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ARTICLE

'...con uno inbasamento et ornamento alto': the rhetoric of the pedestal c. 1430-1550.

Alison Wright

School of Arts and Social Sciences, University College London

When, in 1504, the Florentine painter Cosimo Rosselli gave his opinion on the best situation for Michelangelo's colossal *David*, he suggested it be placed by the cathedral and raised up on a high pedestal ('uno inbasamento et ornamento alto').¹ Rosselli imagined the marble statue dominating the corner of the entrance steps, just to the right of the façade. Sandro Botticelli lent his backing to Rosselli's view with the argument that the sculpture would here be best visible to passers-by. Against both these painters, a goldsmith, Andrea Riccio - almost certainly a local Florentine and not the Paduan bronze sculptor - proposed a position in the courtyard of the town hall, the Palazzo della Signoria.² Here, he claims, the sculpture would be better protected and passers-by would go to see it rather than, as he vividly puts it, 'the figure should come and see us.'³ Differences of opinion expressed in this unusually well documented debate centred above all around questions of visibility, concern for the statue's material preservation as well as the representational and ritual needs of the Florentine government.⁴ Tangentially, the debate also highlighted the crucial role of the pedestal and its physical and ritual situation in mediating the encounter with sculpture. In this context it might seem curious that Riccio should apparently worry that a high, freestanding figure placed in the open should claim too much autonomy.⁵ But his anthropomorphic argument might

¹ Gaetano Milanese ed., *Le lettere di Michelangelo Buonarroti, pubblicate sui ricordi ed i contratti artistici*, Florence, 1875, 621: 'Et aveo pensato di metterlo dalle schalee della chiesa dalla mano ritta chon uno inbasamento in sul chanto di dette schalee, con uno inbasamento et ornamento alto, et quivi le metterei, secondo me.' Rosselli also, though, favoured the idea of putting it next to the town hall.

² For the probable identity of this Riccio see James D. Draper, "Andrea vocato el Riccio Orafo", *Burlington Magazine*, 125, no. 966, Sept. 1983, 541-2. I should like to thank an anonymous reader of this article for drawing this to my attention.

³ Milanese ed., *Le Lettere*, 621 (Sandro Botticelli) 'Cosimo à detto apunto dove a me pare esser veduto da'viandanti'...(Andrea vocato el Riccio orafo) '...et quivi stare bene coperta et essere quivi più stimata et più riguardata [...] et stare meglio al coperto et e'viandanti andare a vedere, et non tal cosa andare incontro a'viandanti et che noi e'viandanti l'andiàno a vedere, et non che la figura venghi a vedere noi.'

⁴ The second government herald expressed the concern that *David* might block the Signoria's access to their Loggia on ceremonial occasions.

⁵ Saul Levine, ('The Location of Michelangelo's *David*: The Meeting of January 25, 1504', *Art Bulletin*, 56, 1974, 31-49 at 42) argued Riccio was concerned for the statue's 'apotropaic potency', which would, in an exposed position, be potentially turned against the citizens rather than against the enemy. The first part of this interpretation is easier to support than the latter.

equally imply a concern with decorum of a kind more flattering to artists, namely, that a statue which a viewer comes to see is, like an actual person, granted greater respect - 'più stimata et più riguardata' as he puts it - than one that 'comes to see' the viewer. In either case Riccio grants a striking agency to the object of the kind that the anthropologist Alfred Gell has argued can indeed be attributed to works of 'high art' status that were not explicitly intended to have ritual functions.⁶

It is rare for such concern with the implications of the placement of a sculpture to be recorded, even in a republic in which sculpture procured with public money had to answer directly to the interests of the government and the citizenry. The present article, which aims to open up some of the artistic and conceptual implications of placing freestanding statues on substantial pedestals, has to draw on a variety of less direct sources, as well as on surviving visual evidence. Contemporary documents may refer to ceremonial or other codified actions in civic and private spaces that were ornamented by works on pedestals and indirectly inform our understanding of the formal, spatial and symbolic aspects of pedestals supporting statues at different moments in their public life. Analysing the semantic structure of a sculptural ensemble while acknowledging changing contingencies of site and sponsorship, illuminates the ways in which pedestals were conceived and indicate how they could be used to inform and attempt to stabilise the meaning of the figure they sustained. In some cases, such as the pedestals for small *all'antica* bronzes, or the base of the ancient 'Idolino' statue discussed below, the production of a ceremonial or even cultic framework for the sculpture is less a matter of immediate 'context' than an active construction of the imagery of the base. Here ritual significance is conferred or invoked through an imaginative and mythologizing appeal to knowledgeable viewers. Beyond the work itself, one of the most direct ways in which such an expanded imaginative framework may be accessed is in relation to the representation of bases in graphic, relief or painted forms or in contemporary enactments for special occasions. This aspect can only be touched on within this article but has been, and will be, extended elsewhere.⁷

Within such a wide field as sculpted bases, supports for freestanding statues are already a restricted category. As Weil-Garris Brandt has stressed, pedestals of the 'classical type' that presented a *statua* - the stand-alone, predominantly male, figure - were relatively rare in the Renaissance compared to the great array of dependent statues and reliefs intended to be read against skylines, on finials, within niches or otherwise subordinate to buildings.⁸ The present study focuses in still further on bases for works in bronze, both ancient and modern. Modern bronzes, especially when designed on a life-size scale, were exceptionally costly and difficult to make and, as prize commissions for Renaissance sculptors, were arguably the most prestigious sculptural form of the period. Bronzes, which were already the most admired ancient works in the Middle Ages, were re-valued in the fifteenth century in light of changing conceptions of the forms and uses of statues in the ancient world. Unsurprisingly, it

⁶ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency, An Anthropological Theory*, Oxford, 1998, esp. 17-21 and, for examples, 52-53.

⁷ 'Fictive' pedestals, especially those represented in altarpieces, form part of my wider research project. A recent analysis illuminating the function of pedestals in a number of fresco cycles is Philine Helas and Gerhard Wolf, 'The Shadow of the Wolf: the Survival of an Ancient God in the Fresco of the Strozzi Chapel (S. Maria Novella, Florence), or Filippino Lippi's Reflection on Image, Idol and Art', in Michael W. Cole and Rebecca Zorach eds., *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World*, Farnham and Burlington VT, 2009, 133-157.

⁸ Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, 'The Relation of Sculpture and Architecture in the Renaissance' in eds. Henry A. Millon and Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, *The Renaissance from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo. The Representation of Architecture*, London and Milan, 1994, 75-98 at 77.

is above all in centres that promoted humanistic study that the most ambitious examples were produced or displayed. This is surely a major reason why plinths for bronzes, not least those of equestrian monuments, were, from the early Quattrocento onwards, the objects of special investment of time and money, and of artistic and literary invention.

My initial observations relate broadly to pedestals of the period from the early Quattrocento to the mid Cinquecento in general; thereafter I address five principal case studies, chronologically ordered, that show how such issues may be applied specifically to bronze sculptures embedded in varying cultural contexts with their own more or less complex histories. While for reasons of economy I omit the category of the equestrian monument, I include one example of a liturgical work, the monumental Paschal candelabrum for the Santo in Padua. With this I wish to demonstrate how a work whose function was ostensibly quite distinct from the 'Standbild' was similarly informed by a rhetorical and civic framework that valued physical and intellectual elevation, elaboration and beauty, as a sign of honour. In this instance the eloquence of the pedestal was cultivated to present the paschal candle as a substitute for a sacred body, a productive slippage that alerts us to some of the wider implications of the plinth function in this period.

Despite the aesthetic and historical importance of pedestals, art historical studies devoted to them remain rather rare.⁹ This is partly a result of such works' vulnerability to removal and loss, or alienation from their original figural partners. But the problem runs deeper and relates, ultimately, to their subordinate function. Intended to draw attention to the work they support, they are destined both structurally and aesthetically to be overlooked. More recently, the photograph as an art historical tool has served pedestals, even more than picture frames, especially badly. The simplest way to bring a sculpted figure into an aesthetic (and legible) proximity to a reader is to crop the image and excise the base. The problem is further exacerbated in traditional monographic studies by issues concerning 'originality'. Pedestals are easily sidelined through being defined as later additions and/or the work of a different sculptor. Such a distinction can produce an anachronistic and unhelpful division between sculpted figures and their historical supports as well as underplaying the implications of changing modes of display. Pedestals after all can usefully be considered as tributes to the works they sustain as well as a means of securing certain responses to them. This tribute may be directly in the hands of the sculptor of the statue, more often it is not, and thus the base constitutes a key ingredient in the reception history of the statue.

In terms of the history of sculpture, the tracking of the typology of Renaissance bases and their development remains a pressing task, one recently broached within a broader historical

⁹ For the Renaissance see Wilhelm von Bode, 'Die Ausbildung des Sockels bei den Büsten der italienischen Renaissance', *Amtliche Berichte aus dem preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 40, 1918-9, 110-120; *ibid.* 'Rahmen und Sockel zur Zeit der Renaissance', *Kunst und Künstler*, 17, 1918-9, at 385-381; Herbert Keutner, 'Über die Entstehung und die Formen des Standbildes im Cinquecento' *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, ser. 3, 1956, 136-68; Inga Gesche, *Neuaufstellungen antiker Statuen und ihr Einfluß auf die römische Renaissance-Architektur*, (Ph.D. diss. Frankfurt 1968), Mannheim, 1971; Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, 'On Pedestals: Michelangelo's *David*, Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus* and the Sculpture of the Piazza della Signoria', *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 20, 1983, 378-415. More recently see Alexandra Gerstein, ed, *Display and Displacement: Sculpture and the Pedestal from Renaissance to Post-Modern*, London, 2007, beginning from a slightly later period than that principally addressed here and the essays by Nicholas Penny ('The Evolution of the Plinth, Pedestal and Socle') and Ian Wardropper, ('"Pied Destal ou Soubassement": Displaying Sculpture in Renaissance France') in Nicholas Penny and Eicke.D. Schmidt, eds., *Collecting Sculpture in Early Modern Europe*, Studies in the History of Art, 47, (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.), New Haven and London, 2008, 461-81 and 145-157 respectively.

overview by Nicholas Penny.¹⁰ Some art historians have examined the relation of the pedestal to the sustained figure, or to other site-specific factors in discussing particular works of the Renaissance. The productiveness and significance of such research is best illustrated by Francesco Caglioti's meticulous and illuminating reconstructions of the magnificent bases of Donatello's *David* and *Judith* together with their lost inscriptions (figs. 18 and 21).¹¹ Beyond the monographic, an approach that similarly takes into account artistic practice, but is not restricted to it, permits the relationship of sculpted bases to exigencies of site, as well as political and cultural investment, to emerge with greater clarity. One of the chief studies to do this is Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt's 'On Pedestals' devoted to the innovative sixteenth-century installation of statues in the Piazza della Signoria in Florence, the greatest public forum for the display of modern freestanding sculpture in Renaissance Italy.¹²

The current study, while much indebted to these researches, is directed rather towards a broader understanding of the act of placing statues on plinths in early modern Italy, and in Florence especially. The inspiration for this research is ultimately drawn not from art history but from the work of a social historian, Richard Trexler, whose *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* used the tools of anthropology to describe and interpret the actions of Quattrocento citizens.¹³ Emphasising Florentines' changing ceremonial and ritual gestures and the central importance ascribed to sustaining personal and collective honour, Trexler was able to expose the performatory and ritualised aspects of the city's major sites in a way that transformed the understanding of their social and political significance. Seen within this ritual framework, pedestals - whatever else they may do - quintessentially express the desire to do honour, and 'produce' honour, within public, sacred and, less frequently, private space. Controversially, Trexler saw this desire as born from anxiety as to the city's legitimacy rather than from any self-confidence - a self-confidence that such structures frequently sought to project. For scholars concerned with the visual self-presentation of the city, such as Volker Breidecker and Marvin Trachtenberg, Florence has also lent itself to sustained analysis because of the ideologically driven eloquence of its urban fabric, and particularly its public monuments, over centuries of political upheaval.¹⁴ Similarly, my own study emphasises the rhetorical work of the pedestal, addressing how these supporting structures could articulate the interests of the different individuals and social groups who commissioned them, designed them and subsequently moved them about. The range of attitudes of those who looked at them, sometimes against the grain, is self-evidently more difficult to access in a milieu where public discourse, controlled by the cultural and political elite, was overwhelmingly encomiastic.

Terminology

Sources directly describing supports for sculpture and similar furnishings for works of art can tell us something about how their function was understood, even if they say relatively little

¹⁰ Penny, 'Evolution'.

¹¹ Francesco Caglioti, *Donatello e i Medici. Storia del David della Giuditta*, Florence 2000, 2 vol., throughout but esp. 2-11, 81-100, 101-152.

¹² Weil-Garris Brandt, 'On Pedestals' As an example in a quite different genre, see the study of a 'triumphant' reliquary base for a Cross, interpreted in a Carolingian theological and political context by Hans Belting 'Das Einhardsbogen', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 36, 1973, 93-121.

¹³ Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, Ithaca, N.Y. and London, 1991.

¹⁴ Volker Breidecker, *Florenz oder 'Die Rede, die zum Auge spricht': Kunst, Fest und Macht im Ambiente der Stadt*, Munich, 1990; Marvin Trachtenberg, *Dominion of the Eye: Urbanism, Art and Power in Early Modern Florence*, Cambridge, 1997.

about their forms. It is significant indeed that, for Quattrocento and Cinquecento viewers, a generic term existed that could encompass all such features as pedestals and frames in works of painting and sculpture: that word, used in the discussion over the installation of the *David*, was 'ornamento'. Tellingly 'ornamento' ('ornato', 'fornamento') drew together physically dissimilar types of furnishing that are separated in modern terminology, though distinctions of specific function were evidently recognised.¹⁵ The term *ornamento*, as it appears frequently in contracts with artists and other contemporary documents, refers to the auxiliary and beautifying function of the pedestal or frame; it did not, however, share the modern implication of the merely decorative.¹⁶ Ornamental furnishings, whether fixed or temporary, were taken as readily legible signs of worth and honour and therefore of considerable significance.¹⁷ An *ornamento* was not superficial, still less extraneous, to that which it ornamented, but intrinsic and even characterising. The theoretical position of ornament and framing in this light has increasingly become the subject of latterday critical analysis. Originating in Kant's later, problematically absolute, distinction of ornament as *parergon* ('outside the work') in the 1790 *Critique of Judgement* - and thus as extrinsic to complete representation - the 'supplementary' status of ornament has been variously revised.¹⁸ In relation to later Renaissance art, Rebecca Zorach has emphasised both the abundant application of and restriction on, ornament to define place within social hierarchy and as sign of control, even domination.¹⁹ While the issues for earlier Renaissance art are not identical, the link between ornament and what one might term an aesthetic of the triumphal already emerges by the 1450s. Furthermore, historical sources indicate the key value for patrons of *ornamenti*. Contracts for altarpieces, for example, show that the carved frame or framing elements (usually referred to as the *ornamento* or *ornamenti*), were subject to detailed requirements and often accounted for a large proportion of the total price of the work. Acknowledged here is the conception of the altarpiece as a complete physical entity whose mode of presentation, its framing, was as significant for its reception as the choice and placement of figures. Equally the attributes of saints to be represented within the work - that which made them recognisable as individuals - might sometimes be called their *ornamenti*.²⁰ By analogy, the pedestal is what served, and serves, to define the freestanding

¹⁵ For 'fornamento' used by Giovanni Bellini for describing a frame for one of his paintings see Jennifer Fletcher, 'I Bellini' in R. Casanelli, ed. *La Bottega dell'artista tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, Milan, 1998, esp. 139-41.

¹⁶ See for distinctions in its use and for examples, Michelle O'Malley, *The Business of Art: Contracts and the Commissioning Process in Renaissance Italy*, New Haven and London, 2005, 28-31.

¹⁷ The 1471 report of the Florentine ambassador on the quality of his room at the Ferrarese court is typical: 'si ornata e parata che ame pare non si possa fare piu a uno gran Signore' (Biblioteca Riccardiana, Moreni 242 f. 2-3).

¹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, Berlin and Libau, 1790, transl. and ed. Oxford, 1952, f. 68, 14-18. For the frame as external to the work and constitutive of it as a representation see Jacques Derrida, *La Vérité en Peinture*, Paris, 1978, 62- 78 esp. 67-73, (*The Truth in Painting*, transl. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, Chicago, 1987, 53-67, esp. 59-61)

¹⁹ Rebecca Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold: Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, Chicago and London, 2005, esp. 151-156 drawing on Kant and Derrida as well as on Oleg Grabar's positing of ornament as an intermediary (*The Mediation of Ornament*, Princeton N.J., 1992, esp. 42-46) and on Angus Fletcher's elaboration of ornament as a 'universal order' (*Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*, Ithaca, 1964).

