Sandro Botticelli’s *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* and *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes* and the Experiences of Quattrocento Florence

A thesis presented to

the faculty of

the College of Fine Arts of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts

Julia Biagini

November 2011

© 2011 Julia Biagini. All Rights Reserved.
This thesis titled
Sandro Botticelli’s *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* and *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes* and the Experiences of Quattrocento Florence

by

JULIA BIAGINI

has been approved for
the School of Art
and the College of Fine Arts by

Marilyn Bradshaw
Associate Professor of Art History

Charles A. McWeeny
Dean, College of Fine Arts
ABSTRACT

BIAGINI, JULIA, M.A., November 2011, Art History

Sandro Botticelli’s *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* and *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes* and the Experiences of Quattrocento Florence

Director of Thesis: Marilyn Bradshaw

The Book of Judith of the Old Testament Apocrypha has inspired various interpretations since the Middle Ages, which resulted in a range of Judith imagery produced in Renaissance Italy. Among the artists creating works representing Judith during this time was Sandro Botticelli, who painted Judith six times throughout his nearly forty-year career. This thesis reconsiders Botticelli’s *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* and *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes*, two small panels in the Uffizi, Florence, by focusing on issues of function, date, and patronage. Like many Quattrocento images of Judith, the pair of paintings responded to the various interpretations of Judith and the Book of Judith. I propose that the panels also operated within a political context in which they commented upon and offered a point of reflection on the events of 1466 in Florence, when a group of Florentine patricians challenged Piero de’ Medici and his position in the Florentine government, and the aftermath of those events.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Marilyn Bradshaw

Associate Professor of Art History
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of people have provided me with assistance and support throughout my time as a graduate student at Ohio University. I am deeply grateful to my advisor, Dr. Marilyn Bradshaw, for guiding this project to its completion. Without her expertise in Florentine art and her dedication to her students, this thesis could not have been written. Her courses contributed to my knowledge of Italian art, and her insight compelled me to look in new directions and explore avenues I had not previously considered. I am also grateful to my committee members, Dr. Jody Lamb and Dr. Charles Buchanan, for taking the time to read a draft of this thesis and offer suggestions for its improvement. I must also thank Gary Ginther, Elizabeth Story, and Nancy Story at the Fine Arts Library for their assistance in locating and obtaining materials for this thesis.

Finally, I am thankful for the support my family has given me throughout this program. Their belief in me was inspiring. A heartfelt thank-you is extended to Taylor Bostock, whose constant encouragement and support guided me through the highs and lows of the past two years.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: Sandro Botticelli Studies</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: Sandro Botticelli’s Uffizi Panels of Judith and Holofernes</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: The Book of Judith</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalogue of Selected Images of Judith from Botticelli’s time</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Lorenzo Ghiberti and workshop, *Judith* (Fig. 36) ........................................ 74
2. Donatello, *Judith and Holofernes* (Fig. 7) .................................................. 76
3. Matteo di Giovanni, *Judith* (Fig. 43) ......................................................... 78
4. Giorgione, *Judith* (Fig. 45) ........................................................................ 81
5. Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (il Sodoma), *Judith* (Fig. 46) ................................ 84
6. Anonymous, after Andrea Mantegna, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (Fig. 47) ........................................................................................................... 85
7. Sandro Botticelli, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (Fig. 4) ............ 87
8. Andrea Mantegna, *Judith* (Fig. 49) .................................................................. 90
9. Sandro Botticelli, *The Tragedy of Lucretia* (Fig. 6) ................................ 92
10. Sandro Botticelli, *Calumny of Apelles* (Fig. 5) ................................. 94
11. Master of Marradi, *Story of Judith and Holofernes* (Fig. 37) .................. 100
12. Antonio Federighi, *Relief of Bethulia* (Fig. 38) .................................... 103
13. Follower of Andrea Mantegna, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (Fig. 53) 104
14. Sandro Botticelli and workshop, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (Fig. 3) and *Landscape with Roebucks and Monkeys* (Fig. 54) .......................... 106
15. Sandro Botticelli, *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* (Fig. 1) and *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes* (Fig. 2) .............................................................................. 109

Bibliography .................................................................................................................................................. 167
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli, <em>Return of Judith to Bethulia</em>, c. 1469-1472, tempera on wood panel, 31 x 25 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli, <em>The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes</em>, c. 1469-1472, tempera on wood panel, 31 x 25 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli (and Workshop), <em>Judith with the Head of Holofernes</em>, c. 1467-1472, tempera on wood panel, 29.2 x 21.6 cm, Cincinnati Art Museum</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli, <em>Judith with the Head of Holofernes</em>, c. 1497-1498, tempera on wood panel, 36.5 x 20 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli, <em>Calumny of Apelles</em>, c. 1494-1498, tempera on wood panel, 62 x 91 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli, <em>Tragedy of Lucretia</em>, c. 1498-1504, tempera (?) and oil on panel, 83.5 x 180 cm, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Donatello, <em>Judith and Holofernes</em>, 1455-1466, bronze with some gilding, height 236 cm, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Michelangelo Buonarroti, <em>David</em>, 1501-1504, marble, 409 cm, Accademia, Florence</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli, <em>Adoration of the Magi</em>, c. 1475, tempera on panel, 111 x 134 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli, <em>Birth of Venus</em>, c. 1484-1490, tempera on canvas, 184.5 x 285.5 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli, <em>Primavera</em>, c. 1480-1482, tempera on poplar, 203 x 314 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli, <em>Saint Augustine in his Cell</em>, c. 1490-1494, tempera on panel, 41 x 27 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli and Workshop, <em>The first episodes of the Tale of Nastagio deli Onesti</em>, 1482-1483, tempera on panel, 83 x 138 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli and Workshop, <em>Further episodes of the Tale of Nastagio degli Onesti</em>, 1482-1483, tempera on panel, 82 x 138 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli and Workshop, <em>Further episodes of the Tale of Nastagio degli Onesti</em>, 1482-1483, tempera on panel, 84 x 142 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Sandro Botticelli and Workshop, <em>Wedding Banquet of Nastagio degli Onesti</em>, 1482-1483, tempera on panel, 84 x 142 cm, private collection, Florence</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, <em>Judith Beheading Holofernes</em>, c. 1597-1598, oil on canvas, 145 x 195 cm, Galleria Nazionale d'arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 18. Titian, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1570, oil on canvas, 113.03 x 92.25 cm, Detroit Institute of Arts.

Figure 19. Sandro Botticelli, *Study of Two Male Figures*, metalpoint, heightened with white gouache, on ochre-brown prepared paper (verso), 26.4 x 20 cm, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, Florence.

Figure 20. Sandro Botticelli, *Minerva*, c. 1480-1490, pen and bistre over black chalk, heightened with white, on a pink ground, pricked and squared off for enlargement, 22.2 x 13.9 cm, Gabinetto degli Disegni e delle Stampe, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Figure 21. Sandro Botticelli, *Minerva and the Centaur*, c. 1480-1482, tempera and oil on canvas, 207 x 148 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Figure 22. *Cosimo de’ Medici, Pater Patriae, and Florence Holding an Orb and Triple Olive-branch* (reverse), c. 1465, bronze, 7.8 cm diameter, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Figure 23. Sandro Botticelli, *Fortitude*, 1470, tempera on panel, 167 x 87 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Figure 24. Sandro Botticelli, *Saint Sebastian*, 1474, tempera on poplar, 195 x 75 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

Figure 25. Andrea del Verrocchio (?), *Tobias and the Angel*, c. 1470-1475, tempera on wood, 33 x 25.5 cm, National Gallery, London.

Figure 26. Fra Filippo Lippi. *Banquet of Herod*, c. 1452-1466, fresco, Duomo, Prato.

Figure 27. Sandro Botticelli, Detail of *The Return of Judith to Bethulia*, c. 1468-1472, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Figure 28. Paolo Uccello, *Monument of Sir John Hawkwood*, 1436, fresco transferred to canvas, 820 x 515 cm, Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence.

Figure 29. Andrea del Castagno, *Niccolo da Tolentino*, 1456, fresco transferred to canvas, 830 x 510 cm, Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence.

Figure 30. Paolo Uccello, *Battle of San Romano*, c. 1438-1440, egg tempera with walnut oil and linseed oil on poplar, 181.6 x 320 cm, National Gallery, London.

Figure 31. Jacopo del Sellaio and Biagio d’Antonio, *Rome Held Ransom by the Gauls and Saved by Marcus Furius Camillus*, 1472, tempera on poplar with gilding, 40.5 x 137 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.

Figure 32. Sandro Botticelli, *The Mystic Crucifixion*, c. 1497-1498, tempera and oil on canvas, 73.5 x 50.8 cm, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Figure 33. Leonardo da Vinci, *Annunciation*, c. 1472-1475, oil on wood, 98 x 217 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Figure 34. Sandro Botticelli, *The Trials of Moses*, 1481-1482, fresco, 348 x 558 cm, Sistine Chapel, Vatican.
Figure 35. Andrea Mantegna, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1495-1500, tempera (distemper) on (linen) canvas, 48.1 x 36.7 cm, The National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

Figure 36. Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Judith*, 1425-1452, gilt bronze, Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Florence.

Figure 37. Master of Marradi, *Story of Judith and Holofernes*, 15th century, tempera on wood panel, 40 x 148.59 cm, Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, Ohio.

Figure 38. *Relief of Bethulia*, designed by Urbano da Cortona or Matteo di Giovanni Bartoli, executed by Antonio Federighi, 1473, inlaid marble, North Transept, Cathedral of Siena.

Figure 39. Frontispiece to the Book of Judith, Bible of San Paolo Fuori le Mura, folio 234v, c. 866-869/870-875, 44.8 x 35.5 cm, Abbazia di San Paolo, Rome.

Figure 40. *Humilitas between Judith and Jael, Speculum Virginum*, 12th century, London, British Library, MS Arundel 44, fol. 34v.

Figure 41. Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Battle Against the Philistines and the Killing of Goliath*, 1425-1452, gilded bronze, 79 x 79 cm, Opera di S. Maria del Fiore, Florence.

Figure 42. Donatello, *David*, c. 1408-1416, marble, height 191 cm, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

Figure 43. Matteo di Giovanni, Judith, c. 1493-1494, tempera on panel, 55.9 x 46 cm, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, Indiana.

Figure 44. Neroccio di Bartolomeo de’ Landi and Master of the Story of Griselda, *Claudia Quinta*, c. 1493, tempera and oil on panel, 104 x 46 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Figure 45. Giorgione, *Judith Giorgione*, c. 1503-1508, oil on canvas (transferred from wood panel), 144 x 68 cm, State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

Figure 46. Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (il Sodoma), *Judith*, c. 1510-1512, tempera on panel, 84 x 47 cm, Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena.

Figure 47. Anonymous, after Andrea Mantegna, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1480s, pen and dark brown ink with black chalk and white heightening on olive-brown prepared paper laid down on canvas, 34.8 x 20.2 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Figure 48. Giuliano da Sangallo, Judith with the Head of Holofernes, black chalk, pen, gold wash, some gray areas wiped, 37.7 x 27 cm, Albertina, Vienna.

Figure 49. Andrea Mantegna, *Judith*, c. 1500-1505, distemper and gold on canvas, 65.3 x 31.4 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Figure 50. Andrea Mantegna, *Dido*, c. 1500-1505, distemper and gold on canvas, 65.3 x 31.4 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.
Figure 51. Sandro Botticelli, *The Story of Virginia*, c. 1498-1504, tempera on panel, 85 x 165 cm, Accademia Carrara, Bergamo. ........................................................................................................... 163

Figure 52. Sandro Botticelli, detail of *The Story of Lucretia*, c. 1498-1504, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. .................................................................................................................... 164

Figure 53. Andrea Mantegna or Follower, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1490-1500, tempera on canvas, 30.1 x 18.1 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 165

Figure 54. Sandro Botticelli and workshop, *Landscape with Roebucks and Monkeys*, c. 1467-1472, oil and tempera on parchment, 29.2 x 21.6 cm, Cincinnati Art Museum. 166
INTRODUCTION

The Return of Judith to Bethulia (Fig. 1) and The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes (Fig. 2). The panels are evidence of Botticelli's early talent and capability in executing what are thought to be his first historiae, as noted by Botticelli scholar Ronald Lightbown, who considered these panels the "first examples of Botticelli's marvelous power of subtle dramatic invention."\(^1\) Indeed, Botticelli’s two Uffizi panels have no known direct precedent, with the return to Bethulia of Judith and her maid given its own panel as well as, and perhaps even more striking, the discovery of Holofernes’ body by his soldiers depicted on its own panel.

Botticelli painted scenes from the Book of Judith no fewer than six times, with his first Judith paintings dated to the very beginning of his painting career and the last placed nearly at the end. This suggests that Judith was a favorite subject of Botticelli and his patrons. In each of these six works, which includes the Cincinnati The Return of Judith to Bethulia (Fig. 3), a panel nearly identical to The Return of Judith to Bethulia in the Uffizi, Judith appears either as the main subject of the painting, as she does in the Amsterdam Judith with the Head of Holofernes (Fig. 4), or she appears as a part of the environment Botticelli created for themes focused on figures other than Judith. The appearance of Judith as a subsidiary figure, for example, can be seen in both the Calumny of Apelles (Fig. 5) and the Tragedy of Lucretia (Fig. 6). I propose that Botticelli’s images of Judith reflect how Judith was considered by Florentines around the time of the

---

execution of each of these works. A synopsis of the major events of Judith’s story is useful here for the discussion of Judith imagery that will follow.

The Book of Judith recounts the attack of the Jewish city of Bethulia by the army of the Assyrian general Holofernes, and the city’s subsequent salvation at the hand of a wealthy widow, Judith. Under orders from his king, Nebuchadneeezer, Holofernes and his army had been attacking the towns which refused to acknowledge Nebuchadneaeezer as their king in order to bring them under his rule. The army laid siege to Bethulia, constricting the town’s supply of food and water to force the Israelites to surrender. Upon hearing the desperation of the elders, Judith took it upon herself to act. She prayed for God’s assistance, asking for the strength and the fortitude to do what was necessary, so that she could accomplish her task. Without revealing her intentions to anyone except to anticipate her return in five days, Judith shed her widow’s garments for her fine clothing and jewelry and, accompanied by her maid, entered the camp of Holofernes under the guise of offering information that would lead to his triumph over the city. Upon meeting Holofernes, Judith told the Assyrians that the God of the Israelites protected his people, who could not be defeated unless they sinned against their God. Judith revealed that God’s retribution would soon be upon the Israelites. Holofernes and his generals, who were enraptured by the beauty of Judith, believed her story about the desperation of the Bethulians and her wish to save herself. She and her maid were given a tent for their personal use, where they remained for several days. On the fourth evening of her stay, Holofernes invited Judith to a feast with him and his men. Smitten with her, Holofernes drank throughout the night, “more than he had ever drank before,” until
everyone but Judith and her maid left. Drunk, Holofernes passed out on his bed. At that moment, Judith asked her maid to stand watch outside. She then took up the sword of Holofernes and, with two strikes, cut off his head. Judith and her maid hid the head in a sack and left the encampment for Bethulia, where her countrymen awaited her arrival. Judith revealed the head of Holofernes to the Bethulians, and advised them to hang it from the walls and to attack the encampment. At sunrise, the Bethulians issued forth from the city gates to attack the Assyrians, who had lost strength and momentum after learning that their commander, Holofernes, was dead. The army of Holofernes did not attempt to engage in battle but instead ran away to escape. Judith was praised as a heroine, and honored through the end of her life.  

The apocryphal story of Judith, which is itself an allegorical and moral story, has given rise to many interpretations. During the Middle Ages her triumph over Holofernes was considered a typological prefiguration of the Virgin Mary’s triumph over the devil, and also of the Church’s triumph over her enemies. Judith’s triumph was also likened to David’s defeat of Goliath. She thus came to be seen as a symbol of various virtues, such as Chastity, Humility, and Fortitude.

During Botticelli’s lifetime, Judith was thought of as a civic heroine for the city of Florence: like David, she was regarded as a figure who resisted and defeated foreign tyranny. The evolution of a political role of Judith is examined in this thesis through a discussion of Donatello’s bronze Judith and Holofernes (Fig. 7), from its first appearance

---

2 English translations from the Latin and Greek texts were consulted for the Book of Judith. A side by side comparison of the Latin Vulgate text with the English translation is found at the following website: <http://www.latinvulgate.com/verse.aspx?t=0&b=18>. A translation from the Greek text is provided in Morton S. Enslin and Solomon Zeitlin, The Book of Judith (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), 57-179.
in the garden of the Medici palace through its removal to the ringhiera in front of the Palazzo della Signoria following the expulsion of the Medici in 1495 and its replacement by Michelangelo’s David (Fig. 8) a few years later. This thesis will situate the Uffizi panels, The Return of Judith to Bethulia and The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes, within the context of Quattrocento Florence by considering the political and social events of Florence during the 1460s, specifically the conspiracy against Piero de’ Medici in 1466, as well as the multiple meanings that Judith held for the Florentine republic from the 1460s through the end of Botticelli’s life in 1510. I believe that Botticelli’s panels offered a point of commentary and invoked memories of the events of 1466 and their aftermath. While this thesis will chiefly address issues of function, dating, and patronage of the Uffizi panels, the catalogue analyzes several images of Judith in relation to Botticelli’s Uffizi panels and in relation to each other to show the popularity of certain types of Judith images and to highlight the inventive ways Botticelli portrayed the heroine.
CHAPTER ONE: SANDRO BOTTICELLI STUDIES

In his lifetime Sandro Botticelli was considered to be one of the best artists in Florence. His works could be seen in most of the churches in Florence, and in the houses of some of the most distinguished and wealthy Florentine families, including the Medici, Pucci, and Vespucci. While the date and patronage of the Uffizi panels are not recorded, a few notices are left today that may shed some light on how Botticelli himself and his art were perceived and valued during his lifetime and afterward, particularly by the Medici family and their associates.

Botticelli’s career as an independent artist probably began around 1470, when he was recorded as a painter in Florence in 1470 in the Memorie Istoriche of Florentine merchant Benedetto Dei. During the 1480s and 1490s he was at the height of his career, with both the artist and his art works praised as rivaling the artists and art works of antiquity. Ugolino Verino, in his epigram On Giving Praise to the City of Florence of 1488, recorded “And Sandro [Botticelli] I would not deem unworthy to be equated to Apelles, his name is known everywhere.” A later epigram by Verino of around 1503 stated “and Sandro should not be deemed less worthy than Zeuxis in painting, although the latter depicted grapes so well that he deceived even birds.” In these two passages a

---

5 “Nec Zeuxi inferior picture Sander habetur, Ille licet volucres pictis deluserit uvis.” Horne, Botticelli, Painter of Florence, 305.
shift can be discerned in the preferences of art and artists between 1488 and 1503. In the first, it is Botticelli who is compared to Apelles and Leonardo da Vinci who is compared to Zeuxis. Later, Botticelli is likened to Zeuxis and Filippino Lippi is compared to Apelles, with Leonardo da Vinci placed above them as unsurpassed.\textsuperscript{6} This shift, noted in Verino’s epigrams by his changing comparisons of contemporary artists with ancient Greek artists and held significance for Botticelli and the appreciation of his art works, will be examined in detail later in this chapter.

Besides Verino’s epigrams, other documents reveal what Botticelli’s contemporaries thought of his art and which qualities they valued the most. Around 1490 Ludovico “il Moro” Sforza, looking to commission an artist for work at Pavia, had an agent in Florence report to him on the artists there. Of Botticelli and his former pupil the agent wrote the following:

\begin{quote}
Sandro di Botticelli, an excellent painter in panel and fresco, his things have a virile air, and show an excellent sense and use of proportion. Filippino of Fra Filippo, a student of the above, and the son of one of the most distinguished masters of our time, his things have a very sweet air, I do not believe they have as much skill.\textsuperscript{7}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{6} Baldassarri, et al., \textit{Images of Quattrocento Florence}, 207-209.

