PREFERENCES OF PATRONAGE IN THE PORTRAITS OF COSIMO I DE’ MEDICI

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by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.  INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE ROLE OF THE EARLY MEDICI IN FLORENCE: PRECURSORS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO THE DUCAL RULE OF COSIMO I DE’ MEDICI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosimo’s Background and Rule</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannerist Art during Cosimo’s Rule</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. PORTRAIT PAINTERS TO THE DUKE</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacopo Pontormo</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnolo Bronzino</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giorgio Vasari</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. COSIMO’S COMMISSIONED SCULPTORS: BUSTS AND FULL-LENGTH PORTRAITS</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccio Bandinelli</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benvenuto Cellini</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincenzo Danti</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giambologna</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURES</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure


4. Jacopo Pontormo, *Maria Salviati with a Little Girl (or Cosimo I de’ Medici)*, c. 1537 (or 1526-27), Baltimore, Maryland, The Walters Art Museum (Photo: ArtStor) .......................................................... 100

5. Ridolfo Ghirlandaio, *Twelve Year Old Cosimo de’ Medici*, c. 1531, Florence, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi (Photo: ArtStor) ................................................................. 101


7. Domenico di Polo de’ Vetri, detail: *Cosimo I de’ Medici* (obverse), c. 1537, Washington DC, National Gallery of Art (Photo: ArtStor) ................................................ 103


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Giorgio Vasari</td>
<td><em>Lorenzo il Magnifico Among His Scholars</em></td>
<td>c. 1556-58</td>
<td>Florence, Sala di Lorenzo il Magnifico, Palazzo Vecchio</td>
<td>(Photo: ArtStor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Baccio Bandinelli</td>
<td><em>Giovanni delle Bande Nere</em></td>
<td>c. 1554-60</td>
<td>Florence: Sala dei Cinquecento, Palazzo Vecchio</td>
<td>(Photo: ArtStor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Baccio Bandinelli</td>
<td><em>Bust of Cosimo I de’ Medici</em></td>
<td>c. 1544</td>
<td>Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello</td>
<td>(Photo: ArtStor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Baccio Bandinelli</td>
<td>Bozzetto for Cosimo I</td>
<td>c. 1544</td>
<td>London, The Wallace Collection</td>
<td>(Photo: Kurz, “A Model for Bandinelli’s Statue of Cosimo I”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Baccio Bandinelli</td>
<td><em>Hercules and Cacus</em></td>
<td>1527-34</td>
<td>Florence, Piazza della Signoria</td>
<td>(Photo: ArtStor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Benvenuto Cellini</td>
<td><em>Perseus and Medusa</em></td>
<td>c. 1545-54</td>
<td>Florence, Loggia della Signoria</td>
<td>(Photo: ArtStor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Benvenuto Cellini</td>
<td><em>Apollo and Hyacinth</em></td>
<td>c. 1548-57</td>
<td>Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello</td>
<td>(Photo: ArtStor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Benvenuto Cellini</td>
<td><em>Portrait Bust of Cosimo I</em></td>
<td>c. 1545-48</td>
<td>Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello</td>
<td>(Photo: ArtStor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Vincenzo Danti</td>
<td><em>Cosimo I as Perseus</em></td>
<td>prior to 1570</td>
<td>Florence, Boboli Gardens</td>
<td>(Photo: <a href="http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/tag/vincenzo-danti/">http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/tag/vincenzo-danti/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Vincenzo Danti</td>
<td><em>Cosimo I de’ Medici as Emperor Augustus</em></td>
<td>c. 1570-71</td>
<td>Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello</td>
<td>(Photo: Museo Nazionale del Bargello)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Giorgio Vasari</td>
<td><em>Cosimo I de’ Medici as Augustus</em></td>
<td>c. 1555-62</td>
<td>fresco in the Sala di Leone X, Palazzo Vecchio</td>
<td>(Photo: ArtStor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Michelangelo Buonarroti</td>
<td><em>David</em></td>
<td>1501-04</td>
<td>Florence, Galleria dell’ Accademia</td>
<td>(Photo: ArtStor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Michelangelo Buonarroti</td>
<td>Detail of <em>David</em></td>
<td>1501-04</td>
<td>Florence, Galleria dell’ Accademia</td>
<td>(Photo: ArtStor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Vincenzo Danti</td>
<td>Detail of <em>Cosimo I de’ Medici as Emperor Augustus</em></td>
<td>c. 1570-71</td>
<td>Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello</td>
<td>(Photo: Museo Nazionale del Bargello)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Giambologna</td>
<td><em>Cosimo I de’ Medici</em></td>
<td>c. 1580s</td>
<td>Florence, Galleria degli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Florence in 1537 was in desperate need of a strong stable ruler that could bring peace and stability to the city. Cosimo I de’ Medici (1519-1574) was that leader, although he was not the immediately clear choice at the time. Born to Giovanni delle Bande Nere and Maria Salviati, Cosimo I was not the direct heir to his predecessor Duke Alessandro de’ Medici. With the unexpected murder of Alessandro by his cousin Lorenzino in 1537, the Senate of Florence quickly needed to select a predecessor in order to prevent Charles V from annexing Florence.\(^1\) Giovanni delle Bande Nere was the descendant of Lorenzo de’ Medici, brother of Cosimo il Vecchio, and Maria Salviati was the granddaughter of Lorenzo il Magnifico, linking Cosimo to both branches of the Medici lineage (Appendix I). This was essential to his right to become an heir because he was a descendant from the Medici by both of his parents, making him a better choice than any of the other possible candidates. Another reason that Cosimo was selected as the next Duke had to do with his father’s lack of involvement in politics. His reputation had not been spoiled by destructive political actions, but had been enhanced by his successes as a condottiere.\(^2\) And so, in 1537, Cosimo I de’ Medici was appointed Duke of Florence at the young age of nineteen, as yet unmarried, and faced with a city in turmoil while also trying to suppress claims that he was not a legitimate heir.

\(^2\) Ibid.
Beyond Cosimo’s political responsibilities, he was an avid supporter of the arts. Many of his commissioned works supported his political agenda, but he also sought to expand the culture of Florence and create many artistic and literary communities. The major art community was the Accademia del Disegno, which was created by Cosimo in 1563. The Accademia was used to train new artists not only in technical proficiency but also in theoretical matters, and it gave the artists a sense of unity amongst themselves.\(^3\) The artists selected for many of his commissions came from the Accademia, so this community was important if an artist wanted to be a court artist to the Medici.

Cosimo I de’ Medici is renowned for his promotion of representations of himself in the art and architecture that he commissioned during his lifetime. The desire to assert himself as the Grand Duke of Florence prompted him to abandon Florence’s Republican roots and promote his ducal rule. Extensive research has been done on how Duke Cosimo turned the Republican seat of government, the Palazzo Vecchio, into his own ducal apartment, and how the imagery depicted in each room expresses Cosimo’s political agenda. Most of the scholarship on Cosimo I de’ Medici is concerned with how he utilized art to illustrate his political agenda. Almost every work of commissioned art, including Cellini’s *Perseus*, the *Neptune Fountain*, and the hundreds of others produced in the Palazzo Vecchio and elsewhere has been analyzed by scholars, and they all seem to fit neatly into Cosimo’s political scheme. For instance, the decorative paintings inside the Palazzo Vecchio reference his familial lineage and associate it within the genealogy

of the gods. In the Sala Grande, Cosimo’s military victories that expanded Florence’s domain, those of Siena and Pisa, are prominently depicted along the walls. Cellini’s Perseus was created to stand outside the Palazzo Vecchio to match Michelangelo’s David and Donatello’s Judith and Holofernes and represented Medici triumph.4

In the broad range of scholarly research on Cosimo’s art patronage comparatively little research has been done specifically on his portraiture. Scholars who have studied his portraits demonstrate how they fit into his political agenda and express how the details were carefully contrived by Cosimo, his advisors, and artists to portray a specific image of the Duke. Not much research has been completed on how the artists Cosimo selected were able to submit to his goals and produce portraits that would fulfill his desires. Back in 1971, Kurt W. Forster wrote the first analysis concentrating on the portraits of Cosimo in his article “Metaphors of Rule: Political Ideology and History in the Portraits of Cosimo I de’ Medici.”5 This serves as an overview of the many different portraits that exist and discusses how Cosimo is represented in each one. Henk Th. van Veen wrote one of the most recent and cumulative books on the subject of his portraits in terms of his political agenda in Cosimo I de’ Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture.6 Veen discusses more than just private commissions; he goes into detail about Cosimo’s public works as well. In Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art: Pontormo, Leo X, and the Two Cosimos, Janet Cox-Rearick is another scholar whose

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4 Margaret A. Gallucci, Benvenuto Cellini: Sexuality, Masculinity, and Artistic Identity in Renaissance Italy (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 9.
main focus details the portraiture and art commissioned by the Medici. With a main focus on Cosimo in her corpus of works on the subject, Cox-Rearick explains the Medici imprese and the references to their family lineage present in their commissioned portraits and artwork.

To go one step further, I believe it is necessary to look not only at Cosimo’s portraits themselves and how they expressed Cosimo’s ideologies, but also why he picked the artists for his court. This thesis will try to answer questions that will help in the understanding of why the artists chosen were selected by Cosimo and how these artists specifically were able to provide images that promoted Cosimo’s agenda. The findings will also seek to answer if there were any similarities amongst the selected artists, and therefore what qualities were favored by the patron. Were the styles of each artist similar? Did Cosimo embrace the Mannerist style since it directly contrasted with the High Renaissance style explored during Republican Florence? Was it the specific fame of the artist that led Cosimo to pick them? Did Cosimo look for experts in their fields? What kind of materials did Cosimo like his artists to use? Were there artists that Cosimo wanted, but was not able to obtain? By answering these questions it will become evident that the artists selected by Cosimo were hand-picked because they were capable of demonstrating the characteristics Cosimo wanted to have portrayed in his portraits.

Through a careful analysis of a select few artists that produced portraits for the Duke, it will become evident that there are similarities not only in the quality of work by

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8 Medici imprese are the artistic symbols used to represent the Medici family. One example used repetitively throughout their history is the laurel branch. There are numerous other Medici imprese, and the list for the family as a whole and each individual member is too extensive to discuss in length in this thesis.
each artist, but also in their personalities and backgrounds. The small selection of artists that I have chosen for this thesis is based on the pieces that I consider to be some of the key portraits of the Duke and most influential in his reign and for the later portraiture. Many portraits of the Duke are available, including numerous coins, but this paper will focus mainly on painting and sculptural portraits completed during the Duke’s lifetime. Pontormo, Bronzino, Bandinelli, Cellini, Vasari, and Danti will all be discussed, including a final examination of Giambologna who completed two major portraits of the Cosimo while he was still alive, only under the patronage of Francesco I, Cosimo’s son. Cosimo did not have just one artist that fulfilled his every artistic desire for portraiture, and each artist contributed something new to the realm of Cosimo portraiture. There are similarities between these artists that will become apparent through this thesis, making their selection by the Duke important.
CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF THE EARLY MEDICI IN FLORENCE: PRECURSORS TO THE DUCAL RULE OF COSIMO I DE’ MEDICI

The path that led to Cosimo I de’ Medici’s position as Duke of Florence, and later Duke of Tuscany, was not a short endeavor for the Medici. Many years of exiles, returns, trials and tribulations took place for the Medici family in order to allow Cosimo the power and prestige he enjoyed. Cosimo never neglected his familial history because it was due to his family that he became a ruler of the Florentine people.

The Medici family saw its first real rise to power beginning with Giovanni di Bicci de’ Medici (1360-1429). Giovanni did not hail from a wealthy background, but through banking was able to achieve a substantial fortune.\(^9\) One aspect that led to the success of the Medici bank was their use of family members as their associates, even if they were far removed from the original line of Giovanni.\(^10\) This kept the wealth within the family and made it less of a worry that the associates would try and overthrow them. Despite his new found wealth, Giovanni did not flaunt his money and subsequently was generally liked by the people of Florence.\(^11\) This tactic was followed by his son, Cosimo il Vecchio, and was one reason that the family was able to hold power, because they did not try to press their boundaries or take on larger amounts of power than they were given. Giovanni and Cosimo were careful to not seem like they were dictators taking over the


government, but eventually were able to control the government. Reluctantly, Giovanni split his time between banking and as a new elected official of the Priori of the Signoria in 1402, a position he would receive again in 1408, 1411 and 1421.\textsuperscript{12} Giovanni did not seem to want to take on a political position, but this start in the government really seemed to open up new avenues of power for the family. However, Giovanni’s real rise to power was not within his position among the Priori, but as the owner of the family’s very prosperous banking empire.\textsuperscript{13}

Giovanni opened more branches of the bank in some key locations for the future of the Medici, including one in Rome, and also moved the main bank to Florence.\textsuperscript{14} Also in Rome, Giovanni created a relationship between the Pope and the Medici by buying the new Pope, Baldassare Cossa, his cardinalship, starting their relationship.\textsuperscript{15} The Medici became the major bankers of the Papacy, which only strengthened their wealth and power. It also created a powerful alliance for the family that was utilized by them in their times of need.

Giovanni’s son, Cosimo (1389–1464), followed in his father’s footsteps and led a seemingly modest lifestyle and kept a careful balance between increasing his power while not trying to take over the Signoria.\textsuperscript{16} During the life of Giovanni and then Cosimo, the Albizzi family tried to exert more personal power in the Republican government and they approached Giovanni about being one of the supporters.\textsuperscript{17} Giovanni declined their offer,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 32.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Kent, \textit{The Rise of the Medici}, 39.
\item \textsuperscript{14} George Pottinger, \textit{The Court of the Medici} (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1978), 29.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Hibbert, \textit{The House of the Medici}, 35.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Pottinger, \textit{The Court of the Medici}, 33.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Hibbert, \textit{The House of the Medici}, 40.
\end{itemize}
and on September 7, 1433 Cosimo was arrested by the Signoria as a result of Rinaldo degli Albizzi’s anti-Medicean plot to gain full control of the government. Instead of keeping Cosimo in prison, Albizzi banished him to Padua and his family members to various cities in Italy; he also disallowed anyone in the Medici family from holding office. Rinaldo Albizzi staged an attack on the Signoria; however, his attack was unsuccessful as he lost various supporters. One of the main issues with Rinaldo’s plan was that he did not dispose of the Medici supporters that could hold office, which led to his demise.

With the Republican regime in control, the exile of the Medici was lifted and Cosimo received a guarded escort back to Florence. In order to punish those that fought to have the family exiled, Cosimo in return exiled those enemies, ensuring that the revolt against the family would not happen again for some time. Cosimo was elected Gonfaloniere (chancellor of the Republic) three times during his life, but he still did not seem like a tyrant or dictator to the people, even though he clearly had the most power of any individual citizen in Florence. He established a form of de-facto rulership over Florence, meaning he was considered a ruler-type figure, yet did not hold a specific title. Although Cosimo himself did not take a leadership position, he was still able to control who was elected to the Signoria to ensure that it was made up of Medici

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18 Ibid., 48 & 50.
19 Ibid., 52.
20 Ibid., 56-57.
21 Pottinger, *The Court of the Medici*, 35.
supporters.\textsuperscript{26} Under Cosimo il Vecchio, the Medici enjoyed the comforts of power, without angering the citizens by removing their government and taking over complete control.

The next major member of the Medici family was Cosimo il Vecchio’s grandson, Lorenzo (1449-1492), often referred to as Lorenzo the Magnificent, who had assumed control after a brief stint by Cosimo’s son, Piero the “Gouty” (1416-1469). Lorenzo was granted special treatment within the Florentine Republic and was given responsibilities and titles that he was either not old enough or experienced enough to have. For instance, he was allowed to become a member of the \textit{Cento}, the Council of the Hundred in charge of legislative affairs of the state, even though he was too young, as well as being permitted to be a member of the \textit{Balià}, a council with almost supreme power.\textsuperscript{27} He also acted as a type of figure head for the government and was entrusted with affairs of the state such as contacting foreign dignitaries and congratulating the new pope, Sixtus IV, after his election.\textsuperscript{28}

Lorenzo had some trouble throughout his rule, including his idea to put down a revolt in Volterra in 1472 by use of force.\textsuperscript{29} Prosperous alum mines were discovered in the city which led to debate about who would reap the wealth, ending in a revolt of the town against Florence, which was in control of the area.\textsuperscript{30} Lorenzo wanted Volterra to

\textsuperscript{26} Hibbert, \textit{The House of the Medici}, 60.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 125 and definitions of parts of the government from J. N. Stephens, \textit{The Fall of the Florentine Republic 1512-1530} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 17 and 68.
\textsuperscript{28} Hibbert, \textit{The House of the Medici}, 125.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Niccolo Machiavelli, \textit{The History of Florence, and of the Affairs of Italy, From the Earliest Times to the Death of Lorenzo the Magnificent; Together with The Prince}. Translated edition (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), 341.
serve as an example to other areas under Florence’s domain.\textsuperscript{31} The town was viciously plundered, and even Lorenzo’s subsequent heartfelt apologies could not make amends for his decision to attack by force, leading that city to resent him and the Medici family.\textsuperscript{32} Lorenzo also had a strained relationship with the Papal Curia that Cosimo and Giovanni had worked so hard to develop.\textsuperscript{33} The Medici bank had begun to decline through mismanagement and excessive loans during his rule as well.\textsuperscript{34} Lorenzo never did seem to have the firm grasp on the power of the government that Cosimo was able to develop during his lifetime.

