JUDITH IN FLORENTINE RENAISSANCE ART, 1425-1512

DISSESION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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1995

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In the spirit of Judith,
to all those who resist tyranny and evil
in all their forms
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I should like to acknowledge the contributions of my advisor, Dr. Francis L. Richardson, to this study, and also thank the other members of my committee for their contributions. Without Dr. Richardson's corrections and editorial hand this study would have been far less accurate, and a far more difficult read, than is currently the case.

I should also like to acknowledge the contribution of Professor Mathew Herban of The Ohio State University in my formation as a scholar. I learned more from him than from anyone else how to approach and understand a work of art, how a work of art means, and I am greatly in his debt for his support and influence on my development as an art historian. Whatever contributions I have made in this work, or might make in future, are in no small measure a result of his efforts.

Finally, I should like to thank my family and friends for their support during this long project. Without them, it would not have been possible.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study examines the image of Judith in Florentine Quattrocento art, during which time it took on a character distinct from those dominant in the Middle Ages, and in northern Italy in the sixteenth century. The Medieval image, found principally in manuscript illuminations, was often non-specific in meaning, and generally treated the moment of the beheading of Holofernes in either an iconic or narrative form. In Renaissance Florence, meanings grew both more specific and, sometimes, secular and civic. Traditional moral or religious content was often retained, but Judith also became an emblem of the city, and, for the first time, was represented directly as an image of civic virtue. Narrative representation became dominant, and in painting the moment selected for depiction shifted from the beheading to subsequent incidents in the tale. Judith also entered the repertory of figures suitable for devotional contemplation for the first time, and she was represented by leading artists of the day (rather than anonymous masters), and in such new media as free-standing bronze sculptures and panel paintings. It is the character of this new image, its forms and meanings, that this study will seek to define.
The tale of Judith, the beautiful widow who saved Israel from conquest by the Assyrian general Holofernes, has instructed and inspired readers of the Bible for over 2,000 years. Placed among the canonical books of the Old Testament by Western Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theologians during Christianity's early centuries [1], it was relegated to the Apocrypha by Jewish and Protestant scholars, where it remains in their Bibles to this day [2]. It is the story of a beautiful and devout Jewish widow who saves Israel from conquest by Holofernes, a fierce and vengeful Assyrian commander [3].

Judith is a citizen of Bethulia, a town guarding one of the mountain passes into Israel, which is under siege by the invading Assyrians. As the town is about to capitulate, Judith seeks a five-day delay from the city elders to attempt to save her nation. She pretends to defect to the Assyrians, assuring Holofernes that God is angry with the Bethulians for their sins, and that through prayer she will be able to determine the time the Assyrians can attack with certainty of victory at minimal cost. She is given permission to leave the camp at night to pray. After several days Holofernes, struck by Judith's beauty, holds a banquet at which he intends to seduce her. Judith arrays herself in finery to attract Holofernes further, and he is so taken by her that he drinks heavily and collapses into bed in a stupor. After his subordinates have taken leave, Judith enters the bedchamber, where she beheads him with his own scimitar, and then flees with her maid and the severed head back to Bethulia. On the following morning, the Bethulians display the
head on their walls, then march out to rout the Assyrians, saving Israel from their invasion.

Judith's story was a significant theme in Christian art from the Carolingian period through the seventeenth century [4]. Her story and person were recurrent subjects in painting and sculpture, appearing in diverse forms as small as the initials of illuminated Bibles, and as large as the ambulatory sculptures of Albi Cathedral; in works as private as a prayer book, and as public as the portals of Chartres Cathedral. In part through her typological identification with both Christ and the Virgin Mary, and in part as a result of direct exegesis of her character and adventure by various apologists, over the course of the Patristic and Medieval periods Judith and her story became vehicles for the presentation of principles that embodied the developing moral and theological doctrines of Christianity. Judith herself came to be seen as an emblem of such major virtues as humility, chastity, justice, and fortitude, and to exemplify their triumph over such vices as pride and lust. Her act of salvation on behalf of the city of Bethulia and the kingdom of Israel was seen to prefigure that of Christ for humanity, and her story thus exemplified and was a symbol of the triumph of good and of the people of God over evil on a number of levels: of the individual soul in its battle against sin; of the Christian community in its conflicts with temporal enemies, such as the Saracens in the period of the Crusades; and ultimately of the Church in its universal struggle against Satan and the world. From the earliest days of the Church Judith served as a heroic example of moral force and physical courage which, coupled with
her faith in God, made her a worthy model for Christians in all times and stations of life [5]. Her image reflected principles fundamental to Christian theology and ethics, and served as a visual embodiment of those ideas as they had been delineated in relation to her by commentators from Clement of Rome, St. Ambrose, and St. Jerome in the Patristic age, to Hugh of St. Victor, Boccaccio, and St. Antoninus of Florence in the late Medieval and early Renaissance periods.

During the Middle Ages, discussion of Judith and conceptions of the meaning of her life and character existed primarily, indeed almost exclusively, in the religious realm. This fact was reflected in art, where she appeared principally in manuscript illuminations of sacred or theological texts, and secondarily as an element in programs of monumental painting or sculpture in chapels or on church portals. The basic content attached to her person and story were established quite early in Christian history. By the end of the sixth century, the range of her meanings as a religious symbol had been largely delineated in Patristic writings, and while the visual forms in which she was represented cannot be traced to earlier than about 870 C.E., a relatively small body of standard depictions, virtually all of which were narrative illustrations of key moments from the story, had been developed by about 1100. The image of Judith, the contexts in which she was presented, and the significance attached to her were not absolutely static, however, and important changes began to take place as early as the fourteenth century. Judith began to embody a variety of new meanings, sometimes in an emblematic form. The fourteenth and
early fifteenth centuries saw a number of works in which the iconography of Judith was conflated with that of figures of virtues from psychomachia, such as Humility, Fortitude, and Justice. In some cases, such links had previously been established in literature, but this development was new to the visual arts, at least in the degree to which the connection was explicitly stated by adapting the imagery of Judith, including the representation of specific moments of her tale, to the depiction of the virtues. Nonetheless, Judith's connection in the visual arts to concepts such as humility or fortitude are basically only extensions of meanings established in the literary tradition, and the evolution of Judith's significance beyond the realm of moral philosophy, and hence at least a quasi-religious context, and into secular contents, was slow.

Much more significant changes in Judith's image occurred in fifteenth century Florence. Judith became a very important figure in Florentine art in the period between 1425 and 1512, and was treated in new and distinctive ways. New meanings, often embodying civic and secular content, were expressed through Judith for the first time, even as she continued to represent traditional moral and religious concepts. More than any other city, Florence embraced Judith, and she came to be a symbol of the community itself, standing alongside David as an embodiment of the triumph of the city against its enemies. Initially, works such as Donatello's monumental sculpture Judith Beheading Holofernes may have been associated closely with the aspirations of the Medici. However, following their expulsion in 1495, this sculpture became a symbol of the fate of tyrants: a revival of
one of the most ancient meanings associated with her, but one not previously stated in a secular, political context, or given special emphasis by local contemporary events.