\textsuperscript{7} “Sandro de Botticello picture Excellnmo in tauola et in muro le cose sue hano aria virile et sono cum optima ragione et integra proportione. Filippino di Frati Philippo optimo Discipulo del sopra dicto et figliolo del piu singular maestro di tempo suoi le sue cose hano aria piu dolce non credo habiano tanta arte.” R. W. Lightbown, \textit{Sandro Botticelli: Life and Work}, vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 183. Another translation of this is as follows: “Sandro di Botticelli, a most excellent painter in panel and fresco, his things have a manly air and also very good organization and complete balance. / Filippino di Fra filippo, very good, pupil of the above, and son of the most remarkable master of his time, his things have a gentler air, I don’t think they have as much skill.” Carol M. Richardson, Kim W. Woods and Michael W. Franklin, eds., \textit{Renaissance Art Reconsidered; an Anthology of Primary Sources} (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 168.
In September 1502, Botticelli was recommended as an excellent painter to Isabella d’Este, who was seeking to commission a painting for her camerino from the artist Pietro Perugino. In his letter to Isabella, her agent Francesco Malatesta recommended Filippino Lippi and Botticelli as alternates to Perugino, noting that Botticelli, in contrast to the other two painters, had no pressing commissions at the time that would delay work for the Marchesa and that Botticelli had agreed to take on the commission.8 This could indicate a falling demand for works by Botticelli, as compared with other artists working in Florence in 1502. Indeed, only a small number of works thus far have been dated past 1500. Still, Botticelli remained a respected artist in Florence, and these documents indicate that his work was valued. In 1504 he was included in the group of men who offered their opinions for the location to place Michelangelo’s marble *David*, and his opinion, along with those of other men who were consulted, is extant.9

By the end of his life Botticelli’s style of painting was no longer in vogue, and no longer desirable in an Italy that preferred the work of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Andrea Mantegna among others. The innovations of these artists soon overshadowed the work of Botticelli and his contemporaries, resulting in their fall into obscurity for several centuries. Herbert Horne, who began his research on Botticelli near the end of the nineteenth century, nicely summarized the artistic landscape and criticism for Botticelli from his last years of life until Horne’s own time:

Nearly all the great masters who had been his rivals at the height of his career, had passed away since the death of

---

Verrocchio in 1488. Domenico Ghirlandaio, Gherardo, Piero and Antonio Pollaiuoli, Benozzo Gozzoli, and Alesso Baldovinetti, had died in rapid succession; and a new generation of painters was springing up, whose ideals in art were very different from his own. The few years of life still remaining to him, were to witness the birth of a series of masterpieces, which for centuries were to eclipse the fame and name both of himself and his contemporaries, and which in the less academic and more widely appreciative judgement of our own age, are still to be accounted the supreme accomplishment of modern art. But at the time in question, although all Italy was already growing aware of the transcendent greatness of the new school, it was still mindful of the work of those masters, who, but a decade or two ago, had been held to have rivaled the masters of antiquity.10

The first attempt at a biography of the life of Botticelli with a summary and evaluation of his works was done by Giorgio Vasari in his *Lives of the Painters*, *Sculptors and Architects* of 1550 and 1568. In writing and organizing the *Lives*, Vasari’s aim was to illustrate the history of art from antiquity to the present day, dividing his book into three parts. Vasari considered his own time to be the final culmination of the redemption of the arts from what he considered their lowest point, the time between the fall of the Roman Empire and Cimabue. Vasari believed that perfection in painting, sculpture, and architecture in his own time was indebted to the work of previous artists—those artists Vasari discussed in the first two volumes—some of whose work approached, rather closely in some cases, but never fully achieved his idea of the perfection that he found evident in works by Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. Vasari’s conception of the history of the arts is very linear, where in the course of time the arts evolved toward a certain endpoint. Botticelli and his work, as well as most of his contemporaries, are

---

grouped into the second period of Vasari’s timeline. Vasari characterized the artistic production of this period by the following points: “richer invention was displayed, with more correct drawing, a better manner, improved execution, and more careful finish. The arts were, in a measure, delivered from that rust of old age, and that coarse disproportion, which the rudeness of the previous uncultivated period had left still clinging to them.” They had come a long way, but had yet to arrive at "that position, in respect of invention, design, and colour" that the artists of Vasari’s day had achieved.  

Though Vasari praised some of Botticelli’s works, particularly the *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 9), in which Vasari identified Medici portraits, and the drawings that Vasari noted were circulated among Florentine workshops after the artist’s death, Botticelli occupied no special place in Vasari’s conception of the history and evolution of art. The picture Vasari drew of Botticelli was that of a man of little education and a large amount of arrogance, who advanced solely by the good will of his patrons and friends. And yet, much of the scholarship on Botticelli beginning in the twentieth century has made a strong case for a Botticelli who was educated, or at least literate, and interacted with some of the brightest humanists and Neoplatonic scholars of the day, such as Angelo

---

11 Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, vol. 1, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996). See “The Author’s Preface to the Whole Work,” 13-26; “The Author’s Preface to the Lives,” 27-47; “The Author’s Preface to the Second Part,” 245-255. Perfection in art, according to Vasari, aims to faithfully, and as closely as possible, imitate nature; "the compositions comprise more figures; the accessories and ornaments are richer, and more abundant; the drawing is more correct, and approaches more closely to the truth of nature; and, even where no great facility or practice is displayed, the works yet evince much thought and care; the manner is more free and graceful; the colouring more brilliant and pleasing, insomuch that little is now required to the attainment of perfection in the faithful imitation of nature."

12 Vasari may reserve the most praise for the *Adoration of the Magi* because of the portraits of the Medici he identifies in the work, which were the ancestors of his current patron, Duke Cosimo I, to whom he dedicates both editions of the *Lives*. He identifies Cosimo the Elder, Cosimo’s grandson and the father of Pope Clement VII, Giuliano, and Cosimo’s son Giovanni, describing where each man is found in the painting. Vasari, *Lives*, vol. 1, 537-538.
Poliziano. Botticelli’s Birth of Venus (Fig. 10), Primavera (Fig. 11), and Calumny of Apelles have been argued as evidence of his knowledge of Neoplatonism and his association with its proponents.  

Vasari’s Botticelli was also a practical joker, and accounts shortly after Botticelli’s death recalled him as “witty” or “facetious;” three stories of tricks Botticelli played on friends, neighbors, and pupils that attest to this status are described in Vasari’s Lives (1568). Botticelli was also described as impulsive, lacking discipline and monetary management: "He earned much, but wasted everything through negligence and lack of management." Furthermore, Vasari claimed Botticelli became an ardent follower of Savonarola and quit painting, falling into poverty and relying on the support of friends and benefactors to survive. Although there is no documentary evidence which confirms nor denies Botticelli’s alleged association with Savonarola, except that his brother, Simone Filipepi, was certainly a follower, the number of art works produced in the late 1490s and early 1500s by Botticelli and his workshop proves that he did not stop painting. Vasari’s perception of Botticelli’s life and personality, no matter the amount of truth or falsity in it, has remained a part of Botticelli scholarship.
The first recorded mention of Botticelli’s Judith and Holofernes panels came about a decade after Vasari’s death, and roughly sixteen years after the second edition of Vasari’s *Lives* was published, when Raffaello Borghini’s treatise *Il Riposo* revisited Botticelli in a short section. While Borghini’s 1584 account of Botticelli did not expand much beyond Vasari’s account of the life of Botticelli, he attributed new paintings to Botticelli either unknown to or omitted by Vasari. One of the works, *St. Augustine in his cell* (Fig.12), Vasari had attributed to Filippo Lippi.\(^{18}\) A glimpse into the value of Botticelli’s art at this time may be offered by the remarks Borghini made concerning certain works. “Francesco Trosci, an astute man of great judgment” owned “a Virgin and Child standing on the ground, supported by an angel, next to which is St. John as a child and a very beautiful landscape.”\(^{19}\)

In his reference to the *Return of Judith to Bethulia* and the *Discovery of the Body of Holofernes*, Borghini wrote that they had recently been given as a gift to the Grand Duchess Bianca Capello de’ Medici by Ridolfo Sirigatti, “to decorate a study with Compagnia dello Spirito Santo, in the town of Montelupo. Waldman has connected this piece with the heavily damaged *Pentecost* currently in the Birmingham City Museum in England, which has been cut down on all sides and now measures 209 x 232 cm (6.9 x 7.6 ft). See Louis A. Waldman, “Botticelli and His Patrons: the Arte del Cambio, the Vespucci, and the Compagnio dello Santo Spirito in Montelupo,” *Sandro Botticelli and Herbert Horne: New Research*, ed. Rab Hatfield (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 105-136.

\(^{17}\) This issue is taken up by Ulrich Rehm in his essay, “Character Assassination with Consequences; The Life of Botticelli According to Giorgio Vasari and Modern Art Historiography” *Botticelli: Likeness, Myth, Devotion*, ed. Andreas Schumacher (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2009), 110-141.

\(^{18}\) For a discussion of the work, see Frank Zöllner in his monograph *Sandro Botticelli*, trans. Ishbel Flett (Munich and New York: Prestel, 2005), 243.

\(^{19}\) Raffaello Borghini, *Il Riposo*, ed. and trans. Lloyd H. Ellis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) 183-184. It is currently unknown as to which specific painting of the Virgin and Child with St. John Trosci owned; the work Borghini identified may be a painting that has been lost. For the original passage, see Raffaello Borghini, *Il Riposo* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagbuchhandlung, 1969), 352: “[Botticelli] Fece molti quadri a più persone, de’ quali ne ha uno Francesco Trosci (huomo accorto, e di gran giudicio, e perciò adoperato in molti negotii dal Gran Duca nostro) in cui è dipinta la Vergine, e il bambino in terra alzato da un Agnolo, appresso a cui è San Giovannino, e vi è un paese bellissimo.”
paintings and ancient statues” as he had “judged these little works of Botticelli to be worthy of appearing next to the others that Her Highness has arranged there.”\textsuperscript{20} This could indicate that Botticelli’s works were still desirable decades after his death, or at least were considered to be a worthy gift to members of Florence’s most powerful family. I propose that this could also mean Botticelli’s images of Judith and Holofernes had some significance to the family. The panels stayed in Florence in the Medici family collection after Bianca’s death in 1587. During the eighteenth century they were moved to the Uffizi and have remained a part of the collection since then. The early attribution of the panels to Botticelli and their visibility in the Uffizi to the public, as well as the skill they display as examples of Botticelli’s early works as an independent master, have resulted in a long history of literature concerning them.

Although in the case of the Uffizi Judith and Holofernes the attribution to Botticelli was and remains unquestioned, the problem of attribution and misattribution was one of the largest tasks of nineteenth and early twentieth-century writers and scholars of Botticelli. Works that are now accepted as Botticelli’s were attributed to other artists,\textsuperscript{21} while some works ascribed to Botticelli were later attributed to other artists or

\textsuperscript{20}Borghini, Il Riposo, ed. and trans. Lloyd H. Ellis, 184. For the original passage, see Borghini, Il Riposo, 352-353: “Due quadretti insieme (nell’uno de’ quali è dipinto Oloferne nel letto con la testa tronca, co’ suoi baroni intorno, che si marauigliano, e nell’ altro Giuditte colla testa nel sacco) hauea non ha molto M. Ridolfo, e esso gli donò alla Serenissima Signora Bianca Capello de’ Medici Gran Duchessa nostra; intendendo, che S. Altezza, come quella, che è virtuosissma, voleva adornare uno scrittoio di pitture, e di statue antiche, giudicando degna quella operetta del Botticello di poter comparire appresso all’altrce.”

\textsuperscript{21}Michael Levey, “Botticelli and Nineteenth-Century England,” Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 23, no. 3/4 (July - Dec. 1960): 296. An example of attribution errors can be seen in 1808, when a work then ascribed to Mantegna but later attributed to Botticelli was recommended for purchase to the Czar of Russia.
followers. The problem of attribution was most evident in the works displayed by museums; for instance, while nineteenth and early twentieth-century visitors to the Uffizi could see works still accepted today as by Botticelli, such as the *Judith* and *Holofernes* as well as the *Birth of Venus*, they could also see images of the Madonna and Child which are no longer attributed to the hand of Botticelli. Even today, this remains an issue in Botticelli scholarship.

Following Borghini’s account, Botticelli’s name faded away into near-obscurity until the nineteenth century, as Horne would observe. Michael Levey is to be credited for his research into the rediscovery of Botticelli in the nineteenth century. His essay makes it clear that this rediscovery did not begin with the Pre-Raphaelites and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, or specifically in England for that matter. France and Germany were among the first countries outside Italy that began displaying a renewed interest in Botticelli by viewing and collecting his works. During the first half of the nineteenth century England followed the trend of traveling to Italy to see and collect the works of Botticelli. As English appreciation of Botticelli grew, so did the rise of what has been termed the “Cult of Botticelli.” This was a literary appropriation of Botticelli as a poetic figure, which was tied to the prose and poetry of Rossetti, Walter Pater, and John Ruskin. In contrast to

---

22 Ibid., 293. The Richardson family was noted by Levy as the first English collectors to attribute works to Botticelli, a name they “associated with quality,” and they sought out his drawings. Two drawings owned by this family which they believed were by Botticelli are no longer attributed to him: one is now ascribed to the followers of Filippo Lippi and the other, to Lorenzo di Credi.

23 Wolfgang Lottes, “Appropriating Botticelli: English Approaches 1860-1890,” *Icons Texts Iconotexts: Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, ed. Peter Wagner (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 253. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which functioned from 1848-1853, diverged from the Royal Academy by considering the work of Quattrocento artists such as Botticelli as their models, instead of the work of High Renaissance artists such as Michelangelo and Raphael.

this literary and artistic interest, Levey noted that the German interest in Botticelli could be seen in the active “acquisition of genuine and important pictures by him.”

The comments made by those viewing Botticelli’s paintings attest to a wide array of opinions concerning the appearance of the paintings and the perceived personality of Botticelli. In an opinion shared by many other viewers and writers, Walter Pater described the colors Botticelli used for human skin as “cadaverous” and “cold.” The Keeper of the National Gallery, Ralph Nicholson Wornum, remarked in 1864 that Botticelli’s “type of female face is, as a rule, coarse and altogether without beauty.” In an enlightening comment concerning a specific work, Sir William Boxall, director of the National Gallery, noted the following after his inspection of the _Nastagio degli Onesti_ panels (Figs. 13-16): “They may be a curious illustration of the taste of the time, but are not adapted to find favour in modern eyes.” As the director of the National Gallery, Boxall was at this time interested in building the museum’s collection of Botticelli’s, yet in this case Boxall chose not to purchase the series because the imagery—that of a nude woman chased down by a man on horseback and attacked by dogs—did not fit the aesthetic preferences of the 1860s. Although the remarks given here seem to show an evident distaste for Botticelli’s paintings, other viewers (and sometimes the same viewer, as in the case of Pater) were drawn to and enthusiastic of Botticelli’s works.

---

28 Levey, “Botticelli and Nineteenth-Century England,” 300. The panels were later bought by Alexander Barker, an English collector of Botticelli’s works who also came to own the _Mars and Venus_.

The range of literature concerning Botticelli produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries spans disciplines to include scholarly essays and monographs, essays and criticism by aestheticists, and letters, novels, and poems. The writings of nineteenth-century aestheticists Walter Pater and John Ruskin concerning Botticelli brought the artist increased attention and interest. However, their essays are not scholarly works since they were not reliant on the type of research that would be undertaken later by other writers such as Aby Warburg and Herbert Horne. Botticelli’s personality and works were interpreted through a nineteenth-century lens, which largely disregarded the works as products of Quattrocento Florence and did not seek to understand Botticelli and his works as products of a completely different time and location. In other words, according to Wolfgang Lottes, “they made him their contemporary and the incarnation of their own sentiments and aspirations.”

Walter Pater’s essay on Botticelli, first published in 1870, has been regarded as “the beginning of the literary cult of Botticelli.” He began by classifying Botticelli as a “secondary painter” compared to artists such as Michelangelo, yet a “charming” painter who was being rediscovered and appreciated in Pater’s day. Despite considering Botticelli as a “secondary painter,” Pater described him as a “poetical painter, blending the charm of the story and sentiment, the medium of the art of poetry, with the charm of

---

line and color, the medium of abstract painting.” 32 Pater has been described as an “aestheticist, who was intoxicated with the affinity of beauty and death, love and languor,” qualities that may have compelled him to see those same things in the women Botticelli painted. 33 Pater wrote the following about Botticelli’s female figures:

He paints the story of the goddess of pleasure in other episodes besides that of her birth from the sea, but never without some shadow of death in the grey flesh and wan flowers. He paints Madonnas, but they shrink from the pressure of the divine child, and plead in unmistakable undertones for a warmer, lower humanity. 34

In the same vein, Pater’s remarks upon seeing Botticelli’s Judith “returning home across the hill country, when the great deed is over, and the moment of revulsion come, when the olive branch in her hand is becoming a burthen” allude to Pater’s desire to see both biblical and mythological figures as also subject to the burdens of humanity. Like Venus and the Virgin, Judith exhibits both beauty and fatigue, and is accompanied by elements alluding to death, as evidenced by the bloodied sword she carries and the head of Holofernes.

John Ruskin’s writings concerning the Return of Judith to Bethulia provide a detailed consideration of the work not seen previously. He instructed his readers first to read the text of the Book of Judith, pointing out certain passages to consider when viewing Botticelli’s Judith.

And you will feel, after you have read this piece of history, or epic poetry, with honourable care, that there is somewhat more to be thought of and pictured in Judith, than painters have mostly found it in them to show you; that she is not

---

32 Ibid., 54.
merely the Jewish Delilah to the Assyrian Samson; but the mightiest, purest, brightest type of high passion in severe womanhood offered to our human memory. Sandro’s picture is but slight; but it is true to her, and the only one I know that is . . .

Ruskin’s instructions for reading the biblical text and his evaluations of the Judith sought to bring attention to Botticelli’s close reading and visualization of the text. Jane Davidson Reid, considering Ruskin’s proposal that Botticelli’s Uffizi Judith is the only “true Judith,” sought to determine whether there are any other images of Judith that fit the criteria of a “true Judith,” in which the representation of the heroine follows the biblical account with no liberties taken, such as the depiction of Judith as the seducer or the seduced. For Reid, the figure of a true Judith should exhibit both strength and fortitude in carrying out her task, as well as the visible capability to do so; the figure should not be unsure or fearful of her task and of Holofernes, as she appears in Caravaggio’s Judith (Fig. 17), nor should she exhibit pride or vanity in herself or in her task, as in Titian’s Judith (Fig. 18) of about 1583. Botticelli’s Uffizi Judith is Ruskin’s “true Judith” in that she is true to the biblical story and seemingly free of any association with vice. However, Reid noted that Ruskin ignored the Holofernes panel. The deception and violence of the Book of Judith is reserved solely for the Holofernes panel, allowing the Judith panel “a degree of sublimation.”

Botticelli’s rising popularity in the nineteenth century called for the publication of new materials concerning his life and work. The literature on Botticelli from the mid

---

38 Ibid., 386-387.
nineteenth to the early twentieth century ranged from poetry and novels to the utilization of scientific and archival research methods. An attempt at a new biography and criticism of Botticelli, as well as a summary of attributed works organized by location, was made by Crowe and Cavalcaselle, who published *A New History of Painting in Italy* between 1864 and 1866.\(^3^9\) By the end of the nineteenth century the need for a more scholarly consideration of Botticelli reliant upon archival research resulted in the publication of several articles and the first of many monographs. The year 1893 held the publication of the first monograph on Botticelli by Hermann Ulmann as well as an essay by Aby Warburg on the *Primavera* and the *Birth of Venus*, both of which were published in German.\(^4^0\) Herbert Horne was contracted in February 1894 to write a small book for the "Great Masters in Painting and Sculpture Series" issued by George Bell and Sons. His book, which was to be completed in about eleven months with a length of "about sixty to one hundred pages, not including plates," was intended to be the first monograph on Botticelli printed in English.\(^4^1\) As it turned out, Horne's profound monograph was published fourteen years later in 1908. The impact of Horne’s book, and the methods he employed, moved Botticelli studies from the areas of aesthetics and fin-de-siècle prose to a scholarly and academic approach to research. In his review of Horne’s book, Roger Fry stated,

---

\(^4^0\) Aby Warburg’s two essays on Botticelli, “Sandro Botticelli’s Birth of Venus and Spring” (1893) and “Sandro Botticelli” (1898), have recently been translated into English in *Aby Warburg: The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, intro. Kurt W. Forster, trans. David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute Publications, 1999).  
There is little, indeed, in his appreciation of Botticelli which is not taken from the criticism of Botticelli's own con-temporaries, most of all from a certain agent of the duke of Milan, who mentions the characteristic of Botticelli as the *aria virile*, the virile air of his figures. By insisting on that simple phrase as a counteraction to the modern idea of Botticelli as a languid sentimentalist Mr. Horne endeavours to get his artist seen in true perspective, and is content to leave it there.\(^{42}\)

Recent literature on Botticelli has called for a re-evaluation of his life, career, and attributed oeuvre. Scholarship from Horne to the present day has done much to disprove the “facts” of Vasari’s life of Botticelli, especially concerning his life and artistic production from roughly the mid 1490s until his death in 1510. Doubt is now rightly placed on the extent of Fra Girolamo Savonarola’s influence upon Botticelli and his artistic production, and a number of works have been attributed to this late period. The most recent research, such as Rab Hatfield’s essay on the *Primavera*, has called into question much that has been written and believed to be true concerning certain paintings.\(^{43}\) I suggest that it is time to re-examine each and all of the Judith paintings by Botticelli, for each needs to be re-evaluated with regard for its function, context, and importance in Botticelli’s oeuvre.

The literature concerning the Judith panels has followed the trends of research on Botticelli highlighted in this chapter, and a consideration of the panels can be found in virtually every monograph on Botticelli. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Judith panels were argued as an example of the poetic nature of Botticelli’s style.