²⁰ O'Malley, *Business*, 30.

statue as such. Seen in these terms a pedestal does not just support or furnish a sculpture *in situ*, it lends the work its proper place of signification in the cultural field.²¹

There are a number of inflections to the range of Italian words used to describe the pedestal, defined broadly as an architectonic support for a figure or object, and there is some commonality, if no absolute consistency, in their usage. The word 'pedistallo', from 'piede' (foot, from the Latin 'pede') and 'stallo' (a stall or place, from the German), was intermittently applied to bases for sculpture but was in common use for a stand-alone furnishing that acted as a support, hence we find a 'pedistallo di lib. 80' in the main audience room of the Medici palace in Pisa in 1492, valued substantially at 15 florins.²² The 'pedestal' type was also used to characterise a form of luxury plate, namely a basin or bowl with an elevated stand (eg. 'uno bacino da pedistallo, d'ottone').²³ The more common description for any type of support, regardless of size, was simply 'foot': 'piede' or 'piè', ('pede' in latin inventories).²⁴ Reliquary bases and the stands made for ancient cups, vases and other precious vessels, are often described in this way. Both represent important sub-genres of the pedestal in the Renaissance and in their different ways represent invitations to honour, and signal ownership of, precious, magical or sacred objects. 'Pedistallo' as it was most often used, as an architectural term, was, and still is, applied to the raised support which sustains a column.²⁵ The Greek word 'plinth' was also employed in architectural treatises for a low, square support beneath a column base, but the word could serve on occasion to describe a base for a statue.²⁶ By the sixteenth century, the more generic 'base': 'basamento' or 'imbasamento' deriving, again, from architectural terminology for the lowest part of a building or column support, was the term most frequently applied to the pedestal for a statue.²⁷

Other terms could be employed to characterise supports for objects of distinctive scale or function. Thus the eight metre high base for Donatello's bronze equestrian monument to Gattamelata in Padua was referred to in contemporary records of the project as a 'pilastro' or pier, a word that acknowledged its architectural substance and distinctive elongated cross-

²¹ For the cultural field see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, Oxford, 1993, esp. 131-2 (from 'Le marché des biens symboliques', first published 1971).

²² Marco Spallanzani and Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà, *Libro d'inventario dei beni di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, Florence, 1992, 224 (f. 108).

²³ Spallanzani and Bertelà, *Libro d'inventario*, 182 (f. 88).

²⁴ See for example the records of goldsmiths' workshops in Gabriella Cantini Guidotti, *Orafi in Toscana tra XV e XVIII Secolo. Storie di uomini, di cose e di parole*, I, Florence, 1994, 264-5.

²⁵ Daniele Barbaro's edition of Vitruvius' *De architectura: I dieci libri dell'architettura*, Venice, 1567, 134, refers to the 'little walls' ('muretti') beneath columns thus: 'altro non sono che i pedistali, che si doveriano dire pedistili, cioè piedi delle colonne, che sarebbe parola composta del Greco [stili] e del volgare [piedi]; ma parliamo secondo uso'.

²⁶ Francesco di Giorgio Martini, *Trattati di Architettura, Ingegneria e Arte Militare*, ed. C. Maltese, I, III, 384: '...senza il printo [*plinto*] ovvero quadro locato sotto la basa', p. 385: 'della basa o vero printo'. Francesco di Giorgio describes these plinths as cube-shaped and called 'steriobata' or stilobates in antiquity. For another 'ancient' term for the plinth see *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Venice, 1499, ed. Marco Ariani and Mino Gabriele, I, Milan, 1998, p. 33: 'El Paagma, ovvero basamento meraviglioso era di solido marmoro...'

²⁷ As in Vasari (*Le Vite dei più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed Gaetano Milanesi, vol. 2, Florence, 1906, 406), à propos of Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes*: '...Similmente il basamento che è un balaustro di granito...'

section.²⁸ From an early moment, and right into the sixteenth century, Donatello's *David* and *Judith* monuments were referred to as 'columns', a term responding to the form of their pedestals.²⁹ At the other end of the spectrum the silver base for a reliquary head of Sant'Attaviano made by Antonio del Pollaiuolo is described in a list of spoils from the cathedral sacristy at Volterra as a 'ceppo' meaning a block or stand.³⁰ The word might have enjoyed a further resonance as the support for a head since 'ceppo' was also the term used for the executioner's block.³¹ The point remains that such occasional nomenclature often depended on the available vocabulary of the writer, rather than representing an established terminology.³²

The rhetorical address of the Renaissance pedestal

In the case of the pedestal, one of the main attractions for focussing on the early to high Renaissance is the relatively brief but significant triumph of ornamental, and occasionally extremely high and prominent bases, as furnishings for the revived type of freestanding sculpture pioneered in Florence. Representations of pedestals, some more imaginative than probable, also feature significantly in paintings, manuscript illustration and prints of this period, in ways that reveal the ubiquity of ornamental richness as a cultural signifier. It is noticeable that, in designing a wide range of objects whether candelabra, 'feet' for reliquaries, fountains, holy water stoups and other forms of functional vessel, craftsmen of this period, with the encouragement of patrons, often built taller and broader. Memorable examples are the silver and gilded reliquaries of the most powerful churches of Florence, Bologna and Padua.³³ More interestingly, these designers also gave a new, or renewed, monumentality and iconographic richness to their works. Hence the aforementioned Paschal candlestick produced by Andrea Riccio for the Franciscan pilgrimage church of the Santo, Padua (fig. 11), has earned a place in more prestigious histories of bronze sculpture rather than that of liturgical metalwork.

A new elaboration of ornament, unsurprising in itself in societies increasingly dominated by aristocratic ideals, was accompanied by a greater articulacy. Choices of form and decoration were never incidental even if their message could, in some cases, amount to little more than a general association of the object, its maker and its owner with the perceived achievements of ancient civilisation. It would be difficult to construct a history of the 'freestanding' pedestal

²⁸ Andrea Gloria, *Donatello fiorentino e le sue opere mirabili nel tempio di S. Antonio di Padova*, Padua, 1895, 8; also referred to by Antonio Sartori, 'Documenti riguardanti Donatello e il suo altare di Padova', *Il Santo*, I, fasc. 1, January-April 1961, 21-83 at 32 and 35.

²⁹ Horst W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, Princeton 1957, vol. 2, 157 and Caglioti, (*Donatello*, 1, 89) also mention that it was referred to in 1453 as a 'columpna'. The term was also used on one occasion to describe the base of the Gattamelata.

³⁰ Maurizio Cavallini, Luigi Pescetti and Giuseppe Pilastrì, 'Volterra e Francesco Ferrucci', *Biblioteca della 'Rassegna Volterrana'* II, *Volterra e Francesca Ferrucci*, Volterra, 1930, 106.

³¹ *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, 2, 760, no. IV and for a 'ceppo' as the stand for a cross see no. XI.

³² Instead of 'basamento' the late sixteenth-century compiler of a description of Rome (Codex Barberini XXX, 89) uses 'posamento' (R. Lanciani, 'Il Codice barberiniano XXX, 89, contenente frammenti di una descrizione di Roma del secolo XVI, pt.2', *Archivio della Società romana di storia patria*, 6, 1883, 445-496 eg. at 446, 447).

³³ See for example Joseph Braun, *Die Reliquiare des christlichen Kultes und ihre Entwicklung*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1940, figs. 348 and 357 (Florence), fig. 358 (Bologna), figs. 376, 378-81, 569 (Padua).

in this period, not least because pedestals did not answer directly to one another in time, as statues clearly did; pedestals answer, first and foremost, to the object they sustain. What one finds in this untidy category is rather a heterogeneous series of cross-fertilisations, often taking place between objects of different function – from statue base to fountain and water stoup, from candelabrum to column, with sculptors responding, in a spirit of emulation or assimilation, to the inventions of their peers ancient and modern.

The appearance of ‘triumphal’ and ornamental bases coincides with a shift in the nature of élite culture and the exercise and representation of power. It is to this shift that the Florentine sculptor-architect Antonio Averlino, called Filarete, spoke when, in the early 1460s, he devised his architectural treatise as a fictional dialogue with his Sforza patron, the princely ruler of Milan.³⁴ The treatise proposes the planning, ornamentation and festive life of an ideal city that is designed, both discursively and artistically, to imply the knowledge, magnificence and superiority of its ruler. In its tirelessly elaborated public buildings, monuments and squares we find a consistent fascination with ingenious ornaments, abundance and height, almost without regard for antique ‘correctness’, proportion or even civic decorum. Filarete was concerned above all with architectural and sculptural features - such as columnar fountains decorating urban courtyards and piazzas - that would impress by their exalted proportions and be understood as outpourings of educated princely munificence.³⁵

A similarly telling but more specific historical instance of the prevailing taste is granted by an episode retold by the humanist Antonio Bonfini. Praising the progress through Italy of Beatrice of Aragon to her consort King Matthias Corvinus in Hungary, Bonfini makes a point of describing in detail the preciousness and costly scale of the goldsmith ware that Beatrice laid out to impress her hosts en route.³⁶ At the magnificent court of Urbino, this overtly competitive ritual involved the display of an inventive salt cellar-cum-jewel box crowned with a flowering tree and of a massive gold pitcher in the shape of a dragon with a mother of pearl body that ‘stood upon a very lofty tripod base’.³⁷ Bonfini framed his account on the one side by noting the ‘wonder’ shown even by such a connoisseur as the Duke of Urbino and, on the other, by Beatrice’s subsequent (implicitly Neapolitan) reform of the dining arrangements and life-style of the Hungarian court. The reform produced what was a nuanced, hierarchical - and widely resented - distancing of the ruler from his courtiers. Thus the loftiness of the highly crafted, costly piece of tableware becomes symbolic of the imposition of a whole new protocol, if not exactly a new social order.

The operative decorum here was not directly transferable to a republican context, yet oligarchic and territorial Florence, a republic until 1512, was increasingly subject to the control of a single family. The Quattrocento Medici belonged to a competitive, mercantile patrician class in which they stood out both for their wealth, and for the degree to which they progressively identified themselves with, and translated to their own interests, symbols and forms of behaviour borrowed from aristocratic regimes and from imperial Rome.

³⁴ Antonio Averlino detto il Filarete, *Trattato di Architettura*, eds. Anna Maria Finoli and Liliana Grassi, Milan, 1972, 2 vols, with a discussion of the dating at p. XIII.

³⁵ Filarete, *Trattato*, Book VIII (1, 235) for the fountain at the centre of the main piazza of Sforzinda (60 v., *ed. cit.*, 2, tav. 36) and Book IX (1, 262-3) for the fountain in the courtyard of a royal palace.

³⁶ Antonio Bonfini, *Rerum Ungaricum decades*, in Rózsa Feuer-Tóth, *Art and Humanism in Hungary in the Age of Matthias Corvinus*, ed. G. Jakobi, Budapest, 1990, 125-9. The relevant passage from Bonfini’s *Ten Books on Hungarian Matters* is translated in Peter Elmer, Nick Webb and Roberta Wood eds., *The Renaissance in Europe: An Anthology*, New Haven and London, 2000, 206-7.

³⁷ ‘supra editissimam basim tripedalis’ (not ‘three feet in height’ as in Elmer, Webb and Wood, *Renaissance*).

Significantly, with their commission of works to Donatello, Cosimo de' Medici and his son Piero introduced the first high, columnar, freestanding bronze sculptures into the space of their *palazzo* in a way that demonstrated their residence's semi-public status. In the same early period of ascendancy, which ended with the Pazzi Conspiracy in 1478, the streets of Florence were the stage for highly inventive allegorical triumphs ('trionfi') and other vertiginous 'edifici'. These floats, which were paraded for civic feasts enriched and transformed the ritual self-presentation of the city, as did extravagantly high 'ceri' or wax offerings dedicated by Florence's subject towns and other institutions.³⁸ In the surviving Italian republics, including what Philippe de Commines referred to as 'the most triumphal' Venice, princely and imperial models that lent nobility and legitimacy to the state and its leading families were freely adopted. Indeed it is clear that in the majority of centres, regardless of their political structure, long traditions of family rivalry and the tensions produced by social mobility were major factors in sustaining an inflationary demand for elaborate signs of public honour. Not the least of these signs was the vertical elaboration afforded by the pedestal, a form that appears centre-stage in images of triumphs (fig. 1) and occasionally even in religious art and narrative scenes of the period. Rivalry at an institutional level was another major motivating force.³⁹

The transforming power of the pedestal

Evidently the significance of the pedestal derives in great measure from its dependence on the worth of the figures, images and objects it sustained. But the relationship between support and supported is always a dialectical one in which power or legitimacy does not flow in just one direction. Renaissance pedestals were designed to have a constructive or constitutive role, elevating the image both literally and metaphorically. For it was always hoped that an honoured image or relic – in other words one given recognition by its magnificent display -- would remain or even *become* efficacious. Such was clearly the case for the carved fragment of the True Cross owned by the Florentine Baptistery: its great silver cross reliquary was ordered in 1457 on the basis that the relic was 'not ornamented as it should be and in its present state is not obvious to many and no-one knows that it is wood of the Cross.'⁴⁰

The presentational function of the pedestal has a strong temporal and performative aspect to it, not least because, like a throne or a cloth of honour, the pedestal physically produces the effect of a moment held and preserved for contemplation against time. Indeed frames and pedestals, though they may include narrative scenes, are intrinsically anti-narrative features that both contain and immobilise. In this respect, they function in a similar way to furnishings used in the elaborately staged religious and diplomatic rituals of the period. They transform protagonists - even when shown at a culminating moment of action - into exempla, actors into icons and allow new meanings to be articulated or brought forth in ways that narrative might otherwise impede or obviate. A number of painters and sculptors of the Renaissance deliberately play either with or against this stabilising aspect of the base: Andrea Mantegna did so, for example, by arresting iconic figures as though they were statues (the *St. Sebastian* in Vienna, and especially that in the Louvre, (fig. 2) are prime examples). His contemporary Donatello generally worked in the opposite direction by allowing his figures

³⁸ See for these especially, Vasari's *Life of il Cecca*, *Le vite*, ed. Milanesi, III, 203. For a sketch of c. 1500 including the stacked forms of 'edifici' in the Piazza della Signoria see John Shearman, 'Art or Politics in the Piazza?' in Alessandro Nova and Anna Schreurs eds, *Benvenuto Cellini: Kunst und Kunsttheorie im 16. Jahrhundert*, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 2003, 19-36, Abb. 2.

³⁹ As I have argued elsewhere in relation to the silver cross for the Florentine Baptistery (*The Pollaiuolo Brothers: The Arts of Florence and Rome*, New Haven and London, 2005, 35-46).

⁴⁰ Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Carte Stroziane, ser. II, 51, f.216 recto (f. 224 new style), 'non è ornato come si richiede e stando in quella maniera non è manifesto a molti e nessuno sa che sia legno della Croce...'

either to transgress or seemingly ignore its boundaries, as for example, in the lost *Dovizia*, where the nymph-like personification was captured in mid stride, as though at any moment she might walk off her column.⁴¹

At the very beginning of the Quattrocento, Filippo Brunelleschi had demonstrated the potential liturgical resonance of the pedestal at the very centre of his bronze competition relief for the first set of Baptistery doors (fig. 3). Here an altar (shown as a kind of furnace) supports the naked boy Isaac who is held, statue-like, on the brink of sacrifice. The altar-as-pedestal is further elaborated with a relief scene within the relief featuring rare, and potentially mystifying, iconography (fig. 4). It seems to show an Annunciation by Abraham to his seated wife Sarah with the 'redeemed' son rising half-length at the centre, as from the waters of Baptism.⁴² The tiny and terrible drama of the boy Isaac in Brunelleschi's relief stands at the beginning of a much more prominent history of Florentine sculptures in which 'redemptive' acts of violent death are performed on pedestals, pedestals which could thus also support connotations of an altar: Donatello's *Judith* slaying Holofernes, Baccio Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus*, Benvenuto Cellini's *Perseus* brandishing the Gorgon's head.⁴³ As Weil-Garris has pointed out, Leon Battista Alberti claimed in his treatise on architecture that in antiquity statues were set up on six-foot high altars and he frequently employed the term 'ara' or 'arula' (little altar) as an appropriate word to refer to a dado or pedestal either beneath a column or a statue.⁴⁴ It is interesting in this light that Cesare Cesariano's illustrated Vitruvius edition of 1521 employs a richly ornamented Roman funerary altar as the pedestal for a Doric column.⁴⁵

In practice, objects such as pedestals not only inflected what they supported but were themselves transformed over time. This might be intentional if, for example, they formed part of the paraphernalia of honour that surrounded actual figureheads, like the rostra supplied for ambassadorial visits, or when pedestals formed part of *tableau* for major feast days. But even when supporting permanent sculpture, the movements, removals or adaptations of pedestals are as telling of societal shifts as any 'original' function, especially when that function had been to stabilise or fix a place and a meaning (perhaps simply as work of art). It

⁴¹ David Wilkins, 'Donatello's Lost *Dovizia* for the Mercato Vecchio: Wealth and Charity as Florentine Civic Virtues', *Art Bulletin*, 65, 1983, 401-423, at 407-8 for the visual evidence for the statue's pose.

