2 The Absent Center

Donatello in the Workshop

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In one of the more memorable passages from his great compendium of artists' biographies, the *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) volunteered an anecdote about the working methods of the fifteenth-century sculptor Donatello (1386–1464/6). The statue in question, popularly known as the *Zuccone*, was one of five Old Testament prophets that Donatello made to encircle the bell tower of Florence's cathedral in the 1420s and 30s, more than a century before Vasari first published his *Lives* in 1550. While carving this, the most "beautiful [statue] that [anyone had] ever made," Vasari reported, Donatello would fix it in his gaze continuously, exclaiming all the while, "favella, favella, che ti venga cacasangue!" ("Speak, speak, or may you shit blood!").[1]

The anecdote is almost certainly apocryphal. Even allowing that Vasari gleaned the story from earlier oral testimony, as seems probable, it is not difficult to see how he used (and perhaps amended) it to reinforce certain myths about Donatello that had become articles of faith by the time the biographer wrote. For one thing, the yarn clearly takes up the venerable *topos* that imagined the sculptor's ultimate creative feat as that of animation, the Pygmalion-like generation of life from inert matter. (Even if the statue does not respond, in an ironic inversion of the Greek myth, the fact that Donatello believes—only half disingenuously—that it *could* is a testament to its mimetic might).[2] For another, it elevates Donatello to the role of solo performer, with the workshop (this is where the event transpires, after all, even if Vasari does not say so) figuring as a space for unencumbered individualism: this in defiance of what Vasari and his readers almost certainly knew, that even a work like the *Zuccone*—which, with a signature incised into its plinth, fed the idea that Donatello, and he alone, had made it—required assistance throughout.[3] It would be difficult to think of a scenario that appeals more to the romantic imagination than this one, the sculptor cocooned in his studio with his work. Or, in Donatello's case, a less likely one.

Yet what interests me in this anecdote is less Vasari's valorization of Donatello the solitary genius—who labors behind doors that seal out the world—than how the writer lets the world, contingent and vulgar, creep defiantly into the narrative frame. This happens in two ways. First, in Donatello's obscene utterance—"cacasangue" being a form of uncouth street slang—which sits rather uncomfortably beside Vasari's gentle insistence, elsewhere in the *vita*, that Donatello was civilized, humble, and kind.[4] And second, in the command that the anecdote has Donatello speak: "favella," from the verb *favellare*, which connotes not speech per se, but the art of telling a good story.[5] Such storytelling was, as we shall see, a staple of sculptors' workshops, which were intensely social spaces, at least partly owing to the necessarily collaborative

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labor that sculpture entailed. There is a certain incongruity to this anecdote, then, because "favella" was less something that one *demanded* in the workshop, much less demanded of one's own work, than what transpired naturally amidst ordinary artisanal routines. Yet it could not occur in Vasari's ideal construct, where the great artist labored alone.

I begin with this anecdote because I think it stages, rather exquisitely, a predicament that haunted Vasari, a pioneering historian of Italian Renaissance art, when compiling his biography of Donatello. That predicament concerns historical evidence, two decidedly different strains of which survived for Vasari to draw upon. On the one hand, a large stock of writings by Donatello's humanist peers, which crowned the sculptor as a heroic figure whose ability to make "faces that [seem to] live" made him a worthy competitor to the ancients.[6] On the other hand, a lively collection of anecdotes drawn from popular Florentine oral tradition, where Donatello flourished as an almost proverbial character of cunning, a sharp-tongued and short-tempered provocateur whose natural habitat was the workshop. These evidentiary strains, both originating in Donatello's own lifetime, sometimes oppose one another; and one has the sense that they have collided in Vasari's anecdote in a sort of uneasy gridlock.

Now if there is a certain pathos here, it has something to do with Donatello's role in what might be called a humanist account of art, to which Vasari was a major, if in many ways belated, contributor. Central to this historiography was sculpture's claim to belong among the "liberal arts," a development, so crucial to that profession's cultural prestige, based on myths—but also practices—that it amounted to intellectual, and not mere manual, labor. One arena where this argument was made—and still the primary arena in which interpretations of Donatello are formed—was in written treatises: in the polymath Leon Battista Alberti's (1404–1472) efforts to restyle sculptural practice as a set of measurable, and hence rational, rules; or the goldsmith Lorenzo Ghiberti's (c. 1378–1455) attempts to record (and so celebrate) its history. I do not mean to claim that certain aspects of Donatello's work do not reflect these currents of thinking. Rather, I wish to suggest that the routine—allowing treatises to guide our accounts of the sculptor—often omits something central. That something, which is the quarry of this essay, is Donatello's workshop.

In what follows, I want to explore what an account of the sculptor might look like were we to thrust the workshop, as both a physical and discursive space, to the interpretive fore. Doing so entails acknowledging that Donatello lived inside a professional and personal community. And in methodological terms, it requires looking beyond what was written to orality, to the "favellare" of Vasari's anecdote, a difficult feat since workshop chatter was ephemeral, it was written down only sporadically, and thus survives in piecemeal fashion. Finally, it means accepting that the workshop may have had different ways of thinking and theorizing about art than those advocated in the period's published art theory. It is an essay in two parts—corresponding roughly with this volume's two frameworks, workshop and portraiture—parts that may feel unrelated at times, but that will be brought together, rest assured, in the final analysis.

A Portrait of Donatello's Workshops

A first task, to set us on our way, will be to establish the basic characteristics of Donatello's working premises: where they were; what purposes they served; and how they were organized. These are more refractory matters than one might think. For in contrast to the shops associated with larger-scale enterprises—those tied to the embellishment and maintenance of the Florence Cathedral complex, for instance, which occupied a relatively stable set of sites for centuries—Donatello's "workshop" was not a fixed spatial entity. From his earliest years as an independent master, in fact, Donatello did not go one decade without changing, more or less significantly, the location of his shop. What is more, his activities at a given time were routinely dispersed across multiple work sites, and even multiple cities.

Here is just a sampling. During the roughly six years that he and his then-collaborator, the sculptor and architect Michelozzo (1396–1472) rented two *botteghe* on the northeastern edge of Florence Cathedral square (c. 1427–1433), Donatello utilized no less than three other workspaces: an atelier, also with Michelozzo, in Pisa (1426–1429); likely another in Rome (c. 1431–1434); and the work facilities linked to Florence Cathedral.[7] In the period that followed, coinciding with the years that he chiseled the *Zuccone* (c. 1433–1436), he availed himself of two different shops entirely: a spacious *bottega* on the Via Larga—comprising a former inn and two adjacent cottages with a courtyard—let from the Medici (c. 1434–1443); and another in nearby Prato, where he, Michelozzo, and their assistants fashioned the pulpit for the exterior of that city's Cathedral (c. 1434–1438).[8] Donatello probably made the *Zuccone* itself, meanwhile, in one of the work spaces at Florence Cathedral. During the decade that he resided in Padua (c. 1444–1453), by contrast, he operated between a live-work space that had previously served as lodging for fishermen and the state-controlled bronze foundry ("il Maglio").[9] To this can be added several occasions when Donatello worked directly on site: he carved the *St. John the Evangelist* (1408–1415) and *Cantoria* (1433–1439) for Florence Cathedral, for example, in chapels converted into ad hoc working spaces.[10] Any analysis of Donatello's "workshop," in short, must be uncoupled from the fantasy of a stable space devoted to the machinations of a great artistic mind. More often, his shops—plural—were temporary arrangements, changing hands often, and materializing wherever it was most practical, or most feasible, for Donatello to conduct his work.[11]

If this number of work premises was unusual in Donatello's time, if not entirely without precedent, it stemmed partly from the material and technical diversity of his projects. In the 1430s, for example, Donatello's practice encompassed a staggering range of materials—marble, sandstone, terracotta, bronze, painted stucco, glass, to name but a few—and such versatility persisted in later decades, too. It follows that each of these media or *métiers* required different personnel, tools, and facilities, not to mention access to distinct "supply chains." It is no coincidence, for example, that nearly all of Donatello's Florentine shops were situated near the Cathedral. Apart from the fact that the wardens of the Cathedral complex, the *operai*, were Donatello's most consistent patrons for the first half of his career, they had a virtual monopoly over the sale of wood and marble, and proximity to the Cathedral would have greatly eased his access to these materials.[12] Pigments and wax were also readily accessible from this location, with apothecaries and wax specialists clustered on capillary streets to the south and north of the Cathedral, on the Corso degli Adimari and near the churches of Santissima Annunziata and Orsanmichele, respectively.[13] A similar logic informed Donatello and Michelozzo's Pisan workshop, chosen, it would seem, for its position along the stretch of the Arno River that cleaved through the city's center. This location made it easier for the pair to receive shipments of marble from the quarries at Carrara, Pietrasanta, and Seravezza (which were transported by boat down Italy's west coast), and to export their finished works to Florence (up the Arno) or, as occurred with their tomb monument of Cardinal Rainaldo Brancacci (c. 1426–1428), to Naples along the coastline.[14] Compare this range of considerations to Donatello's former employer, Ghiberti, whose monomaniacal enterprise of casting two sets of bronze doors for Florence's Baptistery surely influenced his decision to occupy the same workshop for decades.[15]