The main rebellion and problems against Lorenzo came from the Pazzi family. There was a plan to murder Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano by conspirators of the Pazzi family, led by Franceschino de’ Pazzi and their Roman allies, because they wanted the Pazzi family in power.\textsuperscript{35} The attack on Lorenzo, after a large and dramatic scene inside the Cathedral, was unsuccessful, but the conspirators surprised and viciously murdered Giuliano.\textsuperscript{36} Those responsible for the attack went forward with their plan even though Lorenzo had not been assassinated, and made their way to the Palazzo della Signoria to try and overthrow the government.\textsuperscript{37} Medici supporters were able to kill all of those partaking in the rebellion and prohibit the overthrow.\textsuperscript{38} Besides an extensive attack on all of their conspirators, Lorenzo had the Pazzi family killed and their memory erased from

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 343.
\textsuperscript{32} Hibbert, \textit{The House of the Medici}, 125-127.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 129.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 158.
\textsuperscript{35} Pottinger, \textit{The Court of the Medici}, 55.
\textsuperscript{36} Hibbert, \textit{The House of the Medici}, 137-138.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 138.
\textsuperscript{38} Pottinger, \textit{The Court of the Medici}, 57.
buildings and written works.\textsuperscript{39} Despite the issues that developed during Lorenzo’s lifetime, he did have some great successes as well. He was able to make peace with the Duke of Calabria, which made him celebrated amongst the Florentines by stopping the war.\textsuperscript{40} Lorenzo was also a strong supporter of the arts, and they flourished under his patronage; this would be an important approach that Cosimo I de’ Medici would follow under his rule. Lorenzo had enjoyed the wealth from banking and the power that his predecessors had helped him achieve.

The late 1400s and early 1500s were a difficult time for the Medici and Florence. Piero di Lorenzo de’ Medici became the leader of the Medici family after Lorenzo’s death in 1492, but also faced some great opposition during his lifetime. He was not particularly well-liked by the Florentine citizens because he acted more like a prince than his actual status and power allowed.\textsuperscript{41} Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) came to Florence in 1489 and his presence was disastrous for the Medici family, based on his criticisms of their rule and lifestyle.\textsuperscript{42} Savonarola, a Dominican friar, preached a form of extreme religious austerity to the Florentine people and warned them that the Medici would bring disaster to their city through his prophetic visions and fire and brimstone sermons.\textsuperscript{43} At this particular time in history, Florence lacked a strong leader and Savonarola attempted to assume this role.\textsuperscript{44} Savonarola advocated a Republican government free from tyranny, and helped the city to re-establish the popular Republican government.

\textsuperscript{39} Hibbert, \textit{The House of the Medici}, 142.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 155-156.
\textsuperscript{41} Stephens, \textit{The Fall of the Florentine Republic}, 29.
\textsuperscript{42} Hibbert, \textit{The House of the Medici}, 179-181.
\textsuperscript{43} Pottinger, \textit{The Court of the Medici}, 128.
\textsuperscript{44} Andres, Hunisak, and Turner, \textit{The Art of Florence}, 2:905.
government from 1434. Modeled upon the Venetian Republic that had proven stable against outside attack and tyranny within its own government, Savonarola helped develop a Grand Council consisting of around 3000 citizens. The new government tried ineffectively to give power to many instead of just one family, but this method lacked an ability to govern quickly.

Savonarola’s attempts at the religious and political reforms of Florence became realized after his messages of gloom and doom proved accurate with the invasion of Charles VIII of France in 1494. When Charles VIII entered Florence, the city’s citizens revolted against the Medici and they were exiled that very year. A new Republican government was immediately put into place to fill the power vacuum left by the Medici, but the occupation of Charles VIII really showed the people of Florence was that their political situation was not solid and their safety rested in the precarious balance of the new government. This new government, The Great Council, designed in 1494, admitted many members who previously had no power under the Medici, replacing many of the families that had enjoyed power for the past two centuries. This popular government existed from 1494 until 1512, but did not ever enjoy real peace and stability. A few weaknesses outlined by Stephens details the failure of the Republic as a governing entity. First, there was constant debate about whether a government was run more effectively by a few citizens as it seemingly had in the past, or rather by the masses, the approach

45 Ibid., 906.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Stephens, The Fall of the Florentine Republic, 35.
49 Ibid., 24.
50 Ibid., 30.
51 Ibid., 44.
advocated by Savonarola and adopted by the new Republic.\textsuperscript{52} Also, Savonarola, being a foreigner, had modeled his plan for the government off of the Venetian Republic and not a Florentine model.\textsuperscript{53} Instead of the survival or reestablishment of the previous Florentine Republic, this in many ways this seemed like a new government altogether for the Florentines and the local citizenry lost a little of their civic pride.\textsuperscript{54}

This new Republic faced a military threat by Pope Alexander Vi Borgia’s son, Cesare Borgia, who was attempting in the first years of the 1500s to conquer much of the whole of Tuscany, including Florence, as part of his private empire. This, and the attempts of Piero de’ Medici to the regain power, inspired a launch of a new artistic program for the Republican government to establish civic pride.\textsuperscript{55} The government commissioned the \textit{David} by Michelangelo in 1501, which would ultimately be placed in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, the house of the Republican government, although originally intended for the cathedral.\textsuperscript{56} The \textit{David} came to symbolize the Republican government’s strength and stability and their readiness to use force if needed in order to maintain the Florentine lifestyle and their independent government.\textsuperscript{57} Michelangelo’s work became such a strong Republican civic image that it is surprising that the Medici did not destroy the statue after their subsequent rise to power, especially after Cosimo’s decision to turn the Palazzo Vecchio into his ducal palace.

Following their exile from in 1494, the Medici family returned to Florence in 1512. Support for the family came from Pope Alexander VI Borgia who finally

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 42.  
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 43.  
\textsuperscript{56} Paoletti and Radke, \textit{Art in Renaissance Italy}, 388.  
\textsuperscript{57} Andres, Hunisak, and Turner, \textit{The Art of Florence}, 2:967.
excommunicated Savonarola in 1497 which prompted the Florentine Republic to revolt against him for fear of losing God’s favor. The Medici family also gained power when they agreed to financially support the Holy League of Cambrai, an alliance of the Pope, the Holy Roman Emperor, and the French against Venice that the Florentine Republic had declined to participate in, and the Medici had promised even more financial support if the league supported their effort to return to Florence. The Medici, now backed by the papacy and Spanish allies, overpowered the Florentine Republic.

In 1513, the Medici’s position in Florentine society was solidified when Giovanni de’ Medici became Pope Leo X. Giovanni was one of Lorenzo il Magnifico’s sons, and as the Pope helped the Medici rule Florence with both political and monetary backing. Another son of Lorenzo il Magnifico also helped solidify Medici power. Giuliano de’ Medici married into the French royal family in 1515. The title of the Duke of Nemours was bestowed upon Giuliano by King Francis I of France. This revival of Medici rule lasted until 1527 when they were once again expelled from Florence. Lorenzo di Piero de’ Medici, the Duke of Urbino, and Piero di Lorenzo’s son, took over the family after Piero’s death in 1503. Lorenzo’s position in Florence was almost as bad as his father’s, since he spent a lot of time away from Florence, which only increased tensions in the city, since his chancellor, Goro Gheri, was left in charge of the regime around 1516.
Unfortunately, Lorenzo died prematurely of the plague in 1519, leaving the Medici family without a rightful heir.

The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V’s army invaded Rome in 1527, which forced Pope Clement VII Medici to flee.\(^{67}\) Without the backing of the papacy, Florence once again established itself as a Republic and exiled the Medici.\(^{68}\) In 1530, Pope Clement VII Medici mended relations with Charles V, who then aided the Medici in quelling the Republic using imperial forces.\(^{69}\) Alessandro de’ Medici became the first Duke of Florence in the same year, starting an entirely new government system for the city. Alessandro was Cosimo’s predecessor and due to his death in 1537, Cosimo was given his ducal title during a time in Florence that still faced instability and uncertainty.

Cosimo’s Background and Rule

As mentioned previously, Cosimo was not the immediate heir to Alessandro de’ Medici. This created an additional issue to his rule over a semi-unstable government, because not only did he have to solidify Medici control over Florence, but he also had to prove to the city’s citizens that he belonged in power and could bring them the peace they desired. Cosimo learned a lot from some of the problems that his family members had faced before him. For one, Cosimo took a lesson from Giovanni de’ Bicci and Cosimo il Vecchio to not try and take more power than he was given. His official portraiture was not even made until 1543, almost six years after his election, and not until he had secured the Florentine territories. Cosimo waited until he had secured the land and proved his

\(^{67}\) Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 452.
\(^{68}\) Ibid.
\(^{69}\) Ibid.
ability to rule before displaying images of himself as a duke with power. Following the approach of Cosimo il Vecchio and Giovanni de’ Bicci before him, this allowed time for the Florentine citizens to accept their new duke.

Also Lorenzo’s de’ Medici’s experience with the Pazzi conspiracy, taught Cosimo that to prevent opposition, it was necessary to completely rid Florence of the people that opposed Medici rule. Cosimo took care early on in his rule to expel his opposition so they would not try and overthrow him. Also, with the new legal policies that he implemented, Cosimo was able to frighten people into becoming supporters of his reign because, if not, they could be faced with harsh consequences.  

J.R. Hale was able to identify four major themes that describe Cosimo’s reign. Cosimo wanted to transfer Florence away from the control of Charles V’s empire while also integrating territories in Tuscany ruled by the Emperor back into Florence’s dominion.  He also wanted to glorify the Medici and remove the government from the control of the elite class which had been primarily running Florence in the late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries. These themes appear in his political actions and agenda, but they also can be identified in the art that he commissioned. Cosimo’s artwork consistently showed him trying to claim legitimacy as an heir while also celebrating the Medici family. Some major works, like the program of decoration in the Palazzo Vecchio, were executed to show the replacement of the Republic and his new role as Duke and ruler of Florence. Cosimo was also responsible for destroying some art with roots in the Republican past.

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70 Gallucci, Benvenuto Cellini, 23-25.
72 Ibid.
Cosimo was a strong politician and constantly made decisions to assert control over his conquered cities. In order to integrate the people of the cities and towns he had captured, Cosimo offered the people equal citizenship to the people of Florence. To keep the dominio under his command, Cosimo himself went out into the towns to meet with citizens and to ensure everyone had followed his orders. In this way Cosimo was able to gain more citizen support for Florence, expanding their empire, while also keeping control over their territories, since he was able to punish those that were going against his commands.

After his victory over Siena, Cosimo focused his attention on being a power player in the political arena of Italy and the rest of Europe. By strengthening the city’s fortification and supporting the military reforms instituted by his predecessor, Cosimo ensured that Florence and its territories were strong and well-protected. Cosimo also attempted to consolidate and reorganize the government. Within the first few years of his rule, Cosimo made a major change to the previous seat of the Republic, the Palazzo Vecchio, by transforming it into his ducal palace. This completely changed its function, while demonstrating Cosimo’s attempts to exert his dominance as ruler over the dukedom and suppressing former Republic sympathies. Later on in his rule, Cosimo commissioned Giorgio Vasari to construct the Uffizi that would house the offices of thirteen

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74 Ibid.
77 Tingali, “The Identity of the Prince,” 189.
administrative authorities that were dispersed all around the city of Florence.\textsuperscript{78} By combining all of the offices into one location near the Palazzo Vecchio and under his careful watch, Cosimo was able to show political unity under his rule.\textsuperscript{79} This was also the first time in the history of Florence that a civic building was constructed to honor a single person, a major statement for the power of Cosimo.\textsuperscript{80}

One way that Cosimo ensured his control over the courts was by giving himself a premium position within the system. Explained by Margaret Gallucci, Cosimo established the role of the ruler “vis-à-vis” the courts by enacting stricter laws “and then by overseeing the supplication process that mitigated penalties for convicted criminals.”\textsuperscript{81}

In this way, Cosimo was seen as a firm ruler, but he could also grant clemency to those convicted demonstrating his mercy. The incident with Benvenuto Cellini and his arrest and trial in his sodomy case in 1557 demonstrates Cosimo’s harsher penalties implemented under his role, but also his mercy; Cosimo reduced Cellini’s charges from a prison sentence to house arrest.\textsuperscript{82} Cosimo put himself in a prime position to direct the outcomes in his court in his favor and punish his opposition while relieving supporters from the more extreme punishments.

Unlike the Medici of the 1400s, Duke Alessandro did not pass on many court intellectuals to Cosimo.\textsuperscript{83} Therefore, Cosimo had to collect his own coterie of court

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{81} Gallucci, Benvenuto Cellini, 25.  
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 23.  
\textsuperscript{83} Janet Cox-Rearick, Bronzino’s Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1993), 252.
intellectuals and enlisted a large number of humanist scholars and historians. By the end of his rule, Cosimo had brought many scholars into his court to pass on to his son Francesco I. This does not seem true for artists, because many of the artists such as Pontormo, Bronzino, Bandinelli and Vasari were already employed under Alessandro and assimilated into the court of Duke Cosimo.

Cosimo’s choices in artists constantly changed dependent on each project. These artists did not just wait for Cosimo to call upon them, but instead were constantly battling against one another for commissions. It is not apparent that Cosimo ever developed one specific artist to whom he gave every commission of a specific material type, and this is especially evident in his portraiture. For instance, Cellini, Danti, and Bandinelli all made sculptures of the Duke and Pontormo, Bronzino, and Vasari all created painted or sketched portraits. Cosimo varied his decision based on each individual portrait, what it was supposed to express, what material was used, and which artist gave him the best argument to win the commission. One thing lacking in Cosimo’s circle of artists was one who could successfully span across the arts in multiple media for portraiture.

Michelangelo, an artist particularly coveted by Cosimo, was capable of switching from painting to sculpture and excelled in both mediums. The artists available in Florence for Cosimo were not as successful at switching media which is one reason Cosimo employed such a large array of artists to create his portraits among his many other commissions.

Cosimo did not, however, directly commission each artist that worked for him. In fact his private secretary turned major-domo, Pierfrancesco Riccio, was the main liaison
between Cosimo and his artists. Riccio controlled the artists in many cases and welcomed the competition that would put one artist against another. He developed a group of artists as favorites which ensured those commissions. Bandinelli and Pontormo were amongst the many that Riccio favored, yet Cellini was not, and that may be the reason he found it difficult to get many commissions from the Duke. It was also Riccio who selected a section of the *Aeneid* as a motto for Cosimo. This motto states “il pomo d’oro che spunta dal tronco dopo lo schiantarsi dal primo: VNO AVVLSO NON DEFICIT ALTER,” “(the golden apple that sprouts from the trunk after the first was broken off: As soon as one is torn away, another takes its place),” and was previously used by Cosimo Pater Patriae. This motto of resurgence and continuity was one that Cosimo utilized throughout his entire reign and symbolizes the fate of both Medici power in Florence and the fates of Alessandro and Cosimo.

The Medici had an extensive family collection of art works to which their artists had access. Therefore their artists could study previous styles of art, including the Roman style portraits on which many of Cosimo’s portrait busts are based. A portrait bust of Hadrian was included in the Medici collection and the busts made by Baccio Bandinelli (1540) and Benvenuto Cellini (1545) replicated the conventions used to portray Roman emperors by adapting an all’antica style. Cosimo utilized Medici

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84 Cox-Rearick, “Art at the Court of Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici,” 37.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
89 Cox-Rearick, “Art at the Court of Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici,” 36.
imprese and classical imagery to express his political agenda, and the artists under his employ had many works from the Medici collection that would help them achieve portraits that fulfilled this agenda.

Mannerist Art during Cosimo’s Rule

The High Renaissance style of the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century which dominated Vasari’s Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects was characterized by an ideal realism. The figures and settings were created with great realism, but their perfect compositions can only be classified as idealizing. Vasari believed Michelangelo had perfected design and no artist could surpass him. Therefore, Vasari and other artists had to come up with a new way by which art could progress.  

Vasari basically solved this problem by stating that although Michelangelo had perfected design, progress in art still could be made in invention and style, leading artists like Vasari to explore a new avenue in art, called Mannerism.  

Mannerism obeyed very different stylistic laws from High Renaissance art, and the artists’ impulses played a larger role.  

As Zupnick states, “realism seeks to imitate objective visual experience, mannerism editorializes, subordinating objectivity to subjective interpretation.”  

Mannerist figures create a sense of movement among one another and their bodies are placed in positions that almost seem implausible.  

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91 Ibid.  
93 Ibid., 9-10.  
94 Ibid., 10.
According to the scholar Zupnick, Mannerism had made a few appearances in the preceding centuries before it became a widespread style in the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{95} Botticelli with his heavily outlined figures and Pollaiuolo and his stark non-naturalistic poses showed traces of Mannerism. Since Vasari was able to look at these artists, he might have latched onto the Mannerist style because he liked the way he could manipulate figures, causing dynamism. Most of Cosimo’s commissioned artists were in fact Mannerists themselves, but the portraiture does not reflect all aspects of this new style.

The Mannerists adhered to a greater appreciation of \textit{disegno}. The drawings themselves, whether for a painting, structure, or sculpture, showed the artists’ creativity and ingenuity.\textsuperscript{96} For Vasari, learning to draw was the way to release artistic ideas from one’s mind.\textsuperscript{97} Mannerism forms a break with tradition and the need to create perfectly proportioned figures that displayed overall beauty.\textsuperscript{98} Although Mannerism does not make a big appearance in the construction and formatting of Cosimo’s portraiture, it is evident in some of his other commissioned works that those same artists completed. Though Cosimo desperately desired Michelangelo to come work for him, Cosimo embraced other Mannerist artists who were striving to emulate Michelangelo’s artistic achievements and his initial work towards Mannerist art.

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 61.
CHAPTER THREE

PORTRAIT PAINTERS TO THE DUKE

Duke Cosimo commissioned many artworks during his life; however, he had two main types of artists create his portraits, painters and sculptors. There is a significant difference in the handling and application of both types of materials, but the main reason that the two are split into separate chapters in this thesis is the similarities that can be uncovered between the artists of each type of material type by comparing them consecutively.

