

Chapter 18

VIRGIL'S FORGE

The Afterlife of a Sculptural Legend in Aragonese Naples

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Historians of fifteenth-century sculpture traditionally distinguish works that are portable from those that are site-specific, and in general this distinction is warranted. After all, an artist who made a medal, a plaquette, or a statuette – all genres that became newly fashionable in the Quattrocento – did so with full knowledge that the object he made would be held, carried, or circulated. Scaled down and operating freely from any one spatial context, these artifacts often anticipated the vast distances they would span – as diplomatic gifts, for example – and even the diverse audiences they might reach: in their subject matter, for instance, which, being predominantly mythological, had the attraction of being universal. Site-specific works meanwhile, especially those of a monumental sort, were different. Made for a fixed location and often integrated into an architectural fabric, these objects were subject to institutional constraints and typically addressed a local, or localized, audience.

Complicating such routines, however, are the many apparently “immobile” sculptures that, for different reasons, became orphaned from their original sites: some of them physically relocated, and others never reaching their intended destination in the first place but eventually settling elsewhere. The pathways they followed to their new homes could be more or less unruly; and their relocation could occasion a radical shift in meaning, with an object conceived for one site then made to bear the politics, myths, or ideologies of another. Such was the case with Donatello’s *Judith and Holofernes* (ca. 1455–60; Fig. 64) – to take but one well-known example – which, set atop its column in the garden of the Medici family palace, originally embodied that family’s political might.



Figure 236 Donatello, *Horse Head (Testa Carafa)*, ca. 1455, bronze, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples. Photo: Daniel M. Zolli

Yet, when the republican government moved the multi-ton, metallic ensemble to the town hall, following its expulsion of the Medici in 1494, the sculpture came to signify just the opposite: namely, the republic's oppression of Medici tyranny.¹ A parallel situation obtained in the ancient statuary being unearthed, with increased regularity from the mid-Quattrocento, throughout Italy. Owing to the spatial and temporal displacement resulting from their long hibernation underground,

these objects almost always had new viewpoints assigned to them.

Rather than plot individual itineraries or cases of interpretive slippage, the present essay focuses on one particularly salient instance of this phenomenon: Donatello's so-called *Horse Head*, today exhibited in Naples' Museo Archeologico Nazionale (Fig. 236). Measuring nearly six feet tall from neck to forelock, this bronze object began its life as part of an equestrian portrait



Figure 237 Unknown artist, *Tavola Strozzi*, detail showing the Castel Nuovo, ca. 1465, tempera on panel, Museo di San Martino, Naples. Photo: Daniel M. Zolli

commissioned by Alfonso of Aragon for a second-story niche on the imposing arch, and entryway, to his principal fortress in Naples, the Castel Nuovo (Figs. 237–238). Commenced shortly after the Spanish king wrested control of Naples from the French royal dynasty, the Angevins, the monumental gateway at Castel Nuovo served to commemorate, in durable marble, Alfonso’s triumphal entry into the city in 1442–3; and it announced, in a broad epigraph

Figure 238 Aragon Arch, 1443–75, marble, Castel Nuovo, Naples. Photo: Daniel M. Zolli





Figure 239 Pisanello or workshop, design for the entrance façade of the Castel Nuovo, inv. L.527, ca. 1448–50, pen and ink and brown wash over black chalk on parchment, Museum Boymans van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Photo: DeAgostini Picture Library/Scala, Florence

spanning the arch's front, his intention to transform the castle into the seat of a vast Mediterranean empire stretching from Catalonia to Sicily.² In the event, Donatello's labor never progressed beyond this *Head*, although an early design for the arch gives us an approximate idea of the monument's anticipated effect (Fig. 239).³ Cast and finished in 1455, the fragment languished for more than a decade in the sculptor's Florentine workshop, the contents of

which the Medici inherited following his death in 1466.⁴ Then, in 1471, Lorenzo de' Medici visited Alfonso's son and successor, Ferrante of Aragon, in Naples and, seeing the completed arch and its conspicuously empty niche, ascertained what purpose the *Head* had been meant to serve.⁵ Upon returning home, he shipped the *Head* to Count Diomedes Carafa – the principal administrator, or “razionarius,” of the Aragonese court – who installed it in the courtyard of his family palace in Naples.⁶

From this new setting, the *Head* underwent a change in identity, gradually shedding its association with Donatello, over the next century, and acquiring the status of an antiquity instead. More astonishing still, the *Head* was heralded as if it was a fortuitous remnant from a colossal bronze horse that had supposedly stood before the city's ancient Temple of Neptune and which was popularly attributed to Virgil (both temple and horse were allegedly destroyed in the fourteenth century). By the late Middle Ages, it was broadly accepted that the ancient poet had died, and was buried, in Naples. But according to one of the city's unique and most enduring traditions, he had also populated the city with extraordinary *mirabilia*, many of them cast objects, capable of effecting prodigies: a metal fly, and grasshopper, that repelled insects from Naples; a trumpeter that diverted winds harmful to the city's agriculture; and, most relevant to our case, a bronze horse that cured its living counterparts of infirmities.⁷

We have no hard data about when, or by what means, the myth of Virgil's horse first took root in the popular oral traditions of Naples, although textual florilegia vouch for the story's existence already from the beginning of the thirteenth century.⁸ More certain is that the legend, and its companions, assumed their authoritative form in the city's first vernacular history, the so-called *Cronaca di Parthenope* (or “Chronicle of Parthenope”), compiled around 1350 in circles connected to the Angevin court and circulated widely in manuscripts thereafter.⁹ In the *Cronaca's* telling, Virgil had “forged” the bronze horse “under a [favorable] constellation of stars.”¹⁰

So effective was the statue, in fact, that the city's blacksmiths – makers of protective horse shoes – lost business and, fearing further losses in revenue, perforated the horse's stomach, causing it to lose its "virtute" – its strength or power. Then, in 1322, the statue was "converted" ("convertito") into bells for the city's Cathedral, the verb implying not just formal, but symbolic, transformation, from paganism to Christianity.¹¹ The reinterpretation of Donatello's *Head* in this legendary key – its perceived link to the city's storied bronze horse, until then presumed destroyed – was not the result of primitive credulity. On the contrary, many individuals regarded as authorities in the field of art accepted the work's ancient provenance, if not always automatically, and if not always with reference to Virgil. In fact, no less an expert on sculpture than Giorgio Vasari mistook the piece as ancient (in the first, less tightly managed, version of his *Lives of the Artists*, from 1550), arriving at that belief through personal observation and on the strength of local, Neapolitan opinion.¹² In these same years, the antiquarian writer Giovanni Tarcagnola drew the connection in terms starker still, noting that the *Head* could "easily be a relic of [the] ancient bronze horse [before the Temple of Neptune]."¹³ Over the ensuing centuries, Winckelmann, Goethe, and countless other distinguished critics echoed this claim, encouraged no doubt by an epigraph exhibited in Carafa's palace, beginning sometime before 1803, explicitly linking the *Head* to Virgil's horse: "Here you see the head; the [Cathedral bells] preserve the body."¹⁴ Indeed, as late as the early 2000s publications still entertained the *Head's* classical origin; although recent archival work, most systematically by Francesco Caglioti, has established its Donatellesque authorship beyond doubt.¹⁵

Here I will be concerned less with the longevity of the *Head's* misattribution than with its earliest lines of transmission. It will be argued, in what follows, that the groundwork for the

Head's realignment with Neapolitan antiquity was laid at the very outset of its arrival in Naples in 1471. To be sure, external factors facilitated this interpretive shift: the *Head's* estrangement from its would-be home on the Aragon Arch, for example, or its relocation from Florence to Carafa's palace. But it is equally the case that Carafa himself, and the king, Ferrante of Aragon, may have been participants in promoting the object's Virgilian aura. In this respect, the *Head* cannot be disentangled from the ideological concerns of Naples' king and his adviser, whose shared curiosity for the city's ancient history, manifest in their archaeological, antiquarian, and literary pursuits, was motivated by a desire to bolster their authority in the present. Naturally, Ferrante's and Carafa's investments differed in substance – one being a foreign invader, the other a native Neapolitan – but both, as we shall see, perceived the political expediency of aligning the object with a distinguished local symbol.

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The earliest indication of the *Head's* Neapolitan advent comes from a letter, dated July 12, 1471, in which Diomede Carafa thanks his Florentine ally, Lorenzo de' Medici, for "the head of the horse." This letter is the only written testimony, to survive at least, of the count's thoughts on the *Head* and its display and should therefore be quoted in its entirety:

I received the head of the horse Your Lordship deigned to send me, about which I remain as content as I could about anything I have ever desired, and thank Your Lordship infinitely for such a worthy gift . . . I inform you that I have located it well in my house, so that one can see it from every angle; [and] I assure you that it will be a reminder of Your Lordship not only to me but to my sons, who will constantly remember Your Lordship and will feel obliged to you, valuing the

love you have shown by such a gift and ornament to the said house. If I can serve Your Lordship in any way, I beg you to command me, because [I shall gladly] do it.¹⁶

As Leah Clark has rightly noted, this exchange – Lorenzo's offering, and the letter from Carafa it elicited – closely follows the conventions of ritual gift-giving among fifteenth-century Italy's ruling elites. In Clark's analysis, gifts like the *Head*, and others that Lorenzo gave to Carafa, including six antique bronze statues, served as a strategic means by which the de facto ruler of Florence solidified his social and political ties to the Aragonese court.¹⁷ That he did so primarily through Carafa is unsurprising. Within courtly networks, it was evidently common knowledge that the count held "the heart of [King Ferrante] in [his] hand," as one contemporary put it, and even operated, in the words of another, as the "second king" of Naples.¹⁸ In this way, the *Head* can be seen as a successful bid, on Lorenzo's part, to endear himself to Carafa.¹⁹ The language of Carafa's letter captures this, not only in its vociferous praise of Lorenzo, and of the "horse head" itself, but also in its vow to give the "worthy gift" the display it deserved. Well placed so as to be viewed "from every angle" by passersby, it would be the crown jewel of Carafa's courtyard, acting as a continual reminder to Carafa, and to his sons, of the "love shown [to them]" by their Florentine ally. Given the letter's rhetorical priorities, it is perhaps understandable that Carafa omits to mention the fragment's history, as well as its maker, Donatello, by name. That the count was conscious of such information cannot be doubted, however, inasmuch as he had been party to the arch's design, and thus to plans for the equestrian monument, just sixteen years earlier. In other words, by reclassifying the fragment as a "gift," Carafa transformed it primarily into a deposit of his relationship with Lorenzo, with the previous context simply presumed.

