that there are few of that disposition who do not become excellent in such professions. Even so did Giovanni Antonio Sogliani, a painter of Florence, whose cast of countenance was so cold and woeful that he looked like the image of melancholy; and such was the power of this humour over him that he gave little thought to anything but matters of art, with the exception of his household cares, through which he

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<sup>420</sup> Hippocrates *Regimen in acute diseases* 65.

<sup>421</sup> Shar, 308.

endured most grievous anxieties, although he had enough to live in comfort.<sup>422</sup>

Vasari's artists of the *Vite* lead the same life as Aristotle's philosopher, politician and poet, and their psychological afflictions were therefore the same.<sup>423</sup> In the regulation and care of the melancholic passions of the mind, depression was an ailment which required attention. Hippocrates noted that "Fear or depression that is prolonged means melancholia," and for Vasari's artists one such cause was grief. Ficino acknowledged that sadness caused melancholia, and death was the cause of the grief suffered by Piero di Cosimo, Baccio Bandinelli, Michele San Michele, Torrigiano and Francesco Francia.<sup>424</sup> Vasari tells us that upon hearing the news of the death of Cosimo Rosselli, Piero di Cosimo was plunged into such grief as to produce depression. The artist shut himself up in his house and led a solitary life in squalor. Piero di Cosimo would not allow his house to be cleaned and left his garden untended.<sup>425</sup> Similarly, Baccio Bandinelli's grief after the death of his father was so great as to cause his own demise. Vasari explains:

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

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<sup>422</sup> "Spesse volte veggiamo negli esercizi delle lettere e nell'arti ingegnose manuali, quelli che sono maninconici essere più assidui agli astudi, e con maggior pacienza sopportare i pesi delle fatiche; onde rari sono coloro di questo umore, che in cotali professioni non rieschino eccellenti, come fece Giovanni Antonio Sogliani, pittor fiorentino; il quale era tanto nell'aspetto freddo e malinconico, che pareva la stessa malinconia. E potè quell'umore talmente in lui, che dalle cose dell'arte in fuori, pochi altri pensieri si diede, eccetto che delle cure famigliari, nelle quali egli sopportava gravissima passione, quantunche avesse assai commodamente da ripararsi" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 123; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 880).

<sup>423</sup> The effects of melancholia were also discussed in near-contemporary biographies. Filippo Villani noted Coluccio Piero's melancholy, and according the Vespasiano, Nugno Gusmano, Lapo di Castiglionchi and Donato Acciaiuoli also suffered from the complaint. See F. Villani, *Le vite d'uomini illustri fiorentini* (Florence, 1747), 28; and Vespasiano da Bisticci, 235, 310 and 344.

<sup>424</sup> Ficino, 3. 2.

<sup>425</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 133-134.

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 worse daily, 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.<sup>426</sup>

The grief suffered by Bandinelli at the death of his father was echoed in the *vita* of Michele San Michele after the death of his son. Michele's sorrow was caused by the realisation that with the death of Gian Girolamo came the end of the house of San Michele. His grief was so great as to cause a fever and ultimately his own death.<sup>427</sup> Similarly, Torrigiano's melancholic grief was caused by the infliction of a death sentence upon his life.<sup>428</sup> Artistic competition could also produce depression, and Francesco Francia's grief was the result of seeing a panel painting by Raphael. Vasari states:

Wherefore Francia, half dead with terror at the beauty of the picture, which lay before his eyes challenging comparison with those by his own hand that he saw around him, felt all confounded, and had it placed with great diligence in that chapel of S. Giovanni in Monte for which it was destined; and taking to his bed in a few days almost beside himself, thinking that he was now almost of no account in his art in comparison with the opinion held both by himself and by others, he died of grief and melancholy.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> "Queste ossa di suo padre egli di sua mano volle pietosamente mettere in detta sepoltura; dove avvenne che Baccio, o che egli pigliasse dispiacere ed alterazione d'animo nel maneggiare l'ossa di suo padre, o che troppo s'affaticasse nel tramutare quell'ossa con le proprie mani e nel mutare i marmi, o l'uno o l'altro insieme, si travagliò di maniera, che sentendosi male ed andatosene a casa, e ogni di più aggravando il male, in otto giorni si morì, essendo d'età d'anni 72; essendo stato fino allora robusto e fiero, senza aver mai provato molti mali, mentre ch' e' visse" (Ibid., 6: 189-190; idem, *The Lives*, 2: 304).

<sup>427</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 364.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid., 4: 263.

<sup>429</sup> "Laonde il Francia; mezzo morto per il terrore e per la bellezza della pittura, che era presente agli occhi, ed a paragone di quelle che intorno di sua mano si vedevano, tutto smarrito; la fece con diligenza porre in San Giovanni in Monte a quella cappella, dove doveva stare; ed entratosene fra pochi di nel letto, tutto fuori di sè stesso, parendoli non esser rimasto quasi nulla nell'arte, appetto a quello che egli credeva e che egli era tenuto, di dolore e malinconia, come alcuni credono, si morì" (Ibid., 3: 546; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 582).

Depression had other causes, however. Ficino stated that solitude was bad for those suffering from an excess of black bile, and, in the *Vite*, this was a complaint frequently suffered by Vasari's artists.<sup>430</sup> Paolo Uccello lived the life of a hermit in the pursuit of perfection in his art. The author notes:

Paolo Uccello would have been the most gracious and fanciful genius that was ever devoted to the art of painting, from Giotto's day to our own, if he had laboured as much at figures and animals as he laboured and lost time over the details of perspective; for although these are ingenious and beautiful, yet if a man pursues them beyond measure he does nothing but waste his time, exhausts his powers, fills his mind with difficulties, and often transforms its fertility and readiness into sterility and constraint, and renders his manner, by attending more to these details than to figures, dry and angular, which all comes from a wish to examine things too minutely; not to mention that very often he becomes solitary, eccentric, melancholy, and poor, as did Paolo Uccello.<sup>431</sup>

Jacopo Pontormo is also considered a solitary painter who suffered from melancholy.<sup>432</sup> Moreover, the solitude and melancholy of other artists, such as Giotto, Lorenzo Vecchietto and Daniello da Volterra led to their deaths.<sup>433</sup>

Melancholic depression had its cures, however, and in *De vita triplici* Marsilio Ficino recommended "the constant company of agreeable people."<sup>434</sup> Ottaviano Rabasco's *Il convito overo discorsi di quelle materie che al convito*

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<sup>430</sup> Ficino, 1. 10.

<sup>431</sup> "Paolo Uccello sarebbe stato il più leggiadro e capriccioso ingegno che avesse avuto da Giotto in qua l'arte della pittura, se egli si fusse affaticato tanto nelle figure ed animali, quanto egli si affaticò e perse tempo nelle cose di prospettiva; le quali, ancorchè sieno ingegnose e belle, chi le segue troppo fuor di misura, getta il tempo dietro tempo, affatica la natura, e l'ingegno empie di difficoltà, e bene spesso di fertile e facile lo fa tornar sterile e difficile, e se ne cava (da chi più attende a lei che alle figure) la maniera secca e piena di profili; il che genera il voler troppo minutamente tritar le cose: oltre che, bene spesso si diventa solitario, strano, malinconico e povero; come Paolo Uccello" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 2: 203; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 280-281).

<sup>432</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 247.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 1: 627; 3: 78-79; 7: 70.

<sup>434</sup> "assiduam hominum gratiosum consuetudinem" (Ficino, 1. 10).

*s'appartengono*, published in Florence during 1615, similarly recommended social gatherings as a relief for depression.<sup>435</sup> The text primarily referred to the gatherings of the Accademia degli Incitati in Rome and the Gelati of Bologna. In reference to Plutarch, Rabasco claimed that gatherings provided nourishment for the soul and the body, joining the senses and the spirit and awakening intelligence, restoring life, ending toil and all cares, and providing the beginnings of love, magnificence and friendship. Furthermore, banqueting provided a gathering of a few where food was accompanied by pleasurable words and actions. Its aim was to calm the soul and encourage friendship.<sup>436</sup> Rabasco further added that man was by nature a sociable animal and enjoyed the company and community provided by these gatherings.<sup>437</sup>

The argument was continued in Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, which was first published in 1621. In referring to various classical and medieval authors, Burton's work provided a compilation of ideas for the causes and treatment of melancholy. In reference to the writings of Seneca, he stated that the

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<sup>435</sup> O. Rabasco, *Il Convito ovvero discorsi di quelle materie che al convito s'appartengono* (Florence, 1615), 5.

<sup>436</sup> Rabasco wrote: "Differo altri diuersamente, nominando il Conuito cibo, e nutrimento comune del corpo, e dell'animo; diletto congiunto del senso, e dello spirito; suegliamento dell'ingegno; restaurazion della vita; termine delle fatiche, e delle cure; indizio d'amore, e di magnificenza; condimento dell'amicizia, e porto della vita, e con altri mille nomi, che vanno tutti accennando in parte la nobilita, e l'eccellenza del Conuito, ma con vna tal strettezza di parole, che non può alcuna d'esse dirsi diffinizion intera" (Ibid., 3).

<sup>437</sup> "Essendo chè l'huomo per sua natura ami la conuersazione, e comunanza, e fugga la solitudine, E (come diffe quell'altro) l'huomo è animal, che per Conuiti nacque: Perche veramente l'huomo, è per natura sociabile, e sì come la compagnia, e comunanza, e la società" (Ibid., 4).

melancholy man abhorred all company.<sup>438</sup> However, the melancholic's cure was found in exactly that: music, mirth and merry company. Burton wrote:

Our Physitians generally prescribe this as a principall engine, to batter the walls of melancholy, a chiefe antidote, & a sufficient cure of it selfe. *By all meanes (saith Mesue) procure mirth to these men in such things as are heard, seene, tasted, or smelled, or any way perceived, and let them have all enticements, and faire promises, the sight of excellent beauties, attires, ornaments, delightsome passages, to distract their mindes from feare and sorrow, and such things on which they are so fixed and intent. Let them use hunting, sports, playes, jestes, merry company, as Rhasis prescribes, which will not let the minde be molested, a cup of good drinke now and then, heare musicke, and have such companions, with whom they are especially delighted: Merry tales or toyes, drinking, singing, dancing, and whatsoever else may procure mirth: and by no meanes, saith Guianerius, suffer them to be alone. Benedictus Victorius Faventinus in his Empericks, accompts it an especiall remedy against melancholy, to heare and see singing, dancing, maskers, Mummings, to converse with such merry fellowes, and faire maids.*<sup>439</sup>

For Vasari's text this is most clearly expressed in the *vita* of Francesco Salviati.

Vasari states that the painter was by nature melancholic.

Francesco was never much liked there [in France], because he had a nature altogether opposed to that of the men of that country, where, even as those merry and jovial men are liked and held dear who live a free life and take part gladly in assemblies and banquets, so those are, I do not say shunned, but less liked and welcomed, who are by nature, as Francesco was, melancholy, abstinent, sickly, and cross-grained. For some things he might have deserved to be excused, since his habit of body would not allow him to mix himself up with banquets and with eating and drinking too much, if only he could have been more agreeable in conversation.<sup>440</sup>

<sup>438</sup> R. Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. N. K. Kiessling, T. C. Faulkner, R. L. Blair (Oxford, 1990), 2: 206-207. Burton's book appeared in six editions from 1621, 1624, 1628, 1632, 1638 and 1651. The 1990 edition used was mostly composed from the 1632 printing of Burton's text.

<sup>439</sup> Burton, 2: 117-118.

<sup>440</sup> "Oltre di questo non vi fu mai Francesco molto amato, per esser di natura tutto contraria a quella degli uomini di quel paese; essendo che, quanto vi sono avuti cari ed amati gli uomini allegri, gioiviali, che vivono alla libera e si trovano volentieri in brigata ed a far banchetti; tanto vi sono, non dico fuggiti, ma meno amati e carezzati coloro che sono, come Francesco era, di natura malinconico, sobrio, mal sano e stitico. Ma d'alcune cose arebbe meritato scusa; però chè, se la

Vasari continues by admitting that when Salviati was less weighed down by his melancholy he would gather in the company of friends and make himself be cheerful.<sup>441</sup> Moreover, other artists shared in the company of others. Benedetto da Rovezzano “always delighted in the society of men of culture,” as did Sebastiano del Piombo, who often dined with Molza.<sup>442</sup> Puligo “associated with gay spirits and lovers of good cheer,” and other artists were to form the banqueting clubs of the Paiuolo and Cazzuola in the pursuit of friendly company.<sup>443</sup>

Furthermore, music was considered to ease the discomfort of black bile.<sup>444</sup> In Aristotle’s *Problems* he questioned:

Why do those who are grieving and those who are enjoying themselves alike have the flute played to them? Is it in order that the distress of the former may be lessened and the pleasure of the latter increased?<sup>445</sup>

Ficino agreed with Aristotle by writing:

Hermes Trismegistus, Pythagoras, and Plato tell us to calm and to cheer the dissonant and the sorrowful mind with constant and harmonious lyre and song. Moreover, David, the sacred poet, used to free Saul from madness with his psaltery and psalms. I, too, (if I may now compare the lowliest person with the greatest), frequently prove in myself how much the sweetness of the lyre and song avail against the bitterness of black bile.<sup>446</sup>

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sua complessione non comportava che s’ aviluppasse ne’ pasti, e nel mangiar troppo e bere, avrebbe potuto essere più dolce nel conversare” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 34; idem, *The Lives*, 2: 575-576).

<sup>441</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 38-39.

<sup>442</sup> “si diletto sempre di praticare con uomini virtuosi” (Ibid., 4: 536; idem, *The Lives*, 5: 583).

<sup>443</sup> “praticando con persone allegre e di buon tempo” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 467; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 771); Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 609-611; 6: 611-619; see Wittkower, 159 for discussion of Puligo’s behaviour; for discussion of the Cazzuola and Paiuolo, see chapter 3.

<sup>444</sup> Ficino, 1. 10; 2. 8.

<sup>445</sup> Aristotle *Problems* 19. 1.

<sup>446</sup> “Mercurius, Pythagoras, Plato iubent dissonantem animum vel maerentem cithara cantuque tam constanti quam concinno componere simul atque erigere. David autem, poeta sacer, psalterio

In the treatment of the aged, who were prone to melancholy, Ficino also recommended the playing of instruments.<sup>447</sup> Indeed, in Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography, he notes that his assistant, Paulino, became less melancholy when Cellini played his cornet to him.<sup>448</sup>

These musical prescriptions were thus followed by Vasari's artists. Girolamo da Carpi delighted in the pleasures of music, as did Giorgione, who played the lute and sang.<sup>449</sup> Puligo enjoyed the company of musicians, and Bramante improvised upon the lyre and composed some sonnets.<sup>450</sup> Timoteo da Urbino was an accomplished musician with the ability to play many instruments, and he, like Bramante, enjoyed improvising upon his lyre.<sup>451</sup> Rosso Fiorentino is described as an excellent musician, as were Francesco Parmigianino and Matteo Nassaro, who played music as well as they painted.<sup>452</sup> Vasari states that Sebastiano del Piombo's first profession was as a musician; he was an accomplished singer and lute player.<sup>453</sup> Both Girolamo Genga and his son Bartolommeo Genga were musicians, Bartolommeo delighting in the writing of sonnets and verse.<sup>454</sup>

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psalmisque Saulem ab insania liberabat. Ego etiam, si modo infima licet componere summis, quantum adversus atrae bilis amaritudinem dulcedo lyrae cantusque valeat, domi frequenter experior" (Ficino, 1. 10. 49-54).

<sup>447</sup> Ibid., 2. 8. 14-15; see also Wittkower, 106.

<sup>448</sup> Cellini, 35.

<sup>449</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 472; 4: 92.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid., 4: 467; 4: 164.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid., 4: 498-499.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid., 5: 234; Parmigianino's fondness for music is illustrated in his drawing of *Male figures (shepherds for an Adoration?)*, dated ca. 1523-25 and owned by a private American collection. Musical notes were drawn by Parmigianino in the centre of the sheet. See Exh. cat., *Correggio and Parmigianino*, eds. C. C. Bambach, H., Chapman, M. Clayton, G. Goldner (London, 2000), 98-99. See Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 375 for Vasari's description of Matteo Nassaro's fondness for music.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid., 5: 565.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid., 6: 322; 6: 330.

Domenico del Riccio was also considered a fine musician and one of the first members of the Philharmonic Academy of Verona.<sup>455</sup> Finally, Tintoretto also delighted in the pleasures of music, according to Vasari.<sup>456</sup>

In Aristotle's *Problems*, the melancholic temperament, which so affected the mental health of its suffer, was likened to the sensations produced by the consumption of wine.<sup>457</sup> Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that the drinking habits of the artists also found a place within Vasari's *Vite*. The inspiration found in melancholy by the learned scholar was replicated by the consumption of wine by the artist and craftsman of the *Vite*. Andrea Verrocchio would not work outside his workshop without free access to a wine-cellar, and Martin Heemskerck's wonderful skills are attributed to his consumption of wine.<sup>458</sup> Vasari writes:

And the marvellous thing was that Martino [Martin Heemskerck] and his assistants executed those canvases with such assiduity and rapidity, in order that the work might be finished in time, that they never quitted their labour; and since drink, and that good Greco, was continually being brought to them, what with their being constantly drunk and inflamed with the heat of the wine, and their facility in execution, they achieved wonders.<sup>459</sup>

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<sup>455</sup> Ibid., 6: 368.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid., 6: 587.

<sup>457</sup> Aristotle *Problems* 30. 1.

<sup>458</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 3: 370.

<sup>459</sup> "E quello che fu cosa maravigliosa, fece il detto Martino e suoi uomini quelle tele con tanta sollecitudine e prestezza, perchè l'opera fusse finita a tempo, che non si partivano mai dal lavoro; e perchè era portato loro continuamente da bere, e di buon greco, fra lo stare sempre ubriachi e riscaldati dal furor del vino e la pratica del fare, feciono cose stupende" (Ibid., 6: 573; idem, *The Lives*, 2: 499).

Consumption of red wine also increased the desire for coitus in the melancholic temperament.<sup>460</sup> In Cennini's *Libro dell'arte*, he warned against the artist indulging too much in the company of woman.<sup>461</sup> However, the melancholic person was regarded as lustful, and as Aristotle had questioned:

Why are the melancholic particularly inclined for sexual intercourse? Is it because they are full of breath, and the semen is a discharge of breath? If so, those whose semen is full of breath must necessarily often desire to purge themselves of it; for thus they are relieved of it.<sup>462</sup>

Plato's judgment regarding coitus of the melancholic was similar to that of Aristotle's and was stated as such:

And whenever a man's seed grows to abundant volume in his marrow, as it were a tree that is overladen beyond measure with fruit, he brings on himself time after time many pangs and many pleasures owing to his desires and the issue thereof, and comes to be in a state of madness for the most part of his life because of those greatest of pleasures and pains, and deeps his soul diseased and senseless by reason of the action of his body. Yet such a man is reputed to be voluntarily wicked and not diseased; although, in truth, this sexual incontinence, which is due for the most part to the abundance and fluidity of one substance because of the porosity of the bones, constitutes a disease of the soul.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> Aristotle *Problems* 30. 1.

<sup>461</sup> Cennini, 16.

<sup>462</sup> Aristotle *Problems* 4. 30; Hippocrates stated, "Sexual intercourse reduces, moistens and warms. It warms owing to fatigue and the excretion of moisture; it reduces owing to the evacuation; it moistens because of the remnant in the body of the matters melted by the fatigue" (*Hippocrates Regimen* 2. 58).

<sup>463</sup> Plato *Timaeus* 235; Ficino's comments regarding sexual intercourse and melancholy made specific reference to the writings of Hippocrates and Avicenna and were as such: "The first monster is sexual intercourse, especially if it proceeds even a little beyond one's strength; for indeed it suddenly drains the spirits, especially the more subtle ones, it weakens the brain, and it ruins the stomach and the heart - no evil can be worse for one's intelligence. For why did Hippocrates judge sexual intercourse to be like epilepsy, if not because it strikes the mind, which is sacred; and it is so harmful that Avicenna has said in his book *De animalibus*: "If any sperm should flow away through intercourse beyond that which nature tolerates, it is more harmful than if forty times as much blood should pour forth.""

"Primum quidem monstrum est Venereus coitus, praesertim si vel paulum vires excesserit; subito namque exhaurit spiritus praesertim subtiliores, cerebrumque debilitat, labefactat stomachum atque praecordia. Quo malo nihil ingenio adversius esse potest. Cur nam Hippocrates coitum comitiali morbo similem iudicavit, nisi quia mentem, quae sacra est, percutit; tantumque obest, ut Avicenna in libro *De animalibus* dixerit: "Si quid spermatis, supra quam natura toleret, coitu profluat, obesse magis quam si quadragies tantundem sanguinis emanarit" (Ficino, 1. 8, 13-20).

This passion for love was displayed by several of the *Vite's* artists. Raphael was to indulge in amorous affairs, as was the artist Mariotto Albertinelli.<sup>464</sup> Girolamo da Carpi was also to pursue the pleasures of coitus.<sup>465</sup> Moreover, in the *vita* of Filippo Lippi, Vasari displays the lengths to which an artist would go in the pursuit of love. The painter, who resided in the house of Cosimo de' Medici, would escape from his room using bedsheets so as to maintain a love-affair.<sup>466</sup> His passions led to an affair with a novice nun, Lucrezia Buti, and his death was reputedly the result of relations with a lady whose relatives had him poisoned.<sup>467</sup>

Vasari continues by stating that Giorgione and Puligo contracted the plague while in pursuit of love-affairs.<sup>468</sup> It may be speculated that the disease they actually contracted was syphilis, but its symptoms, within the context of the artists' love of music and company, would have exactly correlated with Aristotle's description of the effect of black bile. Aristotle stated:

Now, black bile, which is naturally cold and not on the surface, being in the condition mentioned above, if it abounds in the body, produced apoplexy or torpor or despondency or fear; but when it is overheated, it produces cheerfulness accompanied by song, and frenzy, and the breaking forth of sores, and the like.<sup>469</sup>

The disease of syphilis was prevalent during the sixteenth century and was most notably suffered by the sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini. Several proposals have been

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<sup>464</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 366, 381; 4: 222; for discussion of the licentious behaviour of Raphael and Mariotto Albertinelli, see Wittkower, 153 and 159.

<sup>465</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 472.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 616-617.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 620-621; 2: 628; see Wittkower, 155.

<sup>468</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 99; 4: 467.

<sup>469</sup> Aristotle *Problems* 30. 1.

made regarding the disease's spread throughout Europe. The first epidemic is believed to have broken out in Naples, amongst the French troops who re-possessed it for France in February 1495.<sup>470</sup> When the French withdrew and Charles VIII discharged his soldiers they spread the disease throughout the continent.<sup>471</sup> It was also thought that it may have arrived in Europe with the return of Columbus' sailors from the New World. However, modern medical laboratory tests have proven that these hypotheses might not be correct. The strain of spirochete, or bacteria, causing the ancient disease of yaws cannot be distinguished from that of syphilis. Yaws chiefly occurs in conditions of poor hygiene and the bacteria is transmitted by skin-to-skin contact. Initial symptoms include fever and itching, followed by small tumours which can develop into deep ulcers.<sup>472</sup> It is possible that the spirochete simply found a more effective means of transmission through the mucous membranes of the sex organs, and the arrival of French troops in Italy and the return of Columbus were simply coincidental.<sup>473</sup> In Cellini's autobiography he comments upon the physician, Giacomo Berengario da Carpi, and his cure for syphilis. Carpi used mercury to cure the disease, which as Cellini notes, only sickened his patients more. Unfortunately, Cellini's syphilis had been contracted from a young servant girl in his employment. He observed that the illness produced large blisters all over his body.<sup>474</sup> Thus, Cellini's

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<sup>470</sup> Cellini, 45-46.

<sup>471</sup> C. F. Conway, "Syphilis and Bronzino's London *Allegory*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 49 (1986): 252; W. H. McNeill, *Plagues and People* (New York, 1998), 226.

<sup>472</sup> McNeill, 226-227.

<sup>473</sup> Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary, ed. E. A. Martin, 5th ed. (Oxford, 1998), 714.

<sup>474</sup> Cellini, 107.

description of syphilis is in exact accord with that of Aristotle's probable description of yaws, which is essentially the same disease.

As can be seen, the passions of the mind produced by the melancholy temperament required special attention, and Vasari's *Vite* provided the artists of the Renaissance with such. Whether the passion be love, grief or depression, the cure could be found in the writings of the ancients or in the modern *regimen sanitatis*, and both were documented in the *Vite*.

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Giorgio Vasari's text of the *Vite* provides a *regimen sanitatis* for the Renaissance painter, sculptor and architect. In each biography he describes the temperaments and diseases, the causes and the cures of the artist's ailments. This he achieves through recognition of medical theory and practice and particularly through the principle of the 'non-naturals'. Of overwhelming importance and dominance in the text is the melancholic humour. Margot and Rudolf Wittkower recognised the philosophical, temperamental aspect of the melancholy artist in *Born Under Saturn* but failed to note the medical significance of Vasari's descriptions. Not only did black bile effect the temperaments of the artists but it also induced the diseases associated with the humour. Fever, dropsy, consumption, colic, paralysis and insanity are all recognised as ailments caused by black bile, and all are

suffered by Vasari's artists. Moreover, it is in the air of Tuscany, under the patronage of the Medici, that the melancholy artist is nurtured. This is best illustrated in the *vita* of Michelangelo. In this biography, Vasari describes Michelangelo's creation as from "the proportionate admixture of humours."<sup>475</sup> He is the personification of the intellectual, melancholy artist, born in the air of Tuscany. He is plagued by the melancholy diseases of the spleen and the solitary tendencies of his philosophical temperament. Therefore, in the writing of the *Vite*, Vasari provided a complete analysis of the humour of melancholy. In doing so he achieved the desired elevation of the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture, first called for in Cennino Cennini's *Il libro dell'arte*, and he also paid homage to his Medici patron, Cosimo I.

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<sup>475</sup> "la proporzionata mistione degli umori" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 135; idem, *The Lives*, 2: 642).

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE COMPANY OF THE CAZZUOLA - A CASE STUDY IN MEDICI PATRONAGE AND MEDICINAL TREATMENT

When Cosimo de' Medici founded the Platonic Academy in 1462, he gave as its home his villa at Careggi. The house provided an ideal setting for the academy's philosophers, who, as Aristotle and Marsilio Ficino stated, were prone to suffer from the excesses of the melancholy humour. Ficino, Angelo Poliziano and Pico della Mirandola were able to converse with others in the peaceful setting of the Medici villa.<sup>476</sup> Indeed, it was the Platonic Academy which set the precedent for the formation of other academies in Florence, most notably the Accademia Fiorentina and Accademia del Disegno, under the patronage of Vasari's patron, Cosimo I.<sup>477</sup> Thus, it may be expected that the melancholy artist of Vasari's *Vite* was also to find solace in the company of others under the patronage of the Medici family.

Vasari's tale of the activities of the Company of the Cazzuola is found within the *vita* of Giovan Francesco Rustici, who lived life like a philosopher, enjoying

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<sup>476</sup> The traditional account of its foundation states that Cosimo was deeply impressed by the neo-pagan philosopher Gemistus Plethon who had arrived at the Council of Florence in 1439 to give lectures on Plato; see J. Hankins, "Cosimo de' Medici and the 'Platonic Academy,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 53 (1990): 144; F. A. Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1947), 1; idem, *Renaissance and Reform: the Italian Contribution* (London, 1983), 8.

<sup>477</sup> The case for the Platonic Academy being the predecessor of the Accademia Fiorentina has been made by A. De Gaetano in "The Florentine Academy and the Advancement of Learning through the Vernacular: The Orti Oricellari and the Sacra Accademia," *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 30 (1968): 20.

solitude, although also seeking the company of friends in the quest for recreation.<sup>478</sup> In this he found repose through membership of this jovial company, as did Giuliano de' Medici, Duke of Nemours. Giuliano's illegitimate son Ippolito de' Medici, and Alessandro de' Medici, the illegitimate son of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, were also to enjoy the entertainments of the Cazzuola.<sup>479</sup>

It must be stated that Vasari was not always approving of this company's activities.<sup>480</sup> While he appreciated that the company of others could reduce the effects of the melancholy temperament, as was the case with Francesco Salviati, he regarded the Cazzuola's gatherings as unfashionable.<sup>481</sup> Vasari's opinion was perhaps influenced by the writings of other authors. Machiavelli had published a satirical account of the rules governing such organisations in his *Articles for a Pleasure Company*.<sup>482</sup> Benedetto Varchi had also disapproved of these companies in the *Storia fiorentina* where he was particularly critical of the

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<sup>478</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 601. The term "company" or "compagnia" simply refers to a group or a party. It was used to describe such informal gatherings as the Cazzuola as well as to describe individual confraternal societies.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid., 6: 438; J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle, *Painting in Italy* (London, 1914), 6, 170; A. C. Minor and B. Mitchell, *A Renaissance Entertainment* (Missouri, 1968), 34; A. Mango, *La commedia in lingua nel Cinquecento* (Florence, 1966), 179; and M. Fabbri, *Il luogo teatrale a Firenze* (Milan, 1975), 74.