In his painted portraits, Cosimo I de’ Medici commissioned artists that could illustrate his real likeness. Starting with Pontormo, and then switching his loyalties to Bronzino and finally Vasari, Cosimo demonstrated his political agenda at each point during his rule by the image that that painter was able to produce. Pontormo was already in the service of the Medici family and Cosimo adopted him as one of his first portraitists. Shortly after Pontormo’s portraits, Cosimo decided that Pontormo’s pupil, Bronzino was able to conform more to the Duke’s taste and produce a more clear and direct portrait of the Duke that would assert his power and acknowledge his family lineage. Bronzino stays in favor with the Duke for a long period, making numerous portraits of the Duke reference Medici heritage, and is only ousted as the Duke’s preferred painter, when Vasari comes back to the service of the court in the early 1550s.

This chapter will examine the lives of these three selected painters, and it will become evident that there are similarities in their backgrounds and education that led to
their selection by the Duke. It will also become clear that the Duke preferred painted portraits that focused on his right to rule, and he desired a portrait that could be used by his people to recognize their ruler. Over time, the Cosimo’s taste and political agenda changed due to the successes of his reign, and that will be demonstrated as well in the succession of painters and their portraits of the Duke.

Jacopo Pontormo

Jacopo da Pontormo was born in 1493 to Bartolomeo di Jacopo di Martino and his wife Alexandra. His birth name was Jacopo Carucci, but he was called Jacopo da Pontormo due to the city of his birth, Pontorme. Both of Pontormo’s parents died before he was eleven, so his grandmother, Mona Brigida, was in charge of taking care of the young boy and giving him his initial education. Shortly after his stay with his grandmother, Pontormo was made a ward of the court at age thirteen and moved to Florence.

Vasari suggests that Pontormo once trained under Leonardo da Vinci, but most of his artistic training was under the painter Andrea del Sarto. Early on in his career, Pontormo split from Andrea del Sarto and began working on his own. One of his first works on his own was for an ephemeral decoration made for the festival around 1515

102 Ibid.
103 Ibid., 395.
under Lorenzo di Piero’s reign to glorify the Medici. Pontormo was not without experience painting portraits of the Medici and was commissioned by Lorenzo de’ Medici to paint a portrait of Cosimo il Vecchio to glorify his lineage. After the family returned to control after the brief expulsion in the 1520s, Pontormo received Medici commissions once again under Duke Alessandro de’ Medici with decorations for his villa and for a portrait of the Duke. During Alessandro’s rule, Pontormo held the position of the premier painter in Florence. In fact, Pontormo was actually the only official court painter in Florence during his reign, partly because his main competitor and former teacher, Andrea del Sarto, was already deceased. When Cosimo took over power, he kept Pontormo in the court as a decorator of the Medici buildings, giving him exposure to Pontormo’s main assistant, Bronzino. This was the beginning of what would become be a long relationship.

With previous experience in making both portraits of Cosimo il Vecchio and Alessandro, Cosimo’s choice to elect Pontormo to paint his portrait seemed like an easy decision for the new Duke who was in the midst of attempting to solidify his rule. Pontormo was already aware of the Medici heritage and how they were represented, allowing for him to create a painting quickly. One of the first portrayals of Cosimo commissioned by the Duke from Pontormo was a sketch of Cosimo I de’ Medici in Profile (Figure 1). Cosimo is still at a young age in this portrait, and is not depicted with

105 Ibid., 165.
106 Ibid., 164.
107 Cox-Rearick, The Drawings of Pontormo, 69.
the beard that he would wear throughout his reign, meaning this portrait dates within the first few months after his election. The sketch has short strokes and is merely an outline. No shading or contours give detail to Cosimo’s features. Focus remains on the outline from his forehead down to his neck, and the back of his head is only lightly penciled in. The original forehead contour on the sketch was adjusted slightly to form a more vertical line from his eyebrows to his hairline instead of protruding outwards.

Following this sketch, the workshop of Pontormo completed a painting of Cosimo in profile. Through the evidence made available from an infrared reflectogram of the painting, it is clear that the painted portrait *Cosimo I de’ Medici* (1537) was developed from the sketch due to the similar lines and changes made in the initial stages that mimic those of the sketch (Figure 2). An analysis of this painting reveals thin layers of paint, uncharacteristic for Pontormo, which has led scholars to suggest that this was a quick portrait made to pass around to other artists to make copies. The sketch of Cosimo has also been suggested by scholars to be a preliminary work for a sculpture-type commission instead of a painting because of the precise measurements of the facial features carefully laid out by existing ruler lines. Baccio Bandinelli’s marble relief of *Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici*, is thought to have utilized this sketch (Figure 3).

Since these two portraits were completed so early in Cosimo’s reign, it can be suggested that they influenced later portraits of Cosimo. However, besides Bandinelli’s

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111 Ibid., 126.
112 Ibid., 124.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
relief and coins made for the Duke, the rest of his portraiture moves away from a profile depiction. So Pontormo’s lasting influence was essentially restricted to the small medal-type work, such as coins, of Cosimo that would be passed around Florence, a format the majority of the citizens would have access to. Therefore, most people would have known Cosimo from Pontormo’s depiction, such as the sketch of him in profile, because it was utilized by other artists in works accessible to the public, rather than the portraits of the Duke in the Palazzo Vecchio completed by Vasari and Bandinelli, which few citizens would have access to.

There are two more works representing Cosimo I commonly attributed to Pontormo that must be discussed. The early portrait, *Maria Salviati with her Son Cosimo* (1526-27), is debated amongst scholars of the artist and his subjects (Figure 4). Kurt W. Forster suggested that Bronzino was the artist, while the general consensus lies with Pontormo.¹¹５ Next to Ridolfo Ghirlandaio’s *Twelve Year Old Cosimo de’ Medici* (1531), Pontormo’s portrait of Cosimo with his mother would have been his earliest depiction (Figure 5). Some scholars, such as Janet Cox-Rearick, suggest that the youth in this painting can be identified as Cosimo, yet Strehlke indicates that Maria Salviati is wearing a widow’s veil, which she would not have worn until the death of her husband, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, in 1526, when Cosimo was seven years old.¹¹６ This child looks younger than seven and has very feminine features, which is why Strehlke asserts that the child is one of Alessandro de’ Medici’s illegitimate daughters, most likely Giulia.¹¹７ If Strehlke’s dating is of 1537 is correct, Cosimo would have been eighteen years old,

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¹¹５ Forster, “Metaphors of Rule,” 72.
¹¹６ Strehlke, *Pontormo, Bronzino, and the Medici*, 120.
¹¹７ Ibid.
having just been elected duke, making him far older than the youth in the picture. Janet Cox-Rearick states that this must be Cosimo due to the medal that Maria is holding in her right hand. The subject of this medal is Giovanni dell Bande Nere; the presence of this medal together with the youth holding Maria’s hand was a way to symbolize that the youth was heir to both main branches of the Medici family.\(^\text{118}\) However, the object on the medal cannot be easily identified and could also be interpreted as a medal of Giulia’s father Alessandro. There is not enough supportive evidence to prove that this indeed is Cosimo I.

Another debated portrait of Cosimo is Pontormo’s *Portrait of a Halberdier* (1537-38) (Figure 6). The lance and sword as discussed by Forster suggests Cosimo’s relationship with his father, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, an important military soldier.\(^\text{119}\) However, comparing this image to the profile sketch by Pontormo, also made during 1537, does not provide enough physical evidence and similarities to match this portrait with Cosimo. The *Portrait of a Halberdier* features a much younger looking man. Strehlke states, furthermore, that this particular image represents Francesco Guardi whom Vasari specifically references in his biography of Pontormo as having a portrait made where he is depicted as a soldier, with the painting, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, by Bronzino serving as a cover for the portrait.\(^\text{120}\) Strehlke dates this portrait earlier than Forster, around 1529-30, which would place the portrait at the time when Francesco Guardi was fifteen and he had just been given his father’s estate, which would have been on the front lines of battle during the siege of Florence. The young boy would thus be shown

\(^{118}\) Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art*, 237.
\(^{119}\) Forster, “Metaphors of Rule,” 73.
\(^{120}\) Strehlke, *Pontormo, Bronzino, and the Medici*, 92.
standing guard of his new property.\textsuperscript{121} Even in Strehlke’s own defense against this being a depiction of Cosimo, the detail of the medal on the young boy’s hat is discussed—this is a medal of Hercules and Antaeus often used by both Alessandro and Cosimo.\textsuperscript{122} The medal could be seen as a way to acknowledge Alessandro’s reign and show Guardi’s allegiance to the Duke.\textsuperscript{123} However, Hercules had often served as a symbol of Florence and could have been utilized as such by Guardi.\textsuperscript{124}

The dating also causes an issue for this portrait. If Strehkle’s dating of 1529-30 is correct, then this would be at least one year prior to Ridolfo Ghirlandaio’s portrait of Cosimo at age twelve, while the Pontormo male is clearly much older. There was a portrait by Pontormo of Cosimo I that was listed in the inventory of Riccardo Riccardi, a Florentine art collector, but the listing only details that in this portrait Cosimo was carrying a pole.\textsuperscript{125} In terms of this study, without definitive evidence and without detail of patronage, it cannot be concluded that this is indeed Cosimo I de’ Medici.

It can be definitively stated that Pontormo created the initial sketch of Cosimo when he was elected. This sketch may have been the starting point for the quick painting made shortly after by his workshop or used for medals and reliefs. For instance, the silver medal of \textit{Cosimo I de’ Medici} (obverse) and \textit{Alessandro de’ Medici} (reverse) cast in 1537 by Domenico di Polo de’ Vetri has very distinct features, such as the curve of the nose, that seem to be copied from Pontormo’s sketch (Figure 7).\textsuperscript{126} Cosimo had both his portrait and Alessandro’s set upon the coin, which followed Roman tradition set by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Cox-Rearick, \textit{Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art}, 254n.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Strehlke, \textit{Pontormo, Bronzino, and the Medici}, 92.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 92 and 120.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 128.
\end{itemize}
Augustus, where Augustus placed his predecessor, Julius Caesar on the reverse of his coins.\footnote{Ibid.} This is the first instance of a reference made by Cosimo to the practices of Augustus. As we will see, Cosimo established numerous parallels between his court and the reign of Caesar Augustus.

Other than these initial portraits, Cosimo does not request any more portraits from Pontormo later in his reign. Instead, Cosimo chooses Pontormo’s pupil, Bronzino, as the painter who would not only make his official court portraits, but also his erotic depiction as Orpheus as a wedding present to his wife. Pontormo did, however, play an integral role in getting Bronzino commissions from the Medici. Janet Cox-Rearick suggests that the reason Pontormo lost some of the patronage of Cosimo to his pupil Bronzino was due to his inability to adapt to the new artistic program of Cosimo and to customize his Mannerist style to fit the taste of the duke.\footnote{Ibid.} By this point in the late thirties and early forties, Bronzino, utilized a much more formal approach to portraiture that reflected the wishes of the patron, making him a more suitable choice for the new duke who was trying to promote a specific political program.\footnote{Ibid.}

Agnolo Bronzino

Agnolo Bronzino was an early court painter to Cosimo I de’ Medici. Not only did Bronzino complete numerous projects for Cosimo’s wife, Eleonora di Toledo, but Bronzino created multiple portraits of Cosimo himself. Bronzino was born November 17, 1503 in Monticelli. His father died while Bronzino was still young, fighting for the
League of Cambrai. Bronzino therefore left his family early to relieve some pressure on his single mother. He trained with a master Raffaellino, entering his studio at age eleven. Raffaellino did not keep Bronzino as a student for long as Bronzino entered Pontormo’s studio in 1518. Between 1518 and 1538 Bronzino spent some time as a student and then an assistant of Pontormo. Throughout the turmoil that the city of Florence faced in the beginning of the sixteenth century, Pontormo and Bronzino remained in the city instead of fleeing to other artistic centers like many other artists.

During the rule of Alessandro de’ Medici, Pontormo was the leading painter in Florence, which gave Bronzino, as his assistant, access into the Medici court early on in his career. Pontormo fulfilled the function of court decorator for Duke Alessandro, and when Cosimo I came into power he kept this position. Pontormo was also the leading portrait painter for the Medici in the 1530s and completed one of Cosimo’s earliest portraits, the Portrait of Maria Salviati with her Son Cosimo (1527-30). However, Pontormo’s unique Mannerist style with its distorted colors and figures did not follow the more formal style that was preferred by the court of Cosimo I. Bronzino adapted his style to fit more closely to this taste; this is likely why he received the commission from Cosimo for his first official state portrait. For Cosimo’s wedding to Eleonora di Toledo, Bronzino worked on some of the ephemeral wedding decorations,

131 Ibid., 13.
133 Ibid., 7.
134 Cox-Rearick, The Drawings of Pontormo, 69.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid., 70.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
and according to Vasari, this is one of the major projects that brought him into Cosimo’s favor. Bronzino had already established himself as an artist of skill, and was an easy choice for Cosimo to select for his initial commissions since Bronzino had been previously employed by the Medici. Cosimo had an idea of the quality of Bronzino’s finished product and a sense that critics would accept pieces made by this artist.

The portrait by Bronzino of *Cosimo I de’ Medici as Orpheus* is a unique image when compared to the official state portraiture commissioned by the patron (Figure 8). This particular portrait was a special addition to the body of Cosimo’s portraits since it was a private image. Contributing to its complexity is the fact that this particular intimate portrait was completed so early in Cosimo I’s reign. Cosimo’s marriage to Eleonora di Toledo in 1539 was most likely the determining event that encouraged Cosimo to commission this portrait.

Two main aspects need to be considered when discussing this portrait. The first is the background of Cosimo I de’ Medici and his rule. Why would Cosimo choose to be depicted in the guise of Orpheus? Orpheus is not a mythological figure normally associated with strength or virility. Would not a more heroic mythological figure promote a more powerful persona? After establishing his agenda, the second major issue is to uncover the particular characteristics of Orpheus that Cosimo wanted conveyed. Did Bronzino portray these traits clearly enough for the viewer to grasp the concept that Cosimo intended?

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First, a formal assessment of the figures and the painting’s composition is required. The nude figure of Cosimo I as Orpheus dominates two-thirds of the picture plane. Cosimo is shown seated with his back to the viewer facing a little towards the left of the frame. His head is turned over his left shoulder, engaging in direct eye contact with the viewer. His left arm is raised grasping a lira da braccio by the neck. The back of the lira da braccio rests against Cosimo’s knee and thigh. Cosimo’s right hand holds the bow of the instrument, but instead of using it to play, it is resting upwards in his lap. A red cloth is draped over Cosimo’s right shoulder, down his back and covering his rear. Fabric also envelops his right arm, leaving only the right hand visible to the viewer. Cosimo’s face displays a serene expression. His closed red lips, rosy cheeks and short beard express his youth. His body is idealized, and the musculature shows strength and athleticism. The background is mostly a deep dark smokey brown ending on the right side of the painting in a jagged edge, indicating that Cosimo is seated in some form of rock formation or cave. Wrapped around the side of the rock is a type of rocky beaten path that leads down to Cosimo’s location inside the dark, rocky cavern. A burning reddish-orange light glows from beyond the rocks and is visible on the top far right corner of the painting. The last significant aspect of this painting is the presence of a dog whose two heads, in close proximity to Cosimo are seen over the top of the lira da braccio. Although these heads look ferocious based on their beading eyes and pinched snouts, they do not seem to be growling or barking at Cosimo.
A cleaning of the painting completed in the early 1980s revealed a few interesting facts about Bronzino’s original design.\textsuperscript{140} Originally, Cosimo was not depicted as a mostly nude Orpheus. At first, the red cloth that now drapes only over his right shoulder once covered his entire back and thigh.\textsuperscript{141} The bow that Cosimo holds in his right hand originally was not positioned so suggestively. Previously the bow was directed more towards his stomach than his genitals, as he was in the middle of playing the instrument and calming Cerberus.\textsuperscript{142} These changes, as slight as they may seem, actually necessitated a significant amount of additional work on the left side of the painting and required Bronzino to repaint much of the work.\textsuperscript{143} Therefore, this change in subject matter to the more erotic tone must have had a considerable amount of motivation from the patron behind it in order to require the artist to fix this much of the painting so late in its execution.\textsuperscript{144} This allows us to question the intent of the piece and the goal of the patron.

It is important to consider how Bronzino’s painting of Cosimo relates to the mythology and symbolism of Orpheus. Orpheus is usually represented with a number of different symbols, some of which appear in \textit{Cosimo I de’ Medici as Orpheus}, while others are abandoned. The first emblem is that of the lyre, which is associated with Orpheus’ musical ability and his relationship to his father, Apollo. However, during the Italian Renaissance, many paintings depicted Orpheus with a \textit{lira da braccio}, an

\textsuperscript{140} The process by which the piece was restored is detailed in Mark S. Tucker’s “Discoveries Made During the Treatment of Bronzino’s \textit{Cosimo I de’ Medici as Orpheus},” \textit{Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin} 81, no. 348 (Autumn, 1985): 28-32.


\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
instrument from the viol family similar in size and shape to a viol. In this particular painting, Bronzino has chosen to depict Cosimo with the lira da braccio, following the tradition of Italian Renaissance painting, instead of using the more classically accepted symbol of the lyre. Another feature usually associated with Orpheus is the laurel-leaf crown. This also relates to Orpheus’ father, but is absent in this painting of Cosimo. This omission is surprising, since in later images of Cosimo he wears the laurel-leaf crown because the Medici utilizes it as a familial symbol.