At the same time, Carafa's word choice is not so easily dismissed. For as much as the designation "horse head" ("testa del cavallo") was a statement of fact, it was also a conceptual choice, hinting perhaps that the object's distinguishing characteristic was, for Carafa, neither its Donatellesque authorship, nor its ties to Alfonso V, but its *form*. Cropped sharply at the neck, the *Head* cuts an imposing profile, its scale not only inducing awe, but – as Carafa implied in his letter – practically demanding the viewer's bodily participation, especially when the work was viewed, as it had been at Carafa's palace, near ground level. A later engraving of the courtyard and its contents, from a popular seventeenth-century guidebook, affords a rough idea of the *Head's* effect (Fig. 240).²⁰ The *Head's* immediacy is enhanced, moreover, by a physiognomy that Donatello has exaggerated to the extreme. We now recognize this as a textbook case of the sculptor's site-specific approach to facture.²¹ Realizing that the monument would be installed far overhead, that is, Donatello magnified the horse's most salient features, enlarging its eyes, nostrils, and mouth to the point of abstraction (Fig. 241) and modeling in high relief its veins and the puckered skin limning its jawline, all to enhance its legibility from afar. It was these very distortions, in fact, that scholars first adduced to establish a connection to the Aragon Arch.²² Yet, to a casual observer in the fifteenth century, the *Head* aroused no such association, lacking as it did any telltale trace of its former charge: no inscription or iconographic prompt to link it to Alfonso or to his arch. What was apparent to them, from the horizontal cut across its neck, was only that the head once belonged to a much larger work. The matter of whether that work had been finished and then partly destroyed (Virgil's statue), or never completed at all (Donatello's), meanwhile, was left suspended.

In important respects, such ambiguity is a natural consequence of the *Head's* fragmentariness.



Figure 240 Antonio Bulifon, “Palazzo del cavallo di bronzo,” paper and ink, engraving in Pompeo Sarnelli, *Guida de’ forestieri* (Naples; G. Rosselli, 1697), facing p. 44. Photo: Courtesy of the John Work Garrett Library, the Sheridan Libraries, the Johns Hopkins University

An instructive contemporary parallel, noted earlier, is the ancient statuary being exhumed in the latter half of the fifteenth century, especially in Rome. In a classic book on the subject, Leonard Barkan discerned a marked tendency, among Renaissance viewers, to interpret the histories of these objects in radically different ways.²³ For Barkan, such habits were an inevitable response to these objects’ fragmentary

condition, which all but ensured multiple readings and, from an empirical perspective, not always the correct ones. So it was, say, that some Quattrocento viewers might reverse the gender of the Camillus statue on the Capitoline; or that the identity of a partial statue in the courtyard of a Roman palace could migrate from *Apollo* to *Hermaphrodite* and then to *Vesta*, later being reconfigured into *Cleopatra* and a *Muse*.²⁴ Naturally, examples of this phenomenon can be found in virtually every Italian city with an antique patrimony or that aspired to create one. Witness the bronze *quadriga* at Saint Mark’s Basilica in Venice, which, not three centuries after its theft from Constantinople in 1204, fifteenth-century writers had sent on an interpretive odyssey throughout the premodern world. In one account it was the “splendid” work of the Greek sculptor Phidias; in another, part of a Roman triumphal arch; in a third, an offering made by Venetians to an invading Frederick I of Swabia; and, in another still, a Persian artifact confiscated by the Romans for their city and only later brought to the Hippodrome by Emperor Constantine.²⁵ Cases of interpretive drift were likewise legion in Naples. Take, for instance, the marble river god exhibited on a pedestal not one hundred feet from Carafa’s palace, which, perhaps owing to its lack of a head in the Quattrocento, was alternately regarded as male and female: personifications, respectively, of the Nile and Naples (Fig. 242).²⁶ In each of these examples, it was the absence of information – formal, iconographical, or historical – that compelled viewers to fill in the ellipses. Often, they did this by leaning on what evidence was at hand: classical texts, popular lore, and physical traces on the object itself. Carafa was himself no stranger to such indeterminacy. As the owner of an active archaeological site (more on which shortly), he must have grappled with it regularly.

A complementary, if not identical, logic of open-endedness obtains in Carafa’s *Head*.



Figure 241 Donatello, *Horse Head* (detail showing the sculptor's physiognomic distortions to account for distant viewing), ca. 1455, bronze, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples. Photo: Daniel M. Zolli

Figure 242 Unknown artist, *Nile*, marble, second or third century CE (plinth from the seventeenth century), Largo Corpo di Napoli, Naples. Photo: Daniel M. Zolli



Consider the rugged lip at the object's base. Treated to modern modes of analysis, this edge yields the most prosaic of explanations: it is a join that Donatello, had he finished the multisection work, would have surely concealed. To an audience for whom the secrets of casting were obscure, however, that lip may have blazed a different interpretive trajectory entirely. It is worth remembering that many local tourists to

Carafa's courtyard, as well as onlookers from the street, had been brought up on the popular fables about Virgil, enough to know the destructive fate suffered by his bronze horse. To this caste, the *Head* may have seemed an improbable survival from that violent act, with the jagged boundary serving as index, and testimony, of its amputation. Certainly, Carafa had heard of the statue's destruction during his upbringing; and he would

have found confirmation of it in the *Cronaca*, at least three manuscript copies of which were available for his perusal in the Aragon family library.²⁷

All of this assumes, of course, that Carafa, or the local visitors to his palace, wished to associate the *Head* with the city's most renowned ancient bronze monument – a matter to which I will return – when such an intention is nowhere explicitly declared in the fifteenth century. Indeed, Carafa made no public comments about the sculpture, and his opinions in the letter to Lorenzo are, if not withheld, then indirect. To confound matters further, the earliest commentary on the *Head* dates to the second quarter of the Cinquecento, a half century after its appearance in Naples. Of these five texts, all but one is a compendium of artists' biographies originating in Florence, and all but one attribute the object to Donatello; the lone exception is Vasari, who, as noted earlier, was convinced of the work's antiquity.²⁸ Yet, as intriguing as these sources might be – allowing that, even in the mid-Cinquecento, no one attribution had won universal acceptance – they reveal nothing about the *Head's* earliest reception in Naples or about Carafa's role in shaping that reception.

Even with textual evidence lacking, there are nevertheless indications of the broader associational orbit into which Carafa wished to embed the sculpture. One is the context in which he exhibited the *Head*: the *cortile* of his palace, home to arguably the most impressive antiquities collection south of Rome. Already in the mid-1460s, with construction of his palazzo still underway, Carafa had built the backbone of this collection. He did so chiefly by commandeering objects from Pozzuoli, a port city to the west of Naples colonized first by the ancient Greeks, later by the Romans, and still decorated with their effects: busts, life-size statues, columns, urns, funerary markers (*cippi*), and carved inscriptions, to name only some of Carafa's acquisitions. Some of these

he obtained from the so-called *Crypta Neapolitana*, an ancient tunnel linking Pozzuoli to Naples long identified, in popular lore, as another of Virgil's magical creations and renovated by Carafa's former employer, Alfonso of Aragon, in 1455.²⁹ Yet the locus of Carafa's antiquarian pursuits, if they can be called that, was Pozzuoli's Temple of Neptune (second century CE), the ruins of which he and other members of the Aragonese nobility looted discriminately at first and then secured in their entirety in 1472, when the count legally acquired the property.³⁰

Such activity was consuming, to be sure, but Carafa's madness had its method. After all, excluding the modest corpus of gifts noted earlier, the objects he displayed were emphatically local in origin. In aggregate, they index an imperious determination, on Carafa's part, to possess (but also to understand and to honor) the ancient heritage of his native land, a heritage that the count viewed not as a provincial alternative to Rome, but, as Bianca de Divitiis has shown decisively, vital in its own right.³¹ The epigraphs dispersed throughout the palace register this conviction clearly. The most prominent of these, incised in classical Roman majuscules above the main entrance of the palace, proclaims that the very *raison d'être* for the building, and its contents, was to honor King Ferrante and the "splendor" of Carafa's "most noble fatherland" (Fig. 243).³² A second inscription, still visible on the socle of a spoliated column in the courtyard, designates the Palazzo an "ornament to [Carafa's] *patria*."³³ To these can be added the numerous *all'antica* statues and pseudo-antique inscriptions commissioned by Carafa, many of which allude, often playfully, to the city's ancient heritage – to the siren Parthenope for example – and amplify the building's classical flavor still more (Fig. 244).³⁴

Within this context, an ancient, if not necessarily Virgilian, resonance all but awaited the *Head's* arrival. Displayed in a distinctly classical



Figure 243 Façade of the Palazzo Diomedede Carafa, fifteenth century, Naples. Photo: Daniel M. Zolli



Figure 244 Palazzo Diomedede Carafa, detail showing *all'antica* head inserted into a wall on the second story, fifteenth century, Naples. Photo: Daniel M. Zolli

ambience, that is, the *Head*, probably the only modern sculpture on view in Carafa's courtyard, may well have had a placebo effect on visitors, encouraging them to approach the work, by dint of its surroundings, "as if" it was a local antiquity (even if they knew otherwise).³⁵ Naturally, this was not the only instance of a nobleman exhibiting a Quattrocento work in an outdoor antiquities collection; but, in other such cases – Donatello's *Judith* ensemble in the Medici Palace garden, for example – the work might feature a textual accessory, a signature or inscription, that, by signaling the work's recent manufacture, allowed it to stitch through time less freely.³⁶ A slightly later exception, instructive for our case, is the young Michelangelo's *Bacchus*, completed in 1496–7 and later sold to the Roman banker Jacopo Galli, who exhibited the statue in his

garden amidst real antiquities (Fig. 245). Perhaps owing to Michelangelo's talents at *imitatio*, to the work's embeddedness with classical remnants, and to the damage Michelangelo purposefully inflicted upon the work, the *Bacchus* induced in its first viewers uncertainty as to whether it was ancient or modern.³⁷