We have almost no hard data about the physical appearance of Donatello's shops, apart from occasional information about their size.[16] Nor does the documentary record offer precise details about what tools and equipment the sculptor kept in these spaces: this in contrast to others in his trade, like Maso di Bartolomeo (1406–1456) and Benedetto da Maiano (1442–1497), for whom extensive shop inventories and *libri di bottega* survive. Given the relative uniformity of shop layouts in this period, however, one can safely presume several things. One is that, in contrast to the working premises of certain later sculptors—the famed Casa degli Omenoni of Leone Leoni (c. 1509–1590) in Milan, for example, with its brawny atlantes enlivening the façade—Donatello's shops gave little outward indication of the presence of a great artist within. In all probability, they were located on the ground floor of buildings, with one or more apertures open to the street, but otherwise unremarkable to the eye.[17] Such a format was both pragmatic—it facilitated the flow of people and materials into and out of the shop—and a mechanism for transparency, allowing for the surveillance of shop conduct by patrons, passersby, and occasionally a secret police force that combed shops for evidence of misconduct. An engraving from the 1460s gives us a sense of one type of exterior layout; and a painting from the 1480s another (Figure 2.1, left and right). A well-known marble relief by Nanni di Banco (c. 1385/6–1421), meanwhile, offers an approximate idea of what the interior may have looked like, with sculptors (in this case marble sculptors) training their attention on discrete tasks, their tools arrayed around them (Figure 2.1, bottom). Behind this more public part of the workshop, one might find spaces devoted to specialized activities, storerooms, and a private study for meeting with clients or for drawing—from life, from antiquities, or plaster casts.

Another safe assumption is that Donatello's workshops, wherever they happened to be, were high-gravity arenas of social interaction. This was not distinctive to him, of course, since the early Renaissance *bottega*, no matter the individual or vocation involved, was (to borrow a phrase from Michael Rocke) "a basic institution of male sociability."[18] The very organizational structure of workshops, with their teams of apprentices, collaborators, and day laborers, all but guaranteed this.[19] So did their location and their physical layout. Being densely clustered in particular zones and often open to the street, as we saw, workshops were natural places for congregation. Arguably no source captures this social dimension of workshops better than the *Trecentonovelle*, a collection of popular *novelle* compiled around 1390–1400 by the Florentine merchant-poet Franco Sacchetti (c. 1330–c. 1400) and informed deeply by the oral traditions of Donatello's youth. The *bottega* is one of the most common settings for these stories. It is the place where artisans mingle; observe one another at work; and—a guiding thread throughout—play practical jokes on their masters, patrons, neighbors, bystanders, one another.[20] And as these *novelle* make clear, the visitors that workshops attracted could be diverse indeed: ranging from craftsmen and noblemen to humanists—in short, those from every rung of the social ladder. Take, for example, the workshop of the popular Florentine poet Burchiello

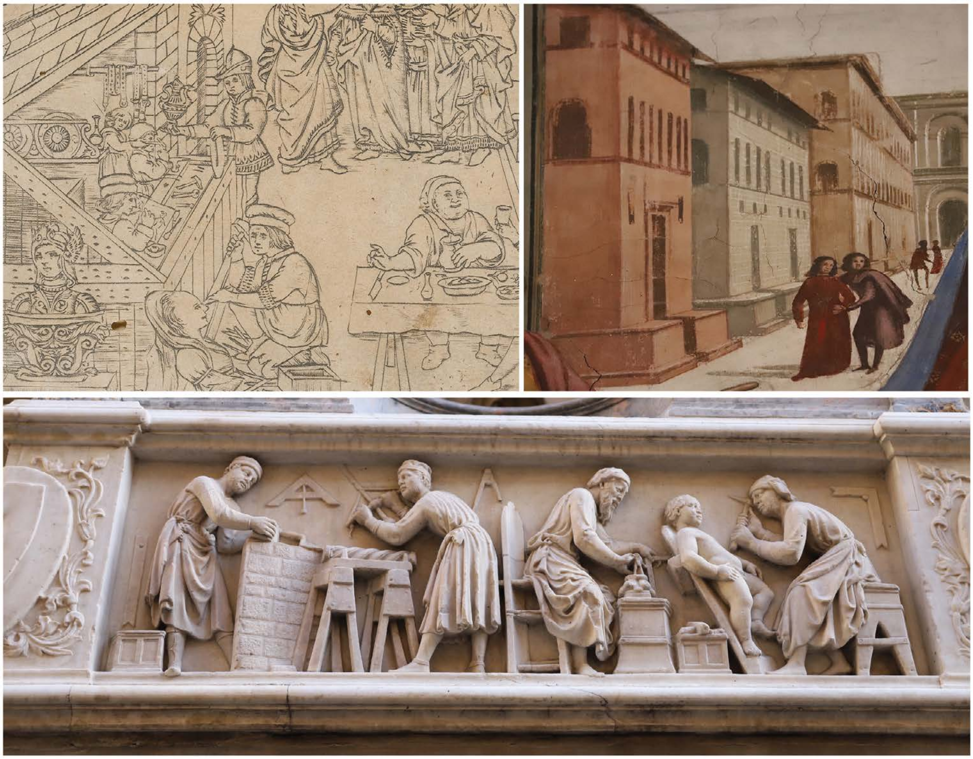

Figure 2.1 Left: Baccio Baldini, *The Children of Mercury* (detail), 1460s. Engraving. British Museum, London. © Trustees of the British Museum. Right: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Presentation of the Virgin Mary* (detail), 1489. Fresco. Tornabuoni Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence. © Daniel M. Zolli. Bottom: Nanni di Banco, Base of the niche of the *Quattro Santi Coronati*, c. 1409–1417, Orsanmichele, Florence. © Daniel M. Zolli.

(1404–1449), a barber by profession, which became, by some accounts, an informal salon where men of different classes and professions flocked to hear his satirical sonnets.[21] Historians have unearthed evidence of similarly heterogeneous circles in the shops of cloth merchants, booksellers, and apothecaries.[22]

While such patterns were common, there is reason to believe that Donatello's *botteghe* were particularly lively spaces, not only because of his collaborative method, and the central location of his shops but also because of the foot traffic that tended to accompany fame. It is almost certain, for example, that Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464), the nominal landlord of Donatello's outsize *bottega* on the Via Larga, was a regular habitué of that shop; as were others in the Medici circle.[23] We also know that the peripatetic merchant and antiquarian Ciriaco d'Ancona (1391–1452) made that same shop, along with Ghiberti's *bottega*, a destination on his Florentine itinerary, not only to take in the "good many antique things" housed there but also the sculptor's "own [works] in bronze and marble."[24] And in a 1434 letter to the wardens of Prato cathedral, Matteo da Prato (1391–c. 1465), a renowned maker of pipe organs, remarked that all of the "experts" in Florence, having examined the first of Donatello's pulpit reliefs, declared "all at once that they [had] never [witnessed] anything like it."[25]

That the likely setting for their encounter was Donatello's Florentine *bottega*, where the relief would have resided before going to Prato, only reinforces the impression that these were heavily trafficked sites, with "studio visits" even taking on a critical dimension.

Naturally, there was more to sculptors' workshops than sociability. Shops were first and foremost places of labor, after all, and the occasional distinguished visitor notwithstanding, they could be places pervaded by dirt, vulgarity, and rabble—the "cacasangue" and "favellare" of Vasari's anecdote. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) may have had personal motivations for adducing "sweat," "dust," "mud," and "bodily fatigue" as proof of sculpture's intellectual inferiority to painting; but there is a certain empirical truth to his specifics.[26] Sculptors' workshops were also hazardous places. Artists occasionally worked in high temperatures (in the case of casting), with toxic substances (e.g., mercury in gilding amalgams, lung-damaging silica from ceramics, lead in glazes, arsenic in paint), and routinely dealt with injuries and chronic illness.[27] Nor was violence uncommon. Our first record of Donatello, in fact, is a legal peace settlement between him and one Anichino di Piero "d'Alemania," both teenagers, following an altercation in Pistoia that led Donatello to cudgel the boy's face—an event that may have occurred in or around a workshop, since the victim was likely the son and apprentice of an established goldsmith, Pietro di Arrigo Tedesco (active c. 1380), then working on a silver altar for the Cathedral of Pistoia (an initiative to which the young Donatello is also sometimes thought to have been linked).[28] Being all-male environments, moreover, workshops were among the most common sites for gambling and sodomitical activity.[29]

The matter of whether, or to what extent, such activities transpired in Donatello's shops is beyond me here. The crowded and diverse company that he kept in these spaces does invite a broader point though: namely, that his shops, like all such spaces, acted as hubs for the exchange of information; places where artists, artisans, and others convened to share news and gossip, swap trade secrets, and seal their camaraderie by telling jokes—either in the interior of shops or seated on the benches that occasionally punctuated their exteriors (Figure 2.1, left).[30] The prevalence and broad import of such chatter—how it breathed life and meaning into these spaces—can be difficult to appreciate, along lines discussed earlier. Even so, there are tools that can attune our ears, however imperfectly, to the type of informal thrum that must have animated Donatello's shops.