Other figures are often present in the background in depictions of Orpheus in the Underworld. These figures could include Persephone and Hades on their thrones, sometimes with Cerberus, the three-headed dog, snarling near their thrones. Cerberus is the only other living being present in Bronzino’s depiction, and is illustrated sitting next to Cosimo, calm yet with a still very threatening demeanor. In some depictions of this myth such figure as Tityus, Ixion, Tantalus, or Sisyphus are shown momentarily pausing from enduring their particular torments by Orpheus’ sweet plea and songs. None of these figures make an appearance in Bronzino’s painting. A fire breathing dragon can also appear in the background, and the gleaming reddish light in the background of the Portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici as Orpheus may reference that idea, or it may refer to the fiery depths of the Underworld. Bronzino used very few symbols in order to suggest that Cosimo is Orpheus. The lira da braccio and the presence of

146 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
148 Ibid.
Cerberus are all that are used to identify this figure as Orpheus, aided by the dark background suggestive of an underworld type location.

That being said, the identification of this figure as a portrait of Cosimo can only be made through his facial features. Bronzino did not use any Medici emblems or references to Cosimo’s name or position to associate this with Cosimo. Although bearing the features of Cosimo, this portrait is predominantly a depiction of Orpheus. Comparing this image to other early portraits of the Duke, such as Cosimo I in Armour (1543), shows the similarity in facial features, making it easy to identify this particular figure as Cosimo (Figure 9). But why should Cosimo choose to be depicted as this mythological figure?

The mythological tale of Orpheus as told in Ovid’s Metamorphoses describes Orpheus as a lover and brilliant musician.\textsuperscript{149} The story begins with Orpheus’ new bride, Eurydice, wandering through the fields with some naiads when she is bitten and killed by a snake. Eurydice is taken prematurely from her love Orpheus and sent to the Underworld before old age. Desperate to have Eurydice back, Orpheus descends into the Underworld in order to plead with Persephone.\textsuperscript{150} Orpheus poetically confesses his love of Eurydice to the goddess while playing melodies on his lyre. The music was so beautiful that it suspended time in the Underworld, causing everyone to stop their activities and listen to Orpheus’ melodic tune. After his final plea, “I ask the enjoyment of her as a boon; but if the fates deny this privilege for my wife, I am resolved not to return. Rejoice in the death of two,” Persephone agrees to allow Eurydice to travel back

\textsuperscript{149} This thesis will utilize Ovid’s Metamorphoses as translated by Frank Justus Miller and published in Cambridge, Massachusetts by the Harvard University Press in 1984. The following paragraph is a brief summary of Book X, lines 1-85.

\textsuperscript{150} Orpheus either talks to Persephone or Proserpine depending whether the Greek or Roman name for the goddess of the Underworld is used. For the remainder of this paper, I will be using the Greek names of the gods.
from the Underworld.\textsuperscript{151} That is, Orpheus can bring his young bride back on the one condition that he cannot turn around until he is fully out of the Underworld. Eurydice travels up behind her husband, and right near the entrance Orpheus turns around to make sure his wife is still following behind him. Eurydice is grabbed back down into the Underworld and Orpheus is not permitted to return again to bring her back. In Ovid’s tale of Orpheus he suggests that women swooned over Orpheus after the death of his wife and he was always in their favor.\textsuperscript{152} This led to his eventual demise through the hands of the Cicones women, who believed he was scorning them, but he is generally represented as a ladies’ man.\textsuperscript{153}

This particular account of Orpheus may relate to Cosimo I’s marriage to Eleonora di Toledo, whom he married shortly after this portrait was created in 1539. Cosimo could have wanted to be portrayed as a faithful and loyal husband who would dive deep in the Underworld to save his beloved. Besides the love of his wife, he was also demonstrating that he was able to win over an audience through his words which would have been a very powerful tool for one of the first Dukes of Florence during a rather politically unsettling period for the Medici. This would have been a positive characteristic that would have proven to his new bride that he would excel at being the Duke as well as make an acceptable husband. Carl Brandon Strehlke also states that “for Bronzino to transform Cosimo into Orpheus, the ancient paragon of the poet and musician, has to express great confidence in the cultural program of the new duke.”\textsuperscript{154} This particular image itself is a very intimate and private image of Duke Cosimo that was probably not

\textsuperscript{151} Ovid, \textit{Metamorphoses}, 10.37-39.  \\
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 10.78-85.  \\
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 11.1-43.  \\
\textsuperscript{154} Strehlke, \textit{Pontormo, Bronzino, and the Medici}, xii.
available to the public.\(^{155}\) One reason we can suggest that this image was kept in a more private location is the fact that there are no copies of the painting.\(^{156}\) Bronzino’s official state portraits of the duke like his Cosimo in Armor (1543), engendered over a hundred copies.\(^{157}\) It is therefore, it is easy to believe that other artists did not have access to this particular portrait. Furthermore, the fact that the Duke is nude and represented in an erotic manner instead of as a strong leader may suggest the intention for this piece to be for his new wife.\(^{158}\)

Beginning in 1539, with the construction of the decorations to celebrate the marriage of Duke Cosimo to Eleonora di Toledo in 1539, Bronzino became a court artist to the Medici and remained within the ducal favor until 1555 when Giorgio Vasari captured the Duke’s interest.\(^{159}\) Bronzino’s diminished role in Cosimo’s court after 1555 might have been due in part to Bronzino’s departure from Florence to work in Pesaro, leaving the opportunity for ducal painting commissions open for Vasari.\(^{160}\) Bronzino, though most famous for his artwork, was also a respected poet and had access to works of the great poets like Petrarch and Dante.\(^{161}\) This experience in reading and writing poetry, as well as his relationships with poets, may explain why Cosimo chose this particular artist to create this intimate scene of poetic love.


\(^{156}\) Ibid.

\(^{157}\) Overall, there are over a hundred copies combined of all three of Bronzino’s official portraits of Duke Cosimo. These three images initial images by Bronzino are entitled: Cosimo in Armor (1543), Cosimo at Age Thirty-Six (1555-1556- no longer extant), and Grand Duke Cosimo (1569-no longer extant). Janet-Cox Rearick, “Bronzino, Agnolo,” in The Dictionary of Art, ed. Jane Turner, vol. 4 (New York: Grove’s Dictionaries Inc., 1996), 858.


\(^{159}\) Cox-Rearick, “Bronzino, Agnolo,” 856.

\(^{160}\) McCorquodale, Agnolo Bronzino, 30.

\(^{161}\) Strehlke, Pontormo, Bronzino, and the Medici, xi.
Cosimo himself was a strong supporter of the arts and literature and created many intellectual societies for both, so his decision to choose an artist who was able to capture the essence of poetry and mythology was essential to the purpose of the piece. Even though Bronzino was the official portrait painter for Cosimo I de’ Medici, he also created portraits of many other individuals. Some of these other portraits painted by Bronzino were of poets and musicians, so Bronzino had previous experience with the type of subject matter that was repeated in the Portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici as Orpheus. In 1555, late in Bronzino’s career for Duke Cosimo, the artist was also commissioned to create designs for four tapestries that would depict events from Ovid’s Metamorphoses. In his work prior to his Medici court paintings, Bronzino created Pygmalion and Galatea between 1529-1530, which was also a subject drawn from Ovid’s Metamorphoses. Bronzino thus had ample experience both with personal portraiture and the mythologies of Ovid to make a suitable candidate as the artist for Cosimo’s portrait.

Bronzino’s depiction of Orpheus does not follow the traditional narrative approach previously used by other artists. Depictions of Orpheus typically illustrate one major scene from his mythology. The scenes chosen for the artwork of Orpheus changed due to the preference of the patrons during the period that each piece was made. The very first depictions of Orpheus that exist from classical antiquity are of the poet as a musician for the heroes on the ship of the Argo correlating to the first event of his

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164 Ibid., 9n26.
mythology.\textsuperscript{165} During the Hellenistic period of Greek art, the transition to Orpheus in the Underworld became the prominent scene, while the Roman Republican period developed the scene of Orpheus’ rescue of Eurydice.\textsuperscript{166} A Roman copy of a Greek original relief sculpture shows Orpheus with Eurydice, and Hermes grabs Eurydice’s hand as if he is about to take her back down into the Underworld. However, Orpheus playing music for animals seems to be the most popular episode over the history of art to represent, as I found many extant examples depicting Orpheus participating in this activity.

This brief examination of the visualizations of Orpheus in the other events of his mythology gives us an understanding of how Orpheus was usually portrayed. In most classical depictions, whether mosaics, paintings, vase paintings, or others, Orpheus is depicted nude or mostly nude. In most instances Orpheus is shown wearing a laurel-leaf crown and playing a lyre. Also, for many of the mythological episodes other figures are represented with Orpheus, but in the images of Orpheus playing for animals, no other figures appear. Bronzino’s painting departs from the usual representations of Orpheus because he lacks the laurel-leaf crown and he removed all of the other figures that usually appear in the scene. As mentioned earlier, Bronzino also adopts the \textit{lira da braccio} from Renaissance tradition rather than using the lyre of classical models. The depiction of Cosimo as a mostly nude figure follows the artistic tradition of Orpheus, yet it contrasts distinctly with how rulers were typically portrayed in the later Renaissance. In most portraits of rulers, the sitter was shown in their finest dress displaying their wealth, power and prestige. This fact that Cosimo’s portrait departs from the traditional imagery of

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 8.  
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 12.
rulers makes this piece so interesting and establishes it as a private, rather than public, work.

Other accounts of Orpheus in classical poems, such as in Plato’s *Symposium* are important to take note of. Plato’s *Symposium*, which only briefly mentions the hero, displays Orpheus negatively as a lover who would not do anything for his beloved. This contrasts greatly to the idea presented by Ovid where Orpheus would go down to the Underworld and do anything for his beloved and out of respect was granted the right to bring her back up from the Underworld. In the *Symposium*, Orpheus is being compared to Alcestis who agreed to die for her husband Admetus, while Orpheus wanted to enter the Underworld alive and return to earth. If Orpheus would have chosen to die he could have been with his beloved Eurydice in the Underworld forever, yet he tried to have both life and his wife and the gods would not grant him that honor. Alcestis had so much love for her husband that she was willing to die for him so that he could remain in the world of the living- a great sacrifice. This particular telling of Orpheus would not have inspired the Duke to create such a portrait. Ovid’s account provides a much stronger statement of love and loyalty, even sacrifice, and it is clear that the Duke selected Ovid’s narrative as the model for this unique portrayal of himself.

The *Portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici as Orpheus* is a very intriguing piece because of its intention and relationship to traditional depictions of both Orpheus and Renaissance rulers. Bronzino utilized enough symbols like Cerberus and the *lira da braccio* to

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167 This paper uses Plato’s *Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias* as translated by W. R. M. Lame and published in Cambridge, Massachusetts by the Harvard University Press in 1961. The following paragraph is a brief summary of *The Symposium*, pages 103-107.


169 Ibid.
identify the scene as Orpheus in the Underworld, yet he did not bombard the composition with too many extra elements that would confuse the viewer. The omission of Persephone, Hades, and other figures allows this image to assume a sense of timelessness. The use of Cosimo’s face on Orpheus’ body demonstrates that Cosimo wanted to promote some of the positive qualities of Orpheus—his skills as poet, musician, and devout lover. Since Cosimo was depicted mostly nude, the erotic overtones of this portrait suggest that this work would have been a private image for his new wife, maybe to seduce and sexually entice her to provide him male heirs; it could also show Eleonora that he would be a devoted lover. Overall this piece is an interesting combination of the elements of traditional Orpheus mythology mingled with aspects of a Florentine Duke’s desire to create a portrait for his new bride.

The first official state portrait of Cosimo was painted by Bronzino. Bronzino’s Portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici in Armour (1543) was the second portrait created by this artist for the Duke (Figure 9). Bronzino was not purely a portraitist, and in fact his total output of portraits was under thirty. In stark contrast to Bronzino’s very private image of Cosimo as Orpheus, of which there were no copies made, his portrait of the Duke in armor was copied around twenty-five times. These versions, some by the hand of Bronzino and others by his workshop, served as propaganda items for the Duke, and many were given as gifts.

Scholars have agreed that the prototype for this new typology of Cosimo in armor

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170 Cox-Rearick, Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art, 239.
173 Brock, Bronzino, 158.
is the portrait located in the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence. Unlike many other state portraits of rulers produced during this time, the half length of the body was the format originally adopted by Bronzino for Cosimo’s official portrait. Most official state portraits of the time used a three quarter length presentation of the sitter. Indeed, the copies of Bronzino’s original are all three quarter length in format. The portraits copied after 1545 feature the impresa of the Order of the Golden Fleece draping around Cosimo’s neck, an honorary title given to him by the Hapsburg Holy Roman Emperor in that year. Bronzino was contracted to make the first of the three-quarter length portraits himself. The dating of this piece would put it prior to 1545, as it lacks the badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

In the prototype half-length portrait, a youthful Cosimo is depicted in armor holding his helmet in his hands. Cosimo is set against a plain deep blue fabric backdrop that drapes down from the top of the portrait. His body is turned slightly to the right side of the painting while Cosimo’s head is facing to the left. Cosimo is not gazing directly at the viewer, but off into the distance. His brow is slightly furrowed; this aware and intent gaze is very different from his erotic smile in the Portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici as Orpheus. A distant gale has been suggested to represent Cosimo being constantly aware of his surroundings and ready to respond with action. The full beard that is representative of Cosimo’s later portraits has not yet grown in, more fully revealing his serious, but calm expression.

The shining silver armor dressed with a few red ornaments is delicately decorated,

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175 Ibid.
176 Ibid.
177 Brock, Bronzino, 158.
but the designs do not dominate the armor or the portrait. Cosimo is depicted here as a warrior who is ready to defend his city if the need arises, but is relaxed with his helmet off, demonstrating that there is peace. The helmet in the hands of Cosimo rather than being worn suggests his ability to make peace with words instead of with war. In his role as a soldier, Cosimo connects to his father, who died defending Florence while serving with the League of Cambrai. Prior to beginning his rule, Cosimo did not have any firsthand military experience, but the image of a soldier promotes the idea of strength and leadership—two ideals Cosimo wanted to convey as a ruler of Florence.

One motto of Cosimo’s regime was “He who does not think of things in advance, does not do them well.” His body in this well crafted official portrait represents that motto clearly. With his eyes scanning the distance, Cosimo is anticipating what is to come. The calm, yet stern expression on Cosimo’s face gives the impression that he is not worried about the future, but is ready to face whatever comes at the city of Florence. He is fully prepared in his military uniform and his right hand is on his helmet, ready to put it on if battle is necessary.

The particular dating of the Portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici in Armor is significant because it relates to a political success of the Duke that occurred in May 1543. This date marks Charles V’s removal of his troops from the fortresses of Pisa, Livorno, and Florence and the return of them to the control of Cosimo I. This was not a military

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178 Ibid.
179 Ibid. The connection between the death of Cosimo’s and Bronzino’s fathers while fighting for the League of Cambrai might have formed a sort of kinship between the two of them. They dealt with a similar experience and this might have led Cosimo to believe Bronzino could establish the connection between he and his warrior father Giovanni, while also suggesting the peaceful nature he wished to portray.
180 McCorquodale, Agnolo Bronzino, 78.
victory for Cosimo, but occurred through peaceful negotiations.\textsuperscript{182} In terms of political power for Cosimo, this negotiation was significant because it solidified Cosimo’s control over Florence, ensuring that the republican factions would not overthrow the new Duke’s government.\textsuperscript{183} Maurice Brock suggests that Cosimo did not have an official portrait painting commissioned immediately upon his installation as Duke in 1537 because his advisors had yet to come up with an appropriate image of the Duke to express his political ideology.\textsuperscript{184} Through this 1543 image it is clear that Cosimo’s advisors wanted to portray a ruler who would bring peace through action, and Cosimo’s success at bringing the fortresses under his power instead of under Charles V articulated that meaning.

The two early portraits of Cosimo as Orpheus and in Armor were not the only portraits painted by Bronzino for the Duke. \textit{Cosimo I at Age Thirty-Six} (1555-56) and \textit{Grand Duke Cosimo I} (1569) were two other official portraits created for the Duke. Unfortunately, these originals are no longer extant, so their political ideology cannot be significantly explored. In 1569 Cosimo was granted the title Grand Duke of Tuscany, marking an important step in his political career. At this point a new official portrait needed to be created to demonstrate his new rank and power.

Giorgio Vasari

Giorgio Vasari was one of Cosimo’s main artists, especially towards the end of his reign, and Vasari was continuously given commissions of high importance by the

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{184} Brock, \textit{Bronzino}, 156.
Duke. Vasari was born in 1511 and was the first son of Antonio di Giorgio Vasari and wife Maddalena Tacci. In 1519, a cousin of Vasari, Luca Signorelli, came to visit the Vasari family and according to Vasari, Signorelli convinced his father to allow him to learn how to draw. His academic education began under Antonio da Saccone and Giovanni Lappoli, but Vasari initiated his study of art under Guillaume de Marcillat, a French glass-painter. In 1524 Vasari joined Alessandro and Ippolito de’Medici in Florence after being brought to the city by Cardinal Silvio Passerini, and he studied with the Medici children under tutor Piero Valeriano. According to Vasari’s autobiography as presented in the Lives, Vasari spent some time in Andrea del Sarto’s workshop and then under the sculptor Baccio Bandinelli. When the Medici were expelled from Florence on May 16, 1527, Vasari returned to Arezzo and meddled in the goldsmith profession during this time. Vasari made numerous paintings here and there in this interim, but his career as an artist really began when he entered into Duke Alessandro de’ Medici’s service in 1532, when he was offered many ducal commissions.