The conclusion to draw, in both cases, is not that contemporaries accepted the works' ancient origins *tout court*, but rather that they might be willing to grant the association – in a momentary suspension of reason – a degree of plausibility. Viewed within this interstitial space of judgment, the *Head* may well have seemed as if it was a species of antique relic that had come out of the ground, of the sort being unearthed regularly at Pozzuoli and brought to Carafa's palace. Of

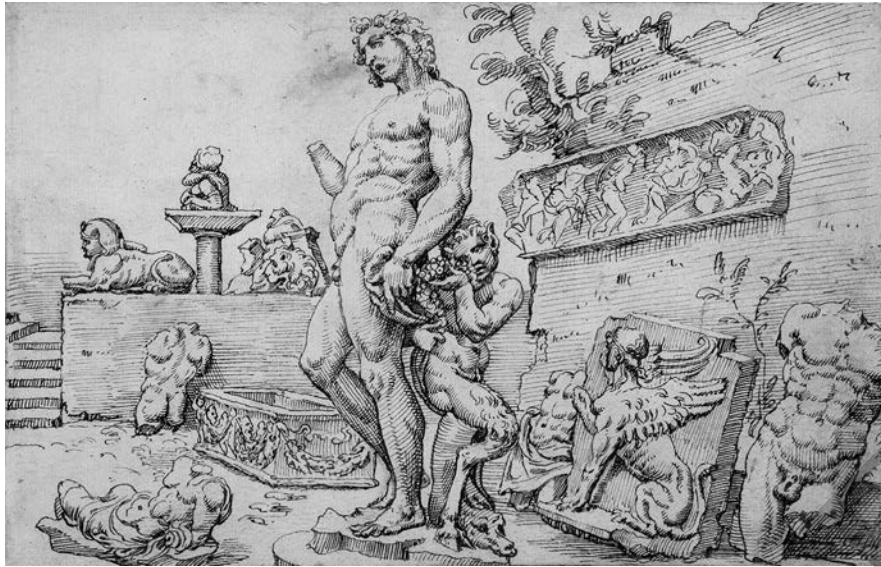


Figure 245 Maarten van Heemskerck, *Garden of Jacopo Galli*, inv. 79.D.2. vol. 1, fol. 72r, ca. 1532–7, pen and brown ink and brown wash, Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Photo: bpk Bildagentur/Staatliche Museen, Berlin/Joerg P. Anders/Art Resource, NY

course, such a claim says as much about the triumph of Donatello's classicism – his seamless imitation of ancient prototypes – as it does about Carafa's display. But it is also worth recalling that Naples, unlike other Italian cities – Rome, Ferrara, Pavia, Padua, and later Venice, to cite only the most prominent examples – had no other bronze equestrian monument to which the *Head* might be compared; that, as far as locals were concerned, the Virgilian horse had been the city's best, and perhaps only, representative of the genre. One cannot know the precise circuitry of visitors' thoughts. But it is suggestive that the *Head* became quickly regarded as the talismanic artifact in Carafa's antiquities collection, even standing in metonymically for the count's entire palace, later known as the "Palazzo del Cavallo Bronzo."³⁸

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Whatever the *Head's* status, one collateral effect of its arrival was to excite interest in the lost Virgilian monument among other members of the Aragon court and King Ferrante in particular. That the king was attracted to that symbol may be inferred

from its appearance on his new currency. This had been an urgent endeavor. In the preceding years, extensive counterfeiting of Ferrante's gold and silver ducats had shattered trust in the Neapolitan market among foreign merchants, who, by refusing to accept the coins, effectively paralyzed Ferrante's economy. On February 16, 1472, the king dispatched a letter to the Regia Camera della Sommaria – the administrative body overseeing royal finances, including the mint – outlining the coordinates for the material and visual identity of the coins' successor. In a measure clearly meant to disincentivize fraud, he advised, first, that the specie be made "entirely of copper," which, being less valuable than silver, would theoretically lower profit margins for would-be counterfeiters (the pursuit being rather like falsifying pennies). What is more, the currency should be "large in the manner of ancient medals, with the image of His Majesty [on the obverse], and [on] the reverse some suitable thing like [that owned by] the Count . . . This we recommend to you."³⁹ The regia officials, for their part, wrote to inform Ferrante that the coin, first struck in April 1472, adhered to "the form given by your Majesty," and extant specimens largely corroborate their



Figure 246 *Cavalluccio* (left: obverse with profile portrait of Ferrante; right: reverse with Virgil's horse) issued under Ferrante of Aragon, BM 1870, 0507.8161, copper, last quarter of the fifteenth century, British Museum, London. Photo: © Trustees of the British Museum

claim (Fig. 246).⁴⁰ In keeping with Ferrante's remit, a classical pedigree is forged by way of the profile portrait of the king on the coin's obverse, which reprises an honorific format from imperial Roman currency, and so-called *antoniniani* in particular. Like the Roman emperors on these older coins, Ferrante wears the rayed crown of the ancient sun god Apollo, an iconographic trait that ascribes to him the status of a deity.⁴¹

More to our concern is the diminutive horse appearing on the coin's reverse. While neither Ferrante's letter, nor the coin itself, expressly identify the creature as Virgil's, the sheer number of coincidences, in artifact and letter alike, strongly suggests that the fabled bronze monument is what we see. For one thing, the animal's placement, on the coin, atop a narrow horizontal ridge – to which two or three of its hooves are firmly attached, depending on the example – implies that it stands on a plinth as a statue would (to say nothing of the coin's material consonance with the ancient bronze horse, copper being the principal ingredient in bronze). For another, the Latin epigraph framing that horse, *EQUITAS REGNI*, unmistakably echoes a text closely linked to its older, Virgilian counterpart. Those familiar with the Virgil legend, through the *Cronaca di Partenope* or less authoritative channels, knew that King

Conrad IV of Germany, upon conquering Naples in 1253, had allegedly placed a metal bridle on the statue, along with an epigram stating that he, the "equitable king" ("Rex . . . aequus"), now dominated the horse ("equum").⁴² Few versed in this local lore would have failed to notice that Ferrante's coin conjured this earlier inscription through its play between text and image: the word "equity" ([a]equitas) suggestively echoing that for the horse that is represented (in Latin, *equus*).⁴³ Nor would they have missed, perhaps, the coin's clever inversion of the earlier anecdote's original sense in its choice to represent the horse *unbridled*. This was a subtle gesture with broad implications. It courted the idea that, while the tyrant Conrad had broken the horse, as he did the Neapolitan people, Ferrante – also a foreigner whose family had taken possession of Naples – would stand for no such antagonism, instead ruling his subjects justly. "Justice," or "equity" as the coin has it, is not only proclaimed in the inscription, but exemplified in the very institution of the coin itself, whose end was to rebuff the threat of counterfeiting and, in doing so, to restore pliancy and trust to the Neapolitan economy.

This was a distinctly political message, but one crafted in terms familiar to Ferrante's local



Figure 247 Campanian didrachm (reverse), silver, third century BCE, Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Photo: bpk Bildagentur/Münzkabinett SMB/Dirk Sonnenwald/Art Resource, NY

audience. For one thing, by staking his promise of political stability on a popular Neapolitan symbol, Virgil's horse, Ferrante sought to communicate clearly, and reassuringly, to his subjects. For another, deploying that symbol enabled the king to comply with the numismatic traditions of his new city, where the image of the equine had endured, with notable tenacity, from the city's beginnings as a Greek colony, in the form of didrachms, through the fifteenth century (Fig. 247).⁴⁴ By mimicking this distinguished type, then, the king insinuated himself into a visual heritage that he could now claim to share. Such a subtext was not lost on Ferrante, whose prodigious appetite for collecting ancient coins from Campania, inherited from his father Alfonso and honed during regular evening discussions with his courtiers, all but guaranteed his familiarity with important precedents.⁴⁵ Ferrante's choice to appoint a native Neapolitan, Girolamo Liparolo, and not a fellow Spaniard as his royal engraver at the mint further betrays an effort at cultural assimilation. Coming from a family with long-standing local ties, Liparolo would be expected to know the popular lore surrounding Virgil, as well as the forms and norms of Neapolitan currency.

Nor were such tactics unique to the coin. Rather, they hold to a broader pattern, in evidence across numerous Aragonese projects in Naples, of the family conforming to local sensibilities rather than importing colonial ones, at least

in the public face it presented. For the monumental entrance at Castel Nuovo, to cite one example, Alfonso had availed himself, almost programmatically, of indigenous Italian "products": the *all'antica* style of the arch, its building materials, and artistic personnel were almost all natively sourced; and each served as a means to articulate Alfonso's authority in terms recognizable to his colonial subjects. Visitors to the castle's courtyard – home to the family's more private routines – however, would encounter subtle avowals of Alfonso's Spanish identity: on the entrance to the family's chapel, for instance, they would see bas-relief portraits of Trajan and Hadrian, Spanish emperors who, according to Alfonso's court humanist Antonio Beccadelli (called "Panormita"), the king saw as his predecessors.⁴⁶ And those who progressed still further, into the "Great Hall," or Gran Sala, were greeted by an unremittingly Spanish aesthetic: Catalan star-shaped ribbed vaulting built using *piperno*, an igneous stone drawn, like the architect, Guillermo Sagrera, from Majorca.⁴⁷ So too, operated Diomedes Carafa's palace. Indeed, presented with that building's *all'antica* style, and with the local antiquities literally immured into its façade, one might easily forget that Carafa had spent more than one-third of his documentable career in Barcelona. In coin and buildings alike, then, the Aragon court keyed its public self-representation in Naples to local legibility, even when, as at Castel Nuovo, its private investments might differ. In this, they wagered that "learning a people's language," to paraphrase a saying popularly attributed to Alfonso's Florentine counterpart, Cosimo de' Medici, was a necessary precondition for successful partnerships of any sort.⁴⁸