One is everyday scrapbook compilations, called *zibaldoni*, scores of which survive in Florentine archives. Because their compilers often carried them, scrabbling down what they heard (or deemed worthy of remembering) as they conducted their daily activities, these books contain the precious residue of information that circulated orally. And just as the routines of their users ranged widely, so, too, do the topics in these compilations. A good example is a *zibaldone* compiled around the 1440s by three friends—two popular poets and a merchant—who, because they moved in Medici circles, were almost certainly familiar with Donatello, and may even have visited his shops.[31] In a single two-page "opening," we carom from a do-it-yourself bed bug remedy, to a list of the ages of Old Testament figures, to a list of bawdy street poems that would not bear retelling in polite company. Other pages are similarly cacophonous. As, indeed, are other *zibaldoni*. While none of these artifacts can be definitively linked to Donatello's shops, so far as I know, the riot of information they contain is nevertheless instructive, reminding us that conversations, in *botteghe* and other bustling spaces like the marketplace, piazza, and tavern, could be as varied and untidy as life itself.

If these documents are one tool for monitoring "shop talk," albeit only in an oblique and general sense, the popular anecdotes about Donatello represent another. Methodologically, this material is just as recalcitrant as the *zibaldoni*, but for different reasons. Though probably originating in the oral testimony of those personally acquainted with Donatello, these anecdotes reach us today in mediated form, having been copied down by a highly literate caste only in the years after the sculptor's death. It is impossible to know, in each case, what was changed, by whom, and to what end, let alone what distortions occurred before the material reached the ears of its transcriber.

Still, patterns do emerge, many of them consistent with first-hand accounts of Donatello's rough character, razor-sharp wit, and generally irreverent nature. Consider the claim, in one anecdote, that Donatello used to "stain his youngest shop hands with pigment so that others did not desire them."[32] Or the allegation, it too thick with innuendo, that Donatello "delighted in keeping beautiful apprentices in his workshop."[33] In a third anecdote, the sculptor, grown tired of his patrons hounding him to finish the Gattamelata monument, destroys the figure's head with a hammer. When his sponsors threaten him with the same fate, Donatello quips, "I'll be content, provided you can remake my head as I will that of [the sculpture]."[34] And in another still, he rejects a high-ranking bishop's repeated demands to visit him, with the rationale that, "I am just as much the Patriarch in my art as he is in his."[35] In his treatise on sculpture (1504), meanwhile, the Paduan humanist Pomponius Gauricus (1481/2–1530) recounts how the influential nobleman Marco Barbo (1420–1491), evidently in awe of Donatello's art, asked the sculptor to see his abacus—a basic tool of drawing practice, and so, Barbo thought, the secret of the sculptor's creativity. Donatello beckoned Barbo to his workshop, only to reveal that his abacus was none other than him, "which I always carry with me, without [effort]"—an arrow of wit intended to puncture Barbo's presumptuousness.[36]

To these can be added Donatello's role as the architect and goldsmith Filippo Brunelleschi's (c. 1377–1446) accomplice in the *Tale of the Fat Woodworker*, a story (allegedly based on real events) in which the pair and their *brigata*, their gang, orchestrate an intricate hoax to convince their friend, the woodworker Manetto, that he is someone else entirely.[37] At one point, Brunelleschi, in ear shot of the joke's victim and wearing "the world's largest smile," asks Donatello if he knows anything about the prank. The sculptor glibly responds that he does not, adding that he recalls hearing several people discussing it the day before "in [his] *bottega*," but that he was so immersed in his "imagination, and engaged in work, that [he] hadn't listened closely."[38] In this brief exchange, one encounters many of the themes discussed earlier, beginning with workshop gossip, which Donatello enlists, deceitfully, to advance the ruse: first, by insinuating that news of Manetto's misfortune was circulating widely enough to have reached his own shop (much to the woodworker's embarrassment); and second, by signaling his *distance* from that gossip, which blinds the ingenuous Manetto to the fact that Donatello is the one manipulating the joke's invisible strings. And in this, the incident highlights a yet more elemental attribute of Donatello's in popular lore: cunning, the chameleon-like ability to achieve any end imagined, using whatever tools (technical, material, or verbal) a particular circumstance demanded.

While these sources hardly live up to modern standards for historical positivism, they do offer insight, I think, into how Donatello was popularly perceived. Note how consistently they zero in on the sculptor's penchant for trickery, or portray him as a maestro of the quick-witted retort. Notice, above all, that the "connective tissue" uniting these anecdotes—the physical context to which many, if not all, refer—is Donatello's workshop. In the book that I am writing on Donatello, I suggest that these popular anecdotes, and others like them, might offer a blueprint for understanding certain aspects of the sculptor's practice: how their emphasis on the sculptor's near-primordial cunning, for example, might be mirrored in works like his *St. Louis* (1422–1425), which, despite looking like a "solid gold statue," is no more than a gilded relief, cast in eight sections, and supported by a hidden armature; or in his pulpit at Prato Cathedral (1428–1438), the mosaic ground of which, although perceptually identical to gilded glass (or glass paste) tiles, Donatello composed from shards of everyday terracotta earthenware coated with a semi-transparent film of shell gold; or, more broadly, in his habit of "making up" materials, just as he made-up his assistants in face paint: as when he tinted limestone to simulate porphyry; terracotta to resemble marble; or adulterated stucco with brick dust in imitation of ancient cameos.

For issues of space, however, I will confine myself to one final observation before pivoting to address this volume's other framework, portraiture. If the popular anecdotes about Donatello highlight his playful personality, and if this is echoed in his play with materials, together they attest to what might be called a nucleated theory of art taking root in and around his workshop: a theory that, while lacking the programmatic coherence of written treatises, still exhibits certain conceptual touchstones throughout—irony, verbal or visual wit, cunning, and craftiness. Accepting this proposition reconfigures our sense of what some of Donatello's patrons, and his Florentine audience more generally, may have prized in the artist's work; and it means reckoning with the idea that Donatello's shops were not just sites of sociability and labor, but places for the formation of artistic identity.

The extent to which portraiture might enter this equation is difficult to gauge, since Donatello is not known to have produced portraits of his contemporaries, let alone to have portrayed himself, or any of his shop personnel, in his works—overtly at least.[39] Although scholars have been on the case for decades now, chasing Donatello's likeness across a range of his works, none has found a self-portrait that can be accepted with total certitude.[40] This situation distinguishes Donatello from some of his peers, who took care to embed portraits of themselves in their works, more or less conspicuously, and occasionally in ways that might lead viewers back into the site of making through the already made. (One thinks here of Ghiberti's self-portrait, clad with the protective headgear typical of sculptors' shops, on his first set of doors for Florence Baptistery (1403–1424); or the relief (1445) that Filarete (1400–1469) appended to the back of his own doors, at St. Peter's in Rome, in which the sculptor and his assistants dance jubilantly across the relief's ground in celebration of their achievement, accompanied by music, wine, and brandishing the very tools—compass, trowel, file, claw hammer—that brought the metallic opus into existence.) Nor do other, less official portraits survive from Donatello's shops. Despite Gauricus's claim that Donatello's pedagogical program for his assistants amounted to one word—"Draw!"—scholars have yet to identify definitively a single example of his *bottega*'s graphic output: this in contrast to the myriad paper relics that survive from the shops of his peers, and that register fledgling artists drawing from a common model or drawing one another drawing.[41]

In casting about for a link between portraiture and Donatello's workshop, one instead finds artifacts characterized by fragmentariness and innuendo. It is widely accepted, for instance, that Donatello incorporated life-casts into his works: the legs of Holofernes in his *Judith and Holofernes* (1457–1464), which one conservator memorably identified as derived from a "man of advanced age with feet disfigured by manual labor," are one such example.[42] But portraiture in this vein may have been little more than an expedient for something else. Though originating as an imprint of a particular person, perhaps even a shop assistant or (less likely) Donatello himself, these casts read as the legs of Holofernes, and not those of their "sitter," whose identity has disappeared within the work's fiction. In a different vein, scholars have often remarked that Donatello's bronze *David* resembles a young boy "playing" the Old Testament hero: one of the adolescent apprentices whose duty it may have been to undress, or dress up, in the *bottega* to serve as a model—though, again, the connection to portraiture here would be no more than indirect.[43] If we enlarge our definition of portrait to include representations of contemporary *types*, however, a more compelling set of connections may emerge with Donatello's *bottega*, in a remarkable work that I want to use to draw together this paper's themes.