Michelangelo Buonarroti is mentioned several times in Vasari’s description of his life, playing such roles as a teacher and admirer. At one point Vasari even states that

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186 Ibid.
187 Ibid., 64.
189 Ibid., 10.
190 Ibid. There are many similarities between the life of Vasari and that of Michelangelo Buonarroti. Michelangelo also spent time with young Medici boys and their tutor, and left Florence as well when the Medici were expelled in 1494 from E. H. Ramsden, *The Letters of Michelangelo* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1963), lviii. Vasari’s obsession with Michelangelo could have led him to elaborate his past slightly as to mimic Michelangelo’s. Since more scholars pull Vasari’s past from his own work, this information needs to be accepted with skepticism.
Michelangelo paid him such a compliment about his architectural designs that “out of modesty [he] forbear[s] to tell.” Vasari considered Michelangelo to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, artists to have ever lived. In the Lives he calls Michelangelo divine and suggests various times that Michelangelo perfected art and design. It is not surprising then that Vasari would want this great artist to compliment his own work.

Whether or not Michelangelo did complement Vasari, this story does give the reader the sense that Vasari thought of himself as an accomplished artist. If Michelangelo in fact made the remark, Cosimo might have been even further drawn to Vasari as a substitute for Michelangelo.

Cosimo was not the first Medici under whom Vasari created work. Ippolito de’ Medici introduced Vasari to life at the court after they had spent some years apart from studying together under their tutor. Vasari also benefited from the patronage of Cosimo’s predecessor, Alessandro. Cosimo’s decision to employ Vasari to create portraits of him seems to follow a pattern. Cosimo knew of Vasari’s skill, but the artist had also been a supporter of the Medici and remained loyal to the family. In fact, many of Cosimo’s portraitists were previously employed by the Medici family.

Duke Cosimo took a special interest in Vasari and granted him commissions and favors to keep him in his service. Even though Vasari always retained his house in Arezzo, Duke Cosimo I had rented him a home in Florence since he spent considerable amounts of time there during the construction of the Palazzo Vecchio, which had been

192 Vasari, Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, 10: 189.
193 Ibid., 8:162.
commissioned by the Duke in 1555.  

In a letter to Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici, Michelangelo states that he has “seen the designs of the rooms painted by Messer Giorgio and the model of the great hall,” and that it appeared to him “a thing wonderful to behold.” One of these paintings for the hall was Vasari’s *Apotheosis of Cosimo I* (Figure 10). The *Apotheosis of Cosimo I* adorns the ceiling and shows the duke “as the culmination of the whole of Florentine History.”

This piece adorns the ceiling of the Sala Grande next to wall frescoes of the victories over Pisa and Siena. Cosimo I de’ Medici is shown here slightly foreshortened and his body is tilted towards the ground. An oak wreath crown is being put on his head by an angel who represents the city of Florence, and small putti surround the whole image. The depiction of the clothing is very realistic and the fresco is illuminated from a single light source. The angel, representative of Florence, displays her gratitude to Cosimo in the inscriptions which encompasses the tondo in a frame like element.

Vasari’s painting on the ceiling of the hall did not always include Cosimo’s portrait. This change was made in November 1564, when a portrait of Cosimo replaced what originally was meant to be a depiction of the city of Florence. In the study of Cosimo’s commissions of his portraits this work is an interesting anomaly. What this situation reveals is that this piece did not originally start out as a portrait, but after Cosimo’s intervention, can now be included as part of this thesis on Cosimo’s portraiture.

In the Sala Grande tondo, Cosimo wanted himself to be viewed as the Roman ruler

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195 Veen, *Cosimo I de’ Medici and his Self-Representation*, 55.
197 Veen, *Cosimo I de’ Medici and his Self-Representation*, 66.
198 Ibid.
Augustus, who had given away power only to seem modest, which eventually earned him even more power. This is one of the only painted portraits of the Duke where he is depicted wearing ancient clothing instead of a more contemporary dress. Also, since Florence is crowning Cosimo it gives the viewer the impression that it was the city that chose him as their leader instead of Cosimo usurping the role. One prominent *impresa* that describes the power and authority of the Duke is the symbol of Saint Stephen. The cross of Saint Stephen was a symbol of the new military company designed by Cosimo to celebrate the defeat of the French and Sienese at the Battle of Marciano making Siena part of the Florentine territories. This victory occurred on Saint Stephen’s Day, August 2, 1554, and membership became an inherited opportunity sponsored by the Medici. This cross is visible on Cosimo’s right hand side, held up by the arm of a cherub whose body is covered by Cosimo. Another power symbol is of the royal crown evident on his left and also being brought to Cosimo by a cherub. This establishes Cosimo as royalty, emphasizing his power beyond just the Florentine territories.

Another portrait of Cosimo is located in the Sala di Cosimo I, where Vasari completed a ceiling fresco entitled *Cosimo I with his Architects, Engineers and Sculptors* (Figure 11). This is an innovative design, since Cosimo is depicted flanked by artists. A ruler depicted with his own artists was a very uncommon theme in the Renaissance, so it is even more surprising that this subject is portrayed twice more in the Palazzo

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199 Ibid., 79.
201 Ibid.
Vecchio.\textsuperscript{202} On the edges of the ceiling in the Quartiere di Leone X, Vasari again shows Cosimo Vecchio surrounded by artists and scholars, and then, in the same room, Lorenzo Magnifico is illustrated with his scholars.

In the Sala di Cosimo I panel, Cosimo I de’ Medici is seated in the upper middle portion with his right leg lifted up somewhat higher than his left. Cosimo I’s head is turned slightly looking over his left shoulder. The left arm and hand are down to the side clutching a t-square and a compass, both architectural instruments, while the right arm is lifted and Cosimo I is pointing towards the figure to his right side.\textsuperscript{203} This piece is the first example that depicts a Medici in the role of an architect.\textsuperscript{204} Giovanni Battista di Marco (il Tasso) is positioned to the right of Cosimo I and holds a model of The Mercato Nuovo, which he was commissioned to build by Cosimo I. Tasso continued his work for Cosimo I after this building, and was appointed to be the architect of the re-designed Palazzo Vecchio until his death in 1555.\textsuperscript{205} To the left of Cosimo I is the figure identified as Niccolò de’ Pericoli, the sculptor/engineer who made the fountains for Cosimo’s villa at Castello called Labyrinth and Hercules.\textsuperscript{206} Positioned in front of Cosimo I with only their upper torsos showing are Giorgio Vasari holding an architectural plan and Francesco di Ser Jacopo, Cosimo I’s financial advisor, to his right.\textsuperscript{207} The five other men depicted in the background can all be identified. Vasari uses a clever technique in the clothing of the main figures. Vasari portrays those who are deceased in an antique-style

\textsuperscript{203} Cox-Rearick, \textit{Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art}, 37.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid., 115.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid., 117.
dress, while the living, Cosimo I, Vasari, and Jacopo are shown in contemporary Florentine dress.\(^{208}\) In this fresco, Cosimo I is shown as the ruler over both of the deceased and the living, further showing his god-like attributes.

This room of the Duke was designed by Cosimo Bartoli.\(^{209}\) The program was centered on acknowledging Cosimo’s military and political successes, and the inclusion of this image of Cosimo with artists is an aspect of his politics.\(^{210}\) Throughout his reign, Cosimo attempted to create ties between artists and civic patronage, an effort in which he succeeded, changing the way art was commissioned for the future.

The Sala di Cosimo I also includes other illustrations of Cosimo. For instance, the ceiling has two other events with a depiction of Cosimo, *Cosimo Dispatching Troops to Serravalle* and *The Election of Cosimo*. Vasari also included multiple portraits of the Duke on the walls, showing Cosimo’s progression from a youthful beardless boy who became Duke in 1537, to Cosimo in the 1560s as the ruler and commander of Florence.\(^{211}\)

Vasari’s *Lorenzo il Magnifico Among His Scholars* in the Sala di Lorenzo il Magnifico, portrays Lorenzo as an intelligent man who appreciated the intellectuals around him (Figure 12). Pictured as a humanist scholar, the various roles of Lorenzo are displayed in the surrounding frescoes as well. Lorenzo is shown as a scholar, humanist, warrior, and diplomat in the various semi-circular frescoes.\(^{212}\) Cosimo I wanted his ancestors to be shown in roles similar to those he played because it legitimizes his

\(^{208}\) Ibid., 120.
\(^{209}\) Veen, *Cosimo I de’ Medici and his Self-Representation*, 20.
\(^{210}\) Ibid.
\(^{211}\) Forster, “Metaphors of Rule,” 96.
\(^{212}\) Felice Stampfle, “A Ceiling Design by Vasari,” *Master Drawings* 6, no. 3 (Autumn, 1968): 266.
authority. If Duke Cosimo I and his ancestors are scholars as well as great warriors and diplomats, their power is strengthened because they are shown positively in all the major responsibilities of a ruler.
CHAPTER FOUR

COSIMO’S COMMISSIONED SCULPTORS: BUSTS AND FULL-LENGTH PORTRAITS

Cosimo’s sculptors were presented with an entirely different task than his painters. The sculpted portraits created for Cosimo, made from either marble or bronze, generally had a more classical appearance and supported Cosimo’s assumed connection to Emperor Augustus. This differs from the more genuine likeness preferred by the Duke in his paintings and his strong Medici promoting agenda. Much like the painters under Cosimo’s command, the sculptors also had similar backgrounds to one another, and their lives constantly intertwine. Unlike the painters, however, Cosimo’s decision of preferred sculptors does not follow a nice linear progression. Cosimo’s sculptor loyalties bounced from one to the other, and he never demonstrated a strong fondness for just one sculptor at a time as he did with his painters.

By describing the lives and portraits done by Bandinelli, Cellini, Danti, and finally Giambologna, this chapter will explore their similarities, but will also seek to demonstrate how Cosimo’s relationship with each sculptor affected the works of the others. It will also illustrate how the task presented to the sculptor was different from that given to the painters, even though both groups of artists were expected to produce portraits of the Duke and many of the portraits in various materials were created around similar time periods during the Duke’s rule.
Baccio Bandinelli

Baccio Bandinelli was born in Florence to the goldsmith, Michelangelo di Viviano da Gaiuole in 1493. After his initial training, Baccio also received some training from Giovan Francesco Rustici. Bandinelli and Cellini had similar training, which is why Cosimo may have had them compete for positions throughout their careers.

The first work commissioned by the Medici from Bandinelli came relatively early in his career and was a project for a Saint Jerome given in 1512, for which only the wax model was ever made. Shortly after, his relationship with Giuliano de’ Medici helped him win the commission in 1515 to create a sculpture of Saint Peter for Florence Cathedral. Around 1519, the Medici once again commissioned Baccio to sculpt a statue of Orpheus for their palace, under the patronage of Leo X. Orpheus was created to represent the peace that had been restored to Florence by the Medici rule and its repression of the Republic. This prototypical image of Orpheus as a symbol of peace may have been an encouraging factor in Cosimo’s subsequent commission of Bronzino for his Orpheus piece.

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214 Ibid.
215 Ibid., 167.
216 Ibid.
217 Ibid.
218 Ibid.
Despite Bandinelli’s previous work for the Medici, his relationship with Cosimo was not seamless. There were numerous problems that Cosimo had with Bandinelli’s work and practices. Cosimo criticized Bandinelli’s use of assistants as excessive and wanted more of the work done by his own hand.\textsuperscript{220} Also, Bandinelli had a major problem of leaving his sculpting projects unfinished which may be why Cosimo hesitated against using him for portraits.\textsuperscript{221} Even the \textit{Hercules and Cacus}, an important piece designed for the Piazza della Signoria, remained unfinished for numerous years.

Around 1554, Bandinelli received a major commission from the Duke to decorate the new Udienza of the Palazzo Vecchio with statues of Cosimo’s Medici lineage.\textsuperscript{222} Giovanni delle Bande Nere, Alessandro de’ Medici, Pope Leo X, and Cosimo were the four members chosen to be represented in sculptural form and made to go inside of niches.\textsuperscript{223} In contrast to the other images of the Duke before this time, this particular portrait of Cosimo was to be a full-length sculpture. Not all of these figures were completed, only those of \textit{Pope Leo X} and \textit{Giovanni delle Bande Nere} installed (Figure 13).\textsuperscript{224} Later, Francesco I, Cosimo’s son, added a full-length portrait of himself in 1594, and this portrait has often been wrongly described as the intended portrait of Cosimo I.\textsuperscript{225} Criticisms of Bandinelli’s Cosimo statue seems to have encouraged him to tear it own.\textsuperscript{226} Scholars are unsure of what happened to this statue or at what stage of completion it was when it was removed.

\textsuperscript{220} Poeschke, \textit{Michelangelo and His World}, 30.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{222} Forster, “Metaphors of Rule,” 83.
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., 83-84.
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid., 84.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{226} Otto Kurz, “A Model for Bandinelli’s Statue of Cosimo I,” \textit{The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs} 85, no. 500 (Nov., 1944): 283.
Cosimo selected Bandinelli to create the *Bust of Cosimo I de' Medici* (1544) which showed up in a Palazzo Vecchio inventory of 1553 in the “Camera di Penelope,” a public room (Figure 14).\(^{227}\) There is evidence to suggest from the dating of both Bandinelli and Cellini’s marble and bronze busts, which seems to have been executed at the same time, that they might have been done as a form of competition between the two sculptors.\(^{228}\) Bandinelli’s portrait of Cosimo I is a half-length marble bust on a small circular stand. The Duke is looking out towards his left. His hair is short, with the slight curl evident from Pontormo’s early sketch. A short beard grazes the Duke’s face, customary for his portraiture. He is wearing a simple all’antica style cuirass and armor. Decorations on the cuirass include two Medusa heads attached to the horns of a ram. Lion heads with rings emerging from their mouths hang down from the straps; these decorations are all executed in a style similar to designs found on classical armor.\(^{229}\) The lions’ heads supporting diamond rings were part of the Medici impresa.\(^{230}\) The pointed hairline is similar to the official portrait done by Bronzino. One significant aspect about the Bandinelli and Cellini busts of the Duke is that both have an all’antica style resembling Roman Imperial busts.\(^{231}\) Bronzino’s official paintings of the Duke depicted him in contemporary uniform of his day, yet the clothing for both busts is based upon ancient toga-type models with a cuirass.

\(^{227}\) Poeschke, *Michelangelo and His World*, 175.
\(^{228}\) Forster, “Metaphors of Rule,” 76-77.
\(^{229}\) Poeschke, *Michelangelo and His World*, 176.
\(^{230}\) Forster, “Metaphors of Rule,” 78.
\(^{231}\) Ibid., 77.
A bozzetto may exist for this sculptural bust by Bandinelli (Figure 15). The small terracotta statue can be dated to around 1544, but is a full-length statue. Therefore, it is undetermined if this bozzetto was created for a bust of Cosimo or a full length sculpture. Cosimo is depicted with his weight resting on his right leg and his left leg drawn slightly back. His left arm is bent with his wrist resting on his hip. Cosimo gazes off to his left and wears a military outfit, very similar to that found in the bust of Cosimo. The facial features are much more idealized in the statuette than in the bust, but still not to the extent of Cellini’s bust. Despite the similarities between the statuette and the bust, there is also the possibility that this was a bozzetto for the Udienza sculptures also made for Cosimo around this period. It is possible that the Udienza statue fragment was turned into the bust, but there is not enough information to assert this fact.

As John Pope-Hennessy describes, Bandinelli was not a portraitist interested in making an exact likeness of the sitter; instead, Bandinelli idealized the features in his portraiture making only a general likeness. Overall, this piece is very idealized, with only a minimum of decoration. Aside from the few Medici emblems on the cuirass, it is difficult to assert that this is Cosimo I de’ Medici. The sculptures that Bandinelli created for the Udienza dealt more with a historical likeness than with individualized living beings. An example to illustrate this fact is of the completed sculpture of Giovanni delle Bande Nere for the Udienza. Giovanni’s facial features and body are very idealized and are meant more to express the idea of his power and achievement rather than his actual individualized characteristics. It has been suggested that the portrait of Cosimo

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232 Kurz, “A Model for Bandinelli’s Statue of Cosimo I,” 280.
234 Ibid., 299.
was so criticized because of its lack of verism that Bandinelli eventually cut it off of its podium in the niche.\textsuperscript{235} In the discussion of Cellini it will become evident that Cosimo also did not enjoy highly veristic portraits.

Another source of animosity between Bandinelli and Cellini may have been their competing sculptures outside of the Palazzo Vecchio. The \textit{Hercules and Cacus} was finished by Bandinelli in 1534; however, the project was initiated in 1508 (Figure 16). Pope Clement VII, a Medici, was the patron of the work, but Michelangelo had tried to convince the Pope to select a different sculptor because Bandinelli had been boasting that his \textit{Hercules and Cacus} would surpass Michelangelo’s \textit{David}.\textsuperscript{236} When the Medici were expelled from Florence in 1527, work on the sculpture stopped with Bandinelli taking leave from the city as well. When the Medici and Bandinelli returned in 1530, work was to resume on the project. Once again Michelangelo tried to relieve Bandinelli from this project and began making his own designs.\textsuperscript{237} However, upon the Medici’s return they asked Michelangelo to finish the Medici Chapel leaving Bandinelli to complete the work.\textsuperscript{238} As it turns out, Michelangelo was not alone in his criticisms of the \textit{Hercules and Cacus}. When the sculptural group was revealed to the public it met with many criticisms; some of the people responsible for the criticisms were put in jail by Alessandro.\textsuperscript{239} \textit{Hercules and Cacus} stood near both Michelangelo’s \textit{David} and Cellini’s \textit{Perseus} and Cellini and Bandinelli seemed to be in a constant feud about which one was the better sculptor.