That signification may also be the primary reason why, after about 1512, Judith became a rare figure in Florentine art. In that year, the Medici returned as the de facto rulers of Florence, a status that was enhanced in 1569, when they began their reign as Grand Dukes. The Medici regime was unlikely to promulgate an image that recently and powerfully had been associated with tyrannicide and the short-lived Florentine republic, and so it is not surprising that Judith ceased to be a prominent motif in the art of the city. Rather, it was Northern Italy that took up and developed Judith's image after about 1500, and did so in a form, and probably with meanings and functions, that differed significantly from those created in central Italy in the latter half of the Quattrocento.

In addition, Judith was represented for the first time as an emblem of civic or human justice in Quattrocento Florence, though the iconographies of the heroine and the virtue had been undergoing a process of synthesis for over a century before she became a direct image of this concept [6]. Consequently, Judith can be seen as embodying a variety of new civic or secular contents in fifteenth-century Florence. These distinguish her Florentine Renaissance image from that of the Middle Ages, and to a considerable extent from that of Cinquecento Northern Italy as well; in the latter case, a small number of works, such as Titian's fresco on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, had a secular and civic meaning, but generally sixteenth century Judiths are
moralizing, religious, or mildly erotic in their content.

Judith's new significance was accompanied by shifts in the way in which she was typically represented. While both narrative and iconic depictions of Judith were common in the late Middle Ages, during the Florentine Quattrocento a strong, almost universal preference developed for narrative portrayals of the heroine. During the Middle Ages, Judith had usually been represented in the act of beheading Holofernes. Either this moment, or one immediately thereafter, in which Judith exults in the decapitation, continued to be dominant in sculpture. However, in painting, a strong preference developed for depicting her in subsequent moments from the story, including her preparations to flee from Holofernes's tent and her journey back to Bethulia. These moments had seldom been represented in Medieval art, and were largely abandoned in the sixteenth century: in part because Cinquecento depictions of Judith from Northern Italy are often iconic in mode before about 1540. Interestingly, this shift to iconic in Venice and Lombardy was accompanied in many instances by a loss of the kind of specificity of meaning present in many Florentine Quattrocento works: a factor which further separates treatments of Judith in the two periods.

Important changes also occurred in the sphere of religious art in the last half of the fifteenth century, when for the first time Judith came to be the subject of devotional paintings, a category that seems previously to have been the province of more strictly sacred or holy figures, such as prophets, saints, the Madonna and Child, and the persons of the Trinity. This development is part of a larger
phenomenon, which also saw other previously neglected figures such as Esther, Susannah, and Tobias depicted in small, independent panel paintings intended to serve as a focus for private devotions. Nonetheless, it was Florence where Judith first flowered as a subject for devotional art.

Finally, changes in the circumstances and formats in which images of Judith were made occurred in the Florentine Quattrocento. For the first time, Judith was represented in panel paintings and in independent, free-standing sculptures. Insofar as virtually all extant Medieval paintings of Judith are in manuscripts, this represented something of a monumentalization of treatments of the heroine. Moreover, while Medieval depictions are largely anonymous, in Renaissance Florence Judith was represented by some of the most celebrated artists of the time, including Lorenzo Ghiberti, Donatello, Antonio del Pollaiuolo, and Sandro Botticelli. Combined, these developments give Judith a much stronger presence in the art of fifteenth century Florence than she had had at any time during the Middle Ages.

Discussion of the Florentine Judiths is preceded in this study by an extensive consideration of the Early Christian and Medieval literary and artistic traditions in treatments of the heroine. No systematic study of Judith during this time has been undertaken, and it is necessary to provide a thorough, if general discussion of this background in order to establish both the body of meanings and iconographic types on which Florentine artists could build their images of Judith, and the ways in which they differentiated themselves
from their Medieval antecedents. Owing to the large number of depictions of Judith in manuscripts, consideration of her image in this context is necessarily selective, though representative of the various types of manuscripts, meanings, and iconographic types in which she existed during this period. Consideration of the Medieval Judith in other contexts, such as monumental sculptures and paintings, is more inclusive, controlled by the need to ensure that the full range of iconographic types, contexts, and contents for Judith has been represented.

Discussion of Florentine Judiths has been divided into two chapters, the first dealing with sculptural representations, the second with paintings. This is partly a matter of chronological convenience; all the Florentine sculptures were created before 1470, and almost all of the paintings after that date. However, significant shifts in iconography, specifically in the narrative moment selected for representation, also occurred as dominance shifted from sculpted to painted depictions. This organization thus allows this difference between works in these two media to be made clear, and facilitates an exploration of the possible causes of this development.

The concepts of narrative and iconic representation, and their relationship to didactic and devotional functions, are of some importance for a consideration of treatments of Judith in the Middle Ages and Renaissance [7]. Narrative works depict figures participating in an action, sometimes through the representation of a group of scenes selected from a larger sequence of events, and sometimes through the depiction of a single episode from the story. When a
group of scenes is selected for presentation, either they can be arranged in a series of discrete works, with each pictorial field containing one episode, or a number of events can be arranged in a single field, a form which is called continuous narration. Regardless of their specific form, artworks with an emphasis on the action of figures in the context of a series of events may be said to exist in the narrative mode.

This mode is opposed to the iconic mode, in which figures are not engaged in action illustrating a story or sequence of events, but rather exist in static, even hieratic, compositions, with action either abstract or limited to a subtle interplay between the figures in the work. Iconic works are often emblematic in character, and the absence of a stated or implied sequence of action can give them the quality of existing outside of time, in an eternity which can be highly appropriate to sacred figures. This is because art in the iconic mode suggests a condition of indefinite duration, one which does not strongly imply preceding or succeeding action, but is in a sense timeless. The narrative and iconic modes reside on a spectrum, and any given work of art might mix elements of the two polar positions, so that in practice many paintings and sculptures have elements of both the narrative and iconic in their compositional forms.

In any attempt to assign a work to one of the modes, the dominant indicator will be the activity of the figures. A piece in which the figures are seen as clearly and committedly in action will generally be perceived as narrative: particularly if their action is specific
and purposeful, i.e., directed toward attaining a goal which is perceptible to the viewer. The psychological engagement of figures in their actions and interactions can be a crucial help in generating a feeling of narrative, since it either establishes a motive for their action, or delineates a response arising from it (whether they are the initiators or recipients of it). On the other hand, works in which the figures are relatively still, or have a frozen or posed quality, will tend to be seen as primarily iconic. This is particularly true if the figures do not interact, or if their interactions are so random-seeming or generalized that their relationship is unclear. In these works, psychological engagement on the part of the figures can often be a detriment to the development of an iconic feeling, perhaps because it implies the kind of commitment to purposeful activity that leads to the building of a story. In other words, iconic representation is well-served by figures which are alone, or isolated from one another. Interaction between figures begins to generate action, and thus the potential for narrative.