The Sculptor's Virtue, the Patron Dis-Armed

This work is the *stemma*, or coat of arms, of the Martelli family. Part of the *gente nuova*—"new people" who had become monied not by noble inheritance but through ambition—the Martelli had gained considerable wealth and influence in Donatello's lifetime as partners in the Medici bank, branches of which the family patriarch, Roberto Martelli (1409–1464), managed in Basel (1433–1439) and Rome (1439–1464).[44] Measuring almost two meters tall, carved from a single slab of local sandstone (*macigno*), and picked out with polychromy and gilding, this *stemma* served, until its relocation in the eighteenth century, as a principal visual node on the façade of the Martelli family palace on the Via degli Spadai (the street connecting the Cathedral square to the Medici palace), being set, in all probability, above that building's main portal (Figure 2.2).[45] Given the object's clear importance to an important family, it is somewhat surprising that the *stemma* has not received more scholarly attention; or that what attention it has attracted has mainly concerned the matter of its authorship.[46] For present purposes, it will suffice to note that a growing consensus has credited Donatello, if not with the arms' carving or painting then at least with their design—an attribution with which I am in fundamental agreement, for reasons that will become clear.[47]

While the image of Donatello as a maker of coats-of-arms might strike us today as unusual, partly because much of this output is now lost or unidentified, his contemporaries and some later commentators like Vasari saw him as displaying a special expertise in that field.[48] The sculptor's close ties with the Martelli are also a matter of record. Apart from the numerous works that Donatello produced for the family—surviving or documented—there are Vasari's well-known remarks, in the second edition of the *Lives*, that the Martelli had taken the sculptor into their house as a young boy. While scholars have long recognized this plot of formation to be fictional, few have doubted that Donatello enjoyed close, even quasi-familial, ties with the Martelli, and with Roberto in particular.[49] Nor is it trivial that the seventeenth-century Florentine writer Giovanni Cinelli (1625–1706), the first person to treat Donatello's production of arms in any detail, regarded the Martelli *stemma* as something extraordinary. Cinelli's remarks are so at odds with historiographic

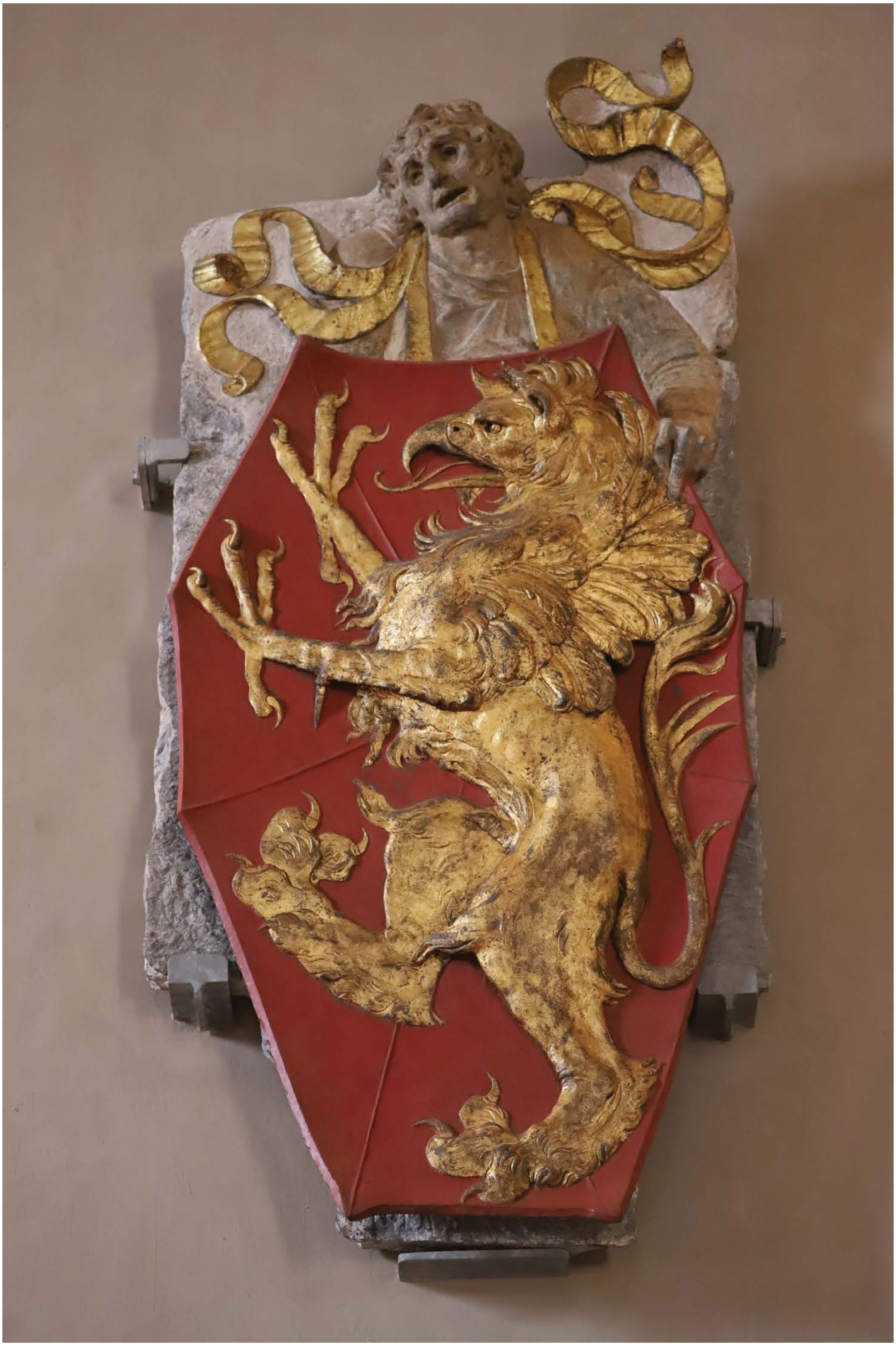

Figure 2.2 Donatello (attr.) with Desiderio da Settignano (attr.), *Arms of the Martelli Family*, 1454–1462. Macigno with polychromy and gilding. H. 193 cm. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. © Daniel M. Zolli.

norms, and speak with such precision about the work and its motivating conditions, that they are worth quoting in their entirety:

> Roberto Martelli [was] an expert judge of the virtue of Donatello [...] On the façade of [the Martelli palace] there are the arms of that family made from stone by Donatello, who was a close familiar of that House, from which he received quarter, and favors that were not ordinary, and particularly from [Roberto]. And [about] these alluring and awe-inspiring arms: there is in the background an [older man], who supports the shield with his hands; and as if [the man] were a hook, [Donatello has] attached the shield to [his] neck by means of a leather strap; the head of the [old man] is marvelous beyond belief [and] wrought with supreme artifice, and amply demonstrates that this is the work of the ingenious chisel of that Donato.[50]

Published two centuries after Donatello's death, Cinelli's remarks should not be taken as gospel. Still, the writer's basic acceptance of Donatello's role in articulating the imagery of the arms, whether alone or (as is more likely) with others, strikes me as instructive, not only because the writer took the attribution for granted but because the details that absorbed his attention were, I submit, so quintessentially Donatellesque. In what follows I want to read this object in relationship to a set of principles highlighted in our foregoing discussion of Donatello's workshops, principles that are evident not just in how the arms are made, or what they show, but in a set of implicit claims they make about the sculptor's relationship to the Martelli.

To attempt this task requires, first, a bit of chronology. A majority of scholars have dated the *stemma* to 1454–1457, that is shortly after Donatello's return to Florence from Padua, when construction on the Martelli palace was nearing completion (1446–1458), but before his departure for Siena (1457–1461/2).[51] In the absence of archival footholds, though, one cannot discount the possibility that he instead completed the work during occasional visits from Siena, or upon repatriating to Florence permanently in 1461/62 (and before his death in 1466). Rather than arbitrate between these possibilities, I propose to see the arms in relation to another event in Donatello's life: his temporary use, perhaps as early as 1459 and not later than 1462, of a workshop on the Via degli Spadai—a hairsbreadth, as it were, from the Martelli palace. The first scholar to publish the document attesting to this workshop, Iodoco del Badia, even ventured that Donatello, returning from Siena but finding his former workspace occupied, set up shop on the ground floor of the Martelli palace itself—a scenario that, if true, would reinforce Cinelli's remark that Roberto Martelli had provided the sculptor with "quarter" and extraordinary "favors."[52] Yet, even if this *bottega* was not in the palace proper, there is a realistic possibility that it belonged to the Martelli, who owned most, though not all, of the buildings lining the street during the years in question. The suitability of these dwellings for sculptor's work, meanwhile, can be inferred from their earlier function; for over a century, the street was a locus for the shops of sword-makers (*spadai*), which craft the Martelli line had practiced until the late fourteenth century.[53] Even as these properties switched hands, and their external appearance changed, the ground-floor spaces could, and did, serve as workshops. To put all of this in terms relevant to our discussion: around the time that he made the Martelli arms—either after, during, or shortly before its manufacture—Donatello occupied a workshop in the family's condensed urban block, a space possibly in the palace itself, and possibly subsidized by his neighbors.

Foregrounding this fact may help to shed light on the arms' most distinctive feature. Indeed, unlike other examples of its kind—which, for reasons we shall consider shortly, rarely allowed anything supplemental to intrude upon the genre's basic structural unit, the shield—this specimen features a full-length male figure supporting the family's arms. Nor does he fulfill this task gallantly. Hair tousled, forehead furrowed, and upper body locked in awkward torsion, he is the very anti-type of Donatello's revered icon of chivalric courage, the *Saint George* (c. 1415–1417) from four decades earlier (Figure 2.3). Where George stands astride his shield—resolutely vertical, left arm, thrust forward like a prow, stabilizing the shield with ease—the scaled-up Martelli aegis is, for his counterpart, hopelessly cumbersome: the ceremonial strap overwhelms him with its calligraphic flamboyance; and his left hand, in an effort to stay the shield, pinches at the griffon's feathers like some prehensile claw. So consumed is he with his task, in fact, that he appears, ironically, less animated than the rampant griffon on the shield, which pulses with feline energy, its tail, feathers, and talons gently rebelling against the limits of its support. Whatever else might be said of this figure, his role is undeniably centered around physical exertion. Who is he and to what occupation does his labor belong?