<sup>480</sup> After Vasari's description of the company's first banquet he states that the after dinner games were best left to the imagination. See *Le vite*, 6: 614.

<sup>481</sup> See pages 127-128 for discussion of Francesco Salviati. Vasari stated that the Cazzuola was unfashionable in *Le vite*, 6: 613. He made the same comment about another convivial company, the Paiuolo. Ibid., 6: 610.

<sup>482</sup> N. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works and Others*, trans. A. Gilbert (Durham, N. Carolina, 1965), 2, 865-868. The date of this work is unknown.

Buonumini di San Martino.<sup>483</sup> Nevertheless, Vasari did believe that it was important to detail the Company of the Cazzuola's activities.<sup>484</sup>

The company chose Saint Andrew as their patron, and significantly it was on this Saint's day, 30 November, 1515, that Pope Leo X had celebrated his entry into Florence.<sup>485</sup> The Cazzuola's activities included the production of plays; the giving of banquets complete with allegorical themes and *intermezzi*; and the creation of food sculptures; all facets of both the Platonic Academy's sixteenth-century descendants, the Medici court, and perhaps more significantly the Roman Saturnalia. Therefore, the amalgam of Saturnian astrology and the melancholy humour, provided by Medici symbolism, reached its zenith in Vasari's *Vite* with the author's description of this particular company. A cure for the Cazzuola's melancholy ailments was found, and the characteristics of the Saturnalia were displayed. The *vita* of Rustici mirrored exactly the descriptions of Marsilio Ficino, Ottaviano Rabasco and Robert Burton. The melancholy of the philosopher/artist and the Saturnian ruler could be avoided through the company of friends and the entertainment of the banquet.<sup>486</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> B. Varchi, *Storia fiorentina* (Florence, 1963), Book 9, Chapter 49, 608-609. The *Storia fiorentina* was commissioned by Cosimo I between 1546 and 1547. See Rubin, 200.

<sup>484</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 613.

<sup>485</sup> Hibbert, 221.

<sup>486</sup> See pages 125-127 for Ficino's, Rabasco's and Burton's comments regarding the company of others as a cure for melancholy.

### The Renaissance Origins of the Company of the Cazzuola

Vasari's descriptions of the company's activities also illustrated the changing nature of Florentine life under the supremacy of the Medici. The confraternities, which had provided the primary means of entertainment during the fifteenth century, were now superseded by the academies, after continued and sustained suppression from both Medicean and non-Medicean governments.

While the confraternities had a religious foundation and the academies were broadly secular and humanistic, both were responsible for the social functioning of the city. Within each category can be found various subsections. For example, Benedetto Varchi formulated an elaborate typography of different Florentine lay confraternities in the *Storia fiorentina*. He wrote:

There are in Florence seventy-three groups called companies, which are divided into two main parts, since some are of boys and some of adult men. The boys' [companies], which are nine in number, meet every Sunday and all feasts of obligation to sing vespers and other divine offices under the guardian and corrector, and for the Festival of San Giovanni and other solemn feasts join the clergy in the procession. Those of the men are of four sorts since some are called 'companies of the standard', and these are more concerned with entertaining themselves and others than divine cult; there are fourteen [of these]. Others, because they whip themselves after holy Office, are called 'companies of discipline', which also process on solemn feastdays, accompany their dead brothers to burial, and do other pious works and charitable offices; there are thirty-eight of these which can also be called fraternities and they contain both nobles and plebeians of every kind. The third more secret and devout than the others, because normally they only meet on Saturday in the night, are called 'companies of the night', and there are four. The fourth and last, which are even more secret and devout, in which only the nobility can enter, are called 'companies of the buche' [underground chapels] and there are eight of these.<sup>487</sup>

<sup>487</sup> "Sono in Firenze settantatrè ragunanze, chiamate compagnie, le quali si dividono principalmente in due parti, perciocchè alcune sono di fanciulli e alcune d'uomini fatti; quelle de' fanciulli, che si

The first of the boys' confraternities, or *fanciulli*, was the Company of the Archangel Raphael or of the Nativity, founded in 1410. Its purpose was to ensure the spiritual well-being and education of its young members. It also was involved in the production of dramatic representations. Boys between the ages of thirteen and twenty-four were admitted to the confraternity. Other *fanciulli* were quickly formed and in 1442 the Pope, Eugenius IV, found it necessary to impose regulations upon the foundation of such organisations. The adult custodians of the pre-existing *fanciulli* and the two most senior Florentine prelates were to approve the founding of any further boys' confraternities.<sup>488</sup>

The adult confraternities fell into two main categories. Varchi identified one of these, the *disciplinati*, but another also existed, the *laudesi*. The former took part in voluntary flagellation, following the example of the eleventh-century abbot Peter Damian and his order, the Umbrian Hermits of Fonte Avellana. The practice allowed the laity to atone for its sin and to imitate the suffering of

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ragunano ogni domenica e tutti i giorni delle feste comandare a cantare il vespro e altri divini uffizi sotto il lor guardiano e correttore, sono nove, le quali per San Giovanni e per altre solennità vanno tutte quante insieme col chiericato a processione. Quelle degli uomini sono di quattro maniere, perciò che alcune si chiamano compagnie di stendardo, e queste attendono più tosto a rallegrare sè ed altrui, che al culto divino, le quali sono quattordici; alcune altre perchè dopo i sacri uffizi si danno la disciplina, si chiamano compagnie di disciplina, le quali vanno anch'esse per le solennità alle processioni, accompagnano i loro fratelli morti alla sepoltura, e fanno altre opere pie e caritativi uffizi; e queste sono trentotto, le quali si chiamano ancora fraternite, ed in elle sono uomini nobili e ignobili d'ogni ragione. Le quarte, più segrete e più devote dell'arte, perchè ordinariamente non si ragunano se non il sabato e di notte, si chiamano compagnie di notte, e sono quattro. Le quinte ed ultime, le quali sono ancora più segrete e più devote dell'altre, perchè ordinariamente non si ragunano, e nelle quali per lo più non sono se non uomini nobili, si chiamano Buche; e queste sono otto" (Varchi, Book 9, Chapter 36, 591; and J. Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence* (Oxford, 1994), 2-3).

<sup>488</sup> R. C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1980), 370.

Christ.<sup>489</sup> The *laudesi* had been founded to guide the laity in the singing of lauds to the Virgin Mary and other patron saints during the daily evening service.

Significantly, these hymns were written in Italian.<sup>490</sup> They, like the *fanciulli*, were also involved in the production of plays and dramas.<sup>491</sup>

Another form of confraternity also existed. These were the artisan companies which drew their membership from a single occupation and were controlled by the guilds. Confraternal affiliation did not necessarily indicate guild membership, however, as was the case with the *sottoposti*, the disenfranchised workers.<sup>492</sup> These confraternities provided charitable relief, ensuring that elderly members and their families would be taken care of.<sup>493</sup>

The academies were often very informal in nature, and consisted of individuals who shared similar interests. They were often humanistic and some groups were eventually incorporated into formalised academies which operated under state control. For example, in 1542 the informal Accademia degli Umidi became the state-sponsored Accademia Fiorentina, charged with the study of the vernacular language and literature. It was responsible for the translation of Greek and Latin works into Italian. The Consul of the academy was also made Rector-General of

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<sup>489</sup> Henderson, 35.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid., 45-46.

the University.<sup>494</sup> Some academies found their origins in confraternal organisations. The Accademia del Disegno replaced the Compagnia di San Luca and, at first, functioned as both a confraternity and academy.<sup>495</sup> The Accademia de'Costanti was formed out of and replaced the Confraternity of San Bernardino. In the year 1559, the younger members of the confraternity, namely Giovanni Altoviti, Niccolò degli Albizi, Giovanni da Filicaia, Gherardo Gherardi, Vincentio del Morello, Alessandro Ceccherelli, Lodovico Paganucci, Bernardo da Monte Gonzi, Pagolo Bernardi, Antonio Falucci, Giovanni da Monte and Stefano Baldini, decided to reinvigorate the company by creating the academy.<sup>496</sup>

Political unrest had become a major preoccupation of the Florentine authorities during the Republican period, and it was believed that the confraternities were a breeding-ground for dissent. It was feared that the disenfranchised workers, the *sottoposti*, would use the confraternities to ferment political unrest. The revolt of the Ciompi, in July 1378, had heightened fears, although it had been hoped that guild control of the major confraternities in the city would prevent unrest. The Signoria found it necessary on several occasions to legislate against the lay brotherhoods of Florence. Beginning in 1415, the Signoria prohibited any

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<sup>494</sup> C. Dempsey, "Some Observations on the Education of Artists in Florence and Bologna During the Later Sixteenth Century," *Art Bulletin* 62 (1980): 555.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, 553.

<sup>496</sup> B. N. C. F., MS II III 427, 60r-60v. Folio 60r lists the membership and folio 60v gives details of the change from confraternity to academy. M. Maylender in *Storia delle accademie d'Italia*, vol. 2 (Bologna, 1926-1930), 110-111 listed the Accademia dei Costanti in his monumental work regarding Italian academies of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Maylender gave the inaccurate location of the Costanti documents to be B. N. C. F., MS VIII 3 126; see also N. Pevsner, *Academies of Art: Past and Present* (New York, 1973), 9.

member of a guild from holding membership of a confraternity without a special licence from the consul of that guild.<sup>497</sup>

Furthermore, in 1419 a communal review of fraternities was carried out. This decree, named the *Societatum laudantium et aliarum revocatio*, dissolved all confraternities not officially sanctioned by a specially appointed commission.<sup>498</sup>

Although these actions did not cause the closure of any of the brotherhoods, it did go some way towards the suppression of their membership and activities.<sup>499</sup>

Further action was taken in July 1426, when it was feared that discussion of communal affairs was occurring within the confraternities. It was believed that tax assessment procedures were being manipulated for the benefit of certain cliques within the confraternities. Accordingly, in September of the said year, all companies were closed and ordered to submit their account books to the Council of Eight on Security.<sup>500</sup>

In 1443, another decree was issued which attempted to block the enrollment of politically active adults in religious confraternities. The *veduti*, those whose names had been drawn for the three highest offices of the Republic (or whose

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<sup>497</sup> G. M. Monti, *Le confraternite medievali dell'alta e media Italia* (Venice, 1927), 1: 181; R. Hatfield, "The Compagnia de' Magi," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970): 110.

<sup>498</sup> A. S. F., *Provvioni*, 109, fols. 160v-161v; for a transcription of the decree see *The Society of Renaissance Florence: A Documentary Study*, ed. G. Brucker (Toronto, 1998), 83-84.

<sup>499</sup> R. F. E. Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence* (New York and London, 1982), 165-166; and Hatfield, 110.

<sup>500</sup> Weissman, 166.

fathers, brothers, or sons had been drawn), were forbidden to join confraternities, if they were over the age of 25.<sup>501</sup> While this legislation was soon modified by the intervention of Archbishop Antonino in 1452, it was reimposed during 1455 with the lowering of the age to 20.<sup>502</sup> Just three years later, the law of 1419 was re-invoked, and confraternities were once again suppressed, but for six years on this occasion.

After a period of relative independence, further decrees against the brotherhoods were passed during the primacy of Lorenzo il Magnifico. In September 1471, a provision against the *veduti* participating in confraternities was once again enforced.<sup>503</sup> Furthermore, during the decade following the Pazzi conspiracy, from 1478 to 1488, Lorenzo was forced to institute severe cuts in displays of public celebration and feasting so as to try to maintain some political stability. The feast of San Giovanni, so important to the Florence, was reduced, and the lavish displays by the confraternities were suspended.<sup>504</sup>

This philosophy of active attempts at suppression was replicated by the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola. On December 2, 1494, Piero de' Medici, Lorenzo's successor, was expelled from Florence, and in the same year the confraternities were once again suppressed. In Article 19 of the general reforms

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<sup>501</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>502</sup> A. S. F., *Provvisioni*, 143, 32v-33v, April 5, 1452; and Weissman, 167.

<sup>503</sup> Weissman, 168.

<sup>504</sup> P. Ventrone, "Lorenzo's *Politica festiva*," in *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics*, ed. M. Mallet and N. Mann (London, 1996), 111.

instituted by the Signoria, it was stated that the confraternities were being outlawed due to “the inconveniences that follow in the wake of the meeting of the companies, intelligences, and sects, and to preserve liberty and peace, and to remove all causes of machination and sedition.”<sup>505</sup>

The beginning of the sixteenth century was to bring little change in the attitude of the central administration of Florence towards the confraternities. The religious brotherhoods of the city were subject to further suppression in 1513, after the restoration of the Medici, and were not granted permission to meet until November 5, 1514.<sup>506</sup> Further action was instituted against the confraternities during 1518, and the repeated outbreaks of plague during the next decade meant that between August 1522 and December 1523, March 1523 and February 1524, and March 1527 and November 1528 all confraternities were ordered to close. The siege of Florence led to further suppression, and although confraternities were briefly allowed to meet after 1530, they were soon prohibited from gathering, and could not do so again until 1540.<sup>507</sup> As a further hindrance to the

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<sup>505</sup> “Et più, hauendo inteso gl’inconvenienti seguitano del ragunarsi le compagnie et intellignetie et secte et per conseruatione di decta libertà et pace et atorre tutte le cagioni di machinationi et seditioni. . .” (A. S. F., *Provvisioni*, 185, 6v, December 2, 1494); and Weissman, 173-74.

<sup>506</sup> A. S. F., *Compagnie Religiose Sopresse*, 1430 (M 112, 42), Company of San Michele Archangelo, 48r; and Weissman, 177-178.

<sup>507</sup> A. S. F., *Compagnie Religiose Sopresse*, 1869 (S 163, 4), Saint Sebastian, 33v; *ibid.*, 171r; A. S. F., *Compagnie Religiose Sopresse*, 1646, Compagnia della Purificazione di Maria Vergine e San Zanobi (P 30, 8), 80v; A. S. F. *Compagnie Religiose Sopresse*, 1869 (S 163, 4), 41v; A. S. F., *Compagnie Religiose Sopresse*, 1646 (P 30, 8), 85v; A. S. F., *Compagnie Religiose Sopresse*, 1646 (P 30, 8), 15v; A. S. F., *Compagnie Religiose Sopresse*, 1583 (P 1, 9), 82v; and Weissman, 178-179. I have only outlined the main periods of suppression of the confraternities, but a more detailed account may be found in the records of the Arcangelo Raffaello, also listed by Weissman on these pages.

confraternities, during 1529 the Commune ordered the sale of all property belonging to ecclesiastical institutions.<sup>508</sup>

Significantly, the artisan confraternities suffered little of the aforementioned edicts, which mainly applied to the *laudesi* and flagellant confraternities of Florence. In a period of repeated suppressions and political turmoil, however, many confraternities lost their finances, meeting places and ultimately their membership, and this was most certainly true of the painters and sculptors Compagnia di San Luca.

The Compagnia di San Luca, formed in 1350, was one of many craft confraternities to be founded from the fourteenth century onwards.<sup>509</sup> Like the majority of the confraternities, the Compagnia di San Luca had originally functioned as an independent institution, but eventually came under the control of the guild of the Arte dei Medici e Speziali. While it remained a popular institution during the early years of its foundation, and remained so into the fifteenth century, during the sixteenth century it suffered a decline. The loss of a permanent meeting place was just one of the difficulties to beset the company. After the foundation of the brotherhood in 1350, the company acquired the cappella maggiore in the church of Sant'Egidio. In this chapel the confraternity held their services as well as their twice-monthly meetings. By the end of the

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<sup>508</sup> Varchi, Book 10, Chapter 29, 659-660; and Weissman, 191.

<sup>509</sup> Weissman, 64.

century, Sant'Egidio had been incorporated into the Ospedale di Santa Maria Nuova, but the confraternity continued to hold its meetings in its appointed chapel until 1504, when the company was granted permission to meet on alternative hospital property. A room called the Aia, previously used for the storage of straw, was placed at the confraternity's disposal and was rented by the Compagnia di San Luca for the sum of seven lire per annum. While the confraternity continued to hold its religious services in the cappella maggiore of the church of Sant'Egidio, the Aia was used for its meetings and activities.<sup>510</sup> Moreover, this meeting place was also used by the Company of the Cazzuola for their first banquet.<sup>511</sup> As the *Capitoli et ordini dell'academia et compagnia dell'arte del disegno* attests, however, in 1515 the current *Spedalingo* of Santa Maria Nuova, Leonardo di Giovanni Buonafede, moved the Compagnia di San Luca to another building on Via della Pergola.<sup>512</sup> Presumably the return of the Aia to the hospital authorities also ended the Cazzuola's use of it.

Finally, in 1550, the confraternity was subjected to a further eviction by the *Spedalingo* of Santa Maria Nuova, Isidoro dei Montaguti, leaving the Compagnia

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<sup>510</sup> For the contract for the rental of the room see C. F. Cavallucci, *Notizie storiche intorno alla R. Accademia delle Arti del Disegno in Firenze* (Florence, 1873), 13-14. The archival citation A. S. F., *Accademia del Disegno*, no.2, 230v is obsolete. See also K. Barzman, "The Università, Compagnia, ed Accademia del Disegno" (Ph. D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1985), 42.

<sup>511</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 617. Bugiardini organised a banquet there, as did Matteo da Panzano. *Ibid.*, 6: 613; 6: 617.

<sup>512</sup> In Appendix 1, 296-304 of Pevsner's, *Academies of Art*, is printed a transcription of the *Capitoli et ordini*. In the *Capitoli* it is noted, "Anchora che dallo spedalingo Buonafe fussero cavati di sotto le volte et tramutata la compagnia l'anno 1515 et messa in sul canto della via della Pergola senza staccarla dal ceppo delle case di detto spedale," 296. See also Barzman, "The Università, Compagnia, ed Accademia del Disegno," 43.

di San Luca with no official headquarters.<sup>513</sup> On October 9, 1550, a sum of 200 lire was paid to the company so as to buy out their contract, signed in 1503, and as means of restitution for the purchase or rental of new accommodation.<sup>514</sup>

Coupled with the apparent disinterest of the majority of its members, the confraternity can be seen to have barely existed.<sup>515</sup> Indeed, examination of the records of the Compagnia reveal that attendance was rare for the artistic members of the Cazzuola. Giovanni Bugiardini is recorded as attending during 1503 and again in 1538 and 1539.<sup>516</sup> Francesco Granacci's attendance is recorded during this same period, 1538 and 1539.<sup>517</sup>

Therefore, the rise of the academy can perhaps be understood in terms of the decline of the confraternities, and the return of Medici rule. Florentines were looking for alternative entertainments and for the members of the Cazzuola, their company provided the source. In 1512 the Medici had returned to the city from exile, and in the same year the Cazzuola was founded.<sup>518</sup> In Florence the

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<sup>513</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 655-56.

<sup>514</sup> A. S. F. *Accademia del Disegno*, no. 4, 39r. The entry reads: "A entrata di Nostra chompagnia questo di 9 d'ottobre lire dugento picoli equali si sono auti da Messer lo spedalingo di Santa Maria D'o . . . damonte aguto frate Di Badia Di Firenze et per lui da frabiagio Chamarlingo di detto Ispedale equali Danari cia'pagato per via d'un chontratto et per ristituzione della nostra chompagnia et convenzione fatta per insino nel mille cinquecento Tre . . ." See also Pevsner, Appendix 1, 296-297; and Barzman, "The Università, Compagnia, ed Accademia del Disegno," 45.

<sup>515</sup> See the introduction to the *Capitoli et ordini*, in Appendix 1 of Pevsner, 296-297; Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 655-656; and Barzman, "The Università, Compagnia, ed Accademia del Disegno," 45-46.

<sup>516</sup> A. S. F., *Accademia del Disegno*, no. 2, 70v; and no. 3, 36v; and 93v.

<sup>517</sup> A. S. F., *Accademia del Disegno*, no. 3, 26v; 90v; no. 4, 9v; 10r; and 10v.

<sup>518</sup> The company had originated in an informal supper party, held in the garden of the musician, Feo d' Agnolo and it was from these humble origins that a more formal organisation, patronised by the Medici, was created. Bastiano Sagginati, Raffaello del Beccaio, Cecchino de'Profumi, Girolamo del Giocondo and the bombardier, Il Baia were Feo's companions and their dinner was simple, just plain ricotta; Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 611-12.

patronage of this prominent family provided the Florentine elite with offices of state, and the artists of the Renaissance appealed to it for a rise in their social status. In Vasari's tale this was achieved through the Cazzuola's adoption of Medici Saturnian symbolism and through reference to the entertainments of their court and the academies founded during their primacy. Medici symbolism and reality were, therefore, combined. The Company of the Cazzuola represented a microcosm of the Florentine realm of the Medici.

#### **The Membership of the Company of the Cazzuola**

The founding statutes of the Company of the Cazzuola had stated that no more than twenty-four members were allowed to join, twelve to be drawn from the 'Great' and twelve gathered from the 'Less'. Therefore, an examination of the membership list of the Company of the Cazzuola reveals a disparate group of Florentine citizens drawn from some of the most prominent families in the city as well as from the more lowly craft trades. Their common bond was Medici patronage and for the artists of the Cazzuola, membership provided the means for a rise in social status. At the banquets of the company they were able to converse in Saturn's melancholy realm with the Medici themselves and their supporters.

Saturn's December festival of misrule, otherwise known as the Saturnalia, provided an antique source. The chief emphasis at the Saturnalia was placed upon feasting, but the social hierarchy usually observed was for this one event

overturned. Masters and slaves reversed their respective roles, so that the slaves were waited upon by their masters, or slaves were temporarily permitted to dine with their masters.<sup>519</sup> In Lucian's *Saturnalia*, Saturn declares, "Let every man be treated equal, slave and freeman, poor and rich."<sup>520</sup> Furthermore, this example of Saturnalian equality was presented by Plutarch, in *Sulla*, during the rout of Thurium. He was to write:

For they [i.e. the Romans] saw drawn up in front of them fifteen thousand slaves, whom the king's generals had set free by proclamation in the cities and enrolled among the men-at-arms. And a certain Roman centurion is reported to have said that it was only at the Saturnalia, so far as he knew, that slaves participated in the general license.<sup>521</sup>

Thus, the emphasis placed upon equality at the Roman Saturnalia was shared by the Medici family. Lorenzo il Magnifico was to entertain country peasants at his villa at Careggi.<sup>522</sup> Moreover, the social hierarchy of Florentine society was overcome at the Company of the Cazzuola, and the Medici sponsored academies of the sixteenth century. At the Accademia degli Umidi, the forerunner to Cosimo I's state-sponsored Accademia Fiorentina, figures such as Benedetto Varchi and Filippo del Migliore were joined by others of more limited academic prowess. One of the founding members was Giovanni Mazzuoli, in whose house the academy met.<sup>523</sup> Mazzuoli had originally traded as a merchant but then joined the

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<sup>519</sup> Accius *Annals* 2-7; see also J. H. D'Arms, "Slaves at Roman Convivia," in *Dining in a Classical Context*, ed. W. J. Slater (Ann Arbor, 1991), 176; and M. Bettini, "Iacta alea est: Saturn and the Saturnalia," in *Saturn from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. M. Ciavolella and A. A. Iannucci (Toronto, 1992), 26-27.

<sup>520</sup> Lucian *Saturnalia* 13; see also Lucian *Saturnalia* 7 and 31.

<sup>521</sup> Plutarch *Sulla* 18. 3; see also Dio Cassius *Dio's Roman History* 60. 19 for reference to slaves equality at the Saturnalia.

<sup>522</sup> See page 39 for discussion of the Saturnalia for peasants given by Lorenzo il Magnifico at Careggi.

<sup>523</sup> B. N. C. F., MS II IV 1, 6v.

militia of Giovanni delle Bande Nere and subsequently spent time in prison.

Another of the important members of the Umidi was Giambattista Gelli. His chosen profession was as a hosier, a combination of cobbler and tailor.<sup>524</sup>

Similarly, this diversity was shared by the membership of the Cazzuola, where the Medici ruler met with the humble pigfeeder.<sup>525</sup>

Thus, the composition of the membership of the Cazzuola was as follows. The so-called 'Great', or *popolo grasso*, which had been referred to in the company's statutes, traditionally applied to those families that belonged to the seven major guilds. During the 1494 Republic, however, the Council of the Great had been convened and now consisted of an all-male group above the age of twenty-nine. They were collectively known as the *beneficiati* because they were privileged enough to have the opportunity to serve the State by virtue of their ancestors or themselves, having been selected for the three major governing bodies of the Republic.<sup>526</sup>

Amongst the *beneficiati* who joined the Company of the Cazzuola were members of some of the most powerful families in Florence, namely the Rucellai, Ginori and Martelli. These families were amongst the most ardent supporters of the

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<sup>524</sup> De Gaetano, 30-31.

<sup>525</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 611-613.

<sup>526</sup> Amongst the 'Great' founding members of the Cazzuola were Jacopo Bottegai, Francesco and Domenico Rucellai, Giovan Battista Ginori, Girolamo del Giocondo, Giovanni Miniati, Niccolo and Mezzabotte del Barbighia, Cosimo and Matteo da Panzano, Marco Jacopi, and Pieraccino Bartoli; see Vasari, 6: 612; Weissman, 196-97; see also P. Burke, "We the people: popular culture and identity in modern Europe," in *Modernity and Identity*, ed. S. Lash and L. Friedman (Oxford, 1992), 300.

Medici family. After 1434, the Medici had held a position of superiority not achieved by any other Florentine family before. It was consolidated by the support of the principal families in Florence so that Medici power gradually had increased throughout the fifteenth century.<sup>527</sup> Although exile from 1494 to 1512 meant that there was no Medici presence in the city, their return was mostly supported by such families as the Rucellai, Ginori and Martelli. The dominant families of Florence looked to the Medici for political patronage and offices of state. Thus, in 1513, Pope Leo X was to advise Lorenzo de' Medici, his Florentine regent, that the office of *Gonfaloniere di giustizia* was of very great significance and reputation, and that in giving that dignity he "should look after the houses which are accustomed to being in the regime, and the branches of those houses [the balance of] which should not be changed without very good reason."<sup>528</sup>

While the cultivation of such support required constant maintenance, as Leo had indicated, Medici patronage was also advantageous to these leading families.

Therefore, the meetings of such companies as the Cazzuola were mutually beneficial to both parties.

Two of the members of the Cazzuola were Francesco (1485-1547) and Domenico (1486-1525) Rucellai, the sons of Girolamo Rucellai (1428-1516). Both were fanatical in their support for the Medici and had been amongst the youths who, in 1512, ousted Piero Soderini from the Palazzo della Signoria. They were also

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<sup>527</sup> F. W. Kent, *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, 1977), 164.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

involved in the reform of government. Francesco went on to become *Gonfaloniere* in 1515 and in 1523 became one of the *Priori*. A position as one of the Eight followed in 1524. It is likely that he left Florence during the fall of the Medici in 1527, but at the fall of the Republic returned to become one of the magistrature of the *Dugento*, instituting reform of the State. By 1535 Francesco had become the vicar for the Mugello, and in 1537 he returned to the position of magistrate as one of the Eight. He was made a senator in 1544.<sup>529</sup>

Furthermore, the Ginori and Martelli families were also represented in the membership of the Company of the Cazzuola. Giovan Battista Ginori (1488-1556) was one of the founding members, and his family were ardent supporters of the Medici. Family members, most notably Carlo di Lionardo Ginori, who attained the offices of *Signore della zecca* in 1512, prior in 1513, *Gonfaloniere di compagnia* in 1514, and *Gonfaloniere di giustizia* in 1527, had achieved political office through the support of the Medici.<sup>530</sup> Giovan Battista himself was to have a prominent political career through the patronage of this prominent family. Born on 26 August, 1488, he had been vigorous in his support of Pope Clement VII. In 1532 he was nominated vicar of San Giovanni and of Val d'Arno and this governance was once again extended in 1544. In 1534 Giovan Battista had been made vicar of Colline Pisane and of Certaldo in 1545. Further vicarages of both

<sup>529</sup> L. Passerini, *Genealogia e storia della famiglia Rucellai* (Florence, 1861), 59.