⁴² This reading differs somewhat from Creighton Gilbert's ('The Smallest Problem in Florentine Iconography', in eds. Sergio Bertelli and Gloria Ramakus, *Essays presented to Myron P. Gilmore*, I, Florence, 1978, 193-218), which draws on the stage directions of a later sacred play by Feo Belcari. Gilbert was surely correct, though, in his identification of the protagonists and of a subsequent moment in the story.

⁴³ See Weil-Garris Brandt, 'On Pedestals', 400-402 for the *Hercules and Cacus* as perhaps evoking the altar of Hercules Invictus at Rome, the site at which the Cacus myth culminates, and 409-10 for the Cellini base as altar-like. Both Weil-Garris and Cole (*Cellini and the Principles of Sculpture*, Cambridge, 2002, 68-9) have shown the significance of this association for the *Perseus* as work of art and as political sign.

⁴⁴ Weil-Garris Brandt, 'On Pedestals', 402 and note 127. See Leon Battista Alberti, *L'Architettura [De Re Aedificatoria]*, eds. Giovanni Orlandi and Paolo Portoghesi, Milan, 1966, 2, 627 for temple altars and 617 for the decoration of pediments with statues (Book VII, Chap. 11, f. 127r): '...imponentur arulae statuarum collocandarum gratia'. See also for supports for columns: Book VIII, Chap. 3, f. 141r, Chap. 6, f. 146, f. 147, f. 147v and Book IX, Chap. 4, f. 163v, and for statues: Book VIII, Chap. 6, f. 147v.

⁴⁵ Yves Pauwels, 'Cesariano et Philibert de L'Orme: le piédestal dorique' du *Premier tome de l'Architecture*, *Revue de l'art*, 91, 1991, 39-43. The pedestal is adapted from a funerary altar owned by Giovanni Ciampolini in early sixteenth-century Rome and now in the Uffizi.

is clear that, in the case of sculpted pedestals, such changes are symptomatic of attempts to manipulate or reorientate the meaning of the potent symbols they sustained. Pedestals might be deliberately removed when a statue was transferred and put to a new purpose. Donatello's bronze *David*, for example, became definitively detached from its base - and from any public significance - when it was eventually transferred to the Medici Granducal residence at Palazzo Pitti and installed as an overmantel feature.⁴⁶ The despoiled pedestal as a relic signifying the overthrow of an overweening regime is a familiar and potent image, and already used by Renaissance painters.⁴⁷

But temporary changes could also be significant. We know, for example, that the same *David*, together with its base, was co-opted into an ephemeral staging (*apparato*) while still installed in the courtyard of the Medici palace on the via Larga. At the marriage celebrations of Lorenzo de' Medici, recounted by Marco Parenti to Filippo Strozzi in 1469, the pedestal was the very centrepiece of the arrangement: 'there was no sideboard [*credenziera*] for the silverware, only tall counters covered with tablecloths in the middle of the courtyard around that beautiful column on which is the bronze *David*, and in the four corners, four brass basins for cups, and behind these [central] counters stood people administering wine and water.'⁴⁸ Here the column and its statue constituted the high, fixed, axis of a symmetrical display designed to produce a decorative unity in the ritualised space of the courtyard. At the same time the structure became rhetorically associated with Medici magnanimity as a fount around which the activities of the guests revolved. The pedestal defined a place of circulation and beneficence. When, in 1495, the Florentine government wanted to re-direct the meaning of Donatello's *Judith* sculpture, which had been removed from the Medici garden beyond that courtyard, they not only re-sited it but permanently changed the inscription on its base.⁴⁹

So potent could statuary be as a site of political and cultural debate that by the first years of the sixteenth century we even encounter the extraordinary phenomenon of the *Pasquino*, the fragmentary Roman sculpture on a simple base that was dressed up for the feast day of St. Mark, adopting each time a new mythological identity and a new voice.⁵⁰ Here the verse 'pasquinades', which were periodically attached around the group and its pedestal, made the statue the protean mouthpiece of the most varied and 'occasional' wit, satire and dissent, working strongly against the notion of triumphal permanence and commemoration.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Anna Maria Massinelli ed., *Bronzetti e anticaglie dalla Guardaroba di Cosimo I*, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, 1991, 26; Caglioti, *Donatello*, I, 356 and II, 409.

⁴⁷ In Exodus 23 v. 24 the Israelites are forbidden to bow down to the gods of other peoples and instructed to 'utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.' Vittore Carpaccio drew effectively on the imagery of overthrow when, in his Scuola canvas in the Louvre of c. 1514, he shows St. Stephen at Jerusalem preaching from an antique pedestal that is surrounded by fragments of broken marble, that point to its previous function.

⁴⁸ Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (BNCF) II, IV, 324, f. 108r-v, published in *Delle nozze di Lorenzo de' Medici con Clarice Orsini nel 1469; informazione di Piero Parenti Fiorentino*, Florence, 1870.

⁴⁹ The base of the *Judith* now reads 'Exemplum sal[utis] pub[licae] cives pos[uerunt] MCCCCXCV'.

⁵⁰ For a multi-faceted reading of the *Pasquino*'s significance see Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture*, New Haven and London, 2002, 210-231.

⁵¹ The engraving of the *Pasquino* of 1546 (see Christian Hülsen, 'Das Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae des Antonio Lafréri' in *Collectanea variae doctrinae Leoni S. Olschki*, Munich, 1921, 157n71a) shows a single, long inscription on the pedestal, but a pasquinade of 1516 (Barkan, *Unearthing*, 230) certainly suggests that the base (though 'al basso' has a double sense) was also decked with temporary inscriptions. For the development of the *pasquinades* and the various attempts

Although in the early period the sculpted base was rarely used as a site for the explicit inscription of artistic agency – the patron’s concerns took precedence – specific sculptors and painters were highly influential in developing the communicative power of the base and in posing new questions to divert or alert an attentive viewer. The pedestal was intrinsically inviting as a site of artistic *fantasia* and invention for the very reason that its design was unlikely to be subject to detailed requirements from patronal bodies. Though the sculptor might be bound by the need to accommodate inscriptions, emblems or stories required by the terms of commission, a certain freedom in devising the embellishment of the base can be presumed and, with it, the possibility for a claim to artistic licence.

Medici column monuments

With regard to the taste for ornate bases *all’antica*, as in so many other respects, works by Donatello emerge repeatedly as formative. In particular Donatello’s renowned bronze sculptures for the Medici palace and garden provide exemplary material for addressing the potential of Renaissance pedestals as mediators and interpreters.⁵² Already in the sixteenth century it is largely *à propos* of Donatello’s work and, to a lesser extent, of other Medici sculpture, that Giorgio Vasari devotes any attention at all to the character of sculpted bases in the *Vite*. It is significant that not only were these works conceived of as freestanding statues, and therefore possessing great ethical as well as aesthetic force, but cast in bronze.⁵³ It is above all ancient bronzes and their modern relatives that merited the most elevated and distinguished pedestals. Freestanding figures with supports that advertised their physical, if not visual, independence from architecture, and so elevated as to appear columnar were a novelty in the fifteenth century and, as such, the implications of this development merit special consideration in terms of the rhetoric of the pedestal.

A detailed consideration of the appearance and placement of the lost pedestal of the *David* (fig. 5, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence), ascribed by Vasari to Desiderio da Settignano is a task both too complex and reiterative to be tackled in this article. Significantly, sources recording inscriptions on the pedestal of this sculpture while in the Medici palace courtyard and of the later *Judith* bronze in the Medici garden, analysed below, refer to them as ‘columns’ and therefore implicitly as objects with a monumental, even ceremonial, connotation. As Caglioti has elaborated, it was as column monuments that these statues, and not just their pedestals, were explicitly characterised in the Quattrocento.⁵⁴

to identify the sculpture in the sixteenth century see Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500-1900*, New Haven and London, 1981, no. 72, 291-2.

⁵² Francesco Caglioti, ‘Donatello, I Medici e Gentile de’ Becchi: un po’ d’ordine intorno alla ‘Giuditta’ (e al ‘David’) di Via Larga’, *Prospettiva*, no. 75-6, 1994, 14-49; no. 78, 1995, 22-55 and no. 80, 1995, 15-58; Caglioti, *Donatello*, as at note 9.

⁵³ Marco Tonelli, ‘La più mirabil cosa’: *Teoria della statua da Donatello a Rodin*, Rome, 2006; For the *David* as anticipating Alberti’s theorisation of the *statua* see Marco Collareta, ‘Considerazioni in margine al ‘De statua’ ed alla sua fortuna’, *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Classe di Lettere e Filosofia*, ser. III, 12, 1982, 171-187.

⁵⁴ Caglioti, *Donatello*, I, 89-100, 139-143, 217-218. For the *David* as a column monument see Horst W. Janson, ‘La signification politique du David en bronze de Donatello’, *Revue de l’Art*, 39, 1978, 33-38 at 37-8; (though claiming that the *David* was first commissioned by the Florentine government as a fully public column monument). The thesis of the sculpture’s public function is rejected by Volker Herzner, ‘David Florentinus 2: Der Bronze-David Donatello im Bargello’, *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, 24, 1982, 105-6). For public statuary according to the typology of *Säulenmonumenten* and their changing evaluation (without reference to Donatello’s Medici bronzes) see Werner Haftmann,

Removed after the ousting of the Medici in 1494, both works were famously re-installed at the Florentine town hall. One of several precise records of the event reads: 'Antonio Manetti being Gonfaloniere, that column where Judith slays Holofernes was placed on the *ringhiera*. On the 29th of December was placed in the courtyard of the Palazzo della Signoria the column of David which was taken from the house of Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici'.⁵⁵ The transfer of these complete ensembles from the 'casa' to the 'palazzo' is highly eloquent: marking a transition from a family residence presented as a centre of power to the public place of renewed republican rule and of two centuries of civic representation.⁵⁶ The sculptures, though newly dedicated to a pristine *res publica* resonated clearly as a display of spoils.⁵⁷ The memory of their previous lives was further guaranteed by the retention of their Medici-commissioned pedestals. In view of this history, it may indeed have seemed ominous when the base of the *David* was struck by lightning in its new location in 1511.⁵⁸

While its date and earliest situation have been debated, we know that with its installation in the courtyard of the new Medici palace in the 1450s, the *David* gained a Latin *titulus* and a pedestal, encompassing what was probably itself a piece of spoliated ancient marble. The latter consisted of a variegated red marble column, set upon a more visually 'open' white marble element supported by corner 'harpies' - apparently variations of the Roman sphinx type - and further decorated with tendrils in bronze. The former, as is by now well known, read: 'The victor is whoever defends the fatherland / God crushes the wrath of an enormous foe./ Behold! a boy overcame a great tyrant / Conquer, oh citizens!'. The inscription thus helped to justify the scale and elaboration of the pedestal.⁵⁹ As Caglioti argues, the *titulus* surely postdated the 1454 arrival of the humanist Gentile de' Becchi (c. 1425- 1497) as priest and tutor in Cosimo de' Medici's household, since the inscriptions beneath both

Das italienische Säulenmonument. Versuch zur Geschichte einer antiken Form des Denkmals und Kultmonumentes und ihrer Wirksamkeit für die Antikenvorstellung des Mittelalters und für die Ausbildung des öffentlichen Denkmals in der Frührenaissance, Leipzig and Berlin. 1939, reprinted Hildesheim 1972

⁵⁵ *Ricordi* of Lorenzo di Giovanni Ruspoli in Caglioti, *Donatello*, I, 106-7 and 299-303 for other versions taken from the 'Prioristi' or lists of government offices.

⁵⁶ Nonetheless Géraldine Johnson's reading according to which the move transformed the *Judith* from 'Medicean idol into a Republican ideal' implies, problematically, that the *Judith* was viewed as 'pagan' as opposed to republican while in Medici possession ('Idol or Ideal? – the Power and Potency of Female Public sculpture' in eds. Géraldine Johnson and Sara F. Matthews Grieco, *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, Cambridge, 1997, 222-245 at 231. See also on the significance of this move Sarah Blake McHam, 'Donatello's Bronze *David* and *Judith* as Metaphors of Medici Rule in Florence', *Art Bulletin*, 83, 2001, 32-47.

⁵⁷ Piero Parenti calls the *Judith* 'spoglia di Piero de' Medici' in his *Storia fiorentina*, ed. Andrea Matucci, vol. I, 1994, 291, transcribed also in Caglioti, *Donatello*, I, 303-4.

⁵⁸ *Ricordanze di Bartolommeo Masi calderaio fiorentino dal 1478 al 1526*, ed. Giuseppe O. Corazzini, Florence, 1906, 82-83 and Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Manoscritti*, 88, 'Ricordi di Piero Masi dal 1452 al 1513', f. 15r, both quoted in extract in Caglioti, *Donatello*, I, 111. For the interest in the event as an omen *ibid.* I, 344.

⁵⁹ The Latin read 'Victor est quisquis patriam tuetur. / Frangit immanis [or *iniusti*, Bodleian, Lat. Misc. e 81] Deus hostis iras / En puer grandem domuit tiranum. / Vincite, cives!'. The inscription was first published by Christine Sperling, 'Donatello's Bronze 'David' and the Demands of Medici Politics', *Burlington Magazine*, 134, 1992, 218-224 at 218-20. Her recorded examples have been joined by many others brought together by Giovanni Agosti and Vincenzo Farinella in Paola Barocchi ed., *Il giardino di San Marco. Maestri e compagni del giovane Michelangelo*, exh. cat., Florence, Casa Buonarroti, 1992, 99 and notes 141-2 and, above all, by Caglioti, 'Donatello, I Medici' and *Donatello*, I, 5-12 and 57-73.

Donatello sculptures are recorded in a collection of Becchi's Latin poems in a manuscript now in Oxford.⁶⁰ Speaking to Medici political interests, the verse inscriptions allowed these works to enter into a tradition of 'eloquent' Florentine civic representations in the public sphere for which expository *tituli* had been composed, thus claiming for the new commissions a similarly broad audience.⁶¹ As elements that required reading front and back, if not necessarily around, the bases, the epigrams would also have reinforced the invitation provided by the columnar pedestals (and David's laurel garland) to circulate about the figures and admire them from multiple angles.⁶² The pedestals, indeed, served as the visual equivalent to Gentile Becchi's rhetorical injunctions to 'Behold!'. In each case victories over Israelite enemies, described as taking place in the past, were held up as both visually striking and vital to contemporaries, whether those 'citizens' were already under Medici protection or were to be persuaded into the fold.

The pedestals, tall and inscribed, strongly reinforced the celebratory evaluation of David and Judith as victors. In part this was a simple matter of elevation: the higher the column, the greater the honour to the victor. Columns were quite frequently set up in commemoration of Christian 'victories' in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but it was also well known that ancient victors had been honoured with columnar monuments like that of Trajan (from whose giant pedestal derives the garland on which the hero *David* stands), or like the Roman equestrian monument, a genre that Donatello reworked for the mercenary captain, 'Gattamelata', at Padua (1447-53).⁶³ When Alberti referred to freestanding columns in his contemporary architectural treatise it was as public *monumenta* in an appropriately rich idiom. Recommending that columns be raised on steps and use superimposed pedestals (*arae*), Alberti suggests a further intervening plinth 'to make the work higher and more beautiful'. This could then be ornamented with celebratory allegories such as Victoria, Gloria or Fama and the pedestal be decorated above with gilded bronze.⁶⁴ In a Florentine context, the pedestal of the gilded bronze *David*, apparently the first of its type, also looks symptomatic of a more general inflation in honorary forms and gestures found not just in humanist writing but in civic manifestations of the period.⁶⁵ Already in 1429 one viewer of the great Epiphany procession remarked on the impressive altitude at which 'David' managed to remain standing on his triumphal car following the procession of the Magi.⁶⁶ As Trexler

⁶⁰ Bodleian MS, Lat. Misc. e 81.

⁶¹ For example those composed for the Palazzo Vecchio by Franco Sacchetti and Coluccio Salutati in the 1380s, recorded in later manuscript collections. See Nicolai Rubinstein, *The Palazzo Vecchio 1298-1532: Government, Architecture, and Imagery in the Civic Palace of the Florentine Republic*, Oxford, 1995, 49-54.