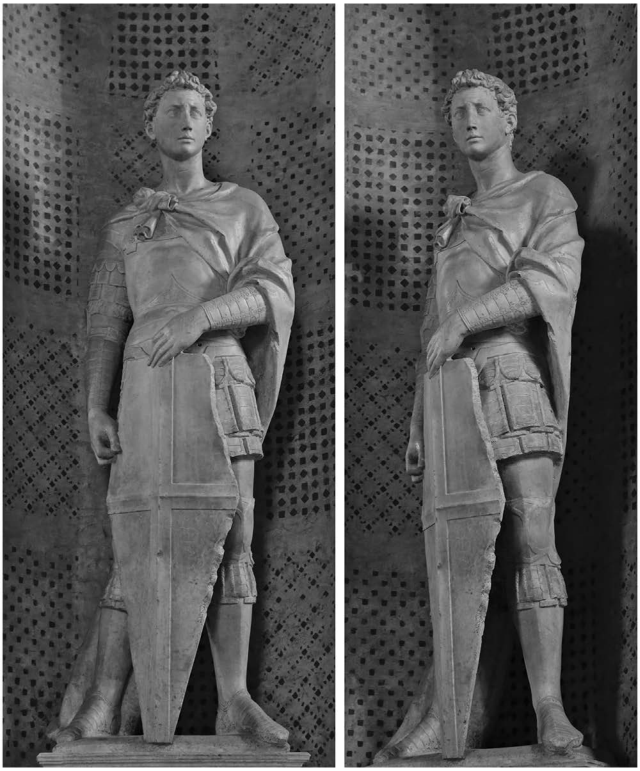

Figure 2.3 Donatello, *Saint George*, c. 1417. Marble. H. 209 cm. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. © Daniel M. Zolli.

To approach these questions, we might follow another interpretive vector, that of clothing. In a recent discussion of the Martelli *stemma*, Patricia Rubin raised the intriguing possibility that Donatello dressed the shield-bearer in an everyday worker's shift—a reading that is, if not certain, then at least plausible based on what we see: the rounded neckline, absence of supplements (e.g., collar, embroidery, or overgarments), sleeves rolled past the wrist, and (originally) yellow/off-white hue are all reminiscent of such attire (as in, e.g., Figure 2.4).[54] For Donatello, a sculptor whose oeuvre is filled with careful and considered descriptions of dress, such sartorial nuance would not have been at all unusual. Nor would it have gone unnoticed by his first viewers, for whom recognizing the social valences in clothing was a basic everyday skill.[55] That Donatello was perhaps thinking along these lines might be further inferred from the figure's left hand—the only non-vestimentary attribute of his that we see (Figure 2.5). Rugged and knobby, it exhibits none of the manual hygiene so prized by the city's patrician classes, but resembles, instead, a well-worn tool. (One is reminded here, anecdotally, of the claim, cited as common knowledge in a letter from a Medici agent in Rome, that Donatello had no "vocation other than [his own] hands.")[56] And nested against the variegated shield, this hand is also impossible to miss, even at the considerable distance at which it was originally (and in its current setting, in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, still is) exhibited.

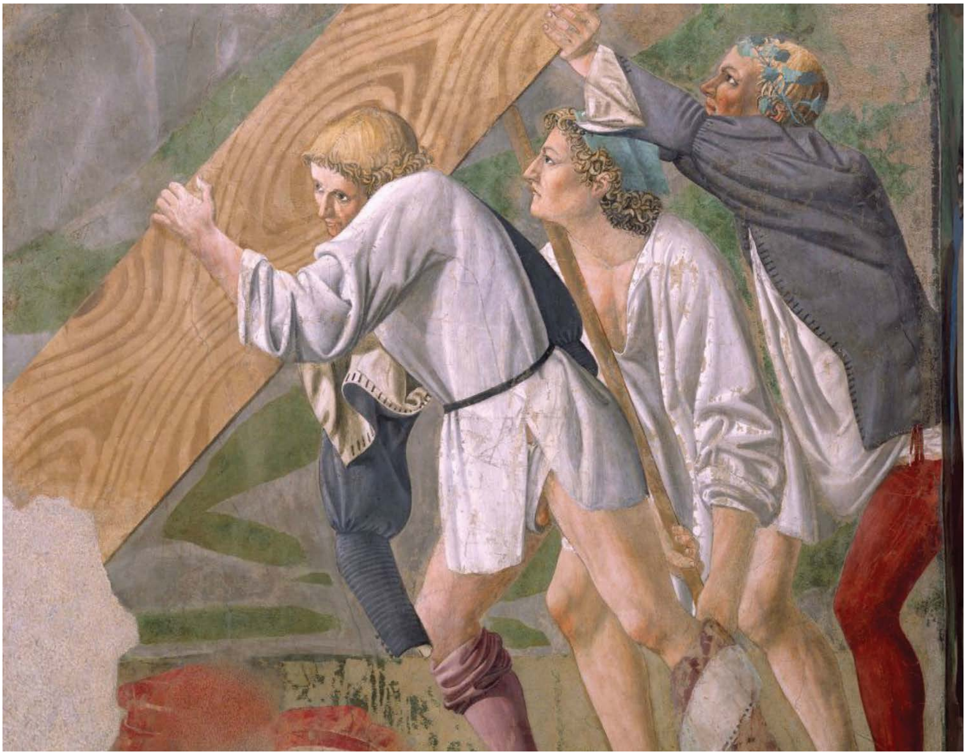

Figure 2.4 Piero della Francesca, *Burial of the Holy Wood* (detail), 1452–1466. Fresco. San Francesco, Arezzo. © Daniel M. Zolli.

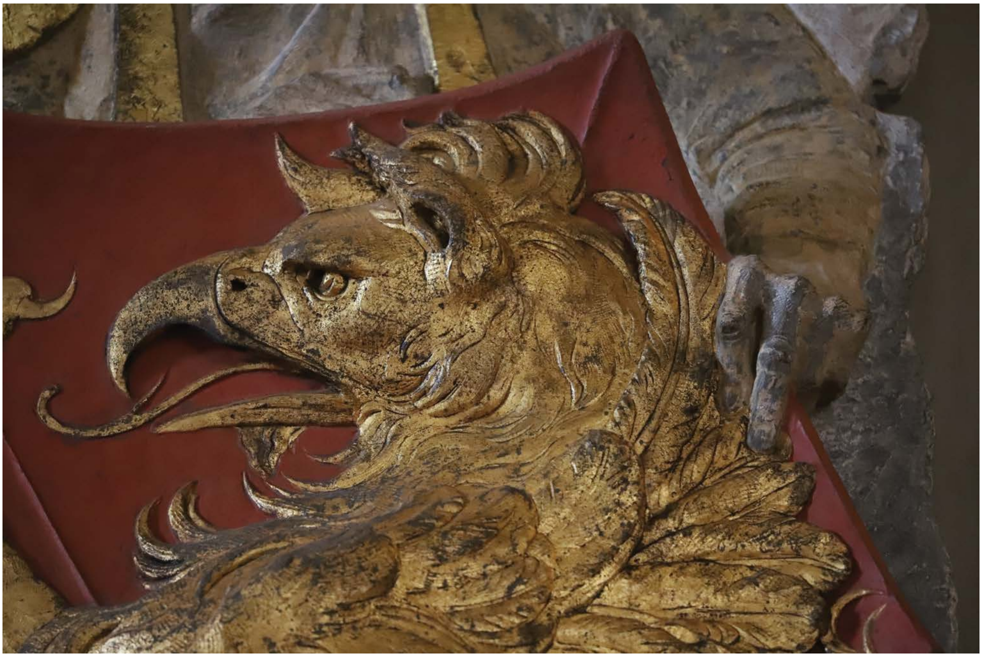

Figure 2.5 Arms of the Martelli Family (detail). © Daniel M. Zolli

Whether or not Donatello intended a more precise identification with a particular type of work I do not know. What can be said with greater certainty, though, is that by adding this figure—wherever it fell on the continuum between workshop assistant, worker, and generic shield-bearer—Donatello complicated the sculpture's message. Because by introducing a laboring figure to the *stemma*, a foreign interloper in a political emblem of the highest order, Donatello also introduced the specter of class difference into the arms, juxtaposing, as Rubin noted, the high and low ends of the social spectrum.[57] Granted, the sculptor's motives for doing this may have been relatively benign. It is possible, for instance, that by hanging the Martelli shield from this figure—rather than, say, a corbel or a ring, as was common for coats of arms—Donatello merely sought a clever alternative to convention: to arrest beholders' attention, in other words, by introducing an unexpectedly human dimension to this display of the family arms. This would bring the figure into line with the infantile *putti* that populate the margins of many of Donatello's works, which Charles Dempsey, in a classic book on the topic, described as "ornament in action," anecdotal characters that "aroused the spectator's interest and amusement by playing out a little light-hearted little drama that is independent of the seriousness of [a given work's] principal theme."[58] But then, such a conclusion would account neither for how sharply this figure diverged from heraldic precedent nor how jarring the juxtaposition of labor and aristocratic pomp may have been for Donatello's original audience.