<sup>530</sup> L. Ginori, "Old Properties of a Florentine Family," *Apollo* 105 (1977): 35-36; D. Franklin, "Rosso Fiorentino's *Betrothal of the Virgin*: Patronage and Interpretation," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 55 (1992): 180; and idem, *Rosso in Italy* (New Haven and London, 1994), 94.

Scarperia and the Mugello, were given to him in 1551 before his death on 16 June, 1556.<sup>531</sup>

Of the Martelli, Luigi di Luigi Martelli was a later member of the Company of the Cazzuola, but like the Rucellai and Ginori membership, he too was a fervent supporter of the Medici family. Indeed, his house was next door to Niccolò di Bernardo d'Averardo de' Medici and of the Martelli palazzi, the closest to the Medici palace.<sup>532</sup>

The prominence of Medici supporters at the Company of the Cazzuola is further illustrated by the attendance of Giovanni Bandini at their meetings. He had been an important diplomat and military commander for the Medici, representing Cosimo I at the Spanish and Imperial courts. Indeed, it was Bandini who had obtained the Emperor's permission for Cosimo to marry Eleonora, the daughter of the Spanish Viceroy of Naples, Don Pedro de Toledo.<sup>533</sup>

Furthermore, the staff of the Medici court was a dominant presence amongst the membership of the 'Less,' or *popolo minuto*, who were from the lesser guilds.<sup>534</sup>

Three heralds of the Signoria, Jacopo del Bientina, Giovan Battista di Cristofano

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<sup>531</sup> L. Passerini, *Genealogia e storia della famiglia Ginori* (Florence, 1876), 21-22.

<sup>532</sup> E. Cropper, "Prolegomena to a New Interpretation of Bronzino's Florentine Portraits," in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Smyth*, eds. A. Morrogh, F. Superbi Gioffredi, P. Morselli, E. Borsook (Florence, 1985), 2: 152-153.

<sup>533</sup> Minor and Mitchell, 17; R. Cantagalli, *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome, 1963), 5: 695.

<sup>534</sup> Burke, "We the people," 300.

Otonaio and Domenico Barlacchi were frequently present at its meetings.<sup>535</sup> At State occasions they were required to wear the Signorial coat-of-arms and amuse the members of the *Priori* as they dined. The court herald of the sixteenth century was also responsible for prescribing appropriate etiquette, the organisation and execution of events and ceremonies, and the later recording of these affairs in the *Libro cerimoniale*.<sup>536</sup> Otonaio had been employed as herald during the 1520s. His wit was used to create carnival songs, and he was also to write a life of Saint John the Baptist, patron of the city of Florence.<sup>537</sup> Moreover, Barlacchi was considered one of the greatest actors of the Florentine Renaissance, and it was he who brought a company of actors to Lyons to perform Cardinal Bibbiena's *La Calandria* for Henry II and Catherine de' Medici in 1548.<sup>538</sup> Therefore, the herald was responsible for the employment of artisans and artists in the creation of these events.

It is, therefore, with little surprise that a large proportion of the attendees of the Company of the Cazzuola was drawn from the musical and artistic communities. While the skills of the fife players Feo d' Agnolo and Pierino; Giovanni the trombone player; Bartolommeo Trombone and Il Talina, two other musicians, were of great use to the Cazzuola, they perhaps found more permanent

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<sup>535</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 613; see also R. C. Trexler, *The Libro Cerimoniale of the Florentine Republic* (Geneva, 1978), 52.

<sup>536</sup> Trexler, 15.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>538</sup> Michel Plaisance's article, "La politique culturelles de côme premier fêtes annuelles a Florence de 1541 a 1550," in *La Fête de la Renaissance* (Paris, 1972), 3: 147 simply states that Barlacchi performed with a group of Florentine actors. It has been suggested by Minor and Mitchell that this company was the Cazzuola. See Minor and Mitchell, 35.

employment at court entertainments organised by the above named heralds.

Indeed it may be noted that on 5 December, 1509, elected to the service of the *Signoria* of Florence were Giovanni di Benedetto Fei, otherwise known as 'Feo', and Michele di Bastiano or Il Talina, players of whistles and tambourines, and both members of the Company of the Cazzuola.<sup>539</sup>

Other employees of the Medici court and members of the Cazzuola were Il Baia, his proper name being Jacopo di Bonaccorso or Corso di Giovanni, and Giovanni Gaddi.<sup>540</sup> Vasari lists Il Baia as a bombardier, but, through the activities of the Company of the Cazzuola, it is apparent that he was skilled in the creation of *girandole* and fireworks, which also became increasingly popular in court entertainments.<sup>541</sup> Giovanni Gaddi was a Clerk of the Chamber and was a keen patron of Jacopo Sansovino. Moreover, he commissioned Andrea del Sarto to paint the Virgin Mary.<sup>542</sup>

Therefore, for the artists of the Company of the Cazzuola, namely Giuliano Bugiardini, Giovan Francesco Rustici, Andrea del Sarto and Francesco Granacci, membership provided access to Medici court circles, and, thus, raised their social standing. They frequently found employment within the court of the Medici and

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<sup>539</sup> See footnote in Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 611.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*, see footnote 6: 611.

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 616; 6: 618.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, 5: 18; the existence of this work has been doubted by Shearman in *Andrea del Sarto*, vol. 2, 310-311. However, more recent literature has suggested that Sarto's *Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist*, in the Galleria Borghese, Rome, is the Gaddi commission Vasari discusses in the *Vite*; see A. Cecchi, *Profili di amici e committenti* (Florence, 1986), 48; and A. Natali, *Andrea del Sarto* (Milan, 1998), 75.

in many ways were crucial to the promulgation of the family's imagery. Indeed, both Rustici and Sarto were members of another convivial company, called the Paiuolo, which, it may be suggested, provided a venue for the training of their associates and apprentices in the activities and customs of the court.<sup>543</sup> The Paiuolo met at Rustici's rooms at the Sapienza. This building was located between the church of the Santissima Annunziata and the monastery of San Marco. During 1511, Andrea del Sarto had also moved his workshop to the Sapienza, as had Tribolo and Antonio di Giovanni Solosmeo.<sup>544</sup> All were members of the Paiuolo and were joined in their convivial gatherings by Sir Spillo, Domenico Puligo, Robetta, Francesco di Pellegrino, Niccolò Buoni, Domenico Baccelli, Lorenzo called Guazzetto, Roberto di Filippo Lippi and, the sometime attendee of the Company of the Cazzuola, Aristotile da San Gallo. Moreover, all of the artistic members, apart from Robetta, had been pupils of either Rustici or Andrea del Sarto.<sup>545</sup> The painter, Sir Spillo, also known as Francesco d'Agnolo, was Sarto's brother, and Aristotile was a neighbor and close

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<sup>543</sup> It is proposed that the Paiuolo also provided a forum for the gathering of artists in a pseudo academic setting, and apart from the Confraternity of San Luca. It thus, elevated the members social status.

<sup>544</sup> Shearman, *Andrea del Sarto*, 1: 2.

<sup>545</sup> Robetta was the only artist member of the Company of the Paiuolo not involved in the workshops of Rustici and del Sarto. Listed as a goldsmith by Vasari, Robetta was in fact better known for his engravings; see Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 609; Francesco di Pellegrino and Domenico Baccelli appear to have been members of the social elite rather than artists. Francesco was present in the French court during Rustici's sojourn in France and, according to Vasari, was instrumental in bringing Rustici to the attention of the French king (*Ibid.*, 6: 619). This would suggest that Francesco was an envoy or ambassador of Florence at the French court. Domenico Baccelli was described as being able to play and sing "most admirably," but it is probable that he was more of a dilettante than a professional musician. He was the father of Girolamo Baccelli who became a member of the Accademia Fiorentina and was the composer of two songs and *intermezzi* for comedies. Thus, it seems likely that Domenico was drawn from the more elite classes; see "Girolamo Baccelli," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome, 1963), 5: 12-13.

friend of Andrea del Sarto.<sup>546</sup> He had bought a site for a house behind the convent of the Servites.<sup>547</sup> More importantly, Aristotile had learnt perspective drawing from Sarto which helped the artist gain commissions for the production of stage-sets and festive decorations.<sup>548</sup> Similarly, Solosmeo had acted as an assistant to Sarto, and Puligo had frequented his workshop, receiving advice in the techniques of painting and also help with drawing.<sup>549</sup>

Three of the members mentioned belonged to the Rustici workshop. Roberto di Filippo Lippi was a pupil of Rustici and later became an instrumental figure in the Medici-instituted Accademia del Disegno. His name is to be found amongst the list of ten appointed to the committee, chosen at the meeting of the Accademia on 18 December, 1571, to conduct the scrutiny in anticipation of the Accademia's receiving its license to administer guild affairs.<sup>550</sup> He had previously been a loyal member of the Compagnia di San Luca, attending every year between 1537 and 1541, and again between 1543 and 1554.<sup>551</sup> Lorenzo, was more commonly known as Lorenzo Naldino and was also the apprentice of Rustici. Naldino was to accompany Rustici to France in 1528.<sup>552</sup> While there he worked with Rosso

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<sup>546</sup> P. La Porta, "Sir Spillo' fratello d'Andrea del Sarto: un contributo," *Bolletino d'arte* 75 (July-October, 1990): 111-116.

<sup>547</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 436.

<sup>548</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 437.

<sup>549</sup> *Ibid.*, 4: 464.

<sup>550</sup> A. S. F., Accademia del Disegno, no. 25, 15v; see Barzman, "The Università, Compagnia, ed Accademia del Disegno," 310-312.

<sup>551</sup> Examination of the documents relating to the Compagnia di San Luca show that he was a regular attendee. His name appears on almost every meeting attendance record; see A. S. F., Accademia del Disegno, no. 4, *Entrata e uscita della Compagnia di San Luca* (1 Gennaio 1534 - 18 Maggio 1556).

<sup>552</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 621.

Fiorentino in the capacity of assistant, further illustrating the closeness of the Rustici and Sarto workshops. Rosso had begun his career in the workshop of Sarto.<sup>553</sup> Finally, Niccolò Buoni would appear to have been a trusted assistant to Rustici. After his departure for France in 1528, Buoni was left in charge of the affairs of Rustici in Florence.<sup>554</sup>

Rustici and Sarto, along with Francesco Granacci, had long been involved in the creation of scenery for dramatic productions given by the Medici. Indeed, all three were involved in the preparations for Pope Leo X's *entrata* of 1515. Rustici was employed by Andrea to execute some statues, and Granacci along with Aristotile da San Gallo erected an archway between the Badia and the Palace of the Podestà.<sup>555</sup> In this, Granacci had created an optical illusion of architecture, imitating the door of the Badia leading to Via del Palagio. Furthermore, he added clay reliefs of figures along the top of the arch, along with the inscription: LEONI X PONT. MAX. FIDEI CULTORI.<sup>556</sup> Moreover, both Granacci and Andrea del Sarto were employers of other artists, such as Andrea di Cosimo Feltrini, in the creation of structures for triumphal processions and festivals. They are both noted as being involved in the preparations for the marriages and funerals of Giuliano, Duke of Nemours and Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino.<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>553</sup> Ibid., 5: 170.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid., 6: 619.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid., 6: 602; 5: 24; 6: 436.

<sup>556</sup> Ibid., 5: 342.

<sup>557</sup> Ibid., 5: 208.

Francesco Granacci had previously been employed by Lorenzo il Magnifico for the preparation of festivities for carnival and, in particular, for the celebrations representing the Triumph of Paulus Emilius.<sup>558</sup> He was later commissioned by the Tribunal of Eight to prepare a representation of the Triumph of Camillus to celebrate the entry of Pope Leo X, in 1513.<sup>559</sup> For the same festival, Andrea del Sarto had been employed by his fellow Cazzuola member, Giuliano de' Medici, Duke of Nemours, to create chariots for the Company of the Diamante. The cars represented the Three Ages of Man.<sup>560</sup> A year later he, in the company of Jacopo Sansovino, made a temporary façade for the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, once again for the entry of the Medici Pope.<sup>561</sup>

Thus, the function of the Company of the Piauolo mirrored that of the Company of the Cazzuola for its 'lesser' members. It provided a vehicle for the training of its members in the apparatus of the court celebration. However, the Cazzuola also provided a microcosm of the wider Florentine Medici Saturnian realm, in which the woes of the melancholy artist and ruler were compared and cured. At a time when painters, sculptors and architects were searching for a rise in status, Vasari had consistently utilised the melancholy humour and its association with the realm of Saturn, the god of great rulers, to achieve their aims. The melancholy

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<sup>558</sup> Ibid., 5: 340.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid., 5: 341.

<sup>560</sup> Giuliano de' Medici, Duke of Nemours, had founded the Company of the *Diamante* which had taken part in the February carnival of 1513; see Shearman, "Pontormo and Andrea del Sarto, 1513," 478; and Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 251.

<sup>561</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 494.

artist was to find relief from his ailments in the same way as the melancholy rulers of Florence. The Company of the Cazzuola provided the means for a Renaissance version of the Roman Saturnalia, where social status was reversed or ignored.

This allusion to status became a feature of the company's entertainments. At the first dinner, given by Giuliano Bugiardini at the Aia, part of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, the attendees were commanded to wear different costumes and those that wore the same suffered a penalty. The tables were divided according to dress; those that were royally dressed placed in the better seats and the more modest placed in the lowly positions.<sup>562</sup> The same theme of status dominated another meeting hosted by Bugiardini and the artist Giovan Francesco Rustici. At this dinner the company was ordered to dress as masons and labourers. As they arrived they were shown a ground plan for a building which was to be constructed from food. The masons would oversee the construction while the labourers conducted the work. All the building materials were then eaten, and the party ended with peals of thunder and artificial rain.<sup>563</sup>

The importance of the patronage of the Medici to the membership of the Company of the Cazzuola therefore, cannot be doubted. It was a truly Medicean organisation. Most members, whether they were from the 'Great' or the 'Less,'

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<sup>562</sup> Ibid., 6: 613-14.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid., 6: 614-15.

were indebted to them for positions of state or employment at court. Medici dominance was also dependent upon these subjects' support, however, and thus, the relationship was co-dependent. For Vasari's artists and for their Medici patrons, the company provided much more. They were able to escape the ill effects of their melancholy humour within the activities and entertainments of the Cazzuola, a Renaissance Saturnalia.

### **The Activities of the Company of the Cazzuola**

The Roman Saturnalia had provided the source for the composition of membership for both the Cazzuola and the Accademia degli Umidi in Florence.

Thus, it may be expected that it too would provided a source for the entertainments of these organisations and for the entertainments of the court.

Saturn was to explain in Lucian's *Saturnalia*:

What I may do is drink and be drunk, shout, play games and dice, appoint masters of the revels, feast the servants, sing stark naked, clap and shake, and sometimes even get pushed head-first into cold water with my face smeared with soot.<sup>564</sup>

Moreover, Ficino, Rabasco and Burton had recommended music, mirth and merry company as a cure for the complaints caused by the melancholy humour, and in the academies and at the Company of the Cazzuola their recommendations were closely followed.<sup>565</sup> Once again, the Medici Saturnian realm and the melancholy humour were connected within Giorgio Vasari's *Vite*.

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<sup>564</sup> Lucian *Saturnalia* 2.

<sup>565</sup> Rabasco's text primarily related to the gatherings of the Accademia degli Incitati in Rome and the Gelati of Bologna.

### The Allegorical Banquet

The celebrations of the court, the academies and the Company of the Cazzuola provided a spectacle of costume, tapestries, precious objects, dance, music, theatre and food, more often than not set within an allegorical context. Their source was antique and provided by the Roman Saturnalia, where the banquet provided the location for such displays.<sup>566</sup> The *Cena Trimalchionis*, from the *Satyrica* by Petronius, gives an insight into the types of entertainment available at the Roman banquet. In this fictitious novel the author parodied the behaviour of the nouveaux-riches in Roman Italy. Action, Encolpius and his brother Ascyltos, are the three characters central to the book. The three are invited to a feast, and it is at this banquet that Petronius encapsulates all the events of the evening. Dishes were supplied in the form of performance. The commentator, Encolpius, gives a description of the main course of Trimalchio's dinner. The servants hung tapestries depicting nets and all the accoutrements of hunting. Spartan hunting dogs were then let into the room to bound among the tables, and, finally, a huge boar, with little baskets filled with dates hanging from its tusks, was brought into the room. The carver, dressed as a huntsman, then cut up the boar with a hunting knife, letting out flying thrushes from the carcass. These were caught by bird-catchers and presented to the diners attending the feast. Finally, the slaves offered the baskets of dates to the guests.<sup>567</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> In Lucian's *Saturnalia* he provides laws for the giving of Saturnalian banquets; see Lucian *Saturnalia* 17-18.

<sup>567</sup> C. P. Jones, "Dinner Theatre," in *Dining in a Classical Context*, ed. W. J. Slater (Ann Arbor, 1991), 186.

In Renaissance Florence, the allegorical themes of banquets and celebrations were mostly Medicean. This can be seen particularly in regard to Medici weddings of the period. In 1539, the patron of Vasari's *Vite*, Cosimo I, celebrated his marriage to Eleonora of Toledo. The rest of Florence celebrated with them. The celebrations lasted for ten days, starting on 29 June and ending on 9 July.<sup>568</sup> The city and Medici palace were decorated to illustrate Medici dominion and the family's union with Spain. The events included a processional entry of the bride, a banquet and allegorical *Trionfo*, and the performance of a comedy with *intermezzi*. However, the main celebrations started on 6 July, 1539 and took the form of a banquet and pageant, both held in the second courtyard of Palazzo

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<sup>568</sup> B. Mitchell, *Italian Civic Pageantry in the Renaissance* (Florence, 1979), 50. On the first day Eleonora and her entourage entered Florence through the Porta al Prato which had been decorated by Niccolò Tribolo with the figures of Fertility, her five children and Security and Eternity, suitable effigies for a new bride. She was greeted by a chorus of vocalists singing a madrigal and then proceeded to a reception given by the Archbishop at the Duomo. The new bride then continued her journey through Piazza San Marco, where an equestrian statue of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, Cosimo I's father, had been erected by Tribolo. She continued on to the Palazzo Medici in the Via Larga. There, the two courtyards of the palazzo were decorated to illustrate and symbolise the Duke's relationship to his ancestors, his legitimacy as a member of the Medici family and his predestined place within it. In the first courtyard were displayed various *imprese* alluding to Cosimo de' Medici's political alliance with Charles V and Spain created by his marriage to Eleonora, as well as personal emblems and those of his Medici ancestor Leo X. The main decorations and celebrations were held in the second courtyard, however. The courtyard was decorated on the east and west walls with pairs of paintings paralleling events from Cosimo's life with events from Medici history. The *Marriage by Proxy of Duke Cosimo* was placed opposite a painting of *Duke Alessandro Disputing the Exiles*, both works by Bronzino. Battista Franco's painting of *Duke Cosimo Invested by Charles V* was paired with Conti's *Charles V Crowned by Clement VII*. The next scenes depicted the *Battle of Montemurlo* by Antonio di Donnino and *Giovanni delle Bande Nere and the Battle of Biagrassa* by Pierfrancesco Foschi. *The Expulsion of the Envoys of Campagna* and the *Entrata of Leo X into Florence* by Foschi were placed together as was the *Elevation of Cosimo as Duke* by Salviati and Bacchiacca's *Visit to Naples of Lorenzo il Magnifico*. The final pair of paintings were the *Birth of Duke Cosimo* and the *Return from Exile of Cosimo Pater Patriae* by Bacchiacca. On the south wall were placed three portraits of Cosimo's ancestors, *Clement VII with Alessandro and Ippolito de' Medici* by Battista Franco, *Cosimo Pater Patriae* by Pontormo and *Leo X with the Cardinals* by Raphael; see Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 443-445; P. F. Giambullari, *Apparato e feste nelle nozze dello illustrissimo Signor Duca di Firenze, et della Duchessa sua consorte, con le sue stanze, madriali, comedia, et intermedii, in quelle recitati* (Florence, 1539), 22-29; A. M. Nagler, *Theatre Festivals of the Medici, 1539-1637* (New York, 1976), 5-6; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 241-243, 251.

Medici. The entertainment at the banquet was opened by the entry of the god Apollo, who descended from the heavens to tell the story of the sacred laurel as it flourished, died and then revived. The whole entertainment was designed to form a metaphor with the revived Medici dynasty.<sup>569</sup> Apollo was accompanied by the Muses of the Spheres - Thalia, Euterpe, Erato, Melpomene, Clio, Terpsichore, Polymnia, Urania and Calliope.<sup>570</sup> Apollo then recited a poem by Giambattista Gelli telling of the history of the Medici.<sup>571</sup> The birth of Cosimo Pater Patriae from Flora-Fiorenza was followed by a lauding of the Golden Age of Lorenzo il Magnifico's rule. Popes Leo X and Clement VII were evoked as new branches of the thriving laurel. Fate was seen to have intervened in the deaths of Giuliano, Duke of Nemours and Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, and deprived the plant of its leaves. The new Cosimo once again revived the laurel. The hopes for the continuation of the Medici dynasty through the union of Cosimo and Eleonora were expressed, as well as hopes for Florence's peace and security.<sup>572</sup> Flora-Florence then entered, accompanied by five nymphs which represented territories under Cosimo's authority. These included the streams Elsa and Sieve and the rivers Arno and Mugnone.<sup>573</sup> The personification of Pisa then entered,

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<sup>569</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 246.

<sup>570</sup> Giambullari, 31-36; Nagler, 7-8; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 419-421.

<sup>571</sup> Giambullari, 37-41.

<sup>572</sup> *Ibid.*, 39; C. Rousseau, "The Pageant of the Muses at the Medici Wedding of 1539 and the Decoration of the Salone dei Cinquecento," in "All the World's a Stage. . ." *Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque*, Theatrical Spectacle and Spectacular Theatre, eds. B. Wisch and S. S. Munshower, Part 2 (University Park, Penn., 1990), 422; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 246-248.

<sup>573</sup> Nagler, 8; Rousseau, 422.

accompanied by a Triton and three nymphs carrying sugar sculptures of products of their respective regions to give to the bride and groom.<sup>574</sup>

These celebrations were undoubtedly reflected in the activities of both the sixteenth-century academies and the Cazzuola. The Accademia del Piano appears to have been dedicated to outdoor pursuits, and in particular spent time observing the geology and topography of Tuscany, as well as the agricultural production of the land. It was during one such outing, in 1560, that an account is given of a *convito*. As the company journeyed through Prato, Pistoia and Galluzzo, note was made of the terrain and agricultural growth. The central aspect of the *convito* was therefore, unsurprisingly, the creation of nature.<sup>575</sup>

A still more elaborate banquet was held by the Sienese Accademia de'Filomati during the carnival of 1604. The academy adopted the theme of the ancient Republic of Sparta for its banquet and the room; table decorations and conversation all reflected this motif. In the four corners of the banqueting hall were placed the divinities Venus and Bacchus, and Lycurgus and Chiron, the teacher of Achilles. Placed on either side of Venus were personifications of Joy and Sobriety, and under the statue of Bacchus was the inscription, 'Our Bacchus needs no ivy'.<sup>576</sup> The overall theme of the room was to reflect the nature of the

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<sup>574</sup> Nagler, 9.

<sup>575</sup> B. N. C. F., MS. II III 427, 19r-21r. The *convito* is discussed on folio 19v.

<sup>576</sup> 'Noster non eget hedera Bacchus' quoted from *Copia della lettera del Signor N. N. al Signor N. N.* in Appendix 1 of François Quiviger's article, "A Spartan Academic Banquet In Siena," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 54 (1991): 219 and 212.

Filomati. While they enjoyed feasting, they also maintained sobriety and learned conversation. This conversation was influenced by and centred upon the various table decorations presented. Only one third of the tables were actually used to serve food. The others carried various elaborate displays designed to stimulate discussion. Upon these tables were placed all the different facets of the countryside. Gardens, prairies, a wood and an aviary were all represented as were fountains and various kinds of animals.<sup>577</sup> These animals were accompanied by mottoes. For example, a mouse gnawing was accompanied by an ostrich sculpted in the act of running and placed with the motto: LAUTAE NIMIS EPULAE NOXIE.<sup>578</sup> Moreover, fables were also represented. At the head of the table for non-academicians was represented the banquet of Jove in the poor house of the Filomati.<sup>579</sup> The banquet progressed with the playing of music and a game. Then a dance was performed between the personification of the Accademia and Honest Pleasure, Ethics, Rhetoric and Mathematics. Debating then continued until the food was served. But before anyone had the opportunity to eat, a group of Harpies descended upon the company and ate what had been presented. The figures of Calais and Zetes then chased the Harpies away and distributed verses to the various academicians. Perfume was sprinkled upon the assembled gathering and each guest was presented with a gift.<sup>580</sup>

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<sup>577</sup> *Copia della lettera del Signor N. N. al Signor N. N.* in Appendix 1 of Quiviger, 220.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*, 222-224 and 213.

The Cazzuola had also provided allegorical banquets, and some of these alluded to the Saturnian imagery of the Medici. At the third dinner described by Vasari, an enactment of Ceres seeking her daughter Proserpine, who had been abducted by Pluto, was performed.<sup>581</sup> The assembled Cazzuola followed Ceres through the mouth of a serpent and enjoyed the nuptial celebrations for Pluto and Proserpine. Dining in the infernal regions of Hell, the company was presented with food shaped, amongst other things, as lizards, spiders, toads and bats.<sup>582</sup> This scene had previously been depicted in the portico frieze of the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano. Janet Cox-Rearick believed that the imagery behind the frieze was derived from Ovid's *Fasti* and Claudian's *On Stilicho's consulship*.<sup>583</sup> The first scene of the frieze depicts Nature in the Cavern of Eternity, and although it more closely followed Claudian's text, the Cazzuola chose both his and Ovid's explanation of the Cavern of Eternity for its feast.<sup>584</sup> Ovid noted that Proserpine, or Persephone, was abducted while picking flowers. He wrote:

Persephone herself plucked dainty crocuses and white lilies. Intent on gathering, she, little by little, strayed far, and it chanced that none of her companions followed their mistress. Her father's brother [Pluto, or Dis] saw her, and no sooner did he see her than he swiftly carried her off and bore her on his dusky steeds into his own realm. She in sooth cried out, "Ho, dearest mother, they are carrying me away!" and she rent the bosom of her robe. Meantime a road is opened up for Dis; for his steeds can hardly brook the unaccustomed daylight. But her troop of playmates, when they had heaped their baskets with flowers, cried out, "Persephone, come to the gifts we have for thee!" When she answered not their call, they filled the mountains with shrieks, and smote their bare bosoms with their sad hands.

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<sup>581</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 615.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 616.

<sup>583</sup> The story of the abduction of Proserpine is also told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 5. 385-678.

<sup>584</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 68-71; see also Chastel, *Art et humanisme à Florence*, 217-225.

Ceres was startled by the loud lament; she had just come to Henna, and straightway, "Woe's me! my daughter," said she, "where art thou?"<sup>585</sup>

Ceres began her wanderings in search of her daughter and:

In turn she cried, now "Persephone!" now "Daughter!" She cried and shouted either names by turns; but neither did Persephone hear Ceres, nor the daughter hear her mother; both names by turns dies away. . . . Now o'er the landscape stole a sober hue, and darkness hid the world: now the watchful dogs were hushed. Lofty Etna lies over the mouth of huge Typhoeus, whose fiery breath sets the ground aglow. There the goddess kindled two pine-trees to serve her as a light; hence to this day a torch is given out at the rites of Ceres. There is a cave all fretted with the seams of scalloped pumice, a region not to be approached by man or beast. Soon as she came hither, she yoked the bitted serpents to her car and roamed, unwetted, o'er the ocean waves.<sup>586</sup>

Finally, Ceres found out her daughter's fate. Ovid notes:

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<sup>585</sup> "ipsa crocos tenues liliaque alba legit.  
carpendi studio paulatim longius itur,  
et dominam casu nulla secuta comes.  
hanc videt et visam patruus velociter aufert  
regnaque caeruleis in sua portat equis.  
illa quidem clamabat "io, carissima mater,  
auferor!" ipsa suos abscideratque sinus:  
panditur interea Diti via, namque diurnum  
lumen inadsueti vix patiuntur equi.  
at chorus aequalis, cumulatis flore canistris,  
"Persephone," clamant "ad tua dona veni!"  
ut clamata silet, montes ululatus implent  
et feriunt maesta pectora nuda manu.  
attonita est plangore Ceres (modo venerat Hennam)  
nec mora, "me miseram! filia," dixit "ubi es?" (Ovid *Fasti* 4. 442-456)

<sup>586</sup> "lustrarat, terrae cornua trina suae.  
quacumque ingreditur, miseris loca cuncta querellis  
implet, ut amissum cum gemit ales Ityn,  
perque vices modo "Persephone!" modo "filia!"  
clamat,  
clamat et alternis nomen utrumque ciet. . . .  
iam color unus inest rebus, tenebrisque teguntur  
omnia, iam vigiles conticuere canes:  
alta iacet vasti super ora Typhoëos Aetne,  
cuius anhelatis ignibus ardet humus;  
illic accendit geminas pro lampade pinus:  
hinc Cereris sacris nunc quoque taeda datur.  
est specus exesi structura pumicis asper,  
non homini regio, non adeunda ferae:  
quo simul ac venit, frenatos curribus angues  
iungit et aequoreas sicca pererrat aquas" (Ovid *Fasti* 4. 483-486; 489-498).