Although produced in the context of a thriving antiquarian community in Naples, the coin was naturally destined for consumption by a broader public. Indeed, within several years, versions of the coin had been struck both at the principal *zecca* (mint) in Naples and at a half-dozen subsidiary mints across the Regno.⁴⁹ Together, they

map a web of paths traveled by the coin across Ferrante's sprawling dominion. Being the most mobile, widely produced, and broadly circulated object in the Aragon empire, moreover, the coin not only served, theoretically, to bind together these far-flung geographies under a single symbol; it acted as a primary means by which Ferrante's subjects learned the will of a king they were likely never to meet. In this way, the Virgilian horse, scaled down and imaginatively reassembled on the coin's reverse, became a key instrument of Aragonese propaganda. For as much as these batches differ in their details – in, for example, the specific privy marks they use to encode information about a given specimen's provenance and facture, also a means of risk management – none abandons the iconic juxtaposition, the codependency, of king and horse. Indeed, just as the emblematic devices (*imprese*) on the backs of contemporary portrait medals, by Pisanello (Fig. 12) and others, might act as surrogates for the sitter on the obverse – invoking aspects of his virtues or accomplishments that a portrait likeness, no matter its mimetic accuracy, could not – the horse reads as an extension of Ferrante's rulership, or even as an avatar of the king himself. Equally indicative of this relationship is the popular nickname by which the coins soon became known, *cavallucci* or little horses, evidence that the king's subjects soon came to equate the object's visual identity, and by extension Ferrante's authority, with the storied equestrian monument.⁵⁰

Another factor to consider, in accounting for Ferrante's sudden interest in Virgil's horse, is his familiarity with the *Head* in Diomedes Carafa's courtyard. The count's own role here cannot be overestimated. Consider Ferrante's admission, in the letter to Lorenzo de' Medici cited earlier, that the idea to include the horse on the coin came to him directly from Carafa. While such a fact is not itself extraordinary – Carafa was *razionarius*, or advisor, to Ferrante, after all, and would be

expected to provide counsel on this and other state-related matters – the timing of Diomedes' advice invites attention, as does its precise referent: “some worthy thing,” *qualche digna cosa*, then in the count's possession.⁵¹ At the time that Ferrante wrote to his staff at the mint, in early 1472, the *Head* had been in situ at Carafa's palace not yet a year; and, the impressive antiquities around it notwithstanding, it was almost certainly one of the most “worthy” objects Carafa owned. The language of Ferrante's letter is also evocative, inasmuch as it echoes the “worthiness” that Diomedes had attributed to the fragment in his letter to Lorenzo de' Medici of 1471 (there, it was a “worthy gift” [*dono digno*]). All of this suggests a relationality, in the minds of Ferrante and Carafa, between the image on the coin, the *Head*, and Virgil's statue.

* * *

To accept this scenario is to confront a paradox. If the pair was aware of the *Head's* modern authorship, and even of the precise circumstances of its abandonment – Ferrante had overseen the completion of his father's arch, after all, a pursuit that no doubt occasioned his reflection on such matters – why then would they allow it to hover suggestively near (if not explicitly within) Virgil's orbit? Answering this question requires us to make certain allowances that have, until only recently, run against art history's disciplinary routines. The first is that the *Head's* real “age” or maker, even a maker as renowned as Donatello, may have mattered less to Ferrante and Carafa than its “use value” in the present. After all, underpinning any impulse to treat the Virgilian identification with skepticism is the presumption that Donatello was somehow the most important variable in the algorithm determining value. Yet such logic underestimates just how politically opportune an alignment with the local cult of Virgil – and an object in which to anchor

that alignment – could be for the Aragonese court. It also miscalculates just how willing Ferrante and Carafa might be, in pursuit of that end, to manipulate the *Head's* past to their mutual advantage. In doing so, the two were not so much engaging in self-deceit – a second allowance, given art history's traditional instinct to treat “misattributions” like this as credulous or naïve – as they were attempting to influence its reception. Such an approach to the object's past might be characterized as “poetic” in something like the word's literal sense of “shaping” or “crafting.”⁵²

I will have more to say about this shortly, but for now it is worth spelling out the implications of the maneuver. For Ferrante, the institution of the *cavalluccio* was a self-legitimizing gesture to Naples' heritage which the Spanish king used to curry favor from locals. It also brought prestige to Carafa. For as much the coin served as propaganda, carrying Ferrante's message of “equity” across vast geographic expanses, so too did it effect a movement inward, drawing attention centripetally to the newly “discovered” artifact in Carafa's *cortile* and even acting as evidence to shore up that artifact's ties to Virgil. Such an association not only elevated the reputation of Carafa's collection – becoming, as we saw, a metonym for his palace, his antiquities collection, and even his self – but, when the association worked in reverse, it also aligned him and his family with the Regno's official currency. This is to read Ferrante and Carafa's strategy as not just poetic, then, but programmatic. By forging a series of mutually reinforcing relationships – among the sculpture, coin, and local lore registered in, for instance, the *Cronaca di Partenope* – that is, the duo not only strengthened the *Head's* Virgilian aura, but also their own political legitimacy. If the pair did not declare this agenda absolutely, their tact is understandable. Judging from the later, conflicting accounts of the *Head's* attribution, enough individuals were cognizant of

Donatello's involvement for any categorical claim to the contrary to appear reckless. Rather, the tactic described here amounted to creating an infrastructure of associations around the object that could capture viewers' imaginations and, under the right conditions, allow its invented past to fall into place.

Such interpretive opportunism was hardly unique to King Ferrante or his advisor. In fact, to find another good example of this practice one need look no further than Ferrante's father, Alfonso V of Aragon, who had himself attempted to fortify his political position in Naples through a strategic alignment with the city's heritage, and particularly its mythical founder, Parthenope. The substance of this alignment included Alfonso's sponsorship of annual games in Parthenope's honor and at least one sculpture that the king outfitted with her identity and enfolded into his political message. The object in question was an antique marble statue that the patriarch of Aquilea, Ludovico Trevisan, sent to his new king in 1446.⁵³ It has been plausibly suggested, on the basis of contemporary descriptions, that the statue was originally a funerary effigy.⁵⁴ Yet, whether or not Alfonso knew this, he promptly pressed the fragment into different referential duties entirely. Already in his letter thanking Trevisan, Alfonso remarked that the figure represented the “City of Naples which, after enduring a long time of war, [had] now attained peace and rests.”⁵⁵ In the same letter, he praised a pair of epigrams that his courtiers, Panormita and Lorenzo Valla, had composed for the statue's base, both of which survive – unlike the statue – and both of which clarify Alfonso's intentions to personify the figure not just as Naples, but as Parthenope herself.⁵⁶ It is probable, moreover, that Alfonso planned to install this “Parthenope” on the uppermost tier of his arch at Castel Nuovo, in a central niche mere feet above that containing his own bronze equestrian effigy.⁵⁷

Figure 248 Aragon Arch (detail showing Ferrante d’Aragona and his soldiers), 1443–75, marble, Castel Nuovo, Naples. Photo: Daniel M. Zolli



This initiative – comprising the production of the statue’s identity, of verses supporting that identity, and its installation – advanced several interrelated claims.⁵⁸ In a first register of meaning, it redated the statue to Naples’ earliest history, a venerable heritage reinforced, and even given factual efficacy, through Panormita’s and Valla’s poems. In a second, it used that same statue to fashion Alfonso, and his arch, as harbingers of peace. By staging his own subordination to Parthenope, in other words, the foreign king not only flatteringly emphasized his submission to the city’s local traditions, as his son Ferrante later would with his *cavallucci*, but he also reminded the populace that his liberation of Naples would enable those traditions once more to flourish. The epigram composed by Valla, and ultimately chosen for the statue, says as much: “Virgin Parthenope, after long-lasting war, rest in what the warrior Alfonso *has given you*.”⁵⁹ On this, the archetypal symbol of Alfonso’s

domination, there would be none of the iconographic trappings of military conquest – no spoils or prisoners, as in the arches of Titus in Rome and of Trajan in Benevento – but rather a personification of Naples’ ancient heroine asleep, free of distress, and under the protection of the “magnanimous” king and his soldiers, who stand guard on the reliefs on the inside of the archway (Fig. 248).

While Alfonso’s “Parthenope” offers a compelling local precedent for Carafa’s “Virgil,” it is also the case that both works were manifestations of a further-reaching development. In fact, misprisions like theirs – productive misreadings of objects or material evidence – were a fundamental means by which fifteenth-century Italy’s social and political elite crafted their claims to legitimacy, allowing them, through the artifacts they creatively relabeled or redated, to link their present power to a prestigious past. Of course, such pursuits were neither unique to Italy nor to the



Figure 249 Unknown artist, *She Wolf* (from *Capitoline Wolf*), eleventh or twelfth century, bronze; Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Romulus and Remus*, 1471–3, bronze, Museo Capitolini, Rome. Photo: © Vanni Archive/Art Resource, NY

fifteenth century. Yet they arguably underwent an intensification in that time and place, at least partly because of the growth of humanism. Indeed, if humanists' research enabled them to interpret the ancient past in increasingly nuanced ways, it was not long before they, or those who employed them, began to use that power to their advantage. An exemplary case is Lorenzo Valla's treatise *On the Donation of Constantine*, written in 1440. In that text, Valla revealed how the Latin used in the document that had long served as the foundation of papal claims to authority over Italy did not come from the early fourth century CE – when the Emperor Constantine allegedly transferred his empire to Pope Sylvester I – but from the eighth century or later. Valla's philological *exposé* was no end in itself. Rather, the very impetus behind the undertaking was a bitter conflict between Valla's patron, Alfonso of Aragon, and Pope Eugenius IV over southern Italy. By exposing the factitiousness of the document, then, Valla weakened papal claims to the territory and enhanced Alfonso's own.⁶⁰ Nor is it a coincidence that the rise of early modern

forgery developed *pari passu* with humanist textual criticism.⁶¹ This is because the very tools offered by scholars like Valla – philology, epigraphy, archaeology, and a repertoire of ancient texts – made it easier for forgers, of artifacts and histories alike, to produce believable reconstructions of the pasts that served them.