To begin thinking through this problem, as well as its entanglements with the workshop and its habits of mind, we might remind ourselves of the formal and political logic underlying publicly displayed coats-of-arms. Except in rare cases, the escutcheon, or shield, appeared alone. When artists wrought these *stemme,* that is, they represented the escutcheon as a discrete element, sealed off from the world by a frame, which acted prophylactically to protect the work's message, to distinguish it from competing messages, and to insulate it from the contingencies of daily reality.[59] There was sound reasoning behind these formal norms. Stationed on the façade of a family's palace (or anything else they owned), the *stemma* stood metonymically for that family's status and power; and it conveyed, perhaps more than any other image type, the identity (real or desired) that the family wished to project. Having only recently replaced its original family emblem of two crossed hammers (a reference to the name Martelli—plural of "hammer"—and to the family's longstanding ties to sword-making) with a griffon (an image rich in classical associations that could conceal the family's lack of nobility), the Martelli understood this fact well (Figure 2.6, top). Although there was no legal prohibition against craftsmen or artists devising their own personal arms, as indeed the Martelli had with hammers, there were strict communal controls to ensure that they only displayed those arms on personal property (Figure 2.6, left and right).[60] Such restrictions ensured that the overwhelming majority of private arms that appeared in the built environment belonged to families of great political power, wealth, or social standing. And it meant that, excluding shop signs (a separate category to which I shall return) and

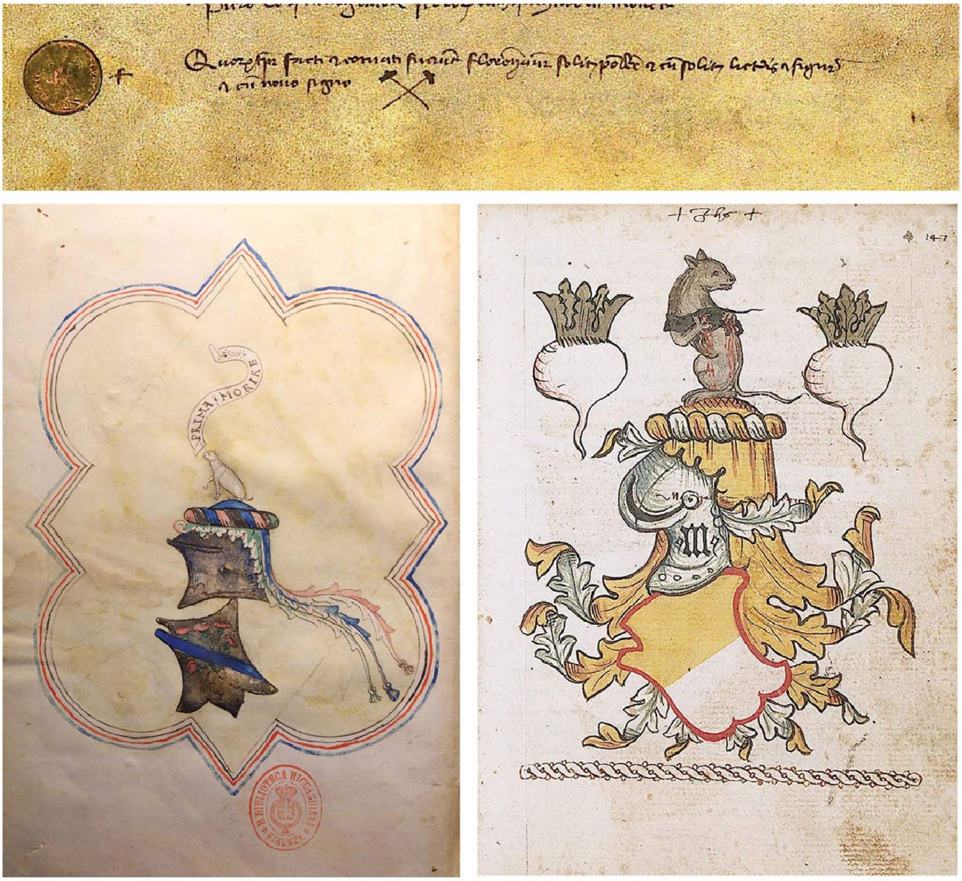

Figure 2.6 Top: Folio from the *Libro della Zecca*, featuring the arms of Ugolino Martelli (1519–1595) (detail), dated 1382. Archivio di Stato, Zecca, Fiorinaio, c. 76 v. © Daniel M. Zolli; Left: *Zibaldone*, flyleaf. Biblioteca Riccardiana 1114, Florence. © Daniel M. Zolli. Right: Folio from Michael of Rhodes' notebook featuring Rhodes' coat of arms, 1401–1443. Private collection. © https://brunelleschi.imss.fi.it/michaelofrhodes/

corporate arms (i.e., those of the guilds), craftsmen, and artists, despite fashioning the arms of others, were conspicuous only by the absence of their arms in urban space.

It does not follow that artisans or those from non-aristocratic backgrounds did not desire arms, as any number of *stemme* can attest. The arms devised by an anonymous Florentine artisan on the flyleaf of his personal *zibaldone*—comprising, among other features, an ermine, carnations, and an inscription likely derived from popular poetry—are one such example (Figure 2.6, left).[61] The coat of arms that Michael of Rhodes (dead 1445), a Venetian mariner of humble origins, appended to his notebook in these same years is another. Though obeying the usual grammar of heraldry, Rhodes' arms playfully reimagined its typically high-minded symbols. The crest of his *stemma*, for instance, consists of an oversized mouse that has ensnared and butchered a cat; and it is flanked by leafy white turnips (a peasant food) masquerading as regal crowns (Figure 2.6, right).[62] While Rhodes' arms are humorous, and may even index a certain pride in his social station, they are also tinged with pathos. Lacking a noble lineage or inheritance, that is, Rhodes may well have concluded that his only recourse to authority in his arms was to imagine a world turned upside down—a world where mice killed cats. More pathological still were the arms that the Florentine wool workers, or *ciompi*, emblazoned on the banner they carried in June 1378, during the revolt in which they succeeded in wresting authority, briefly, from the Florentine government—an event in which Donatello's father, a wool stretcher, seems to have played a prominent role. One of the principal motivations for the revolt was the wool workers' dissatisfaction at their disenfranchisement; they were barred from participating in government, were not represented by the guilds, had no arms, and were thus invisible in the city's signs and symbols. Small wonder, then, that the arms they chose to convey their agitative purpose featured an angel wielding a sword, a reference to Archangel Michael, bringer of divine justice.[63]

The fact that arms were so intimately connected to the identity and authority of powerful families, but not necessarily of artists, also made them a primary target for gestures of subversion. The roots of this conceit run deep. It is quite natural to think, for example, that Donatello and Roberto Martelli alike were familiar with the report, known from Plutarch and Cicero, that the Greek artist Phidias, forbidden from signing his statue of Athena Parthenos on the Acropolis in Athens, smuggled his self-portrait, along with a portrait of his patron, onto its shield. (In a variant of the story, Phidias engineered the shield so that any effort to tamper with his likeness would cause the whole statue to break apart).[64] Closer to their own time, though, Donatello and the Martelli would have found echoes of this idea in popular Tuscan storytelling traditions. Consider two examples from Sacchetti's *Trecentonovelle*. In the first, a socially striving artisan, paying an unannounced visit to Giotto's workshop, informs the artist that he needs his "arms" painted on a shield.[65] Startled by the artisan's audacity, his presumption that someone of Giotto's fame would undertake the task and his failure even to convey what his arms may have looked like, Giotto resolves to teach him a lesson. Accepting the commission, Giotto embellishes the shield with the artisan's literal arms (a helmet, gauntlet, breastplates, knife, and lance) then berates the man, crowing that his actions might be appropriate for a Bavarian duke, but not someone who should be ashamed of his ancestors. The second story, meanwhile, centers around Sacchetti's celebrated antihero, the Florentine painter Buffalmacco, whom the Bishop of Arezzo (a city in eastern Tuscany) commissions to paint an eagle perched atop the carcass of a lion on his palace façade. In other words, the Bishop takes for granted that because Buffalmacco was his financial dependent, he would acquiesce to making a political emblem disparaging his native city (the Guelphs, symbolized by the lion, were a *Florentine* political party). Yet, hidden behind the scaffold, the plucky Buffalmacco paints the reverse of what his patron has paid for—"a fierce and great lion tearing an eagle to pieces"—thus scoring a symbolic victory over the Ghibelline bishop and his city.[66]

Both stories make the same point in different terms. At stake in each is the idea, hugely important in Donatello's time, that artists had social standing and agency. Each plot is set in motion by the patrons' assumption, born from a position of presumed superiority, that the artist was no more than a vehicle for giving their authority visual form, with little personal stake or say in the matter. And in both stories, the artist, through subversive visual wit, not only dis-arms the patron, as it were, but also makes his own agency and identity the very subject of the arms. In doing so, the artist asserts, tacitly, that his products depend not on mechanistic subservience but on a consenting relationship between equal partners. Most important for our purposes is that the grid where this power struggle plays out is the coat of arms.