⁶² Christine Rebene, 'Die Entwicklung der Freifigur', in eds. Lars O. Larsson and Götz Pochat, *Kunstgeschichtliche Studien zur Florentiner Renaissance*, I, Stockholm, 1991, 69-77 points out, however, that the *David* has only four fully satisfactory viewpoints.

⁶³ Haftmann, *Säulenmonument*, esp. 115-6 for spoliated memorial columns at Venice, Pisa, Florence and elsewhere.

⁶⁴ Leon Battista Alberti, *De Re Aedificatoria*, VIII, chap. 3 (eds. Giovanni Orlandi and Paolo Portoghesi, 685): 'quo esset opus celsiori cum venustate' and 687. See also Jonathan B. Reiss, 'The Civic View of Sculpture in Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 32, 1979, 1-17 focussing on Alberti's encouragement of revived ancient sculptural forms, especially the triumphal arch and the column, as long as they were commissioned in the public good and not by private individuals.

⁶⁵ Trexler, *Public Life*, 223, 241-7, 258-263 who links this increased magnificence above all to the representational needs of Florentine government.

observed, from the mid Trecento onwards, a number of Florence's most important civic feasts were instituted as 'memories of victories' over both foreign enemies and, in the case of the feast of St. Anne for example, over internal tyranny.⁶⁷ This celebratory, but also militant, patriotic and exhortatory rhetoric attaching to the *David* and to the later *Judith* group was a major aspect of their public, civic appeal both at the Medici palace and at the town hall after 1495 – even though, by then, the Medici themselves had been toppled from their pedestal and re-constructed as negative exemplars of internal tyranny.⁶⁸

Statues raised on columns were, as in Venice, Siena or Este-governed Ferrara, associated strongly with the presence of princely authority and the exercise of Justice - political and ethical ideals worthy of being 'looked up' to as well as feared.⁶⁹ The *David* and *Judith* bronzes confronted viewers with either the spectacle or aftermath of execution, certainly not judicial, but presented as just. Such a construction is what enabled Niccolò Risorboli, in an encomiastic *canzone* identified by Randolph, to read the *David* as a kind of allegory of the overcoming of the Pitti-Neroni conspiracy (1466).⁷⁰ This was, naturally, a later imposition upon Donatello's statue of a kind designed to ingratiate Risorboli with Piero de' Medici, but the reading responds to the highly communicative and rhetorical character of Donatello's sculpture as a column monument. Column statues, as objects isolated within a larger urban scene, were designed to command attention and, when located in a space of circulation, they produced not just a compositional centre but a centre of power; they were sites from which passers-by or visitors might feel watched over but also over-seen.

There is a further, less straightforwardly political, discourse of power pertaining to the sculpture on a high pedestal, in which the *David*, as a nude figure in a classicising pose and material was particularly implicated. Heckscher argued eloquently in the case of the ancient bronzes collected in the Middle Ages at the Lateran in Rome that the combination of the figure and column brought with it connotations not only of justice but also, unavoidably, of 'pagan idol'.⁷¹ While actual ancient statues were frequently preserved, even treasured in the Christian era, pagan idols on high pedestals - inviting the worship of the figure as if it were animate - asked to be toppled.⁷² Freestanding cast sculpture in precious materials such as

⁶⁶ Paolo di Matteo di Pietrobuoni cited in Rab Hatfield, 'The Compagnia dei Magi', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 33, 1970, 107-161 at 146.

⁶⁷ Trexler, *Public Life*, 222-23.

⁶⁸ For the significance of this rhetoric for Cosimo de' Medici and his contemporaries, see especially Dale Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance. The Patron's Oeuvre*, New Haven and London, 2000, 283-4.

⁶⁹ Haftmann, *Säulenmonument*, 118-120; Wolfgang Wolters, *La scultura veneziana gotica (1300-1460)*, Venice, 1976, I, 20; Charles M. Rosenberg, *The Este Monuments and Urban Development in Este Ferrara*, Cambridge and New York, 1997.

⁷⁰ Adrian W.B. Randolph, *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics, and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence*, New Haven and London, 2002, Chap. 4, 139-40. In Risorboli's *canzone* 'Fiorenza' declares 'On a column is an armed one, / Who appears to give grief to your enemies, / So that you fear and love / That which is done by him to overcome Goliath. / This was that unjust and ill-spirited faction, That wanted to take from me those who were born with me....and its great iniquity/ Fell to reason and justice'. For the Italian see Antonio Lanza, *Lirici toscani del Quattrocento*, Rome, 1975, 2, 379.

⁷¹ William S. Heckscher, *Sixtus III aeneas insignes statuas Romano populo restituendas censuit [...]*, 'S-Gravenhage, 1955, esp. 16. See also Janson, 'Signification', 38; Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-making in Medieval Art*, Cambridge, 1989, Chap. 2; A. Chastel, 'Les 'idoles' à la Renaissance', in Silvia Danesi Squarzina ed., *Roma centro ideale della cultura antico nei secoli XV e XVI*, Milan 1989, 468-476.

bronze or gold – of which the Golden Calf set up by Aaron for the Israelites and destroyed by Moses (Exodus 32) was the paradigmatic Judaeo-Christian example - were especially open to condemnation as the symbols of sacrifice to false gods.⁷³ Pagan images could continue to provoke emotive responses when given exalted positions, however temporary. Thus in his description of the 1454 procession for the feast of San Giovanni (in the decade the *David* was mounted in the Medici palace courtyard), Matteo Palmieri tells us that a ‘German’ spectator was so incensed by one of the pagan *tableaux* that he climbed on to the representation of the Roman Temple of Peace, took down the ‘idolo’ and threw it into the piazza before doing the same to the emperor Octavian.⁷⁴ It seems significant, though, that Palmieri singled out the iconoclast as a foreigner. The *tableau* was considered a perfectly acceptable fiction by the Florentine *festaiuoli* who designed the parade: the float was to be received as an episode within a Christian salvation history; it was also designed to entertain the crowd and be admired. A decade or so later, the draughtsman of the so-called Florentine Picture Chronicle, working in a similar vernacular idiom, depicted the statue of the Golden Calf upon a magnificent, isolated column with Donatellesque linguiform ornament (fig. 6). Both idol and column are raised upon a broad low vase with a victory garland, rather like that of Donatello’s *David*.⁷⁵ What the draughtsman offers is aesthetic admiration for the ‘pagan’ pedestal. A similar instance of artistic enjoyment of the idol already in the 1450s has been pointed out by Patricia Fortini Brown who noted the visual interest firmly centred on the statue of Bacchus and his almost absurdly large, ornate pedestal at the expense of the figure of the saint in the *St. Apollonia destroying a Pagan Idol*, a panel attributed to Antonio Vivarini.⁷⁶

By the 1450s when the bronze and gold *David* gained its new pedestal, it seems the sculpture would benefit, rather than suffer, from comparison with ‘pagan’ practices of displaying statuary. The Desiderio pedestal helped to inscribe the ideal viewer as an admiring devotee of antiquity and its cultic images, images that were appreciable for their beauty and artifice.⁷⁷ The idol-like quality of the *David* was evidently not dependent on its

⁷² For the rehabilitation of the ‘idol’ form in the Renaissance see Camille, *Gothic Idol*, 346 and Cole and Zorach eds, *The Idol in the Age of Art*, 3-4. For varied Christian attitudes and actions towards pagan sculpture in late antiquity and Byzantium see especially Liz James, ‘“Pray not to Fall into Temptation and Be on Your Guard”: Pagan Statues in Christian Constantinople’, *Gesta*, 35, no. 1, 1996, 12-20 (critiquing the anachronism of Cyril Mango, ‘Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17, 1963, pp. 53-75) and Helen Saradi-Mendelovici, ‘Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 44, 1990, 47-61.

⁷³ Werner Hofmann ed., *Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst*, Hamburg Kunsthalle exh. cat. 1983-4, 132-5; Camille, *Gothic Idol*, 126, 233-4 for representations of saints on columns. For the later, seventeenth-century instrumentalisation of Jewish idolatry and the lessons of the Golden Calf by Calvinist reformers see J. Sheehan, ‘Sacred and Profane: Idolatry, Antiquarianism and the Polemics of Distinction in the Seventeenth Century’, *Past and Present*, 192, 2006, 35-66.

⁷⁴ Matteo Palmieri, *Liber de temporibus*, in *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, vol. 26, part 1, 172-4; See Alessandro d’Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano*, I, Turin, 1891, 228 ff.

⁷⁵ Sidney Colvin, *A Florentine Picture Chronicle*, London, 1898, plates XX and XXI; Arthur E. Popham and Philip Pouncey, *Italian Drawings in the British Museum, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, London, 1950, I, no. 274, II, pls. CCXXXVII-CCXLI. Colvin describes the fascination with the ‘pedestal’ of the calf in terms of a goldsmith’s taste for ornament and, less convincingly, with the description of the candlestick of the tabernacle of the Covenant in Exodus (25, 31-37).

⁷⁶ In the National Gallery of Art, Washington. Patricia Fortini Brown, ‘The Antiquarianism of Jacopo Bellini’, *Artibus et Historiae*, 13, no. 26, 1992, 65-84 at 77-78 and *idem*, *Venice and Antiquity*, 135.

⁷⁷ For the *David* bronze as ‘idol’ see also Camille, *Gothic Idol*, 344-5.

explicit agency as an Old Testament exemplar but enabled it rather, alluringly, to command a space and draw the gaze in a manner not dissimilar from those elevated and perspectively-centred pagan idols in Jacopo Bellini's drawing books of this period.⁷⁸ The *David's* elevation, naturalism and other sensuous similarities to a work such as the Roman bronze *Spinario*, not only provoked admiration as 'art', they likewise helped to make the flattering case for Florence as the new Rome.⁷⁹

The figure's dependence on the pedestal for its command over the viewer has been incontrovertibly demonstrated by the recent provision of a high columnar support to a new copy of the *David* bronze in the Bargello. In addition to the positive, heroic enhancement to the body offered by the view from below, the dialectical structure of the figure-pedestal relationship is also highlighted by the negative suggestion of the fearfulness and 'baseness' of the pedestal. The appropriately female-gendered harpy/sphinxes designed by Desiderio at the base of the pedestal could be read as a kind of 'other' to the holy and virile exemplar. This is no simple equation, however, since not only might the Old Testament hero's actions themselves inspire both 'love and fear' but the harpy/sphinxes, as guardians of the monument, were not presented simply as fearful hybrids.⁸⁰ If Caglioti's persuasive identification of sculptural fragments in the Chigi-Saracini and Museo Horne is correct, the creatures from the lost base appeared not only beautiful and protective, but positively beatific.

Desiderio showed himself here a masterly interpreter if not a simple amanuensis of Donatello. The oppositional relationships that are set up, yet also questioned, in the *David* bronze, operate both internally to the bronze itself and, in parallel, between the hero and his pedestal. Such relationships are elaborated in less subtle terms in Donatello's second freestanding bronze for the Medici. The *Judith slaying Holofernes* (fig. 7, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence) is a work that Vasari credited to Donatello in its entirety and though once dismissed as a later addition, its pedestal has been shown to have a good claim to be that designed by the sculptor himself.⁸¹ It takes the form of a simple but very large double-baluster carved from grey granite sandwiched between two white marble drums. The absolutely novel baluster shape (only Castagno's fictive version in the equestrian fresco of Niccolò da Tolentino pre-dates it) represents a radical simplification of a Roman candelabrum form – such that it hardly resembles one – and re-iterates, in more robust kind, the slender free-standing double balusters incorporated at each corner of the triangular cast

⁷⁸ See the British Museum Drawings Nook, f. 97 with a nude figure on a columnar fountain especially the opening with soldiers looking up at a pagan idol, where the right hand page shows a statue (now barely legible) on a Corinthian column raised on a hexagonal base (Louvre Drawings Book, f. 47); also the folio of polygonal temple containing a pagan idol (Louvre Drawing Book, f. 53).

⁷⁹ The *Spinario* was arguably also a column figure even before its transfer to the Capitol, see Chiara Frugoni, 'L'antichità: dai 'Mirabilia' alla propaganda politica', in ed. Salvatore Settis, *Memoria dell'Antico nell'arte italiana*, I, *L'uso dei classici*, 1984, at 14 and fig. 2.

⁸⁰ In the later sixteenth-century Junius (*Emblemata*, 1565) interpreted the sphinx as a symbol of God: both virginal and fierce, to be loved and feared (Margaret Aston, *The King's Bedpost: Reformation and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait*, Cambridge, 1993, 86 and fig. 68). The inscription with the sphinx emblem reads 'Mysteris addicta Memphis ade pro sacra / Sphingem biformeme dedicavit, symbolum Dei. Amato numen ceu piis mite, ac placabile: Rursus time, ut vindex inexorabile impiii'.

⁸¹ Caglioti, *Donatello*, I, 89-100.

base of the bronze group.⁸² Vasari wrote of it admiringly: 'similarly the base, which is a granite baluster of a simple Order is full of grace and pleasing to the eye'.⁸³ Contrary to claims that the pedestal is a palimpsest, technical evidence has shown that the baluster and the lower marble drum were carved to fit one another and must both, therefore, have been made either in 1495, which does not accord with the sources, or before Donatello's death in 1466.⁸⁴

The strigilated motif of the base, originating in works by Brunelleschi and deriving principally from Roman funerary art, is common in Medicean works of the 1440s to 1460s such as the altar of the tabernacle at SS. Annunziata (1449) and tomb pier of Cosimo de' Medici in the crypt of San Lorenzo. It seems likely, indeed, that Donatello's more knowledgeable viewers could have recognised the S-fluting of the lower drum as connected with funerary altars or sarcophagi and thus appropriate to the imagery of death and salvation represented by the *Judith*. Some further external weight to Caglioti's case for a 1460s date for the base may be brought by the pedestal form used to support the burning figure of Febrina, in an early Florentine print of a legend of Virgil the sorcerer.⁸⁵ The combination of baluster form and fluted drum in the engraving probably recalls the slightly earlier *Judith*. With the contemporaneity of the base to the statue established, an argument for a distinct formal and thematic continuity between the pedestal and the bronze it supports is strengthened.

The sculpture is most often referred to as 'Judith' in contemporary sources, and simply as 'a woman' in the dedicatory inscription originally appended to one side of the pedestal by its commissioner: 'Public health. Piero de' Medici son of Cosimo, has dedicated this statue of a woman to the union of fortitude and liberty, so that the citizens should be brought back with an unvanquished and constant spirit to the defence of the Republic'.⁸⁶ Though this nomination implies that Holofernes is effectively an attribute, Donatello devoted half of Judith's standing height to the dying body of the assassinated general and the dialectic which operates between them as victor and vanquished is, I would argue, formally and symbolically played out in the pedestal. Vasari's evaluation of the base in terms of 'grazia' alerts us to the potentially 'womanly' quality of the double-baluster form, whose sinuous profile is ingeniously extended into the ornament of the lower drum.⁸⁷

There is also a clear sense in which the double-baluster refers to two distinct and opposed bodies. Judith rises above her enemy, strong and austere, columnar even, the very image of

⁸² For the derivation of the double baluster from antique decorative forms see Paul Davies and David Hemsoll, 'Renaissance Balusters and the Antique', *Architectural History. Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain*, 25, 1983, 1-23; Caglioti, *Donatello*, I, 100, note 78.

⁸³ 'Similmente il basamento, ch'è un balaustro di granito con semplice ordine, si dimostra ripieno di grazia et a gli occhi grato in aspetto', Vasari, *Le Vite*, ed. Milanese, III, 210.

⁸⁴ Anna Maria Giusti, Roberto Manni and Roberto Nesti, 'Il restauro del sostegno lapideo' in *Donatello e il restauro della Giuditta*, Florence, 1988, 118-20; Caglioti, *Donatello*, I, 93 ff.

⁸⁵ Arthur M. Hind. *Early Italian Engraving*, London, 1948, A.I.46 vol. I, cat. no. 46 and II, Plate 45. The badly damaged print, which also exists in a second version, probably dates to the 1460s.

⁸⁶ 'Salus Publica. Petrus Medices Cos. fi. libertati simul / et fortitudini hanc mulieris statuam, / quo cives invicto constantique animo ad / rem publicam redderentur, dedicavit'.

⁸⁷ For the alignment of 'grace' as a quality of art and female beauty see Philip Sohm, 'Gendered Style in Italian Art Criticism from Michelangelo to Malvasia', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 48, no. 4, 1995, 759-808 at 765-8 and 770.