Such enterprises could be more or less interventionist, and more or less fantastic. Take, for instance, Pope Sixtus IV's "restoration" of the *She-Wolf* in Rome, a bronze statue that early Renaissance viewers called an ancient "idol" but that is now dated to the eleventh or twelfth century (Fig. 249).⁶² When Sixtus relocated the sculpture, along with several other bronze antiquities, from the Lateran Palace to the Capitoline Hill in 1470–3, he had the artist Antonio del Pollaiuolo add figures of the suckling Romulus and Remus to its base.⁶³ From a passage in Cicero, the pontiff had inferred that this was the statue's original configuration, and the modern interpolation was clearly meant to fix that reading. Yet, in a dedication exhibited near the statue, Sixtus would avow this "outstanding

bronze [work's] antique eminence and worth," artfully implying that the twins had been there all along.⁶⁴ In doing so, Sixtus – like Alfonso had done with the "Parthenope" – forged a supporting infrastructure between the statue, its inscription, and an ancient text (viz., Cicero), such that, in less than a generation's time, locals would celebrate the *She-Wolf* as the earliest tangible evidence of the city's foundation (a history that, reading the dedication, they would learn had been restored to them thanks to the "immense benignity" of the papacy). Some years later, in 1492–3, the infamous Dominican polymath Giovanni Nanni, or Annius of Viterbo, also put forward an artifact as archaeological testimony of his city's mythical past.⁶⁵ When he published his "discovery," Annius identified the object, a marble relief in Viterbo Cathedral of relatively recent facture, as the remains of a column that the Egyptian god Osiris had built to commemorate his encounter with the Viterbesi. This proved, in Annius' assessment, that the hill town's history long predated the arrival of the Etruscans in Lazio, and – just as saliently – that of Rome.

In a different, but no less opportunistic, vein, families fabricated material evidence to support their ancestral fictions. This was particularly true for the *nouveau riche* of Tre- and Quattro-cento Italy, especially, if not exclusively, the growing ranks of wealthy merchants and mercenary soldiers (*condottieri*). For as much as these groups' rise had occasioned a desire to display their social status – a major impetus for Renaissance patronage – so as well did it create anxiety about the distinguished ancestry these individuals lacked. Faced with a status that was incommensurate with their heritage, they simply invented evidence. Such was the logic that impelled the Porcari, a family of wealthy cattle farmers, to claim the ancient Roman senator Marcus "Porcius" Cato as their primogenitor. Sometime in the mid-Quattrocento, the family's patriarch, Giulio, endeavored to certify this lineage by way

of a spurious Latin inscription, interpolated in the entablature above his palace doorway, that announced prosopopoeically, "I am he, Cato Porcius, author of our progeny who . . . brought [this] noble name to the lips [of all]."⁶⁶ A similar yearning for self-legitimation drove the Aragonese military captain Orso Orsini to fabricate ties to the ancient Roman governor Ursus Alus.⁶⁷ When the mercenary soldier built his family palace around 1470–2 in Nola, near Naples, using the fortune he had amassed from his contracts (*condotte*), he made sure to add a lengthy inscription to its façade that literally spelled out this imagined heritage.⁶⁸ Any well-trained skeptic could recognize that inscriptions like Orsini's were forgeries, of course, and might even celebrate them as such. During his visits to Rome in the 1420s and 1430s, for example, the erudite traveler Ciriaco d'Ancona had noticed several "false" inscriptions chiseled into the private homes of citizens; and yet his language, in accounting for them, is not so much censorious as it is charmed.⁶⁹

Still, how learned individuals chose to exercise these skills varied according to their motivations. It is not without irony, after all, that Valla, having accomplished perhaps the most consequential feat of philological detective work in the Western tradition – by exposing the *Donation of Constantine's* fraudulence – would then author a poem that remade an anonymous Roman fragment over in the image of Parthenope. Even allowing that Valla's expertise was linguistic, and not artifact-based, one must believe, in the latter case, that he had been willing to relax his critical standards considerably. What united these two seemingly antithetical endeavors, though, was how directly they served the political needs of Valla's Aragon employers. While a Parthenope statue, so identified, became self-serving propaganda for Alfonso, Valla's work on the *Donation* solidified the family's claims to rule the kingdom of Naples legitimately. This ethos brings a

measure of clarity to why Carafa and Ferrante found no contradiction between the *Head's* present manufacture and their efforts to link it to a distant past.

* * *

To develop the argument in one final way, we might examine the *Head* in the light cast by another phenomenon: the widespread practice in fifteenth-century Italy of raising public civic monuments to ancient Roman authors. In a recent essay, Sarah Blake McHam sees this trend as the coalescence of several factors: an urge, among humanists, to celebrate the value of classical literature; a desire, among civic authorities, to assert their cities' illustrious pedigrees by linking them to famous native sons; and a need to offset the absence of physical evidence – the authors' bodies or graves – with something tangible.⁷⁰

Consider two examples. In Padua, local elites claimed the ancient historian Livy, born in that city, as a source of civic pride. Although in existence earlier, that cult exploded in the early Quattrocento, when Padua's chancellor, Sicco Polentone, identified human remains found near the Basilica of Santa Giustina as Livy's, saving them, by his telling, from monks who, fearing that the discovery would lead the populace to revert to paganism, had tried to "burn the bones and [scatter] their dust to the winds."⁷¹ There followed plans for a column monument, never realized, and two reliefs, still visible on the exterior of Padua's town hall, one of which purportedly housed the author's bones.⁷² While these memorials, and the material evidence literally behind them, became a rallying point for Padua's prestigious Roman past, they also roused curiosity abroad. We know, for instance, that Alfonso of Aragon, an enthusiastic reader of Livy's Roman history, sent an ambassador to inform him about the bones; and that Alfonso's courtier

Panormita even acquired what he believed (or chose, self-servingly, to believe) was Livy's forearm for the Neapolitan king. When Alfonso died, Panormita passed the relic on to Giovanni Pontano, soon to become the doyen of Ferrante's circle of Neapolitan humanists, who later enshrined the arm in his family burial chapel, accompanied by an inscription, now lost, that recast the Paduan writer as an emblem of personal legitimation.⁷³

In the Abruzzese town of Sulmona, meanwhile, memorializing the city's most cherished native son, Ovid, was a priority of the highest order. Already in the thirteenth century, the poet's purported likeness featured on official municipal seals, coins, and even in several public statues.⁷⁴ When Alfonso of Aragon wrested control of Sulmona from the Angevins, in 1438, he was careful to pay respect to Ovid, recognizing the political advantageousness of such a move. No sooner had the city surrendered, in fact, than the king commenced plans to erect a monument to Ovid on Sulmona's civic palace, under the advisement of Panormita and later Pontano (Fig. 250).⁷⁵ As in Alfonso's later appropriation of Parthenope and his son's use of Virgil's horse on his currency, in Naples, the deed served to remind locals of their illustrious history, in an effort to excite pride, and good will, amidst a political sea change. And, as with the other examples, it absorbed a potent local symbol into the Aragon empire's visual repertory.

Noteworthy here are the similarities that the Livy and Ovid memorials share with Carafa's *Head*. In all three cases, the artifacts, and the interpretations governing them, were instigated by humanists and antiquarians motivated by an appetite for the classical past, but also by their own political ends. And each artifact amounted to a durable public expression of its respective ancient author, with the *Head* being distinct because it was, to some at least, associated with Virgil himself. At the same time, each artifact



Figure 250 Unknown artist, statue of Ovid, 1474, marble, Palazzo Pretorio, Sulmona. Photo: Alinari

represented a particular interpretation of that figure, to the exclusion of others. The Paduans' depiction of Livy in professorial robes, for example, stressed his identity as a scholar, a fitting choice in a city renowned for its university. And by outfitting Ovid with a laurel crown and book – emblazoned with SMPE, the initials of his well-known homage to his birthplace, “*Sulmo mihi patria est*” – the Sulmonesi/Aragon commemorated the poet's literary achievements while evading any indication of his other legendary popular personae: Christian convert and saint, monk, and even magus.⁷⁶

If Carafa and Ferrante had implicitly, if somewhat fantastically, courted the local, Neapolitan interpretation of Virgil as artist-magus, as I have argued, that reading had little currency outside of a southern Italian context. On the contrary, it cut

against what might be called the two normative identities of the poet in fifteenth-century Italy: as originary figure for classical literature and a patron saint of humanism on the one hand; and pagan oracle and moralist who had prophesied Christ's arrival on the other.⁷⁷ Predictably, one center of the Virgil cult, where these latter interpretations had considerable traction, was Mantua, the poet's birthplace.

From the early Dugento, and perhaps earlier, Virgil appeared in a relief on the façade of the town hall, and possibly on the city's currency.⁷⁸ And at an uncertain date, locals installed a statue of the poet in Mantua's main civic square. Of this statue's form and precise location little is known. What is certain, though, is that the Riminese condottiere Carlo Malatesta, having entered the city after a victorious battle in 1397, cast the monument into the Mincio River, outraged by what he perceived as the Mantuans' idolatrous worship of a pagan. Although toppled by the iconoclastic energies of a moralizing soldier, the statue endured in three letters written by humanists in the immediate wake of its destruction, which together read as a defense of Virgil's poetry and, more generally, of the merit of classical literature in a Christian society.⁷⁹

In the 1490s, the marchioness of Mantua, Isabella d'Este, had the idea to create a new Virgil statue to replace the one that had perished. Although the project was never realized, its initial coordinates are plotted in a letter from Giovanni Pontano, whose involvement with the earlier monuments to Roman poets, mentioned already, and extensive knowledge of Virgil may have led Isabella to solicit his advice.⁸⁰ Pontano's recommendations leave nothing to chance: the monument should be made of marble, and not bronze; Virgil should appear crowned with a laurel wreath; he should wear classical sandals, a toga, and mantle; and his portrait should be based on a bust then in the possession of the Mantuan poet Battista Fiera, which Pontano deemed an



Figure 251 Andrea Mantegna, *Project for a Monument to Virgil*, ca. 1500, pen and ink on paper, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY

authentic likeness. No further accoutrements were necessary – no book “nor anything else beneath” – and an inscription on the base should mention only Virgil’s name and Isabella’s role in “restoring” the statue.⁸¹ In her reply, the marchioness agreed to follow “the [wishes] of Pontano, as [they are] infallible”; and a preparatory drawing in the Louvre, attributed to Mantegna or an associate, suggests that, before she abandoned the project, Isabella did just that (Fig. 251).⁸²

That the Virgil of Pontano’s proposed monument was a classical poet, in spirit and letter, is to be expected. This was, after all, the orthodox perception among Mantuans of their ancestor. It does not follow, however, that Pontano was unaware of the alternatives. Considering that he had been a regular in Diomedes’s palace and had scrutinized the count’s antiquities closely, his familiarity with the *Head* is certain.⁸³ Equally assured was Pontano’s knowledge, from the *Cronaca di Partenope*, of the legends about Virgil’s

sculptural sorcery, at least one of which he glossed in his writings.⁸⁴ And yet Pontano recognized how little purchase such legends had abroad and therefore exercised the decorum he and his fellow humanists so prized, adjusting his advice to the needs of his audience.