The presence of a setting is another important indicator for distinguishing between the narrative and iconic modes. Narrative representation must have a location in which the events can take place; without it, the development of comprehensible dramatic action is very difficult. Characters in a story, as in life, exist and act in time and space, and not in a spaceless or timeless void. In some instances, a generalized setting suffices for the creation of a narrative opportunity. In other circumstances, the figures in a narrative relate to objects or elements in their environment in a
causal and necessary way, so that a quite specific setting is required for a comprehensible depiction of the action taking place (though sometimes this setting can be established through minimal means). This is the case in representations of Judith beheading Holofernes, for example, in which the heroine must slay the Assyrian as he sleeps drunkenly in the particular location of his bed in his tent. Given the world of the story, Judith cannot kill Holofernes in any other way or in any other location; she could not overcome him were he not incapacitated by drink, alone, and ensured of privacy. Without this specific setting, her action cannot be comprehended in the context of the traditional story. Thus, comprehensible narrative usually requires some indication of where the action takes place, and often a fair degree of specificity is needed, even if it must be minimally suggested.

The use of a setting is not inconsistent with the iconic mode; indeed, the majority of iconic images include some indicators of environment and an implication of three-dimensional space, and often these elements are fully developed and detailed. But works in the iconic mode usually do not suffer if the setting is abstract and non-specific, or even absent entirely. In fact, when the image is designed to express a spiritual or non-material reality, an abstract, spaceless, or non-existent setting can be advantageous in eliminating potential distractions therefrom. Thus, in general terms, it is fair to say that while narrative usually requires location, and sometimes of a quite specific nature, in iconic works the relationship between place and image is often much looser.
Most works possess either a narrative or iconic presence sufficiently great for them to be placed comfortably in one mode or the other, despite the fact that many mix elements characteristic of each of the categories. These pieces stand somewhere along the spectrum between the extremes of dramatic and symbolic representation, resting in a given mode by virtue of the relative weights of their specific blends of characteristics. A total context ordinarily will be developed that allows a work to be seen with reasonable clarity as either principally iconic or principally narrative, which thereby gives the viewer some guidance in comprehending the potential function and meaning of each object or characteristic present, even if that element is serving a dual purpose: for example, as both a symbol and a realistic part of the setting of the piece.

In theory, the narrative and iconic modes should be equally adaptable to the presentation of didactic content, or to the creation of an image suitable for devotional contemplation; in practice, however, each mode might tend to better serve one of these respective functions. When assessing the significance of a given artwork, it is important to remember that the meaning of a work of art results from the confluence of many elements. These may include its intended function and location; the figures and action (if any) represented in it; symbolic images; artistic conventions; cultural traditions, beliefs, and understandings relating to the figures or images; the artist's manipulation of elements of style, composition, and technique; and the way in which these factors interact with one another. An artist may employ these elements to create a highly specific meaning, or may allow
for a more general expression, perhaps one supplied principally by
the viewer on the basis of his culturally conditioned responses. The
former approach would be likely to create a successful didactic piece,
one that expressed a specific content that could be understood by and
inform the viewer, and perhaps be used by him to teach others. On the
other hand, the latter approach might be more suitable to works intended
for contemplation or adoration, in which the viewer could be expected
to seek repeated and progressively deeper and richer contacts with an
image. The absence of a limited, specific meaning could permit the
devotee to explore a large range of possible contents latent in the
imagery: contents which he might not be capable of articulating
verbally, but to which he could respond emotionally, psychologically,
or spiritually.

It can be argued that in narrative works the action necessarily
directs content, deflecting thought or contemplation in a given, and
hence limiting direction. If so, then a relatively general iconic
image could be more conducive to successful devotion or veneration,
permitting an unmediated communion between the individual and the
sacred person as embodied in the work of art. But such an argument
can deal only in likelihoods, and can never be regarded as
establishing a firm basis for defining intended function or meaning.
In the iconic mode, the artist may express a specific content, or may
choose not to direct the viewer to a particular meaning, but to leave
him free to derive a less-guided meaning from the piece. Provided the
language of the artwork can be understood by the viewer, both highly
general and highly specific contents can be expressed in the iconic
mode. In narrative works, the artist has the additional tool of the specific moment or moments selected for representation from the range of possible incidents in the story. By selecting a particular incident, the artist can direct the viewer toward a specific meaning or range of meanings, and make others illegitimate or inappropriate. Thus, the narrative mode gives the artist another means of creating and limiting meaning, but he is still free to create either a general or a highly specific expression. Works in either mode may express highly sophisticated, complex content, or generate messages so general that the viewer is essentially at liberty to assign almost any reasonable interpretation to the work, to use the image as a "cue" for his own reflections and insights, or indeed to derive no meaning from the work at all outside its decorative value.

In a consideration of the development of the image of Judith, both in the Medieval and Renaissance periods, the issue of specificity of content is a critical one, because very often depictions of Judith tend to be rather general, leaving the viewer some scope to arrive at an individual sense of their significance. In such cases, patronage, initial location, and the original function of the object can be useful in narrowing the range of presumable intended meanings, and in establishing those which an informed memebor of the work's intended audience can reasonably be expected to have understood as central to the artist's statement. Unfortunately, such circumstances are uncertain, or even totally unknown, for most Judiths from Renaissance Florence. In such cases, all that can be done to arrive at an understanding of the work of art is to establish the range of possible
meanings generated by the image, and to suggest those that the form of the work and its imagery make more likely, less likely, or impossible.

Two difficulties complicate this task. In the first several centuries of Church history, an extensive body of traditional associations was built up around the figure of Judith. Those meanings were initially propounded in literature, and it is unknown how much of this body of potential significance was intended by artists, or understood to be present by viewers, in the specific content of early representations of the heroine. Early images of Judith apparently existed almost exclusively as narrative illustrations in manuscript illuminations of the Old Testament or full Bible, or of works of general history such as the Histoire Universelle. Such depictions, whether in the form of initials or more complete treatments of episodes of her story in full-page continuous narratives, were certainly intended to function as decorations illustrating the text; however, most of the images are sufficiently general that any number of traditional meanings could have been evoked by them, depending on the background of the individual viewer. Unless limitations are established through inscriptions or symbols that specify the range of acceptable interpretations, a depiction of Judith beheading Holofernes, for example, can express a wide variety of meanings, from the fate of tyrants, to the operation of divine justice, to the triumph of a given virtue over its corresponding vice, depending on the way in which it is apprehended by a particular person. Thus, a given viewer of an early manuscript illumination depicting Judith might have seen only a decorative picture, or simple representation of
the narrative. A different viewer might have understood the same painting to embody a larger content, however, and might, for example, have employed it for didactic purposes, to make more vivid the story itself to illiterate monks or parishoners, and to direct them to follow Judith's example of faith and courage in adversity; or to teach such concepts as chastity or humility, or God's justice.