\textsuperscript{235} Ibid., 297.
\textsuperscript{236} Ibid., 472.
\textsuperscript{237} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{238} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{239} Ibid.
Benvenuto Cellini

Benvenuto Cellini was an interesting artist in the court of Cosimo I de’ Medici. His life was filled with sex, rivalry, and constant competition. Born in Florence in 1500 to an engineer and musician, Cellini had a variety of artistic training. His father worked in the courts of Lorenzo and Piero de’ Medici as a musician and was one of the people trusted to help decide the final location of Michelangelo’s *David.* Cellini was therefore given exposure to the Medici court very early on in his life. According to Cellini’s autobiography, his father did not want him to become an artist, but after constant pressure from Cellini, his father finally conceded to the request and allowed Cellini artistic training.

Benvenuto’s training came primarily from goldsmiths. His initial training was with Michelangelo di Viviano da Gaiuole, Bandinelli’s father, at age thirteen, but he fails to record that in his autobiography, possibly due to his ongoing feud with Bandinelli. Cellini’s *Life* starts his artistic training with the goldsmith, Antonio di Sandro, also known as Marcone. Cellini began working with metals at the age of fifteen. His next two teachers were Uliviere della Chiostro, followed by Francesco Salimbene, both goldsmiths. When Cellini was nineteen, he traveled to Rome and there worked for four different goldsmiths: Giovanni de’ Giorgio, Giovanni da Caravaggio, Giannotto Giannotti, and Paolo Arsago. In a short time, Cellini was exposed to many different masters of the craft and their specific styles. However, Cellini never trained under a

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243 Ibid., 24 and 27.
244 Ibid., 28 and 31.
master of the field of sculpture, to which art he owes his fame.

The first chance that Benvenuto was given to create a large scale product was offered to him by King Francis I of France, with whom he was already employed as a miniaturist. This commission required Cellini to make twelve large silver candlesticks, each with a life-sized figure of a god or goddess on the base. Unfortunately, only Jupiter was completed when Cellini returned to Florence. Although unsuccessful with his first large scale project, his work for Francis I granted him international recognition which helped him gain commissions throughout his career.

Cellini worked for other members of the Medici before Cosimo I. Pope Clement VII employed Cellini to melt down papal jewels and objects with his insignia to prevent the imperial troops from taking them during their occupation in Rome of 1527. Unknown to Clement VII, Cellini was stealing some of the goods himself. He was imprisoned for this once he was discovered; however, it must have only been a minor offense since Clement VII elected Cellini head of the papal mint in 1529, only two years after his infraction. Cellini also received some patronage from Alessandro de’ Medici for minting coins. It is evident from the work for Clement VII and Alessandro that he was a highly skilled goldsmith, yet he had not made any large scale works for the Medici, only coins and smaller jewelry items.

In Florence, Cellini was not approached by Cosimo to produce works, despite his

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245 Ibid., 123-124.
246 Ibid.
247 Poeschke, Michelangelo and His World, 207.
248 Gallucci, Benvenuto Cellini, 8.
249 Poeschke, Michelangelo and His World, 207.
250 Ibid.
251 Ibid.
prior relationship with the Medici. Instead, Cellini ventured to Poggio a Caiano to the Duke’s villa to meet with him and request work.²⁵² According to Cellini’s Life, Cosimo and Eleonora were ecstatic that Cellini had returned to Florence to help support his nieces, and quickly put him to work.²⁵³ The Perseus and Medusa (1545-54), intended for the Piazza della Signoria, was the first sculpture commissioned by Cosimo from Cellini; this was a major piece, especially considering Cellini was primarily a miniaturist before this time (Figure 17).²⁵⁴ Cosimo’s bestowal of this commission upon Cellini marks the beginning of the feud between Baccio Bandinelli and Cellini. Bandinelli had originally been considered for the sculpture, but Cosimo ultimately decided upon the newcomer Cellini due to the recent criticisms of Bandinelli’s work.²⁵⁵

Baccio Bandinelli consistently created trouble for Cellini. For instance, bitter that Cellini had received the Perseus commission instead of him, Bandinelli bribed the assistants of sculptors in Florence to refuse to work for Cellini.²⁵⁶ These two artists had a huge rivalry and always tried to discredit each other’s work. With reference to Cellini’s Perseus, Bandinelli told the Duke that Cellini lacked disegno, and was not suited to create his own works, but his efforts would be best utilized fixing reliefs and ancient works.²⁵⁷ Bandinelli was the provveditore of the Cathedral works and was in charge of disbursing marble materials to Florentine artists.²⁵⁸ This meant that Bandinelli could stop

²⁵² Parker, Cellini: Artist, Genius, Fugitive, 163.
²⁵⁴ Parker, Cellini: Artist, Genius, Fugitive, 124.
²⁵⁵ Ibid., 166.
²⁵⁶ Ibid., 171-172.
²⁵⁸ Ibid., 100.
Cellini from getting materials.\textsuperscript{259} Bandinelli’s control of materials to impede his rival’s progress is seen in the incident of Cellini’s \textit{Apollo and Hyacinth} (Figure 18).\textsuperscript{260} Cosimo had forced Bandinelli to give over a block of marble for Cellini’s \textit{Apollo}, and Bandinelli had picked a deliberately disturbed rock to make sculpting it more difficult for Cellini.\textsuperscript{261} Cellini describes the marble as having two large holes that for years “had been exposed to rain, and with the holes always full of water the rain had penetrated so deeply that the block was decayed.”\textsuperscript{262} The resulting work is strangely contorted as a result of Cellini’s efforts to work around Bandinelli’s damage to the block.

The \textit{Portrait Bust of Cosimo I} was cast in 1547 right after Cellini had fled the preceding year to Venice because of an accusation of sodomy, and returned to Florence (Figure 19).\textsuperscript{263} Cellini’s bust was initiated in October 1546 and was an opportunity for the artist to practice casting a major sculpture by trying different types of clay to see which would work best for the large-scale \textit{Perseus} project.\textsuperscript{264} Cellini wanted to see which clay would be easiest to mold and hold his designs. The casting of the bust itself was completed by Zanobi di Pagno, a bell maker, which further proved the point of critics that Cellini was unable to do works on this large a scale by himself.\textsuperscript{265}

Cosimo modeled for his portrait bust, which in format resembles those of the great Roman Emperors.\textsuperscript{266} Cosimo is depicted in a half-length bust wearing Roman imperial costume. A cuirass covers his chest, while a paludamentum-type cloak covers

\begin{footnotes}
\item[259] Ibid.
\item[260] Ibid.
\item[261] Ibid.
\item[262] Cellini, \textit{The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini}, 343.
\item[263] Poeschke, \textit{Michelangelo and His World}, 208.
\item[264] Parker, \textit{Cellini: Artist, Genius, Fugitive}, 176 and Poeschke, 212.
\item[265] Poeschke, \textit{Michelangelo and His World}, 212.
\item[266] Parker, \textit{Cellini: Artist, Genius, Fugitive}, 176.
\end{footnotes}
his right arm starting at the elbow, and drapes over his left shoulder. Cellini’s bust has similar features to Bandinelli’s bust on the cuirass; to begin, both have a Medusa head in the center and the lion heads with the diamond rings in their open mouths on the straps that keep the cuirass on Cosimo. Cellini develops a much more elaborate costume than Bandinelli, and the details create a much more stunning display with more dimension. The cuirass worn by Cosimo was originally gilded and his eyes had an inlay of silver or enamel.\textsuperscript{267} Another one of the major differences between the marble bust of the Duke by Bandinelli and the bronze by Cellini is the degree of likeness which prevails in the bronze.\textsuperscript{268} Bandinelli’s Cosimo seems to stare off into space without much real emotion on his face. The features seem idealized with a lack of personality. Cellini’s, on the other hand, shows Cosimo with a furrowed brow, in a state of concentration, as if he is preparing for battle. Straining his neck muscles, Cosimo looks to his right, scanning the horizon. The portrait has a degree of intensity, even ferocity, that makes it seem like Cosimo is about to burst at the seams.

Cellini’s bust portrayed Cosimo as a warrior ruler, whereas Cosimo preferred to be depicted as the protector of peace.\textsuperscript{269} Cosimo’s reign was about solidifying the government under his rule and he wanted Florence to remain a city of peace under his command, not one of constant warfare. His dislike of Cellini’s portrait was evident from his delay of paying for the sculpture and the fact that he did not even keep it in Florence; it was sent off to Elba.\textsuperscript{270} After Cosimo sent the bust away, Cellini began working on a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{267}Pope-Hennessy, \textit{Italian High Renaissance & Baroque Sculpture}, 478.
\item \textsuperscript{268}Forster, “Metaphors of Rule,” 79.
\item \textsuperscript{269}Parker, \textit{Cellini: Artist, Genius, Fugitive}, 176.
\item \textsuperscript{270}Cellini received 300 \textit{scudi} at presentation, 300 \textit{scudi} a decade later, and then the final 150 \textit{scudi} shortly before his death. Parker, \textit{Cellini: Artist, Genius, Fugitive}, 177.
\end{itemize}
marble copy with slightly less life-like features, but it was never finished.\textsuperscript{271} For this copy, Cellini used a similar design for the cuirass, because the \textit{all’antica} style was one preferred by Cosimo during this period of the mid-sixteenth century, but he made many adjustments to the facial features of the Duke.\textsuperscript{272} The beard, hair and eyes became more idealized, and less stress is seen on his face and neck.

What is intriguing about the relationship between Cosimo and Cellini is that Cellini was convicted of sodomy even before and during his work for Cosimo, and Cosimo was a firm ruler on legislation and punishment.\textsuperscript{273} Cosimo made a major reformation during his rule of the court system. Cosimo wanted to show his direct involvement as a ruler over the courts and instituted stricter legislation.\textsuperscript{274} One area that Cosimo reformed was the laws on sodomy; he enlarged the definition of the law and enforced more severe penalties.\textsuperscript{275} This change was implemented well after Cosimo knew of Cellini’s first infractions with this illegal behavior. Also, in Cosimo’s new legislation, a young man convicted of sodomy in a case of youthful experimentation was no longer exempt from punishment as was the case in the previous law.\textsuperscript{276} This meant that if Cellini had “experimented” during Cosimo’s reign as he had in his 1523 conviction, he would have faced criminal consequences and may not even have ever become an artist of the Medici court. In the years following Cellini’s conviction he tried to gain commissions from Cosimo, but was unsuccessful. Cellini created five works after

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\textsuperscript{271} Poeschke, \textit{Michelangelo and His World}, 212. \\
\textsuperscript{272} Poeschke, \textit{Michelangelo and His World}, 48. \\
\textsuperscript{273} Cellini’s first conviction was in 1523 and was attributed to youthful experimentation and he was not sentenced. This would have been prior to Cosimo offering Cellini commissions and a place in his court. Gallucci, \textit{Benvenuto Cellini}, 19. \\
\textsuperscript{274} Gallucci, \textit{Benvenuto Cellini}, 23. \\
\textsuperscript{275} Ibid., 25. \\
\textsuperscript{276} Ibid. \\
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Perseus and the portrait bust for Cosimo in the late 1540s, yet Cosimo only accepted one.\footnote{Cole, Cellini and the Principles of Sculpture, 83.}

Even though Cellini remained in Cosimo’s court until his death, after Cellini’s trial and conviction in his second sodomy case, fewer commissions were given to Cellini. The year 1557 marked Cellini’s arrest, and he was released after he made a formal appeal to Cosimo; his sentence was lessened from imprisonment to house arrest.\footnote{Gallucci, Benvenuto Cellini, 23.} Cellini’s appeal was not automatically accepted by the Duke, however close their relationship as patron and artist seemed to be, but instead the Duke granted the deferment to house arrest only after Girolamo de’ Rossi, the Bishop of Pavia, wrote the Duke a letter on behalf of Cellini.\footnote{Ibid., 27.}

The works that Cellini completed for Cosimo were sculptures made of bronze. This was the material Cellini had proved he was successful at using in his early career and one major reason Cosimo selected him for his court. Cellini’s Perseus was Cosimo’s sculptural addition to the Palazzo Signoria, and this bronze piece contrasted with the former Republican sculptures made of bronze and marble. Perseus is said to symbolize Cosimo, and I believe his representation in bronze was intended to establish his differences from the previous rulers presented in the Palazzo Signoria, while asserting his position as the Florentine ruler. Cosimo’s decision to use Cellini to make bronze sculptures lasted until Cellini’s death, and although Cellini loved working with marble and experimented with the material himself, there is no evidence that he ever was
Vincenzo Danti

Perugian born Vincenzo Danti (1530-1576) was trained as an artist by his father Giulio Piervincenzo Danti. Originally trained as a goldsmith, much of Danti’s work broke away from his initial training and was created in marble. His first major project for a bronze statue of Pope Julius III was originally given to Danti and his father in 1553, but only Vincenzo signed the work. Before Danti made his way to Florence, he spent some time in Rome studying the works of the masters, mainly Michelangelo, and developed a strong interest in anatomy.

In 1557, when he was around the age of twenty-seven, Danti went to Florence for work, just at the right time to get a commission from Cosimo I de’ Medici. Niccolò Tribolo had been responsible for the artistic program at the villa at Castello, but his death in 1550 had left an opening for a new artist. This seems to have been a common way for artists to begin working for the Duke. For example, when Giovanni Battista di Marco (il Tasso) died in 1555, Vasari received the commission for the Palazzo Vecchio, making him one of Cosimo’s leading artists. Danti had the help of Sforza Almeni, also from

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280 Cole, Cellini and the Principles of Sculpture, 83.
281 Although his date of birth is debated by scholars, a date of general consensus is April 1530. Poeschke, Michelangelo and His World, 229.
282 Pope-Hennessy, Italian High Renaissance & Baroque Sculpture, 484.
283 Poeschke, Michelangelo and His World, 229.
285 Ibid., 65.
Perugia, who as Cosimo’s advisor and the superintendent of his finances, more than likely encouraged the Duke to commission Danti. Danti’s acceptance was not just based on his previous artistic successes. Once again, as demonstrated in the case of Vasari, Almeni played a role in his selection as an artist of the court as well. The first commission from Cosimo was neither a portrait nor ultimately a successful piece. A *Hercules and Antaeus* was designed by Danti and casts were attempted three separate times. After multiple mis-castings, the commission was finally turned over to Bartolommeo Ammannati. This was a major defeat for Danti, who did not give the Duke a strong impression at the start.

Fortunately for Danti, he made a few important connections in Florence besides his fellow Perugian Sforzo Almeni. Initially, when he came to Florence, Danti may have worked with Bandinelli on a few projects and learned how to carve in marble. Bandinelli’s importance in the court of the Medici was probably not unnoticed by the newcomer, and this was a crucial relationship for Danti who, as he increased his skill in marble, simultaneously appears to have gained favor with the Duke. Vincenzo Danti did not have much contact with Duke Cosimo when he was given his initial commission for a ducal portrait. Vasari had assured Danti that the Duke approved the commission, so the model and designs were made prior to any financial arrangement. Since this was not a free standing portrait commission and was to go into the façade designed by Vasari,

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288 Ibid., 65-66.
289 Ibid., 66.
290 Ibid.
Vasari most likely had strong input on the artists that would act as his assistants. Danti had worked with Vasari previously on a few smaller projects in the redecoration of the Palazzo Vecchio and it is due to Vasari’s strong influence over the Duke that Danti received this commission. Danti secured his position amongst the court artists of Cosimo I because of his introduction to the Duke to the colored marbles that became an element of late Medici art. Despite Danti’s initial failure with his bronze casting, he was able to utilize marble to stay in the court of Cosimo.

Originally the Uffizi façade, designed by Giorgio Vasari, was intended to hold a seated statue of Cosimo I flanked by Danti’s statues of Equity and Rigor over the Medici coat of arms. For an unknown reason, this particular sculpture, depicting a full length seated Cosimo, was never put in its location, but instead was taken from the workshop to be reconstructed into a Perseus figure and then finally installed in the Boboli Gardens (Figure 20). Cosimo is seated on a monster-type figure designed by Giambologna to replace the original figure of Deceit. Renaissance depictions of Deceit usually portrayed a scaly monster figure with a female head and claw-like feet. Some of these elements can be seen in the Boboli Gardens sculpture with the lion clawed feet, but the beautiful female face typically given Deceit is replaced with that of an imaginary creature.

Once again Cosimo is shown in a warrior type costume that reflects knowledge of both the Bandinelli and Cellini portrait busts of the Duke. A cuirass is worn over a

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293 Summers, “Danti, Vincenzo,” 511.
294 Summers, The Sculpture of Vincenzo Danti, 171.
296 Crum, “Cosmos, the World of Cosimo,” 245n.
297 Ibid.
298 Hall, Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art, 100.
military toga. This is a full length sculpture, but the Duke seems very awkward in his position. Seated as if on a throne, the Duke rests upon the monster with both legs around his neck and his ankles, touching together underneath the monster’s head. Cosimo seems to be strangling the creature with his legs, yet he holds a bludgeoning weapon in the air with his right hand like he is swinging at the figure beneath him. The Duke has an expressionless face despite the impending action and lacks dynamism. *Cosimo I as Perseus* also lacks any clearcut *imprese* or physical features that distinguish this as Cosimo I. The gorgon heads that were seen on Cellini and Bandinelli’s cuirasses on their portrait busts are present, but that is the only decoration on Danti’s armor. Small rings attach the straps of the cuirass, but they are not the lion head with ring type, emblematic of the Medici family, that was present on the previous portrait busts of the Duke. Although this cannot be definitively determined, Cosimo may have seen this portrait and disagreed with its placement on the Uffizi since it did not individualize his features or incorporate some of the family *imprese* and did not glorify his right to rule.