Fortitude. On the ornamental panel on her left arm she wears, in emblematic fashion, the image of an upright vessel, a vase of poppies.⁸⁸ Holofernes by contrast is a vessel emptied of life. Artificially supported above a sagging cushion, his frozen limbs are, to borrow Vasari's expressive description, 'falling'. Already in the triangular bronze support that underpins and controls the dominant viewpoints for the group, reference is made to Holofernes' 'base' nature, that drunken *luxuria* that brought his downfall. The enebriated putti who disport themselves on the lower reliefs serve, as Charles Dempsey aptly puts it, as 'ornament in action that comments upon and enlarges the main theme'.⁸⁹ Similarly, in the double-baluster form of the monumental base, the counterpoint of upright and decadent bodies is reiterated in the abstract by an upright vase form standing above an upturned one. Even the fluid channels of the lower drum might be read as issuing from the upturned vessel, itself a recognisable symbol of drunkenness.

To a greater extent than the *David*, another example of humility triumphant, the base refigures both the thematic and formal division of the bronze sculpture and the rhetorical 'contrapposto' of the inscription. On the opposite side from the dedication to the patron, a second inscription, read: 'Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues. Behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility'.⁹⁰ Thus the rise of cities is counterweighted to the fall of kingdoms, humility overturns pride with the slice of a sword. Holofernes is clearly produced as the moral inversion of the upright Judith.

The dialectical quality of the pedestals for the early Medici bronzes accords with the extended imagery of triumph in this period, especially in the case of the *Judith* since it implicitly figures the base as the place of domination over vice.⁹¹ Where the statue conquers, Gross has argued that the base itself is mythically construed as a victim.⁹² While such a distinction is crude, certainly Donatello's *Judith* and, in direct emulation of it, Cellini's later *Perseus* bronze (fig. 18), both offer an emotive overflow onto the pedestal from the conquered and broken body of the freshly dead or dying enemy. The conquering Judith also binds Holofernes as she slays him, an operation that could have evoked for Florentine viewers the famous Quattrocento imagery of the Petrarchan triumph. In panels representing the *Trionfo di Amore* of the 1460s onwards, (workshop of Apollonio di Giovanni, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, Jacopo del Sellaio, Museo Bandini, for example) Love's victims are

⁸⁸ Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 268 note 1, refers to later examples of the vase of flowers signifying virtues implanted in the soul, notably in Paolo Giovio's, *Dialogo dell'impresa militari et amoroze* and the 'Fame' relief of the Gerolamo Della Torre tomb by Riccio where a vase holding plants is inscribed VIRTUS.

⁸⁹ Charles Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, Chapel Hill and London, 2001, 55-58. Patricia Rubin ('Signposts of Invention: Artists' Signatures in Italian Renaissance Art', *Art History*, 29, no. 4, 2006, 563-599 at 581-3) argues that the putti, appearing below Donatello's signature on the cushion also act as a 'signature gesture' in relation to Donatello's earlier work, being associated with his poetic creative powers.

⁹⁰ In the Latin, the word 'cesa' (sever) cuts the distich in two: 'Regna cadunt luxu, surgunt virtutibus urbes:/ Cesa vides humili colla superba manu'. The version cited is from Passerini's codex in the Biblioteca Nazionale 140bis f. 153v (see Caglioti, *Donatello*, I, 9). Caglioti (100, note 80) argues that there may have been a now missing element to the pedestal that contained the old Medici inscriptions. The lozenge of darker marble standing proud as a stop marking the end/beginning of the later inscription could conceivably coincide with the original level of an inscription.

⁹¹ In Vasari's posthumous portrait of Lorenzo 'il Magnifico' de' Medici as enlightened ruler *all'antica* an ancient vessel inscribed VIRTUTUM OMNIA VAS (the vessel of all virtue) appears next to him while the socle supporting it reads VITIA VIRTUTI SUBIACENT. This represents an ideological position typical of Medici absolutist power of the sixteenth century.

⁹² Kenneth Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1992, 178.

bound around the base of his high, gilded, fountain-like pedestal while in the subsequent *Trionfo di Pudicizia* the naked Cupid is himself tied to the base of Chastity's pedestal.⁹³ Within the self-celebratory mode of Quattrocento public sculpture actual bases rarely include explicit representations of restrained enemies or 'vices'. Nonetheless, the pathetic, 'ornamental' and violent possibilities of subjugation did begin to be worked out in graphic inventions of the period that remain close to the festival culture of *Trionfi*. A niello design and a related Florentine print of the 1460s represents a triumphant *all'antica* woman, in the act of beheading a naked, bearded man (Hind A. II, 11) who is chained, seated, to a basin-shaped pedestal (fig. 8).⁹⁴ The victim adopts the pose of an antique seated Marsyas, the exemplum of defeated pride.⁹⁵ But the pedestal also extends its scope through a series of rings for tethering further 'captives', slaves perhaps to vice and 'baseness'.

The pedestal as an explicit site of moral and even sexual subjugation or subjection, already rendered ambivalent in this print, was markedly more problematic in monumental works. Famously, concern was voiced by the Florentine herald Francesco Filarete that Donatello's image of Judith beheading Holofernes was unfitting as an exemplar of a woman killing a man: as a 'segnio mortifero' she had brought bad luck on the city since her ill-starred installation at the town hall.⁹⁶ It is not until Medici rule became absolute that emasculated captives or *prigioni*, albeit in highly abstract form, first featured in Florence on the pedestal base of Baccio Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus*, erected in 1534.⁹⁷ In a decorative context this motif had begun to appear more frequently from the earlier sixteenth-century already, especially in Venice and the Veneto. In a sculptural ensemble like that by Riccio discussed below, such bound figures bring an emotive pathos to the realm of the base. While troubling to modern viewers, to contemporaries prisoners were construed as hierarchically appropriate and even imaginatively diverting ornaments.⁹⁸

Statues in miniature

Pedestals produced in Florence, Siena and Venice, especially in the wake of Donatello's models were highly inventive, drawing above all on a rich range of antique monumental

⁹³ See for these examples and others Alexandra Ortner, *Petrarcas 'Trionfi' in Malerei, Dichtung und Festkultur: Untersuchung zur Entstehung und Verbreitung einer florentinischen Bildmotivs auf cassoni und deschi da parto des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Weimar, 1998, esp. Anhang I, no. 6, 338-42 and no. 7, 343-5.

⁹⁴ Hind, *Engraving*, I., p. 67-8, cat. no. A.II.11, referring also to a niello print in the library of Parma. For a detailed reading of the print and the problem of its moral coding see Randolph, *Engaging*, 271-4.

⁹⁵ See especially Francesco Caglioti and Davide Gasparotto, 'Lorenzo Ghiberti, il 'sigillo di Nerone' e le origini della placchetta 'antiquaria'', *Prospettiva*, 85, 1997, 2-38 at CH CH

⁹⁶ A new transcription of the whole of the herald's judgement (given in the context of deliberations over the location of Michelangelo's *David*) is provided by Caglioti (*Donatello*, I, 305, note 54 for further literature). See also H. Bredekamp, *Repräsentation und Bildmagie der Renaissance als Formproblem*, Munich, 1995, 10-29; Randolph, *Engaging*, 280-1; Johnson, 'Idol or Ideal?', 231-2.

⁹⁷ Weil-Garris Brandt ('On Pedestals, 396-7 and note 82) suggestively connects these figures to the monumental 'prisoners' and herms designed for the colossal pedestal-like structure of Michelangelo's early design for the tomb of Julius II.

⁹⁸ See for example the pair of bronze candelabra for San Marco, Venice, commissioned in 1527 from Maffeo Olivieri (Danizio Cattoi in eds. Bacchi and Giacomelli, *Rinascimento e passione per l'antico*. cat. no. 82, 410-415). Satyrs appear bound near the foot while, high above, a ring of nude figures dance in triumph and hold up the inscription declaring the commission and authorship of the candelabrum.

features mined from objects such as funerary altars and marble candelabra. It may not have been the case that the original function of these spolia was always understood but, even when they were, an appreciation of artistic *inventio* meant this presented no bar to their imaginative re-application as pedestals. Equally the development of the formal vocabulary, if not the semantics, of the pedestal in the early modern period owed relatively little to antique literary descriptions of statues such as those of Pliny the Elder or Pausanias, not least perhaps because these writers were not concerned with the precise appearance of any of the statue bases they admired.⁹⁹

Among contemporary sculptors directly inspired by antique ornament and the recent models of Donatello and Desiderio, the goldsmith Antonio del Pollaiuolo emerges as preeminent in the development of the pedestal. In addition to designing battle reliefs as a fitting ornament for the base of the equestrian monument, he pioneered integrally designed and cast bases for the revived genre of the bronze statuette).¹⁰⁰ Pollaiuolo's surviving bronze figures - which might be seen as smaller substitutes, or even calling cards,, for monumental commissions - are cast on a larger scale than surviving ancient statuettes and invited substantial pedestals (eg. figs. 9 and 10). These he designed, I would argue, both to condition the viewing of the small-scale figure along the heroic lines of the freestanding *statua*, which they evoke, and to produce the work as an object of the possessive gaze. With a more obvious derivation from ancient candelabrum tripods than Donatello's *Judith*, Pollaiuolo's triangular bases - actually truncated, three-sided pyramids - are adapted in terms of their height and breadth to the proportions of the figure they support. The corners and sides of the pedestal also effectively direct the beholder towards the ideal views onto the figure in the round and dramatise the subject, whose limbs often overhang the base. Such devices are indebted to Donatello but, by their application to the small scale, are turned to new effects. Ultimately the bases of Pollaiuolo's statuettes served to inscribe a new type of viewer: a collector and connoisseur of such intimate objects and of ancient art who could handle, contemplate and strategically place the work within their study to 'magnificent effect'.¹⁰¹

While the integral bases implicitly serve to highlight Pollaiuolo's own powers as a sculptor, the pedestals of two surviving single figures of Hercules Victor, also explicitly allude to the pedestal as a site of temporary tributes. That in Berlin (fig. 9) bears an empty ansate tablet, whereas that in the Frick Collection, New York, apparently a later cast from a model of Hercules with his foot on an ox's skull, introduces trophies.¹⁰² Like the carved garlands on

⁹⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, completed AD 70s; Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 2nd century AD.

¹⁰⁰ The exemplary combination of contemporary equestrian warrior with an historiated base displaying battle reliefs is one we know of only from Vasari's description of the artist's drawing for a monument to Francesco Sforza. The drawing (now in Munich) has since had the base 'pieno di battaglie' carefully cut off it, see Wright, *Pollaiuolo*, . 137-142 and List of Works no. 17 and for Pollaiuolo's statuettes and their ideal viewers see Chap. 11.

¹⁰¹ The quote is from Cellini's account of his display of the statuettes for the base of the *Perseus* (somewhat above eye level) to impress Cosimo I and Eleonora of Toledo (*The Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, (transl. J.A. Symonds), ed. Charles Hope and Alessandro Nova, Oxford, 1983, 191-192).

¹⁰² This sculpture has been recently re-attributed to Giovanfrancesco Rustici as a work of c. 1515 and a possible model for a larger Medici commission, see Tommaso Mozzati, 'Il fuoco e l'alchimista. Giovanfrancesco Rustici la pratica del bronzo', *Proporzioni*, n.s. 6, 2005 (2007), 142-175 at 154-156, 174-5; *idem. Giovanfrancesco Rustici. Le Compagnie del Paiuolo e della Cazzuola. Arte, letteratura, festa nell'età della Maniera*, Florence, 2008, 126-7 and especially 'Una proposta per Giovanfrancesco Rustici. L'Ercole giovane della Frick Collection' CH CH locate via Denise?: . Stylistic comparison with the early sixteenth-century *David 'Pulsky'* in the Louvre, attributed to Rustici by Caglioti, seems rather to confirm the much more stable, less mannered ponderation of the Frick figure.

Roman funerary *arae*, these ornaments are shown as suspended, rather than permanently attached to the base and seem to imply an act of dedication. The viewer is called to imagine a ritual context in which these signs of honour were appended and, perhaps, to question why the prominent Berlin tablet bears no inscription. Does the sculptor invite the viewer's tribute to Hercules alone, or equally to himself, as a rival to the artists of antiquity?¹⁰³ The type of the 'trophy' base, adapted for the Frick figure was also adopted before 1490 on the pedestals of the, now lost, bronze statues of nude warriors, in the forecourt of Matthias Corvinus' royal palace at Buda.¹⁰⁴ In both the freestanding statue and its more affordable relative, the bronze statuette, the trophy ornament allowed the work to extend the inevitable imaginative dialogue both with surviving ancient bronzes and with ancient literary evocations of the ritual uses and belligerent themes of sculpture.¹⁰⁵

The early Cinquecento

It is in the field of the small bronze that some of the most ingenious adaptations of ancient furniture supports, including tripods, continued to be employed well into the sixteenth century, even if inconsistently.¹⁰⁶ Yet already in the early 1500s the gap between the ornamentation of bases for small domestic bronze furnishings, especially tableware, and that for freestanding figures opened wider. With the obvious exception of fountain sculpture, a more sober, architectural, rather than sculptural, aesthetic became the norm for bases for freestanding statues.¹⁰⁷ One spur to this may have been a fuller antiquarian knowledge of Roman practice - though it should be remembered that ancient statues were quite happily accommodated on funerary altars in the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁸ In the case of Michelangelo's *David*, which was influentially installed on an architectonic - and architect designed - plinth in 1504, the need to integrate the 'gigante' with the Prior's rostrum, to which it formed a high termination, would also have been a crucial factor. While still talismanic in its presence, the great eloquence, difficulty and classicising appearance of Michelangelo's statue was achieved at the expense of the ornamental and thematic charge of many Quattrocento ensembles - not least the columnar *Judith* which it replaced, or the inventive four double-baluster pedestal for the Florentine lion (*Marzocco*), with which it continued to share the *ringhiera*.¹⁰⁹

Tellingly it is Baccio Bandinelli, who aspired to Donatello and Michelangelo's honours, who chose to provide more ornate, encomiastic bases *all'antica* for several of his public sculptures. One of these, the *ara*-like pedestal carved by Benedetto da Rovezzano for the

¹⁰³ The ansate tablet was at this time beginning to be used as a place of authorial inscription in prints, probably following Pollaiuolo's own precedent in the *Battle of Nude Men* engraving.

¹⁰⁴ See Bonfini, (Feuer-Tóth, ed. 1990, 127, transl., Elmer, Webb and Wood, 209).

¹⁰⁵ Wright, *Pollaiuolo*, 349 for trophy ornament, 337 for probable inspiration from Greek 'iconic' epigrams.

¹⁰⁶ For many late fifteenth and sixteenth-century examples see eg, Herbert Beck and Dieter Blume eds., *Natur und Antike in der Renaissance*, exhib. cat. Liebighaus, Frankfurt am Main, 1985.

¹⁰⁷ For the architectural plinth in the sixteenth century see esp. Keutner, 'Über die Entstehung'.

¹⁰⁸ See for example the colossal bronze statue of Hercules 'Victor' unearthed in the Forum Boarium under pope Sixtus IV and which was later installed on a cylindrical altar, adorned with Herculean clubs and garlands suspended from ribbons.

¹⁰⁹ For the Marzocco base see Alessandro Cecchi, 'Giuliano e Benedetto da Maiano ai servizi della Signoria fiorentina', in Daniele Lamberini et al., eds, *Giuliano e la bottega da Maiano*, Atti del convegno internazionale, Fiesole 1991, Florence, 1994, 148-157.

base of the Medici *Orpheus*, was designed c. 1516 to replace the decorative *colonna* of the bronze *David* removed in 1495. The *Orpheus* pedestal was a politically eloquent elaboration that seems, with its abundance of Medici devices, animal forms and ancient ornaments to flaunt that imaginative licence which Horace's *Ars Poetica* – a primary source for *Orpheus* itself - associated with both poetry and painting.¹¹⁰ As already noted, Bandinelli also used a partially figured base for the *Hercules and Cacus*, a marble group designed to stand beside, and stand up to Michelangelo's *David*. It is perhaps significant for Bandinelli's embrace of eloquent ornament that his father had been a goldsmith. Amongst other activities Michelangelo di Viviano had mounted jewels and hardstones in Lorenzo 'il Magnifico's antiquities collection, evaluating them for dispersal in 1495 and collaborated with Antonio di Salvi, Pollaiuolo's pupil, on a silver cross for the Florentine Duomo.¹¹¹

The liturgical pedestal: Riccio's candelabrum

At the risk of irritating the purist, I wish briefly to trace the sustained early Cinquecento appreciation of the rhetoric of height and decorative richness as signs of honour in relation to another ecclesiastical work, one that, in function and imagery, can be read as a kind of super-base (fig. 11). The giant bronze Paschal candelabrum made by Andrea Briosco 'Il Riccio' for the Santo in Padua in some respects extends the legacy of Donatello's bronze sculpture in the city, but it also presents an extraordinary renewal of the pedestal as a 'cultic' form in direct dialogue with beliefs about ancient ritual practice. Designed to support the great Easter candle, Riccio's bronze is unusual for a candelabrum in that, reaching nearly four metres in height, it does not have integral feet but rests on its own, four-sided marble pedestal. This distinction effectively presents the candlestick itself as an honourable monument; yet it is one that is figured at every level as a support. The stacked structure and material richness of the candelabrum immediately recall the ornamental aesthetic of Filarete's 1460s architectural designs for Sforzinda, referred to above, not least his description of a gilded bronze paschal candle for the cathedral which he describes as, like the ancient Temple of Solomon, 'tanto ricco e con tanto ornamento'.¹¹²

The commission to Riccio from the Santo's administrative élite, the Massari dell'Arca, in June 1507 specified the candelabrum's height, materials (bronze, like those sculptures already decorating the choir of the Santo by Donatello, Bertoldo and Riccio himself) and that it was to be covered with stories, with freestanding figures at the corners and 'honorevole'.¹¹³ The Paduan humanist who took immediate responsibility for the project, Giovanni Battista de

¹¹⁰ Karla Langedijk, 'Baccio Bandinelli's Orpheus: A Political Message', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 20, 1976, 33-52; for changing applications of Horace's view of poets and painters as possessing equal powers of inventive imagination see Norman E. Land, *The Viewer as Poet: The Renaissance Response to Art*, University Park, Pennsylvania, 1994, 110-111.