Of all Pontano’s remarks, however, those regarding the monument’s materials stand out. Monuments are built to endure; and marble, in Pontano’s thinking, lingered longer in this world. While it was less “noble” than bronze, it was also less vulnerable, never in “danger” of being melted down “at some point [to make] a bell or a cannon sound.”⁸⁵ On the one hand, Pontano’s remarks are practical; and the writer may have based them on any number of historical antecedents for bronze statues finding their way back to the furnace. For a Neapolitan, Virgil’s horse, converted into church bells, would have been a paradigmatic case. Or perhaps Pontano had in mind Leonardo da Vinci’s unrealized equestrian monument for Duke Francesco Sforza of Milan, the alloy for which the Milanese gave to Isabella’s father, Ercole d’Este, in 1494 to produce artillery for his ongoing battle with Charles VIII’s French armies.⁸⁶

On the other hand, it is possible to see Pontano’s remarks as indicative of a broader sea change taking place in Italy. After all, much had changed for the humanist and for Naples in the years between his arrival at the Aragon court, in the 1450s, and his letter to Isabella in 1497. At the time of the exchange, in fact, Pontano’s literary reputation may have flourished, but his political career had ended in disgrace. Just two years earlier, when Charles VIII succeeded briefly in conquering Naples – expelling Ferrante’s cousin and Pontano’s pupil, King Alfonso II – the humanist declared loyalty to the French king, showing how readily he would abandon the family that had supported him for decades. With the return of the Aragon, less than a year later, Pontano was predictably banished from office,

and he would spend the remainder of his life in a villa outside the city (he died in 1503). From this outpost he completed several treatises that addressed, among other things, the problem of excess among nobility, and he invoked the Aragon – especially the elder Alfonso – as a cautionary tale.⁸⁷ As Pontano recognized, the money that the Aragon kings had lavished on public displays of “magnificence,” including the arch, had all but bankrupted the kingdom. Their excess had led to ever-higher taxes, resentment among locals, internal rebellions, and – especially in the 1490s – difficulty bearing the costs of defending the Regno from external invasions. As much as Pontano’s letter to Isabella shows a humanist deftly navigating the different interpretations of Virgil, it also registers an awareness of the collapse of Aragonese authority in Naples. Such circumstances add a powerful subtext to Pontano’s aversion to bronze and also help to explain his insistence that the Virgil monument be “semplice” and thus, one presumes, less likely to inspire indignation, as its predecessor had, in times of military upheaval.

* * *

With the benefit of hindsight, Pontano’s intuitions look prescient. By the first decade of the sixteenth century, the Aragonese presence in Naples had been eclipsed by the Spanish Habsburgs, who appointed a succession of viceroys to rule the city. The Habsburgs, too, had expansionist ambitions; and, like the Aragon family, and the Angevins before them, they supported a cosmopolitan court culture. It was this international outlook that has made sixteenth-century Naples so well suited to the discipline’s current emphasis in “global” art history.⁸⁸ The Aragonese court also stands to benefit from this framework: its habit of acquiring artworks, employing humanists, and cultivating diplomatic relations from across Europe registering

cosmopolitanism on a scale rarely matched in other fifteenth-century courts. This very cosmopolitan web facilitated the *Head’s* arrival in the first place.

And yet, as this chapter has attempted to show, the Aragonese never lost sight of politics at home, their transnational ambitions notwithstanding. Indeed, their handling of Donatello’s *Head* foregrounds an avowedly local model of archaeological and historical inquiry, and a local symbol in Virgil, that was, by all appearances, just as instrumental to the family’s imperial image as its cosmopolitan character. It would be a mistake, however, to claim that, by “backdating” the object to Naples’ deepest past, Carafa and Ferrante d’Aragona had perpetrated a kind of epistemological violence. Rather, it is perhaps more accurate to say that the pair saw themselves as paying respect to, or even participating in, local tradition, albeit in creative and self-serving ways. It might be argued, moreover, that the importance of that tradition is borne out by the sheer persistence of the *Head’s* classical attribution, which, by the mid-sixteenth century, had crystallized into fact. This perhaps owed to the simple reality that later viewers no longer knew about the fragment’s link to the Aragon Arch. It is equally the case, however, that their opinions were strengthened by local conviction, to which accounts routinely referred well into the nineteenth century.⁸⁹ Of course, no one would claim that the *Head* retained the magical charge of Virgilian lore. But by allowing that venerated myth to linger in their accounts of the object, however vestigially, these latter-day interpreters did something else: they ensured that, even as the city succumbed to successive colonial rulers, even as its political fortunes changed, Neapolitan history, and identity, were never entirely forgotten. In this, the *Head* might be said to have accomplished a feat not entirely unlike Virgil’s: it protected the city, and its patrimony, against all odds.

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- remains George L. Hersey, *The Aragonese Arch at Naples, 1443–1475* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973).
- 3 The *Head* indicates that, if fully realized, the Aragon statue would have been roughly eighteen feet tall, a megalomaniac size that would have dwarfed Donatello's twelve-foot-tall *Gattamelata* in Padua and even rivaled Leonardo da Vinci's later bronze equestrian monument of the duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza (begun 1482), it too never realized.
- 4 The literature on the *Head* is extensive. See, for example, Gaetano Filangieri, "La testa di cavallo in bronzo già di casa Maddaloni in via Sedile di Nido," *Archivio storico per le province napoletane* 7 (1882): 407–20; Licia Vlad Borrelli, "Un dono di Lorenzo de' Medici a Diomede Carafa," in *La Toscana al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico. Politica, economia, cultura, arte*, ed. Luigi Beschi, three vols. (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 1996), vol. 1, pp. 235–52; Francesco Caglioti, "Donatello. Horse's Head," in *In the Light of Apollo: Italian Renaissance and Greece*, ed. Mina Gregori (Athens and Milan: The Hellenic Culture Organization, 2003), pp. 198–200; Mara Minasi, "Testa di cavallo detta 'Carafa,'" in *La Roma di Leon Battista Alberti. Umanisti, architetti e artisti alla scoperta dell'antico nella città del Quattrocento*, exh. cat., ed. Francesco Paolo Fiore (Milan: Skira, 2005), pp. 350–1; Ilaria Ciseri, "Carafa Protome," in *The Springtime of the Renaissance: Sculpture and the Arts in Florence, 1400–60*, exh. cat., eds. Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi and Marc Bormand (Florence: Mandragora, 2013), p. 364; and Leah R. Clark, *Collecting Art in the Italian Renaissance Court: Objects and Exchanges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), esp. pp. 22–58.
- 5 This backstory is naturally more nuanced than what I have sketched suggests. For a more complete explanation of events, see Caglioti, "Donatello. Horse's Head," pp. 198–200.
- 6 On Carafa, see Alfred de Reumont, *The Carafas of Maddaloni: Naples under Spanish Dominion* (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1854); Tommaso Persico, *Diomede Carafa. Uomo di stato e scrittore del secolo XV* (Naples: Luigi Pierro, 1899); and Bianca de Divitiis, *Architettura e committenza nella Napoli del Quattrocento* (Venice: IUAV and Marsilio Editore, 2007), with additional bibliography.
- 7 The best analysis of the Neapolitan legends of Virgil as artist-magus is still Domenico Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, trans. E. F. M. Benecke (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1908), esp. pp. 239–376.
- 8 In general, the Virgil legends began to circulate throughout Western Europe in the thirteenth century. See Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, p. 344.
- 9 The Virgil cycle comprises seventeen chapters of the *Cronaca*: roughly one-quarter or one-sixth depending on the particular manuscript copy. For the original text, and substantial treatments of them, see Samantha Kelly, *The Cronaca di Partenope: An Introduction to and Critical Edition of the First Vernacular History of Naples (c. 1350)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), esp. pp. 182–200.
- 10 "Anche lo dicto Virgilio fece forgiare uno cavallo de metallo socto costellazione de stelle che per la visione