Horne made an attempt at dating, stylistic influences, and the identification of elements of the paintings which directly related to fifteenth-century Florence. The more ambitious monograph writers following Horne have either followed his analysis or made their own attempts at dating, function, and influence.  One question particularly debated is whether Botticelli incorporated elements of the style of Piero and Antonio Pollaiuolo or Andrea del Verrocchio.  Wilhelm von Bode believed the panels to have been part of a piece of furniture, a point which subsequent writers have either agreed with or attempted to disprove.  I believe Lightbown’s argument conveys the best understanding of the primary purpose of Botticelli’s panels: the small size and attention to detail of the paintings indicate that they were collector’s pieces which were often kept protected and taken out for close, personal study.  The patron who examined these panels would have admired the delicacy of the painting, but the imagery would have caused the patron to meditate upon the story of Judith and the multiple meanings Judith and her story held for a fifteenth-century Florentine audience.

44 The seminal monographs on Botticelli are cited and evaluated in Lightbown, Botticelli: Life and Work, 2nd ed., 328-329. The monographs written by Herbert Horne and Jacques Mesnil were given the highest praise.
46 Bode, Sandro Botticelli, 30.
47 Lightbown, Sandro Botticelli: Life and Work, 2nd ed., 32.
The Return of Judith to Bethulia and The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes are considered to be among the masterpieces of Botticelli's early paintings. The two panels are not dated, but are believed to have been executed by Botticelli sometime in the late 1460s or early 1470s. Rather than present Judith either in the act of decapitating Holofernes or in the moments after the decapitation, Botticelli painted scenes that were very uncommon in pictorial representation and completely novel to the category of Judith paintings. Furthermore, Botticelli presented two panels rather than a single panel, a choice that has generated much discussion as to whether the panels were originally a single panel painted on both sides or were always two separate panels which were framed side by side. The inventiveness displayed by Botticelli, as well as the lack of information concerning their original function and patron, invites several issues which complicate the understanding of the paintings. I aim to offer new perspectives concerning the function, dating, and physical orientation of the panels.48

A further issue concerns the status and reception of Judith imagery in Quattrocento Florence. By the late 1460s, Judith and her heroic actions in defense of liberty had, like David, gained some significance for Florence and Florentines as an exemplary civic model. Images of Judith celebrated her victory over a figure of vice and tyranny. Current scholarship has revisited fifteenth- and sixteenth-century depictions of Judith in an attempt to reconsider them as objects responding to contemporary ideas of

48 The issue of the orientation and display of the panels is taken up in catalogue entry 15, The Return of Judith to Bethulia and The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes.
Judith and to contemporary social and political life. I seek to uncover the links between Botticelli’s panels and other similar images produced around the 1460s and 1470s, and to show how the panels were informed by theories of Judith and by Florentine social and political memory.

Beginning with *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes*, the panel uses as its focus a single moment which clearly references a specific, yet very short, passage in the Book of Judith. Botticelli used his imagination to make it an emotionally gripping scene that expressed the shock and anguish felt at the moment of the discovery of the corpse.

Bagoas went in, and knocked at the entry of the tent, presuming that he [Holofernes] was sleeping with Judith. As no one answered he parted the curtains, entered the bedroom, and found him lying on the floor, a headless corpse. He broke into a loud clamor of weeping, groaning, and howling, and rent his garments…When the commanders of the Assyrian army heard these words, they rent their tunics and were seized with consternation. (Judith 14:14-19)

While in the text Judith pushed the headless body to the floor, Botticelli chose to leave Holofernes on his bed. A soldier, his body foreshortened, pulls back the sheets to reveal the mutilated body. The figures, excluding Holofernes, are divided into two groups appearing to the left and right of Holofernes. The emotions visible on their faces are also divided along these lines. The group to the left of Holofernes exhibit expressions and gestures of shock and sorrow. One man raises his hands and looks in anguish upon the discovery, while over his shoulder another man covers his eyes but still keeps his head inclined toward the headless body. The larger group to the right, containing five men and two horses, express less visible emotion compared to the other group. The
variety of gestures Botticelli used recalls the work of previous artists and the knowledge of the range of gestures that could be used to denote a specific emotion. The gaze of all the figures, even the two horses that appear near the entrance of the tent, is upon Holofernes, save one figure off to the upper right corner who looks upward.

The body of Holofernes is Botticelli’s first attempt at a semi-nude figure. The execution of the body points toward some study of human anatomy, which he could have been exposed to in the workshop of Piero and Antonio Pollaiuolo or the workshop of Verrocchio. Further evidence that Botticelli studied anatomy and figures from life can be seen in a drawing in the Uffizi which shows a male figure, nude except for a loincloth, who leans on a stick, his head positioned at such an angle that he appears to look at the ground (Fig. 19). This study of a male figure has been proposed to be a preliminary study for the man who appears to the right of Holofernes, who leans on his sword to gaze at the body.49

The space created by the enclosed tent in the Holofernes panel is one that seems tight and cramped, as opposed to the open and airy atmosphere of the Judith panel. Botticelli pushed the figures to the edge of the frame, with the body of Holofernes and the large wound from his beheading rendered fully visible to the viewer. The body of Holofernes quickly and easily captures the viewer’s attention, as the youthful yet

headless body may both “attract and repel the viewer.” The message of justice meted out on a figure of pride and lust, a figure who threatened the liberty and well-being of others, is clear. Together with the figures who surround the body, the composition effectively “expresses the disorder and disarray of the Assyrian army, now metaphorically and actually without a head.”

The painting of *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* depicts Judith and her maid, who carries the head of Holofernes, returning to the besieged city of Bethulia. They are shown in movement, walking along the ridge of a hill. A light wind rustles their garments and the fabric covering the head of Judith’s maid wafts behind her head. The breeze has lifted the white sheet covering the head of Holofernes to reveal his aged face, which contrasts with the youthful body presented in the Holofernes panel; his eyes and mouth are closed and the features of his face are taut, as if he is grimacing.

Judith’s appearance reflects the wealth with which she adorned herself in the text: “She chose sandals for her feet, and put on her anklets, bracelets, rings, earrings, and all her other jewelry. Thus she made herself very beautiful, to captivate the eyes of all the men who should see her.” (Judith 10:4) In Botticelli’s painting, her garments appear to be of a more luxurious fabric and texture than those of her maid. Besides wearing jewelry on her body, she has her hair woven with beads and pearls that add brilliance to the jeweled headdress. Judith holds the sword of Holofernes in one hand and an olive branch in her other hand, two items of great significance. The way she holds the sword

---

51 Ibid., 331.
in her hand causes the tip of it to point to her wrist and to the hand holding the olive branch. Her grip on the sword appears strong and powerful, yet her hold on the olive branch is soft and delicate, with a finger extended as though she is pointing.

We identify this woman as Judith by the sword she carries, which is, along with the head of Holofernes, the most common attribute of Judith and one that distinguishes her from Salome, another biblical woman who shares similar attributes with Judith. Both women are often depicted with a severed head, but only Judith is depicted with a sword, indicating she was the woman who personally performed the decapitation.\(^\text{52}\) It is noteworthy that through the history of western art these two women became conflated with one another. Though they share similar iconographic attributes and share stories in which their actions resulted in the death of a man, the similarities end there. Judith’s cause was an unselfish act taken at personal risk to save her kinsmen from a tyrant, while Salome was regarded as a selfish girl whose demands resulted in the death of a virtuous man, John the Baptist.

In imagery, the possession of a sword by a figure is also associated with representations of virtues, such as Justice, Fortitude, and sometimes Constancy. As a symbol, the sword represents justice, administered by the figure that holds the sword, as well as the conferral of authority to that figure.\(^\text{53}\) The presence of the sword in images of Judith confers upon her these attributes of justice and fortitude, which could also be

\(^{52}\) Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 12-13. Panofsky notes that the sword is the distinguishing feature between Judith and Salome, as they have both been depicted with other items such as the severed head, the platter, or the maid.

inferred from the book of Judith. As Judith prays before she leaves Bethulia, she asks the following of God: “Give me constancy in my mind, that I may despise him [Holofernes]: and fortitude that I may overthrow him.” (Judith 9:14)

In addition to the sword, Judith also holds an olive branch. The olive branch is unique to Botticelli’s paintings of Judith, and was not considered an attribute of Judith in the way that the sword, maid, and head of Holofernes were, as symbols of her victory.\(^{54}\) Horne remarked that Judith bears the olive branch “like ‘un tronbetto coll’ulivo a notificare la pace’ to use a phrase of the time, as a herald or trumpeter used to do, when sent to Florence to declare a peace, during the intestine wars of the fifteenth century.”\(^{55}\) The olive branch is a symbol of peace, used since antiquity.\(^{56}\) It is also an attribute of Minerva and thus Wisdom as well.\(^{57}\) Botticelli’s drawing of *Minerva* (Fig. 20) in the collection of the Uffizi depicts the goddess holding a helmet in one hand and an olive branch in the other, which is remarkably similar to that held by Judith. Both olive branches are composed of many leaves and small branches, and they differ only in size. The olive branch held by Judith may link her to Minerva as possessing wisdom.

Another comparison between Judith and Minerva was offered by Frank Zöllner. One possible issue addressed by Botticelli's *Minerva and the Centaur* (Fig. 21) of the early 1480s is the triumph of virtue, represented as female, over vice, represented as male. This figure of Minerva does not hold an olive branch; instead, olive branches decorate Minerva's hair and twist around her arms and torso "as a sign of female

\(^{54}\) A repetition of this motif of the olive branch in any medium for a work of Judith, whether before or after Botticelli’s Judith, is one that I have yet to find and continue to search.


\(^{57}\) Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 235.
virtue." Minerva overpowers and subdues the centaur "by the strength of female virtue," despite the "superior physical strength and legendary wildness" of the centaur. Likewise, the virtuous Judith is able to overpower and defeat the physically stronger Holofernes.

In addition, the olive branch appeared on Florentine insignia shortly before Botticelli made the Uffizi panels. A bronze medal produced around 1465 displays on one side the profile of Cosimo de’ Medici (COSMVS MEDICES DECRETO PVBLICO) and on the reverse a seated figure (Fig. 22). The medal, produced after Cosimo’s death, asserts him as the Pater Patriae of Florence and was probably distributed among those with whom the Medici associated. The woman on the reverse is identified as Florentia, with the words PAX LIBERTAS QVE PVBLICA (Peace and Liberty for the Public) encircling her. She is the personification of Florence and holds an orb and an olive branch that has three small sprigs. The olive branch may link these two figures in terms of associating them with liberty. The olive branch Judith holds, in part, serves as a reference for the identification of Judith as a symbol or allegory for Florence.

In the Judith panel, the female figure who accompanies Judith is identified as her maid. The maid follows closely behind her mistress, carrying both the basket containing the head of Holofernes upon her own head as well as two vessels for holding liquids, which refer to the provisions the two women took with them for their stay in the enemy

---

58 Zöllner, Sandro Botticelli, 82.
59 Ibid., 80.
The focus of the maid is completely upon Judith. In Botticelli’s panel, Judith is the noticeably larger figure of the two women. The difference in scale creates a hierarchy that was not used by Botticelli in another version of this panel, the Return of Judith in the Cincinnati Art Museum. While the subordinate position of the maid to Judith is suggested by the different sizes in the Uffizi panel, a greater sense of companionship and camaraderie in carrying out their task is suggested by the similar sizes of both figures and the closer spatial relation between the two women in the Cincinnati panel.

In the Uffizi panel, the attention of the maid is completely upon Judith, as is indicated by her gaze and the curvature of her neck and torso towards Judith, as if she is leaning forward to listen. Judith’s expression is much more puzzling. She does not meet the gaze of her maid, although she turns her head towards her. Instead, she tilts her head to the side and looks to a point outside the picture frame. Her expression could suggest a meditation on her part of the actions she has taken to defend her city.

The Return of Judith to Bethulia and The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes have long been considered to be among Botticelli’s earliest works and dated from 1468 to 1472. Arguments for a more specific dating usually rest on one either before or after Botticelli painted the Fortitude (Fig. 23), which shares several similarities with the figure of Judith; this is most apparent in the execution of the flowing draperies and the shared

---

62 “And she gave to her maid a bottle of wine to carry, and a vessel of oil, and parched corn, and dry figs, and bread and cheese, and went out.” (Judith 10:5)
63 The small panel of The Return of Judith in the Cincinnati Art Museum has been presented at various times as either a preliminary study for the Uffizi Judith, or a later variation of the Uffizi Judith. For a full discussion of the Cincinnati panel, see catalogue entry 14.
64 Lightbown, Botticelli: Life and Work, vol. 2, 22. Lightbown noted that Hermann Ulmann, in the first monograph on Botticelli, dated the panels to this early period.
contemplative yet melancholic expression of the two women. Horne dated the panels to around 1470, executed just after the *Fortitude*, which Horne had dated to 1468 or 1469. He wrote that the two panels show less the style of Filippo Lippi and more the influence of Piero and Antonio Pollaiuolo, whom Botticelli had recently worked with when executing the *Fortitude*, in that the figures are shown as having a mass and exhibiting movement, which are evident in the execution of the drapery and are not seen in works rendered before Botticelli’s acquaintance with the Pollaiuolo. Archival research since Horne has found that Botticelli executed the *Fortitude* between June and August of 1470. Lightbown argued that *The Return of Judith* and *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes* should be dated before the *Fortitude*, for the two small panels show an “immaturity of execution” compared to the more refined execution of the *Fortitude*. The similarities between the *Fortitude* and the *Judith*, and the lack of many other securely dated paintings to this early period of Botticelli’s career make the issue of dating one panel before or after the other difficult to determine; however, based on stylistic considerations I date the *Judith* from around 1468 to 1471.

In order to further establish the parameters of the dating of the Uffizi panels, a comparison with *Saint Sebastian* (Fig. 24) is useful. The panel is reliably dated to 1473/4, as contemporary accounts record its installation at Santa Maria Maggiore in Florence as January 1473. Although the figure of Saint Sebastian is far larger than that

---

67 “In santa Maria maggiore e di sua mano uno san bastiano intauola, che e invna colonna, il quale fece dj Giennaio nel 1473.” *Anonimo Magliabecchiano*, fol. 85, recto. See Lightbown, *Botticelli: Life and Work*, vol. 1 (1979), 158. By the modern calendar, January 1473 is January 1474, as the Florentine new year began in March.
of Holofernes, the bodies of these figures provide an instructive comparison because both are rendered partially nude. The arms, legs, and torso of Sebastian, with the use of shading to show muscle and bone structure, reveal a greater study of anatomy and suggest some experience in drawing from live models, and overall the figure is more effective and polished in its execution than the body of Holofernes. A further comparison between *St. Sebastian* and *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* concerns the landscape. The figures which comprise each landscape serve both to support the scene in the foreground and to reference an event which took place shortly after that scene. A small group of soldiers, which are identified as archers by the bows they carry, walk along a path in the direction of a city further in the background. The archers refer to the Roman soldiers who shot their arrows at Sebastian in an attempt to execute him.⁶⁸ Their task completed, the men returned to the city. In sum, the superior handling of the body of Sebastian indicates that the *Discovery of the Body of Holofernes*, and therefore the *Judith* panel as well, were completed prior to 1473.

The difficulty in dating the works of Botticelli by written records should be noted. Despite the vast amount of scholarship on Botticelli and his paintings, few paintings are securely dated by contracts or other contemporaneous documents. Furthermore, "the dating of Botticelli's works has always been a contentious issue; his intellectual and technical development have resisted reduction to any formula that would satisfactorily

---

account for the sequence of his paintings. His solidly dated works do not always
follow a constructed timeline of linear progression in terms of technical skill and greater
naturalism; instead, his oeuvre is usually broken down by writers into specific styles
which he developed and used. A clearer example of this is Botticelli's late style, coined
as a "mannerism" by Horne, which encompasses the works produced in the last ten to
fifteen years of Botticelli's life. These paintings, such as the *Calumny of Apelles*, show
less his study of anatomy, which was evident in his earlier works, and more his use of
highly elongated, rather unnatural forms that serve to heighten emotion, action, and
gesture rather than imitate nature.

An enhanced understanding of Botticelli’s *Judith* and *Holofernes* panels is gained
by an examination of the possible painters and paintings of the 1460s and early 1470s
that could have influenced Botticelli. The placement and interactions of Judith and her
maid may be compared to *Tobias and the Archangel Raphael* (Fig. 25) by Verrocchio, in
whose shop Botticelli may have spent some time after leaving Fra Filippo Lippi’s shop.
The painting has been dated to the early 1470s, with the design attributed to Verrocchio
and the execution of the painting believed to have been carried out by an assistant; both
Domenico Ghirlandaio and Leonardo da Vinci may have contributed their hand to the
painting. In the painting, the two figures walk across a landscape, with the Archangel
Raphael leading the young Tobias. As with Judith and her maid in Botticelli’s panel, the

---

71 This comparison is first proposed by Wilhelm von Bode in *Sandro Botticelli*, 31.
72 For Ghirlandaio, see Dario A. Covi, *Andrea del Verrocchio Life and Work* (Castello, Italy: Leo S.
Olschiki Editore, 2005), 202-203. For Leonardo da Vinci, see Nicoletta Pons, “Workshop of Verrocchio:
interaction between the two figures is clearly between that of superior and subordinate. Tobias walks very close to, yet slightly behind the archangel. His full attention is upon the archangel, while the archangel does not meet the gaze of Tobias but instead looks towards the ground with his eyes nearly closed, resulting in a mysterious expression upon his face. Tobias appears smaller and out of scale with respect to the archangel, in much the same way as Judith and her maid appear.

Paintings of Tobias and Raphael may also have appealed to Botticelli as a model for his *Return of Judith to Bethulia* for their literary parallels. Both apocryphal stories deal with a journey undertaken in order to accomplish a specific task in which divine assistance is given, though not in the same way. Tobias was assisted by a corporeal Raphael throughout his journey, while Judith was assisted by God through her own prayers and faith, and not by any physical presence. More importantly, images of Tobias and Raphael as early as the 1450s depicted the two figures set in a landscape, with Tobias and Raphael set on higher ground with a valley behind them, often with a stream or river and sometimes a city as well. Botticelli adopted those elements of a landscape with figures embarking on a journey, shown at a higher elevation with a valley below.

The composition of Judith and her maid may also be compared to the work of Fra Filippo Lippi, in whose shop Botticelli was trained. In several ways, Botticelli’s Judith is reminiscent of the dancing Salome from the fresco of the *Banquet of Herod* in Santo Stefano, Prato (Fig. 26). The draperies of Judith and her maid display movement similar to the garments of Salome as she dances before the banqueters. The melancholic

---

73 The story of Tobias and the archangel Raphael is found in the Book of Tobit, and is part of the Old Testament of the Vulgate.
expression of Judith also recalls a similar expression upon the face of Salome. Lippi worked intermittently on the Prato frescos between 1452 and 1466, as he still oversaw his workshop in Florence and had other commissions to execute.\footnote{Megan Holmes, \textit{Fra Filippo Lippi, The Carmelite Painter} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 117.} As a student of Lippi, it is possible Botticelli accompanied his master at some point to assist him with the frescoes in Prato. Even if Botticelli had never seen Lippi’s Salome in Prato, the techniques Lippi used to define movement, the preciseness of his use of line, and the rather demure facial expressions of his Madonnas and angels were all elements of Lippi’s work in the 1450s and 1460s which Botticelli likely learned from him. The similarities between the figures of both panels and the figures of Lippi indicate that the panels were made relatively early in Botticelli's career, when he was still in the process of developing his own painterly style distinct from Lippi.

In the \textit{Judith} panel, an aspect that is often dismissed is the scene depicted in the landscape beyond Judith and her maid. A battle is visibly taking place near the walls of a city and in the land before them (Fig. 27). Soldiers on horseback and on foot race out from the city gates to meet the opposing forces in battle, who appear to either retreat or to race forward to engage in battle, either with the soldiers or at the city walls. It is possible that these figures are dressed in armor; the grey color of their garments, recalling that used to denote armor, is almost uniform from head to foot. In a small piece of landscape visible between the figures of Judith and her maid, the battle continues. Again these figures are denoted by a dark, gray color. Some appear on horseback, while others are on foot.
As the *Judith* panel may have been Botticelli’s first attempt at painting soldiers and a battle scene, he may have looked to the work of others for inspiration. One soldier on horseback that appears to be closer to the viewer than many of the other soldiers and is rendered with more detail leads a cavalry towards the city walls. This figure shares a few similarities with Paolo Uccello’s equestrian fresco of the condottiere *Sir John Hawkwood* in Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence (Fig. 28). Both of these figures wear a similar hat and cape. The positioning of this soldier, though, is the most striking reference to Hawkwood. He sits upon his horse with one hand grasping the reigns and the other holding a lance, as if charging forward. Upon close inspection, the soldier in Botticelli’s appears quite similar. This soldier holds the lance at almost the exact angle as that of Hawkwood, again appearing to charge forward. Located in the cathedral of Florence, Uccello’s fresco was visible to the public as was Andrea del Castagno’s equestrian monument to *Niccolo da Tolentino* (Fig. 29) beside Uccello’s, with Castagno’s offering another possible model for Botticelli.