She wandered also in the sky, and accosted the constellations that lie next to the cold pole and never dip in the ocean wave. "Ye Parrhasian stars, reveal to a wretched mother her daughter Persephone; for ye can know all things, since never do ye plunge under the waters of the sea." So she spoke, and Helice answered her thus: "Night is blameless. Ask of the Sun concerning the ravished maid: far and wide he sees the things that are done by day." Appealed to, the Sun said, "To spare thee vain trouble, she whom thou seekest is wedded to Jove's brother and rules the third realm."<sup>587</sup>

Claudian provided the description of the cavern in which the Cazzuola celebrated Proserpine's marriage to Pluto. He wrote:

Far away, all unknown, beyond the range of mortal minds, scarce to be approached by the gods, is a cavern of immense age, hoary mother of the years, her vast breast at once the cradle and the tomb of time. A serpent surrounds this cave engulfing everything with slow but all-devouring jaws; never ceases the glint of his green scales. His mouth devours the back-bending tail as with silent movement he traces his own beginning.<sup>588</sup>

Thus, the imagery of the Medici, particularly the Saturnian symbolism of the villa at Poggio a Caiano, and the Cazzuola were, once again, linked. The image of the snake biting its tail was the ancient symbol of the Return of Time. In Medici

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<sup>587</sup> "errat et in caelo liquidique innumera ponti  
adloquitur gelido proxima signa polo:  
"Parrhasides stellae (namque omnia nosse potestis,  
aequoreas numquam cum subeatis aquas),  
Persephonen natam miserae monstrate parenti!"  
dixerat. huic Helice talia verba refert:  
"crimine nox vacua est; Solem de virgine rapta  
consule, qui late facta diurna videt."  
Sol aditus "quam quaeris," ait "ne vana labores,  
nupta Iovis fratri tertia regna tenet." (Ovid *Fasti* 4. 575-584).

<sup>588</sup> "Est ignota procul nostracque impervia menti,  
vix adeunda deis, annorum squalida mater,  
immensi spelunca aevi, quae tempora vasto  
suppeditat revocatque sinu. complectitur antrum,  
omnia qui placido consumit numine, serpens  
perpetuumque viret squamis caudamque reductam  
ore vorat tacito relegens exordia lapsu" (Claudian *On Stilicho's consulship* 2. 424-430).

symbolism it took the form of a ring accompanied by the motto SEMPER, therefore, signifying the eternal return and rule of the family in Florence.<sup>589</sup>

Moreover, the Company of the Cazzuola chose to depict the equivalent story of Tantalus in Hell at another of its allegorical banquets. The link to Medici Saturnian imagery can be explained in that Tantalus was the son of Pluto, who was the son of Cronus, or Saturn.<sup>590</sup> Moreover, just as Saturn had ruled during the Golden Age, Tantalus was king of the gold rich kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor.<sup>591</sup> His sin was to kill his own offspring. Just as Saturn had devoured his own children, Tantalus was to sacrifice his own son, Pelops, and feed the gods on a stew made from his limbs, at a dinner on Mount Sipylus, in the mistaken belief that this would please them.<sup>592</sup> His punishment was to be condemned to the region of Tartarus. Homer notes:

And I saw Tantalus too, bearing endless torture.  
He stood erect in a pool as the water lapped his chin-  
parched, he burned to drink, but he could not reach the surface,  
no, time and again the old man stooped, craving a sip,  
time and again the water vanished, swallowed down,  
laying bare the caked black earth at his feet-  
some spirit drank it dry. And over his head  
leafy trees dangled their fruit from high aloft,  
pomegranates and pears, and apples glowing red,  
succulent figs and olives swelling sleek and dark,  
but soon as the old man would strain to clutch them fast  
a gust would toss them up to the lowering dark clouds.<sup>593</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 77.

<sup>590</sup> P. James, *The Sunken Kingdom: the Atlantis Mystery Solved* (London, 1995), 209; alternatively, Pluto might have been the son of Oceanus.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>592</sup> Ovid *Fasti* 4. 197-200; Apollodorus *Epitome* 2. 3; and Pindar *Olympia* 1. 25-55.

<sup>593</sup> Homer *Odyssey* 11. 669-680; see also Apollodorus *Epitome* 2. 1; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 458-459; and Euripides *Orestes* 5-10.

Thus, Tantalus's story was highly appropriate for the Company of the Cazzuola. Not only did it share a close affinity with that of Saturn, but his punishment, with its reference to food, was an appropriate although unpleasant subject to be depicted at a banquet. Furthermore, Tantalus, like his grandfather, Saturn, was thought to enjoy the many pleasures of life. Athenaeus was to write:

Tantalus went to the abode of the gods, and while living among them obtained from Zeus the privilege of asking for anything he desired. Having a disposition that was insatiable of physical enjoyments, he made mention of them alone, and of a life similar to that of the gods.<sup>594</sup>

Therefore, the story of Tantalus provided an appropriate allegory for the Company of the Cazzuola.

Antiquity had provided the source, and the Saturnian allegory of the Medici court celebration was extended to Vasari's description of the Company of the Cazzuola. Ultimately, the academies of Tuscany were to adopt these themed dining experiences, although Medici symbolism was rarely depicted. The influence of the court was purely in the mechanics of banqueting, but the influence of the Saturnalia feast extended beyond themes for banquets to the creation of edible food sculptures.

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<sup>594</sup> Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 7. 281b; Athenaeus goes on to claim that it was because of this that Tantalus was given his punishment. Euripides thought that his punishment was for revealing the secrets of the gods to mortals; see Euripides *Orestes* 10. Apollodorus and Pindar believed that Tantalus had shared the ambrosia and nectar of the gods with mortals; see Apollodorus *Epitome* 2. 1; Pindar *Olympia* 1. 60-65.

### *Edible Sculptures*

For Ottaviano Rabasco the ‘spectacle’ of the banquet was the most important facet of antique creation. In this regard he gives the example of Trimalchio’s feast in which the presentation of food is provided in a spectacular fashion.<sup>595</sup> It may be assumed that the food provided at this banquet was similar to that at the Roman Saturnalia. An hors d’oeuvre consisting of a donkey made from Corinthian bronze, bearing saddle bags stuffed with olives, white on one side and black on the other, was presented, and a wooden hen laying peahens’ eggs, stuffed with fig-peckers and marinated in peppered egg yolk, was also provided.<sup>596</sup> Thrushes encased in pastry were stuffed with raisins and nuts, and quinces bristling with thorns looked like sea urchins.<sup>597</sup> Encolpius, the narrator of the event, comments upon further creations.

At this stage four slaves came dancing, and removed the upper portion of the tray, and when that was lifted away, we beheld another course underneath; fat fowl, sows’ udders, and in the middle a hare tricked out with wings to resemble Pegasus. At each of the four corners we observed a figure of Marsyas with little bladders, from which a kind of *caviare* flowed over the fish which swam in the miniature lake beneath.<sup>598</sup>

Furthermore, one of the final dishes was a pastry Priapus and a cornucopia of fruit.<sup>599</sup> All was not what it seemed, and, as Encolpius explains, “We thrust out our hands in eager delight for such sumptuous fare, and here again there was

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<sup>595</sup> Rabasco, *Capitolo* 14, 199-200.

<sup>596</sup> Petronius *Satyrice* 31. 9-10; and 33. 3-8.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, 69. 6-8.

<sup>598</sup> “quo facto videmus infra [scilicet in altero ferculo] altilia et sumina leporemque in medio pinnis subornatum, ut Pegasus videretur. notavimus etiam circa angulos repositorii Marsyas quattor, ex quorum utriculis garum piperatum currebat super pisces, qui quasi in euripo natabant” (*Ibid.*, 36. 2-3; *idem, Cena Trimalchionis*, trans. M. J. Ryan (London and Newcastle,)).

<sup>599</sup> Petronius *Satyrice* 60. 4

more amusement to keep up the fun; for at the slightest touch, the cakes and apples threw out a spray of saffron, which squirting in our faces, was the cause of not a little inconvenience.”<sup>600</sup>

Therefore, the food sculptures of the fifteenth and sixteenth century found their ancestor in the Roman Saturnalia, and more specifically Trimalchio’s feast.<sup>601</sup> In *De honesta voluptate et valetudine*, Platina recreated a recipe for the redressing of a peacock. The bird was skinned so as to keep the feathers intact and the meat was then cooked separately. This was then reinserted into the skin for presentation.<sup>602</sup> At a banquet given in Rome during March 1493 by Cardinal Farnese for Prince Maximilian Philip, Bishop of Ratisbon, and Ferdinand, godson of William, Duke of Bavaria, white peacocks and pheasants were presented as Platina prescribed, with the addition of pearls, corals, gold and silver leaf. Moreover, a Hydra with seven heads made from pastry filled with chopped veal, yolks of hard-boiled eggs and pine kernels; lions and unicorns constructed from hares in large pies; and large eagles rearing with crowns on their heads, also made

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<sup>600</sup> “avidius ad pompam manus porreximus, et repente nova ludorum commissio hilaritatem [hic] refecit. omnes enim placentae omniaque poma etiam minima vexatione contacta coeperunt effundere crocum, et usque ad os molestus umor accidere” (Ibid., 60. 5-7; idem, *Cena Trimalchionis*).

<sup>601</sup> The cooks of the Middle Ages also had to make allowances for the unavailability of some items as well as the dietary rules imposed by the Church, which forbade certain foods on certain days and at certain times of the year. The Renaissance cook turned these requirements into deliberate food novelties. In the recipes of the *Menagier de Paris* he explains how to create a wild boar from a pig when the latter is out of season. “Get a male pig of about two years and in May or June have it castrated, then in boar-hunting season [September to October] catch it, dismember and cut it up as you would a wild boar. . .”; see G. E. Brereton and J. M. Ferrier, *Le Menagier de Paris* (Oxford, 1981), Recipe 335. The recipe numbers refer to the sequence of paragraph numbers beginning on page 191; Scully, 103.

<sup>602</sup> B. Platina, *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* (Venice, 1494), 6: 14; Scully, 107.

of pastry, were presented at the banquet.<sup>603</sup> The malleability of pastry meant that creative shapes could be made out of it, and so it is perhaps not surprising that pastry became the material of choice for the creation of food sculptures.

Certainly, at the banquet given at the Palazzo Vecchio on 2 May, 1589, to celebrate the marriage of Ferdinando de' Medici and Christine de Lorraine, pastries were presented, decorated with banderoles of ten different colours of ribbon. The coats of arms of various family members and guests were painted upon the pies.<sup>604</sup>

The first account of edible food sculptures being created by the Cazzuola comes at the banquet provided by Rustici and Bugiardini. While the masons instructed the labourers in the construction of a building, the building itself was created from food. The foundations were created from cooked lasagna and ricotta with the mortar made from sugar, and sand from cheese mixed with spices and pepper. The gravel was made from sweetmeats and berlingozzo. Bread and flat cakes formed the bricks and tiles, and the basement was manufactured from pastry and liver. Columns were composed from cooked tripe, boiled capons, veal, tongue and parmesan. All of these were dismantled and eaten by the company.<sup>605</sup> At a later dinner, given by Matteo da Panzano, with the theme of Ceres seeking her

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<sup>603</sup> The peacock was to stand on its own feet by means of small iron rods fastened to the platter. Camphor with wool was placed in its mouth and set on fire to make it look as if it was breathing fire. The same was done with pheasants, cranes, geese and capons. V. Cervio, *Il Trinciante di M. Vincenzo Cervio, ampliato, et ridotto a perfezione dal cavalier reale Fusoritto di Narni trinciante* (Rome, 1593, reprint Bologna 1980), 126-27; J. di Schino, *The Splendour of the Table*, trans. G. Riley (Rome, 1992), 8. Cervio's text was first published in 1581.

<sup>604</sup> J. M. Saskow, *The Medici Wedding of 1589* (New Haven and London, 1996), 159.

<sup>605</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 614.

daughter Proserpine who had been abducted by Pluto, edible insects were provided. As the party was led into the infernal regions of hell, it was furnished with a range of serpents, grass snakes, lizards, tarantulas, toads, frogs, scorpions and bats made from pastry and meats. These were presented to each guest on a shovel and wines were served in horn vessels and crucibles. The bones of human skeletons, formed from sugar, were then provided.<sup>606</sup>

These, in many ways were similar to those presented at the Company of the Paiuolo, mentioned above, whose chief occupation was the invention of food sculptures for the banquets held by the society. At the first meeting of the company, Rustici arranged that the entire group should sit inside a huge cauldron, an obvious reference to the name of the company. This cauldron can be equated with the 'krater,' or wine vat, of the Greek symposium. The symposium was similar to the Saturnalia in that it was devoted to revelry.<sup>607</sup> The krater, like the *paiuolo*, was central to the gathering, providing a focus for entertainments. Both were located amidst the guests at the gathering. While the krater held wine which aided conversation, singing, games and dancing, the *paiuolo* was inspiration for the food creations of the company.<sup>608</sup> The food for the evening was thus presented in the centre of the vat upon a tree-like contraption. Each branch held a different dish, and the tree descended and ascended to present each course of the

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<sup>606</sup> Ibid., 6: 616-17.

<sup>607</sup> F. Lissarrague, *The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet*, trans. A. Szegedy-Maszak (Princeton, 1987), 7.

<sup>608</sup> Ibid., 19.

banquet. Furthermore, the cauldron was decorated with paintings and tapestries.<sup>609</sup> Spillo presented a goose dressed as a blacksmith and equipped with all the instruments necessary to repair the cauldron. Puligo, however, provided a suckling pig made to resemble a serving girl who watched over her brood of chickens and was later to clean the cauldron, and Robetta made an anvil out of a calf's head so as to aid in the maintenance of the vat.<sup>610</sup> Rustici provided a stew-pan formed from pastry, depicting Ulysses plunging his father so as to make him young again. The figures of Ulysses and Laertes were made from two boiled capons with edible additions to make them appear as human forms.<sup>611</sup> Finally, Andrea del Sarto contributed an octagonal temple made to resemble the Baptistery of Florence. The pavement was made from jelly, divided into compartments to make mosaic. The columns were sausages, and the capitals parmesan cheese. The cornices were made from sugar and the tribune formed from marzipan. In the centre of the temple was a choir stand made from cold veal. The music book was made from lasagne with peppercorns representing the letters and musical notes. The singers standing before the stand were roast thrushes and other small birds. They wore waist-coats or shirts resembling choristers' tunics made from the thinnest parts of a caul of hog's lard. Behind them stood two fat pigeons as contra-bassi and six ortolans representing soprani or trebles.<sup>612</sup>

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<sup>609</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 610.

<sup>610</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 611.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 610.

<sup>612</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 610-611.

Thus, the food sculptures of the courts of Europe and those of the Company of the Cazzuola and the Company of the Paiuolo originated from antiquity and in particular, Trimalchio's feast. The court and the Cazzuola also provided a forum for the display and creation of sugar sculptures.

### *Sugar Sculptures*

The overwhelming development in culinary sculptural invention came with the introduction of sugar to Europe. Sugar sculptures shared the same antique origins as their pastry and meat counterparts, but can be regarded as a more modern development. Bones made from sugar were scattered upon the tables during the Cazzuola banquet organised by Matteo da Panzano, and although the use of sugar in the creation of objects was a small aspect of the Cazzuola feasts, its use was undoubtedly influenced by the court.

The overwhelming cost of sugar had made it a popular item to illustrate wealth at the courts of Europe, but had the opposite effect within the confines of the Cazzuola feasts. Its prohibitive expense made it an unlikely addition to most of their gatherings. The relative costs for sugar in comparison to other food stuffs can be gleaned from Ain-i-Akbari's evaluation of the cost of consumer goods from India in about 1590. While the cost of brown sugar was 56 dams per man, white sugar was priced at 128 dams and candy sugar at 220 dams. In comparison, wheat flour could be bought for 22 dams, onions for 6 dams and salt for 16 dams

per man. The equivalent costs in pence would be 0.9 pence per pound for brown sugar, 2.17 pence for white sugar, and candy sugar was priced at 3.74 pence per pound. Flour would have cost 0.37 pence per pound, onions 0.102 pence and salt was priced at 0.27 pence per pound.<sup>613</sup> Once transportation costs were added to the cost of the raw product, the charge made to the consumer was considerable. Perhaps a better gauge of the price of sugar can be made from the fact that in 1515 Queen Marguerite of Navarre reported that one sugar-loaf the size of the small finger was enough to pay for a sumptuous banquet for a gentleman and his friends at an Alençon tavern.<sup>614</sup>

During the sixteenth century the sources for sugar changed somewhat, with the development of sugar production in the Atlantic islands by the Portuguese and Spaniards. While a native crop of India, the sugar industry had been developed by Arabs and Syrians, who after the crusades, were superseded by Western European powers. The Mediterranean sugar industry was further developed by the Venetians with sugar grown near Tyre, on Crete and Cyprus.<sup>615</sup> Other producers were located on the islands of Malta and Rhodes, as well as Egypt, but these sources were replaced by Portuguese production on Madeira and the island of Saõ Tomé and by the Spanish industry in the West Indies and eventually

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<sup>613</sup> A. Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. H. Blochman (Calcutta, 1891), 63; N. Deerr, *The History of Sugar* (London, 1950), 2: 525-526. The prices given in pence have been calculated using Deerr's estimation of multiplication by 0.017 reduces the quantities of dams per man to pence per pound.

<sup>614</sup> Queen Marguerite's disclosure is held within her *Heptameron* and quoted from M. Toussaint-Samat, *A History of Food*, trans. A. Bell (Oxford, 1992), 555.

<sup>615</sup> S. W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (Harmondsworth, 1986), 28.

Brazil. The monopoly was broken by the Venetians, however, who set up refineries in the West Indies, Canary Islands and Madeira so as to compete.<sup>616</sup>

Luca Landucci, the Florentine historian, was to note:

1471. 26th May. I bought some of the first sugar that came here from Madeira, which island had been subdued a few years before by the King of Portugal, and sugar had begun to be grown there; and I had some of the first.<sup>617</sup>

The Portuguese had made their fortunes with profits from sugar, and no better illustration of this can be made than the gift given to Pope Leo X from the King of Portugal upon hearing news of his succession. Landucci writes in his diary on 18 October, 1513, that the King had sent life-sized figures made of sugar of Leo and twelve cardinals. Moreover, three hundred torches, each three braccia long, one hundred chests of sugar, chests of cinnamon, cloves and other spices, a white horse, and a bejewelled and richly dressed Moor from Calcutta were also sent.<sup>618</sup>

Thus, sugar was an established although expensive product in Europe, and while it was often used to enhance the flavour of foods, it also provided a tool for the court sculptor of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. While antiquity, and specifically the Saturnalia, had provided the primary source for the creation of

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<sup>616</sup> Toussaint-Samat, 556.

<sup>617</sup> "E a dì 26 di maggio 1471, conperai de'primi zuccheri della Madera che ci venissino mai; la quale isola fu dimesticata pochi anni innanzi dal Re di Portogallo, e cominciato a farvi e zuccheri; e io ebbi de'primi che ci venissino" (L. Landucci, *Diario Fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516* (Florence, 1883), 10; idem, *A Florentine Diary*, trans. A. de Rosen Jervis (London, 1927), 9). It should also be noted that Luca Landucci was an apothecary and as such would have been charged with the selling of sugar. Sugar was more often considered a medicine rather than a food stuff. His book was begun ca. 1500 and Luca's hand stops in 1515. The manuscript was continued by another hand until 1542.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid., *Diario Fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516*, 343.

food sculptures, the skills and inspiration for the creation of these sugar sculptures most probably came from the courts of Persia and Egypt. In 1040 C.E., a Persian visitor to the Egyptian court, Nasir-i-Chosrau, noted that the Sultan used 73,300 tons of sugar during Ramadan. An entire tree of sugar and other large displays augmented his table.<sup>619</sup>

These displays were no doubt made of marzipan paste. Examination of a Baghdad cookery book, written in the year 623/1226 by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn al-Karim al-Katib al-Baghdadi, contains such recipes for marzipan.<sup>620</sup> In Chapter IX of the text, entitled Halwa, a recipe can be found for Makshufa.

Take equal parts of sugar, almonds (or pistachios), honey, and sesame-oil. Grind the sugar and almonds, and mix together. Add saffron to colour, mixed with rose-water. Put the sesame-oil into the basin, and boil until fragrant: then drop in the honey, and stir until the scum appears. Add the sugar and almonds, stirring all the time over a slow fire until almost set: then remove.<sup>621</sup>

A similar recipe can be found in Epulario's *Il quale tratta del modo del cucinare ogni carne, uccelli, & pesci d'ogni sorte*, dated 1606. Instructions were provided for the making of a marzipan tart. Almonds were to be soaked in water so as to soften them and make them very white, tasty and sweet. These were then to be pounded and mixed with rosewater. To make the marzipan, equal quantities of

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<sup>619</sup> E. von Lippman, *Geschichte des Zuckers* (Berlin, 1929), 224-225; Mintz, 88.

<sup>620</sup> A. J. Arberry, "A Baghdad Cookery-Book," *Islamic Culture* 13 (January 1939): 30.

<sup>621</sup> A. J. Arberry, "A Baghdad Cookery-Book," *Islamic Culture* 13 (April, 1939): 211; see also C. A. Wilson, "The Saracen Connection: Arab Cuisine and the Mediaeval West: Part 1," *Petits propos culinaires* 7 (March 1981): 18-19.

sugar and almond paste were to be mixed, and another ounce or two of good rosewater was to be added.<sup>622</sup> Therefore, the source for Italian marzipan can most definitely be found in Persia.

The uses for marzipan in Italy extended beyond the making of tarts, however, to that of sculptures, as had been made in Persia. Amongst the peacocks, pheasants and pastries of Cardinal Farnese's banquet of March 1593, was a *Hercules with club in hand* made of almond paste, and three rampant lions holding the imperial crown made of marzipan and embellished with gold.<sup>623</sup> At a dinner given by Pope Pius V, in a garden in Trastevere, in honour of Venus, more examples of almond paste sculptures were presented. During the final course of the dinner, statues representing *Paris holding a golden apple*, a nude *Pallas*, a nude *Juno*, a nude *Venus*, *Helen of Troy*, and *Europa on the bull* were placed on the tables.<sup>624</sup>

Other recipes for sugar pastes did exist, however. Sugar-paste sculpture could be made in two other ways. The sugar mixture was either formulated so that it became malleable like wax or was melted and cast in moulds. Mixtures could be made with gum arabic, derived from the trees *Acacia senegal* or *Acacia arabica*, oil, or water.<sup>625</sup> It was most certainly one of these recipes that was used in not

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<sup>622</sup> Epulario, *Il quale tratta del modo del cucinare ogni carne, uccelli, & pesci d'ogni sorte. Et di più insegna far saporì, torte, pastelli, almodo di tutte le provincie del mondo* (Messina, 1606), Capitolo 5, 36v.

<sup>623</sup> Cervio, 126; di Schino, 8 and 14.

<sup>624</sup> B. Scappi, *Cuoco secreto di Papa Pio V. divisa in sei libri* (Venice, 1570), 193v; di Schino, 43-44.

<sup>625</sup> Mintz, 79.

only the creation of the sugar bones at the Cazzuola feast given by Matteo da Panzano, but also the sculptures of the produce from the Medici dominions, presented to Cosimo I and Eleanora of Toledo at their wedding.

The use of sugar sculptures extended to the other courts of Italy. They were presented at a dinner given by Pope Pius V in a garden in Trastevere. A sugar sculpture of the goddess *Diana*, presented with the moon on her brow, with her bow and her hound on a leash, was displayed during the first course. Five sugar nymphs, the first carrying an arrow, the second a bow and quiver, the third a viol, the fourth with a cornet and the fifth holding a cemballo were shown with her.<sup>626</sup>

At the court of Ferrara sugar sculpture was also present at banquets. Cristoforo di Messisbugo was employed at this court, and his book, first published a year after his death, in 1548, details the entertainments at court. At a banquet given on 24 January, 1529, the same pattern of entertainments and decorations was followed. Throughout the dinner, sugar sculptures were presented, depicting the labours of Hercules. This subject matter had obvious allegorical significance as a play upon Ercole d'Este's name, who was the guest of honour at this feast. With the first course came twenty-five statues, all more than two palmi high, depicting *Hercules defeating the Lion*.<sup>627</sup> Later, fifteen more sugar sculptures were presented, representing *Hercules defeating the Hydra*. During the performance of

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<sup>626</sup> Scappi, 192r; di Schino, 41.

<sup>627</sup> Scappi, 15r.

the famous actor Ruzzante and his company, twenty-five more sculptures made their entrance at the *intermezzo*. Twenty of these depicted *Hercules defeating the Bull*, and five more were of *Mars, Saturn, Venus, Cupid and Eve*.<sup>628</sup> All told, sixty-five sugar sculptures were presented at this banquet.

Moreover, at a later banquet given on Saturday, 20 May, 1529, a dinner of fish was presented to an assembled company, which included Ippolito d'Este, the Archbishop of Milan, the Cardinal of Ferrara, the Duke of Ferrara and his wife, as well as other gentlemen and women. Amongst the decorations of flowers, silver and elaborately folded napkins were several sugar sculptures. The first course was accompanied by fifteen such sculptures, all about three palmi in height. Five were of the figure *Venus*, five of *Bacchus* and five more of *Cupid*.<sup>629</sup>

Therefore, the inclusion of sugar sculpture at the Company of the Cazzuola, although limited, was symbolically significant. It demonstrated the closeness of their banqueting practices to those of the court, and its cost thus elevated the status of the 'Lesser' members to that of the 'Greater'.

#### *Culinary Artists*

At the Company of the Cazzuola, their edible creations were products of their own labours. However, there is little direct evidence to support a theory that

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<sup>628</sup> *Ibid.*, 18r-18v.

<sup>629</sup> C. Di Messisbugo, *Banchetti compositioni di vivande, et apparecchio generale* (Venice, 1557), 9r.

members, although close to the Medici, were involved in the creation of food sculptures for their court. Nevertheless, the proposal is a likely one if the example of other artists is considered.

Early precedent was set by Bertoldo di Giovanni, who had held a favoured place within the household of Lorenzo de' Medici. He was the head of the Medici sculpture garden and probably received the same favours as Michelangelo, dining with Lorenzo and living within his palazzo. Documentation suggests that Bertoldo's duties were not only concerned with the school he set up in the Medici sculpture garden, but also included the preparation of food novelties for Lorenzo's table. In a 1478 lease for a three roomed apartment, signed between Giovanni and a saddlemaker, some stress was placed upon the importance of the kitchen. It has been suggested that Bertoldo may have been intending to cast his medals in its hearth.<sup>630</sup> An alternative suggestion may be that the kitchen was required for the making of food sculptures. In a letter written to Lorenzo de' Medici and dated July 29, 1479, Giovanni made many references to cookery, suggesting that his culinary skills were considerable. The letter was sent from the Vallombrosan abbey of Coneo in the Val d'Elsa, where he had gone to serve as witness to the induction of Leonardo Pucci into the priory. Bertoldo's letter has been interpreted as an allegory of the political situation of the time, but may also be taken at face value. In it Bertoldo laments the favourable position of cooking,

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<sup>630</sup> A. S. F., Not. antecos. 3334 (già B.2320), carta 67; J. D. Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni: Sculptor of the Medici Household* (Columbia and London, 1992), 28 and Appendix 5.

in comparison to the arts of painting and sculpture, amongst the social elite. He states that his cookery book has won Luca Calvanese the favour of a knighthood from the Pope's nephew, Girolamo Riario, while he himself has received no recognition. He beseeches Lorenzo il Magnifico to intercede on his behalf with the officials of the Grascia, the committee responsible for the quality and price of foods, so as to win their favour.<sup>631</sup>

Furthermore, Lorenzo seems to have enjoyed an elaborate and varied diet, often prepared by household employees. For example, in 1491 a goldsmith named Francesco was to prepare a banquet for foreign ambassadors at Poggio a Caiano. Eighteen years previous to this, he had attended to some falconry business for Lorenzo.<sup>632</sup> Artists, therefore, found that their duties extended beyond that of their official trade.