In later Medieval works in which images of Judith were included, such as the portals at Chartres or Amiens, or the typological illustrations of the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, the context of the work, the way it relates to and parallels the meaning of associated figures, serves to create specific meanings. If a viewer brings to such works a still larger content based on his knowledge of tradition, or on personal reflections on the image, this represents secondary content lying outside the intentions of the work's artist and/or patron. The object may accommodate those meanings, i.e., it may do nothing to deny their validity, but they cannot be considered primary to the work. This does not mean that such meanings are invalid; they may in fact be part of the richness of the work, and certainly are part of its history, as well as historical phenomena in themselves. It is appropriate for the historian to note that such readings, where recorded, existed as part of a secondary level of meaning in a work; however, where a primary content can be shown to exist, a distinction must be maintained between that meaning which the artist intended to convey, and others which he did not suppress or deny, and which an individual viewer might discover as latent in the work and draw from or impose on it. But in those cases where neither context, nor
narrative moment, nor symbolic imagery shape a specific primary content, all that can be asserted is that the intended meaning of the work is undetermined, and cannot be discovered on the basis of extant evidence.

The second complicating factor in evaluating the meaning of images of Judith is the fact that a work of art's significance may change over time, particularly if it is moved from its original location and comes to serve a new purpose. Such was, for example, the case with Donatello's *Judith Beheading Holofernes*. This sculpture was in the Medici palace when first mentioned in the documentary record [8]. Either one or, more probably, two inscriptions were placed on the work at the time of its creation or shortly thereafter. The first of these inscriptions read "*Regna cadunt luxu surgent virtutibus urbes caesa vides humili colla superba manu* (Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues; behold the proud neck severed by the humble hand);" the second read "*Salus Publica. Petrus Medices Cos. Pi. libertati simul et fortitudini hanc mulieris statuam quo civis invicto constantique animo ad rem pub. redderent dedicavit* (The Public Weal. Piero Son of Cosimo Medici has dedicated the statue of this woman to that liberty and fortitude bestowed on the republic by the invincible and constant spirit of the citizens)." [9] These inscriptions refer to the triumph and fortitude of Florence and its citizenry, and invoke Judith's traditional meaning of the triumph of humility over pride, establishing both a secular, civic content and a potential for moral contemplation: meanings and functions appropriate to its probable location in the garden of the Medici palace, a place which was both
public and private in its use. As Martha Fader points out, this initial reference to the triumph of Florence might have been intended to refer to its successes under Medici governance, so that the statue functioned in part as an instrument of Medici propaganda [10]. Moved to the Piazza della Signoria in 1495, the work became a symbol of the new republic, and took on distinctly anti-Medici overtones [11]. Initially, the proud neck of the "Regna cadunt luxu" inscription probably referred to the enemies of Florence and the Medici. In 1494, these proud figures were seen as the Medici themselves. Thus, the content of the sculpture underwent a change of some significance as a result of its being moved from its initial context and its adaptability to new meanings created by shifting political conditions in Florence. In analyzing images of Judith, and the changing meanings associated with her, it is necessary not merely to account for that residue of traditional content attached to her, which might be recalled as secondary meaning in the encounter between an individual viewer and a particular work, but also to consider how changes in the circumstances under which a particular work of art was viewed might create new meanings, and render older ones inapplicable.

As has been noted, during the Middle Ages the vast majority of artistic representations of Judith appeared in manuscript illuminations. In certain late Medieval works, such as the Speculum Humanae Salvationis and the Speculum Virginum, images of Judith were placed in typological relationships with figures such as the Virgin Mary, Jael, and Queen Thomyris. Here a quite specific meaning was generated through analogy; i.e., the persons associated with one
another had similarities in character or in their stories that allowed them to be used to demonstrate the same principle, which was normally stated in the text. These form the minority of illuminations depicting Judith, however. Most images of her were straightforward narrative representations of episodes from her story, and illustrated either the text of the Book of Judith in a Biblical manuscript, or some other volume containing an account of her adventure. If such images were meant to function as more than narrative illustration, if they were intended to carry a content beyond a description of events from her history, normally no visual or textual indications of that meaning were given. Thus, if such illuminations were used for didactic purposes to point out implications in Judith's life or character that illustrated larger truths of Christian theology and ethics, that further content would have been brought to them by the viewer or commentator, not directly invested in them by the artist.

Sculpted representations of Judith were rare during the Middle Ages, and seem to have existed only in the context of larger programs. Only two monumental paintings of the heroine are known: a portrait in a quatrefoil on the entrance arch to the Baroncelli Chapel in Santa Croce in Florence, executed by Taddeo Gaddi between 1328 and 1335; and a fresco by Guariento once in the Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo in Padua (ca. 1350; now detached, and in the Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arte in that city) [12]. There is no evidence for any altarpieces or devotional paintings including Judith before about 1470, though she was a popular figure on cassone panels, where cycles of scenes from her story were presented, and where her example of
chastity and piety provided an appropriate model for a bride [13]. While it is not impossible that rare examples of Judith's image in other painted formats were made prior to the last third of the fifteenth century, the absence of any such works is probably not merely an accident of survival. Judith was not a saint, and even if her historical status generally seems to have been taken for granted [14], she did not have the stature of an Old Testament prophet or a direct ancestor of Christ. As a result, though a hero of faith, she was not a truly sacred personage; rather, along with figures such as Esther, Susannah, and Tobias, her person and adventure seem to have been regarded as somewhat more secular in nature, exemplifying at most the proper attitudes and actions of God's faithful in the world. However much these figures might have been held up as appropriate models for behavior, moral exemplars, or even earthly symbols of spiritual realities, they would seem not to have been considered suitable objects for worship or veneration, and therefore their apparent exclusion from altarpieces and icons is not surprising. Icons in particular were frequently considered to actually manifest the presence of the holy person depicted [15], and if Judith did not have sufficient stature in the hierarchy of heaven to make it efficacious to pray to or commune with her, there would be no motive for depicting her on an object designed for veneration. Thus, in a strict sense, Judith could not have functioned as an object of Christian worship, so that her seeming absence from icons and altarpieces probably indicates that she was not depicted in such formats.
While Judith may not have been considered an appropriate object of veneration, a question arises as to whether she might nonetheless have been a fit subject for devotional meditation. In this kind of contemplation, the primary goal of the viewer of a work is a particular kind of deep, emotional experience, a psychological state which will enlighten him and improve his spiritual state and behavior. This is accomplished through reflection on or empathic identification with the character, attitudes, and actions of the subject [16]. Works in both the iconic and narrative modes of presentation could serve as a focus for such meditations; however, in the Early Christian and Medieval periods, the "holy portrait" was, by its nature, considered the more natural, and was certainly the most common, object of devotion, and pictures in the iconic mode formed the large majority of devotional images throughout the Middle Ages [17].