Several other horsemen are visible beyond the soldier previously discussed in Botticelli’s Judith; these figures are raising their lances and charging forward. In addition to the equestrian cenotaphs in Florence Cathedral, Botticelli may have looked to the paintings of battle scenes available to him before 1470. Paolo Uccello’s *Battle of San Romano* (Fig. 30) may have served as another source of inspiration. The raised spears of Botticelli’s soldiers and the horses he has shown reared on their hind legs, as if preparing to charge forward, echo Uccello’s charging cavalry. However, it cannot be confirmed that Botticelli would have seen Uccello’s panels, which were completed in the late
A more likely source for Botticelli’s battle scene may have been cassone panels, which often featured battle scenes. An example, although dated slightly after Botticelli’s panels, is the panel illustrating *Rome Held Ransom by the Gauls and Saved by Marcus Furius Camillus*, executed by Biagio di Antonio and Jacopo del Sellaio (Fig 31). Sellaio, according to Vasari, had been trained by Filippo Lippi, possibly alongside Botticelli.76 In the foreground are several skirmishes, and to the far right a procession of soldiers leave a walled city to join the battle. The panel was part of a pair of chests ordered by Lorenzo di Matteo Morelli, both of which, although they have been reframed and reconstructed, are remarkable for their completeness and accuracy.77

By following the biblical text it can be surmised that the landscape recalls the emergence of the Bethulian soldiers from behind the city walls to drive out the army of Holofernes following the return of Judith and the revelation of her deed.78 Botticelli situated Bethulia in a river valley, with rolling hills on either side. Only the city walls are visible, and the river seems to meet the city walls at a central location; stone buildings behind the walls can be seen on either side of the river. However, this landscape does not fit the description of Bethulia given in the Bible; rather, it is reminiscent of Florence, with the Arno running through it and hills surrounding the city.79 Botticelli diverged from the text, which several times mentioned Bethulia as commanding a spot on a

---

75 Kent, *Cosimo De’ Medici and the Florentine Renaissance*, 265. According to Kent, the Uccello panels do not show up in records of the Medici home until 1492. She considers Cosimo to have been the patron, and it is very likely the panels would have been displayed in the home upon completion. Botticelli may have seen them or at least been aware of them before painting the Judith panel.


79 Horne first calls attention to this in *Botticelli, Painter of Florence*, 24-25.
mountain.\textsuperscript{80} Furthermore, the Assyrians laid siege to the city by cutting off its water supply. This act, and its consequences upon the city, led Judith to leave the city for the Assyrian camp. Yet Botticelli has painted a city that has a river running through it, and thus a water supply that could not be easily severed from the city. By situating Bethulia in a valley like Florence, the painting draws a comparison between Florence and Bethulia. Bethulia is rendered much more vulnerable by its location in a valley rather than on a mountaintop, a situation to which Florentines could relate. Placing Bethulia in its true, textual location upon a mountaintop, which is a highly defensible position, correlates more to the location of other Tuscan towns, such as Siena. This diversion from the text, I believe, implies a conscious decision by Botticelli or the patron to situate the Book of Judith in a location which directly recalled Florence.

The decision to diverge from the biblical text and paint a city that resembled Florence was not a new one. It was common practice for Renaissance artists to depict biblical and antique subject matter as if it took place in the artist’s own time, and even the artist’s or patron’s own city. A view of the city of Florence in fifteenth-century works could reflect a sense of civic pride in the city and government of Florence. That pride extended to the appearance of the city itself, from the construction of new buildings and the continuing work on the Duomo to the general maintenance of the city buildings and fortifications, for which each citizen was required to contribute some amount of money.

\textsuperscript{80} “These Israelites do not rely on their spears, but on the height of the mountains where they dwell; it is not easy to reach the summit of their mountains.” (Judith 7:10).
The number of prints of the city of Florence as well as the words written by Florentines about their city attested to this feeling of pride for Florence.81

Furthermore, Botticelli’s inclusion of Florence in a painting is not unique to the Judith. At the end of the fifteenth century Botticelli painted Florence in the landscape of The Mystic Crucifixion (Fig. 32). This city is indisputably Florence, as buildings such as the Duomo, Giotto’s Campanile, and the Palazzo della Signoria can be identified. The badly damaged panel depicts the crucified Christ in the foreground; below him are an angel and a repentant Mary Magdalene. In the sky, “angels descend at God’s command to drive back the black clouds of Hell that were about to roll over Florence” whose citizens have repented.82 The panel, dated c. 1497, reflects the sermons of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, and “the salvation of a repentant Florence.”83

A discussion of the landscape created by Botticelli is not complete without a consideration of how landscape was considered and approached in the fifteenth century, as well as Leonardo da Vinci’s anecdote about Botticelli concerning landscape. This painting, done early in Botticelli’s career, displays a conscientious and careful rendering of a landscape nearly in miniature.

In his writings that were compiled as the Codex Urbanus, Leonardo da Vinci critiqued both Botticelli’s comments concerning the execution of landscapes and Botticelli’s own landscapes as well.84 Although these two painters were both working

---

82 Lightbown, Botticelli: Life and Work, 2nd ed., 244.
83 Ibid., 244-246.
84 The documents known as the Codex Urbanis (Vatican) were compiled by Leonardo da Vinci’s pupil Francesco Melzi, in an attempt to organize the writings he inherited from Leonardo. Melzi placed Leonardo's writings on painting in a volume which was titled ‘Book on Painting by M. Leonardo da Vinci,
in Florence in the 1470s, they had different views about landscape painting. In a comparison of the *Return of Judith to Bethulia* with Leonardo’s *Annunciation* (Fig. 33), greater detail resulting from a close study of nature and botany can be seen in Leonardo’s painting as compared to Botticelli’s, yet only a few years separate these paintings. Leonardo wrote that Botticelli considered the study of landscape “of no use because by merely throwing a sponge soaked in a variety of colours at a wall there would be left on the wall a stain in which could be seen a beautiful landscape.” Although Leonardo agreed that *invenzioni* could be seen in such a stain, “they do not teach you how to finish any detail” resulting in “very sad landscapes,” such as those of Botticelli.²⁵ Botticelli may not have subscribed to Leonardo’s close study of nature and the importance Leonardo placed on perfecting all aspects of painting, including landscapes, but it would be a disservice to the works of Botticelli to assume that he gave no thought to the execution of his landscapes. Still, according to Lightbown, Leonardo’s anecdote about Botticelli and his landscapes is neither unwarranted nor unfounded; Botticelli’s backgrounds and landscapes are, “for all their airiness and charm, derivative and artificial, graceful terminations to a pictorial vista.”²⁶

The landscape of the *Judith* panel differs from many of Botticelli’s other landscapes precisely because of what is rendered in the landscape. The battle scene represents the event which took place after Judith and her maid returned to Bethulia.

---

²⁵ Ibid., 201-202. Leonardo wrote the following concerning Botticelli’s landscapes: “E questo tal pittore fece tristissimi paesi.” Since the passage is undated and does not reference any specific works by Botticelli, it cannot be ascertained whether Leonardo was referencing Botticelli’s work in the 1470s, the 1480s, or was speaking in generalities of the works he had seen. See Lightbown, *Botticelli: Life and Work*, vol. 1, 181, for the full passage.

Chronologically, the next passage of the text painted by Botticelli is the subject of *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes*. To finish the story, the viewer then returns to the panel of *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* and refers to the background, in which Judith has already returned and revealed the head, and the Bethulian soldiers leave the city to rout the Assyrian army, now disorganized after discovering their dead general. The landscape is not purely decorative but serves an important purpose as a rendition of the culmination of Judith’s actions, and the final episode of the narrative Botticelli painted. It is reasonable to conjecture, therefore, that Botticelli took as much care in painting this landscape as he did in his other paintings which contain multiple scenes of the same story, as seen in his fresco *The Trials of Moses* in the Sistine Chapel (Fig. 34).

The inclusion of several episodes from the Book of Judith in paintings was not especially common. A rather common composition of Judith showed her placing the head of Holofernes into a sack held by her maid, such as Andrea Mantegna’s *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* in the National Gallery of Ireland (Fig. 35). Others show Judith in the act of beheading Holofernes, such as Donatello’s bronze sculpture. Still others show Judith depicted in the format that recalls those used for virtues, in which she appears victorious, usually holding her sword and the head of Holofernes as well, as in the small panel of Judith on Lorenzo Ghiberti’s second set of bronze doors for the Florence Baptistery (Fig. 36). The only other Tuscan images of Judith which illustrated more than one episode of the narrative during the Quattrocento were cassone panels, such as the Dayton panel of *The Story of Judith* (Fig. 37), and a pavement design in Siena.

---

87 Several versions of this work were produced by Mantegna and his followers. For a detailed analysis of some of these pictures, refer to catalogue entries six, eight, and thirteen.
88 A discussion of Ghiberti’s *Judith* panel is found in catalogue entry 1.
Cathedral (Fig. 38), both of which include a scene highly reminiscent of Botticelli’s own versions illustrating the return of Judith and her maid to Bethulia. The tradition of depicting several events of the story of Judith within a single frame dates back to at least the Carolingian Bible of San Paolo Fuori le Mura, produced sometime around 860. In this Bible, the frontispiece to the Book of Judith depicts the story in three registers, showing the beginning and end of the story in the top register, where Judith is seen leaving and then returning to Bethulia (Fig. 39). Further examples of the range of representations of Judith are examined in the catalogue.

It remains undisputed that Botticelli’s Uffizi paintings were made to be viewed together and to complement each other as illustrating the outcome of Judith’s beheading of Holofernes. Concerning the function of the panels, previous scholarship has classified them as a type of small picture intended for close inspection, and not regularly on display in the home but instead kept wrapped and protected. This thesis does not claim to dispute that likely function, but to add to the discourse on the panels.

At first glance the Return of Judith to Bethulia and Discovery of the Body of Holofernes seem to illustrate only the book of Judith, but certain elements of the painting point towards a social and political interpretation responding to the events of 1466. Elements of the imagery such as the presence of the olive branch and the battle in the landscape suggest an allusion to a political context which the paintings may comment

---

89 For a discussion of each image, see catalogue entry 11 for the Dayton panel and catalogue entry 12 for the Siena pavement design.
90 For an analysis of this manuscript illumination, see Joachim Gaehde, “The Pictorial Sources of the Illustrations to the Books of Kings, Proverbs, Judith, and Maccabees in the Carolingian Bible of San Paolo Fuori Le Mura in Rome,” Frühmittelalterliche Studien 9 (1975): 381-382.
91 Lightbown, Botticelli: Life and Work, 2nd ed., 32-33. Lightbown asserts that because of their size, the panels are too small to have been originally made for any sort of furniture.
upon. One of those instances came following the death of Cosimo de’ Medici, when his son Piero was met with resistance in establishing and maintaining his position in the governance of Florence.

Upon the death of Cosimo de’ Medici in 1464, his son Piero was left in an uneasy position. Though Cosimo had largely won the support and a measure of control of the Florentine government and posthumously was given the title “Pater Patriae,” Piero was not held in that esteem. Leaders of other states thought that Piero would assume his father’s role as a leader of Florence and wrote to congratulate him of this, but not all of Florence believed the power and prestige Cosimo held should be passed to Piero, or to any of his descendants. Piero, though, quickly assumed his father’s state of affairs. He ordered a review of the assets of the Medici bank; several mistakes in recordkeeping as well as an overextension of credit were found. Piero then did what was necessary to aid this situation: he called in debts.

Piero was met with resistance and anger when he issued the order for debt collection. This order combined with other growing feelings of resentment toward the Medici. Jealousy of the wealth and influence of the family as well as of their alliance with the Sforza in Milan was prevalent among the prominent and wealthy families of Florence.

---

93 Specifically, Pope Pius II and Louis XI of France wrote to Piero expressing their condolences for the death of Cosimo and their respect towards him, and they placed their confidence in Piero as the worthy successor of Cosimo. These letters, translated into English, can be viewed in Janet Ross, *Lives of the Early Medici As Told in Their Correspondence* (Boston; The Gorham Press, 1911), 84-87.
Florence. Feelings of the loss of democracy stemming from Cosimo’s time existed among Florentines. Moreover, there existed a movement to push for more equality in the regime, which included both a larger pool of candidates for the Signoria and the return to the “sealed” purses as the method of selection for the Signoria and the Gonfaloniere. This would have ended the power of the accoppiatori, who were the ten men chosen by the Medici, who in turn selected from a pool of candidates the Gonfaloniere and the men to make up the Signoria each term.95

An opposition to Piero de’ Medici had begun to emerge soon after the death of Cosimo. In his memoir, Marco Parenti recalled the beginnings of this opposition as follows:

Piero de’ Medici, who no less than the princes of Italy needed to consider his affairs if he wished to maintain himself in the authority his father had left him, decided to take action against the city and its citizens. His reputation was much diminished at this time, and M. Luca Pitti held court at his house, where a large part of the citizens went to consult on matters of government. Amongst the other citizens M. Agnolo Acciaiuolo and M. Dietisalvi di Nerone were the most outstanding. Though superior to M. Luca in prudence, they consented to his having such prestige, and to increase it they too frequented his house. All this they did to block Piero de’ Medici, whom previously everyone was accustomed to consult on public affairs as well as private, and to take away from him the overbearing position that he had assumed . . . in this manner they had brought him down to such a degree that few frequented his house . . .

95 Mark Phillips, The Memoir of Marco Parenti: A Life in Medici Florence (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 169, 207. Part of this was achieved during the election of November 1465, when those elected to the Signoria and the Gonfaloniere were drawn from sealed purses.

96 Phillips, The Memoir of Marco Parenti, 190.
Niccolò Soderini was also a prominent member of the opposition. He was the brother of Tomaso Soderini, the man who would in a few years recommend Botticelli to paint virtues for the Mercanzia and who, in contrast to his brother, was a Medici supporter as well as a relation by marriage to Piero. From November to January 1465 Niccolò Soderini served as Gonfaloniere of Justice initially to much public support, but the reform measures he proposed for the elections and pool of candidates to government office lost him support. According to Machiavelli, despite the individual and self-serving aims of the conspirators, they were united in their wish to oust Piero and for the city to be “ruled by the magistracies, not by the advice of a small junta,” which was the Medici-supporting Council of One Hundred. They took these issues to the streets, canvassing the populace for support. In the past, politics occurred indoors, within the Signoria, and not out on the streets. Now politics was taken to the people, causing unease and fear, especially among those in leadership positions who now feared the stability of those positions.

As Florentines began taking sides and strengthening each party, the situation escalated to a breaking point. Piero was informed that his enemies, losing patience and support, had negotiated with Ferrara to assassinate him and to march upon Florence. Machiavelli wrote that “on this advice Piero armed and came to Florence surrounded by a great throng of armed men. After that, all those who belonged to his party armed, and the

97 Ibid., 171-174.
enemy part did the same.”99 Parenti corroborates this account, adding that Piero enlisted the support of two thousand Milanese troops.

The election of the Signoria of August 1466 proved decisive for both sides. The situation had reached such a point that,

In the morning [of the election] the soldiers arrived in every direction. They were kept outside the gates; those of Piero at San Gallo were more numerous and were well stocked with food, those of M. Luca on the other side of the Arno were meagerly provided. That morning at the usual hour and with great expectations from all sides, the new Signoria was drawn.100

As many as three thousand troops in addition to the Florentine citizens gathered in the piazza.101 The election favored Piero, causing his opponents to lose support. By this time Florence, who considered herself politically conservative, was tired of the current problems. The people wished for peace; “the example of peace and prosperity in the last years of Cosimo’s lifetime, the efficiency of a government that was not subject to the constant changes of direction and competence brought about by unrestricted rotation . . . the more ‘open’ the constitution was seen to be getting, the more they [Florentines] rallied behind Piero.”102 Convinced of the failure of the opposition and in an effort to save his own position in Florence, Pitti distanced himself from his co-conspirators and declared loyalty to Piero. Fearing their imminent arrest Neroni, Soderini, and Acciauoli

---

99 Ibid., 235.
102 Ibid., 47-48.
fled Florence; shortly after they were exiled from Florence, along with a number of their lesser supporters.\textsuperscript{103}

Though exiled, the men tried to enter into Piero’s good graces and thereby return to Florence, but were unsuccessful and lived the rest of their lives in exile. Neroni and Soderini, though, continued their battle with Piero, enlisting the help of Venice and Modena, and the Venetian condottiere Bartolomeo Colleoni, to march on Florence in what became known as the Colleonic war. The Florentine army, along with Milan and Naples, answered the threat. A few light skirmishes later, the conflict ended with the battle at Imola in 1468.\textsuperscript{104}

In the years following these events, histories and memoirs were written by those sympathetic to either side, though most were pro-Medici. The events and their outcome were never truly lost in the public memory; instead, "they were replayed in the minds of contemporaries and helped to shape the sense of citizenship Florentines brought to later moments of decision," including such events as the Pazzi conspiracy.\textsuperscript{105} The four men charged with leading the opposition were recalled as ambitious men led by pride and private desires. The Signoria exiled the men for "conspiring with foreign powers against

---

\textsuperscript{103} Philips, \textit{The Memoir of Marco Parenti}, 202-206. Marco Parenti listed the names and punishments of those condemned for their involvement in the plot, announced on 12 September 1466. A few days later, on 20 September, several families who had previously been exiled from Florence, including the Strozzi who were exiled upon Cosimo de’ Medici’s return to Florence from exile in 1434, were restored to the city and “were free of their penalties and were made eligible for office.”

\textsuperscript{104} Machiavelli, \textit{The History of Florence}, 239-243. Machiavelli maintains that the battle at Imola hardly qualified as one, since no one was killed. See also Phillips, \textit{The Memoir of Marco Parenti}, 212-213.

\textsuperscript{105} Phillips, \textit{The Memoir of Marco Parenti}, 220.
Florentine liberty. Iacopo di Niccolò di Cocco Donati, a Medici supporter, recalled in his ricordi the threat of "the destruction of the city and the loss of liberty." This conflict proved, to some Florentines, as yet another threat to the stability of the republic. Florence, dating back to its wars with Giangaleazzo Visconti at the beginning of the fifteenth century, placed a high importance upon the conception of itself as a republic, like that of the Romans. This republic was in opposition to, and frequently threatened by, the tyrant rulers of other states, such as Giangaleazzo Visconti. It is likely that the events of 1466, to some, would have stirred memories of the previous battles Florence had engaged in to preserve her liberty, such as those with Milan and Naples. Furthermore, memories of the previous insurrection against the Medici, in which Cosimo was exiled in 1433 by Rinaldo Albizzi, only to return a year later to exile Albizzi and several of his associates, were surely stirred up by both the events themselves and the reinstatement to Florence by some of those exiled with the Albizzi, such as the Strozzi.

Botticelli’s movements and patronage during the 1460s are difficult to chart. He probably entered the workshop of Filippo Lippi in the early 1460s and stayed until Lippi moved to Spoleto in 1468. As Filippo was dividing his time before 1468 between Prato and his workshop in Florence, Botticelli may have stayed at either location, or traveled between them with Lippi. Despite those movements, Botticelli would have been aware of the events in Florence either through his own experiences living in the city, or through

---

106 Ibid., 245.
107 Ibid., 243-244.
109 This event was particularly at the forefront of Marco Parenti’s letters and memoir, as he was related by marriage to the Strozzi and had sought, since his marriage, to have Filippo and Lorenzo Strozzi restored to Florence. See Philips, The Memoir of Marco Parenti.
his master Lippi, who had been patronized by and had corresponded with Piero de’ Medici as early as 1439. Vasari recorded that Lippi was also patronized by Piero’s father, Cosimo, and attributed several works as well as Lippi’s acquirement of the commission for the frescoes in Spoleto to that relationship. Such a relationship between Lippi and the Medici would have been known to Botticelli, and during those years probably would have inspired in Botticelli more sympathy towards the Medici than the opposition. Although only the Primavera and Minerva and the Centaur have been strongly connected to Medici family patronage, Botticelli owed a number of his commissions to the Medici, some of which were obtained through personal recommendations made by the family. Yet little is known of Botticelli’s patrons during the late 1460s and early 1470s. The first name associated with the commission of one of his works was for the altarpiece, the Adoration of the Magi of c. 1475, made for the funerary chapel of Guasparre di Zanobi del Lama. Despite the support shown to the

110 A letter written 13 August 1439 by Filippo Lippi and addressed to Piero di Cosimo at his villa in Trebbio concerns a panel Lippi had painted for Piero. From the letter, it seems Piero no longer wanted the panel and would not send Lippi any payment, which Lippi claims he desperately needed. Holmes, Fra Filippo Lippi, The Carmelite Painter, 154.
111 Lippi died at Spoleto, and was buried there. Vasari notes that years later, Lorenzo de’ Medici went to Spoleto in order to bring Lippi’s remains to Florence, “so they might be deposited in the Florentine Cathedral, Santa Maria del Fiore. His endeavors were unsuccessful, and Lippi’s body remained at Spoleto. A marble tomb was later erected for him, paid for by Nofri Tornabuoni. Lorenzo had Agnolo Poliziano compose an epigram to Lippi, which was then carved on the tomb; “CONDITUS HIC EGO SUM PICTURÆ FAMA PHILIPPIUS; / NULLI IGNOTA MEÆ EST GRATIA MIRA MANUS. / ARTIFICES POTUI DIGITIS ANIMARE COLORES, / SPERATAQUE ANIMOS FALLERE VOCE DIU. / IPSA MEIS STUPUIT NATURA EXPRESSA FIGURIS, / MEQUE SUIS FASSA EST ARTIBUS ESSE PAREM. / MARMOREO TUMULO MEDICES LAURENTIUS HIC ME / CONDIDIT; ANTE HUMILI PULVERE TECTUS ERAM.” Vasari, Lives, vol. 1, 442-443.
Medici in the painting through the portrayal of several family members, del Lama is not known through documentation to have been a supporter of the family.\textsuperscript{113}

Although there is no evidence to link the Uffizi panels to either the Medici or their associates, it is plausible that the patron of the panels was a Medici supporter. It is of some significance that the panels were first recorded close to a century after their execution to a man associated with the Medici, Ridolfo Sirigatti, and that he gave the panels to a Medici. Sirigatti was a Medici bureaucrat and an art collector.\textsuperscript{114} It is tempting to suggest that the panels had, before Sirigatti obtained them, continuously been in the possession of a Medici supporter since their completion.