¹¹¹ See recently Laurie S. Fusco and Gino Corti, *Lorenzo de' Medici: Collector and Antiquarian*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, 21, 136-7, 165-9, 346, 356-7, 369; Louis A. Waldman, *Baccio Bandinelli and Art at the Medici Court. A Corpus of Early Modern Sources*, Philadelphia, 2004, doc. nos. 17, 19, 25, 28-31 and 87, 96, 97 for the Duomo Cross.

¹¹² The candelabrum is placed before the high altar between twelve marble candelabra (Filarete, ed. 1972, I p. 252).

¹¹³ Antonio Sartori, *Documenti per la storia dell'arte a Padova*, Vicenza, 1976, 199. The specifications for ornament were based on Riccio's drawing: 'secondo che ne ha dimostrato per uno disegno in carta, el quale starà apresso di me [Leone]...'. It was to cost a princely 600 ducats. The design was immediately approved by the Abbot of the Santo.

Leone, almost certainly supplied the work's complex iconographic programme.¹¹⁴ The beautiful architectonic base, provided by Francesco di Cola and dated 1515, is itself nearly 1.5 metres high and is carved not with latin letters but what Alberti would have seen as the 'universal' language of images, in this instance antique vases and symbolic emblems in low relief.¹¹⁵ On the front facing the nave (fig. 11), a *vas virtutum* bears the Cross of salvation that is itself crowned with a vase of fire signifying, in a theological context, the immortal soul and the love of God that secures the soul's redemption.¹¹⁶ The larger vessel is surrounded by *arma christi* appropriate to the liturgy of the Passion. Commenting in 1590 (*Le religiose memorie*) on the emblems on the base, which also include pagan sacrificial instruments, Valerio Polidori noted that they had much in common with hieroglyphs and were 'very similar to the mysteries of the Egyptians'.¹¹⁷ Indeed, interpreted as allegories of the Church and of Christ's Passion and victory, the marble reliefs underpinned the learned, syncretic representation of Christianity within the candelabrum as whole. The lost inscription beneath the base emphasised that the monumental candlestick could be seen as a pyramid ('hanc pyramidem'), a form that was usually associated with a tomb function in the Renaissance.¹¹⁸

The 'pyramid' is hierarchically subdivided and the bronze part alone can be read as a series of honorary forms of diminishing scale piled one above the other. Within this cumulative rhetoric, each register serves as a pedestal for the next, and accordingly the majority have subjugated figures bound at each corner. These creatures may be read as the earth-bound 'other' to the transcendent imagery of liberation and victory found elsewhere on the monument. The lowest and largest tier with its four sphinxes and horned masks, unites features of the Roman funerary altar and the ancient candelabrum base with coped sides.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ See Blume, 'Antike un Christentum' at 100; Davide Banzato 'Riccio's Humanist Circle and the Paschal Candelabrum' in Denise Allen and Peta Motture eds, *Andrea Riccio. Renaissance Master of Bronze*, exh. cat. Frick Collection New York, October 2008-January 2009, New York 2008, 39-63 and *idem*, 'Il candelabro pasquale di Andrea Briosco: Note sulla storia, la committenza, la lettura, le derivazioni dall'Antico e da altre fonti figurative' in eds. Bacchi and Giacomelli, *Rinascimento e Passione per L'Antico*, 97-119 esp. 105-6.

¹¹⁵ Alberti, *De Re Aedificatoria*, Book VIII, Chapter 4, f. 143r. ed. Orlandi and Portoghesi, II, 697.

¹¹⁶ The vase as vessel of virtue was familiar in relation to Marian liturgy, notably the Marian Antiphon *Gaude virgo mater christi* describing the Virgin as 'splendens vas virtutum'. St. Anthony of Padua was also given this appellation in a 'prose' to be recited after the Gloria: 'Vas virtutum, via morum / Victor fuit viciorum / Armis penitencie' (Vase of virtue, way of good life / with the arms of penitence he conquered vice), see Jacques Cambell, 'Le cult liturgique de Saint Antoine de Padoue', *Il Santo*, 11, 1971, 3-70 at 37. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 148 note 26 points out that the 'vaso igneo' in the late fifteenth-century *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* signified 'una participatione d'amore'. See also Guy de Tervarent, *Attributs et symboles dans l'art profane, 1450-1600*, Geneva, II, 1959, coll. 396ff for the vase as signifying the soul. For Polidoro's early interpretation of the symbols of the marble base see *Le religiose memorie*, Venice, 1590, 13-14v.

¹¹⁷ Leo Planiscig, *Andrea Riccio*, Vienna, 1927, 246.

¹¹⁸ 'Joannes Baptista de Leone philosophus hanc pyramidem faciendam curavit ex thesauro divi Antonii Andrea Crispo patavo sculptore primario anno Christi 1507 et Ludovicus ejus frater J.C. posuit anno 1515. Erat opus annorum 3 nisi Maximiliani atrocissimum bellum cum partibus venetis impedimento fuisset' (Planiscig, *Andrea Riccio*, 244). For the understanding of the pyramid (often conflated with the obelisk) in the Renaissance see Brian Curran, *The Egyptian Renaissance: the Afterlife of Ancient Egypt in Early Modern Italy*, Chicago and London, 2007, 67-72.

¹¹⁹ For the relation of the work as a whole to antique candelabra and for an analysis of its physical structure see Shelley Sturman, Simona Cristanetti, Debra Pincus, Karen Serres and Dylan Smith, 'Beautiful in form and execution': the design and construction of Andrea Riccio's Paschal candlestick', *Burlington Magazine*, 151, October 2009, pp. 666-672.

The next sub-section, with bound satyrs surmounted by griffins, is also architectonic and altar-like, but from this point onwards the bronze becomes round in section, culminating in a baluster standing on a drum. According a similar centrality to cultic paraphernalia, the complex and learned iconography of the superimposed bronze reliefs also extends upwards the themes of the marble base: virtue, sacrifice, spiritual wisdom and victory in the Christian era *sub gratia*,¹²⁰ The largest figures, to whom the satyrs are subordinate, are Cardinal Virtues, but they appear in the guise of Roman matrons raised for admiration like statues on small, ornamented bases. Physically similar to reliefs of Victories surrounded by trophies as they appeared on Roman triumphal arches, they also carried a similar message.¹²¹ The largest fields, closest to the viewer include the Christ Child recognised by Gentile kings (*Adoration of the Magi*), the burial of Christ's body, and his liberation of Adam and the worthy *sub legis* from Hell. In each of these readily recognisable narratives the protagonists are dressed *all'antica*, but it is with the fourth and last scene (fig. 12), without precedent in Christian iconography, that Christian liturgy is audaciously embedded in pagan religion.¹²² Instead of depicting the Resurrection, Christ appears with his wounds in the form of a freestanding statue in blessing: a triumphant bronze god on a tiered pedestal, at the centre of an ancient ritual of sacrifice. In front of the under life-size image, figures are gathered for the slaughter of a lamb at a small altar.¹²³ The ritual setting is animated by musicians playing pipes, singers, torch bearers, a priest and a laurel-crowned figure with a *patera*. The scene thus comments on the sacrifice of Christ as *agnus dei*, reenacted in the Mass, and on his saving resurrection, without actually representing them. As both Saxl and Blume have noted, the triumphant figure of Christ as Saviour is instead paralleled with the greatest god of Olympus in the relief frieze immediately below, where Jupiter is shown driving away bestial beings in his chariot of war.¹²⁴ In fact the precariously 'pagan' statue would have had an added claim to antiquity and authenticity for contemporaries since Riccio's cult object refers in both scale and pose to a large bronze figure of the Resurrected Christ made in the Veneto around 1490. This, as Nagel and Wood have shown, was understood to recreate or, as they would have it, substitute for an ancient bronze figure of Christ referred to most influentially in the *Golden Legend*.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ See Banzato, 'Riccio's Humanist Circle', 48 ff. and Bernardo Gonzati, *La Basilica di S. Antonio di Padova*, Padua, 1852, I, 142-3 for the relationship of the base to the bronze.

¹²¹ For similar Victory reliefs on pedestals, themselves imitating earlier roman examples and re-used in the Early Modern period as pedestals for sculpture see Richard Brilliant, 'I piedistalli del giardino di Boboli: spolia in se, spolia in re', *Prospettiva*, 31, 1982, pp. 2-17.

¹²² For the earlier, twelfth century, typological linking of Christ and the Old Testament tradition of sacrifice see A. Krueger and G. Runger, 'Lifting the Veil: Two Typological diagrams in the Hortus Deliciarum', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 60, 1997, 1-22.

¹²³ The relief effects, composition and costume of the scene is directly comparable to the marble of *Marcus Aurelius sacrificing to Capitoline Jove*, kept at the Palazzo dei Conservatori from 1515 (see H. Stuart Jones, *A Catalogue of the Ancient Sculptures preserved in the Municipal Collection of Rome, Sculpture of the Palazzo dei Conservatori*, Rome, 1926, (II), 22, Scala II, no. 4.

¹²⁴ For Christ's alignment with Jupiter see Fritz Saxl, 'Pagan Sacrifice in the Renaissance', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 2, 1938, 346- 367 at 353; Dieter Blume, 'Antike und Christentum', in Beck and Blume, *Natur und Antike*, 84-129 at 105; for the frieze see F. Ragna Enking, 'Andrea Riccio und seine Quelle', *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstmuseen*, 62, no. 3, 1941, 11-107 at 94; Banzato, 'Il candelabro', 110.

¹²⁵ See Alexander Nagel and Christopher T. Wood, 'Toward a New Model of Renaissance Anachronism', *The Art Bulletin*, 87, no.3, 2005, 403-415 at 403-7.

The axially placed statue of the resurrected Christ on a layered pedestal acts, I would argue, as a kind of *mise-en-abyme* within the work as a whole, providing a gloss on its symbolic meaning and on the ritual and votive character of the work. The candelabrum too was originally placed, not to one side as now, but at the centre of the choir and was animated, like the sacrifice scene, as part of a ceremony of light within the basilica. To appreciate the efficacy of the bronze's pedestal function and its imagery one must re-imagine its role in the liturgy of the Easter Vigil. In this still active ritual, light from the 'new fire' representing the Lumen Christi of the Resurrected Christ was brought into the church, darkened after Good Friday, and hailed by the congregation as it is processed to the east end. There the Paschal candle (at Padua already standing on the candlestick and reachable by temporary steps) was blessed and the deacon began the proclamation known as the *Exultet*, an injunction to rejoice at Christ's victory over death. In the middle of the proclamation the deacon paused to stick five grains of incense, representing Christ's wounds, into the wax. The *Exultet* represents this act as a sacrifice to God and the action turns the Paschal candle itself into a surrogate for the resurrected body of Christ.¹²⁶ The twelfth-century theologian Honorius of Autun, indeed, explained the allegorical meaning of the candle in just these terms: its wax signifying Christ's humanity, its wick his immortality and its flame his divinity.¹²⁷ Finally, at the statement 'Now also we know the praises of this pillar, which the shining fire enkindles to the honour of God', the candle was lit and, in a powerful gesture of expanding radiance from the sanctuary, other candles around the church would be lit from the Paschal flame.

Until its displacement to the Gospel side in 1593, the Paduan candlestick, set axially in relation to the high altar, reinforced the relationship between the candle, the body of Christ and the sacrifice of the Mass.¹²⁸ Viewed simultaneously as an *ornamento* of the high altar, as well as of the Santo and even the city, its success at its installation (long delayed by war) was resounding and immediate, with praise offered for the beauty and honour it brought to Padua.¹²⁹ The fact that it was the tallest work of its kind in northern Italy, even when compared with that of San Marco in Venice, is indicative of the monumental and implicitly competitive rôle it was designed to perform.

Patriotism was served by the medium as well as by the exceptional fusion of pagan forms and practices and Christian content in the Paschal candelabrum, a fusion extremely suggestive of humanist interests in the Veneto-Paduan milieu of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth century. The special part played there by bronzes in evaluating and instrumentalising the legacy of antiquity is well known.¹³⁰ But the extravagant ambition of

¹²⁶ The liturgy for the Easter Vigil, in its early twentieth century form is described in Adrian Fortescue and J.B. Connell, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, fourth ed. London 1932, 336-345. See also for its slightly changing forms and origins Archdale A. King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church*, London, New York and Toronto, 1957, 194-6 and 414-419 and *La semaine Sainte dans la Chapelle Pontificale*, Rome, 1834, 61-64 for this ceremony in its particular form in the Sistine chapel.

¹²⁷ Diane Zervas, *Orsanmichele a Firenze/ Orsanmichele Florence*, Florence 1996, I, 116, note 129, Honorius of Autun, *De divinis officiis*, PL, 172, col. 649, an exegesis also found in Johannes Beletus.

¹²⁸ Gonzati, *La Basilica*, I, 143 for the moving of the candlestick and its changed relationship to the marble base.

¹²⁹ The original installation of 1516 took place on the eve of Epiphany, enabling the candelabrum to register as an offering of thanks to God in a time of renewed peace. Sartori, *Documenti*, 200 for the Santo records documenting this and praising the work.

¹³⁰ Sandra Faccini, ('Ecchi e traggessioni dell'antico nella scultura padovana in rapporto all mediazione veneziana. Un ipotesi di ricerca per un capitolo di storia dell'arte veneta' in *Venezia e*

Riccio's bronze as a type of pedestal *all'antica* is, I think, also paralleled in relation to a different monument of humanist culture, a work of literary fiction. As Planiscig first recognised, the pyramidal form of Riccio's candelabrum was anticipated in the golden Obelisk of the Triune God described and illustrated in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, a vernacular romance published in Venice 1499 and attributed to the Venetian Dominican humanist Francesco Colonna (1433-1527).¹³¹ This highly original, not to say peculiar, composition, devotes large part of its ekphrastic display to detailed descriptions of imaginary ancient monuments and objects that, made to perform in various ways, overwhelm the perceptions of the dreamer, Poliphilo.¹³² The *Hypnerotomachia* offers insight into the more arcane aspects of enthusiasm for an imaginary antiquity in the Veneto, of which the candlestick is a superlative product. It also suggests the way such a richly crafted work as the candelabrum could be embedded in a number of ritual frameworks, real, but also rhetorical and imagined, such that it could be appreciated as at once functional, monumental, ancient, didactic, symbolic, curious and sensually stimulating.

Antiquity on a pedestal: the 'Idolino'

The ability to re-interpret the legacy of antique art and re-animate it is, as we have seen, a key component in the presentation of sculpture already much earlier in the fifteenth century. Genuine ancient marbles and bronzes, including non-figural works, were increasingly also restored and given supports by modern craftsmen for aristocratic or patrician collectors. Such re-orderings of the ancient fragment, sometimes accompanied by general restoration work, collectively known as 'acconciatura', was frequently the preserve of those credited with expertise in things antique - sculptors and goldsmiths such as Andrea del Verrocchio or 'Antico'.¹³³ Thus the presentation of objects made by a different hand, while implicitly an act of completion and tribute, was no humble undertaking but a work of interpretation, often helping to fix a specific meaning.¹³⁴

One of the most impressive examples of this function *vis-à-vis* an ancient sculpture in the Renaissance is another north Italian work, the very large bronze pedestal commissioned to support the nude youth that came later to be known as the 'Idolino' (now Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Florence, inv. no. 1637) (fig. 13).¹³⁵ The circumstances affecting

l'archeologia. Atti del convegno internazionale, Venice 1988, Rome, 1990, 184-7) argues for a greater freedom and expressiveness relative to Venice in Paduan interpretations of the repertory of the antique. For the tradition of bronze art in Padua see Davide Banzato, 'Da Donatello a Tiziano Aspetti. Centocinquant'anni di scultura in bronzo a Padova' in *Donatello e il suo tempo. Il bronzetto a Padova nel Quattrocento e Cinquecento*, exh. cat. Palazzo della Ragione, Padua, 2001, Milan, 2001, 17-37.