Something similar could be said to happen in the Martelli arms. By introducing a laboring figure into the composition, Donatello may have wanted to call attention, if not to his own effort in fashioning the shield, then at least to a type of labor that literally sustains the object. There are several ways to interpret this move, some more convincing than others, but all of them plausible based on what the sculpture shows. A first possibility would have us see this figure in sympathetic terms. By portraying the shield-bearer with humanity, Donatello, a keen portraitist of emotional and physical vulnerability, aimed to seize viewers emotionally. Or, in a parallel vein, the shield-bearer might represent a bid at quotidian realism, caught—eternally—in the moment of displaying the family aegis on behalf of (and to) the Martelli. A refinement of this scenario would cast the figure as an artisan and the shield as his wares—an especially compelling prospect if indeed Donatello's shop was, or had once been, in the Martelli palace. In this way, the arms may have read as a sign for Donatello's shop in the space below, even, or also, while performing its traditional function of marking Martelli property. While shop signs typically alluded to some organizing dimension of the shop's activities—wheel makers might depict St. Catherine's wheel, cobblers a shoe, and so forth—the bodies of artisans themselves could also function as de facto shop signs, since, as Michael Camille once observed, these people "produced their goods in open view of passersby […] one did not need to see [a sign] because [the artisan] was visible" (Figure 2.1, left).[67] So, as well, could the figure's presentation of a shield—which reads, *because* of the figure, as a discrete object, a thing independent of him—have paid homage to the craft that had, until only recently, predominated the street, and with which the Martelli had deep ancestral ties—sword and armor-making.

But the visual evidence allows for quite a different reading, one that hews more closely to the spirit of the *novelle* mentioned earlier. Because by representing a worker supporting the Martelli arms—if indeed this is what he shows—Donatello put the weight of the family's public image in the hands of a worker (perhaps even those of an artisan), who "gives rise to" the Martelli's most decisive piece of political propaganda.[68] The sharp rhetorical emphasis on the figure's struggle only magnifies the point that the display of this object depends on his will as much the Martelli's, that he supports the weight of the family enterprise as much as they do. While there may be something "tricky" about this—an adjective that one of Donatello's patrons summoned, in these same years, to describe his personality—it would be misplaced, I think, to characterize this as insubordination.[69] After all, it strains credibility to think that Donatello would wish to undermine his benefactor and (by many accounts) close friend, or that Roberto Martelli, a person of considerable artistic and political discernment, would grant such irreverent fare pride of place on the public face of his family palace. The possibility exists, but here I want to argue for a different way of thinking about the shield-bearer, the coordinates of which will be familiar from this essay's first half.

One possible rationale for the absence of payment records or contracts related to the Martelli arms—that bugbear of those wishing to establish, once and for all, its attribution and date—is that it occurred outside of normal patronage transactions, indeed that it was a gift. Such exchanges were neither uncommon in the period nor unusual for Donatello. We know, for example, that the sculptor offered the physician Giovanni Chellini (friend and neighbor of the Martelli) a gilt bronze roundel in 1456 as compensation for the sustained medical care (so Chellini) "that I gave him and was giving him."[70] It has also been suggested that the Medici paid for the sculptor's decoration in the Old Sacristy at San Lorenzo, and much else that he produced for that family, in kind—with, e.g., food, wine, clothing, firewood, and by sharply reducing the rents of his workshops.[71] That Donatello could have made similar arrangements with Roberto Martelli is nothing if not plausible. In his *vita* of Donatello, in fact, Vasari highlighted mutual generosity as a hallmark of the pair's relationship, adding that visitors to the Martelli residence could still see the exquisite reliefs "and numerous other things" that Donatello had "given [the Martelli]…with great liberality [and] as an expression of the servitude and the love that he carried for that family." The refusal of Roberto's heirs to sell or give away these works, Vasari continued, was "testimony [of the family's] affection for Donatello [and a] recognition of his virtue."[72]

Locating the arms within this matrix of gift-giving brings us closer to the heart of the matter. Whether its arrival preceded or followed the period when Donatello set up shop on the Martelli's street, possibly in one of the family properties or the palace itself, whether it was an act of generosity or repaid one—it is hard to say—the *stemma* would stand as one link in an ongoing chain of mutual favors between friends. Pushed to this level of scrutiny, the object begins to look like a token of honor and respect. Rather than being a portrait of the artist, in this scenario the arms would portray a relationship. Borrowing Vasari's terms, one might even hazard to say that the shield-bearer (an avatar of Donatello) "gives" the shield to the Martelli, the object's first audience, as an expression of his "servitude" and "love." Both object and the action it depicts, then, hint at the same idea. Just as the Martelli sustain Donatello—with their patronage, favor, and friendship—so too will he support the family, by bringing distinction to their name through his art.

Two final points. The first is that the arms enfranchise Donatello's sense of identity as much as the Martelli's. The fact that the arms chart a certain intimacy between the sculptor and family, in other words, ought not conceal the extent to which the sculptor has made the arms distinctly his own (and this would be no less true if Donatello designed, but did not carve, the arms). The social dimensions of the work (both its iconography of display and its probable origins in artistic collaboration); its representation of labor, in a manner at once playful and profound; its hard-won technical skills (e.g., low-relief perspective); the ambiguity so central to its effect: all belong to a Donatellesque code—a code that departs from heraldic conventions, but which is familiar, in essential ways, from the sculptor's workshops. That Roberto Martelli would allow for the intrusion of these qualities into something as symbolically consequential as his arms—sharing "real estate," as it were, with Donatello on the family palace—would then seem less a measure of tolerance then of his quasi-fraternal acceptance of the sculptor.

The basis for that acceptance meanwhile—our second point—was Martelli's "recognition" of Donatello's "virtue," as both Vasari and Cinelli suggested, of the sculptor's capacity to do something worthwhile extremely well. In a society that defined status in terms of difference—between members of major or minor guilds, "new" and "old" families, between having money and political influence or not—virtue offered common ground. Consider the framing premise of the aforementioned *Tale of the Fat Woodworker*. The joke is first hatched at a dinner hosted by the nobleman Tomaso Pecori, yet including "men of standing, both of the ruling group and masters of various ingenious arts, such as are painters, goldsmiths, sculptors, woodworkers and similar craftsmen."[73] As the story makes clear, the glue of their bond is virtue, the substance of which varies depending on the individual. And in a telling reversal of the social order, the leaders of this fraternity are Brunelleschi ("of marvelous talent intellect") and Donatello ("of a stature known to all").[74]

More relevant still is a popular anecdote about Donatello and clothing. In his biography of Cosimo de' Medici, composed in the generation following the banker's death (and Donatello's), the book dealer and Medici associate Vespasiano de' Bisticci (1421–1498) related that, "because [the sculptor] did not dress as [Cosimo] would have wished, [the banker] gave him a rose-tinted cloak and hat, and he made him [wear] a cape under his mantel" (i.e., the garments of an aristocrat). In an effort to appease his friend, Donatello wore them "once or twice" before telling Cosimo that "he would not do so anymore because he felt he was being made a figure of fun." By refusing to dress in a manner incongruous with his social station, then, Donatello asserted that his own clothes—the clothing of a sculptor, we must presume—and by extension his vocational identity were inherently worthy of respect. Equally instructive, however, is that "told" by Donatello that he will not comply, Cosimo accepts the limits of his own agency, and the relationship proceeds on the artist's terms (sartorially, at least), since Cosimo possessed "liberality [for] all men who possessed virtue, since he loved them regardless."[75] In Cosimo's eyes, Donatello's abundant virtues as a sculptor override his social vices. Most instructive of all, though, is that neither party has compromised its identity at the end of the exchange. Though social opposites, Cosimo and Donatello are able to coexist peacefully, to their mutual benefit. And in this way, I submit, the anecdote parallels the structure of the Martelli arms, which allows different identities, as well as differing understandings of dignity and self-respect, to coexist.

This essay has asked what our history of fifteenth-century sculpture might look like were we to shift emphasis from the treatises that characterized creativity to the physical and social contexts where creativity thrived, and particularly to the workshop. Doing so might alert us to the particular value that artists attached to these spaces, but also to a different set of values than those typically brought to bear on analyses on early Renaissance sculpture: craftiness, irony, humor, sociability, as well as honor and virtue. In the case of the Martelli *stemma*, I have tried to suggest, such values are defended and even celebrated, but never to the detriment of the Martelli, or the object's traditional purpose. Nor does the articulation of these values diminish the idea that sculpture was "liberal," that it possessed interest beyond commercial ends, since the very act of giving the arms to the Martelli, as I have suggested Donatello did, distinguished the sculptor's art from servile labor. To attend to Donatello's workshop culture and its expression in his art, in other words, does not mean abandoning our long-cherished guidebooks for interpreting the period, the treatises that the sculptor's learned contemporaries wrote. In many cases, the works themselves betray both at once. But perhaps minding these less familiar qualities, and their expression in the "favellare," the everyday banter, of the workshop, to return to the anecdote with which I began, our image of the sculptor will be more polychromatic. On a rosy day, we might even say that that the exercise gives us something greater, more complex, than Vasari's vision of Donatello absorbed in a private *pas de deux* with his art, a truer portrait—perhaps—of the sculptor at work.