In conclusion, I propose that Botticelli's \textit{Return of Judith to Bethulia} and \textit{Discovery of the Body of Holofernes} comment upon the political situation of Florence in 1466 and its aftermath. As Florence had come to identify with Judith during the Quattrocento as it had identified with David, some imagery of Judith gained a political context in which she served as an exemplary civic heroine. Donatello’s bronze \textit{Judith and Holofernes} stands as one strong example of how Judith operated publicly and politically. Furthermore, this statue may be linked directly to the outcome of the conspiracy of 1466 and the continuance of Medici power in Florence by means of an inscription added sometime after 1466: “The salvation of the state. Piero de’ Medici, son

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 170-171.  
of Cosimo, dedicated this statue of a woman both to liberty and to fortitude, whereby the citizens with unvanquished and constant heart might return to republic.”¹¹⁵

The panels may be both a commentary upon the events of 1466 and a warning against pride and ambition. Like Holofernes, the opponents of Piero and of Florentine liberty met with a terrible fate. Though Acciauoli, Soderini, and Neroni were not executed for their ambition, they were exiled from their homeland for the rest of their lives. Herbert Horne remarked that the landscape of the Judith panel resembled “the city, with its walls and towers, lying in a valley by a river, like Florence by the Arno, with the enemy encamped on the neighboring hills, as they were in actual warfare at Florence.”¹¹⁶

The army in the landscape recalls the very real presence of an armed force which gathered outside Florence, ready to follow the orders of Piero. Though each side had included foreign powers, Piero enlisted the help of Florence's ally, Milan, while his opponents looked instead to those powers which were not on the friendliest terms with Florence. The battle reflects a skirmish that could have ensued between the opposing forces of the supporters of Piero and those of his opponents. Like the army of Holofernes, leadership was lost and the anti-Medici coalition was defeated: Luca Pitti changed sides, his three collaborators fled the city, and the citizens dispersed.

The figure of Judith holding the olive branch and the sword represents the defense of liberty and peace. By destroying her enemy, Judith had rescued her city from tyranny

¹¹⁵ Sarah Blake McHam, “Donatello’s Bronze David and Judith as Metaphors of Medici Rule in Florence,” The Art Bulletin 83, no. 1 (March 2001): 36. This statue and the inscription are discussed further in Chapter Three and in endnote 143.
¹¹⁶ Horne, Botticelli, Painter of Florence, 24-25.
and brought peace. Likewise, in Florence, with the quelling of the uprising, peace was delivered to the city and was upheld by the Signoria.

Judith’s features and her melancholic appearance are difficult to reconcile with her triumphant actions. As I had suggested earlier, Judith’s facial expression suggests a meditation upon her actions. In looking at Judith, perhaps the viewer too is encouraged to meditate on the actions taken, both those of Judith and those taken in 1466 and beyond, in order to defend the liberty of a city. She holds the sword in a tight grip, but the olive branch is grasped very lightly between her thumb and index finger. Peace, symbolized by the olive branch held lightly in Judith’s hand, is difficult to hold on to, and often needs to be defended with the sword.

After a consideration of the information and issues of dating presented, I suggest a date of between 1469 and 1470. Those years experienced the death of Piero and the rise of Lorenzo as the head of the family, which was a smoother transition of Medici leadership than Piero’s had been. For Lorenzo, no major opposition occurred until 1478, the year of the Pazzi conspiracy. For the patron of the panels, the paintings would have served as objects through which to recall and reconsider the events of 1466, mediated through the story of Judith and Holofernes. The paintings could have been intended not only to commemorate the peaceful outcome of the conspiracy of 1466, but also to warn about the potential conflicts that can occur with a change in Medici leadership. The size of the panels makes any larger statement by the patron or by Botticelli unlikely, however, because such statements would be better suited by large, public works rather than small private paintings.
CHAPTER THREE: THE BOOK OF JUDITH

From the commentaries of the Middle Ages to current thoughts of how Judith images were viewed in the time and place in which they were made, an overview of various interpretations of Judith and the Book of Judith is essential in any discussion of Judith imagery. I will highlight several of the issues concerning Judith which I believe are important for understanding Botticelli’s Uffizi panels, as well as Botticelli’s subsequent images of Judith, which are examined in the catalogue.

First, an overview of the Book of Judith itself is useful. The historical inaccuracies of the events and names contained in the book have led scholars and commentators to the conclusion that the story is not based upon an actual event in Jewish history but may be “of the time of the Maccabees or later, wherein the writer sets forth in parable the hopes and fears of his nation, and stirs up his countrymen to heroic resistance to the oppressor.” The story seems to have been written and meant to be understood as an allegory, or a fictional account meant to inspire in the reader feelings of faith in God and “heroic resistance.” As such, the text is apocryphal in Judaism and Protestantism, but is included in the Catholic canon.

Moreover, several of the names given in the Book of Judith indicate the moralizing aspect of the story rather than the historicity of the account. Bethulia has several possible Hebrew translations or allusions toward Hebrew words, among them betūlah (“virgin” or “an innocent and pure young woman”) and bêt ‘elōah (“house of the

---

Lord, that is, the Temple or perhaps even the city of Jerusalem”). The name Holofernes “often signifies that particular power of the Devil by which Man was first tempted and seduced: Incontinence, or by her Latin name, Luxuria.” The name Judith may be a personification of Judaism, and indeed Judith translates as "Jewess." Judith, rather than referencing a specific historical figure, may instead refer to the Jewish people.

The Book of Judith was incorporated as part of the Catholic canon with Saint Jerome’s translation of the book into Latin. His commentary and introduction to the book established the basis for much of the commentaries and interpretations of the book that followed. He ended with the following:

Receive the widow Judith, a paradigm of chastity, and with triumphant laud make her known in perpetual praises. For not only for women, but also for men, she has been given as a model by the one who rewards her chastity, who has ascribed to her such virtue that she conquered the unconquered among all men, and surmounted the insurmountable.

Judith’s actions, according to Jerome, gave her the status of both heroine and moral exemplary as a woman embodying the virtue of chastity.

Beyond the Book of Judith’s status as part of the canon, Judith became important for early Christians in other ways. Her actions gained further significance for Christianity when Prudentius included her in his *Psychomachia*, or the “Fight for Man’s Soul.”

She figures in the battle between Chastity (*Pudicitia*) and Lust (*Libido*), where Chastity used her sword to smite her foe. Holofernes, a man ruled by lust, desired Judith and lost his life in his pursuit of her. Judith, personifying Chastity, “checked his unclean passion with the sword, and woman as she was, won a famous victory over the foe with no trembling hand.” As an Old Testament heroine, Judith’s victory prefigured Mary’s victory over Lust, in which Lust was defeated when both Mary and Christ were conceived and born without sin. With those events, Prudentius wrote, much of Lust’s claim over the human soul was lost.

Judith makes another appearance in which she personifies a virtue in the *Speculum Virginum*, or the Mirror of Virgins, the earliest known copy of which dates to around 1140. The manuscript was a teaching tool used in convents and monasteries for the instruction of young women, extolling self-reflection upon vices and virtues. Humility (*Humilitas*) is stressed as the most important virtue one must possess, and the

---

123 Aurelius Prudentius Clemens was a Roman Christian poet who lived from 348 to the early 400s. The *Psychomachia* described the battles between virtues and their opposing vices.


125 Ibid., 284-285. “Well, since a virgin immaculate has borne a child, hast thou any claim remaining—since a virgin bore a child, since the day when man’s body lost its primeval nature, and power from on high created a new flesh, and a woman unwedded conceived the God Christ, who is man in virtue of his mortal mother but God along with the Father? From that day all flesh is divine, since it conceives Him and takes on the nature of God by a covenant of partnership.” *post partum virginis, es quo / corporis humani naturam pristina origo / deseruit carmenque novam vis ardua sevit, / atque innupta Deum concepit femina Christum, / mortali de matre hominem, sed cum Patre numen. / inde omnis iam diva caro est quae concipit illum naturamque Dei consortis doedere sumit.’

126 The earliest extant manuscript copy of the *Speculum Virginum* is Arundel MS. 44 in the British Library, which dates to ca. 1140.
base from which one may aspire to and obtain other virtues. The virtuous Judith is associated with Humility, who defeats Pride (Superbia). The reader is encouraged to contemplate the humility of figures such as Judith, and “conquer the vice of pride.”

In depicting Judith as a type of virtue, such as those delineated in the Psychomachia, the Mirror of Human Salvation, and the Speculum Virginum, a similar composition was used. Judith may be shown with the sword in one hand and the head of Holofernes in the other. Both Judith and Holofernes may be depicted in the moment of her triumph over Holofernes, and thus all vices he embodies. This psychomachic formula is used to illustrate the triumph of virtue over vice, in which virtue is shown standing over or trampling vice, as in an illumination from a Speculum Virginum in the British Library in London (Fig. 40). Donatello’s Judith and Holofernes employs this formula. Judith stands above Holofernes, holding him up to deliver a second blow to fully sever his head. The first inscription which accompanied this sculpture further supported the depiction of virtue over vice, and the personifications of Humility and Pride by Judith and Holofernes, respectively: “Kingdoms fall through luxury; cities rise through virtue. Behold the neck of Pride severed by the hand of Humility.”

Botticelli did not directly follow this formula in The Return of Judith to Bethulia, but he did employ it in the Calumny of Apelles, in which Judith appears as a statue in a niche above the throne of the king. She holds the sword in one hand, with the head of

128 Ibid., 279.
130 REGNA CADUNT LUXU, SURGUNT VIRTUTIBUS URBES / CESA VIDES HUMILI COLLU SUPERBA MANU. Another translation is the following: “Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtue. Behold the proud neck severed by a humble hand.” This inscription was found on the column which supported the sculpture. John Pope-Hennessy, Donatello (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993), 280.
Holofernes appearing at her feet. Judith is shown robed with her hair covered, which is a stark contrast to the rather lavish garments worn by Judith in *The Return of Judith to Bethulia*. Instead, these garments recall those of Donatello’s *Judith* and the earlier manuscript traditions in which Judith is dressed in garments which cover most of her body, including a veil, indicating the wearer exemplifies Chastity (*Castitas*) and *Sanctimonia*.

Another medieval religious document in which Judith made an appearance was the *Mirror of Human Salvation* (*Speculum Humanae Salvationis*), where Judith was argued to be a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary. The text of the *Mirror of Human Salvation* “recounts the Christian story of redemption in . . . chapters that explore Old Testament characters and storylines understood as types, or precursors, of people and events that would occur in the New Testament.” Through a series of interpretations of the Old and New Testaments, Judith’s actions taken in order to save her people were likened to Mary’s defeat of Satan in order to save the Church. In other words, “the medieval allegorical imagination understood that, just as Judith defeated Holofernes, so

---

131 For a discussion of the *Calumny of Apelles* and Judith’s appearance in the painting, see catalogue entry 10.
132 Freedman, “The Metamorphoses of Judith,” 237. An example of this is the Judith frontispiece from the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura.
133 Kimberly L. Vrudny, *Friars, Scribes, and Corpses: A Marian Confraternal Reading of the ‘Mirror of Human Salvation’* (*Speculum humanae salvationis*) (Walpole, MA, et al.: Peeters, 2010), 11. The date and geographical location of the original *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* are unknown, as is its scribe. According to Vrudny, it is probable that the original scribe was a Dominican friar who wrote the *Speculum* early in the fourteenth century in Bologna, Italy. See ibid., 12-28.
134 Ibid., 115-127. The interpretation of Mary as savior of the Church rests on an earlier interpretation of Genesis 3:15. In this passage, Mary is interpreted as the destroyer of the serpent, and as the serpent became an allegory of Satan, the passage was further interpreted as Mary’s defeat of Satan.
Mary defeated the serpent.” The poet of the *Mirror of Human Salvation* justified the reference as follows:

[Mary] is prefigured indeed through Judith, who resisted Holofernes,  
Because she opposed the devil, the infernal prince.  
Judith clothed herself in clothes of celebration,  
And adorned her head with a turban and her feet with sandals.  
Mary clothed herself in the tunic of her seamless Son  
And cloaked herself in the double robes of His derision.

Judith’s story allows her to easily be linked to another Old Testament figure, David. Judith and David have been considered pendants since the Middle Ages. Both are figured as saviors of the Jewish people; aided by God, they defeated an enemy stronger than them, who threatened to oppress the Israelites. Furthermore, both beheaded their enemies and returned to their home city with the heads as trophies. This association was visible to Florentines in Ghiberti’s doors to the Baptistery referred to as the “Gates of Paradise,” where a niche figure of Judith was placed beside the larger panel of *Battle Against the Philistines and Killing of Goliath* (Fig. 41). In the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, both Holofernes and Goliath were allegorized as the Devil; likewise, the triumphs of Judith and David over their opponents both prefigured and served as allegories for the triumphs of the Virgin Mary and Christ, respectively, over the devil.

In addition, the pairing of David and Judith was one which Botticelli seems to have preferred, as evidenced in his recorded suggestion on where to place Michelangelo’s

135 Ibid., 125.  
136 Ibid., 129.  
David. He voiced an interest in placing the marble statue to the right of the steps of the Duomo “with a Judith at the other corner.”

The stories of David and Judith allowed them to move beyond religious interpretations to serve a more secular purpose. David was associated as a civic hero of Florence perhaps as early as 1408 or 1416, coinciding with the dates of the possible creation and movements of Donatello’s marble David (Fig. 42). In August 1416 the statue was moved to the Palazzo Signoria. Beyond the statue’s placement in a government building, the inscription further associates David as a model hero for the Florentines: “To those who bravely fight for the fatherland the gods will lend aid even against the most terrible foes.”

David and Judith were appealing models for Florence and Florentines, since both David and Judith overcame their respective disadvantages of youth and gender to defeat their enemies and preserve the liberty of their cities.

The link between Judith and Florentine politics is most evident in Donatello’s sculpture of Judith and Holofernes, in which Judith figures as a defender of liberty. Documents of the commission of Donatello’s Judith are not extant but it is believed that it was commissioned by a Medici. This statue, probably completed sometime in the 1450s, must be understood in the context of Cosimo’s efforts to insert himself, and by extension his family, into a position in the Florentine government in which Cosimo could in large part hand-pick those who would serve in office by reducing not only the number

---

138 Richardson, et al., Renaissance Art Reconsidered, 319.
141 The possible original patrons of Donatello’s Judith and Holofernes include Cosimo de’ Medici, Piero de’ Medici, Siena, or an unknown patron. See Jansen, The Sculpture of Donatello, vol. 2, 200-204.
of people but also the families eligible to hold office. Cosimo’s ever-tightening control had to be legitimized in a way that Florence still appeared, on the surface, to be a democracy. The Medici had to defend their right to rule Florence without appearing to do so or they ran the risk of being viewed as tyrants. How this could be achieved is best summarized as follows:

The principle circles of the political class . . . had to be made to believe that Medici rule represented a continuation of the republic through the employment of different and better means and thus that this family’s supremacy meant not the end of the free state but its glorious consummation. . . . The Medici had to present themselves as the incarnation of their native town, its history, and its values.142

What better way to assert this than with large bronzes of Florence’s protector, David, and of Judith as well, visible in the Medici courtyard and gardens from the street.143

Both the David and the Judith and Holofernes reassert the Medici family’s status as defenders of the liberty and values of the Florentine republic against the tyranny of foreign invasion. The inscription added to the Judith and Holofernes by Piero sometime in the 1460s supports this: “The public weal. Piero son of Cosimo de’ Medici dedicated the stature of this woman to liberty and to the fortitude with which the citizens, with resolute and unvanquished spirit, bring to the public good.”144 Piero’s inscription, according to Dale Kent, “reasserts the Medici family’s identification with the republic,

144 Pope-Hennessy, Donatello, 280. SALUS PUBLICA. PETRUS MEDICES COS. FI. LIBERTATI SIMUL ET FORTITUDINI HANC MULIERIS STATUAM QUO CIVES INVICTO CONSTANTIQUE A[N][M]O AD REM. PUB. REDDERENT DEDICAVIT. This inscription (now lost) was placed on the column upon which the sculpture stood in the garden of the Medici palace in Florence. It was put on the opposite side of the first inscription. See catalogue entry 2 for further inscriptions associated with the statue.
and the defense of its liberty.”145 The statue was a visible piece of propaganda placed on Medici property “to bear testimony to the fact that the spirit of the republic resided there with the Medici family, and that the Medici embodied the republic and its values and would defend these with their lives.”146 Here, before Botticelli had completed his Judith, was a Judith depicted not only as a defender of Florentine liberty, but one that also responded to the events of 1466.

The position Judith occupied as a type of civic heroine in Florence was unstable. The Renaissance world was a male-dominated one, in which an image of a woman who overpowers a man could not long be considered as an appropriate civic symbol. By the time *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* and *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes* entered the collection of Bianca Capello de’ Medici by 1584, and certainly within Botticelli’s own lifetime, images of Judith and their reception had changed from when Botticelli first painted the panels. No longer was Judith considered an appropriate type of model for a city; the decline of the Florentine republic that was established with the 1494 exile of the Medici saw the end of that role for Judith. This may be noted in the comment given by the First Herald of the Signoria, Francesco, one of the men asked to offer suggestions on where to place Michelangelo’s *David*. His words were recorded fewer than nine years after Donatello’s statue of Judith was given the status of Florentine civic symbol.

The Judith is an emblem of death, and it is not fitting for the Republic—especially when our emblems are the cross and the lily—and I say it is not fitting that the woman should

145 Kent, *Cosimo De’ Medici and the Florentine Renaissance*, 283.
kill the man. And even more important, it [Donatello’s
Judith and Holofernes] was erected under an evil star, for
from that day to this, things have gone from bad to worse . .

147

 Though images of Judith continued to be produced, she was no longer viewed as a civic figure for Florence.

147 Ibid., 318.
CONCLUSION

This thesis has presented a close study of *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* and *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes* in relation to the literature on Botticelli and the impact it has had on critiques of his work, the possible painters and paintings which could have influenced the young Botticelli, the status and interpretations of Judith through the end of the fifteenth century, and the social and political climate of Florence Botticelli experienced in the 1460s and 1470s. I have shown that in addition to depicting a narrative through two small panels, the paintings likely responded to the political problems of Florence from 1465 to 1466, the years in which Piero de’ Medici and his party weathered one of their strongest oppositions and solidified the Medici presence in the political atmosphere of Florence.

*The Return of Judith to Bethulia* and *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes* represent the beginning of Botticelli’s career as an independent Florentine artist. They showcase his emerging skill at executing small-scale works and, perhaps more importantly, his ability to render a fresh yet studied interpretation of a popular theme. However, for all of their straightforwardness in illustrating specific events of the Book of Judith, Botticelli’s panels cause us to look again and again, reforming our opinions of both Judith and Holofernes. Botticelli’s ability to convey emotion in all of its complexities and contradictions in his figures remains one of the most enduring qualities of his paintings. That Judith appears to show melancholy during her triumphant return to Bethulia will forever stay in the memory of anyone who views the painting. Writers
since Pater and Ruskin have sought to explain this. Yet there is no simple answer in puzzling through the meanings of Botticelli’s imagery.
CATALOGUE OF SELECTED IMAGES OF JUDITH FROM BOTTICELLI’S TIME

Representations of the story of Judith and Holofernes made during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries could be found in both public and private locations. They appear as public sculpture, in religious settings of churches and chapels and in the private bedrooms and studioli of the wealthy. Not only was Judith a religious exemplar, she was also an exemplar for contemporary women, and thus deemed fit for inclusion on such secular items as cassoni. The following catalogue of selected Judith images aims to show the variety of mediums used for Judith, focusing on those works which were produced during Botticelli’s lifetime, from the decade of the 1450s to 1510.