Technically, a devotional image need not manifest the presence of the individual depicted, as an icon was believed to do, to serve as a satisfactory focus for empathic contemplation. The goal of the individual in meditation is to so conform his spirit to that of the object of his devotions that he will achieve some degree of enlightenment, and become in his character and actions more like his model. Such a process does not require direct, mystical communion with the devotional object, only that the devotee imprint the model on his spirit through repeated contemplative experiences, so that thinking, feeling, and behaving like his exemplar becomes his nature or character. Thus, devotional pictures need not meet the same standards as icons, and so a wider range of figures might be
considered acceptable subjects for devotional works. In the Middle Ages, however, this does not generally seem to have been the case. It is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between works that can properly be called icons, and would have been created to function as such, and devotional pictures in the Medieval period. In fact, it is highly questionable whether the period itself, at least in the East, made any distinction at all between them. Though a certain number of icons in the narrative mode were created, the large majority were in fact rather emblematic, portrait-like images, and hence would have been suitable for either venerative or devotional practice. The difference between icons and devotional pictures under such circumstances would not have been in physical appearance, but rather in the way in which the viewer approached and used the objects, and the contexts in which they were placed. Probably, in fact, some such works served, and were meant to serve, more than one function [18]. Thus, a painting designed as an object of veneration could also have functioned as a devotional image, or even a didactic tool [19]. Further, owing to differences in religious practice between the Eastern and Western Churches, a given object could have been used in one way in, for example, Constantinople, and another in Rome, and have functioned satisfactorily in both [20]. Thus, it is perhaps not really useful to try to make a distinction between icons and devotional paintings in the Medieval context. The differences were simply not great enough in most instances, and if visual distinctions existed, they were not sufficient to be detected by modern viewers.
The general observation that Medieval devotional works were almost always iconic in form is an important one, however, for in Quattrocento Florence artists created a body of objects whose function was almost certainly devotional that altered this tradition in a number of ways, including a shift toward more extensive use of the narrative mode, the inclusion among the figures deemed suitable for devotional meditation of personages such as Judith and Tobias, and the infusion of secular content as a level of meaning in at least some of those new images [21].

During the latter half of the fifteenth century, particularly in central Italy, figures like Judith emerged from the illuminated pages of manuscripts and began to be represented in free-standing sculptures and (generally) small, independent paintings on panel or canvas. The reasons for this development are complex, and to some extent conjectural; however, the humanization of Medieval Christianity by the new attitudes and ideas of the Renaissance, the increasing emphasis on private devotional practice at the expense of corporate worship, an increasingly secular society, and political conditions in Florence were probably the primary factors leading to the creation of a relatively small, but important body of works portraying Judith. This group contains works embodying both traditional and new meanings and forms, and includes a monumental bronze sculpture by Donatello; a small bronze statuette variously attributed to Verrocchio and Antonio del Pollaiuolo; four paintings by Botticelli; one by Domenico or Davide Ghirlandaio; and one by the north Italian master Andrea Mantegna which was in the Medici collection by 1492 [22]. In addition,
Lorenzo Ghiberti included a figure of Judith in his *Gates of Paradise* for the East door of the Baptistry (1425-52), and Michelangelo incorporated her into the spandrel decorations in the Sistine Ceiling (1508-12), a monumental manifestation of the image, but one consistent in many respects in its approach and meaning with earlier examples on a smaller scale [23].

In some respects, Florentine depictions of Judith during the fifteenth century continued Medieval treatments of her story. But there were also several significant innovations. During the Middle Ages, by far the most common image of Judith was one in which she beheaded Holofernes, whether it stood alone as an initial, or was part of a typological series, or formed the climax of a composition featuring continuous narration. The power of Donatello's *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, its prominence in size and as a major public monument, are such that it almost seems as if the execution must also have been the dominant Renaissance compositional moment, but in fact this was not the case. From about 1450 to 1540, representations of the beheading itself were relatively rare. Rather, two other scenes, seldom seen in the Medieval iconographic corpus, and then only in continuous narratives, became the norms for the Florentine Renaissance: Judith and her maid, Abra, returning to Bethulia, and Judith at the opening of Holofernes's tent after the execution [24].

The reasons for this change are unclear, but it might have been motivated at least in part by a feeling that it was inappropriate to show a woman committing an act of violence against a man. In scenes of the return and the departure from the tent, reference to the death
of Holofernes was inevitably made through the presence of his severed head, but it is often discreetly concealed in a basket or under a cloth: a necessary part of the narrative, hiding the head so that the deed will go undetected until Judith and Abra have escaped, but one which also mutes its force visually. Her prior action was clearly implied, but the viewer was spared Judith actually wielding the sword, and the violent and bloody portions of her action could be elided. This latter aspect of Judith's story was troubling to at least one Renaissance commentator: Francesco di Lorenzo Filarete, herald of the Florentine Signoria, commented in 1504 that "... the Judith (of Donatello, which shows the beheading in progress) is a deadly symbol (sego mortifero) and does not befit us whose insignia are the cross and the lily, nor is it good to have a woman kill a man ..." [25] A shift to a new moment, one in which the beheading was alluded to, but in a more decorous fashion, might have been a less offensive alternative to those who found the violent nature of Judith's act unsettling.

However, the choice of a different moment for emphasis might also have appealed to artists and patrons for other reasons. The beheading is the climactic moment of the story, but is one of such drama and finality that it tends to imply the completion of the action. In fact, what follows is significant, and rich in potential meanings. The shift to other incidents allowed artists to more easily imply past and, especially, future action. The beheading brings to an end the personal conflict between Judith and Holofernes, but that between the Assyrians and Bethulians concludes only when she returns, and the
severed head is displayed to the invaders, who break and run.