The court of the Sforza at Milan presented just as many opportunities for display and pageantry as did the Medici court of Florence. It was there that Leonardo da Vinci found employment with the Duke, creating not only military battlements and machinery but also sculptures, paintings and buildings. His repertoire extended also to the creation of entertainments and banquets. The most famed of these was the Festa del Paradiso, organised on 13 January, 1490, to celebrate the

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<sup>631</sup> A. S. F., M. A. P., 37, 593; Draper, 7-9 and Appendix 7. The letter has been translated and reprinted in full, and the author gives a full explanation of the possible allegorical meaning of the letter; see pages 9-11.

<sup>632</sup> Draper, 11.

marriage of Giangaleazzo Sforza to Isabelle of Aragon.<sup>633</sup> Leonardo created a mechanical mountain which could be opened and closed. In niches in the interior of the structure stood the personifications of the seven planets. In the starry sky shone the twelve signs of the zodiac. The beauty and virtue of the bride were praised by Jupiter, Apollo and Pluto, while Mercury brought forward the three Graces and the seven Virtues, all gifts of Jupiter. These gifts then accompanied Isabelle to her apartment.<sup>634</sup> While no accounts exist of the creation of food sculptures by Leonardo for this celebration, it has been suggested that the artist did indeed create marzipan sculptures for the Sforza court. It appears that he lamented in his *Notes on Cuisine*, "I have observed with pain that my signor Ludovico and his court gobble up all the sculptures I give them, right to the last morsel, and now I am determined to find other means that do not taste as good, so that my works may survive." Leonardo also noted that his marzipan models of military fortifications for Lorenzo il Magnifico received the same treatment.<sup>635</sup> An observation regarding the ephemeral nature of such sugar sculptures was to be made by the Venetian commentator, Sanuto. During the visit of the Duke of

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<sup>633</sup> L. H. Heydenreich, *Leonardo da Vinci* (Basel and London, 1954), 60; F. M. Valeri, *La corte di Lodovico il Moro* (Milan, 1915), 2 and 469.

<sup>634</sup> Heydenreich, 60.

<sup>635</sup> The facts relating to Leonardo da Vinci's creation of marzipan sculptures are problematic and seem to have no documentary background. The first contemporary source for information is provided by Tor Eigeland in his article "Arabs, Almonds, Sugar and Toledo," *Aramco World* 47, no. 3 (May/June 1996): 32. In this he gave a date of 1470 for the writing of Leonardo's *Notes on Cuisine*. Unfortunately, as Martin Kemp has pointed out, the dating of this work would be impossible as the artist did not enter the service of the Duke of Milan until 1482. Moreover, no records exist of such a book by Leonardo. However, Eigeland's article seems to have spawned further comment, receiving recognition in K. M. Reese's article, "Art lovers eat marzipan works created by da Vinci," *Chemical and Engineering News* (July 29, 1996): 80; and in M. W. Browne's review of the exhibition "Leonardo's Codex Leicester: A Masterpiece of Science," shown at the American Museum of Natural History, Manhattan, New York and written in the *New York Times*, Friday 25 October, 1996.

Milan to Venice in 1530, he notes that several members of the nobility acted very poorly. At a meal served during a *naumachia*, 250 confections of sugar were presented.<sup>636</sup> Sanuto commented:

It was a most beautiful collation, but badly served, because the Milanese gentlemen who were on the viewing platform with the ladies did not receive anything, but many [Venetian] senators stuffed their sleeves with confections to the great shame of those who saw them, and among the others, Ser Victor Morosini of San Polo who stuffed himself with many confections.<sup>637</sup>

The use of sugar sculpture at court was almost solely confined to occasions of importance, namely the arrival of visiting dignitaries and weddings. It was at the Medici weddings of 1600 and 1608 that the Giambologna workshop found employment in their creation. The marriage of Maria de' Medici, niece of Grand Duke Ferdinando I and daughter of the previous Grand Duke Francesco, to Henri IV of France had taken place by proxy on 5 October, 1600.<sup>638</sup> During the evening of that day, a banquet was held in the Salone dei Cinquecento of the Palazzo Vecchio. On the three tables placed in the centre of the room were arranged sugar sculptures depicting the *Labours of Hercules*, as were various groupings of animals and buildings among "altre mille invenzioni artificiosissime."

Furthermore, in front of Maria was placed a sculpture of *Henri IV on*

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<sup>636</sup> M. Sanuto, *I Diarii* (Venice, 1879-1903), 54, column 80; P. F. Brown, "Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp: the Ceremonial Welcomes of the Venetian Republic," in *Triumphal Celebrations and Rituals of Statecraft*, ed. B. Wisch and S. S. Munshower, Part 1 (University Park, 1990), 147.

<sup>637</sup> "... non voglio restar di scriver come fo una bellissima colation, ma mal partita, peroche li zentilhomeni milanesi che erano sul soler di le donne non have niente, ma molti senatori se impinò le manache di confezion con vergogna grande de chi li vedeva, et tra li altri sier Vettor Morexini da San Polo che si impite di assà confetion" (Sanuto, 54, column 81; Brown, 147).

<sup>638</sup> K. J. Watson, "Sugar Sculpture of Grand Ducal Weddings from the Giambologna Workshop," *Connoisseur* 199 (September, 1978): 22.

*horseback*.<sup>639</sup> While it is unlikely that the aged Giambologna actually constructed the sugar sculptures, his assistant Pietro Tacca was the most probable source. An autograph petition dated 8 June, 1600, by Pietro Tacca, for re-imbusement of funds to pay the workers who had helped him create the sugar figures and the baker who had dried out the sculptures in his oven, would indicate that he was the author of such figures for the banquet. Furthermore, the notice of payment was made two days later to 'pietro tacca di Gian Bologna'.<sup>640</sup>

At the later wedding of Cosimo, the son of Ferdinando I, to Maria Maddalena of Austria in October 1608, Pietro Tacca was once again asked to construct sugar sculptures for the banquet, which was to be held on 19 October, 1608. This time the forty statues were placed on a credenza and included such subjects as *The Grand Duke on horseback*, *The Crown Prince on horseback*, *Hercules slaying the Centaur*, *The horse without rider*, *The horse rearing*, *The horse killed by a lion*, *The Centaur and Deianira*, *The Rape of Proserpina by Pluto*, *Triton*, *Flora*, *Bacchus*, *Mercury*, and *Hercules with a dragon*.<sup>641</sup>

The example of the Giambologna workshop was copied by Bernini's later in the seventeenth century. At the banquet given by Alexander VII for Queen Christina

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<sup>639</sup> Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane, *Descrizione delle felicissime nozze della cristianissima maestà di Madama Maria Medici Regina di Francia e di Nauarra* (Florence, 1600), 15-16; Watson, 23.

<sup>640</sup> A. S. F. *Guardaroba*, 246, 237r; Watson, 23.

<sup>641</sup> C. Rinuccini, *Descrizione delle feste fatte nelle reali nozze de' Serenissimi Principi di Toscana D. Cosimo de' Medici e Maria Maddalena* (Florence, 1608), 23, 78-81; Watson, 25. Watson has suggested that Tacca's sugar sculptures for both the 1600 and 1608 Medici weddings were made using some of the bronze sculpture moulds from Giambologna's workshop. See page 23.

of Sweden, on 26 December, 1655, two of Bernini's assistants, Giovanni Paolo Schor and Ercole Ferrata, constructed the sugar sculptures. The latter was one of the teachers of the Florentine Academy in Rome, and his involvement in this banquet is confirmed by an entry in the treasurer's register, dated February 1656.<sup>642</sup> A payment of 49 scudi was made to Ercole Ferrata for the creation of sugar sculptures for the banquet. Both artists had also assisted Bernini in his work on the Cathedra Petri and in the Chigi chapel at the Duomo of Siena.<sup>643</sup> Among the works for the banquet were the *Phoenix* and the *Sun* by Schor.<sup>644</sup>

The involvement of the artists of the Cazzuola in the production of sugar sculptures for the Medici court is therefore highly probable, if the accounts of other artists are considered. It can be seen that food sculptures were an important aspect of both court and private company entertainments during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Within the context of Vasari's *Vite*, they held a more vital position. The worlds of the melancholy Renaissance artist and his Medici ruler were allowed to coincide within the activities of the Cazzuola, a pseudo-Roman Saturnalia. Relief from their ailments was found in the company of others and in the merriment of activities derived from antiquity.

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<sup>642</sup> G. Masson, "Food as a Fine Art," *Apollo* 83 (May, 1966): 338; J. Montagu, "The Bronze Groups made for the Electress Palatine," in *Kunst des Barock in der Toskana* (München, 1976), 131.

<sup>643</sup> Masson, 338.

<sup>644</sup> P. Bjurström, *Feast and Theatre in Queen Christina's Rome* (Stockholm, 1966), 55.

*The Giving of Gifts*

In his *Georgics* Virgil characterised the Golden Age of Saturn's reign as a time of bounty. It was stated:

Before the reign of Jove no tillers subjugated the land: even to mark possession of the plain or apportion it by boundaries was sacrilege; man made gain for the common good, an Earth of her own accord gave her gifts all the more freely when none demanded them.<sup>645</sup>

This principle was adhered to at the Company of the Cazzuola, most particularly at the banquet given by Matteo da Panzano, at the Aia of Santa Maria Nuova.

Frugality was encouraged, and the excesses of the previous feasts discouraged.

Indeed, it was decided that the company would only meet once a year, on the feast-day of Andrew, their patron saint. At this dinner the room was arranged with beds like the interior of a hospital, and the company dressed as pilgrims and wasters. Saint Andrew recommended that through parsimony of feasting the common good of all the members of the Cazzuola would be protected and guarded against poverty.<sup>646</sup>

However, at Saturn's banquet of the Saturnalia the principle of common good more commonly took the form of an exchange of gifts by all.<sup>647</sup> Saturn was to state in Lucian's *Saturnalia*:

I take over the sovereignty again to remind mankind what life was like under me, when everything grew for them without sowing and without

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<sup>645</sup> "Ante Iovem nulli subigebant arva coloni:  
ne signare quidem aut partiri limite campum  
fas erat; in medium quaerebant, ipsaque tellus  
omnia liberius nullo poscente ferebat" (Virgil *Georgics* 1. 125-128).

<sup>646</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 617-18.

<sup>647</sup> See Martial *Epigrams* 5. 18; Pliny *Letters* 4. 9, 7-8; Lucian *Saturnalia* 14-16.

ploughing - not ears of wheat, but loaves ready-baked and meats ready-cooked. Wine flowed like a river, and there were springs of honey and milk; for everyone was good, pure gold. This is the reason for my short-lived dominion, and why everywhere there is clapping and singing and playing games, and everyone, slave and free man, is held as good as his neighbour. There is no slavery, you see, in my time.<sup>648</sup>

Thus, Saturn's gift of bounty during the Golden Age was mirrored in the exchange of gifts at the Saturnalia. This principle was shared at the Medieval and Renaissance courts of Europe. The sharing of the feast with the peasants beyond the gate was considered a Christian duty, and alms dishes, which were placed upon the tables at the banquet and were of elaborate design, were employed to add to the charity offered by the lord.<sup>649</sup> These creations often took the form of a ship, or nef, as represented by the silver Burghley nef, made by Pierre Le Flamand in Paris between 1482 and 1483, and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (fig. 4). In the scene of *January*, from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, by Pol de Limbourg, 1413-16, an example of a nef can be seen (fig. 5).<sup>650</sup> Several nefs were also depicted in the miniature of *Charles V welcomes the German Emperor Charles IV*, from the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, 1377 (fig. 6).

However, the nef would seem to have had many other uses at the table. At the Company of the Cazzuola it was used to hold confections. Vasari notes:

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<sup>648</sup> Lucian *Saturnalia* 7.

<sup>649</sup> P. Eames, "Pageantry, Power and Plate: Medieval Feasts and Ceremonies," *Country Life* (December 5, 1985): 1758.

<sup>650</sup> Musée Condé, Chantilly, MS. Lat. 1284, 2r; and B. A. Henisch, *Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society* (University Park and London, 1985), 150-151.

At the end of the supper came a ship full of various confections, and the crew of the ship, pretending to remove their merchandise, little by little brought the men of the Company into the upper rooms, where, a very rich scenic setting having been already prepared, there was performed a comedy called the *Filogenia*, which was much extolled; and at dawn, the play finished, every man went happily home.<sup>651</sup>

An alternative interpretation of the use of the nef has been supplied by Bridget Henisch. In her explanation, the boat was an elaborate salt cellar which allowed the craftsman to show off all his skills and imagination.<sup>652</sup> Traditionally, the nef could only be owned by royalty, higher clergy and high ranking nobility. The boat was carried into the banqueting hall by the butler, preceded by an usher and followed by the cup-bearer and other officials who served at the high table.<sup>653</sup> It would be placed in front of the host so as to denote his status.<sup>654</sup> An Italian example of a nef was commissioned by the *priori* of Perugia in 1512, designed by Pietro Perugino, and completed by the goldsmith Mariotto di Marco. Its design was elaborate and included the depiction of a ship's crew carrying the figures of the Perugia bishop San Ercolano, a group of putti, two horses with bells around their necks and a figure of Fortune.<sup>655</sup> Other nefs were converted into religious reliquaries, such as that owned by Joanna of Austria, wife of Francesco

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<sup>651</sup> "Al fine della quale venendo una nave piena di varie confezioni, i padroni di quella, mostrando di levar mercanzie, condussero a poco a poco gli uomini della compagnia nelle stanze di sopra, dove essendo una scena ed apparato ricchissimo, fu recitata una comedia intitolata *Filogenia*, che fu molto lodata; e quella finita all'alba, ognuno si tornò lietissimo a casa" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 617; idem, *The Lives*, 2: 527).

<sup>652</sup> Henisch, 164-165.

<sup>653</sup> G. B. Hughes, "Silver nefs and Galleons," *Argentor* 5 (1950): 213-214.

<sup>654</sup> C. Oman, *Medieval Silver Nefs* (London, 1963), 3.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

de'Medici. This nef was Venetian in origin, made of crystal and silver-gilt and decorated with gems. The mast contains a relic of Saint Leocadia.<sup>656</sup>

Through the presentation of the nef at the Company of the Cazzuola, the Medici symbolism of the Golden Age of Saturn's rule had been alluded to. This was to continue in the production of plays.

### The Theatre

The creation of stage sets and the performance of theatrical events was central to both the activities of the Company of the Cazzuola, the academy movement and the court. Entertainment extended beyond allegorical representations at banquets to include the performance of comedies and plays, and their source was undoubtedly antique. Theatre had been considered an activity of the Saturnalian banquet and New Comedy was a particularly popular entertainment. In Plutarch's *Convivial Questions*, he outlined the kinds of performances that should be eliminated. Tragedy, pantomime and Old Comedy were mostly rejected, but New Comedy was regarded as having no critics. The plots were considered wholly suitable. "When girls are raped or seduced they usually end up married, when the leading man has an affair with a hetaera it is either broken off, if the girl is 'bold and fast', or else there is some kind of happy ending."<sup>657</sup> Therefore, the New

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<sup>656</sup> Ibid.,15.

<sup>657</sup> Jones, 192.

Comedies of Terence and Plautus were considered appropriate for the banquet.

Indeed, in Macrobius's *Saturnalia*, Symmachus stated:

Our ancestors regarded a jest as something worth taking care and thought over; and I should like to begin by reminding you that two of the lords of language in those old days, the comic poet Plautus and the orator Cicero, were both outstanding for their witty jests. Plautus indeed was so famous on this account that after his death comedies of uncertain authorship were attributed to him simply by reason of the wealth of jokes which they contained.<sup>658</sup>

Thus, it was this form of writing which was to have such an influence upon the comedies of Machiavelli and Ariosto, which were, in turn, performed at the Company of the Cazzuola.<sup>659</sup> Vasari states that the Company of the Cazzuola performed *La Calandria* of Cardinal Bibbiena, the *Suppositi* and *Cassaria* of Ariosto and the *Clizia* and *Mandragola* of Machiavelli.<sup>660</sup> Bibbiena had been described as a "great thief of Plautus" by Baldassare Castiglione, and Lodovico Ariosto was one of the courtiers of the Ferrara court of Ercole I, assembled to produce the Latin comedies of Plautus and Terence.<sup>661</sup> He, therefore, had a sound training in classical drama. Machiavelli's *Mandragola* cannot be identified with any comedy of Terence or Plautus in particular, but he did base his *Clizia* upon Plautus's *Casina*.<sup>662</sup> The Medici ambassador and Cazzuola member, Bandini, was

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<sup>658</sup> Macrobius *Saturnalia* 2. 1, 10-11.

<sup>659</sup> M. T. Herrick, *Italian Comedy in the Renaissance* (Urbana, 1960), 112.

<sup>660</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 618; Aristotile da Sangallo also designed the scenery for another play by Machiavelli, most probably the *Clizia*, which was performed at the house of the furnace-master, Jacopo. While Vasari is not clear as to the full name of the host for performance of Machiavelli's *Clizia*, it is probable that he was referring to Jacopo Bottegai, a member of the Company of the Cazzuola; see *ibid.*, 6: 438; Minor and Mitchell, 34; and Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Painting in Italy*, 6, 170.

<sup>661</sup> Herrick, 71 and 67.

<sup>662</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

an acquaintance of Machiavelli, primarily through his connection with Filippo Strozzi, who had introduced the historian, politician and playwright to the Medici court in 1520.<sup>663</sup> In a letter dated 11 August, 1526, Machiavelli was asked by the Republican orator, Bartolommeo Cavalcanti, to send his greeting to Giovanni Bandini and his friends.<sup>664</sup> In the context of the Cazzuola's performance of Machiavelli's *Mandragola* and the *Clizia*, the connection is an interesting one, although it can only be speculated that Bandini was responsible for the introduction of Machiavelli's plays to the company. Moreover, the company may have travelled to Lyons, France to perform Bibbiena's *La Calandria* for Henry II and Catherine de' Medici.<sup>665</sup> Aristotile da San Gallo and Andrea del Sarto had executed the scenery for the Cazzuola performance of Machiavelli's *Mandragola* at the house of Bernardino di Giordano, perhaps during January 1525.<sup>666</sup>

Broadly termed as "learned" or "erudite" comedy, this form of theatre was very popular throughout the academies of Italy. The Accademia degli Umidi, the predecessor to the Accademia Fiorentina, was founded on November 1, 1540,

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<sup>663</sup> R. Devonshire-Jones, *Francesco Vettori: Florentine Citizen and Medici Servant* (London, 1972), 147; V. Gaston, "The Prophet Armed: Machiavelli, Savonarola, and Rosso Fiorentino's *Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 51 (1988): 224.

<sup>664</sup> He wrote, "Restami pregarvi che mi raccomandiate strettissimamente al sig. luogotenente, di poi salutate per mia parte Giovanni Bandini, il Fieravante e gli altri amici, offerendomi loro" (*Opere di Niccolò Machiavelli*, vol. 3, *Lettere*, ed. F. Gaeta (Turin, 1984), no. 318, 608); Gaston, 224.

<sup>665</sup> Minor and Mitchell, 35. Mitchell and Minor failed to footnote their source and no other verification for the Cazzuola's performance of the *Calandria* can be found. B. Mitchell's article, "Le intermèdes au service de l'État," in *La Fête de la Renaissance*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1972), 130, discusses the performance but no mention is made of the Cazzuola. Furthermore, in Plaisance's article, page 147, he simply states that Barlacchi performed with a group of Florentine actors, but does not specify.

<sup>666</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 437. The dating of the comedy's performance was given in Mango, 179; and Fabbri, 73.

with the purpose of discussion and promotion of Italian literature, and the enjoyment of the company of others.<sup>667</sup> The authors Petrarch, Boccaccio and Dante were of particular interest to the academy.<sup>668</sup> However, the activities of the Umidi were diverse, ranging from the discussion of Aristotelian philosophy to the composition of carnival songs, and the production of comedies and farces. While Pierfrancesco Giambullari, Cosimo Bartoli and Giovanni Norchiati formulated the learned pursuits of the Umidi and the later Accademia Fiorentina, another member, Niccolò Martelli, otherwise known as Il Gelato, was to compose a song for carnival.<sup>669</sup> Moreover, on November 9, 1544, *Il furto* by Francesco d'Ambra was presented in the Sala del Papa in Santa Maria Novella to a male audience and two days later to a female audience. A week later it was performed before Cosimo de' Medici at the Villa di Castello.<sup>670</sup> Il Lasca was also to entertain the academy with the performance of a farce by his own hand.<sup>671</sup> Moreover, while no definite affiliation between the Umidi and the Cazzuola can be ascertained, the Cazzuola were to perform the *Mandragola* at the Umidi's presentation of Il Lasca's farce, and Il Barlacchi, the court herald and member of the Cazzuola, was also to perform Il Gelato's song for carnival.<sup>672</sup>

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<sup>667</sup> B. N. C. F., MS II IV 1, 4r; De Gaetano, 31.

<sup>668</sup> The three authors were depicted in the title pages of the *Capitoli* of the Umidi, B. N. C. F., MS II IV 1, 6r and were later the subject of discussion amongst the company. See B. N. C. F., MS II IV 1, 8r-15v.

<sup>669</sup> Such lectures regarding philosophy can be seen in B. N. C. F., MS II IV 1, 160v-171r. In this lecture, given at the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, Dante's *Purgatory* was discussed in relation to theology and science; see also De Gaetano, 32; Il Gelato's carnival song is to be found in B. N. C. F., MS II IV 1, 63v-64v.

<sup>670</sup> B. N. C. F., MS B III 52, 21v; De Gaetano, 43.

<sup>671</sup> B. N. C. F., MS II IV 1, 37v-40v. No date is given for this performance.

<sup>672</sup> "... per cio esse nella mandragola recitatasi dalla Cazzuola. ..." The reference to the Cazzuola's performance of Machiavelli's *Mandragola* can be found at B. N. C. F., MS II IV 1, 38r. Il Barlacchi is listed amongst the singers of Il Gelato's song at B. N. C. F., MS II IV 1, 65r.

However, the production of plays was not only confined to this academy. The Accademia degli Allegri was specifically devoted to feasting, and, although little account remains of the company's activities, the production of comedies as well as banquets seem to have been its main preoccupations.<sup>673</sup> Amongst the accounts of creditors and debtors to the company is noted a payment by Palla Strozzi for reparation of the expenses relating to a comedy.<sup>674</sup>

Theatre and comedy were also important facets of the Medici court. At Cosimo I's wedding to Eleonora of Toledo celebrations continued on to 9 July, 1539 with a performance of Antonio Landi's comedy *Il comodo*, performed in the same courtyard of the Palazzo Medici.<sup>675</sup> A later Medici wedding held in 1589 between Cosimo's son Ferdinand, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and Christine of Lorraine gave further cause for Florence to celebrate, and once again, fully illustrates the form of entertainments held at the Medici court.<sup>676</sup> The marriage had taken place by proxy in Blois, France, but Ferdinand's new bride arrived in Livorno, Tuscany, from Marseilles on 24 April, 1589.<sup>677</sup> The triumphal entry involving the Florentine populace was followed by a series of banquets, comedies and other performances within the more private setting of court. The comedies included the performance of Girolamo Bargagli's *La Pellegrina* as well as six *intermezzi* on 2

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<sup>673</sup> Much of the documentation that does exist for the Accademia degli Allegri is illegible. See B. N. C. F., MS II III 427. It should also be noted that in Maylender, vol. 1, 148, he cited the archival reference as B. N. C. F., MS. VIII 3-126 which does not exist.

<sup>674</sup> B. N. C. F., MS II III 427, 45v.

<sup>675</sup> Nagler, 9; Mitchell, *Italian Civic Pageantry in the Renaissance*, 51.

<sup>676</sup> R. Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650* (Woodridge, 1984), 176-178.

<sup>677</sup> Nagler, 70; Saskow, 19.

May. Two other comedies performed were *La zingara* on 5 May and *La pazzia* on 13 and/or 15 May.<sup>678</sup>

The performance of these plays, whether within the confines of the Cazzuola or the court, also provided a platform for the display of innovation and resulted in developments in stage production. Aristotile da San Gallo, the artist responsible for the creation of the scenery for the Cazzuola's performance of Machiavelli's *Mandragola*, was to introduce the use of rotating prisms to change scenery, first seen in his production for Duke Pierluigi Farnese in Castro.<sup>679</sup> The prisms turned on pivots, the three sides of which were painted with different scenes, and these turned whenever a new scene required it.<sup>680</sup> Unfortunately, Vasari included little information about the scenery developed for the Cazzuola performances, but perhaps Brunelleschi's invention for the mystery play, presented in the church of San Felice during the feast of the Annunciation on March 25, between 1435 and 1440, bore similarity to the presentation of Saint Andrew throwing open the gates of Heaven to reveal a choir of angels, a performance given by the Cazzuola at the feast of Francesco and Domenico Rucellai.<sup>681</sup> Filippo Brunelleschi's theatrical mechanism was one of the most influential in the development of fifteenth-century stage machines.<sup>682</sup> A choir of angels was suspended within a hemispheric

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<sup>678</sup> Saskow, 19.

<sup>679</sup> Nagler, 44-46.

<sup>680</sup> E. Carrick, "Theatre Machines in Italy, 1400-1800," *Architectural Review* 70 (1931): 10.

<sup>681</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 618.

<sup>682</sup> See A. R. Blumenthal, "A newly-identified drawing of Brunelleschi's stage machinery" *Marsyas* 13 (1966-67): 20-31; Carrick, 9.

Heaven, surrounding an Angel Gabriel inside a *mandorla*. Gabriel pointed to the Virgin Mary, recreating the scene of the Annunciation. The hemisphere of Heaven was suspended from the rafters of the church and was made of thin, flexible strips of wood. An iron ring supported the hemisphere and was connected to an iron-reinforced roof beam. A dozen twelve-year-old boys stood on wooden pedestals within the hemisphere, each wearing gilt wings and caps. The choir of angels sang as the Heaven slowly revolved. In the centre of the hemisphere of Heaven was another structure in the form of a pinwheel. This was connected to an iron bar which was affixed to both the floor and the ceiling. At the end of each spoke of the pinwheel was placed another child who was dressed as a *putto*, and the whole wheel revolved within the hemisphere around it. At the centre of the wheel was a copper *mandorla* and inside this was located the Angel Gabriel. A sliding scaffold of doors was arranged along the bottom of the hemispheric dome so as to allow the children to be placed within the wheel and the Heaven. Indeed, Brunelleschi's invention had been influential upon other artists, notably Il Cecca and Leonardo da Vinci. Il Cecca had designed machinery for the performance of the mystery play of the Ascension, at the church of the Carmine in 1475, and Leonardo's revolving stage of 1495 revealed a knowledge of Brunelleschi's contraption.<sup>683</sup>

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<sup>683</sup> Blumenthal, 24; For Il Cecca see Vasari, *Le vite*, 3: 197-99. For Leonardo see K. Steinitz, "A Reconstruction of Leonardo's Revolving Stage," *Art Quarterly* 12 (1949): 325-338. For reference to Brunelleschi's device see page 331.

Therefore, theatre, so important a part of the classical banquet, also found a place within the entertainments of the court and the academy. Indeed, it can be seen that the Company of the Cazzuola were involved in both forums of production, and thus, the company and the Medici once again, collided. Moreover, the choice of plays given reflected the influence of Saturnalian judgments regarding suitable theatre, and thus, united the Cazzuola with the Saturnian symbolism associated with the Medici.

### Mechanical Innovations

The activities of the Cazzuola also reflected developments in pyrotechnics and mechanical jokes, which were common to the court of the Medici, and had their origins in antiquity. At Trimalchio's feast, food had spurted saffron as soon as it was touched, and this form of jocular innovation was most commonly displayed by the *giuochi d'acqua* of the sixteenth century, which spurted water at its unwitting victims. At Giovanni Gaddi's banquet these inventions were created by the company, but their source was primarily from the Renaissance garden and ultimately from antiquity.<sup>684</sup> In Leon Battista Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*, the author recommended the use of water jokes in the creation of the garden. In Book nine, Chapter four of his text he wrote:

To these [porticos to enjoy sun and shade] add some little pleasant Meadow, with fine Springs of Water bursting out in different Places where least expected.<sup>685</sup>

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<sup>684</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 618.