Included in this small sampling of the large number of extant works devoted to Judith and Holofernes are works from outside Florence. They show both the circulation of known motifs and the development of new motifs in Judith imagery. A major goal of the catalog is to illustrate the types of works Botticelli must have known and perhaps drew some inspiration from for his own paintings. The catalogue also supports the notion that Botticelli’s paintings likely had some impact on the works of other artists. Several of the works, like Botticelli’s Uffizi panels, may have alluded to contemporary politics. In addition to Donatello’s Judith, Botticelli’s Story of Lucretia may have responded to the expulsion of the Medici from Florence.

The catalogue is arranged in three categories that present images of Judith by type. In the first category are images that show only Judith. Depicted outside the scope of a narrative, Judith assumes a singular, symbolic status in these images. The catalogue continues with a second category of images in which Judith is given some kind of
narrative context, such as those of Andrea Mantegna and Botticelli’s Amsterdam painting of Judith, dated around 1497. Images in the third category show multiple scenes of Judith’s narrative. Two of these works share the remarkably similar compositional arrangement of Judith and her maid that is seen in Botticelli’s Uffizi and Cincinnati panels depicting Judith’s return to Bethulia. The catalogue ends with a final consideration of Botticelli’s Uffizi panels, focusing on how the panels may be viewed and presented.

1. Lorenzo Ghiberti and workshop, Judith (Fig. 36)
1425-1452
Gilt bronze
Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Florence (formerly on the east doors of Florence Baptistery)

This small figure of Judith was one of twenty-four others figures that served as part of the framing of Ghiberti’s second set of bronze doors executed for Florence’s Baptistery, the Gates of Paradise. Among the framing figures are five female and nineteen male figures depicting prophets and Old Testament heroes and heroines. Little is known concerning specific dates of the casting and finishing of these small figures. While a letter dated 4 April 1436 reveals that all ten panels and the twenty-four small figures had been cast by that time, another document, dated January 1448, records that the pieces of the frame had yet to be chased.

The figure of Judith is that of a young woman clothed in billowing garments who holds a sword she raises triumphantly above her head, with the head of Holofernes held at her side. The figure is set within a niche that originally appeared to the left of the large panel of *The Battle Against the Philistines and the Killing of Goliath* at the bottom of the doors. This placement directly associates Judith with David; their victories over their enemies “fortells the salvation of mankind and Christ’s victory over death.” Ghiberti’s *Judith* may have served as a source for works of Judith executed after the installation of the doors. In addition, the head of Holofernes may have provided a visible example to artists since most images of Judith which contain the head of Holofernes show Holofernes as Ghiberti did: an older man with the hair of his head and beard long, full, and tousled.

Despite the loss of some surface gilding, the figure appears to be in good condition. There are no readily apparent losses or damage to the bronze figure. The doors were first cleaned between 1943 and 1948. The flooding of the Arno in 1966 damaged the doors, and since the Judith is located at the bottom of the doors the figure was likely damaged at this time. Following a period of restoration after the flood, the doors were removed from the Baptistery in 1990 to undergo conservation and an intensive restoration, and remain indoors.

---

151 Ibid., 17-18.
Donatello, *Judith and Holofernes* (Fig. 7)  
c. 1455-1466  
Bronze, some gilding  
Height 236 cm  
Palazzo Vecchio, Florence

Donatello’s *Judith* shows the heroine on the cusp of triumph over her enemy. Judith stands above the sitting Holofernes and raises her sword to deliver a blow to his neck. The sword itself was once gilded, and traces of gilding remain. Judith grasps Holofernes by his hair to keep him upright against her own body, using her leg to keep him balanced and still. The strike she prepares to deliver is likely the second blow which finally severs his head, as there is evidence of a wound already at his neck.

Several elements of the sculpture highlight the opposition of virtue and vice through Judith and Holofernes. The conservative apparel of Judith, which covers her head, arms, and legs contrasts with Holofernes’s state of undress. This contrast further underscores the victory of Judith through her chastity and humility, and the defeat of Holofernes, who has been incapacitated by his own vice-ridden lifestyle. Holofernes sits upon a pillow, which is a further reference to *Luxuria*. The triangular base upon which the statue rests is decorated on the front panel with a Bacchic orgy and on the back two panels with scenes depicting the harvesting and stomping of grapes for wine production. The emphasis on wine and drunkenness, of course, relates to the drunkenness of Holofernes.

The *Judith and Holofernes* was first recorded in 1464 as occupying a place in the garden of the Medici palace. It remained there until it was seized by the state on 9

---

October 1495 for the opera of the Palazzo della Signoria (town hall). According to Luca Landucci, on 21 December 1495 the statue “was placed on the ringhiera of the Palazzo de’ Signori, by the side of the door.” However, on 8 June 1504, the statue was replaced by Michelangelo’s David, and was moved inside the town hall. On 10 June 1506, the statue was again moved, this time to the nearby Loggia dei Lanzi (Loggia de’ Signoria), where it remained until World War I, when it was moved to the Museo Nazionale for reasons of safety. In 1919 it was placed again in front of the town hall, occupying nearly the same place it had from 1495 until 1504. Except for a period of time during World War II, when it was again removed for its safety, the statue remained on the steps of the town hall until it was removed for cleaning in 1984.

A total of four inscriptions have been associated with the statue, of which two remain inscribed on it today. The first, which is on the cushion upon which Holofernes sits, and is between his hands, identifies the statue as a work of Donatello: OPVS DONATELLI FLO. The second remaining inscription, which is on the pedestal, is EXEMPLVM SAL PVB CIVES POS MCCCCXCV. The other two inscriptions were on the pedestal used for the statue when it was in the Medici gardens. The first read

Regna cadunt luxu, surgunt virtutibus urbes / caesa vides humili colla superb manu

(Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtue. Behold the neck of pride

---

156 The statue was cleaned between 1984 and 1988, and since 1984 the statue has been in the town hall, with a copy now found outside the town hall.
severed by a humble hand). The second stated *Salus Publica. Petrus Medices Cos. Fi. Libertati simul et foritudini hanc mulieris statuam quo cives / invicto constantique animo ad rem. pub. / redderent dedicavit* (The public weal. Piero son of Cosimo de’ Medici dedicated the statue of this woman to liberty and to the fortitude with which the citizens, with resolute and unvanquished spirit, bring to the public good.).\(^{158}\)

3. Matteo di Giovanni, *Judith* (Fig. 43)
c. 1493-1494
Tempera on Panel
55.9 x 46.0 cm
Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, Indiana


This fragment of a panel depicts Judith holding both the sword and the head of Holofernes, following a more triumphant depiction of Judith, such as that of Lorenzo Ghiberti. Her lower body is cut off by a ledge which runs the length of the panel. In the background two landscapes can be seen at either side of Judith. The left side is occupied


\(^{159}\) This provenance was obtained thanks to the Indiana University Art Museum Provenance project: Matteo di Giovanni, <https://www.indiana.edu/~iuam/provenance/view.php?id=259> (accessed 5-17-2011)
by a mountainside and a few faintly visible structures in the distance. To the right, the
tents of the Assyrian army cover the landscape, along with two soldiers, one of which is
on horseback. The panel was part of a series of eight exemplary heroes, or virtuous men
and women from Greek, Roman, and Hebrew antiquity. \textit{Judith} was probably paired with
a panel thought to be either Joseph of Egypt or Eunostos of Tanagra.\footnote{This panel has been cut down at the bottom, and has lost the inscription which named the figure. An analysis of the narratives in the background support an identification of either man.}

Compared to the other seven panels, the \textit{Judith} is the most severely altered. A
seven centimeter false extension at the lower edge refers to the ledge which appears
before Judith. In contrast, there are no ledges in the other paintings in the series, and the
seven other figures are all shown in their entirety.\footnote{Luke Syson, “Virtuous Men and Women,” \textit{Renaissance Siena: Art for a City}, Luke Syson et al. (London: National Gallery Company, 2007), 234-235. See also Fern Rusk Shapley, who noted about the panel that it had “been shortened and the painted balustrade added on a separate piece of wood.” See \textit{Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection, Italian Schools, XIII-XV century} (London: Phaidon Press, 1966), 157.} The panels that have not been
reduced in size show a full figure standing upon a stone plinth that bears an inscription
relating to the figure above as well as a narrative in the landscape, also relating to the
figure. Therefore, about half of the \textit{Judith} panel is lost, including her own pedestal and
inscription. This panel is also missing most of Judith’s narrative elements, as only the
very top portions of these are visible.\footnote{Syson, “Virtuous Men and Women,” 239.} It is likely that the original panel would have
followed the formula of the others, in which case Judith would have been a full-length
figure standing upon a stone plinth with an inscription describing her heroic deeds and
perhaps her chastity as well, as the remaining inscriptions for the women, Sulpitia and
\textit{Claudia Quinta} (Fig. 44), both state their chastity, and with additional scenery behind her
relating to her narrative.
Judith is the only painting Matteo di Giovanni contributed to the series; the others were painted by the Master of the Story of Griselda, Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Pietro Orioli, and Neroccio di Bartolomeo de’Landi. The Master of the Griselda story contributed to most of the paintings and finished several of the panels begun by other artists. A reason for the Griselda Master’s additional contributions is that he likely was made head of the project, and was responsible for unifying the appearance of the panels. The large number of painters working on a single project led to differences of style still visible today, especially evident among the panels of the women, which were left more to the individual painters than to the Griselda Master.

Two separate families have been cited as the possible patrons of the series, the Piccolomini and the Spannocchi. The paintings may have been made to commemorate the marriage of Silvio Piccolomini and Battista Placidi in January 1493. An association with the Piccolomini family is supported by the inclusion of what may be their crescents held by some of the putti on the plinths. Recent research into the provenance of the Judith panel led by the Indiana University Art Museum Provenance project has placed the panel within the Piccolomini collection as early as 1530, lending some additional credence to Piccolomini patronage. The panels have also been linked to the Spannocchi family, as the dominant colors of the panels of red, gold, and golden-brown are the same colors as those of the Spannocchi coat of arms. Luke Syson has proposed a plausible link to the Spannocchi due to the defacement of the banners in the panels of this series, which appears the same as the defacement of banners in the Griselda panels that were done for the Spannocchi. The similarity presents the possibility that all the panels were located in

163 Ibid., 242.
the same area at the time of the defacement. The Griselda panels, which depict scenes from Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, were executed by the Griselda master for the double wedding of Antonio and Giulio Spannocchi; these are the panels for which the Griselda master is named.

4. Giorgione, *Judith* (Fig. 45)  
c. 1503-1508  
Oil on canvas (transferred from wood panel)  
144 x 68 cm  
State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg  
Provenance: M. Bertin; Jean Baptist Forest; by 1729, Pierre Crozat; Louis-François Crozat, marquis du Châtel; 1770, Louis-Antoine Crozat, baron de Thiers; 1772, collection of Catherine II of Russia, from the Crozat collection.

The first thing one can note about Giorgione’s *Judith* is her lack of being situated in any concrete passage in the biblical narrative. If not for the sword she holds and the decapitated head at her feet, she would not be recognizable as Judith. Giorgione placed his heroine in front of a low stone wall, beyond which is a landscape with a town appearing in the hazy distance. In the foreground, Judith, the wall, the large tree behind her, and the vegetation on the ground are rendered with a tighter, more precise brushstroke than those details in the background. The vegetation is executed in such a way that it can be identified. The use of sfumato somewhat obscures the town in the distance as well as the mountains beyond it; they appear to be enveloped by a fog or mist descending from the mountains, which makes it unclear whether the town is situated on a

---

164 Ibid., 243.  
166 Jayne Anderson, *Giorgione The Painter of ‘Poetic Brevity’* (New York: Flammarion, 1997), 200, notes the presence of “…wild flowers, white grape hyacinths, sylvan tulips and a rare *Columbina japonica*, a plant then only recently introduced to Italy.”
hill, as would be true to Bethulia if the town is supposed to be Bethulia, or on flat ground. It would seem, though, that Judith is somewhere in Bethulia as the land seems to drop beyond the stone wall. Sfumato and shadow also blur the line between the head of Holofernes, his hair, and ground. These painterly techniques, however, add to the grotesque appearance of the head; it appears to have already begun to deteriorate, indicating it has been some time since it was separated from the body.

Judith stands with her back to the wall and the landscape, resting one arm on a high ledge of the wall as her fingers play with the belt of her dress. Her gaze is directed down to the head of Holofernes on the ground, on which she places her bare foot on his forehead and scalp. A slit in her dress exposes her leg and much of her thigh. The sword she holds is incredibly large; the hilt is just above Judith’s waistline and extends all the way to the tip on the ground. Most of the swords Judith is depicted with are much shorter, since she is often shown holding them aloft, as in the previous art works discussed in this catalogue, or comfortably at her side, as Botticelli painted her in the Uffizi and Cincinnati panels. The dress she wears is rather simple when compared to later Venetian paintings of Judith, such as those ascribed to Tintoretto; it is pink, with some gold sewn in around the neckline and both arms. The only jewelry she wears is a brooch and a jewel hairpiece resting at the part of her hair.

167 Some scholars, among them Jaynie Anderson and Jan Białostocki, suggest that her eyes are closed. However, the edge of her upper and lower eyelids could show a slight amount of space between them. A slightly darker spot on each eye could indicate the presence of her irises, lending credence to the idea that her eyes are open. It remains too unclear to say for sure whether her eyes are definitely open or definitely closed, but I propose that they are open and she looks down at the head of Holofernes.

Jan Białostocki noted a divide in the work between “[on the one hand] the
dominant calm, collected, contemplative mood and, on the other, the motifs of death, like
the severed head and the sharp, deadly weapon: between the dainty way the woman
balances the huge sword (holding it almost like a pen) and the obvious consequences of
her brutal act.”\textsuperscript{169} Drawing a diagonal through the work, separating the upper body of
Judith along with the tree and higher wall from the lower part containing the sword,
wrinkled garments, decomposing head, and hazy landscape, shows the divide between
tranquility and chaos, life and death.\textsuperscript{170} Giorgione’s composition seems to separate
Judith from Holofernes, and therefore separates virtue from vice; yet, the elements of life
and death are nevertheless presented in a harmonious way.

This image differs from Ghiberti’s and Donatello’s because it blurs the
boundaries between representing Judith as a virtuous heroine or as a murderous femme
fatale. The bare foot associates Judith with humility; the bare thigh implies eroticism,
however, and aids in referencing Judith as a seductive figure. In addition, Judith’s foot
upon the head of Holofernes appears to caress his hair rather than triumphantly display it
as a trophy. These details, it has been written, may have “already been symptomatic of a
turning point in the long iconographic development of the subject, from being an allegory
of the loftiest, most sacred virtues to being a wild, wicked, and deadly maenad.”\textsuperscript{171} The
tradition of painting Judith was not particularly strong or common when Giorgione

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., 115.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 115-116. According to Białostocki, “…on the upper right are serenity, tranquility, the sky, and
life (which the large tree stands for). On the left is death, the earth, the deadly weapon, shades of dark red,
the turbulent draping of her fluttering, wrinkled, and crumpled robe.”
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 131. Białostocki discusses Giorgione’s Judith and the evolution in the representations of Judith
from medieval manuscripts and sculpture through Klimt. The suggestion of Judith as a reference to the
classical Greek and Roman maenads was one made by Aby Warburg-Judith as a head huntress.
executed the panel in the early sixteenth century, and he may have looked outside Venice to the work of other Italian or perhaps to Northern European artists, where a tradition of painting Judith as a femme fatale already existed.

Though the patron of the Judith is unknown, the painting was originally on a wood panel that almost certainly served as a cabinet door (the painting was transferred to canvas in 1893). Scans have revealed that a piece of wood was once attached to the panel, presumably to cover a keyhole that would no longer have been needed when the panel was removed from the door and emerged as a singular panel in the Crozat collection in Paris.172

5. Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (il Sodoma), *Judith* (Fig. 46)
c. 1510 - 1512
Tempera on wood panel
75 x 47.5 cm
Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena

Provenance: Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, Siena; Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena.

In a format similar to the painting of Judith by Giorgione, Judith is set against a landscape which does not directly recall anything from the apocryphal account. She holds a sword in one hand and the head of Holofernes in the other. The landscape appears more barren than the abundant vegetation painted by Giorgione for his *Judith*. The ground Judith stands upon is brown and without any sort of greenery save for a few bushes which appear in the background. Two tall trees appear to the right of Judith, their branches bare. In the distance to either side of Judith may be seen the hazy outline of

---

cities and mountains. In this rather brown and lifeless landscape the viewer’s eye is
drawn to the colors used for Judith, especially her blue dress with its reddish robe.

This panel may have formed a pair with a *Lucretia* of roughly the same size
owned by the Kestner Museum at Hannover.\(^{173}\) It is possible as well that the panel was
part of a larger series of figures, such as a series of *uomini famosi* or a series of female
figures personifying virtues. Along with a *Charitas*, the *Judith* and *Lucretia* may have
formed a series illustrating the theological virtues. With the *Judith* associated with Hope
and *Lucretia* associated with Faith, the panels may have adorned a room in a palace; the
palace of Pandolfo Petrucci has been singled out as a possibility.\(^{174}\) As Judith is not set
within a narrative, it seems likely that the painting was meant to associate Judith with
virtues or to illustrate her as a famous female figure.

Hayum considered the panel to be in good condition, the surface “somewhat
abraded.”\(^{175}\)

6. Anonymous, after Andrea Mantegna, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (Fig. 47)
c. 1480s
Pen and dark brown ink with black chalk and white heightening on olive-brown
prepared paper laid down on canvas
34.8 x 20.2 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Samuel H. Kress Collection)

Provenance: Count Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi [1878-1955]; sold 26 June
1935 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York, as by Mantegna; 1939, gift
to the National Gallery of Art.

1976), 125.


\(^{175}\) Hayum, *Giovanni Antonio Bazzi*, 124.
This highly detailed, finished drawing shows Judith placing the head of Holofernes into a sack held by her maid. No additional narrative elements identify the scene for this painting, such as the tent included in other renditions of this scene associated with Mantegna. Some evidence of a ground line is made by a few lines of white heightening, and possibly the remnants of letters.

The number of paintings, drawings, and prints of Judith executed by Mantegna and his followers indicate the theme was of some interest to Mantegna and his patrons. The Washington drawing is believed to have been copied from a now-lost original composition by Mantegna. The existence of two other nearly identical drawings executed by different hands supports this claim. A drawing such as this could have been made as a gift, or for a patron who simply desired a drawing after Mantegna’s variations on the Judith story. It very closely imitates the paintings by Mantegna of Judith with the head of Holofernes in Dublin and in Montreal.

The drawing is in good condition, though it has not escaped some damage and repainting. The edges are mostly clean with some small tears along the right side. The drawing does not appear to have been cut down or in any way reduced in size. There are small holes throughout the surface, the largest of which appear in the beard of Holofernes and the neckline of Judith’s dress. Some repainting, which appears as a light, cream color, may be noticed at the following areas: the neck of Judith and upper portion of her dress, the fabric covering her hair, the dress and nose of the maid, the beard of

---

177 Ibid., 241. The two other drawings are currently held in the collections of the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, and of the Duke of Devonshire and the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees.
Holofernes, and smaller sections of the garments of both women. This repainting could have been added to repair some damage, or to add more visible shading, which contrasts with the more subtle shading utilized by the original artist. There are some water stains at the top of the drawing. On the back, some adhesive remnants appear at the four corners of the drawing, which suggests that the drawing was pasted to another surface and later removed. The paper is a darker olive brown color which has been mounted on linen canvas.  

---

7. Sandro Botticelli, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (Fig. 4)  
c. 1497-1498  
Tempera on wood panel  
36.5 x 20 cm  
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam  


This panel, slightly larger than the earlier *Return of Judith to Bethulia*, is Botticelli’s last painting solely devoted to Judith. Judith is shown emerging from the black void of the tent of Holofernes, the sword in one hand and the head in the other. Her veiled head and bare feet may indicate this Judith is meant to represent the humble, virtuous heroine. Great attention was given to the painting of the figures of Judith and the head of Holofernes, yet the background is rather plain, with only the red cloth tent serving as a setting.

---

178 Notes on the condition of the drawing are based on my observations of the drawing made on April 29, 2011.
In a marked contrast from images produced by Mantegna and his followers illustrating the same event in the 1490s, Judith holds the head of Holofernes at her eye level and looks directly at it. The head of Holofernes is not the overly large head present in the Uffizi and Cincinnati panels, but the comparatively small head of an aged man. She shows neither triumph nor melancholy, with her own head angled towards Holofernes’ head and her lips parted, revealing the white of her teeth. Rather than depicting a piece of the narrative, Botticelli “focuses entirely on Judith’s moment of reflection . . . and thus makes the relationship between the beautiful, virtuous heroine, her deed, and Holofernes the actual subject of the image.”

This contemplative rather than narrative interpretation brings a degree of intensity to the picture, encouraging the viewer, like Judith, to contemplate the significance of her story and her actions.