A number of very important meanings were traditionally associated with the beheading, most significantly those revolving around the triumph of virtues over corresponding vices: in fact, it was very common to see Judith standing over Holofernes in the climactic moment in a form very similar to that in which virtues were seen to stand atop the vices they had conquered [26]. If this parallel compositional form generated memories of the psychomachia tradition in the minds of viewers of a work, then their apprehension of its content might have been directed toward Judith's role as a moral exemplar, a body of meaning which was strongly ingrained in her image by the fifteenth century. A scene which referred to the beheading but did not actually depict it might allow that content to remain latent rather than assume dominance. It could still appropriately be appreciated by viewers, but at the same time the work of art could accomodate new meanings or allow shifts in emphasis. Thus, for example, scenes of her return, in which Bethulia itself could be depicted, would not necessarily eliminate a consideration of the moral or allegorical implications of Judith's action, but could allow the artist to make them secondary in the viewer's mind, and bring forward meanings connected to the salvation of the city: give new emphasis, in fact, to meanings with civic, political, and secular import. This is not to say that scenes of the beheading could not carry such new meanings: certainly Donatello's sculpture was seen to embody political content in its time. But that content was initially established through the inscriptions, and the work's status as a symbol of the Florentine republic in its
revolt against the tyranny of the Medici resulted from its associations with the family, and its shift to a new location after their 1494 expulsion, and not from anything present in the work itself. Consequently, it is likely that the prevalence of the new scenes in Renaissance art reflects both a sense that representations of the beheading itself were repellent or indecorous and the insight that different scenes might better accommodate new content than the old standard.

Thus, while the range of specifically religious content attached to Judith remained approximately the same from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, her function as a moral exemplar and symbol of virtue was supplemented by her employment as a vehicle for meanings that were secular in nature, including her use as a symbol of Florence. One of the hallmarks of the Florentine fifteenth century was a growing secularization of culture, including an increased concern with civic affairs and civic virtues, such as justice in its diverse forms. The flexibility of Judith and her story to accommodate meanings of both a sacred and a secular nature, and even to do so simultaneously, might account in part for her special popularity in Florence. Certain works, such as Donatello's Judith Beheading Holofernes, may have been intended by the artist and/or patron to express both a sacred and a more secular content: such, at least, would be the implication of the inscriptions placed on the sculpture when it was in the Medici palace, which referred to both the triumph of a virtue (humility) over a vice (pride) and to the preservation of the city in the fact of its enemies. The secular and sacred meanings were not necessarily in
equilibrium; clearly one could be dominant, as in the Donatello, where the civic significance of the sculpture may have been somewhat stronger even during its time in the Palazzo Medici [27]. Nonetheless, the potential to carry both sacred and secular content was clearly present in the image of Judith, and in Quattrocento Florence this possibility was embraced to a degree hitherto unknown.

Often works depicting Judith from this period were rather non-directive in their form; i.e., they did not include inscriptions or many symbolic images, and the choice of narrative moment accommodated a range of potential meanings, rather than serving to exclude many of them. This was certainly true of the bronze statuette by Verrocchio or Pollaiuolo and the paintings of Judith at the Opening of Holofernes's Tent, and to a lesser extent of Ghirlandaio's version of Judith Returning to Bethulia. Such images may have relied on the body of traditional content for whatever meanings they were seen to have by their original audiences. Conversely, they may have had a specific content apprehensible to their original audiences, but inaccessible to the modern researcher. Thus, while an attempt will be made in the discussion of each work to come to some sense of its intended function and meaning, it will not always be possible to speak with confidence. Even where a primary content can be defined with reasonable certainty, it is the nature of the image of Judith that additional, potentially valid readings reside latently in the figure, and might have been appreciated by at least some members of its original audience.
Another change in the treatment of Judith between the Middle Ages and Renaissance was her aforementioned inclusion in devotional paintings. By the fourteenth century, there seems to have been a shift from the largely corporate worship of the earlier Middle Ages toward more private, personal religious experience: a trend that accelerated in the fifteenth century. This was reflected in an increased emphasis on private devotions, and seen in art in a significant growth in the production of small paintings of holy, sacred, or Biblical figures intended for individual contemplation in the home or monastic cell [28]. These works were not objects of worship or formal veneration: rather, they provided a focus for contemplation and models for the Christian to imitate. The practice of private devotions did not originate in the fifteenth century: indeed it was known throughout the history of Christianity, and was one of the potential abuses that concerned St. Gregory of Nyssa when he defended the use of sacred imagery [29]. However, devotional meditation underwent a significant revival in the late Middle Ages, stemming in part from the example of St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226), and the spiritual exercises of St. Bonaventure and Jacopone da Todi, created in the latter half of the thirteenth century. In the visual arts, this development was reflected in the German andachtsbilder and the proliferation of Books of Hours during the fourteenth century [30]. It is the marked increase in the production of isolated, iconic figures or narratives painted on small panels or canvas to serve as a focus for private devotions, and the extension of their subjects to figures of a less sacred nature, such as Judith, that appears to have
been new to the Quattrocento.

Of course, not all small panels or cabinet paintings are devotional works, even when figures from sacred history are presented. As will be seen, a work such as Botticelli’s Uffizi Judith Returning to Bethulia probably has a significant, even primary, secular content, and so, even though the image could easily have been used for devotional meditation, that probably was not the work’s intended function [31]. Strictly speaking, works whose principal content was secular should not be considered devotional, even though they might emulate traditional or new forms of devotional art in appearance, incorporate religious figures normally found in that genre, and even accommodate devotional practices as a potential secondary use. Nonetheless, most of the remaining paintings from Quattrocento Florence that depict Judith seem to fit the profile of devotional works, and this marks a significant new development in the use of her image.

There are a few additional similarities and differences between the Medieval and Florentine Renaissance handlings of Judith that merit brief consideration. Outside of cassone panels, the continuous narration present in many Medieval manuscript illuminations disappeared. It was replaced by full-length depictions of Judith in single moments of action. However, a narrative, rather than iconic emphasis was maintained in Florentine Judiths: Donatello’s sculpture, Botticelli’s paintings of the 1470s, and Michelangelo’s fresco are all clearly narrative in mode, while Ghiberti’s figure from the Gates of Paradise, Botticelli’s later work, the Ghirlandaio painting, and
Mantegna's essays (all of which show Judith at the opening of the tent), preserve a narrative dominance, though they also introduce emblematic qualities more typical of the iconic mode. Among Florentine works, only the small bronze of Pollaiuolo or Verrocchio can be considered primarily iconic, and even it preserves a strong flavor of narrative in Judith's active posture, in which she raises her sword as if to strike. Only the body of Holofernes is required to make it a fully narrative scene of the beheading.