<sup>685</sup> "Aderit et area festivissima. Prorumpent aquulae praeter spem lics complusculis" Alberti, *L'architettura*, Book 9, Chapter 4, ; idem, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, Book 9, Chapter 4, 193).

His prescription was followed at various Medici villas. At the Villa Medici at Castello, the Grotto of the Animals was studded with water jets to soak the unsuspecting visitor.<sup>686</sup> The developments in engineering that made these inventions possible were spawned by a revived interest in the texts of Archimedes, Aristotle and Vitruvius, as well as Hero of Alexandria's *Pneumatics*.<sup>687</sup>

Fireworks, which had been invented during antiquity, and were popular at the Renaissance courts of Europe, were also a form of entertainment found at the Company of the Cazzuola. At Giovanni Gaddi's banquet fireworks were created by the company.<sup>688</sup> Moreover, at the feast organised by Matteo da Panzano, where Ceres was depicted seeking Proserpine, who had been carried off by Pluto, Il Baia, the artillery-man, was condemned to hell by Pluto for preparing fireworks and *girandole*, platforms for the bearing of the fireworks, which represented the seven mortal sins and things appertaining to the realms of the Devil.<sup>689</sup>

The first methods for the creation of fireworks dated back to the time of Alexander the Great and the inventor Marcus Graecus. Grecian pitch, alchitran, live sulphur, tartar, sarcocolla, niter, and petroleum oil were mixed with quicklime and egg yolks. The concoction was then placed in an air-tight vessel of glass or earthenware and placed under warm manure for a month. After heating,

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<sup>686</sup> C. Lazzaro, *The Italian Renaissance Garden* (New Haven and London, 1990), 66-67.

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>688</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 618.

<sup>689</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 616.

the liquefied mixture was then poured into hollow sticks or small pots and a fuse placed in the centre.<sup>690</sup> Similar methods of putrefaction were used for other recipes, but the ingredients changed. For example, sulphur was mixed with petroleum oil or rock oil, juniper oil, well-refined saltpeter, and asphalt. Goose or duck fat, black pitch, varnish, pulverized dove's dung, and aqua vita were used to cover the sulphur and other ingredients before being placed under manure.<sup>691</sup> These classical methods for making fireworks entered one of the first treatises regarding the subject. It was produced in Italy by the author Vannoccio Biringuccio during 1540 under the title *Pirotechnia*. Furthermore, Biringuccio's discussion of fireworks extended to the creation of *girandole*, which he himself admitted, were popularly used in Siena and Florence during the chief feast-days. In the public squares, edifices were erected, either fixed to the ground or suspended by a rope across the square, in which were placed the fireworks. The structure was generally made from wood on which was fastened hay. Allegorical scenes were then constructed out of hay and papier-mâché and these scenes were then used to cover the construction.<sup>692</sup> Figures were made from a framework of wood covered with hay and shaped through a heavy linen cloth. Plaster of Paris was used to shape the head, feet and hands. The figures were then painted with suitable flesh tones.<sup>693</sup> Thousands of fireworks were then attached to the structure. Indeed, such *girandole* had been created for the feast-day of St. John

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<sup>690</sup> V. Biringuccio, *Pirotechnia*, trans. C. S. Smith and M. T. Gnudi (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1966), 436.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.*, 436-37.

<sup>692</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

<sup>693</sup> *Ibid.*, 441.

the Baptist, as can be seen in Giovanni Stradano's fresco at the Palazzo Vecchio (fig. 7). The *girandole* was suspended above the Piazza Signoria, and it is highly probable that this structure and those of Il Baia conformed to those of antiquity and Vannoccio Biringuccio's *Pirotechnia*. The mechanical innovations presented by the court were thus echoed in the activities of the Company of the Cazzuola.

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In Vasari's explanation of the Company of Cazzuola, the achievements were two-fold. Firstly, the similarity of the Cazzuola's activities to that of the academy movement served to heighten its artistic members' rise in position. The composition of membership and arrangements for entertainment were the same or very similar, and both functioned as replacements for the suppressed and failing confraternities. David Chambers has suggested that the Calza companies of young patricians, who held banquets and prepared theatrical performances during the Venetian carnival, provided the antecedents to the development of the academy in Venice, and it may also be suggested that the more informal groups such as the Cazzuola did the same for the academic movement in Florence.<sup>694</sup> However, the Company of the Cazzuola held a more significant role if taken within the context of Medici medicinal and Saturnian symbolism. Ficino and Burton had prescribed the company of others as the cure for melancholy and the

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<sup>694</sup> D. S. Chambers, "The Earlier 'Academies' in Italy," in *Italian Academies of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. D. S. Chambers and F. Quiviger (London, 1995), 12.

melancholic's ruler, Saturn, provided the banquet to cure the complaint. Whether the feast was provided by the court, the academy, or the Company of the Cazzuola, they all shared a common theme: entertainment and invention.

It is fitting, therefore, that the Company of the Cazzuola should be described in Vasari's *Vite* within the biography of Rustici, who was believed to have lived his life like a philosopher.<sup>695</sup> At the Company of the Cazzuola the artistic members had attained the level of the learned, and their shared entertainments with the elite acted as guardians against their melancholy humour. Moreover, the membership's close association with the Medici court and its use of Medici Saturnian imagery in its activities reinforced this aspect of a rise in social status. Thus, the Medicean Saturnalia was more than just pure entertainment for the artistic members of the Cazzuola, but also a means of elevating their art. Vasari's account placed the artistic membership at the same social level as the more important members of the company. In J. A. Crowe's and G. B. Cavalcaselle's publication, *A History of Painting in Italy*, brief mention of the Company of the Cazzuola was made. An account of its activities, mostly derived from Vasari's *Vite*, reflected that the entertainments of the company echoed the lavish behaviour of the sixteenth century, where "artists were drawn into the vortex of dissipation and immorality which peculiarly characterised the upper classes in Italy."<sup>696</sup> Perversely, this was undoubtedly Vasari's aim in describing the

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<sup>695</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 601.

<sup>696</sup> Crowe and Cavalcaselle, 170.

Company of the Cazzuola. The author successfully displayed how the artists had risen to higher social circles. The various banquets and theatrical events produced by the Company of the Cazzuola can be seen as an attempt to raise the status of the artist above that of craftsman. Their construction of a society devoted to courtly entertainments reflected their skills, but also propelled the artist into higher society. The artist's quest for inclusion in the liberal arts was therefore, closer to achievement for, as Charles Sorel writes:

Music and Dancing, not only give great pleasure but have the honour of depending upon Mathematics, for they consist in number and in measure. And to this must be added Painting and Perspective and the use of very elaborate Machines, all of which are necessary for the ornament of Theatres at Ballets and at Comedies. Therefore, whatever the old doctors may say, to employ oneself at all this is to be a Philosopher and Mathematician.<sup>697</sup>

Moreover, association with the elite provided the serious function of obtaining patronage. Burke has stated that, "For the elite, but for them only, the two traditions [of court and carnival entertainments] had different psychological functions; the great tradition [i.e. court] was serious, the little tradition was play."<sup>698</sup> For the wealthy members of the Company of the Cazzuola, Burke's reasoning was essentially accurate. However, it should also be added that for the lesser membership of the society the exact opposite was true. Their activities and association with the elite performed a very serious function of showcasing their skills.

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<sup>697</sup> C. Sorel, "Le Nouveau Parnasse," *Oeuvres Diverses*, (Paris, 1663), 9-10. Quotation found in Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century*, 273-274.

<sup>698</sup> P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 1996), 28.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE PHYSIOGNOMIC PORTRAIT AND ITS PLACE WITHIN THE *VITE*

The science of physiognomy is based upon the writings of Hippocrates, the source of modern medicine, who established the art of judging character and disposition from the external appearance of the body, and, in particular, the features of the face, in his treatise *Epidemics*.<sup>699</sup> Hippocrates ideas were furthered by Aristotle in his treatise *Physiognomonica*. He stated that physiognomy was signified by “movements, gestures of the body, colour, characteristic facial expression, the growth of the hair, the smoothness of the skin, the voice, condition of the flesh, the parts of the body, and the build of the body as a whole.”<sup>700</sup> Therefore, physiognomy is based upon the same premise as that used by physicians in the diagnosis of disease, in that it relies upon signs and symptoms. Moreover, it also relates to complexion theory.<sup>701</sup> The melancholic, choleric, sanguine or phlegmatic man possesses specific humours which determine his mental and physical well-being and, thus, his emotions and responses.<sup>702</sup>

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<sup>699</sup> E. Evans, “Physiognomics in the Ancient World,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 50, part 5 (1969): 5; T. S. Barton, *Power and Knowledge: Astrology, Physiognomics and Medicine under the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, 1994), 98. Hippocrates had made such observations as:

“If the head is large and the eyes small, if they are stammerers, they are quick to anger. People who are long-lived have more teeth. Stammerers and rapid talkers are severely melancholic. People who blink are quick to anger. Those with large head, large dark eyes, thick, blunt nose, are good. Blue eyed, large . . . Those with small head, thin neck, narrow chest, are equable. If one’s head is large he will not stammer or be bald unless his eyes be gray” (Hippocrates *Epidemics* 2. 6, 1).

<sup>700</sup> Aristotle *Physiognomics* 2.

<sup>701</sup> See chapter 2 for the discussion of complexion theory.

<sup>702</sup> L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York, ca. 1934), 4: 191.

This medical knowledge was of practical significance to the painter and sculptor as it provided a guide to the internal workings of man and thus, the external appearance of disease and temperament in the human body.<sup>703</sup> Alberti, made reference to the importance of physiognomy within his treatise *De pictura*, which was first published in Latin during 1435, and a year later was presented in an Italian edition. For the Renaissance artist, nature was his guide and truth to nature his ambition. Alberti's text agreed. He recommended observation of nature as the artist's best source for the complex expression of physiognomy.<sup>704</sup> He understood that man's inner feelings and diseases had external consequences.<sup>705</sup> Moreover, Alberti explained that man's external appearance is definable by species, but each individual within the species is defined by his or her personal appearance.<sup>706</sup> This final point was expanded upon in Alberti's *De statua* (ca. 1464), where he claimed that the sculptor had two purposes in the achievement of external likeness. He notes:

If I am not mistaken, the sculptors' art of achieving likeness is directed to two ends: one is that the image he makes should resemble this particular

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<sup>703</sup> Vasari described paintings containing the depiction of disease. In the *vita* of Antonio Veneziano, he congratulated the painter upon his depiction of blindness, paralysis and dropsy in his cycle of the history of St. Raneirius, in the Camposanto, Pisa, dated ca. 1384 to 1388. See *Le vite*, 1: 663-665. This cycle was destroyed during World War II. See R. Fremantle, *Florentine Gothic Painters: From Giotto to Masaccio* (London, 1975), 229-230. Giotto was also to achieve great visual likenesses of internal maladies. Vasari comments that in the church of San Francesco, Rimini he painted a cycle of Saint Michelina. He notes:

“Medesimamente, grandissimo affetto fu quello ch'egli espresse in un infermo di certe piaghe; perchè tutte le femmine che gli sono intorno, offese dal puzzo, fanno certi storcimenti schifi, i più graziati del mondo” (Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 392-393).

Thus, the study of disease and its effects upon the human body had a practical application. Vasari's descriptions of artist's afflictions helped to expand the artist's knowledge of medicine.

<sup>704</sup> Alberti explained that emotion was expressed by the movements of the body and that nature was the artist's best source for the observation of this; L. B. Alberti, *On Painting and On Sculpture. The Latin texts of De pictura and De statua*, trans. C. Grayson (London, 1972), 81.

<sup>705</sup> *Ibid.*, 80-83.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

creature, say a man . . . The other end is the one pursued by those who strive to represent and imitate not simply a man, but the face and entire appearance of the body of one particular man, say Caesar or Cato in this attitude and this dress, either seated or speaking in court, or some other known person.<sup>707</sup>

The importance of an artist's training in this pseudo-science became increasingly recognised during the Renaissance, especially in Pomponius Gauricus's *De sculptura*, written during 1504, and Francisco de Hollanda's *Tractato de pintura antigua*, written during 1548.<sup>708</sup> Moreover, Paolo Pino in his treatise entitled *Dialogo di pittura*, written in the same year as Hollanda's tract, emphasised the importance of physiognomics to the artist.<sup>709</sup>

Thus, it may be expected that Giorgio Vasari was also to refer to the science within the pages of the *Vite*. The author was to state:

that, for greater perfection in demonstrating not only the passions and emotions of the soul but also the events of the future, as living men do, they [painters] must have, besides long practice in the art, a complete understanding of physiognomy.<sup>710</sup>

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<sup>707</sup> "Captandae similitudinis ratio apud statuarios, si recte interpretor, destinationibus dirigitur duabus, quarum altera est ut tandem quale peregerit simulacrum animali huic, puta homini, persimillimum sit . . . Altera earum est qui non tantum hominem, verum huius istius, puta Caesaris Catonisve, hunc in modum, hoc habitu, sedentis pro tribunali aut concionantis, aut eiusmodi noti alicuius, vultus totamque corporis faciem imitari experimereque elaborant" (Ibid., 122-123).

<sup>708</sup> See Pomponius Gauricus *De sculptura*, ed. and trans. A. Chastel and R. Klein (Geneva and Paris, 1969); and M. Barasch, "Character and Physiognomy: Bocchi on Donatello's St. George, a Renaissance Text on Expression in Art," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36 (July-September, 1975): 427.

<sup>709</sup> P. Pino, "Dialogo di pittura," in *Trattati d'arte del cinquecento*, ed. P. Barocchi, vol. 1 (Bari, 1960), 136; and Barasch, 427.

<sup>710</sup> "che, a maggior perfezione del dimostrare non solamente le passioni e gli affetti dell'animo, ma ancora gli accidenti avvenire, come fanno i naturali, oltre alla lunga pratica dell'arte, bisogna loro avere una intera cognizione d'essa fisionomia" (Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 99; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 19-20).

This knowledge of physiognomy was most adequately put to use in the painting of portraits. The precedent had been set in antiquity. Pliny was to write that Apelles:

also painted portraits so absolutely lifelike that, incredible as it sounds, the grammarian Apio has left it on record that one of those persons called physiognomists, who prophesy people's future by their countenance, pronounced from their portraits either the year of the subject's deaths hereafter or the number of years they had already lived.<sup>711</sup>

The prophetic use of Apelles antique portraits was shared by the portraits of the Renaissance, and in particular became a facet of the images of the Medici family and their supporters.

### **The Physiognomy of Medici Portraiture**

During the Renaissance, painting and sculpture came to present an amalgamation of the actual and the ideal, and this was particularly the case within the field of portraiture.<sup>712</sup> While the portrait had to portray a likeness to the sitter's external appearance, it was the physiognomy of his or her inner soul that was of paramount importance, and this was more often than not dictated by philosophy rather than reality.

Vasari's *Vite* presents a prime example of this. He created an elaborate web of symbolism to associate the painters, sculptors and architects of the Renaissance with the melancholy humour of the Medici family. This web continued into the

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<sup>711</sup> "Imagines adeo similitudinis indiscretae pinxit, ut - incredibile dictu - Apio grammaticus scriptum reliquerit, quendam ex facie hominum divinantem, quos metaposcopos vocant, ex iis dixisse aut futurae mortis annos aut praeteritae vitae" (Pliny *Natural History* 35. 88-89).

<sup>712</sup> Paola Tinagli discusses the concept of the 'ideal' in relation to female portraiture in *Women in Italian Renaissance Art* (Manchester and New York, 1997), 48-50.

actual portraits of the family and their supporters. He recognised that artists were prone to reproduce images of themselves in their works. In the 1550 edition of the *Vite*, Vasari had commented:

The sculptors that we have called old but not ancient, overwhelmed by the many complexities of art, arranged their figures with such a lack of skill and beauty that, whether they were of metal or of marble, they were nothing else but coarse, as they had coarse minds and foolish and dull wits; and it all arose from this, that in portraying themselves, [the sculptors] expressed and resembled themselves.<sup>713</sup>

This had previously been determined by Leonardo da Vinci who wrote:

Figures often resemble their masters. . . because judgment is that which moves the hand to the creation of lineaments of figures through varying aspects until it is satisfied. And, because judgment is one of the powers of the soul, by which it composes the form of the body in which it resides, according to its will, thus having to reproduce with the hands a human body, it naturally reproduces that body which it first invented. From this it follows that he who falls in love naturally loves things similar to himself.<sup>714</sup>

In the biographies of the *Vite*, Vasari had created individual physiognomic portraits where artists temperaments and medical afflictions were dominated by the humours. In turn, these biographies were case studies for the portrait painters

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<sup>713</sup> “Gli scultori che noi abbiamo chiamati vecchi ma non antichi, sbigottiti dalle molte difficoltà della arte, conducevano le figure loro sì mal composte di artificio e di bellezza, che, o di metallo o di marmo che elle si fussino, altro non erano però che tonde, sì come avevano essi ancora tondi gli spiriti e gli ingegni stupidi e grossi: e nasceva tutto da questo, che ritraendosi esprimevano se medesimi, e se medesimi assomigliavano” (Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, 3: 210; Rubin, 331).

<sup>714</sup> “le figure spesso somigliano alli loro maestri. . . chè il guidizio nostro è quello che move la mano alle creazione de' lineamente d'esse figure per diversi aspetti, in sino a tanto ch'esso si satisfaccia. E perchè esso giudizio è una delle potenze dell'anima nostra, con la quale essa compose la forma del corpo dov'essa abita, secondo il suo volere, onde, avendo co'le mani a rifare un corpo unmano, volentieri rifà quel corpo di che essa fu prima inventrice. E di qui nasce che chi s'innamora volentieri s'innamorano di cose a loro simiglianti” (C. Pedretti, *Leonardo da Vinci on Painting: a Lost Book (Libro A)* (London, 1965), 35; M. Kemp, “Ogni dipintore dipinge se’: A Neoplatonic echo in Leonardo’s art theory?” in *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance. Essays in Honour of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. C. H. Clough (Manchester and New York, 1976), 311-312).

of the Renaissance and were useful tools in the completion of commissions for their learned and powerful patrons, whose appearances were likewise dictated by their temperaments.

### The Melancholy Medici

When Giorgio Vasari dedicated his first edition of the *Vite* to Cosimo de' Medici he was motivated by a desire for patronage, both for himself and the arts as a whole. He appealed to his patron's scholarly inclinations which had been shared by successive generations of the Medici family.<sup>715</sup> Indeed, the scholarly nature of the Medici court is expressed in the portraits of the period. In countless works by Agnolo Bronzino the device of an open book is added to illustrate his sitter's academic prowess. In his portrait of *Ugolino Martelli*, painted between 1535 and 1536, the young scholar is seen holding a book by Pietro Bembo in his left hand while he points to the text of Homer's *Iliad* with his right hand. An edition of Virgil also lies on the table.<sup>716</sup> Moreover, in Bronzino's painting of *Laura Battiferri*, ca. 1560, located in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, the poetess points

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<sup>715</sup> Cosimo Pater Patriae had sponsored the careers of such humanists as Poliziano, Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. See the introduction to chapter 3.

<sup>716</sup> Ugolino had been a student at the University of Padua and had helped to found the Accademia degli Infiammati. In 1544 he was elected Consul of the Florentine Academy. The portrait of *Ugolino Martelli* is located in Berlin at the Staatliche Museum. See C. McCorquodale, *Bronzino* (London, 1981), 52; and Cropper, 155. Other Bronzino portraits which use the device of a book are *Boy with a Book*, ca. 1532-33 (Milan, Castello Sforzesco, Trivulzio Collection); *Lucrezia Panciatichi*, ca. 1540 (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi); *Boy with a Hat*, ca. 1540s (Berlin, Staatliche Museum); *Portrait of a Girl with a Book*, ca. 1545 (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi); *Portrait of a Young Man*, ca. 1550-1552 (London, National Gallery); *Francesco de' Medici as a Boy*, 1551 (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi); and *Portrait of a Lady*, ca. 1555 (Turin, Galleria Sabauda).

to the text of the *Sonnets of Petrarch* which she is reading.<sup>717</sup> Vasari hoped that Cosimo I would patronise not only the humanists but also the painters, sculptors and architects of Florence and elevate their crafts to the positions held by poetry and philosophy.<sup>718</sup> In the *Vite*, he made constant reference to the melancholy humour of his subjects, equating the artist's temperament to that of Aristotle's philosopher, politician and poet.<sup>719</sup> However, the *Vite* also served as a text book for the practitioners of painting and sculpture. Vasari provided case studies of disease and temperament which could be a useful tool in the physiognomic portrayal of subjects in portraiture.

Politics and courtly principles dictated the appearance of the individual in mid-sixteenth century Florentine portraiture, and both were dominant factors in the melancholy physiognomy of the sitter. The former was noted by Klára Garas in *Italian Renaissance Portraits*. She believed that the political struggles of the period were reflected in the portraits of the time.<sup>720</sup> Indeed, when Cosimo I became *capo* of the Florentine Republic in 1537, he inherited a city full of political uncertainty, both for his own family and for the Florentine people as a

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<sup>717</sup> Laura Battiferri was born in Urbino but married the Florentine sculptor Bartolomeo Ammanati in 1550. She was extremely close to Eleanora of Toledo and dedicated her first book of poems to her in 1560. She was also the author of a madrigal, *Superb and Sacred Hills*. Ibid., 139-140.

<sup>718</sup> Cosimo eventually did do this through the creation of the Accademia del Disegno. Moreover, Cosimo was portrayed in a tondo in the Room of Cosimo I, the Palazzo Vecchio, surrounded by his architects, engineers and sculptors. See K. W. Forster, "Metaphors of Rule: Political Ideology and History in the Portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 15 (1971): 96-97.

<sup>719</sup> Aristotle *Problems* 30.1. See also page 77.

<sup>720</sup> K. Garas, *Italian Renaissance Portraits* (Budapest, 1965), 19-20. This argument has also been presented in A. Comb, *Agnolo Bronzino, His Life and Works* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), 7-9; M. Levey, *Bronzino* (Paulton, 1967), 6; L. Bellosi, "Il ritratto fiorentino del cinquecento," in *Il primato del disegno*, exh.cat. (Florence, 1980), 39; and Cropper, 149.

whole. His family had been expelled from the city in 1494 and 1530. The Dukes of Nemours and Urbino had both died in their youth and Alessandro de' Medici had just been assassinated. During the past fifty years the Florentine people had endured the invasion of Charles VIII of France and the religious fanaticism of Girolamo Savonarola. Moreover, they had suffered under the tyrannical government of Cosimo's immediate predecessor Alessandro de' Medici who had returned as *capo* of the Republic in 1531.<sup>721</sup> The arrival of yet another young Medici pretender, Cosimo de' Medici, who was only eighteen years of age, was therefore greeted with trepidation.

This uncertainty was expressed in the portraits of the Medici family, their supporters and the *litterati* that were drawn to their court, and can be seen in Bronzino's portrait of *Maria Salviati*, dated ca. 1540. As the mother of Cosimo I it may be expected that she would have been jubilant at his becoming head of the Medici family and the Republic of Florence. Her portrait shows a woman of restraint, however. She is unsmiling and in her eyes the viewer can almost see the worried workings of her mind. As a deeply religious woman she holds a Bible, but this also suggests that she was praying for her son's survival. Her dark coloured dress, befitting for a widow, adds to the feeling of sadness. Her melancholy humours are awakened and the viewer is presented with the very image of melancholia itself.

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<sup>721</sup> See the introduction to chapter 1 for further details regarding the Medici family's political fortunes; and McCorquodale, 28.

Perhaps of more pressing importance was the influence of Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano*, which was published in 1523. This outlined court etiquette and was influential to sixteenth-century portraiture and in particular the portraits of the Medici family and their followers. These paintings were almost all the work of Agnolo Bronzino who dominated the field of Florentine portraiture between the 1530s and 1560s, and was well acquainted with the diseases associated with the melancholy humour having been a pupil and friend of the artist Jacopo Pontormo.<sup>722</sup> Furthermore, he was trained in the etiquette of court life having worked at the court of Duke Francesco Maria and Duchess Eleanora della Rovere of Urbino in Pesaro, where Baldassare Castiglione was also in attendance.<sup>723</sup> Castiglione recommended the quality of *riposo*, or inner calm, as essential to gentlemanly character, and this combined with *sprezzatura*, the term the author used to describe the countenance of satisfied self-confidence which the courtier should adopt, was clearly expressed in the paintings of Bronzino.<sup>724</sup>

However, these principles of courtly behaviour also had the effect of giving a dolorous air to the physiognomy of the sitter. Vasari stated that the melancholic displayed a cold and woeful countenance and certainly Bronzino's paintings are cool and elegant, the faces of the men and women expressing a detachment from

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<sup>722</sup> For Bronzino's dominance in the field of portraiture see C. H. Smyth, *Bronzino as Draughtsman: An Introduction* (New York, 1971), 20; and McCorquodale, 41; Vasari noted Pontormo's melancholy. See *Le vite*, 6: 247.

<sup>723</sup> Smyth, 80.

<sup>724</sup> McCorquodale, 29; and Hartt, 552 and 446.

the viewer.<sup>725</sup> While the figures stare boldly out at the spectator, the eyes make no attempt at communication. This can be seen in Bronzino's portrait of *Lodovico Capponi*, painted between 1550 and 1555. The young courtier's face is expressionless as he stares out at the spectator, indicating his inner calm and self-confidence. His inner thoughts are instead represented in the device of a cameo which he holds in his right hand and which almost certainly contains a miniature portrait of Maddalena Vettori. It is inscribed with the word *sorte*, or fate, alluding to his uncertainty about the future. Lodovico was secretly engaged to Maddalena, whom Cosimo I had intended for one of his cousins. He finally relented and allowed the couple to marry.<sup>726</sup> Vasari had explained how melancholy artists were prone to the excesses of love in the *vite* of Filippo Lippi, Giorgione, Mariotto Albertinelli, Raphael, Puligo and Girolamo da Carpi.<sup>727</sup> Moreover, the grief at the unfulfillment of that love may account for Lodovico's melancholy physiognomy.<sup>728</sup> Thus, in the portraits of the Medici and their court the viewer is presented with the courtier whose image is dictated by etiquette, but also displays the physiognomy of the melancholic.

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<sup>725</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 123. See also pages 122-123, footnote 422.

<sup>726</sup> The painting is now located at the Frick Collection, New York. See McCorquodale, 137-139; and E. Munhall, *The Frick Collection/ A Tour* (London, 1999), 79.

<sup>727</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 2: 616-617; 4: 99; 4: 222; 4: 366, 381; 4: 467; and 6: 472. Aristotle had stated that the melancholic were prone to sexual desires in *Problems* 4. 30. See also Hippocrates *Regimen* 2. 58. This facet of the melancholic's behaviour was discussed at length in chapter 2, in the section entitled, "The 'Non-Natural' of Care of the Passions of the Mind."

<sup>728</sup> Marsilio Ficino stated that sadness was a cause of melancholy. See Ficino, 3. 2. See chapter 2, "The 'Non-Natural' of Care of the Passions of the Mind," for a further discussion of the effects of grief upon the artists of Vasari's *Vite*.

It may be suggested that Castiglione's definition of courtly behaviour was dictated by the association of the melancholy humour with the courtier. Precedent had been set in antiquity when Aristotle had determined that the philosopher, politician and poet were susceptible to this bilious humour. Moreover, Marsilio Ficino had dedicated his treatise *De vita triplici*, regarding the melancholic's cure, to Lorenzo il Magnifico, which would indicate that this humour was a common ailment at court. In the portraits of the Medici, the *sprezzatura* and *riposo* of the sitter were reflective of his or her melancholic temperament which in turn was exacerbated by the political uncertainty of the mid-sixteenth century.

The expressionless stare in Bronzino's portrait of *Lodovico Capponi* also produced an impenetrable barrier between the sitter and the viewer, giving the feeling of isolation to the figure. Vasari had commented upon the solitary nature of the melancholic in the biographies of Giotto, Lorenzo Vecchietto, Giovanni Antonio Sogliani, Jacopo Pontormo and Daniello da Volterra, and this was visually represented in Bronzino's portraits of the Medici family and their supporters.<sup>729</sup> However, it was not only manifest in the lack of facial expression, but also in the very composition of the figure within the background.

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<sup>729</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 627; 3: 78-79; 5: 123; 6: 247; and 7: 70.