NOTES

- sola de lo cavallo o sulo per seli approssimare l'altri cavalli stimulate de alcuna infirmitate se aveano remedio di sanita. Lo quale cavallo li miniscalchi de la cita de Napoli avendo de cio gran dolore inpercio che non aveano guadagnyo alle cure deli cavalli inferme si andaro una nocte et perforarolo in ventre da poy dela quale percussione o roctura lo predicto cavallo perdiò la virtute. Unde de poy fo convertito ala costruzione delle canpane dele maiure ecclesie de Napoli in delo anno de nostro signyore Ihu xpo Mille CCC XXII lo quale cavallo si stava colcato indela corte de la predicta maiore ecclesia de Napoli." Original text cited in Kelly, *The Cronaca di Partenope*, p. 186.
- 11 Later accounts credited the archbishop of Naples with transforming the statue into bells, or, in certain cases, a single bell, for the Cathedral. To my knowledge the earliest mention of the archbishop is Pietro de Stefano, *Descrittione de i luoghi sacri della citta di Napoli, con li fondatori di essi* (Naples: Raymondo Amato, 1560), p. 15v, who added that the city's religious figures wished to "remove [the] superstition" surrounding the statue. For further accounts of the event, particularly from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Filangieri, "La testa di cavallo di bronzo," esp. pp. 407–10.
 - 12 Vasari likely saw the *Head* during his visit to Naples in 1544–5. For his 1550 text, see Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori, nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, eds. Rosana Bettarini and Paola Barocchi, eleven vols. (Florence: Sansoni, 1966–87), vol. 3, p. 226. He would later reattribute the work to Donatello, in the 1568 edition, although not without a disclaimer that "many believed [the work to be] antique" ("che molti la credono antica"). For his remarks in the latter edition, see Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori scritte da Giorgio Vasari, pittore aretino*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, nine vols. (Florence: Sansoni, 1906), vol. 2, p. 409.
 - 13 "Et quella gran testa di bronzo, che si vede hora in casa del Signor Duca di Madaloni, potrebbe agevolmente essere reliquia di quel cavallo." Giovanni Tarcagnota di Gaeta, *Del sito, et lodi della citta di Napoli con una breve historia de gli re suoi . . .* (Naples: Giovanni Maria Scotto, 1566), p. 64v.
 - 14 The full inscription reads: "QUAE MEA FUERIT DIGNITAS, QUAE CORPORIS VASTITAS/SUPERSTES MONSTRAT CAPUT/BARBARUS INJECIT FRENOS/SUPERSTITIO AVARITIESQUE DEDERUNT MORTI,/BONORUM DESIDERIUM AUGET MIHI PRETIUM/CAPUT HUIC VIDES,/CORPUS MAIORIS TEMPLI CAMPANAE SERVANT,/MECUM CIVITATIS PERIIT INSIGNE/ID GENUS ARTIUM AMATORES FRANCISCO CARAFA/HOC QUICQUID EST DEBERI SCIANT." Quoted in de Reumont, *The Carafas of Maddaloni*, p. 120.
 - 15 Fusco and Corti label the *Head* "ancient or fifteenth century" (Laurie Fusco and Gino Corti, *Lorenzo de' Medici: Collector and Antiquarian* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], pp. 36 and 39). For a thorough substantiation of Donatello's authorship, see Caglioti, "Donatello. Horse's Head," pp. 198–200. Two technical studies of the *Head*, both from 1992, further support the attribution to Donatello. See Licia Vlad Borrelli, "Considerazioni su tre problematiche teste di cavallo," *Bollettino d'arte* 71 (1992): 67–82; and Edilberto Formigli, "La grande testa di cavallo in bronzo detta 'Carafa': un'indagine tecnologica," *Bollettino d'arte* 71 (1992): 83–90.
 - 16 "Ho ricevuto la testa del cavallo la Signoria Vostra s'è digniata mandareme, de che ne resto tanto contento quanto de cosa havesse desiderato et re[n]gracione Vostra Signoria infinite volte si per essere stato dono digno como [sic = come] per haverlo da la Signoria Vostra. Avisandola l'ò ben locato in la mia casa, che se vede da omne [sic] canto, certificandove che non solo de Vostra Signoria ad me ne starà memoria ma ad mei fillioli, i quali de continuo haveranno la Signoria Vostra in observancia et sarannoli obligati, extimando l'amore quella ha mostrato in volere [sic = volere] comparere con tale dono et oramento alla dicta casa. Si ho da servire la Signoria Vostra, son parato, et pregola me vollia operare che volintiero serà [sic] da me et de bona vollia servita." Original text transcribed in Fusco and Corti, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, p. 283, doc. 10. I derive my translation, with minor alterations, from Fusco and Corti, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, p. 11.
 - 17 See Clark, *Collecting Art in the Italian Renaissance Court*, pp. 27–48 and 47–53.
 - 18 The first quotation – "haveti el cuore del Re i[n] mano" – is from Ippolita Sforza, duchess of Calabria; the second – "costui fi reputado el secundo re" – is from Zaccaria Barbaro, the Venetian ambassador to Naples. Both citations, and their original archival references, appear in Clark, *Collecting Art in the Italian Renaissance Court*, pp. 31, 242 n.
 - 19 Clark further conjectures that Lorenzo's gift of the *Head* may have been a counter-gift to Carafa's earlier offering of a Neapolitan *buffone* (jester) for the festival of the Florentine banker held to honor Galeazzo Maria Sforza (see Clark, *Collecting Art in the Italian Renaissance Court*, pp. 36–7).
 - 20 See Pompeo Sarnelli, *Guida de' forestieri* (Naples: Giuseppe Roselli, [1697]), p. 44v (image), and pp. 45v–46r, 55r and 74r–75v (text).
 - 21 The classic study on this topic is Robert Munman, "Optical Corrections in the Sculpture of Donatello," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 75 (1985): 1–96; see also Daniel M. Zolli, "Donatello's Visions: The Sculptor at Florence Cathedral," in *Sculpture in the Age of Donatello: Renaissance Masterpieces from Florence Cathedral*, exh. cat., eds. Timothy Verdon and Daniel M. Zolli (London: D. Giles, 2015), esp. pp. 53–61, 65 and 67–8.
 - 22 For an example of this logic, see Caglioti, "Donatello. Horse's Head," pp. 199–200.
 - 23 Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), esp. pp. 119–207.
 - 24 For these examples and others, see Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, pp. 119–207, esp. pp. 145–58, 179, and 182–4; Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources* (London: Harvey Miller, 1986), pp. 224–5 (no. 192). On the

- Apollo/Hermaphrodite/Vesta* statue in the Sassi collection, see Kathleen Wren Christian, *Empire without End: Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, c. 1350–1527* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 374–9.
- 25 These interpretations belong, respectively, to Ciriaco d'Ancona, Bernardo Giustinian, the German pilgrim Arnold van Harff, and Marin Sanudo. For full citations and a fine discussion of the *quadriga's* reception, in the fifteenth century and beyond, see Marilyn Perry, "Saint Mark's Trophies: Legend, Superstition, and Archaeology in Renaissance Venice," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 40 (1977): 27–49, esp. pp. 30–4.
- 26 See Kelly, *The Cronaca di Partenope*, p. 181; and Ludovico de la Ville sur-Yllon, "Il corpo di Napoli e la 'capa' di Napoli," *Napoli nobilissima* 3 (1894): 23–6.
- 27 On the contents of the Aragonese library, which the French King Charles VIII plundered in 1495, see Giuseppe Mazzatinti, *La biblioteca dei re d'Aragona in Napoli* (Rocca S. Casciano: Licinio Cappelli Editore, 1897), esp. pp. xxvi, lii–lvii, and 175–6; and for the earliest Aragonese manuscript copies of the *Cronaca*, see Kelly, *The Cronaca di Partenope*, pp. 103–14.
- 28 The authors of the first texts to mention the *Head* are: Pietro Summonte (quoted in Fausto Nicolini, *L'arte napoletana del Rinascimento e la lettera di Pietro Summonte a Marcantonio Michiel* [Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, 1925], p. 166); Antonio Billi and the Anonimo Gaddiano (in Fusco and Corti, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, p. 343, doc. 218); Giovambattista Gelli (Girolamo Mancini, "Vite d'artisti di Giovanni Battista Gelli," *Archivio storico italiano* 17 [1896]: 60); and Giorgio Vasari (in Vasari, *Le vite*, ed. Milanese, vol. 2, p. 409).
- 29 On the *Crypta Neapolitana*, see J. B. Trapp, "The Grave of Vergil," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 47 (1984): 1–31, esp. p. 6.
- 30 On Pozzuoli's antiquities, see Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *La vera antichità di Pozzuolo* (Naples: G. Carlino e C. Vitale, 1607), pp. 54–5; on Carafa's activity in Pozzuoli, see De Divitiis, *Architettura e committenza*, pp. 97–106.
- 31 See De Divitiis, *Architettura e committenza*. See also her discussions of the regional chauvinism that has tended to marginalize accounts of southern Italian antiquarianism – in Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, and Sicily – in Bianca de Divitiis, "Building in Local *all'antica* Style: The Palace of Diomede Carafa in Naples," *Art History* 31 (2008): 505–22, esp. p. 506.
- 32 "IN ONOREM OPTIMI REGIS/FERDINANDI ET SPLENDOREM NOBILISSIMAE PATRIAE DIOMEDES CARAFA COMES MATALONE MCCCCLXVI."
- 33 "HAS COM/ES INSIGNIS/DIOMEDES/CONDIDIT AE/DES CARAFA/IN LAVDEM RE/GIS PATRIAE/QUE DECOREM" (illustrated in De Divitiis, *Architettura e committenza*, p. 48). A second inscription, on the pedestal of the column, gestures to the building's relationship to Carafa's ancestors.
- 34 These are discussed, and transcribed, in De Divitiis, *Architettura e committenza*, esp. pp. 88–9.
- 35 I derive the idea of a "placebo effect," wherein modern works might be granted more distant origins, from Christopher S. Wood, "Maximilian I as Archeologist," *Renaissance Quarterly* 58 (2005): 1154.
- 36 On the *Judith's* placement in the Medici Palace, and its relationship to antiquities, see, for example, Adrian W. B. Randolph, *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics, and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 261–5 and 334–5, with additional bibliography.
- 37 The early sources surrounding the *Bacchus* are in Michael Hirst, "The Artist in Rome, 1496–1501" in Michael Hirst and Jill Dunkerton, *Making and Meaning: The Young Michelangelo* (London: National Gallery, 1994), pp. 29–35. See also, for example, Luba Freedman, "Michelangelo's Reflections on Bacchus," *Artibus et historiae* 24 (2003): 121–35.
- 38 The title appears in the engraving in Sarnelli, *Guida de' forestieri*, discussed earlier (see note 20).
- 39 "S. M. ha deliberato et vole che de continente V. S. doneno ordine che se facciano li pizoli o moneta de rame al modo ditto . . . ciò è che sia la moneta tutta de rame et grossa al modo delle medaglie antique con la imagine de la Maestà Sua et con lo reverso de qualche digna cosa como ad lo S. Conte de Magdalone . . . Reccomandamo alle Signorie Vostre. Ex Arnone XVI, february 1472." Cited in Arturo G. Sambon, "I 'Cavalli' di Ferdinando I d'Aragona Re di Napoli," *Rivista italiana di numismatica* 4 (1891): 327, n. 4. On the coin more generally, see Mario Rasile, *I "cavalli" delle zecche napoletane nel periodo aragonese* (Formia: Circolo numismatico Mario Rasile, 2002); and *Medieval European Coinage*, eds. Philip Grierson, M. A. S. Blackburn, and E. M. Screen, fourteen vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986–2017), vol. 14 ("South Italy, Sicily, Sardinia"), p. 13.
- 40 "havendo vostra maesta mandato se facesse moneta de pizoli in nostra ceccha in la forma data per vostra maesta fo comenzato ad farese a 18 de aprile." Cited in Sambon, "I 'Cavalli' di Ferdinando," p. 331.
- 41 This is different than the gold and silver ducats of Ferrante, produced from 1470, where the king wears the actual crown itself. See Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy 1400–1600* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 82–3.
- 42 That inscription is quoted in the *Cronaca di Partenope* as: "Rex domat hunc equus parthonopensis equum/Actenus effrenis nunc freni paret actenis." See Kelly, *The Cronaca di Partenope*, p. 187.
- 43 This same point is made in George L. Hersey, "The Arch of Alfonso in Naples and Its Pisanellesque 'Design,'" *Master Drawings* 7 (1969): 19–20.
- 44 For examples of Campanian coins featuring horses, from the Roman period through the thirteenth century, see Michael H. Crawford, *Coinage and Money under the Roman Republic: Italy and the Mediterranean Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), esp. p. 28.
- 45 On the atmosphere of the Aragon's evening readings and discussions, see Lorenzo Valla, *Opera Omnia* (Basel: Henricus Petrus, 1540), pp. 460–632.