The fact that bronze sculptures of Judith exist points to another change from the Middle Ages, the use of new media and, to a certain extent, the monumentalization of images depicting her. In Florentine art, only Donatello's sculpture and the fresco of Michelangelo represent truly monumental manifestations of the heroine, but even in the realm of painting, the works by Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, and Mantegna are both physically larger and visually more impressive than the manuscript illuminations of the Middle Ages. As a consequence, even though Judith appears as the principal figure in a modest number of works from the Florentine Renaissance, compared to the Medieval period she is a much more significant figure, despite the larger body of works produced in the earlier time. It is true, of course, that the production of Renaissance images was condensed into a much shorter span of time, but it must also be remembered that much more Medieval material has probably been lost. It is primarily the expansion of scale and the importance of the artists who depicted Judith that make her seem so much more important to the Renaissance than to earlier periods [32].
A final issue that should be addressed is the difference in the
degree of specificity of meaning in images of Judith between the
Middle Ages and the Florentine Renaissance. A certain number of
Medieval images existed in contexts that lent a highly specific
meaning to the figure. Such, for example, is the case when she
appears in typological relationship to the Virgin Mary, Jael, and
Thomyris as destroyers of evil in the Speculum Humanae Salvationis, or
as a salvation figure related to Christ and Mary Ecclesia in the north
transept portal of Chartres Cathedral [33]. A similar use of context
to create meaning can be seen in Renaissance works, such as Ghiberti's
bronze doors or Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel fresco. However, it is
very difficult, if not impossible, to assign any specific meaning
beyond a simple narration of the story's events to a large number of
manuscript illuminations that illustrate texts of the tale. The
larger implications of her story might have been appreciated by
individual viewers, and this information conveyed to others, but that
content was derived, not from the specific imagery or choice of
narrative moment in the work, but from its audience's prior knowledge
of a tradition of literary interpretations. Most of these Medieval
images of Judith have a vast potential content, but a very limited and
non-specific meaning was actually mandated by the form and imagery of
the works.

Depictions of Judith from Renaissance Florence, on the other
hand, in most instances are likely to have had a specific content
which the artist intended to convey. Though the precise meaning of
the Quattrocento paintings and sculptures may not always be accessible
today, it is probable that few were created without a specific meaning in mind. It is true that most do not have an abundance of readily interpretable symbols to guide the viewer toward a given meaning, but most were created to serve a particular function for a particular person, and designed for a particular place. They also include a sufficient number of elements that shape meaning, such as choice of narrative moment and an array of images beyond that of Judith herself arranged in an expressive fashion, to indicate that a fairly specific meaning was embodied in each. This may not have been the case with Pollaiuolo or Verrocchio's small bronze statuette, whose provenance is unknown before the nineteenth century, and which is so general an image almost any meaning compatible with Judith's story could be projected on to or derived from it, so absent are clues to guide interpretation. But some element, even if it is only contemporary events, normally intervenes to suggest an avenue of interpretation in the remainder of the Florentine works, and those that can be approached with more confidence indicate that specificity of meaning was characteristic of independent depictions of Judith during this period.

The question of specificity of meaning is significant in a consideration of changes in the iconography of Judith in Italy in the period from 1425 to 1540, and in delineating differences in the way in which her image was conceived between Central and Northern Italy. During this span of time, there was a marked shift in the treatment of Judith. During the Quattrocento, a preponderance of strongly narrative works was created in Florence or by Florentine artists
working elsewhere in Central Italy. These works usually included full-length figures engaged in action, and probably embodied a fairly specific primary meaning, one accessible to its original viewers even if it is more opaque today. Though Judith continued to be represented in a very traditional fashion in manuscript illuminations of the Quattrocento, she rarely appeared in Northern Italian paintings or sculptures of the period, coming into prominence only after 1500. While the decline in Judith's popularity in Florence can be accounted at least in part to the return of the Medici [34], her seemingly sudden popularity in Northern Italy is less easily explained, and when she finally emerged as a significant figure in the art of the region, it was in a form distinctly different from that dominant in Central Italy during the Renaissance.

When Judith began to be depicted in Venetian and Lombard art, the works were very often basically in the iconic mode, and compositions usually featured half-length figures in association with Judith's traditional attributes, with narrative elements either absent or understated. Even when full-length figures were presented, as in Giorgione's painting of Judith, the iconic, emblematic presence of the figure strongly outweighed narrative implications in the work. There is also a paucity of symbols or other indicators of specific content, such as the shaping influence exerted on meaning by choice of narrative moment, or information on patronage and function. As a result, most North Italian depictions of Judith from the first half of the sixteenth century are quite ambiguous. Circumstances much like those in early Medieval manuscript illuminations seem to have
obtained, i.e., the viewer had access to as full a range of possible meanings for Judith's story as were known to him, without being strongly directed toward any particular one.

The ambiguity of meaning present in individual works extends to the identification of images of Judith. As Paul Joannides points out, there are certain North Italian works from the sixteenth century in which a woman is depicted with the attribute of a severed head, but no other certain indicators of identity, creating the possibility of confusion between Judith and Salome, two figures whose implications are far from compatible [35]. The reasons for these developments are unclear, but they may have resulted in part from continuing close contact between Venice and Byzantium prior to its fall, the influx of Greek refugees after 1453, and a certain native conservatism in Venetian art. The North Italian works are far more similar to Byzantine icons, and to traditional local images of the Madonna and Child, in their use of half-length figures in the iconic mode than are Florentine pieces. If the Venetian pictures are devotional works, and only a more purely decorative function really suggests itself as an alternative, then their form might have been the result of an impulse to imitate icons or other traditional devotional forms in Venice. This is not true of every image of Judith created in Northern Italy during the sixteenth century: Titian's fresco of her on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, for example, though emblematic in form, probably was meant to carry fairly specific content, perhaps drawing on Judith's by then long-standing association with justice. Nonetheless, there was
between Central Italy in the Quattrocento and Northern Italy in the Cinquecento, a break great enough to consider the Venetian and Lombard works as representing a distinctly different phase in its evolution.

If it is fair to say that it was in the Renaissance that the figure of Judith truly came into its own as an image in art, then it is necessary to credit the elevation of her status primarily to Florence and Florentine artists. Significant changes occurred over the course of the Renaissance; first about 1500, and later about 1540, when a renewed emphasis on narrative by artists such as Tintoretto and Veronese initiated a series of developments that led into the Baroque treatments of her image, one which was far more emphatic in its violence and militancy than was the norm in the earlier era. In fifteenth century Florence, a series of works was created which both answered the needs of patrons for particular kinds of religious and political experiences and expressions, and also embodied meanings close to the central concerns of the Renaissance. The manner in which Judith and her story were treated and transformed over the course of this period so crucial to the history of the subject forms the central concern of this study. However, in order to understand fully how the Florentine Quattrocento version of Judith was both similar to and different from those of the preceding Medieval period, and in order to appreciate the range of latent or traditional meanings such images might have contained, it will be necessary to examine in some detail the history of the literature and art in which she was present before the fifteenth century. This examination will occupy the next chapter.
NOTES