A comparative drawing by Giuliano da Sangallo exists for this panel (Fig. 48). Sangallo was a close contemporary of Botticelli, living from 1445 until 1516. The undated drawing sketches out the figure of Judith, who holds a sword and the head of Holofernes aloft and looks pensively at it. She is accompanied by her maid, who holds a large bowl that is probably meant for the head. Sangallo, although primarily an architect, took elements from both Botticelli and Leonardo da Vinci for his paintings and drawings. An interpretation of the drawing is similar to one for Botticelli’s painting, although without a solid dating it cannot be ascertained if one composition influenced the other or if both works drew from an unidentified, earlier source.

179 Botticelli: Likeness, Myth, Devotion, 248.
180 Ibid., 250.
The panel has suffered heavy damage. It underwent X-ray examination and restoration carried out by the Rijksmuseum between 1946 and 1948. A summary of the damage is as follows:

The painted surface has been transferred to a new panel, which was subsequently cradled. A crack running from the upper edge through the head of Holofernes has been painted in. Hardly any craquelure is visible, the panel having been repainted in most places, notably the black background, the right lower section of the curtain and the floor. . . . Judging by the fragmented representation, it would seem that the original panel was sawed down on three sides.  

Furthermore, the x-ray exams revealed the existence of a figure to the left side of Judith that is identified as her maid. The layer of paint which covered her was removed to reveal this heavily damaged figure. Despite the damage, the painting remains attributed to Botticelli with little dissent due to the amount of detail as well as the overall execution of Judith and the head of Holofernes.

The dating of the panel rests on the similarities in execution of the elongated figure of Judith to Botticelli’s figures of his late works. The color palette—especially the bright reds and greens—also point to a later dating, bringing to mind the colors used for the *Mystic Crucifixtion*, dated around the same time.

---

183 Ibid. Also see *Botticelli: Likeness, Myth, Devotion*, 248.
Andrea Mantegna, *Judith* (Fig. 49)  
c. 1500-1505  
Distemper and gold on canvas  
65.3 x 31.4 cm  
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts  


In this remarkable panel, a tall, statuesque Judith places the head of Holofernes into a sack held by her maid, whose smaller, hunched posture contrasts with the powerful yet gracefully curving posture of Judith. They stand upon a rocky ground with little vegetation; the background, which appears to be a mix of greens and gold, has the appearance of a simulated marble surface.

The use of distemper and gold create a surface which seems sculptural, imitating the appearance of bronze, and the images produced are often termed *bronzi finiti*. Mantegna created a number of paintings in grisaille; the finished painting is a *trompe l’oeil* which imitates sculpture—a type of “art imitating art rather than nature.”\(^{184}\) While the Montreal *Judith* simulates bronze, Mantegna executed another Judith, currently in the collection of the National Gallery of Ireland, which simulates marble. This has led some scholars to regard them as “substitute statuettes,” which responded to the sculpture produced by the artist Jacopo Alari-Bonacolsi (Antico) who, along with Mantegna, was patronized by the Gonzaga.\(^{185}\) The paintings were also intended as “substitute sculptural reliefs,” which decorated the *studioli* of patrons such as the Gonzaga, particularly Isabella d’Este, who had married Francesco Gonzaga.\(^{186}\)

\(^{184}\) Martineau, *Andrea Mantegna*, 395. 
\(^{185}\) Ibid., 412 
\(^{186}\) Ibid., 395.
Together with its pendant *Dido* (Fig. 50) of the same dimensions and materials, the two panels may have belonged to the collection of the Gonzaga in Mantua, specifically that of Isabella d’Este. A sound explanation for pairing these two women is as follows:

Both women acted unconventionally for the sake of delivering their countrymen rather than for personal aggrandizement; both remained firmly in control of both their actions and their emotions throughout the course of their respective ordeals, and both stories end with a reaffirmation of their widowed fidelity. . . . in the end, it was a sword which delivered them both from the threat of violation –Judith turned it against Holofernes and Dido against herself. These deaths were the result of carefully deliberated planning and were realized with an unflinching purposefulness by women whose strength of character overcame their natural aversion.

The *Judith* is considered to be in excellent condition, though the green marble background has been darkened through past additions of varnish. A 1991 cleaning removed all varnish from the surface. On the reverse of the panel was found *AND.A.MANTEGNI.A.P.*, though this is considered a later addition and not the signature of Mantegna.

---

187 Margaret Franklin, “Mantegna’s ‘Dido’: Faithful Widow or Abandoned Lover?” *Artibus et Historiae* 21, no. 41 (2000): 117. Though it seems likely, no documentation links either the *Judith* or the *Dido* to Isabella or her court.

188 Ibid., 117. In this interpretation, Dido is the Carthaginian queen who took her life to “preserve her widowed constancy,” and not the Dido of Virgil who committed suicide after Aeneas left her. See ibid., 111-116.

189 Martineau, ed., *Andrea Mantegna*, 413. The inscription was found through infra-red reflectography.
9. Sandro Botticelli, *The Tragedy of Lucretia* (Fig. 6)
c. 1498-1504
Tempera on wood panel
83.8 x 176.8 cm
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston


Botticelli recounted the ancient Roman story of Lucretia in three scenes within his panel *The Tragedy of Lucretia* (or *The Story of Lucretia*), culminating in the central scene which serves as a call to action for the Roman citizens. Lucretia, the chaste wife who chose suicide after she was raped by the Roman prince Tarquinius, declaring “never shall Lucretia provide a precedent for unchaste women to escape what they deserve,” was a favorite character for cassoni and spalliere. It is widely suggested that this panel, along with its companion *The Story of Virginia* (Fig. 51), were made as spalliere. However, they represent a curious choice by Botticelli and the patron in that the central scene and focal point of each panel is a call to action against a tyrant (or tyrants), resulting in the beginning (as in the case of the *Lucretia*) or the preservation (as in the *Virginia*) of a republican state. This choice has led many to hypothesize that the panels may serve as “political allegories in which Medici tyranny is denounced and condemned,” and were not commissioned as spalliere.

Chronologically, the first scene occurs at the left, where Tarquinius propositions and then attacks a terror-stricken Lucretia at the doorway to her home. The second scene

---

191 It is possible the *Lucretia and Virginia* were commissioned for the marriage of Giovanni Vespucci to Namicina di Benedetto Nerli in 1500; however, the inclusion of David and Judith and the strong republican sentiments which run through both panels throws some doubt on this possibility. See Zöllner, *Botticelli*, 268.
takes the viewer to the right, where Lucretia faints into the arms of her husband and father as she reveals to them why she called them back to their home so urgently. The central scene reveals the body of Lucretia laid out in a public square surrounded by mourners. They gather around the her body, and perhaps here Botticelli thought of the rousing vow Brutus made after Lucretia stabbed herself: “By this girl’s blood—none more chaste till a tyrant wronged her—and by the gods . . . I will pursue Lucius Tarquinius the Proud, his wicked wife, and all his children, and never again will I let them or any other man be King in Rome.”

This act proved to be the catalyst which propelled the Roman citizens to oust their kings and establish a republican government.

To add to the republican feeling of the _Lucretia_, both David and Judith are included as sculptural decoration in rather prominent places. Judith appears in a bronze relief above the doorway where Tarquinius accosts Lucretia (Fig. 52). In the relief, Judith is shown twice—first, where she and her maid conceal the head of Holofernes and second, where Judith is welcomed at the city gates, presenting the head of Holofernes like a trophy for her kinsmen to see. David appears as a free-standing statue at the top of a column in the center of the panel, rising above the body of Lucretia.

The inclusion of these biblical figures, which seem out of place in a painting of pagan Rome, serve instead to draw parallels among these three figures who through different means defeated a tyrant. To link the panel to Florence, Judith had already been appropriated as a symbol of the Florentine republic, and in 1504 David became the new symbol with the installation of Michelangelo’s marble statue; the prominent position of

---

193 Livy, _The Early History of Rome_, 102.
David as opposed to the more periphery location of Judith could, therefore, suggest the panels were produced in 1504.\textsuperscript{194}

The panel has suffered some damage, including horizontal cracks which have been cradled to prevent further damage. There is some paint loss, which was revealed when the panel was cleaned between 1954 and 1955.\textsuperscript{195}

10. Sandro Botticelli, \textit{Calumny of Apelles} (Fig. 5)
c. 1494-1498
Tempera on wood panel
62 x 91 cm
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

Provenance: 1550-1568, Fabio Segni (Vasari); 1704, Medici collection (Galleria degli Uffizi); June 1773, moved from Palazzo Pitti to the Galleria degli Uffizi.

Sandro Botticelli’s \textit{Calumny of Apelles} is a work that has been the subject of several theories concerning its meaning, function, dating, and patronage. The identification of the primary figures follows both the description given in Lucian’s \textit{On Slander} that pertains to a painting by Apelles, and the description given by Leon Batista Alberti in his treatise \textit{On Painting}. Botticelli embellished Lucian’s and Alberti’s accounts by setting the event in a hall replete with scenes from a variety of sources, from antiquity to Boccaccio and other contemporaneous sources, to create a true invenzione.

Botticelli’s painting has been dated from 1492 to 1498. No documentation remains concerning the original patron or the intended location. The highly detailed nature of this work points to a patron of some means who would have placed this work in a studiolo. However, this painting remained in Botticelli’s possession until it was given

\textsuperscript{194} Lightbown, \textit{Botticelli: Life and Work}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., 268-269.
to Antonio Segni, who passed it on to his son Fabio.\footnote{196} Antonio Segni has been ruled out by most scholars as the patron by Vasari’s word that Botticelli “gave” the painting to Segni, and not that Segni commissioned it or paid for it.\footnote{197} By the time Vasari saw it, an inscription was added that read “This little picture warns earthly kings not to be tempted to indict people accused falsely. Apelles gave a similar one to the King of Egypt, who was served up just what he deserved.”\footnote{198}

The main scene Botticelli depicted is taken largely from Lucian’s *ekphrasis* of Apelles’ painting, included in his commentary *On Slander*. The painter Apelles had been accused by an envious rival painter of treason against the Egyptian king Ptolemy, who, Lucian tells us, “was not particularly sound of judgment, but had been brought up in the midst of courtly flattery, was so inflamed and upset by this surprising charge” that he did not stop to consider the highly improbable nature of the accusation. Although Apelles’ name was cleared, the event compelled him to create a painting which responded to the dangers of false accusations.

Lucian described the painting by Apelles as follows:

> On the right of it sits a man with very large ears, almost like those of Midas, extending his hand to Slander while on one side, stand two women–Ignorance, I think, and Suspicion. On the other side, Slander is coming up, a

\footnote{196}\footnote{197}\footnote{198}
woman beautiful beyond measure, but full of passion and excitement, evincing as she does fury and wrath by carrying in her left hand a blazing torch and with the other dragging by the hair a young man who stretches out his hands to heaven and calls the gods to witness his innocence. She is conducted by a pale ugly man who has a piercing eye and looks as if he had wasted away in long illness; he may be supposed to be Envy. Besides, there are two women in attendance on Slander, egging her on, tiring her and tricking her out . . . one was Treachery and the other Deceit. They were followed by a woman dressed in deep mourning, with black clothes all in tatters—Repentance . . . she was turning back with tears in her eyes and casting a stealthy glance, full of shame, at Truth, who was approaching.199

Botticelli’s painting follows much of this text yet also incorporates some details from Alberti’s description of the painting given in On Painting. In Alberti’s advice for painters attempting to execute invenzioni, he recommended the Calumny as a beautiful invention. The figure of Slander more closely follows Alberti’s description of “an attractive woman, but whose face seemed too well versed in cunning” than Lucian’s figure of fury and excitement. The women who attend Slander hurry after her, fixing her hair and adornments, as Alberti described them. The figure of Repentance, though her hood covers much of her face, fits the description given by Lucian. Truth, whom Alberti described as “chaste and modest,” has been of interest because of her striking similarity to Botticelli’s Venuses, particularly his Venus in the Birth of Venus.200 Truth, like Venus, exhibits the pose of the Venus pudica, which implies modesty.

Several scholars have attempted to offer explanations for the function of the painting. Botticelli may have executed this work for himself, taking Ugolino Verino’s

words to heart that he was a “modern-day Apelles.” Botticelli not only reinterpreted Apelles’ famous painting, but also included other antique works rendered as reliefs, such as Zeuxis’ *Family of Centaurs*, and placed them alongside themes he had previously painted such as the Judith and the *Nastagio degli Onesti*. This juxtaposition forces a comparison between Botticelli’s own works and the known works by the masters of antiquity. It may have been Botticelli’s intent to be viewed as a learned painter, or *pictor doctus*, in which case this work could be a type of homage to his accomplishments.

The possibility of slander against a specific person, whether denunciations were brought against Botticelli himself that caused him to paint this image of Calumny, or against the Medici or Savonarola, has been taken into consideration.

Other scholars, in considering the broad range of sources for the sixty-five narratives depicted in the painting, have proposed that Botticelli probably was aided in developing this complex program by a humanist scholar. Stanley Meltzoff proposed that the program was developed by both Botticelli and Poliziano as a gift to Piero di Lorenzo de’ Medici, who was exiled from Florence before he could be given the work. The painting was to function as an elaborate defense of the arts (poetry and painting) against...
Savonarola’s sermons attacking the arts. Despite the number of explanations for this painting, none may ever completely explain the mysteries contained within it, nor the patron who commissioned yet never received it, unless Botticelli truly did paint it for himself.

The interest in the *Calumny of Apelles* for this thesis is the appearance of Judith behind the throne of the king. Judith is significant in this work not only because of where Botticelli placed her, but also because he made her easily identifiable. No figure obscures her from the viewer, and two narratives set in mock relief illustrate well-known scenes from the biblical text. She is painted as a statue in a niche; above her is a relief scene which shows Judith and her maid outside the tent of Holofernes placing his head in a sack, while below and partially covered is yet another representation of Judith and her maid returning to Bethulia with the head of Holofernes. The niche statue of Judith is fully robed, her head veiled like Donatello’s *Judith*. In her hand is the sword of Holofernes which she holds by the blade rather than by the hilt. She neither holds nor displays the head as a trophy; instead, the head rests at her feet. In this format, Judith probably was meant to symbolize a virtue, such as Justice.

Judith’s placement behind the figure of the king, accompanied by two scenes illustrating the biblical text, point to an importance of this figure when Botticelli was at work on the *Calumny*. In 1495 Judith rose to prominence in Florentine public life when she was the figure chosen to represent the new Florentine Republic that was established with the exile of the Medici the previous year. That choice was literalized when Donatello’s bronze *Judith and Holofernes* was placed in public view in front of the

---

Palazzo Signoria. Botticelli’s decision to place Judith and her narratives in a prominent location in his *Calumny of Apelles* rather than another figure such as David may reflect the new status for Florence that Judith achieved in 1495.

Furthermore, the depiction of exaggerated movement and action in Botticelli’s figures provides the evidence for placing the work in the mid to late 1490s as an example of Botticelli’s “late style.” For example, this frenzy of movement is seen in the figure of Slander, who rushes forward to bring the victim to the king while her assistants Ignorance and Suspicion hurry to keep up with her. The figures themselves are not proportionate, but are thin and elongated “into a mannerism” characteristic of Botticelli's style in the mid 1490s that continues to appear in his final works.207

Though the attribution of the *Calumny of Apelles* to Botticelli is undisputed, Nicoletta Pons has questioned his authorship of the entire painting by raising the possibility that Botticelli had a collaborator. She attributed much of the work of the small reliefs of the hall, which differ in execution with the larger figures, to the hand of Bartolomeo di Giovanni.208

The panel was restored during the summer of 2004 by Sandra Freschi and Nicola Ann MacGregor, under the direction of Alessandro Cecchi at the Uffizi. The restoration succeeded in revealing the brilliant coloration and glazing, and the sense of depth achieved by the architecture of the hall.209

---


11. Master of Marradi, *Story of Judith and Holofernes* (Fig. 37)
15th Century
Tempera on wood panel
40 x 148.59 cm
Dayton Art Institute

Provenance: Harold I. Pratt, New York; 1964, Dayton Art Institute

*The Story of Judith and Holofernes* illustrates several episodes from the book of Judith. Judith herself, accompanied by her maid, is shown three times, all of which are contained within the right half of the panel. To the far right, the flaps of a tent are drawn back to reveal Judith beheading a sleeping Holofernes, with her maid placed just outside the tent preparing to receive the head. Gathered around the tent and beyond are groups of soldiers and the other tents of the Assyrian encampment. Judith and her maid reappear, this time walking along a winding path leading to a city, and are shown a third time entering the city through a gate. Attention has been called to the figures of Judith and her maid leaving the tent of Holofernes with his head; they closely mirror both the Uffizi and Cincinnati panels of *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* by Botticelli.210 In the Dayton panel, Judith and her maid swiftly leave the tent of Holofernes, their haste evident in their rustling clothing. Although Judith holds no olive branch, her hand seems to nearly touch the nearby foliage; in her other hand she holds the sword. As in Botticelli’s panels, the Dayton Judith looks back in the direction of her maid, who grasps her dress as she hurries after her mistress. The maid also balances a basket upon her head, although in this basket there is no head visible. The strong similarities between these figures and those of

Botticelli may suggest the Master of Marradi was, in some way, aware of Botticelli’s designs.

To the far left a procession of soldiers issues from the walls of the city to engage in a skirmish meant to illustrate the battle between the Bethulian soldiers and the Assyrians. The walled city representing Bethulia in the middle of the background serves as a device both to separate the left and right sides of the panel and to link the two sides through the continuation of the narrative. As Judith enters the city from the right side to propel the Bethulians to action, soldiers leave from the left gate of the city in response to Judith’s actions.

Like many panels of this dimension, it is likely that *The Story of Judith* was originally part of a cassone. Elaborately painted cassoni, or large chests, which were commissioned to hold the trousseau of a wealthy bride and marked the occasion of a wedding, were popular in the fifteenth century. Cassoni were decorated with narratives that “were chosen not only for their decorative effects, but also because they might be auspicious to the union, or because they would act as examples of moral qualities desired from both partners.” Judith, as an Old Testament heroine, was deemed a suitable subject for cassoni both for the moral qualities she possessed and because she was considered as an exemplary of civic behavior. By the nineteenth

---


213 Ibid., 31.
century, many chests had been dismantled, with the panels sold as individual works, as is the likely explanation for the current condition of the Dayton panel.\textsuperscript{214}

Bernard Berensen attributed the panel to Jacopo del Sellaio, a Florentine painter who was trained in the workshop of Fra Filippo Lippi,\textsuperscript{215} whereas Everett Fahy attributed the panel instead to the Master of Marradi, a painter first identified by Federico Zeri.\textsuperscript{216} Zeri attributed to this master’s early work paintings that show the influence of Botticelli and Domenico Ghirlandaio, and placed works that show the influence of Pietro Perugino after 1490.\textsuperscript{217} If his chronology is accepted, the panel was likely executed prior to 1490.

The panel has suffered much damage to both the wood panel and the painted surface. It underwent a restoration in 1967 that aimed to restore the painting so that it showed an image closer to the original composition. X-ray examination showed the extent of the changes to the composition, including a change to the head of the Judith beheading Holofernes, and the outline of another figure close by her. The surface of the painting had been abraded and heavily repainted, probably to disguise some of the losses of the original composition.\textsuperscript{218}

\textsuperscript{215} \textit{Fifty Treasures to Commemorate the Dayton Art Institute} (Dayton, OH: Dayton Art Institute, 1969), 66. Sellaio is mentioned in Vasari’s life of Filippo Lippi. See Vasari, \textit{Lives}, vol. 1, 442.
\textsuperscript{218} This information was taken from the treatment record for \textit{The Story of Judith and Holofernes} by Jacopo del Sellaio carried out by the Intermuseum Conservation Association in Oberlin, Ohio, between February and March 1967 (ICA Reg. No. 51/67).
12. Antonio Federighi, *Relief of Bethulia* (Fig. 38)  
Designed by Urbano da Cortona or Matteo di Giovanni Bartoli  
1473  
Inlaid marble  
North Transept, Siena Cathedral  

Three events illustrate the Book of Judith in this design made for the floor of  
Siena Cathedral, which over several decades was paved with several large narratives and  
allegorical figures. To the far right and inside a red tent, Judith raises her sword above  
her head, prepared to strike Holofernes. Much of this scene was damaged when Nicola  
Pisano’s pulpit of 1265 to 1268 was installed next to it in 1543; therefore, it is no longer  
certain whether Judith was joined by her maid or if her maid awaited her outside the tent.  
Judith and her maid appear next in the center of the design walking along the hillside,  
presumably returning to Bethulia after their stay at the Assyrian camp. The left side is  
dominated by a large, walled city, named by the inscription “BETVLIA,” with tall towers  
dominating the view. From a gate below the inscription mounted soldiers issue from the  
city gates to clash in the foreground with the Assyrian soldiers.  