Perseus was a mythological figure that Cosimo referenced more than once in his commissions, most notably, Cellini’s *Perseus and Medusa* sculpture in the Piazza della Signoria. In reference to Cellini’s sculpture, Cellini records in his *Vita* that Cosimo stated to him “that all he wanted as my [Cellini’s] first work for him was a Perseus; he had been wanting this for a long time.”299 This account demonstrates the importance that Perseus seemed to play for the Duke. In her recent Ph.D. dissertation, Christine Corretti

addresses the role of Perseus to the Duke and his artistic imagery. One particular assumption that Corretti believes drew the Duke to the Perseus figure was not just the mythological hero himself, but also the imagery of Perseus’ triumph over Medusa. Corretti suggests that Medusa’s head represented the Florentine enemies of the Duke that were against his new regime, and acted as a warning for citizens of Cosimo’s power. If Danti’s original sculpture intended for the Uffizi was designed to demonstrate Cosimo as Perseus as it contemporary appearance illustrates, the sculpture most certainly would have referenced the near-by Cellini sculpture and would have been immediately identifiable as Cosimo as the mythological hero. Since the details of the original sculpture before the alterations are unknown, speculations can only be made about the sculptures original intention of the Duke as Perseus. However, the imagery of the Duke dominating his enemies, even his civic enemies, would have been understood by the Florentine people. That being said, the replacements of the sculpture move towards a more individualized representation of the duke, including more of his imprese, which may explain Cosimo’s dismissal of Danti’s first sculpture of the Duke.

The image that replaced Cosimo I as Perseus on the Uffizi façade was another sculpture by Danti, Duke Cosimo de’ Medici as Augustus (1570-71) (Figure 21). This time, the seated statue was replaced by a free-standing version, yet the warrior persona was retained. Instead of a tall, metal viking-like helmet worn by Cosimo I as Perseus,

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300 Christine Corretti, “Cellini’s Perseus and Medusa: Configurations of the Body of State” (PhD diss., Case Western Reserve University, 2011).
301 Ibid., 21.
Danti’s new statue wears the lion head helmet that represents Hercules.\textsuperscript{302} Also in marble, the new version, like the original, has a similar idealizing approach that makes it very difficult to identify this figure as Cosimo. The newer statue was to take on the guise of Emperor Augustus, a ruler Cosimo particularly identified with and emulated.

Cosimo I de’ Medici was consistently trying to associate himself with the influential members of the Medici family. After his predecessor, Alessandro de’ Medici, was murdered, Cosimo I had to make his case that he was the rightful successor to the ducal position. Since this ducal position was granted by the Emperor, and Alessandro had not left an heir, the emperor stated that Alessandro’s nearest blood relative would assume this position.\textsuperscript{303} His familial ties were always stressed by Cosimo, since it was because of his bloodline that he was granted his ducal seat by the Senate and Emperor.\textsuperscript{304} In the paintings in the Palazzo Vecchio, Cosimo I’s emphasis on the genealogy is apparent, as numerous rooms are dedicated to his ancestors.

Besides identifying himself with his Medici lineage, Cosimo also attempted to carve out an identity as the new Augustus. Danti’s Duke Cosimo de’ Medici as Augustus, designed around 1570, utilizes Augustan imprese to facilitate this connection. This portrait was used as a status symbol for Cosimo and depicted him as an imperial leader.\textsuperscript{305} The similarities between Augustus’ and Cosimo I’s situation in becoming a ruler explain why Cosimo I wanted to be represented as Augustus. The inclination to

\textsuperscript{302} Roger J. Crum emphasizes the Herculean imagery of Danti’s piece, making reference both to the lion helmet illustrating Hercules’ defeat of the Nemean Lion and Hercules’ use of double columns as markers of the western world, represented by the façade’s two columns placed near the Cosimo sculpture. Crum, “Cosmos, the World of Cosimo,” 245.

\textsuperscript{303} Karla Langedijk, The Portraits of the Medici 15th-18th Centuries (Studio Per Edizioni Scelte, 1981), 79.

\textsuperscript{304} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{305} Veen, Cosimo I de’ Medici and his Self-Representation, 138.
compare the two rulers already existed because of the dual assassination of both of their relatives.\textsuperscript{306} For instance, Augustus was not the son of his predecessor Caesar. Augustus, or Octavian, the name before he was Emperor, was the grand-nephew of Caesar, and only in Caesar’s will after his murder was Augustus adopted into Caesar’s family, making him the heir. Cosimo I’s situation was strikingly similar. The previous ruler, Alessandro, was murdered, and since he did not have an heir, Cosimo I was the next closest relative. Cosimo may not have been the most legitimate ruler like Augustus, but they both had strong familial connections.

Throughout Augustus’ life he had numerous portraits made that represented him as Caesar’s heir. This was to solidify his authority and strengthen his rule. Cosimo even adopted the image of the Capricorn, the sign under which both he and Augustus were born, in many of his works.\textsuperscript{307} This relationship would symbolize a particular type of rule for Cosimo—one of peace and prosperity, as the initiator of a new golden age. Augustus was said to have brought a golden age to Rome, the Pax Romana, by stabilizing the empire and expanding their territories, and Cosimo wanted to promote this particular aspect about himself. Cosimo had ultimately strengthened Florence and expanded the Florentine territories through his rule as Duke and expanded the Florentine territories. Florence during the period of Cosimo was relatively stable, an element missing from the lives of its citizens during the previous half-century.

\textit{Cosimo as Augustus} is a full length marble sculpture depicting Cosimo in Roman imperial military clothes. A cuirass lays over a short military skirt, but muscle definition

\textsuperscript{306} Forster, “Metaphors of Rule,” 85.

\textsuperscript{307} Ibid.
is readily apparent under the armor. Cosimo is shown holding a baton in his right hand, resting the bottom on the top of his right thigh. His left hand is down by his side grasping the top of his shield. The front of the shield is only viewable from the side or back, which is surprising since this statue was to be set against the façade of the Uffizi. A ram, the astrological symbol of the Capricorn, is visible on the front of the shield. As mentioned previously, this sign was shared between Augustus and Cosimo. He is shown in the contrapposto pose, with the weight pressing down on his left leg. Instead of the usual type of helmet seen in military depictions, Cosimo wears a lion’s head, referencing Hercules. A medusa-gorgon type head details the top of the cuirass; however, the lions with the diamond ring *impresa*, seen on both Bandinelli and Cellini’s portraits, is missing. Cosimo’s facial features are very idealized, and his curly hair pops out from underneath the lion helmet. His expression is a look of concern due to his somewhat furrowed brow. What is most interesting about this particular sculpture is that Cosimo I lacks a beard. From the year of his election onward, Cosimo had been shown with at least a short beard. This must once again be a reference to Augustus, who was never depicted with a beard, but instead was always shown youthful, even in his old age.

*Duke Cosimo I as Augustus* relates to a few other previous pieces produced in Florence during this time. For instance, this particular piece is very similar to the painting done by Vasari for the Sala di Leone X in the Palazzo Vecchio, *Cosimo I de’ Medici as Augustus* (1555-1562) (Figure 22). Vasari’s painting depicts a very individualized and recognizable Cosimo de’ Medici. The facial features, including the nose, eyes, eyebrows, and beard all share qualities similar to characteristics found in Bronzino’s portraiture and those done elsewhere by Vasari in the Palazzo Vecchio.
However, the costume and relative stance of Vasari’s figure seems to be reflected in Danti’s work. Both portrayals of Cosimo show him in the military cuirass with a Roman robe underneath. Neither of the cuirasses is particularly adorned besides the Medusa head near the top, and the abdominal muscles are clearly defined in each figure underneath the cuirass. Both depictions show Cosimo grasping a baton in his right hand and resting it against his right thigh. Instead of the shield that Danti places in Cosimo’s left hand, Vasari shows the Duke grasping the hilt of a sword. A shield is visible in Vasari’s painting, however, and it depicts the Capricorn symbol with the stars from the crown of Ariadne as seen in Danti’s. A cloak billows behind Vasari’s figure, yet falls gently behind the back of Danti’s. Although there are a few differences between these two depictions of Cosimo as Augustus, there are many similarities, which lead one to believe Vasari’s painting may have been utilized as a source for Danti. Since Vasari was in charge of the project, he may have directed Danti to this particular portrait of the Duke for inspiration since Danti’s first attempt was dismissed.

There are also some similarities that I have observed between Danti’s Duke Cosimo de’ Medici as Augustus originally located on the Uffizi façade and Michelangelo’s David, whose position was in the connecting Piazza della Signoria (Figures 23-25). Danti, as mentioned previously, spent some time in Rome studying the work of Michelangelo, and his work on the Palazzo Vecchio would have granted him constant access to the David which was placed right outside the palace in the Piazza. Danti seems to have reversed the composition of the David in his Cosimo sculpture. Cosimo looks out towards his right, while David looks over his shoulder to his left. Michelangelo’s sculpture holds up a sling towards his chin in his left hand while the right
hand rests at the side holding another object. Cosimo in Danti’s portrayal also holds an object in his hand down by his side, the shield. The contrapposto pose is evident in both works, with the weight bearing leg being the right in Michelangelo’s sculpture and the left in Danti’s. Also, Cosimo’s idealized facial features definitely reference the *David*. Although not as psychologically penetrating as Michelangelo’s sculpture, Vincenzo Danti utilizes the penetrating eyes, furrowed brow, and pursed lips of the *David*. The furrowed brow leaves the audience questioning the action portrayed by the sculpture, whether or not it is a scene of concentration, worry, or victory. Idealized, heavily stylized curls peak out from under Cosimo’s helmet, similar to the abundance of curls that crown *David’s* head. Overall, Michelangelo’s slightly taller *David* (approximately 13 feet 5 inches tall) has more slender proportions than Danti’s (approximately 9 feet 2 inches), the composition remains relatively similar.

Since Michelangelo’s *David* was almost an anti-Medicean sculpture designed for the Republic, it is interesting that the Duke would want a piece that so closely resembles this sculpture. However, Duke Cosimo always sought to have Michelangelo work for him, and as that never came about, the Duke satisfied his desire with works that imitated the master. More pointedly, the *Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici as Augustus* sculpture was designed to defuse the Republican, anti-Medicean associations of Michelangelo’s *David* by having *David* address this image of Cosimo which falls in the line of sight of

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308 There has been numerous scholarship debating the object in David’s hand, however, for the purpose of the paper it is just important to note that he holds an object.

309 The sculptures heights are courtesy of the Museo Nazionale del Bargello and ArtStor.
Michelangelo’s sculpture. This piece is also interesting because *Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici as Augustus* is the only statue that Cosimo commissioned of himself for a public space. Since this was such a rarity for the Duke, it may explain the decision to relocate the initial sculpture and replace it with one celebrating the Duke’s familial lineage and his relationship with Augustus. About twenty years after *Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici as Augustus* was put up in the façade, it was replaced once again by Francesco I de’ Medici with a statue by Giambologna, who had worked on the alterations of *Cosimo I as Perseus*. Giambologna’s work will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Danti deliberately references the *David* in his Medici Uffizi sculpture. Since Michelangelo’s lasting *David* was such a powerful symbol of the Republican government, Cosimo and his artists needed to find a way to incorporate the sculpture into his own artistic program and lessen the Republican pride effect of the image. One way to do this was to place a statue of himself in the direct line of vision of the *David*, so the Republican statue seems to be looking towards Cosimo’s rule. This sculpture would then play a large role the overall political agenda of the Uffizi façade, and may explain why Cosimo’s son, Francesco I, decided to replace the sculpture later on with a more life-like image of the Duke for added political effect. Danti’s works were significant to the original meaning of the Uffizi, and the decision of Cosimo to select this sculptor is

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310 Marvin Trachtenberg discusses in brief the changes to the political meanings made by the Medici family by each addition to the Piazza della Signoria. However, Trachtenberg does not go into how each of these works changed the politics of the square or how Vasari’s Uffizi and its sculptures move the focus from the existing sculptures, such as the *David*, to the new Medici sponsored building. Marvin Trachtenberg, *Dominion of the Eye: Urbanism, Art, and Power in Early Modern Florence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 276. For more information on Cosimo and Vasari’s use of the Uffizi to redirect attention from the formally Republican sculpture to the public tribute of the Duke see Crum, “Cosmos, the World of Cosimo,” 238.

311 Crum, “Cosmos, the World of Cosimo,” 238.

312 Ibid.

313 This idea was presented to me by Dr. Gustav Medicus.
surprising due to his lack of previous noteworthy success in the Medici court.

Giambologna

Giambologna differs from the other artists employed by the Medici because he was not Italian born. In 1529, Giambologna, born Jean Boulogne, lived in the Picardy area of what is currently Northern France, but at the time was a province of Flanders.\(^{314}\) His initial artistic training was under the engineer and sculptor, Jacque Dubroeucq, who in 1542 trained him in the French and Flemish style.\(^{315}\) Dubroeucq had spent some time studying in Rome and introduced Giambologna to the Italian style.\(^{316}\) Giambologna visited Rome himself early on in his career and was greatly influenced by Michelangelo and the ancient Greco-Roman style.\(^{317}\)

Giambologna was planning on returning to his hometown after his excursion to Rome, but stopped in Florence to study the work of the Florentine masters, namely Michelangelo. Bernardo Vecchietti offered Giambologna a sponsorship, including finances, to convince the young sculptor to stay in Florence, and was ultimately responsible for introducing Giambologna to Francesco de’ Medici.\(^{318}\) Francesco was not yet the Duke himself, but the heir-apparent, and had Giambologna employed by the Medici court, giving him a monthly salary by 1561.\(^{319}\) One of the first works that Giambologna was offered by the Medici was actually the opportunity to participate in the

\(^{315}\) Ibid.
\(^{318}\) Avery and Hall, *Giambologna: An Exhibition of Sculpture*, xi.
\(^{319}\) Ibid.
competition for the *Neptune* fountain to be in the Piazza outside the Palazzo Vecchio.\(^{320}\)

Although Giambologna did not win the commission, his model of *Neptune* captured the attention of Francesco who offered him the commission of the marble sculptural group, *Samson and a Philistine*.\(^{321}\)

Prior to his major posthumous equestrian memorial portrait of Cosimo commissioned by Francesco, Giambologna was given the task of making a replacement statue of Cosimo for the Uffizi façade. Francesco was displeased with Vincenzo Danti’s *Duke Cosimo de’ Medici as Augustus* that was currently situated on the façade due to its lack of likeness of the Duke (Figure 26).\(^ {322}\) In the 1580s, around twenty years after the original portrait, Giambologna made a similar version at the request of the new Duke.\(^ {323}\) Giambologna’s newer version is much less idealized than Danti’s original. Giambologna’s figure is wearing more contemporary dress and does not have the same classical features as Danti’s. The cuirass, lion’s head helmet, sword and shield have all been removed. Giambologna’s Cosimo stands with the weight on his right foot and is staring down upon the piazza while pointing down to the viewer with his right hand. A regal cloak still wraps around his upper body, but his body is not perfectly muscular like the original. Cosimo’s facial features can be distinguished as well. Here he wears the beard that he was depicted with in almost all of his portraiture from the beginning of his rule. The viewer can discern through the facial features that this is Cosimo I de’ Medici, which is what Francesco preferred over an allegorical depiction of his father.

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\(^{320}\) Ibid.

\(^{321}\) Ibid.


\(^{323}\) Ibid.
Commissioned in 1574, prior to the Uffizi façade statue, Duke Francesco I employed Giambologna to undertake a memorial equestrian portrait of the previous Duke Cosimo almost immediately upon his accession to the dukedom in 1574.\textsuperscript{324} The *Equestrian Portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici* is especially significant because it is the first permanent sculpted equestrian portrait ever to be placed in Florence (Figure 27).\textsuperscript{325} Even though commissioned by his son, this statue further emphasizes the power that Cosimo had obtained during his rule as Duke of Florence and Tuscany. A former Republican city now allows the glorification of an individual as its ruler, promoting the Medici as official dynastic rulers of the city. This further asserts Cosimo’s intended relationship with the Roman Emperors who often had equestrian portraits commissioned to celebrate their power and conquests. Not only did Francesco I de’ Medici have this equestrian statue erected for his father, he also enlisted Giambologna to make one for himself that would decorate the Piazza dell’ Annunziata showing how far the family had come since Giovanni de’ Bicci’s and Cosimo’s role in the government in the 1400s.\textsuperscript{326}

The *Equestrian Portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici* was not completed until 1594, even though Giambologna had previous experience making equestrian statues. For the wedding of Francesco to his wife Joanna of Austria, Giambologna made a few horses out of ephemeral materials as decoration.\textsuperscript{327} Francesco also had Giambologna make a wax model of a horse in 1562, which is near the time when Giambologna first entered into the court of the Medici.\textsuperscript{328} The equestrian portrait takes its design from classical models such

\textsuperscript{324} Avery, *Giambologna: The Complete Sculpture*, 33.
\textsuperscript{326} Ibid., 1224-1225.
\textsuperscript{327} Avery, *Giambologna: The Complete Sculpture*, 158.
\textsuperscript{328} Ibid.
as the *Equestrian Portrait of Marcus Aurelius* (161-180 CE), instead of Renaissance examples, which is surprising since Francesco rejected the classical style sculpture by Danti of Cosimo on the Uffizi façade.\(^{329}\) There are very distinct similarities between Giambologna’s and the Roman equestrian portrait of Marcus Aurelius. In both bronze sculptures, the horse’s right leg is raised in the air as if it is taking a step forward. Giambologna’s horse seems to be facing more towards the ground than the horse of Marcus Aurelius, who is looking forward. Another difference is in the position of the sitter. Marcus Aurelius has his right hand raised in the air addressing the people, while Cosimo keeps both hands on the reins. Once again in the portrait by Giambologna, Cosimo is shown in contemporary dress, breaking away from the classical tradition followed by the sculpted portraits that he commissioned.