The harmony found in High Renaissance portraiture, between the background and the sitter was replaced by discord. In Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, from 1503 and the Raphael paintings of *Maddalena Strozzi Doni* and *Angelo Doni*, both dated ca. 1505 and located in the Pitti Gallery, Florence, the unity of the figure with the landscape is seen, while in Bronzino's portrait of *Eleanora of Toledo and her son, Giovanni de' Medici* there is a clear separation between the figures and nature.<sup>730</sup> The *Mona Lisa* is bound to nature and the landscape is painted as a compliment to her. Her hair, which falls over her right shoulder blends with the rocky outcrops of mountains and the folds of the scarf over her left shoulder are continued in the line of a distant bridge. The matronly forms of Maddalena Strozzi Doni are also integrated with the landscape. The pattern of the beaded border on her transparent veil is repeated in the foliage of the slender tree and the blue border of her bodice continues the line of the hillside. The curves of the landscape compliment the rather buxom figure of the sitter. The portrait of her husband is also complimented by the background landscape. The edge of his tunic is set at a level so as to form a continuation of the line of the horizon. The total opposite is found in Bronzino's portrait. It is hardly apparent that the Duchess and her son are set in the open air and seated on a terrace. The sky is painted an unnatural blue and no attempt has been made to establish a unified composition. The same discord is to be found in Bronzino's portrait of *Bartolomeo Panciatichi*, dated ca. 1540 and located in the Galleria degli Uffizi,

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<sup>730</sup> Bronzino's portrait of *Eleanora of Toledo and her son, Giovanni de' Medici* is located in the Galleria degli Uffizi and is dated ca. 1546.

Florence, where he is set against a townscape of total unreality. Fragments of buildings in different styles and scales are arranged at peculiar angles to create a disturbing backdrop to the figure.<sup>731</sup> The overall composition is one of tension and this serves to isolate Panciatichi within his own melancholy realm.<sup>732</sup>

Moreover, a narrowly defined picture space is found in Bronzino's portraits and the figures are sharply outlined, rather than enveloped by the softening *sfumato* found in the portraits by Leonardo and Raphael which helps to unite the figure with his or her setting. As in the portrait of *Bartolomeo Panciatichi*, the figure of *Ugolino Martelli* only inhabits the foreground of the painting, his bodily form silhouetted against the background.<sup>733</sup> While the direct bright light of Bronzino's portraiture enhances the isolation of the sitter from the background, the distant gaze of the eyes also dislocates the subject from the viewer.

The isolation and tension of the figures in Bronzino's portraits was further heightened by the *contrapposto* in which he positioned the sitter's body. He seems to have first experimented with this pose during the 1530s when he completed two drawings, the first entitled *Study of a Young Man*, now in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, and the second a *Portrait*

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<sup>731</sup> McCorquodale, 53.

<sup>732</sup> Bartolomeo Panciatichi was a learned courtier who wrote and published Latin poetry and held several important state offices in Florence. He and his wife were condemned of heresy in February 1552 and forced to make public abjurations of their beliefs. See L. Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits* (New Haven and London, 1990), 116.

<sup>733</sup> McCorquodale, 52.

*Study of Jacopo Pontormo*, in the Gabinetto dei Disegni, at the Galleria degli Uffizi. In both, the figures knees turn to the left while their heads turn to the right. The same pose, only in reverse, was used in Bronzino's painting of *Ugolino Martelli* and here the effect of the *contrapposto* can be fully seen.<sup>734</sup> The angles of the body create discord between Martelli and the architectural background of Palazzo Martelli, while his turned head isolates him from the viewer.<sup>735</sup>

A further device was used by Bronzino to place the figure in a solitary position, thus emphasising his or her melancholy. The arm of a chair and the hands of the figure were used to divide the sitter from the spectator. Certainly, Leonardo and Raphael had used the arm of a chair to divide the picture plane in their portraits of the *Mona Lisa* and the *Doni portraits*, respectively, and it was generally a common device in portraits of the Renaissance. In Bronzino's portraits of *A Lady with a Dog*, dated between 1529 and 1530, located in the Stadelches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt; the *Portrait of Maria Salviati*; the *Portrait of Lucrezia Panciatici*; the *Portrait of Bia di Cosimo de' Medici*, dated 1542 and located in the Uffizi; his *Portrait of a Lady*, dated ca. 1555, located in the Galleria Sabauda, Turin; and the *Portrait of a Lady*, dated 1559 in the Galleria degli Uffizi, he uses the same device. However, in Bronzino's works the division is made more extreme by the bright light he places upon the hands which rest upon the chair arm. Even in portraits where a chair is not painted the sharp *chiaroscuro* of the

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<sup>734</sup> Ibid., 45-46.

<sup>735</sup> See Cropper, 151-155 for discussion of the background in the portrait of *Ugolino Martelli*.

sharply lit sitter's hands against a dark sleeve, dress or tunic act as a division.<sup>736</sup>

In the portraits of *Luca Martini* and *Laura Battiferri* the left hands of the figures cross their bodies to point at a map and book respectively. However, the arms also divide the sitters from the spectator and the brightly illuminated hands act as a halt to any communication.<sup>737</sup>

Thus, Bronzino's portraits of the Medici family and their circle fully expressed the physiognomy of the melancholic philosopher, politician and poet. The blank uncommunicative facial expression of the sitter corresponded to Castiglione's code of courtly decorum, but also corresponded to the countenance of the melancholic, both of which the artist was familiar with. He had worked at the court of Urbino where Castiglione had been in attendance, and was the pupil and friend of the deeply melancholic Jacopo Pontormo. Moreover, through the devices of *contrapposto* and *chiaroscuro* he was able to fully isolate the figure from the viewer, again underscoring the melancholy of the sitter.

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<sup>736</sup> For McCorquodale's comments regarding the hands in Bronzino's portraits see pages 46-47.

<sup>737</sup> Bronzino's portrait of *Luca Martini* was completed ca. 1554 and is located at the Pitti Palace, Florence. Martini holds a map showing the drainage works which he installed in the countryside around Pisa so as to make the ground fertile. See McCorquodale, 144.

## The Choleric Warrior

In Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates and Cebes debated the destiny of souls after death and concluded that they would always seek their corporeal form until finding another body. Socrates added:

And they may be supposed to find their prison in natures of the same character as they had cultivated in their former lives. . . Those who have chosen the portion of injustice and tyranny will pass into wolves, or into hawks and kites. Where else can we suppose them to go?<sup>738</sup>

Thus began the philosophy of the physiognomic relationship between the animal kingdom and the human form. Plato had noted the connection between human and animal temperaments and this notion was continued by Cicero in *De divinatione*. He stated:

Trustworthy conjectures in divining are made by experts. For instance, when Midas, the famous king of Phrygia, was a child, ants filled his mouth with grains of wheat as he slept. It was predicted that he would be a very wealthy man; and so it turned out. Again, while Plato was an infant, asleep in his cradle, bees settled on his lips and this was interpreted to mean that he would have a rare sweetness of speech. Hence in his infancy his future eloquence was foreseen. And what about your beloved and charming friend Roscius? Did he lie or did the whole of Lanuvium lie for him in telling the following incident: In his cradle days, while he was being reared in Solonium, a plain in the Lanuvian district, his nurse suddenly awoke during the night and by the light of a lamp observed the child asleep with a snake coiled about him. She was greatly frightened at the sight and gave an alarm. His father referred the occurrence to the soothsayers, who replied that the boy would attain unrivalled eminence and glory.<sup>739</sup>

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<sup>738</sup> Plato *Phaedo* 81; Evans, 21.

<sup>739</sup> "Fiunt certae divinationum coniecturae a peritis. Midas illi Phrygi, cum puer esset, dormienti formicae in os tritici grana congesserunt. Divitissimum fore praedictum est; quod evenit. At Platoni cum in cunis parvulo dormienti apes in labellis consedissent, responsum est singulari illum suavitate orationis fore. Ita futura eloquentia provisa in infante est. Quid? amores ac deliciae tuae, Roscius, num aut ipse aut pro eo Lanuvium totum mentiebatur? Qui cum esset in cunabulis educareturque in Solonio, qui est campus agri Lanuvini. noctu lumine apposito experrecta nutrix animadvertit puerum dormientem circumplicatum serpentis amplexu. Quo aspectu exterrita clamorem sustulit. Pater autem Rosci ad haruspices rettulit, qui responderunt nihil illo puero clarius, nihil nobilius fore" (Cicero *De Divinatione* 1. 36, 78-79).

It was Aristotle, however, who was to form a scientific approach to the concept in his tract entitled *Physiognomonica*. In establishing the various methods employed in the analysis of physiognomic type, he noted:

The first method took as the basis for physiognomic inferences the various genera of animals, positing for each genus a peculiar animal form, and a peculiar mental character appropriated to such a body, and then assuming that if a man resembles such and such a genus in body he will resemble it also in soul.<sup>740</sup>

He continued by outlining various human temperaments and their similarity to animal counterparts. In his juxtapositioning of the human type with that of the lion he concluded:

the lion manifestly exhibits the male type in its most perfect form. He has a good-sized mouth: his visage is square and not too bony, the upper jaw level with the lower and not protruding: his nose you would call, if anything, rather thick: his gleaming eyes are deep-set, and neither absolutely round nor unduly long, and of moderate size: his brow is of the right size, his forehead square and slightly hollowed from the centre, and over its lower part towards the eyebrows and nose, there hangs a sort of cloud, and from the top of the forehead down to his nose there runs a ridge of hairs sloping outwards: his head is of a moderate size: his neck of due length and broad in proportion.<sup>741</sup>

Moreover, he assigned the quality of courage to the lion, although he was also “generous and liberal, proud and ambitious, yet gentle and just and affectionate to his comrades.”<sup>742</sup> Therefore, it is of little surprise that the physiognomy of the courageous lion became associated with the imagery of the warrior.

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<sup>740</sup> Aristotle *Physiognomics* 1.

<sup>741</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>742</sup> *Ibid.*, 1; 5.

It was during the late fifteenth century that the four temperaments and elements became analogous with the four typical animal types. Such texts as the *Shepherds' Calendars*, published during the last decade of the century, associated the melancholic temperament, which corresponded to the element of earth, with the pig; the sanguine and air were related to the ape; and the phlegmatic temperament, corresponding to water, was associated with the lamb. Significantly, the lion represented the choleric temperament and the element of fire.<sup>743</sup>

It was this rich heritage of imagery that Vasari drew upon in writing the *vita* of Torrigiano. In his one artistic example of the truly choleric temperament, Vasari provided a profound analysis of type through vocabulary and the deeds of the sculptor.<sup>744</sup> Indeed, Vasari describes Torrigiano as a powerful person, who was proud and fearless but also overbearing and choleric.<sup>745</sup> Moreover, in the opening paragraph of the *vita* he noted:

Great is the power of anger in the soul of one who is seeking, with arrogance and pride, to gain a reputation for excellence in some profession, when he sees rising in the same art, at a time when he does not expect it, some unknown man of beautiful genius, who not only equals him, but in time surpasses him by a great measure. Of such persons, in truth, if may be said that there is no iron that they would not gnaw in their rage.<sup>746</sup>

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<sup>743</sup> L. M. Slepztzoff, *Men or Supermen? The Italian Portrait in the Fifteenth Century* (Jerusalem, 1978), 21.

<sup>744</sup> Salviati was also described as being on occasion choleric, but his predominant humour and temperament was that of the melancholic; see Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 25.

<sup>745</sup> *Ibid.*, 4: 259.

<sup>746</sup> "Grandissima possanza ha lo sdegno in uno che cerca con alterigia e con superbia in una professione essere stimato eccellente, e che in tempo che egli non se lo aspetta, vegga levarsi di nuovo qualche bello ingegno nella medesima arte, il quale non pure lo paragoni, ma col tempo di

In the description of Torrigiano's leonine rage Vasari had set the stage for the discussion of the sculptor's actions and works. It cannot be doubted that the "unknown man of beautiful genius" was Michelangelo and the warrior instincts of Torrigiano caused him to break his rival's nose. However, his physical actions extended beyond this incident to include his actual involvement in war. After travelling to Rome to avoid prosecution in Florence for his assault upon Michelangelo, Torrigiano entered the service of Duke Valentino and fought during the Duke's campaigns against Romagna. Similarly, he was to fight under Paolo Vitelli in the war with Pisa and was with Piero de' Medici at the battle of Garigliano. It was at the latter that he won the name of valiant standard-bearer.<sup>747</sup> Finally, in Vasari's analysis of the choleric temperament he informs the reader that Torrigiano had provided a *St. Jerome and the Lion* for the monastery of St. Jerome, Seville.<sup>748</sup>

Therefore, Vasari's examination was complete and for the artist and his Medici patron the symbolism of the lion, the choleric and the warrior would have been obvious references. They had often been incorporated into the sculptural and pictorial representation of leaders and soldiers, as Vasari himself noted. Giotto depicted the Duke of Athens in a fresco at the Palazzo del Podestà, Florence.

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gran lunga lo avanzi. Questi tali certamente non è ferro che per rabbia non rodessero" (Ibid., 4: 255; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 691).

<sup>747</sup> Ibid., 4: 259-260. In the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, the sculptor described his similar choleric temperament to that of Torrigiano. He admitted to being choleric and exhibited the leonine 'fire' of rage exhibited by Torrigiano. Moreover, he was also to become a successful soldier, taking part in the Sack of Rome; see Cellini, 26-27; and 62-73.

<sup>748</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 262.

Many beasts of prey were painted around his head to signify his nature and character.<sup>749</sup> Moreover, Fuccio was to create a marble tomb for the Queen of Cyprus in the Church of San Francesco, Assisi. He sculpted her sitting on a lion, “in order to show the strength of her soul.”<sup>750</sup>

Vasari was no doubt also drawing upon the many artistic examples of the physiognomy of the lion in relation to human leadership, and particularly the Medici, to be found outwith the *Vite*. Lomazzo, the painter-aesthetician of the late Renaissance, remarked that the portrait painters of the Renaissance, had created pictures which radiated the dignity with which nature endowed the model. The painter had to emphasis human worth and the greatness of noble and outstanding individuals so as to inspire their contemporaries to virtuous and great deeds.<sup>751</sup> In a drawing by Michelangelo, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and presumed to be of Lorenzo il Magnifico, the artist depicted Lorenzo as a fearless and proud hero (fig. 8). The almond-shaped and deep sunken eyes, the furrowed brow and coarse tousled hair of Michelangelo’s image correlated exactly to Aristotle’s physiognomy of the lion.<sup>752</sup> Moreover, in a glyptic of Lorenzo, now in

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<sup>749</sup> Ibid., 1: 626.

<sup>750</sup> Ibid., 1: 296.

<sup>751</sup> Garas, 11.

<sup>752</sup> K. Langedijk, *The Portraits of the Medici* (Florence, 1981-1987), 2: 1152-1153. The identification of this drawing is somewhat circumspect. Van Regteren Altena suggested in *Storia dell’arte in onore di Antonio Morassi* (Venice, 1971), 77 that the drawing was of Lorenzo as has Langedijk. However, this has been doubted by Middeldorf in *Drawings by Michelangelo* (London, 1975), 75-77.

the Museo degli Argenti, Palazzo Pitti, Florence, his profile with long wavy hair, similar to the mane of a lion, was represented (fig. 9).<sup>753</sup>

In the imagery of Pope Leo X a correlation had been formed between name and physiognomy. On the frontcover of the illuminated manuscript entitled *Genealogia medicea*, by Pier Cattaci and dedicated to Leo, a portrait of the Pope bordered by the seven virtues fills the top half of the page. The miniature, completed between the spring of 1518 and the spring of 1519, bears an inscription from the Psalms and placed above this image reads, “INGRESSUS OPERATUS SINE MACULA ASCENDENTAM IUSTITIAM IN MONTEM DOMINI,” alluding to Leo’s peaceful return to Florence after eighteen years of exile.<sup>754</sup> Furthermore, as Langedijk points out in *The Portraits of the Medici*, the eulogy following the portrait provided a comparison between the magnanimity of Leo and *il Marzocco*, the lion emblem of Florence.<sup>755</sup>

Leo’s imagery made further reference to his leonine physiognomy in the decorative cycle by Giulio Romano, for the Sala di Costantino, in the Vatican, Rome (ca. 1523-1534). The Pope appears as the personification of Clement I and his facial features and general countenance betray the power and aggressiveness

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<sup>753</sup> Langedijk, 2: 1172.

<sup>754</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 51.

<sup>755</sup> The eulogy reads, “Dicesi che’l Leon, quando altri e in terra  
Se stesso vince, e mai la preda offende,  
Anzi, quella magnanimo difende,  
Che pietà sempre agrandi e pace e guerra. . .”(quotation from *ibid.*, 1: 52).

of his physiognomy. Moreover, in the canopy above him, depicting the signs of the zodiac, it is the lion, or Leo, which holds the dominant position.<sup>756</sup>

This juxtaposition had previously been made by Leon Battista Alberti. In Alberti's *On Painting*, he had reiterated Aristotle's findings, noting that while observation of nature was the artist's best source for the complex expression of physiognomy, man's external appearance was also definable by species.<sup>757</sup> The physical manifestation of such beliefs had been made in his profile *Self-portrait* from 1438, where his facial physiognomy related to that of a lion, thus symbolising his chosen name of Leon and his own courage and pride. The prominent facial features and coarse curly hair, aligned his image with Aristotle's leonine man.<sup>758</sup> This was certainly Alberti's intention for in the *Apologhi* of 1437 he had made continuous reference to the lion. In one such example he wrote:

When Leo heard that at one time another lion had been vouchsafed a place in the heavens: driven by the desire for glory he did all he could to make himself easily first among lions. You are crazy, that's all, said Envy, for that place which belongs to this kind of action has already been awarded long ago to one who deserved it. Leo replied: we shall be satisfied also to deserve it.<sup>759</sup>

He further added:

The famous lion that was friends with a man was walking through the streets of Rome led by him on a rope, and was asked why, seeing that he

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<sup>756</sup> Ibid., 1: 52; 2: 1441; and Meller, 65-66.

<sup>757</sup> Alberti, *On Painting*, 81 and 85.

<sup>758</sup> Aristotle's discussion of hair appears in *Physionomics* 2 and 3.

<sup>759</sup> "Cum leoni cuidam aditum in coelum patuisse Leo quidam intellexisset: cupiditate gloriae flagrans difficilima omnia ita exequabat ut leonibus omnibus facile perstaret. Et nam quidem insanis inquit invidia. Qui nam huic generi animantium locus debeatur iam pridem merenti consignatus est. Respondit Leo: Sat nobis erit quo meruisse" (L. B. Alberti, *Opera*, ed. Massainus (1499), g3v; quotation taken from R. Watkins, "L. B. Alberti's Emblem, the Winged Eye, and his Name, Leo," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 9 (1959-1960): 257).

could outdo horses on the racetrack, leap higher than the leopard, outfight the bull, and surpass man in humanness of spirit, being, moreover, second to no lion in beauty and dignity, he yet let himself be led and let the dogs bark at his heels. This, he said, was his nature, to be kind to his friends and to despise the barkers.<sup>760</sup>

Nevertheless, it was in the imagery of Cosimo I, Vasari's patron, that the personification of the leonine warrior most strongly prevailed. The symbolism was of particular relevance to the Duke as major military events which had secured his leadership of Florence had occurred during the month of August, under the sign of Leo. On 1 August, 1537 he had defeated Filippo Strozzi and the *fuorusciti*.<sup>761</sup> Moreover, symbolically, the association with the strength of the lion inferred Cosimo's own power as a leader. In Bronzino's 1545 portrait of *Cosimo I*, the Duke appears in armour with the attributes of Aristotle's leonine physiognomy. His square forehead, thick-set nose and coarse hair signify his similarity to the lion and thus, his inner courage and fortitude. But, perhaps this had been more adequately expressed in the marble portrait bust of *Cosimo I* by Baccio Bandinelli, completed between 1543 and 1544. The features of Bronzino's portrait are accompanied by Aristotle's clouded forehead. Lions' heads holding diamond rings hang from the shoulder straps, at once relating

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<sup>760</sup> "Leo illae celeberrimus amicus hominis a suo illo hospite Romae pertabernas ductus loro rogantibus quid ita ageret ut cum in arena pegaseos cursu, saltu pardos, viribus tauros, humanitatae homines exuperasset, cunque inter leones forme et dignitate esset nulli secundus, Idem tamen se loro ductari et canes latrantes post se insanire pateret respondit eiusdem esse animi et prodesse amicis et latratores despiceret" (Alberti, *Opera*, g3v-4r; quotation taken from Watkins, 257).

<sup>761</sup> K. W. Forster, "Metaphors of Rule: Political Ideology and History in the Portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 15 (1971): 85; Forster added that Cosimo had dispelled the last military threat to his control of Florence on 2 August 1554 at Scanagallo (of Marciano). However, this victory would have had no influence upon Cosimo's military personifications in painting and sculpture, as all were completed well before this date.

Cosimo's image to the lion and symbolically associating him with *il Marzocco*, the heraldic image of the Florentine Republican lion. Indeed, the association of the lion with Florence even extended to the keeping of lions behind the Palazzo Vecchio, off the Via dei Leoni. In 1331, when two cubs had been born in the city, Giovanni Villani predicted it would bring prosperity and fortune to the city.<sup>762</sup>

Benvenuto Cellini was later to use a similar device in his bronze bust of *Cosimo I*, completed between 1543 and 1548, where a lion's head hangs over the Duke's right shoulder.<sup>763</sup> Once again, the facial physiognomy of the lion was imposed upon the portrait of Cosimo but was also accompanied by a sternness of expression which is most strongly seen in the strained muscles of the neck and dominant stare of the sitter. The lions' heads are also apparent in Niccolò della Casa's engraving after Baccio Bandinelli of *Cosimo I de' Medici* where they also appear upon Cosimo's armour.<sup>764</sup>

In adopting this form, the artists were harking back to such works as Donatello's *Gattamelata*, dated ca. 1445-1453 and located in Padua, and Verrocchio's *Colleoni Monument*, dated ca. 1481-1496, in Venice. In each case the heroes depicted were already dead and thus, the sculptors presented idealised leonine forms for both.<sup>765</sup> The furrowed brow, almond-shaped eyes and coarse wavy hair

<sup>762</sup> *Cronica di Giovanni Villani*, vol. 5 (Rome, 1980), capitolo clxxxiii, 235-236; Forster, 79.

<sup>763</sup> Forster, 79.

<sup>764</sup> Smith, "Cosimo I and the Joseph Tapestries for the Palazzo Vecchio," 192. The engraving is located at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis.

<sup>765</sup> H. Kaufmann in *Donatello* (Berlin, 1935), 133, believed that Donatello had quite faithfully depicted the dead man's features, using the tomb sculpture inside the Basilica as his model. In H. W. Janson's *The Sculpture of Donatello* (Princeton, 1957), 161, the author disagreed noting that the effigy on the tomb was created by a second rate artist ten years after the creation of Donatello's

of the *Gattamelata* strongly related to Aristotle's descriptions of the leonine physiognomy. Verrocchio's equestrian monument is more closely related to his warrior 'type' seen in the relief sculpture of the two warriors from the *Beheading of St. John*, in the Opera del Duomo, Florence, and in the glazed terracotta relief of *Darius* from the Robbia workshop, but after a work by Verrocchio.<sup>766</sup> These equestrian sculptures displayed the courage and pride of the lion, however, both in facial expression and bodily posture. Donatello perhaps more closely incorporated the gentle nature of the lion, as described by Aristotle, within his bronze, while Verrocchio's monument of Bartolommeo Colleoni showed his proud and fierce temperament as he stands on his stirrups and twists his body to stare at the enemy.

Cosimo I could also draw upon his own family's leonine imagery for inspiration. In Vasari's portrait of *Alessandro de' Medici*, painted during the first half of 1534, the young duke was seen in armour with a cityscape of Florence in the background. Significantly, the legs of the chair on which he sat, ended with

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sculpture. Moreover, it is unlikely that Donatello used a death mask for the face of the *Gattamelata*, as Erasmo da Narni was very old and sick when he died. See Sleptzoff, 17-19 for a full analysis.  
<sup>766</sup> P. Meller, "Physiognomical theory in Renaissance Heroic Portraits," in *The Renaissance and Mannerism. Studies in Western Art II. Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art* (Princeton, 1963), 54. The relief sculpture of the *Beheading of St. John* is part of the altarpiece from the Baptistery, Florence, begun in 1366 and finished in the fifteenth century. Leonardo da Vinci, an apprentice to Verrocchio, produced a drawing of the *Darius* relief and this is now in the British Museum, London. According to Vasari the original work was presented along with a companion piece to Lorenzo il Magnifico by Matthias Corvinas of Hungary; see Vasari, *Le vite*, 3: 361. See also M. Kwakkelstein, *Leonardo da Vinci as a physiognomist: theory and drawing practice* (Leiden, 1994), 15. Moreover, in the drawing *Head of a Man and of a Lion*, from the Royal Library, Windsor and dated ca. 1503 to 1505, Leonardo depicted a warrior, choleric in temperament, with a lion representing his physiognomy; see Royal Library, Windsor Castle, *Windsor leoni volume 12505*; and South Bank Centre, *Leonardo da Vinci*, exh. cat. (London, 1989), 90.

lion's paws, once again referring to *il Marzocco* of Florence. Vasari's source was probably Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica* which had been published in Venice during 1505. The book had already been of influence to Albrecht Dürer who had utilised the imagery within his set of woodcuts entitled *The Triumphal Arch of the Emperor Maximilian*. In one such image from the prints the Emperor was seen in a similar profile pose to that of Vasari's *Alessandro*, and moreover, was seated upon a lion.<sup>767</sup>

The juxtaposition of name and leonine physiognomy had also appeared in several other examples of Renaissance art. Indeed, in Antonio Pisanello's *Portrait of Leonello d'Este* (ca. 1441), the hair of the sitter conformed to that of a lion's mane.<sup>768</sup> Pisanello had also undertaken physiognomic studies of a lion's head, as seen in a sheet of drawings held by the Boymans Museum, Rotterdam.

Thus, the leonine description of the *vita* of Torrigiano, which had been so accurately described by Vasari, correlated also with that of his Medici patrons and was a useful guide for the artist as a means to achieve success in the visual representation of soldiers and leaders.

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<sup>767</sup> Langedijk, 1: 72-73.

<sup>768</sup> J. Woods-Marsden, "Ritratto al Naturale": Questions of Realism and Idealism in Early Renaissance Portraits," *Art Journal* 46 (1987): 210.

In the portraits of the Medici family and their supporters two physiognomic types existed. For the actual head of the family and Florence a physiognomy of power was adopted and thus, the leonine choleric warrior represented the temperaments of Lorenzo il Magnifico, Leo X, Alessandro de' Medici and Cosimo I. For the Medici family and its supporters, the melancholic image of Aristotle's philosopher, politician and poet was instead adopted, thus expressing the learned nature of the Medici court. In the *Vite*, Vasari had provided physiognomic descriptions of both humours which would have been obvious to both his patron, Cosimo I, and the practitioners of the arts. He produced a means to pay homage, but also to educate.

### **Vasari's Legacy - The Accademia del Disegno and the Teaching of Physiognomy**

The descendant of Vasari's text was institutional rather than literal and it was in the teaching program at the Accademia del Disegno that the physiognomic theories which he espoused were continued. The formation of the Accademia del Disegno during the early 1560s, under the patronage of the Medici duke, Cosimo I, united the most prominent Florentine artists within a state-sponsored institutional framework. The Accademia provided both social and educational support for its members and, for the first time, an artists' organization could rival the literary Accademia Fiorentina in prestige. The membership in the first year of its foundation numbered seventy-five and included painters and sculptors from the workshops of Bronzino, Michele di Ridolfo Ghirlandaio, Pier Francesco

Foschi, Tribolo, Bandinelli and Ammannati. However, it was the overwhelming enthusiasm of Montorsoli and Vasari that was to propel the academy into existence.<sup>769</sup> Indeed, it is within the pages of the *vita* of Montorsoli that Vasari describes the circumstances surrounding the foundation of the Accademia del Disegno. Vasari relates how the Compagnia di San Luca had almost completely disbanded due to the lack of a meeting place.<sup>770</sup> He encouraged Duke Cosimo to support the foundation of the Accademia del Disegno and was, therefore, able to secure a building for their meetings and lectures.<sup>771</sup> The statutes of the academy were drawn up by its reformers who included Montorsoli, Francesco da Sangallo, Agnolo Bronzino, Michele di Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio, Pier Francesco di Jacopo di Sandro and, of course, Giorgio Vasari.<sup>772</sup>

Artists had met in informal groups before the formation of the Accademia with the purpose of learning. These included the Medici sculpture garden, created by Bertoldo di Giovanni under the patronage of Lorenzo il Magnifico. Students came to the garden upon the recommendation of their master, and, rather than study the rudiments of painting and sculpture, consideration and observation was made of

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<sup>769</sup> C. Goldstein, "Vasari and the Florentine Accademia del Disegno," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 38 (1975): 145-152; M. A. Jack, "The *Accademia del Disegno* in late Renaissance Florence," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 7 (1976): 8-9; Pevsner, 80; C. Dempsey, "Some Observations on the Education of Artists in Florence and Bologna during the Later Sixteenth Century," *Art Bulletin* 62 (1980): 552-553; A. Hughes, "'An Academy for Doing'. I: the Accademia del Disegno, the Guilds and the Principate in Sixteenth-Century Florence," *Oxford Art Journal* 9 (1986): 3; and K. Barzman, "Liberal Academicians and the New Social Elite in Grand Ducal Florence," in *World Art*, ed. I. Lavin, vol. 2 (University Park and London, 1989), 460.