Notes

1 Vasari, *Le vite*, 2: 404–05.

2 For a discussion of this anecdote, see Gross, *Moving Statue*, 179–84.

3 On the *Zuccone* signature, see Boffa, "Artistic Identity," 46, 93, and 274.

4 On the complexities, the source material posed for Vasari's *vita* of Donatello, see Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari,* 321–56, esp. 321–27 and 339–40.

5 On "favellare," see *Dizionario della lingua italiana*, 5:743–44.

6 For this quotation, see Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 109 and 168.

7 See Thomas, *Painter's Practice*, esp. 12, 44, 50–53, 67. On the Pisan *bottega*, see Lightbown, *Donatello and Michelozzo*, 1:87–88.

8 The Medici later had the workshops razed to build the family palace, on which see Hyman, "Florentine Studies," esp. 64–74.

9 On the Maglio and the "Casa del Pesce," see Calore, "Fuoco dell'arte," 143–65, esp. 148. For records of the movement of models from Donatello's shop to the foundry for casting and back, see Sartori, "Documenti riguardanti Donatello," 37–99 (here 75); and Sartori, "Donatelliano monumento equestre," 318–34 (here 327).

10 See *Duomo di Firenze*, 257 (doc. 1289); and 35, 37 (nos. 210, 223).

11 The Bischeri workshop, for example, was not only rented by Donatello and Michelozzo, but to Verrocchio and to the painter Lorenzo di Credi. Ghiberti's shop later went to Perugino. On this phenomenon, see Thomas, *Painter's Practice*, 41–43.

12 See Thomas, *Painter's Practice*, 19 and 21.

13 On the shop locations of Florentine wax specialists, and their rationale, see Thomas, *Painter's Practice*, 16, 22, and 47–48.

14 On Donatello's and Michelozzo's geographic, financial, and professional motives for setting up the Pisan shop, see Lightbown, *Donatello and Michelozzo*, esp. 1:88. For a document attesting to Donatello's purchase of a boat, likely to transport marble from the quarries in the Apuan Alps, see Herzner, "Regesti donatelliani," 181–82 (doc. 85).

15 See Thomas, *Painter's Practice*, 53; and Galli, "Nel segno di Ghiberti," 87–108.

16 On workshop sizes, see Thomas, *Painter's Practice*, esp. 36–43.

17 This claim, and several others in this paragraph, echo observations in Bloch and Zolli, "Making and Unmaking," esp. 11–12.

18 I draw this quotation from Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships*, 158.

19 On workshop sociability see Franceschi, "La bottega," esp. 2:75–78; and Neilson, "Demonstrating Ingenuity," 63–91, esp. 85–91.

20 Of Sacchetti's *novelle* that transpire in workshops, see especially LXIII, LXXXIV, CXIV, CXLV, CXLIX, CLC, CLXXXIII, CXCI, and CXCII.

21 See, for example, Watkins, "Il Burchiello," 21–87.

22 See Kaborycha, "Copying Culture," esp. 47–49; and Ganz, "Florentine Friendship," 372–83, esp. 372–74.

23 Both Matteo Strozzi and Poggio Bracciolini are known to have solicited Donatello's opinions about antiquities, for example, alerting us to the possibility that they, too, haunted his shop. See Pfisterer, *Entdeckung der Stile*, 488–89 (docs. 2–3).

24 *Vita viri clarissimi*, 70 and 132.

25 Cited in Guasti, *Il pergamo di Donatello*, 19.

26 See Farago, *Paragone*, 256–57.

27 See, for example, Mustari, “Opera del Duomo,” 261–63.

28 On this document and the event’s possible workshop connections, see Gatti, “Buonaccorso Pitti,” 95–106 (here 100); and Caglioti et al., “Reconsidering the Young Donatello,” 15–16. For additional examples of workshop violence, see Brucker, *Firenze nel Rinascimento*, 311; and Franceschi, “La bottega,” 79.

29 On gambling in shops, see, e.g., Bernardino da Siena, *Le prediche*, 1:343 (XXVI). The classic study on Quattrocento Florentine sodomy, meanwhile, is Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships*, with 88–91, 152, 186 devoted to workshops; but see also Franceschi, “La bottega,” esp. 78.

30 See Franceschi, “La bottega,” 75–78. On the benches occasionally placed outside of shops, see Elet, “Seats of Power,” 453–55.

31 Biblioteca Riccardiana (Florence) 2734. I thank Amy Bloch for pointing me to this source. For a discussion of this *zibaldone*, see Kent, *Cosimo de’ Medici*, 72, 92, 422n and 432n; and 69–81 for *zibaldoni* generally. See also Kaborycha, “Copying Culture.”

32 Cited in *Angelo Polizianos Tagebuch*, 168 (no. 322).

33 Cited in *Angelo Polizianos Tagebuch*, 118 (no. 230).

34 Cited in *Angelo Polizianos Tagebuch*, 27–28 (no. 44).

35 Cited in *Angelo Polizianos Tagebuch*, 27 (no. 43).

36 Gauricus, *De sculptura*, 65.

37 Manetti, *Novella*.

38 Manetti, *Novella,* 36–37.

39 An exception to this claim might be the portrait bust of Niccolò da Uzzano (1430s), though the attribution is uncertain.

40 For the idea that Donatello portrayed himself as Goliath in the bronze *David*, see Shearman, *Only Connect*, 24–26; and on the San Rossore reliquary, see Avery, *Donatello*, 25.

41 Gauricus, *De sculptura*, 73. The one drawing typically attributed to Donatello is in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rennes, on which see Cole and Pfisterer, “Massacre of the Innocents/David,” 129–33 (no. 3), with additional bibliography.

42 Bearzi, “Considerazioni,” 119–23 (here 120).

43 The point is commonplace, though see Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, 183.

44 On the Martelli arms, see, among other sources, Darr and Preyer, “Donatello,” 720–31; and Coonin, “Donatello,” 43–60.

45 On the history of the Martelli family and their palace, see Martines, “La famiglia Martelli,” 29–43.

46 A notable exception to this claim is Rubin, *Images and Identity*, 109, on whose reading of the arms I depend.

47 See Coonin, “Donatello,” 44–45 and 54n, with additional bibliography.

48 This was the thrust of Vasari’s remark that Donatello “delighted in every kind of work,” including “stone coats-of-arms.” See Vasari, *Le vite*, 2:425.

49 For a discussion of Vasari’s claim, and its possible motivations, see Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari*, 352.

50 Bocchi, *Le bellezze*, 24.

51 For representative remarks on dating, see Darr and Preyer, “Donatello,” 724, with additional bibliography.

52 See Badia, “Le botteghe,” 60–62. For the original document, see Caglioti, *Donatello*, 2:428 (with analysis on 1:49).

53 On the family’s long-standing ties to sword-making and the Via degli Spadai, see Martines, “La famiglia Martelli,” esp. 35.

54 Rubin, *Images and Identity*, 109. On the original pigment, see Biliotti, “Stemma Martelli, 232–37 (here 234). My thanks to Patricia Rubin for discussing these aspects of the work with me, and for alerting me to parallels in Piero della Francesca’s fresco.

55 On class and clothing in fifteenth-century Florence see, for example, Rubin, *Images and Identity*, 93–133.

56 Cited in Herzner, “Regesti donatelliani,” 189 (doc. 138).

57 Rubin, *Images and Identity*, 109.

58 Dempsey, *Renaissance Putto*, 38, though see 1–61 generally. The quotation derives from Dempsey’s discussion of the Cavalcanti Annunciation, though can be applied broadly.

59 On coats of arms in fifteenth-century Florence, see, for example, Pastoureau, *L'art héraldique*; and Seiler, "Kommunale Heraldik," 204–40.
60 See Sassoferrato, *Grammar of Signs*, esp. 145–46.
61 On this flyleaf see Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici*, 75–76.
62 On Rhodes' arms, see Long, *Book of Michael of Rhodes*, 2:2, 33, 177.
63 On the Ciompi flag and arms in relation to this event, and their symbolism, see Trexler, "Follow the Flag," 357–92; and Atkinson, "Fluid Topographies," esp. 566–73.
64 See Preisshofen, "Phidias-Daedalus," 50–69, esp. 56–58.
65 Sacchetti, *Il trecentonovelle,* 161–63 (LXIII). On this story, see Löhr, "Disegnia sechondo," esp. 163–65.
66 Sacchetti, *Il trecentonovelle,* 464–66 (CLXI).
67 Camille, "Signs," 1–36 (here 20).
68 Rubin, *Images and Identity*, 109.
69 Herzner, "Regesti donatelliani," 219–20 (doc. 380).
70 I derive my translation from Rubin, *Images and Identity*, 60, which includes a brilliant analysis of the so-called Chellini Roundel (original Italian found on 279n1).
71 See Avery, "The Early Medici and Donatello," 86. Documents recording Donatello's receipt of gifts in kind may be found in Herzner, "Regesti donatelliani," 181–82 (doc. 85) and 186 (doc. 109).
72 In Vasari, *Le vite,* 2:408–09.
73 Manetti, *Novella,* 1.
74 Manetti, *Novella*, 3, 8.
75 Bisticci, *Le vite*, 1:193. For an excellent analysis of this anecdote, see Rubin, *Images and Identity*, 86–89.

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