\(^{329}\) Ibid., 33.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Cosimo’s portraiture seems to be divided not only by painting and sculpture, but also by the meaning that each type of material was used to convey his political agenda. The paintings completed primarily by Bronzino and Vasari detailed and defined Cosimo’s Medici lineage. They utilized Medici *imprese*, such as the laurel leaf, to let the viewer know that he had a legitimate right to become the duke based on his heritage, even if he was not directly related to his predecessor Alessandro. These private and public paintings of the Duke illustrated a similar likeness and it was evident that Cosimo wanted to be realistically displayed in these images.

The paintings were utilized in Bronzino’s case as a form of official portraiture. These painted portraits were duplicated numerous times in each instance and would have been seen by many, therefore, allowing those who saw the portraits to be able to recognize the Duke. Bronzino and Vasari were most likely selected for his portraiture since they had the artistic capabilities of producing exactly what the Duke wanted. Prior to Cosimo’s commission for portraits, Bronzino had completed other works for the Medici and portraits of other individuals. Bronzino was able to make a likeness of the Duke in a way that could be easily read by the viewer and then duplicated. Also, Bronzino’s master, Pontormo had worked previously for the Medici. By using artists previously employed by Alessandro early on in his career, Cosimo was also able to establish a form of continuity between himself and his predecessor.
Another reason that Bronzino may have been commissioned again to make more portraits for the Duke lies beyond just Cosimo’s approval of *Cosimo in Armor*. By utilizing the same artist for all of his official portraiture, Cosimo established a sort of “brand” for himself. The later portraits would have allowed easy recognition of Cosimo based on the continuity with Bronzino’s first painting of Cosimo. Still, the Duke’s political role changed and comparison of later images with the earlier ones reflects the artist’s adaptation of Cosimo’s portraits to these new circumstances.

Vasari played a different role for Cosimo than Bronzino. For example, Vasari did not create portraits that would have been passed around the empire or given as gifts to dignitaries. Vasari’s portraits of the Duke were a part of the overall political program of the transformation of the Palazzo Vecchio from the Republican seat of government into the ducal palace. Throughout the Renaissance, rulers and aristocrats displayed themselves in a variety of different aspects. In the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, chapels were a dominant location for portraiture. A patron would commission a chapel and in return their picture would be illustrated as a donor, usually in a scene with the Madonna, Christ, or a saint. Slowly into the sixteenth century, private palaces became the preferred venue for portraiture by patrons. This is evidenced by the many portraits that depict Cosimo in the newly decorated Palazzo Vecchio designed by Vasari. Cosimo’s decision to utilize Vasari for this extensive project most likely stems from Vasari’s personality and training. From an early age, Vasari was groomed to be in the Duke’s court, and his extensive knowledge of the art of Italy, evident from his *Lives*, made him well aware of many artworks and approaches to cycles utilized by the courts,

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including those commissioned by the Medici. Vasari would have had a good handle on the Medici *imprese* and lineage that was so important to Cosimo’s artistic program.

Beyond the fact that he had previous knowledge of art made for the Medici, Vasari was also a major component of the Medici literary and artistic court under Cosimo and served as an artistic advisor in many cases. Cosimo trusted Vasari’s opinion, and Vasari always made sure to appeal to every whim of the Duke as much as possible, including the introduction dedicating the *Lives* to him. Vasari had a very outgoing and eager to please personality that I believe drew Cosimo to him. Since Vasari was well read and educated, he worked well with the Duke, who was so concerned with bringing the literary and artistic circles under his command, and sponsoring the arts such as Lorenzo the Magnificent had a century earlier. Cosimo strove to be a patron of the arts, and Vasari provided him with connections to the popular artists and input needed to fulfill his artistic agenda. Also, since Vasari was so aware of the work of the Renaissance, he knew the types of images, such as victory scenes, that would best amplify the Duke’s ambitions. Vasari also had relationships with the writers of the times like Paolo Giovio, who helped write the histories of the Duke and decided upon his imagery.

A similarity between Bronzino and Vasari lies in their previous relationship to the Medici court. Like Bronzino’s Medici experience under his master Pontormo, Vasari was also employed by Alessandro during his rule. This leads one to question why Cosimo did not utilize Vasari very early on in his career to make his official portraits. The reason behind Cosimo’s selection of Bronzino instead of Vasari probably lies with Vasari’s activities during the early reign of Duke Cosimo, working on the project of the
Lives. The first edition of the Lives was not published until 1550, which means prior to that point Vasari would have been busy doing research and compiling the biographies of the various Renaissance artists. Although sponsored by the Medici for the Lives, Vasari does not make many artworks for the Medici during this period of his writing and seems to be traveling to other Italian cities, like Arezzo and Rome where he makes frescoes. It was right after the first publication that Cosimo switched from Bronzino to Vasari, probably because Vasari was now available and back in Florence to complete his larger project of redesigning the Palazzo Vecchio.

Another distinct parallel between these two painters is that both had a similar Mannerist style. Both Bronzino and Vasari were, in essence, Mannerist painters and adopted the awkward turning and proportions of the figures, and filled picture planes. However, both artists seem to follow a more traditional, classical style in the portraits of Cosimo. Cosimo wanted his portraits to be very deliberate with their political meaning and the Mannerist style could have confused the viewer with the true intentions of the work. Bronzino and Vasari thus had ample skill in creating a clear-cut portrait that would emphasize Cosimo’s power, family lineage, and his authority which may have separated them from the rest of the artists in Florence at that time, giving Cosimo a reason for their selection.

One would imagine that the High Renaissance style popular during the period of the Florentine Republican government from 1494-1512 would have been entirely

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331 Vasari dedicates both editions of the Lives to Cosimo I de’ Medici and recognizes his support of the project. His leave from Florence seems to be spent on gathering information while also working for a few other artistic patrons before returning back to Florence for the major projects of his later career. Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, trans. Mrs. Jonathan Foster, ed. Jean Paul Richter (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1850), 1:1-5.
dismissed by Cosimo. Since Cosimo tried in almost every way to dismantle all aspects of Republican life, including transforming their seat of government, the Palazzo Vecchio, into his own ducal palace, it would seem logical that Cosimo would want to embrace the new Mannerist style that broke away from the High Renaissance. However, clarity, specifically in his public portraiture, was important in illustrating Cosimo’s political agenda, and the High Renaissance style better suited that ambition.\textsuperscript{332} Also, much like the transformation of the Palazzo Vecchio, he referenced Florence’s past by keeping the building, but changed it to suit his own needs.\textsuperscript{333} Cosimo’s portraiture references those of his predecessors by the style showing his respect for tradition, but also clearly enforces his political right to rule. Vasari and Bronzino were able to adapt to the need for a readable portrait that emphasized Cosimo’s lineage and authority.

Differing from Cosimo’s choice of painters is his selection of sculptors. Painted portraits were more popular than sculptural busts in the sixteenth century, due to their cheap cost and an artist could achieve a more soft and lifelike effect in painting.\textsuperscript{334} This may be why Cosimo selected an artist for his official painted portrait prior to picking an artist for a sculptural bust. It is my opinion that Cosimo chose to have both Cellini and Bandinelli make his sculpted portraits in order to incite competition. I think that Cosimo was not totally satisfied with either artists; Cellini’s issue with the law and the criticisms of Bandinelli’s work serving as troublesome issues for him. Cosimo really seemed to want a higher quality of work, and it is possible that he thought that pitting these two sculptors against each other would result in a better product. Cellini and Bandinelli both

\textsuperscript{332} Cosimo did embrace the Mannerist style in the Palazzo Vecchio allegorical cycles, but his portraiture remained relatively classical in nature and clear in meaning.

\textsuperscript{333} Tingali, “The Identity of the Prince,” 192.

\textsuperscript{334} Alazard, \textit{The Florentine Portrait}, 173.
trained under Bandinelli’s father, so their background was similar and their rivalry
stemmed from their earliest artistic experience. Bandinelli had been a fixture in earlier
Medici art, and much like Bronzino, was probably utilized because he provided
continuity between Cosimo and his predecessors.

The appearance of the portrait busts differ from the painted portraits. The
sculptural busts referenced Cosimo’s relationship to Roman Imperial rule and satisfied
Cosimo’s desire to be seen as a ruler with the type of power enjoyed by emperors like
Augustus. Referencing classical portraits, these images did not bear very close
resemblance to the Duke in the manner of painted ones, but instead presented a more
idealized image. Cosimo’s choices for sculptors then would have had to do with their
experience and understanding of ancient works.

Both Bandinelli and Cellini were also Mannerist artists like Bronzino and Vasari,
and once again that style of art is absent from Cosimo’s portraiture. The sculptures really
aspired to create a classical image of the Duke and both seemed relatively successful.
Although they were striving towards the same goal of an antique-type bust, Cellini made
his portrait with more detail and life-like qualities than Bandinelli’s simpler approach. Of
all the artists, Cellini seems to incorporate the Mannerist style more into his portraiture of
Cosimo with the bulging eyes and extremely detailed appearance, which may be why
Cosimo never again commissioned a portrait from the sculptor. Cellini’s Mannerist style
in metalwork had gained him international fame with his work for King Francis I of
France, and that fame may have attracted the artist to Cosimo. Despite his fame, Cellini
was still unable to receive as many Medici commissions at Bandinelli. Though not an
exceptional piece of work, Bandinelli’s bust illustrated Cosimo’s desired relationship to the Roman Emperors further illustrating why he seemed to stay in favor with the Duke. Danti’s appearance in the court seems very different from the others. He did not have much previous successful Medici experience when he made the portraits of the Duke. Danti worked with Vasari on a few of the decorations for the Palazzo Vecchio, but his first main sculpture for Cosimo, *Hercules and Cacus*, was ultimately a failure. His selection by Cosimo really depended upon his relationship to Vasari, and Vasari’s encouragement of the Duke to allow Danti to make his portrait. Vasari did not make sculpture, only paintings and architectural designs, so this aspect of Vasari’s design needed to be completed by another artist. In 1570 when Danti’s work was commissioned, Bandinelli was already deceased (d. 1560) and Cellini had fallen completely out of favor with the Duke. Therefore, Cosimo was required to select a new sculptural artist for the project, and went with Vasari’s choice, since Vasari had become one of the Duke’s trusted advisors.

Cosimo’s decision to give the commission to Danti then was not due to his fame or ability; it had more to do with Vasari’s opinion of Danti whom Vasari thought could fulfill the Duke’s artistic desires. Danti was by no means an expert in his field, as many of the other artists in the court seemed to be, yet Cosimo still entrusted him with the important sculpture to be placed on the Uffizi. This illustrates Cosimo’s dependence upon advisors in his selection of artists.

Giambologna also was brought into Duke Cosimo’s court by someone else. Francesco I, Cosimo’s son, was the main patron of Giambologna, and Giambologna’s...
portraits are unique because they were not commissioned by Cosimo himself. The two sculpted portraits by Giambologna, the Uffizi statue and the equestrian portrait, were commissioned by Francesco I in memory of his father. The decision of Francesco I to use Giambologna instead of a sculptor in his father’s court illustrates the difference between the two patrons. As mentioned earlier in the discussion of Giambologna’s Uffizi sculpture, it was made more to be more representational of Duke Cosimo than the one commissioned by Cosimo from Vincenzo Danti. Cosimo did not strive for life-like sculptures during his lifetime. He cared more about presenting himself in the same manner as Roman emperors to express his power. Francesco I wanted to celebrate his lineage to his father, and a lifelike statue more fulfilled that goal.

Overall, Cosimo’s decisions on his artists seem to change depending upon what material the portrait was to be made in. For painted portraits, Cosimo picked artists who had previous experience within the Medici court and who could clearly illustrate his family lineage and therefore his right to rule. Cosimo seemed to have had a much harder time deciding between his sculptors and never had a single sculptor at one time to which he gave all of his commissions. Bandinelli had previously done a lot of work for the Medici court, making him a top contender, but Cellini’s father had worked in the court as well. Bandinelli and Cellini also had similar training and skill, yet one never surpassed the other for Cosimo. These two sculptors, along with Danti, created portraits for the Duke that followed a more classical style and emphasized the adopted relationship between Cosimo and Augustus and the other Roman Emperors. These sculptural busts in the instances of Cellini and Bandinelli and the full-length sculptures by Danti did not seem to satisfy the Duke, yet Bandinelli and Danti received more than just one
commission for a portrait. There does not seem to be one definitive quality that prompted Duke Cosimo to employ all of these artists, but they are many similarities between them that seemed to appeal to the Duke for his portraits and inspired him to choose these artists.
**APPENDIX I**

**TWO BRANCHES OF THE MEDICI FAMILY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Giovanni di Bicci</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. 1360 d. 1429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COSIMO IL VECCHIO</strong></td>
<td>1434-1464</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. 1389 d. 1464</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PIERO IL GOTTOSO</strong></td>
<td>1464-1469</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. 1416 d. 1469</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LORENZO IL MAGNIFICO</strong></td>
<td>1459-1492</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. 1449 d. 1492</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PIERO</strong></td>
<td>1492-1494</td>
<td>Giovanni</td>
<td>1512-1513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. 1471 d. 1503</td>
<td>Pope Leo X</td>
<td>(1513-21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GIULIANO</strong></td>
<td>1512-1513</td>
<td>Duc de Nemours</td>
<td>1478 d. 1516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. 1475 d. 1521</td>
<td>Pope Clement VII</td>
<td>(1523-34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LORENZO</strong></td>
<td>1518-1519</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duke of Urbino</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. 1492 d. 1519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IPPOLITO</strong></td>
<td>1523-1527</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. 1511 d. 1535</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALESSANDRO</strong></td>
<td>1523-1527, 1531-1537</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. 1510(?) d. 1537</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GIULIO</strong></td>
<td>1519-1534</td>
<td>Giovanni il Popolano</td>
<td>b. 1467 d. 1498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giovanni delle Bande Nere</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. 1498 d. 1526</td>
<td>(m. Maria Salviati grand-daughter of il Magnifico)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COSIMO I</strong></td>
<td>1537-1574</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Duke of Tuscany</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. 1519 d. 1574</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The names of those who governed Florence are printed in capitals, and the dates limiting their periods of rule in italics.

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Fig. 1. Jacopo Pontormo, Cosimo I de’ Medici in Profile, c. 1537, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi (Photo: Strehlke, Pontormo, Bronzino, and the Medici: The Transformation of the Renaissance Portrait in Florence).
Fig. 2. Workshop of Jacopo Pontormo, Cosimo I de’ Medici, c. 1537, Florence, Galleria Palatina (Photo: Strehlke, Pontormo, Bronzino, and the Medici: The Transformation of the Renaissance Portrait in Florence).
Fig. 3. Baccio Bandinelli, *Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici*, c. 1540, Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello (Photo: Museo Nazionale del Bargello).
Fig. 4. Jacopo Pontormo, *Maria Salviati with a Little Girl (or Cosimo I de’ Medici)*, c. 1537 (or 1526-27), Baltimore, Maryland, The Walters Art Museum (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig.5. Ridolfo Ghirlandaio, *Twelve Year Old Cosimo de’ Medici*, c. 1531, Florence, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 6. Jacopo Pontormo, Portrait of a Halberdier (Francesco Guardi or Cosimo I de’ Medici), c. 1528-30, Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 7. Domenico di Polo de’ Vetri, detail, *Cosimo I de’ Medici* (obverse), c. 1537, Washington DC, National Gallery of Art (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 9. Agnolo Bronzino, *Portrait of Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici in Armor*, c. 1543, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 10. Giorgio Vasari, *Apotheosis of Duke Cosimo de’ Medici*, c. 1563-65, ceiling fresco in the Salone del Cinquecento, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 11. Giorgio Vasari, *Cosimo I de’ Medici Seated Among Architects and Engineers*, c. 1559, ceiling fresco in the Sala di Cosimo I, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 12. Giorgio Vasari, *Lorenzo il Magnifico Among His Scholars*, c. 1556-58, Florence, Sala di Lorenzo il Magnifico, Palazzo Vecchio (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 13. Baccio Bandinelli, *Giovanni delle Bande Nere*, c. 1554-60, Florence, Sala dei Cinquecento, Palazzo Vecchio (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 14. Baccio Bandinelli, *Bust of Cosimo I de’ Medici*, c. 1544, Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 15. Baccio Bandinelli, bozzetto for Cosimo I, c. 1544, London, The Wallace Collection (Photo: Kurz, “A Model for Bandinelli’s Statue of Cosimo I”).
Fig. 16. Baccio Bandinelli, *Hercules and Cacus*, c. 1527-34, Florence, Pizza della Signoria (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 17. Benvenuto Cellini, *Perseus and Medusa*, c. 1545-54, Florence, Loggia della Signoria (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 18. Benvenuto Cellini, *Apollo and Hyacinth*, 1548-57, Florence, Museo Nazionale Bargello (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 20. Vincenzo Danti, *Cosimo I as Perseus*, prior to 1570, Florence, Boboli Gardens (Photo: http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/tag/vincenzo-danti/).
Fig. 21. Vincenzo Danti, *Cosimo I de’ Medici as Emperor Augustus*, c. 1570-71, Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 22. Giorgio Vasari, *Cosimo I de’ Medici as Augustus*, c. 1555-62, fresco in the Sala di Leone X, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 23. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *David*, 1501-04, Florence, Galleria dell’ Accademia (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 24. Michelangelo Buonarroti, detail, *David*, 1501-04, Florence, Galleria dell’Accademia (Photo: ArtStor).

Fig. 25. Vincenzo Danti, detail, *Cosimo I de’ Medici as Emperor Augustus*, c. 1570-71, Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 26. Giambologna, *Cosimo I de’ Medici*, c. 1580s, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi (Photo: ArtStor).
Fig. 27. Giambologna, *Equestrian Portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici*, c. 1587-93, Florence, Piazza della Signoria (Photo: ArtStor).