Similar to Botticelli’s Uffizi panel though reversed, Judith leads her maid upon a  
hillside back to Bethulia. Judith is set slightly ahead of her maid and extends an arm to  
indicate Bethulia is ahead; the damage to the surface makes it difficult to see if she holds  
a sword in her other hand, though the position of it at her side and the suggestion that her  
hand appears to grip something indicates that she likely held a sword. As in Botticelli’s  
panel, the maid follows closely behind balancing a basket upon her head which reveals  
only a small portion of the head of Holofernes. The similarities of this design may  
suggest its exchange between Florentine and Sienese artists.
Although Antonio Federighi is credited with the execution of the floor design, which was done in 1473 during the rectorship of Savino di Matteo di Guido Savini, whose name appears along the bottom border of the *Relief of Bethulia*, the artist or artists who created the design are unknown. Several Sienese artists have at times been linked with the project; among those artists, Urbano da Cortona and Matteo di Giovanni Bartoli are considered to be the artists who likely contributed much of the design. A restoration carried out in 1790 by Carlo Amidei and Matteo Pini may have altered the appearance of the floor design.219 Other areas of the scene are worn, damaged by centuries of worshippers and visitors walking across the floor.

13. Follower of Andrea Mantegna, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (Fig. 53)  
c. 1490-1500  
Tempera on canvas  
30.1 x 18.1 cm  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Provenance: Before 1625, William Hebert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke (possibly by exchange from King Charles I of England); 5-6 and 9-10 July 1917 Sotheby’s (London) sale, sold by Reginald Herbert, 15th earl of Pembroke; July – September 1917, owned jointly by Thomas Agnew & Sons, Ltd., London, and Duveen Brothers, Inc., London and New York; by 1920, on approval to Carl W. Hamilton, returned 1921; c. 1923, Joseph E. Widener, Lynnewood Hall, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania; inheritance from Estate of Peter A.B. Widener by gift through power of appointment of Joseph E. Widener, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, after purchase by funds of the Estate; 1942, gifted to the National Gallery of Art.

Like the drawing of *Judith and her Maid* which is also part of the National Gallery of Art collection, this panel depicts Judith and her maid concealing the head of Holofernes in a sack before they return to Bethulia, and was likely executed after an

---

invention by Mantegna. This painting places Judith just outside the tent of Holofernes; inside the tent only a bedpost and the foot of Holofernes are shown. The scale of Judith and her maid is far more exaggerated than both the National Gallery of Art drawing and the Montreal painting, as Judith clearly towers over the short, older woman who represents her maid. To render the skin of Judith, the artist used grays and white that give Judith the appearance of being made of marble or porcelain, which becomes even more evident when compared to the more naturalistic tones used for the maid.

The wood panel itself bears some similarities to Botticelli’s *Return of Judith to Bethulia* and *Discovery of the Body of Holofernes* in the Uffizi. All three are painted on thin wood panels; the Washington Judith is painted on a panel five millimeters thick, which is roughly the same thickness as the panels by Botticelli. They are also relatively close in size, and have an unpainted edge on all sides. It is surmised that due to this lipped edge, the Washington Judith had an engaged frame. All three paintings likely were made as small, precious items which were meant for close inspection.

A painting thought to be similar to this panel is mentioned in the inventory taken of the Medici palace following Lorenzo the Magnificent’s death in 1492: the painting is listed as “a panel in a small box, showing a painting of Judith with the head of Holofernes and a maid, by the hand of Andrea Squarcione.” Botticelli may have known the Judith painting mentioned in the inventory, and the work might likely predate his own images of Judith, as the use of the name Andrea Squarcione was common only early in Mantegna’s

---

career, around the 1450s and 1460s. When this painting entered the Medici collection is nevertheless uncertain. We also have a record referring to a painting Lorenzo owned: a letter to Mantegna written by Lorenzo de’ Medici, dated 2 March 1480/1481, thanking him for a painting Mantegna had given to him.\footnote{Ibid., 462-463. The note concerning the letter included by Lightbown is as follows: ‘Marzo 1480 et 1481. A di 2…A Andrea Mantinia, dipintore a Mantova; lettera grata per la dipintura et opera sua mandata, ringazziandolo, etc.’} It is tempting to imagine that Lorenzo’s letter to Mantegna refers to the Judith painting listed as by Squacione in the 1492 inventory.

14. Sandro Botticelli and workshop, \textit{Judith with the Head of Holofernes} (Fig. 3) and \textit{Landscape with Roebucks and Monkeys} (Fig. 54) 
c. 1467-1472
Tempera on wood panel
29.2 x 21.6 cm
Cincinnati Art Museum

Provenance: By 1867, Principe di Fondi, Naples; 24 April 1895 sold as a Mantegna (buyer unknown); June 1899, Bardini sale at Christie's in London, attributed to Botticelli (bought by "Adams"); 1911, Stefano Bardini; by 1924, Ugo Bardini; 1954, Cincinnati Art Museum (John J. Emery Endowment)

This panel has often been described as a variation on the Uffizi \textit{Judith} due to the close similarities of Judith and her maidservant, as well as evidence of a battle taking place in the landscape. There is, however, a stronger psychological connection between Judith and her maid. As Judith turns back, her gaze seems to almost meet that of the maid, which is not the case in the Uffizi panel. The two women are shown walking much closer together, and perhaps side by side as evidenced by their extended legs which are nearly on the same line. The closeness of the figures suggests a sense of companionship and camaraderie, and a closer sense of equality and shared responsibility.
in their task than their different social stations of wealthy widow and maid would have allowed in their daily lives.\footnote{The connection between the maid and Judith is also discussed by Gabriele Dette in Botticelli: Likeness, Myth, Devotion, 247.} A large outcropping of rock separates the two women from the rest of the landscape, which shows a skirmish to the lower right and portions of a city upon hillside. This panel, along with the Uffizi Judith, comprises the earliest known examples which solely illustrate this specific scene of Judith and her maid returning to Bethulia.

The scene on the reverse of the panel, which has suffered even more damage with a portion of the upper right corner completely gone, shows two deer resting atop an outcropping of rock and grass (Fig. 43). Below are two monkeys, one walking and the other monkey shown sitting. The presence of this second, sitting monkey, which has suffered much damage, was revealed only during x-ray exams done of the painting in 1954.\footnote{Philip R. Adams, “Botticelli” The Cincinnati Art Museum Bulletin 4, no. 2 (Feb./March 1956): 8.} A small coastal town can be discerned in the distance. If at least a portion of this scene can be attributed to Botticelli, it represents the first and only solely landscape painting executed by Botticelli. Its existence shows that at least at this early portion of Botticelli’s career, he was in fact concerned with the execution of landscapes. However, it cannot be ascertained if this image is original to the panel, since it is composed on a sheet of parchment which was adhered to the panel.\footnote{John Spike, Italian Paintings in the Cincinnati Art Museum (Cincinnati: Cincinnati Art Museum, 1993), 17. According to Spike, the parchment was found during a technical examination, “between the wooden panel and the first application of gesso.”}

Both sides of the panel have been subject to heavy damage and repainting, especially to the head of Judith and the drapery, which has colored many observations.
and attempts at attribution. Horne ascribed this painting to a less talented follower of Botticelli, while others have attributed it to Filippino Lippi or the workshop of Botticelli. The strongest evidence for an attribution to Botticelli himself rests on the technical examinations done in 1954 when the Cincinnati Art Museum acquired the panel. X-rays done to peer beneath the layers of paint and repaint revealed “a vigor of drawing that would be hard to ascribe to anyone but Botticelli.” Though others may have had a hand in the painting of the panel, it seems very plausible that the drawing and the design of the panel were by Botticelli.

The dating of this panel has become reliant on the dating of the Uffizi panel, as well as on technical observations of changes in the piece, such as changes to the positioning of the olive branch held by Judith. The panel has been proposed as a sort preliminary exercise in the composition, which was perfected in the Uffizi version. The differences between them, and yet the still skillful execution, could indicate that the panels were worked on at the same time as two variations sharing the same basic design. W. G. Constable, noting some of the less-skillful handling of the drapery, proposed that the panel could have been executed after the Uffizi panel for a patron wanting a variation on that panel, with an assistant working on the drapery. A number of pentimenti, including a change to the olive branch from a position close to the Uffizi panel to the

---

226 Ibid., 5-6. The face of Judith was repainted after 1899, when a reproduction of the panel in a Christie’s catalogue (as part of a sale of June 1899) shows the head to be different.
228 See Adams, “Botticelli,” 8. O. Mündler ascribed the painting to Filippino Lippi while it was in the collection of the Principe di Fondi in Naples (this is also the first mention of the panel).
229 Ibid., 8.
230 This is proposed by Lightbown, vol. 2, 21; Lightbown, 2nd ed., 37-38.
present position, may serve as evidence that this piece was a variation produced after the Uffizi panel.232

15. Sandro Botticelli, *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* (Fig. 1) and *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes* (Fig. 2)
c. 1469-1472
Tempera on wood panel
31 x 25 cm
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

Provenance: 1584, Bianca Capello de' Medici (Raffaello Borghini); 8 March 1587, Antonio de' Medici; 1621, Medici inventory; 24 May 1632, given to the Custodian the Tribuna; 1635, Galleria degli Uffizi.

Together the two panels *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes* and *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* depict the climax of the apocryphal story of Judith. Her task completed, Judith and her maid return to Bethulia with the head of Holofernes, which has been wrapped and is carried by Judith’s maid upon her head. In the landscape beyond the two women, a battle is shown taking place outside the fortifications of a city, referencing the routing of the Assyrian army by the Bethulians after Judith has returned to the city.

In the *Holofernes* panel, Botticelli shows the moment at which the headless body of Holofernes is discovered. In contrast to the text, in which only Bagoas discovers the body, several soldiers bear witness to the discovery. Consideration is given to showing emotion in the figures of the soldiers, each of which displays emotions of shock, horror, or sadness in a different way. A darker color palette is used in this panel than in the *Judith*, employing more vibrant reds and blues which are offset by the stark white of the bed sheets.

Each panel is about 0.6 to 0.8 centimeters thick and slightly warped.\(^\text{233}\) There is some surface damage to the *Judith* panel, where the paint appears rubbed away. The surface of the *Holofernes* panel is in slightly better condition than the *Judith*, though there is some damage and discoloration to the far sides of the panel, which is not painted to the edges, and some discoloration to the curtain (which serves as the tent). Neither panel is painted to the edge of the wood; a thin lip of wood surrounds the painted portion of each panel, indicating that the panels have not been reduced in size.

Since they were first mentioned by Borghini, both panels have always been cited together and displayed together as pendants. Early inventory records of the pieces list them together, about a *braccio* in length, which indicates they were framed side by side and not back to back.\(^\text{234}\) Due to the thinness of each panel it has been proposed they may have originally been one single, double-sided, painted panel that was later cut into two, but there is no further evidence to suggest this was the case.\(^\text{235}\) Neither is it certain that the two pieces were made by Botticelli as pendants, though it is unlikely that they were not made as such. Although the *Judith* panel could stand on its own as an independent work, a case for the *Holofernes* panel to stand on its own is difficult to make. As this catalogue has illustrated, Judith was represented often, with or without Holofernes or other elements of the narrative, and was easily identified by her attributes of the sword, the severed head, and the maid. Representations solely of Holofernes, without Judith or any references to her, are limited to this example. The image of a headless corpse

\(^{233}\) This estimate is based on my observations of the panel on display at the Galleria degli Uffizi in December 2010.

\(^{234}\) Lightbown, *Botticelli Life and Work*, vol. 2, 21-22. One braccio is equal to seventy centimeters.

\(^{235}\) Ibid.
surrounded by other figures does not recall any specific story nor point to any clear lessons of morality without further information available to the viewer in the image.

When paired with the Judith, though, the viewer can instantly recognize that the corpse in the painting is that of Holofernes, who has just been found by his soldiers. Therefore, it is very likely that these two works were made as pendants, and were meant to be viewed and interpreted together.

Currently, the Judith and the Holofernes are displayed unframed, and side by side in a well-lit glass case in the Sala di Botticelli in the Uffizi. The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes is displayed to the left of The Return of Judith to Bethulia. Viewed in this order, Judith appears to look to the Holofernes panel and upon the scene she and her maid had left behind. This order better illustrates the chronology of events and serves, through the gaze of Judith, to unite the panels in an even closer way than if viewed in the opposite order or front to back. However, no records specify how the two panels were meant to be displayed, nor in what order.

A second possibility is to reverse the panels, so that the Judith panel is to the left of the Holofernes panel. In this format, the viewer is first drawn to the Judith panel by seeing them left to right. The tree is utilized as a device to further separate the panel of Judith and her maid from the panel of Holofernes and his soldiers.

The third possibility for the panels is to view them as a single panel, the images back to back. By placing them back to back each panel may be studied individually and as an isolated scene. This provides the opportunity for a more intense study and meditation upon each scene, which, for example, makes the scene of the discovery of
Holofernes more startling as it is not balanced by the less violent scene of Judith.

However, this orientation breaks up the flow of illustrating the story through two panels that the viewer would see together if they were placed side by side. Instead, the viewer must physically turn the panel over to move between the images. Each possibility provides a different experience for viewers of the panels. What we can deduce today is that in the sixteenth century when the Judith images belonged to Grand Duchess Bianca Capella, the two scenes were viewed on separate panels which were framed together.
Figure 1. Sandro Botticelli, *Return of Judith to Bethulia*, c. 1469-1472, tempera on wood panel, 31 x 25 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 2. Sandro Botticelli, *The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes*, c. 1469-1472, tempera on wood panel, 31 x 25 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 3. Sandro Botticelli (and Workshop), *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1467-1472, tempera on wood panel, 29.2 x 21.6 cm, Cincinnati Art Museum.
Figure 4. Sandro Botticelli, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1497-1498, tempera on wood panel, 36.5 x 20 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Figure 5. Sandro Botticelli, *Calumny of Apelles*, c. 1494-1498, tempera on wood panel, 62 x 91 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 6. Sandro Botticelli, *Tragedy of Lucretia*, c. 1498-1504, tempera (?) and oil on panel, 83.5 x 180 cm, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.
Figure 7. Donatello, *Judith and Holofernes*, 1455-1466, bronze with some gilding, height 236 cm, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.
Figure 8. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *David*, 1501-1504, marble, 409 cm, Accademia, Florence.
Figure 9. Sandro Botticelli, *Adoration of the Magi*, c. 1475, tempera on panel, 111 x 134 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 10. Sandro Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*, c. 1484-1490, tempera on canvas, 184.5 x 285.5 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 11. Sandro Botticelli, *Primavera*, c. 1480-1482, tempera on poplar, 203 x 314 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 12. Sandro Botticelli, *Saint Augustine in his Cell*, c. 1490-1494, tempera on panel, 41 x 27 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 13. Sandro Botticelli and Workshop, *The first episodes of the Tale of Nastagio deli Onesti*, 1482-1483, tempera on panel, 83 x 138 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid.
Figure 14. Sandro Botticelli and Workshop, *Further episodes of the Tale of Nastagio degli Onesti*, 1482-1483, tempera on panel, 82 x 138 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid.
Figure 15. Sandro Botticelli and Workshop, *Further episodes of the Tale of Nastagio degli Onesti*, 1482-1483, tempera on panel, 84 x 142 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid.
Figure 16. Sandro Botticelli and Workshop, *Wedding Banquet of Nastagio degli Onesti*, 1482-1483, tempera on panel, 84 x 142 cm, private collection, Florence.
Figure 17. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, c. 1597-1598, oil on canvas, 145 x 195 cm, Galleria Nazionale d'arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome.
Figure 18. Titian, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1570, oil on canvas, 113.03 x 92.25 cm, Detroit Institute of Arts.
Figure 19. Sandro Botticelli, *Study of Two Male Figures*, metalpoint, heightened with white gouache, on ochre-brown prepared paper (verso), 26.4 x 20 cm, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 20. Sandro Botticelli, *Minerva*, c. 1480-1490, pen and bistre over black chalk, heightened with white, on a pink ground, pricked and squared off for enlargement, 22.2 x 13.9 cm, Gabinetto degli Disegni e delle Stampe, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 21. Sandro Botticelli, *Minerva and the Centaur*, c. 1480-1482, tempera and oil on canvas, 207 x 148 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 22. Cosimo de’ Medici, Pater Patriae, and Florence Holding an Orb and Triple Olive-branch (reverse), c. 1465, bronze, 7.8 cm diameter, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Figure 23. Sandro Botticelli, *Fortitude*, 1470, tempera on panel, 167 x 87 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 24. Sandro Botticelli, *Saint Sebastian*, 1474, tempera on poplar, 195 x 75 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.
Figure 25. Andrea del Verrocchio (?), *Tobias and the Angel*, c. 1470-1475, tempera on wood, 33 x 25.5 cm, National Gallery, London.
Figure 26. Fra Filippo Lippi. *Banquet of Herod*, c. 1452-1466, fresco, Duomo, Prato.
Figure 27. Sandro Botticelli, Detail of *The Return of Judith to Bethulia*, c. 1468-1472, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 28. Paolo Uccello, *Monument of Sir John Hawkwood*, 1436, fresco transferred to canvas, 820 x 515 cm, Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence.
Figure 29. Andrea del Castagno, *Niccolò da Tolentino*, 1456, fresco transferred to canvas, 830 x 510 cm, Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence.
Figure 30. Paolo Uccello, *Battle of San Romano*, c. 1438-1440, egg tempera with walnut oil and linseed oil on poplar, 181.6 x 320 cm, National Gallery, London.
Figure 31. Jacopo del Sellaio and Biagio d’Antonio, \textit{Rome Held Ransom by the Gauls and Saved by Marcus Furius Camillus}, 1472, tempera on poplar with gilding, 40.5 x 137 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.
Figure 32. Sandro Botticelli, *The Mystic Crucifixion*, c. 1497-1498, tempera and oil on canvas, 73.5 x 50.8 cm, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
Figure 33. Leonardo da Vinci, *Annunciation*, c. 1472-1475, oil on wood, 98 x 217 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
Figure 34. Sandro Botticelli, *The Trials of Moses*, 1481-1482, fresco, 348 x 558 cm, Sistine Chapel, Vatican.
Figure 35. Andrea Mantegna, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1495-1500, tempera (distemper) on (linen) canvas, 48.1 x 36.7 cm, The National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.
Figure 36. Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Judith*, 1425-1452, gilt bronze, Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Florence.
Figure 37. Master of Marradi, *Story of Judith and Holofernes*, 15th century, tempera on wood panel, 40 x 148.59 cm, Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, Ohio.
Figure 38. *Relief of Bethulia*, designed by Urbano da Cortona or Matteo di Giovanni Bartoli, executed by Antonio Federighi, 1473, inlaid marble, North Transept, Cathedral of Siena.
Figure 39. Frontispiece to the Book of Judith, Bible of San Paolo Fuori le Mura, folio 234v, c. 866-869/870-875, 44.8 x 35.5 cm, Abbazia di San Paolo, Rome.
Figure 40. *Humilitas between Judith and Jael, Speculum Virginum*, 12th century, London, British Library, MS Arundel 44, fol. 34v.
Figure 41. Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Battle Against the Philistines and the Killing of Goliath*, 1425-1452, gilded bronze, 79 x 79 cm, Opera di S. Maria del Fiore, Florence.
Figure 42. Donatello, *David*, c. 1408-1416, marble, height 191 cm, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.
Figure 43. Matteo di Giovanni, Judith, c. 1493-1494, tempera on panel, 55.9 x 46 cm, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, Indiana.
Figure 44. Neroccio di Bartolomeo de’ Landi and Master of the Story of Griselda, *Claudia Quinta*, c. 1493, tempera and oil on panel, 104 x 46 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Figure 45. Giorgione, *Judith* Giorgione, c. 1503-1508, oil on canvas (transferred from wood panel), 144 x 68 cm, State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.
Figure 46. Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (il Sodoma), *Judith*, c. 1510-1512, tempera on panel, 84 x 47 cm, Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena.
Figure 47. Anonymous, after Andrea Mantegna, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1480s, pen and dark brown ink with black chalk and white heightening on olive-brown prepared paper laid down on canvas, 34.8 x 20.2 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Figure 48. Giuliano da Sangallo, Judith with the Head of Holofernes, black chalk, pen, gold wash, some gray areas wiped, 37.7 x 27 cm, Albertina, Vienna.
Figure 49. Andrea Mantegna, *Judith*, c. 1500-1505, distemper and gold on canvas, 65.3 x 31.4 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.
Figure 50. Andrea Mantegna, *Dido*, c. 1500-1505, distemper and gold on canvas, 65.3 x 31.4 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.
Figure 51. Sandro Botticelli, *The Story of Virginia*, c. 1498-1504, tempera on panel, 85 x 165 cm, Accademia Carrara, Bergamo.
Figure 52. Sandro Botticelli, detail of *The Story of Lucretia*, c. 1498-1504, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.
Figure 53. Andrea Mantegna or Follower, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1490-1500, tempera on canvas, 30.1 x 18.1 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Figure 54. Sandro Botticelli and workshop, *Landscape with Roebucks and Monkeys*, c. 1467-1472, oil and tempera on parchment, 29.2 x 21.6 cm, Cincinnati Art Museum.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


______. *The Pavement Masters of Siena (1369-1562)*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1901.


*Fifty Treasures to Commemorate the Dayton Art Institute*. Dayton, OH: Dayton Art Institute, 1969.