- 46 Antonio Beccadelli, *De dictis et factis Alphonsi Regis Aragonum et Neapolis libri quatuor Antonii Panormitae* (Rostock: Typis Myliandrinis, 1589), p. 92. On Alfonso of Aragon's self-identification with Trajan and Hadrian, see Peter Stacey, "Hispania and Royal Humanism in Alfonsine Naples," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 26 (2011): 51–65; and Bianca de Divitiis, "Castel Nuovo and Castel Capuano in Naples: The Transformation of Two Medieval Castles into 'all'antica' Residences for the Aragonese Royals," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 76 (2013): 454.
- 47 See Hersey, *The Aragonese Arch at Naples*. For a brilliant analysis of a similar approach to local materials, building techniques, and aesthetics in the Angevin period, see Caroline Bruzelius, *The Stones of Naples: Church Building in the Angevin Kingdom, 1266–1343* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).
- 48 "Dicendo Neri di Gino a Cosmo: Io vorrei che tu mi dicessi le chose chiare sì, che io t'intendessi, gli rispose: Appara il mio linguaggio!" Cited in Anonymous, *Angelo Polizianos Tagebuch (1477–79)*, ed. Albert Wesselski (Jena: Diederich, 1929), p. 84.
- 49 On the location of the Aragonese mints – in Lazio, Abruzzo, Apulia, Campania, Basilicata, and Sicily – see Sambon, "I 'Cavalli' di Ferdinando"; and *Medieval European Coinage*, vol. 14, pp. 21–35.
- 50 For the earliest uses of the term, and variants (including "cavalli," "cavalluzzo," and "calaluzzo"), see Rasile, *I "cavalli" delle zecche napoletane nel periodo aragonese*, esp. p. 7. On other nicknames given to coins based on visual traits, see Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance*, pp. 82–3.
- 51 See note 39.
- 52 ποιεῖν, *poiein*, "to make." On the "poetic" reception of earlier artifacts in early modern Italy, see Charles Mitchell, "Archaeology and Romance in Renaissance Italy," in *Italian Renaissance Studies*, ed. E. F. Jacob (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), pp. 455–83; Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*; and, within a Northern European context, Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
- 53 On the Parthenope statue, see Andreas Beyer, *Parthenope: Neapel und der Süden der Renaissance* (Munich and Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag), esp. pp. 13–9; and Andreas Beyer, "Napoli," in *Storia dell'architettura italiana. Il Quattrocento*, ed. Francesco Paolo Fiore (Milan: Electa, 1998), pp. 437–40.
- 54 Beyer, *Parthenope*, p. 13; and Christian, *Empire without End*, p. 47.
- 55 "que represente la statua de la Cuidat de Napels la qual cansada por mucho tiempo de guerra agora opttiendo paz se reposa." Alfonso V, letter to Trevisan (March 1446), transcribed in Beyer, *Parthenope*, p. 13. The assertion allows that Trevisan had been behind the initial identification, which Alfonso merely upheld. Still, the general spirit of the observation applies.
- 56 "Enbio vos aqui interclusos los versos que le fechos fazer: de todos los otro fechos por letra de secretario vos scriuo ofreciendome siempre a vuestra onra e plazer." Transcribed in Beyer, *Parthenope*, p. 13.
- 57 See Hersey, "The Arch of Alfonso," pp. 17–18, inferring from documentation and the famous drawing attributed to Pisanello or his workshop.
- 58 Here I am drawing on the excellent analysis of Beyer in *Parthenope*, pp. 13–19.
- 59 "Parthenope virgo diuturno exercita Marte/Martius Alphonsus dat, requiesce tibi." Cited in Beyer, *Parthenope*, p. 15.
- 60 On this episode, see, for example, Wolfram Setz, *Lorenzo Vallas Schrift gegen die Konstantinische Schenkung* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1975).
- 61 For this idea, see especially Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010); and, in the German context, Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction*.
- 62 On the Capitoline *She-Wolf*, see, for example, *La lupa capitolina*, exh. cat., ed. Claudio Parisi Presicce (Milan: Electa, 2000), esp. pp. 102–5; for its broader context in the later 1470s, see Christian, *Empire without End*, pp. 103–16; and for Pollaiuolo's additions, see Alison Wright, *The Pollaiuolo Brothers: The Arts of Florence and Rome* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 353–6, 490, and 528.
- 63 On the creative restoration of works, see, for example, Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, pp. 173–207; and Francesco Caglioti, "Due 'restauratori' per le antichità dei primi Medici: Mino da Fiesole, Andrea del Verrocchio e il 'Marsia rosso' degli Uffizi. I," *Prospettiva* 72 (1993): 17–42.
- 64 "SIXTUS IIII. PONT. MAX. OB IMMENSAM BENIGNITATEM AENEAS INSIGNES STATUAS PRISCAE EXCELLENTIAE VIRTUTISQUE MONUMENTUM ROMANO POPULO UNDE EXORTE FUERE RESTITUENDAS CONDONANDASQUE CENSUIT . . . ANNO SALUTIS NOSTRAE MCCCCLXXI. XVIII KAL. IANUAR." On the inscription, see Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, p. 53.
- 65 On the so-called *marmo osiriano*, see Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, pp. 244–50, and pp. 427–8 for additional bibliography; and Brian Curran, *The Egyptian Renaissance: The Afterlife of Ancient Egypt in Early Modern Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 121–31, esp. p. 126.
- 66 For citation, see Pio Paschini, *Roma nel Rinascimento* (Bologna: Licinio Cappelli, 1940), p. 162; see also Christian, *Empire without End*, pp. 71–2 and 354–8.
- 67 See Christian, *Empire without End*, p. 87; see also Georgia Clarke, "Palazzo Orsini in Nola: A Renaissance Relationship with Antiquity," *Apollo* 144 (1996): 44–50.
- 68 Additional examples of pseudo-antique inscriptions and false lineages are in Christian, *Empire without End*, pp. 290–5 and 313–4.
- 69 See Christian, *Empire without End*, p. 45, n. 27.
- 70 Sarah Blake McHam, "Renaissance Monuments to Favourite Sons," *Renaissance Studies* 19 (2005): 458–86.

- 71 "ea ossa comburere et in pulverem ventis dare." Cited in Siccio Polentone, *La Catinia, le orazioni e le epistole di Siccio Polentone*, ed. Arnaldo Segarizzi (Bergamo: Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1899), pp. 77–84, esp. p. 79. An account of the episode is in Polentone's biography of Livy, *Sicconis Polentoni scriptorum illustrium Latinae linguae libri XVIII*, ed. Berthold Louis Ullman (Rome: American Academy of Rome, 1928), pp. 183–4.
- 72 See McHam, "Renaissance Monuments to Favourite Sons," pp. 466–72.
- 73 Paolo Sambin, "Il Panormita e il dono d'una reliquia di Livio," *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 1 (1958): 276–81.
- 74 See McHam, "Renaissance Monuments to Favourite Sons," pp. 463 and 472–4.
- 75 See Augusto Campana, "Le statue quattrocentesche di Ovidio e il capitanato sulmonese di Polidoro Tiberti," in *Atti del Convegno Internazionale Ovidiano*, two vols. (Rome: Istituto di Studi Romani, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 270–1.
- 76 For the legends about Ovid as a magus, monk, prophet, and saint, see Giovanni Pansa, *Ovidio nel medioevo e nella tradizione popolare* (Sulmona: Caroselli, 1924), pp. 29–64.
- 77 On these interpretations, see Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, esp. pp. 75–103 and 195–209.
- 78 See McHam, "Renaissance Monuments to Favourite Sons," pp. 462–3.
- 79 On the Malatesta incident, and its echoes in humanist literature, see, for example, Alan Fisher, "Three Meditations on the Destruction of Vergil's Statue: The Early Humanist Theory of Poetry," *Renaissance Quarterly* 40 (1987): 607–35.
- 80 On Isabella's unrealized Virgil monument, see McHam, "Renaissance Monuments to Favourite Sons," pp. 474–6.
- 81 Pontano did not himself write the letter, but his suggestions are transcribed almost verbatim by Count Jacopo Pinaella d'Atri, the Mantuan ambassador to Naples. See Attilio Portioli, "Monumenti a Virgilio in Mantova," *Archivio storico lombardo* 4 (1877): 553–4.
- 82 "concoreremo in lo piacere del Pontano, come quello che è infallibile." Cited in Portioli, "Monumenti a Virgilio in Mantova," p. 554.
- 83 We know this because Pontano included an epigraph from an ancient urn, displayed in the count's courtyard, in his grammatical treatise of the 1460s, *De tumultis*. See De Divitiis, *Architettura e committenza*, p. 126.
- 84 See Trapp, "The Grave of Vergil," esp. pp. 10–11.
- 85 "Venissimo poi a la discussione come dovesse essere fatta la statua, de bronzo, sia de marmo, dicendo che ancor che fusse più nobile il bronzo, pur per il pericolo che ad qualche tempo non se ne facesse sonar campane o bombarde, saria bene de farla de uno bello marmo." Cited in Portioli, "Monumenti a Virgilio in Mantova," p. 553.
- 86 The literature on Leonardo's monument is extensive, but see, for example, Carlo Pedretti, "The Sforza Horse in Context," in *Leonardo da Vinci's Sforza Monument Horse: The Art and the Engineering*, ed. Diane Cole Ahl (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1995), pp. 27–39.
- 87 These treatises, *De magnificentia* and *De splendore*, are included in Giovanni Pontano, *I libri delle virtù sociali*, ed. Francesco Tateo (Rome: Bulzoni, 1999).
- 88 On the "global" character of Naples, owing to Spanish colonialism in particular, see, for example, Nicolas Bock, "Center or Periphery? Artistic Migration, Models, Taste and Standards," in *Napoli è tutto il mondo: Neapolitan Art and Culture from Humanism to the Enlightenment*, eds. Livio Pestilli, Ingrid D. Rowland, and Sebastian Schütze (Pisa and Rome: F. Serra, 2008), pp. 11–36.
- 89 From 1803, or slightly earlier, visitors would have been further encouraged by a Latin inscription attached to the *Head* that provided a capsule history of the work, and its relationship to Virgil. That epigraph is now housed in the Museo di San Martino.