¹³¹ Planiscig, *Andrea Riccio*, 247. For the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* and the identity of Colonna see Maria T. Casella and Giovanni. Pozzi, *Francesco Colonna. Biografia e opere*, 2 vols. Padua 1959; Giovanni Pozzi and G. Gianella, 'Scienza antiquaria e letteratura. Il Feliciano. Il Colonna', *Storia della cultura veneta*, 3, 1, Vicenza, 1980, 459-477; Fortini Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 207-222; Curran, *Egyptian Renaissance*, 133-158.

¹³² Colonna's description of the ancient objects encountered by Poliphilo in his dream start from the base and work up so that the accumulation of superlatives, use of terms from the Greek and neologisms become a verbal equivalent not only to the *all'antica* forms described, but to the pervasive visual and material excess they represent.

¹³³ Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy*, London, 2001, 126-128; Arnold Nesselrath, 'Antico and Monte Cavallo', *Burlington Magazine*, 124, no. 951, 1982, 353-357.

¹³⁴ Barkan, *Unearthing*, 176-187

¹³⁵ Reinhard Kekulé, *Über die Bronzestatue die sogennanten Idolino*, Berlin, 1889; Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, no. 50, 240-41 for an account of its collection history and changing

the appearance of this pedestal, with its extensive animal ornaments and leaf-framed relief fields are not widely known and require some setting up. The life-size bronze boy it was made for was unearthed in Pesaro in October 1530. Generally now considered Augustan, it may initially have functioned as a lamp holder, but the work had a more prestigious Renaissance incarnation.¹³⁶ Immediately presented to Francesco Maria I della Rovere, Duke of Urbino it was restored for display shortly before his death (1537-8) as an ideal example of an ancient Greek *statua* and ultimately installed at the Duke's nearby *locus amoenus*, the magnificent extension to the Villa Imperiale.¹³⁷ This site, an imaginative rethinking of the villa models of both Bramante's Belvedere and Raphael's Villa Madama in Rome, was designed by Girolamo Genga largely, it seems, at the behest of Eleonora Gonzaga (1494-1570) who wanted it as a 'gift' for her husband.¹³⁸ According to a fragmentary biography of Francesco Maria I della Rovere, the bronze youth was placed in the 'Sala scoperta' or 'uncovered room'. This was, in fact, the large sunken courtyard of the villa extension.¹³⁹ Completed about 1538, this impressive space was constructed, according to its frieze inscription, as a place of repose between the Duke's military labours.¹⁴⁰ This is surely a significant interpretative context in which one can resituate the sculpture and its Renaissance base. Dominated by an architectural façade to the north with a central grotto and fountains, behind which hidden steps lead up to two garden terraces, the arrangement of the 'sala' is so theatrical as to have suggested to some a place of performance, though it

identity; Mario Iozzo ed. '*...Qual era tutto rotto. L'enigma dell'idolino di Pesaro. Indagini per un restauro*', Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 15 Dec. 1998 – 14 February 1999, esp. Mario Iozzo, 'La base dell'*Idolino*' 29-31, Luigi Beschi, 'L'idolino: storia, critica, fortuna', 7-19 which follows and slightly enlarges on his catalogue entry 'L'Idolino di Pesaro', in Maria Grazia Ciardi Dupré Dal Poggetto and Paolo Dal Poggetto, *Urbino e le Marche prima e dopo Raffaello*, exhib. cat. Palazzo Ducale, Urbino, Florence, 1983, 398-405; Mauro Cristofani, 'Per una storia del collezionismo archeologico nella Toscana granducale, I, I grandi bronzi', *Prospettiva*, 17, 1979, 4-15 at 4-5 for the sculpture's history in the Medici Granducal collection.

¹³⁶ Andreas Rumpf, 'Der Idolino', *Critica d'Arte*, 19-20, 1939, 17-27.

¹³⁷ The restoration was undertaken by Genga's brother-in-law Giovan Battista Belluzzi called 'Il Sammarino' and his son Bartolommeo. The former's diary (*Diari*, (1535-41) ed. cons. 1907, 78) says it was commissioned in 1537 and would therefore have been completed after Francesco Maria I's death.

¹³⁸ For the villa and its novel programme see Antonio Pinelli and Orietta Rossi, *Genga architetto: aspetti della cultura urbinata del primo 500*, Rome, 1971, 137-155; Luciana Finelli, 'Villa Imperiale a Pesaro. Spazi inaccessibili attorno al giardino', *2/Venti complessi edilizi italiani*, Turin, 1985, 215-232; Sabine Eiche, 'I Della Rovere mecenati dell'architettura', in *Pesaro nell'età dei Della Rovere*, III, 1, Venice, 1998, 231-264 at 235-242; Luciana Miotto, 'Rapporto fra villa e teatro nell'Imperiale di Girolamo Genga' in *I Della Rovere nell'Italia delle corti, II, Luoghi e opere d'arte*, Urbino, 2002, 27-47; Catherine King, 'Architecture, Gender and Politics: the Villa Imperiale at Pesaro', *Art History*, 29, no. 5, 2006, 796-826. Vasari (*Le vite*, ed. Milanese, VI, 319) refers to the painted decoration of the villa as well as to its courtyards, loggias, fountains and gardens, which attracted many illustrious visitors; he does not refer to the statue.

¹³⁹ Eiche, 'I Della Rovere', 244. '...e il piedistallo sopra il quale al Palagio Imperiale nella sala scoperta pose di Baccho il getto antiquo e amirando, può testificare ancho il piacer che egli haveva della scultura, intaglio e del getto' [Biblioteca Vaticana, Ms. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1037, f. 217] cited by Georg Gronau (*Documenti artistici urbinati*, Florence 1936, at 17-18). See also Cristina Frulli, in Ciardi Dupré Dal Poggetto and Dal Poggetto, *Urbino e le Marche*, 408.

¹⁴⁰ For the frieze inscription by Pietro Bembo see King, 'Architecture' 798.

not clear that it was ever actually used in this way.¹⁴¹ The 'Idolino', with his demonstrative gesture and speaking pedestal, was certainly a prime actor there and one who might have obstructed any temporary staging, given his axial placement facing towards the deep colonnaded atrium to the south. The figure appears there, seen from behind, in Francisco de Hollanda's view of the Villa from the north.¹⁴² (fig. 14) Hollanda's drawing seems to show a high cylindrical base with swags, perhaps an antique funerary urn, on a low, square socle or step, and it may be that this early view was taken before the provision of the bronze pedestal, though it may simply be an inaccurate rendering of the latter. What the drawing certainly clarifies is one motivation for the bronze base's monumentality at 146 cm high by c. 84 cm square; only on such a scale could it establish the small statue's visual significance within a courtyard some 15 metres deep and 30 metres wide.

There is no record of who designed and cast the pedestal, nor any modern consensus as to its date or attribution. On stylistic grounds, a Venetian workshop seems likely, and Middeldorf's attribution to the Venetian-trained Recanati firm of bronze casters Girolamo, Aurelio and Lodovico Lombardo, has recommended itself to a number of scholars on grounds of locality and on stylistic comparisons. These can be drawn, above all, with the vine-clad sacrament tabernacle bearing *all'antica* reliefs in Milan cathedral (1559-60), though an earlier date for the pedestal - closer to that of the statue's restoration and perhaps not many years after Francesco Maria I's death in 1538 - is preferable.¹⁴³

Mancini, reporting in 1531 on the excavation of the figure, mentions the earlier discovery on the same property of a granite panther, a beast associated with bacchic triumph. Together with the two bronze vine branches that accompanied the statue (and that are apparently held by the figure in Hollanda's drawing), these provided the archaeological 'evidence' for the identification of the god. The pedestal was clearly commissioned not

¹⁴¹ For the fragmentary evidence of 'theatrical' events sponsored by Francesco Maria I Della Rovere at Pesaro see Guido Arbizzoni, 'La 'Magnificientia' del principe, la festa e la città', in *Pesaro nell'età dei Della Rovere*, Venice, 2001 (*Historica Pisaurensia.. Collana di Studi diretta da Scevola Mariotti*, Vol. III, 2), 403-427 at 406-8. For the use of a similar courtyard at Rome for secular events see John Shearman, 'A Functional Interpretation of Villa Madama, *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 20, 1983, 315-327; for the possibility of theatrical performances see Eiche, 'I Della Rovere', 244 and Miotto, 'Rapporto'. For the gardens see Franco Panzini in 'Giardini rovereschi nella Pesaro del Cinquecento', in *Pesaro nell'età dei Della Rovere*, III, 1, at 269-272).

¹⁴² Hollanda's sketchbook now in the Monastery library of the Escorial is reproduced in Jorge Segurado, *Francisco d'Ollanda. Da sua vida e obras. Arquitecto da Renascença ao Serviço de D. João III, Pintor, Desenhador. Escritor, Humanista, 'Fac-simile' da carta a Miguel Ángel – 1553 e dos seus Tratados sobre Lisboa e Desnho – 1571*, Lisbon, 1970, 61, fig. 20.

¹⁴³ In a letter of Francesco Maria II della Rovere donating both statue and pedestal to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the pedestal is described as having been made for the former's father (Guidobaldo della Rovere), see Gronau, *Documenti artistici*, 18, but the letter, that mistakenly also says the statue was found under Guidobaldo, may be unreliable. For the attribution to the joint Lombardi workshop see Ulrich Middeldorf, 'Notes on Italian Bronzes (III), Girolamo, Aurelio and Lodovico Lombardo and the Base of the 'Idolino'', *Burlington Magazine*, 73, no. 429, 1938, 251-7. Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, (*Taste and the Antique*, 240) accept Middeldorf's attribution, as does Jeremy Warren ('Bronzes in the Werner Collection', *Apollo*, 155, May 2002, 25 and note 30) and the attribution to Girolamo Lombardo is proposed by Cristina Frulli, ('Girolamo Lombardo (attr.). La base dell'Idolino', cat. no. 114 in Ciardi Dupré Dal Poggetto and Dal Poggetto, *Urbino e le Marche*, 406-8) citing Girolamo's connection with Jacopo Sansovino in Venice in the late 30s and early 40s. She prefers a date in the 1540s. An engraving after the reliefs is in F. Gregori and Thomas Patch, *La porta principale del Battistero di Firenze*, Florence, 1773 (as by Ghiberti). The pedestal and its provenance is first discussed at length in G. Bencivenni Pelli, *Saggio storico della R. Galleria di Firenze*, II, Florence, 1779, 177.

only to present the freestanding figure as a major work of Greek sculpture, appropriate to a grandiose, classicising setting, but, like the *sala scoperta* itself, but to show-case the wealth, learning and culture of its latter-day owners. Through words and images, the pedestal stabilised the prestigious identification of the bronze more precisely as an early cult object, an idol, through association with the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. On the front of the pedestal are symmetrically inscribed the words: 'ut potui huc/ veni / delphis et /fratre re/licto' 'As [soon as] I was able I came here having left behind Delphi and my brother [Phoebus]'

The pedestal form is basically architectonic but with a smaller transitional socle area beneath the statue itself and with decorative paraphernalia inventively adapted from that of funerary altars. These include goat's head protomes, here supporting (bacchic) ivy garlands, double-headed vessels issuing entwined snakes and what appear to be aquatic 'panthers' at the lower corners. This ornamental vocabulary thus strongly reinforces the cultic quality of the pedestal as an 'alta ara' (altar). The whole is raised on a deep socle bearing a prominent wave pattern echoing the panthers' tails, a feature that, together with the borders of vines and ivy leaves, further supports the idea that the pedestal was designed in the knowledge of the sculpture's rhetorical placement as well as its general setting, before a garden and water feature.

The very prominent inscription, like that of the courtyard and façade of the villa, was composed by no less than Pietro Bembo, the unrivalled scholar of Greek and antiquarian (friend of de Leone), who like many humanists learned his epigraphic skill from studying, among other things, ancient funerary urns.¹⁴⁴ In a letter of 28 July 1533 to the Venetian ambassador, Conte Giovan Jacopo Leonardi, Bembo suggested the pedestal should read: "Ut potui huc veni Phebo Delphisque relictis" ('As [soon as] I was able I came here having left behind Phoebus and Delphi') with the further explanation that 'Bacchus was worshipped in antiquity in Delphi, together with Apollo'.¹⁴⁵ As Iozzo has argued, the inscription, slightly adjusted on the pedestal, refers to the cult of Dionysos at the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi – a sanctuary which Plutarch (*De E apud Delphos*, 9, E 388) claimed also belonged to Phoebus' half brother Dionysus, to whom it was entrusted in the winter months.¹⁴⁶ Thus, for the initiated, the inscription spoke to the function of the new part of the Pesaro villa as a summer residence symbolically associated with bucolic retreat.¹⁴⁷

The lack of any inscription on the back face is probably due to its position, since the courtyard's *mise-en-scene* privileged the frontal view with the triumphal architecture forming an appropriate backdrop. Rather than dionysiac revels, the side panels contain two elegantly composed scenes (30 x 44 cm) from which the god himself is absent. These beautifully chased works, modulating between very low and high relief, can be understood as

¹⁴⁴ For Bembo as a collector as well as composer of epigraphic inscriptions, see esp. Giulio Bodon, *Veneranda Antiquitas: Studi sull'eredità dell'antico nella Rinascenza veneta*, Bern et al 2005, 49-67. He was more directly involved in restoring another bronze work, brought from Rhodes, in the Venetian Martini collection. This was the so-called 'Berlin Adorante', see Giulio Bodon, *Enea Vico fra memoria e miraggio della classicità*, Rome, 1997, 118 and 168; Irene Favaretto, *Arte antica e cultura antiquaria nelle collezioni venete al tempo della Serenissima*, Rome, 1990, 105 and 125-6.

¹⁴⁵ Frulli, 'Girolamo Lombardo', 406.

¹⁴⁶ Iozzo, 'Il base'.

¹⁴⁷ For the villa as summer residence: Pinelli and Rossi, *Genga architetto*, 138. Miotto ('Rapporto', 28 – 30) argues that the Villa Imperiale was built specifically as the summer wing of a double residence, of which the old Villa Sforza was the winter residence.

completed by the 'triumphant' figure of the bronze *statua* above.¹⁴⁸ That to the left (fig. 15) constitutes an highly unusual 'Triumph of Ariadne'.¹⁴⁹ Bacchus's mortal bride, holding a staff, is borne in a panther-drawn biga accompanied by beautifully muscled satyrs, and crowned with the bacchic vine by a nymph, much as a victor in a Roman triumph.¹⁵⁰ The pose of the victrix, and the nearest panther are especially close to a grisaille fresco in the Sala della Calunnia of the adjacent old wing of the villa showing the 'Triumph of a goddess' in a lion-drawn chariot.¹⁵¹ The episode, associated both with Bacchus's nuptials and his victorious return from Indian conquests was appropriate both to Della Rovere's role as a military captain and the inscription of the Villa as his wife's gift.

The second, equally dynamic, side panel shows a nymph or priestess pouring a libation over a burning tripod altar to which a reluctant sacrificial goat is dragged by a man in phrygian dress (fig. 16). Those familiar with Greek literature might have known that it was from the phrygians that Bacchus adopted his religious rites.¹⁵² Certainly it this scene - whose imagery may derive from a Latin source, Virgil's *Georgics* in which the sacrifice of the he-goat to Bacchus is described – that constructs the bronze *statua* as a cult image of Dionysus.¹⁵³ The relief thus affirms the implication of Bembo's inscription that the god has issued directly from his temple at Delphi. He appears during those summer months when Phoebus/Apollo, according to legend, had returned to Delphi from Hyperborea.

In both scenes, unusual prominence is given to the female protagonist. Though at one level she is evidently subordinate, an explanatory support to the main actor, it is conceivable that the active role of Ariadne in the Triumph was intended as an oblique tribute to Eleonora Gonzaga, who resided at Pesaro during the summer, often in her husband's absence. The highly cultivated daughter of Isabella d'Este, Eleonora was a major protagonist in the

¹⁴⁸ The pedestals is assembled from four large sections of hollow, four-sided mouldings, divided by the four side panels, with just the triumph relief let in separately.