<sup>770</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 6: 656.

<sup>771</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 657.

<sup>772</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 658; all of these men, apart from Montorsoli, still held prominent positions at the academy until at least 1571; see A. S. F. *Accademia del Disegno*, no. 25, 15v.

Lorenzo's collection of antique sculptures. Therefore, while the apprentices made copies of these works, their study was of antiquity and was more theoretical in nature.<sup>773</sup>

During the sixteenth century apprentices were increasingly encouraged to seek inspiration from outside the workshop. Informal academies were set up, such as those of Baccio Bandinelli, which provided teaching but also discussion of factors relating to art. As a pupil of Giovan Francesco Rustici, who was involved with the informal convivial companies of the Cazzuola and the Paiuolo, Bandinelli was familiar with the benefits of group gatherings.<sup>774</sup> The first of Bandinelli's academies formed in Rome at the beginning of the 1530s. An engraving by Agostino Veneziano from 1531, inscribed ACADEMIA DI BACCHIO BRANDIN IN ROMA IN LUOGO DETTO BELVEDERE MDXXXI shows a group of seven artists studying by candlelight.<sup>775</sup> While three of them draw from a classical male statuette, four more seem to be discussing the female form and its depiction. Bandinelli's later academy was to meet in Florence during the early 1550s and its activities were much the same as its Roman counterpart. As seen in Enea Vico's engraving of 1550, Bandinelli's Florentine

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<sup>773</sup> Bertoldo's school is discussed by A. Hauser, *The Social History of Art* (London, 1951), 1: 304-305; Pevsner, 38-39; Jack, 6-7; A. Chastel, "Vasari et la légende médicéenne," in *Studi Vasariani* (Florence, 1952), 159-167; idem, *Art et humanisme à Florence*, 19-25; E. Gombrich, "The Early Medici as Patrons of Art," in *Norm and Form* (London, 1966), 35-57; and C. Elam, "Lorenzo de' Medici's Sculpture Garden," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 36 (1992): 41-84.

<sup>774</sup> For information regarding the convivial companies of the Paiuolo and Cazzuola see chapter 3; Bandinelli's affiliation with Gianfrancesco Rustici is discussed by K. Weil Garris Posner in *Leonardo and Central Italian Art: 1515-1550* (New York, 1974), 38.

<sup>775</sup> Wittkower, 232; Pevsner, 39; and Jack, 7.

academy was also devoted to study and learned discussion outwith the confines of the workshop and within a more relaxed atmosphere.<sup>776</sup>

The Accademia del Disegno formalised these methods of teaching within an institutional framework. Nicholas Pevsner commented that the academy was created out of a “belief in certain teachable dogmas and certain canons discovered by a few divine artists of the past.”<sup>777</sup> The recommendations presented in the writings of Alberti, Leonardo and Vasari were undoubtedly followed by the curriculum of the academy, and instruction was given in such subjects as geometry, astronomy, life drawing, drapery studies, anatomy and natural philosophy. Physiognomy was the branch of natural philosophy most pertinent to the education of painters and sculptors and would have formed part of the teaching at the academy.<sup>778</sup> Unlike the universities, lectures were given in the vernacular, making access to learning available to all who attended.<sup>779</sup>

The teaching of natural philosophy and physiognomy, however, does not appear to have entered the curriculum of the academy until the last quarter of the sixteenth century. No mention was made of its teaching in the incorporating statutes of the Accademia or the addenda of 1563. Neither was it mentioned in the reformed statutes of 1584 which, as Karen-edis Barzman has noted, is not

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<sup>776</sup> Pevsner, 42.

<sup>777</sup> Ibid., 55; C. Goldstein, *Teaching Art: Academies and Schools from Vasari to Albers* (Cambridge, 1996), 16; idem, “Vasari and the Florentine Accademia del Disegno,” 146.

<sup>778</sup> K. Barzman, “The Florentine Accademia del Disegno: Liberal Education and the Renaissance Artist,” in *Academies of Art: Between Renaissance and Romanticism*, ed. A. Boschloo (S-Gravenhage, 1989), 23.

<sup>779</sup> Idem, “Liberal Academicians and the New Social Elite in Grand Ducal Florence,” 2: 459.

surprising considering the purely administrative nature of the document.<sup>780</sup>

However, in Francesco Bocchi's treatise entitled *Eccellenza della statua del San Giorgio di Donatello*, written in 1571, but not published until 1584, the subject of physiognomics entered the author's analysis of Donatello's sculpture. It was obviously intended for the attention of the academicians as a letter to the Accademia del Disegno prefaces the work.<sup>781</sup> Bocchi stated that three properties produced perfection in art: *costume* (the Renaissance equivalent of expression), vivacity and beauty.<sup>782</sup> In his analysis of expression he believed it united character and emotion stating:

*Costume* is a solid purpose which, stirred by nature, is freely employed by her and, since it has its roots in our soul, is turned into a firm habit [usage], so that it constitutes the quality of a man's life; so as one says of somebody that he is well-mannered or crude.<sup>783</sup>

Bocchi continued by recognising that the inner workings of man's soul found expression in his exterior body. He noted:

The *costumi*, then, expose our soul and the thoughts which, although in themselves they cannot be expressed in any material [substance], leave traces that easily enable us, as Petrarch says, "to read the heart from the forehead."<sup>784</sup>

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<sup>780</sup> Idem, "The Florentine Accademia del Disegno," 23.

<sup>781</sup> F. Bocchi, "Eccellenza del San Giorgio di Donatello," in *Trattati d'arte del cinquecento*, ed. P. Barocchi, vol. 3 (Bari, 1962), 128; and Barasch, 413.

<sup>782</sup> Bocchi, 133; and Barasch, 414.

<sup>783</sup> "È il costume un saldo proposito che, mosso da natura, per suo libero volere adopera e, perché ha sua radice nell'anima nostra, per ferma usanza adopera, e poco appresso compone la qualità della vita nell'uomo; come ad ora ad ora si dice di alcuno, che sia costumato o scostumato" (Bocchi, 134-135; and Barasch, 419).

<sup>784</sup> "Scoprono adunque i costumi l'animo nostro et i pensieri, i quali, quantunque vero sia che in alcuna materia esprimere non si possano, si in ciò pure operano, che con agevolezza, come dice il Petrarca, "nella fronte il cuor si legge" (Bocchi, 135; and Barasch, 419).

Moreover, in Giovanni Battista Paggi's summary of the academy's curriculum, written during 1591, he alluded to the teaching of natural philosophy.<sup>785</sup> He commented that part of the teaching of natural philosophy included physiognomy. It was considered important for artists to know the various causes of the diverse temperaments. The four humours of the sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic were recognised as producing different bodily coloration, movements of the body and facial expression. The representations of anger and pallor, amongst others, were discussed. In the instruction of physiognomy, academy paintings were used to illustrate the differences and some of these most probably originated from the feast-day celebrations of the academy.<sup>786</sup>

Furthermore, the subject matter chosen for depiction at the celebrations of the Accademia del Disegno often reflected the teaching programme of the organisation. One month prior to the feast-days of Saint Luke or of the Trinity, six painters and sculptors were chosen to complete the decorations for the celebration. The academy usually paid for the materials needed to complete the works and a competition was held to select the best painting or sculpture. After the feast-day some of the works were sold so as to help support the academy's activities, some were given as gifts to the officers of the academy and others were

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<sup>785</sup> Barzman, "The Università, Compagnia, ed Accademia del Disegno," 401; idem, "The Florentine Accademia del Disegno," 15; see also Dempsey, "Some Observations on the Education of Artists in Florence and Bologna During the Later Sixteenth Century," 556.

<sup>786</sup> G. B. Paggi, "Lettere al Fratello Girolamo," in *Scritti d'arte del cinquecento*, ed. P. Barocchi, vol. 1 (Milan and Naples, 1971), 206; see also G. Bottari and S. Ticozzi, *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura ed architettura* (Milan, 1822), 6: 83-84.

kept to form part of the permanent collection of the Accademia.<sup>787</sup> In 1590, the personification of Natural Philosophy was presented at the feast-day of Saint Luke. The seven liberal arts and personifications of Honour, Virtue and Natural Philosophy were presented in honour of Giovanni de' Medici.<sup>788</sup>

Four years later, on 17 October 1594, six terracotta statues representing the elements of earth, water, fire and air, and the arts of Painting and Sculpture were presented for the feast-day of Saint Luke. Amongst the eight paintings executed, three depicted allegories concerning *Ingegno*, *Disegno* and *Natura*. Saint Anthony, representative of the element of earth, and Saint John the Baptist, symbolic of fire, were also depicted.<sup>789</sup> The selection of these saints was also based upon the patronage of the academy. Giovanni and Antonio de' Medici were cited as its patrons in October 1594.<sup>790</sup> The overall scheme depicted the connection between the arts and natural philosophy.

The lessons and lectures given at the Accademia del Disegno were developed in written form by Pietro Francavilla for the benefit of all artists. He was the pupil of

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<sup>787</sup> Jack, 14.

<sup>788</sup> A. S. F., *Accademia del Disegno* no. 27, 115r and 135r; Barzman, in "The Florentine Accademia del Disegno," 23 gave the wrong citation of A. S. F., *Accademia del Disegno* no. 27, 134.

<sup>789</sup> A. S. F., *Accademia del Disegno*, no. 27, 135v; 28r; 82v; in Barzman's article, "The Florentine Accademia del Disegno", 23 she only cites A. S. F., *Accademia del Disegno*, no. 27, 135 as her source for the same information as given in the above text. However, this folio only discusses the paintings of *Ingegno*, *Disegno*, and *Natura* as well as the two paintings of the saints. Information regarding the terracotta figures can be found at A. S. F., *Accademia del Disegno*, no. 27, 28r and A. S. F., *Accademia del Disegno*, no. 27, 82v.

<sup>790</sup> A. S. F., *Accademia del Disegno*, no. 27, 112r.

Giambologna and was a native of Cambrai.<sup>791</sup> Francavilla's primary concern, however, was with the subject of anatomy. Baldinucci reveals that in 1595 Francavilla travelled to Pisa to complete a commission of a marble statue of Ferdinand I. While there, he took lessons in the sciences and more noble liberal arts, in particular anatomy. His investigations included the creation of male and female anatomical illustrations which demonstrated the differences in anatomy. These included illustrations of the interior parts of the body and in particular investigation of the eyes, the hearing, the voice, the heart, the pulmonary and ventricular veins, the muscles, veins, arteries and nerves.<sup>792</sup> These researches into the human body were undoubtedly useful in the writing of his treatise entitled *Il microcosmo*. While the text evidently seems to have remained unpublished, Filippo Baldinucci explains that the work was comprehensive and planned to encompass not only the anatomy of the human body but also physiognomy. Human generation and temperament was also included. While Francavilla intended for the book to be published in France, examination of the content of this text helps to further reveal the interests of the academy and its academicians and the place of physiognomy within its concerns.<sup>793</sup> The disciplines of anatomy and physiognomy formed a partnership in his writings.

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<sup>791</sup> F. Baldinucci, "Pietro Francavilla," *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, ed. F. Ranalli (Florence, 1974), 3: 56; idem, "Pietro Francavilla," *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, ed. P. Barrocchi and A. Boschloo (Florence, 1975), 7: 29; Barzman, "The Università, Compagnia, ed Accademia del Disegno," 393; and M. N. Kornell, "Artists and the Study of Anatomy in Sixteenth-Century Italy," (Ph. D. diss., University of London, Warburg Institute, November 1992), 193.

<sup>792</sup> Baldinucci, "Pietro Francavilla," ed. F. Ranalli, 3: 64-65.

<sup>793</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 71; idem, "Pietro Francavilla," ed. P. Barrocchi and A. Boschloo (Florence, 1975), 7: 39; and Barzman, "The Università, Compagnia, ed Accademia del Disegno," 393-394.

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Thus, the teaching program of the Accademia, and the works dedicated to it, reflected the earlier analysis of its founder Giorgio Vasari. Benedetto Varchi had noted in one of his lectures during 1547:

It is of course true that, as the poets [sometimes] describe the exterior, so the painters show, as far as they can, the interior, that is, the emotions.<sup>794</sup>

In the pursuit of artistic perfection, the merits of physiognomic study had been recognised during the sixteenth century and the adoption of such learning by artists was visually manifested in their paintings and sculptures. Although Alberti's remarks were brief, they paved the way for deeper investigation into the representation of inner emotion and disease. It was the work of later literary and artistic scholars, such Giorgio Vasari, that furthered the progress of the understanding and use of physiognomy in figurative depiction. The painting of portraits, religious and historical works or the creation of sculptures all required its inclusion and the overall success of the painting or sculpture depended upon it. Vasari's text had combined biography with physiognomic ideals and thus, allowed for the teaching of physiognomy at the Accademia del Disegno. He stressed that in writing the biographies he sought to illustrate the various temperaments and activities of the artists.<sup>795</sup> These temperaments were dominated

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<sup>794</sup> "Bene è vero che, come i poeti descrivono ancora il di fuori, così i pittori mostrano quanto più possono il di dentro, cioè gli affetti" (B. Varchi, "Lezione nella quale si disputa della maggioranza delle arte e qual sia più nobile, la scultura o la pittura," in *Trattati d'arte del cinquecento*, ed. P. Barocchi, vol. 1 (Bari, 1960), 55; and Barasch, 417).

<sup>795</sup> Paolo Giovio, the source of much of Vasari's medical knowledge, had utilised information regarding the temperaments in the writing of the *Elogii*, particularly in commenting on the causes

by the melancholy humour, and in the case of Torrigiano, the choleric. In the verbal portraits of his biographies he paid homage to his patron for in the portraits of the Medici family and their supporters specific reference was made to these humours. Moreover, physiognomy was an important facet of an artist's education, and its importance was most acutely expressed by its inclusion in the *Vite* and in the teaching programme of the Accademia del Disegno.

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of diseases and the deaths of his subjects. Indeed for Giovio internal disease formed an important part of the portrait of a person because physical appearance was affected by the constitution of the patient. Vasari's mode of description can easily be understood when examined in the context of Giovio's influence and can perhaps explain the physiognomic literary portraits provided in the *Vite*. See Zimmerman, *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy*, 19.

## CONCLUSION

The skills of the painter and the sculptor were traditionally classified amongst the mechanical rather than the liberal arts, and, consequently, both were outwith the sphere of the learned. While artist/writers such as Cennini and Alberti had called for the higher recognition of painters, it was not until the sixteenth century and the writing of Giorgio Vasari's *Vite* that true worth was given to these professions.<sup>796</sup> Biographies of artists had been written before the *Vite*, but it was Vasari who was to claim that "the arts were born anew" during the sixteenth century in Tuscany.<sup>797</sup>

The text reinforced the artists' changing position as Vasari highlighted the positive and negative facets of both the practice and practitioners of the arts. The work was divided into three parts, representing the three stages through which the arts progressed before reaching perfection in the *vita* of Michelangelo. This perfection was identified as rule, order, proportion, *disegno* and style.<sup>798</sup>

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<sup>796</sup> Cennini had written, "E sappi chellavorare di tavola e propio da gentile huomo, che co'velluti in dosso puoi far cio che vuoi" (Cennini, *Il libro dell'arte*, 87); "doing a panel is really a gentleman's job, for you may do anything you want to with velvets on your back" (idem, *The Craftsman's Handbook*, 91); Alberti set forth the arguments in his treatise *On Painting*, that Roman citizens had taught painting to their sons. See page 65; and P. Burke, *Culture and Society in Renaissance Italy: 1420-1540* (London, 1972), 64. Moreover, in Rensselaer Lee's article "Ut pictura poesis: the humanistic theory of painting," *Art Bulletin* 22 (1940): 197-198, the author explained how Giovanni Lomazzo and Ludovico Dolce equated painting with the liberal art of poetry.

<sup>797</sup> "siano rinate" (1550 Dedication of *Le vite* to Cosimo I; Vasari, *Le vite*, 1: 2; idem, *The Lives*, 1: 3). See also Goldstein, *Teaching Art*, 137. Filippo Villani had included the biographies of Giotto and Cimabue in his work. Other artists biographies included Antonio Manetti's *Life of Brunelleschi*, Antonio Billi's *Libro*, written in the last years of the fifteenth century, and Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Commentario* also included biographical information. The text of the Anonimo Magliobechiano, dated ca. 1537-1542, included notes about artists.

<sup>798</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 4: 7-8; see Rubin, 236-252 for discussion of Vasari's five rules of perfection.

However, Vasari's analysis of the causes of the elevation of the arts extended beyond the discussion of these ideals to include medicine. The importance of anatomy was constantly stressed throughout the *Vite*, as Vasari noted Michelangelo's and Leonardo's devotion to its study. Nevertheless, Vasari's text also placed importance upon another facet of medicine: the theory of the four humours and its practice in the treatment of disease. Marsilio Ficino had provided a *regimen sanitatis* for melancholy orators, leaders and scholars in *De vita triplici*, and in the *Vite* Vasari had done the same, providing a regimen of health for the practitioners of the arts. The artist was, thus, equated with the scholar.

Moreover, while Ficino's text was dedicated to Lorenzo il Magnifico, Vasari chose Cosimo I as his Medici patron for the *Vite*. Medici family imagery had long been associated with the Golden Age of Saturn's rule and by name association with the planet Saturn which dominated the melancholy humour. Thus, in Vasari's discussion of melancholy, its philosophical and astrological significance and its various diseases were included. Alliance with the humour of the Medici thus elevated the position of the Renaissance artist.

The amalgamation of the various facets of Medici melancholy symbolism within the *Vite* was most adequately expressed in Vasari's description of the Company of the Cazzuola. No doubt, Vasari was referring to such literary examples of gatherings as those provided by Boccaccio in the *Decameron* (ca. 1370-1371),

Alberti in the *Dinner Pieces* (ca. 1430-1440), and Castiglione in *Il libro del cortegiano*.<sup>799</sup> While Alberti's *Dinner Pieces*, mostly composed while he was a student at the University of Bologna, formed a collection of short stories intended for dinner entertainments, Boccaccio's and Castiglione's writings reflected the true setting of the banquet as a real outlet for entertainment and performance. In his "Preface to Book One", dedicated to the Florentine doctor and mathematician Paolo Toscanelli, Alberti wrote that he had "begun to collect my *Dinner Pieces* into short books so that they may be more easily read over dinner and drinks."<sup>800</sup> Indeed, the Latin title of the work, *Intercenales*, refers to the Latin phrase *inter cenas*, literally translated as "over dinner."<sup>801</sup> For Boccaccio, the seven young ladies and three gentlemen of the *Decameron* retreated to the countryside around Florence to escape the Black Death and found story-telling a suitable pastime after they had feasted. Likewise, Castiglione found a suitable setting for his ideas regarding chivalry and courtly behaviour in the after-dinner conversations held in the private rooms of Elisabetta Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino. Castiglione commented:

To continue, let me say that it was the custom for all the gentlemen of the house to go, immediately after supper, to the rooms of the Duchess; and there, along with the pleasant recreations and enjoyments of various kinds, including constant music and dancing, sometimes intriguing questions were asked, and sometimes ingenious games played (now on the suggestion of one person and

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<sup>799</sup> In Paul Barolsky's series of books entitled *Michelangelo's Nose; Why Mona Lisa Smiles and other Tales by Vasari* (University Park, 1991); *Giotto's Father and the Family of Vasari's Lives* (University Park, 1992); and *The Faun in the Garden* (University Park, 1994), the author took a revisionist look at the writings of Vasari, examining his skills as a story-teller and reasoning behind the anecdotal information supplied. Indeed, Barolsky regards Vasari's literary accomplishments to have been obscured by the *Vite's* art historical importance.

<sup>800</sup> L. B. Alberti, *Dinner Pieces*, trans D. Marsh (Binghamton, New York, 1987), 15.

<sup>801</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

now of another) in which, using various ways of concealment, those present revealed their thoughts in allegories to this person or that. And occasionally, there would be discussions on various subjects, or there would be a sharp exchange of spontaneous witticisms; and often 'emblems', as we call them nowadays, were devised for the occasion.<sup>802</sup>

This legacy of both fictitious and practical tools to banqueting was mirrored in the *Vite*. The very work itself was described as a conception of a banquet held at the house of Cardinal Farnese, in Rome, during the mid-1540s. The leading literary figures of the period were present, amongst them Paolo Giovio who encouraged Vasari to begin the *Vite*.<sup>803</sup> However, the setting of the banquet and dinner was also referred to by Vasari, throughout the other lives of the author's artists. These dinners reflected the desire for the perception of the artist to be changed. While he was occasionally presented as the lowly craftsman who delighted in the pleasures of the tavern, more often than not the painter, sculptor and architect of Vasari's *Vite* was found in the company of men of status and learning.<sup>804</sup> Brunelleschi was invited to dine with Paolo Toscanelli, the recipient of Alberti's dedication of the first book of the *Dinner Pieces*, and a famed

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<sup>802</sup> "Ma lassando questo, dico, che consuetudine di tutti i gentiluomini della casa era ridursi subito dopo cena alla Signora Duchessa; dove tra l'atre piacevoli feste, e musiche, e danze, che continuamente si usavano, talor si proponeano belle questioni, talor si faceano alcuni giuochi ingegnosi ad arbitrio or d'uno, or d'un'altro; nei quali sotto varii velami spesso scoprivano i circostanti allegoricamente i pensier suoi a chi piùloro piaceva. Qualche volta nasceano altre disputazioni di diverse materie, ovvero si mordea con pronti detti: spesso si faceano imprese, come oggidì chiamiamo" (Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano*, 22; idem, *The book of the courtier*, 44).

<sup>803</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 7: 681. Paul Barolsky has pointed out in *Why Mona Lisa Smiles and other Tales by Vasari*, 112, that Vasari must have already started planning the *Lives* before this dinner as the work was published only a few years later in 1550. It would have been impossible for Vasari to have produced such a text within such a short time.

<sup>804</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, 5: 630. Perino del Vaga was described as only being able to find happiness and repose from the demands of his work in the company of friends at a tavern.

mathematician.<sup>805</sup> Sebastiano del Piombo also frequently dined with Molza, and Michelangelo not only supped with Lorenzo il Magnifico de' Medici but also lived within his household.<sup>806</sup> However, at the Company of the Cazzuola, artists and courtiers, and occasionally the Medici themselves, gathered in entertainment, and more importantly, to cure their melancholy ailments. Once again, the status of the craftsman was raised as he socialised with his potential patrons.

The verbal descriptions of the artists of Vasari's *Vite* also corresponded to the physiognomy of Medici portraiture. The melancholic biographies corresponded to the portraits of the Medici family and their followers, and the *vita* of Torrigiano paid homage to the choleric imagery of Cosimo I as warrior. The inclusion of physiognomy in the *Vite* also had a practical application. It was a tool in the education of the artist. Its importance to the artist can be further underlined in that physiognomy was to enter the teaching programme of the Accademia del Disegno.

Thus, Giorgio Vasari's *Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori* can be read as an exercise in patronage and status. Through the medical symbolism of the Medici family, with its astrological and philosophical significance, Vasari was able to pay homage to his patron, Cosimo I, and increase the status of the artists and their professions of painting, sculpture and architecture.

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<sup>805</sup> Ibid., 2: 333.

<sup>806</sup> Ibid., 5: 583 and 7: 143.

## ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1. Image of *Riforma*, from Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, ca. 1593. Reprinted from C. Ripa, *Iconologia*, ed. P. Buscaroli, Turin, 1988.

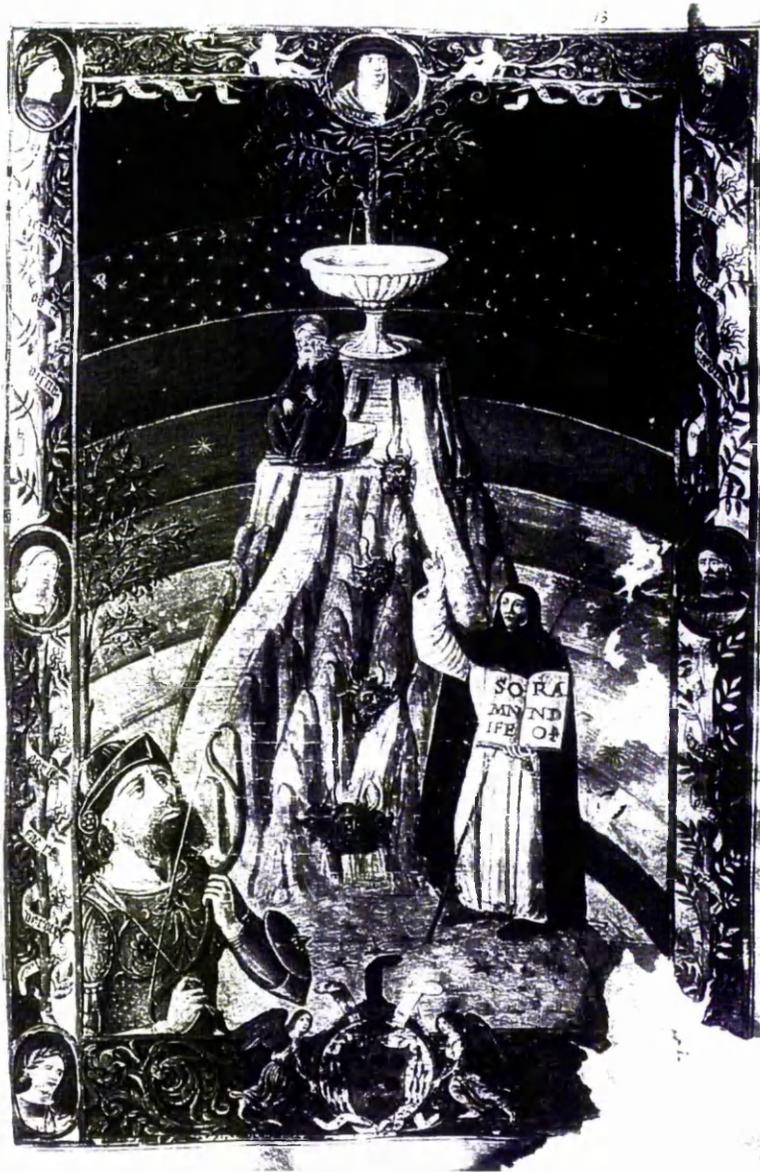


Fig. 2. Attavante, *Monte della Scienze*, from Tommaso Sardi, *L'Anima Pellegrina*, Rome, Biblioteca Corsiniana 55. K. I, ca. 1513. Reprinted from J. Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art*, Princeton, 1984.



Fig. 3. Manuscript of Leo X. Monte di Giovanni, title page to Niccolò Valori, *Vita Laurentii Medici*, Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana MS Plut. 61, 3, f. 2r, ca. 1518. Reprinted from J. Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art*, Princeton, 1984.



Fig. 4. Pierre le Flamand, *The Burghley Nef*, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1528.



Fig. 5. Pol de Limbourg, *January*, from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, Chantilly, Musée Condé, 1413-1416.



Fig. 6. Miniature of *Charles V welcomes the German Emperor Charles IV*, from the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, Paris, Musée du Louvre, 1377.



Fig. 7. Giovanni Stradano, *The girandole for the feast-day of St. John the Baptist*, Florence, Palazzo Vecchio, stairs from the Sala di Leone X to the Quartiere degli Elementi, ca. 1558. Photograph by the author.



Fig. 8. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Drawing Presumed to be of Lorenzo de' Medici*, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, cat. no. 316r, ca. 1520-1524. Reprinted from K. Langedijk, *The Portraits of the Medici*, vol. 2, Florence, 1981-1987.



Fig. 9. Anonymous, *Glyptic of Lorenzo de' Medici*, Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Museo degli Argenti, Inv. 1921, no. 331, date unknown. Reprinted from K. Langedijk, *The Portraits of the Medici*, vol. 2, Florence, 1981-1987.

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