¹⁴⁹ My thanks to Jeremy Warren for discussing the pedestal's attribution with me and for pointing out the version of the relief in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (see Nicholas Penny, *Catalogue of European Sculpture in the Ashmolean Museum. 1540 to the Present Day*, I, *Italian*, Oxford, 1992, cat. no. 55, 73-4, also detailing later copies in other media).

¹⁵⁰ A panel in the Pinacoteca of Gubbio attributed to Matteo Balducci (first half of the sixteenth century) and adapted from a sarcophagus relief apparently also shows Ariadne without Bacchus on the chariot, though the figure is androgynous. Since Gubbio was a Della Rovere possession it could conceivably bear some patronal relation to the Pesaro bronze. See Paul Schubring, *Cassoni: Truhen und Truhenbilder der italienischen Frührenaissance: ein Beitrag zur Profanmalerei im Quattrocento*, Leipzig, 1915-1923, no. 518, Vol.1, 344 and pl. CXX, incorrectly identifying Silenus as Bacchus.

¹⁵¹ It may derive either from it or a common source. Paolo Dal Poggetto, 'La diffusione del verbo raffaellesco: la Villa Imperiale; l'attività di Raffaellino del Colle', *Pesaro nell'età dei Della Rovere*, III, 2, Venice, 2001 203-245 at 215-6, draws the comparison, incorrectly referring to the pedestal scene as the Triumph of Diana. Angela Scilimati, ('Valore, virtù, amore. Storia di una corte rinascimentale nella Villa Imperiale di Pesaro', in Paolo Dal Poggetto ed., *I Della Rovere, Piero della Francesca, Raffaello, Tiziano*, exh. cat., Milan, 2004, 143-148) argues that the grisaille scene shows the goddess Isis in triumph.

¹⁵² For a summary of some of the Latin and above all Greek sources on the triumphs and cult of Dionysos known in the earlier Renaissance see Phyllis P. Bober, 'Appropriation Contexts: Décor, Furor Bacchicus, Convivium', in eds. Alina Payne, Ann Kuttner, Rebekah Smick eds, *Antiquity and its Interpreters*, Cambridge, 2000, 229-243 at 231-232.

¹⁵³ Virgil, *Georgics*, Book II, 393-395 'ergo rite suum Baccho dicemus honorem....et ductus cornu stabit sacer hircus ad aram'.

extension and re-modelling of the villa while Francesco Maria was on campaign.¹⁵⁴ Though clearly not acting in isolation, Eleonora was rhetorically given credit for the Villa Nuova in Bembo's inscription over the south façade of the villa and, as Scilimati has argued, she was implicitly accorded a parallel tribute to her husband in the mythological cycle of grisailles adorning the aforementioned Sala della Calunnia.¹⁵⁵

The tailor-made base of the 'Idolino', which remained with the sculpture when it was given to Ferdinand II de' Medici by Francesco Maria II della Rovere in 1630, is not only richly classicising, it is exceptional for its magnificent material and adaptation to its physical and rhetorical setting. Rather than referring directly to its Renaissance owners, however, the pedestal produces an eloquent cultic significance for an ancient bronze, and, being made of bronze itself and inscribed in Latin, effectively substituted as an antique itself. The inscription, written as speech, gives direct agency to the god as one who has arrived post haste from his Grecian temple. Though released from duty he is still, like the Della Rovere rulers, triumphant, and 'peace-bringing'.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, Bacchus could have been seen here as an appropriate figure for the off-duty military leader following the construction of the god in just these terms in the historical writing of Diodorus Siculus.¹⁵⁷ The imagery of the base must, therefore, have been devised with the help of someone familiar with the scenography of the Villa Imperiale and with the Della Rovere agenda. While the bacchic subject and pagan imagery of transformation and sacrifice addressed to an élite audience are perfectly attuned to the ethos of a villa *all'antica*, its propriety is striking: the bacchantes' snake ornament is, for example, discreetly absorbed into the image of a cult vessel.¹⁵⁸ In the learned address of the base we are reminded of the cultural milieu evoked by Castiglione's *Calandria*, performed for Francesco Maria I Della Rovere at Urbino in 1513, to which Miotto and others have alluded, but also of Jacopo Sadoletto's platonic dialogue *Phaedrus*.¹⁵⁹ This, elegant dispute between the values of philosophy and rhetoric was fictively located in the convivial surroundings of Jacopo Galli's suburban villa, home of Michelangelo's drunken *Bacchus*.¹⁶⁰

Here the resemblance in setting ends however, for as we know from Heemskerck's drawings of the early 1530s, the Galli garden was, like Michelangelo's drunken god, a far less ordered affair. In addition to the Bacchus placed on cylindrical socle, perhaps a reused column section, a motley collection of ancient works included a reclining nymph on a platform raised, idol-like, on a small column (fig. 17). While some collectors were keen to order and mark

¹⁵⁴ 'Francischo Mariae Duci Metaurensium a bellis redeunti Leonora uxor animi eius causa villa exaedificavit (Gronau, *Documenti artistici*, 9).

¹⁵⁵ Scilimati, 'Valore, virtù, amore'.

¹⁵⁶ Bober ('Appropriation', 233) refers to Horace's second *Epistle* for these aspects of Bacchus in his manifestation as Liber Pater.

¹⁵⁷ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, III, 64, 65, 72. See Michaela Marek's argument for the relevance of Diodorus' writings for the conception of Bacchus as a god of military triumph and peace-bringer in relation to the themes of Alfonso D'Este's *camerino* (*Ekphrasis und Herrscherallégorie. Antike Bildbeschreibung bei Tiziano und Leonardo*, Worms, 1985, 63-9).

¹⁵⁸ In Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* (9, 257-260) the bacchante Ino, who brought Dionysos' rites to Delphi who, takes, in desperation, the snake coiled around the tripod there and wreathed it into her hair.

¹⁵⁹ Miotto, 'Rapporto', 35-7.

¹⁶⁰ Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, Chapter XII, esp. 183-4. See also Bober, 'Appropriation' for the figure of Bacchus in humanist discourse and the antiquarian culture of collecting.

their sculptural trophies, clearly standards for the display of ancient statuary, even in the mid sixteenth century, were still in the making. This allowed the unruly, puzzling fragment to retain something of the incongruous allure that Roman objects described in the *Mirabilia* literature had done already in the Middle Ages.¹⁶¹ The Pesaro Bacchus by contrast is imaginatively brought to order and visibly given an illustrious past.

The inhabited pedestal

Literary descriptions of ancient works by Pliny the Elder or Pausanias communicated the votive function of ancient bases but rarely offered more specific testimony. In one case we are told, for example, that the pedestal of Phidias' famous cryselephantine statue of Pallas at Athens was enriched with a story showing twenty 'figures of newborn gods' called the 'Birth of Pandora'¹⁶² Pausanias (II, 27.2) describes an ivory and gold statue by Asklepios on whose supporting throne were carved heroic battles against the fearful and monstrous, amongst them Bellerophon fighting the Chimera and Perseus carrying off Medusa's head.¹⁶³ It is an iconic version of this latter encounter that is represented in Benvenuto Cellini's great bronze for Cosimo I de' Medici (18) and it may be no coincidence that Perseus's pedestal, produced from about 1547 to 1554, also offers for it a myth of origin. With his father Zeus to the fore, the child Perseus beside his mother Danäe to the left (19), his protectress Pallas to the right and Mercury behind, a series of bronze figures in niches ornament the base in poses that are variants on the impressive theme of the principal figure. Below, and somewhat apart from the altar-like pedestal proper, carved in marble, is a further bronze element, the narrative relief showing a subsequent moment to the slaying of the Gorgon, the hero's rescue of the chained Andromeda. As Cole has pointed out, it was, according to Ovid, as a postscript to *this* victory that Perseus built three altars and sacrificed to the gods Mercury, Jupiter and Pallas.¹⁶⁴ A place of origin for the statue it supports, the pedestal, for those familiar with the Perseus legend from Ovid, also folds back into the Perseus' myth as a site of dedication to the gods, whom Cellini shows as still invigorate in bronze, both objects/idols and beings.

Evoking in a stylish *all'antica* visual language the original cultic function of bronze statuary, Cellini's approach to the pedestal is also characteristically that of a goldsmith 'setting' a prized piece. As, arguably, the most ambitious pedestal of the entire sixteenth-century it embraces sculptural qualities at the expense of architectural ones and revives, if it in no way imitates, the kind of inventive design associated with Florentine Quattrocento goldsmiths,

¹⁶¹ For perceptions of antiquity from the Middle Ages see esp. Frugoni, 'L'antichità', 5-72. For the display of collections of antiquities in the Renaissance see, for example, Gesche, 1971; Claudio Franzoni, "Rimembranze d'infinita cose". Le collezioni rinascimentali di antichità, in ed. Settis *cit.*, 299-360; Matthias Winner, Bernard Andreae and Carlo Pietrangeli eds., *Il Cortile delle Statue. Der Statuenhof des Belvedere im Vatikan*, Akten des internationalen Kongresses 1992, Mainz am Rhein 1998; Henning Wrede, 'Antikenstudium und Antikenaufstellung in der Renaissance', *Kölner Jahrbuch*, 26, 1993, 11-25; Kathleen Wren Christian, 'The De' Rossi Collection of Ancient Sculptures, Leo X and Raphael', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 65, 2002, 132-200; *eadem*, 'From Ancestral Cults to Art: The Santacroce Collection of Antiquities', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, ser. IV, 14, 2002, 255-272; *eadem*, 'Instauratio and Pietas: The della Valle Collections of Ancient Sculpture', in eds. Penny and Schmidt, *Collecting*, 33-65.

¹⁶² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Chap. XXXVI, Bk. 4, 18 (eds. John Bostock, and Henry T. Riley).

¹⁶³ Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, I, xxiv. 7, (transl. W.H.S. Jones, London and Cambridge Mass, Vol. I, 1918)

¹⁶⁴ Cole, *Cellini*, 68-9.

bronze casters and marble carvers such as Donatello, Antonio del Pollaiuolo or the Da Maiano brothers. By entering into a deliberate dialogue with the earlier sculptures of the piazza, the *Perseus* particularly invited comparison with another Medici bronze work, the *Judith and Holofernes* column, by then also situated under the Loggia de' Lanzi. Though the pedestal itself is not as high as that of the *Judith*, it ingeniously integrates into, and borrows from, the height of the parapet in order to produce more elevated proportions. The marble panel framing the relief is superimposed over the Loggia wall and serves as a kind of historiated predella. Optically the relief registers as connected to the pedestal and gives the whole the appearance of a column.

It has been convincingly argued that the reversal of the relations of vanquished to victor relative to the *Judith* effectively reinstated the patriarchal order; it has also been said that *Perseus*, holding aloft the head of the slain Gorgon, acted as a reminder of the power of the state to execute its enemies.¹⁶⁵ Since Cosimo I had intended at the outset only a figure of *Perseus*, such a provocative implication cannot have been deliberate, but in the statue's final form it was hard to avoid.¹⁶⁶ Certainly the work was not, as its bronze ancestors were, being held up as an example to Florentine citizens. Instead it was intimately associated with the individual figure of the autocratic prince, Cosimo I, whose astrological sign of Capricorn was referred to in the protome ornaments of the pedestal. Cosimo too was official head of the Accademia Fiorentina, of which the composer of the elegant Latin epigrams that give voice to the statuettes, Benedetto Varchi, was a leading light. The raising up of this embodiment of masculine potency reflected, for better or worse, directly onto Cosimo's rule.

While the pedestal seems, like the figure of Medusa, to represent another bid by Cellini to squeeze more out of the commission than it had immediately afforded, his own identity is not directly alluded to on the base, rather his name appears prominently on the strap crossing the hero's naked torso, imitating Michelangelo's inscription on his only signed work, the Vatican *Pietà*, but making Cellini's own agency explicitly heroic. In truth it is not as common as one might imagine even in this later period for the pedestal itself to advertise the name of the sculptor, as opposed to the donor. Among Cellini's Florentine contemporaries it was above all Baccio Bandinelli, always anxious to present his work in competitive terms and adopt a socially elevated persona, who regularly appended his name to the socles of his monumental marbles including the *Hercules and Cacus* that looked disapprovingly across at the *Perseus* from the steps of the Palazzo Vecchio.¹⁶⁷ Only considerably later, in Venice, did Alessandro Vittoria begin consistently and insistently to inscribe his name on the low integral socles of his sculptures both large and small.¹⁶⁸ The immediate spur to this practice may well have come in Vittoria's case from the example of Jacopo Sansovino but more broadly it is indebted to suppositions about antique practice, not least the misleading late antique inscriptions *OPUS FIDIAE* and *OPUS PRAXITELIS* on the structures supporting the marble *Horse Tamers* on the Quirinal in Rome.

¹⁶⁵ Yael Even, 'The Loggia dei Lanzi: A Showcase of Female Subjugation', *Women's Art Journal*, 12, 1991, 10-14. For the *Perseus* bronze as a despotic sign in the framework actual, political and rhetorical, of the ducal city see especially Breidecker, *Florenz*, 25-33.

¹⁶⁶ Shearman (',Art or Politics') has argued rather for the *Perseus*'s deliberate continuity with the republican ',salus publica' theme, yet knowledge of the forces now responsible for Florentine ',public health' must, as Shearman would have recognised, have radically effected the work's reception.

¹⁶⁷ Weil-Garris Brandt, 'On Pedestals', 405 for the significance of the inscription on the *Hercules and Cacus*, acutely noting that Bandinelli's name on the base 'made Bandinelli a Medici surrogate'.

¹⁶⁸ See Victoria Avery, 'Alessandro Vittoria's Socles: Shaping and Naming', in ed. Gerstein, *Display*, 16-32 at 18 and 20-24.

Although Cellini gave the working of the marble over to two professional carvers, his agency is everywhere displayed in the pedestal by an overflow of visual wit. The inventions of grotesque ornaments especially invite interpretation as the product of Cellini's own visual and verbal *fantasia*. Purposefully delighting and affrighting the viewer, night creatures, deeply undercut, frame the inscribed cartouches. Sunken-eyed death masks belching hellish or sacrificial smoke crown the niches. Punning 'pedes' detached from their caryatid owners (whose Ephesian breast-plates are another kind of mask) emerge as a second base below the lower moulding. These motifs show a concern to vary but also elaborate the themes of the main group, not least those of horror, dismemberment, and excess. Employing the lurking imagery of death or mortification they also frame the superior 'life' both of the statue and the pedestal's own sculpture gallery of bronzes, cast by Cellini himself.¹⁶⁹ While Medusa's contorted, scarcely-dead limbs spill over from the group above, Mercury, in fact, is poised to defy entirely the containment of his marble niche. The flight of Cellini's fantasy, manifest as a knowing restaging of antique motifs, ornament and the inventive traditions of Florentine sculptors and goldsmiths, pushes beyond the boundaries of the pedestal. Here the sculptor's own astrological deity is self-evidently Mercury.¹⁷⁰

To move from Donatello's Medici bronzes to Cellini's *Perseus* of a century later is to trace a familiar arc in the history of freestanding statuary. In this article I have sought to bring into focus what such a Renaissance revival of bronze statuary, 'rests on', focussing on pedestals as characterising features that, because of their physical and ontological separateness from the main sculptural content, could gain a particular purchase on it. As *ornamenti* the substantial pedestals designed for bronzes almost always come 'after', both as furnishing and as elaboration. As such, they often escape the viewer's conscious attention altogether. But high pedestals impacted enormously on the command of the statue over the viewer and closer attention to them highlights the increasingly eloquent ways that they enter into a dialogue with the objects they sustain. While occasionally at the centre of ritual practices, broadly defined, it is rather the pedestal's appeal to an imaginative ritual setting that emerges as distinctive from the later fifteenth century, sometimes going as far as to provide an imagined before- and after-life for the principal figure. By evoking antique practice or even specifying a sacral context, the pedestal added value to the sculpture by enriching, or even forging, its status both as a presence and as a work of art. Nor does this staging as art in any way diminish the political functions or implications of freestanding statues, indeed the reverse. It is precisely in the honorific and ordering work given to the high pedestal that the triumphalist ideology of Italian Renaissance states appears at its most blatant and the related social anxiety to distinguish the privileged spectator is most clearly revealed.

Word count: 14,657

¹⁶⁹ In one of Agnolo Bronzino's encomiastic poems, he addresses the statuettes of the base in terms that parallel the 'burning love' and sweet pain that generated the child Perseus to Cellini's own pains of labour, see Cole, *Cellini*, 56-8.

¹⁷⁰ The astrological tradition according to which inventors of all kinds, including goldsmiths and sculptors, were 'children' of Mercury is represented most famously in the fifteenth-century *Mercury* engraving from the series of the Planets attributed to Baccio Baldini.