3 A fuller summary of the story of Judith is found in the appendix.

4 The earliest extant depiction of her story is in the San Paolo fuori le Mura Bible, c. 870; see Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, "The Lord Has Struck Him Down By the Hand of a Woman! Images of Judith," in Doug Adams and Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, editors, Art as Religious Studies (New York, 1987), p. 85. An extremely fragmentary and badly preserved fresco exists on the choir screen of Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome. Frances G. Godwin posited that a Judith cycle was represented there, and that it and the San Paolo fuori le Mura Bible cycle had a common source in a lost rotulus, probably from North Africa (Egypt). If so, this would indicate the presence of an earlier, perhaps quite ancient tradition of depicting Judith in the visual arts. There is insufficient evidence to link the choir screen and the Bible to a single source; however, taken together they suggest the likelihood that there was a tradition of representing Judith cycles from the Early Christian period. Unfortunately, no examples survive in a sufficiently legible state for the phenomenon to be examined, and it can only be extrapolated from later works such as the illumination in the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura. The early tenth century Byzantine Bible of Leo (Rome, Vatican Reg. gr. 1, fol. 383) suggests a similar tradition existed in the East. Frances G. Godwin, "The Judith Illustration of the 'Hortus Deliciarum'," Gazette des Beaux-Arts 36 (1949), see especially pp. 28-30, 32, 37.

5 The earliest known Christian references to Judith occur in the letters of Clement of Rome (c. 30-c. 99 C.E.) in the first century C.E. Carey A. Moore, translator and editor, The Anchor Bible: Judith (New York, 1955), p. 64. For further discussion of the literary tradition, see Chapter 2.

6 This development is traced in Wolfgang Pleister and Wolfgang Schild, Recht und Gerechtigkeit im Spiegel der europäischen Kunst (Cologne, 1988), pp. 86-171. While identifications of Judith with individual moral virtues such as Chastity and Humility existed from at least the third century C.E. (Moore, "Anchor Bible Judith," p. 64),
toward the end of the Middle Ages there came to be a strong tendency in the iconography of Justice to represent her with the traditional attributes of the heroine. The process reached back into the thirteenth century, when the sword began to be mixed with, and sometimes to replace, scales as the attributes of Justitia.Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Allegory of Good Government fresco (1337-9) in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena seems to be the first instance in which the figure of Giustizia was represented with both a sword and severed head, attributes traditionally and unambiguously associated with Judith in earlier art. This figure is, however, labelled as Justice, not Judith. It is only in Renaissance Florence that a figure of Judith herself takes on the significance of an emblem of Justice.

7 A full discussion of these issues, establishing both the basic functions of Christian art and the relationship of those uses to modes of representation, may be found in Sixten Ringbom, Icon to Narrative (Abo, 1965). Ringbom established basic categories, functions, and concepts for the study of Christian art, and the present study is indebted to him for his basic structural framework and definitions, though the terms and concepts as defined below do not always accord precisely with those Ringbom delineated.


9 Janson, "Donatello," p. 198. The inscriptions were apparently located on a column below the statue, perhaps a base or pedestal.


12 A fuller discussion of this and other Medieval works depicting Judith may be found in Chapter 2.


14 Sources such as St. Jerome, Tertullian, and St. Ambrose speak of Judith as a real person, and if they had any doubts concerning her historicity or the general accuracy of the book's account of events they did not commit them to writing. Sulpicius Severus and a few other authors in the fifth century C.E. expressed doubts about the authenticity of the Nebuchadnezzar mentioned in the opening of the
book, but in general it was accepted as a record of real events performed by real people from the Patristic period through the Renaissance. Moore, "Anchor Bible Judith," p. 46.


16 Ringbom, "Icon," p. 12. One of the presumed benefits of devotional contemplation, or empathic identification with a sacred figure, would be a closer conformation of the character of the devotee with that of the object of his devotion. This in turn would lead to an alteration in attitudes and behavior, so that the individual would become more like the sacred person with whom he identified. Thus, by reflecting on Judith, either purely imaginatively or with the aid of images, one might be led to emulate her example of humility, or chastity, or moral and physical courage. In some ways this process is related to the didactic function, in that by meditation and imitation the devotee learns how better to behave toward God and his fellow creatures. But there is a spiritual and emotional, perhaps even mystical dimension to the devotional experience that is not, or at least need not be, part of a simple didactic one, in which only the intellect of the viewer need be engaged. Consequently, in this study reference to the didactic function will be understood to refer primarily to the inclusion of meanings in a work that do not depend on devotional contemplation for apprehension, nor to operate principally through it as a means of edification.

17 Ringbom, "Icon," p. 38. Ringbom essentially sees icons as "holy portraits," or portraits of sacred persons, existing outside a strongly and specifically narrative context.

18 As Ringbom points out, the isolated devotional image was particularly suited to the combination of two or all three of his functions for Christian art (cultic, didactic, and empathic). Ringbom, "Icon," p. 13. It is noteworthy that narrative images seem not to have functioned very often in the Middle Ages as icons or objects of devotional contemplation. It might seem logical to think that seeing an example of praiseworthy action in a narrative work, and meditating on it, would have been a more powerful inducement to better behavior in the devotee than simply reflecting on or identifying with the character of an individual depicted in an icon. However, in Medieval devotional practice this apparently was not considered true. Perhaps this was so because action was seen to flow from character, so that the primary objective of the devotee was to conform his inner being to that of the sacred figure; perhaps it was because the efficacy of the process was based on the personal commitment or love of the devotee for the object of his devotions more than on conscious imitation of actions. The precise reasons are unclear, but as a historical phenomenon this seems to have been the case.
19 The distinctions between functions Ringbom discusses are ultimately derived from those uses of images considered legitimate by Christian theorists. In practice, particularly when confronted with the possible functions of a specific work of art, the divisions are by no means as clear as the analytical structure and its terminology might suggest.

20 Perhaps as an icon in Constantinople, and a devotional image or altarpiece in Rome.

21 A fuller account of this development can be found in Ringbom, "Icon," pp. 11-71. Ringbom primarily discussed the shift from half-length icons to half-length narratives in depictions of Christ from about 1450-1525. Developments in the iconography of Judith did not precisely parallel those he details in that of Christ; in fact, they ran in largely opposite directions up to 1500. However, the amplified popularity of devotional paintings in the fifteenth century as compared to earlier eras seems to account in part for the new popularity of the image of Judith and the particular form which most representations of her came to take during the period from 1425 to 1512.

22 This work has probably been lost. However, Mantegna's surviving works on this theme are all very similar to one another, and it is commonly believed that a painting of Judith and Abra at the opening of Holofernes's tent, now in the National Gallery in Washington, reflects the appearance of the lost Medici panel in at least a general way. Niny Garavaglia, The Complete Paintings of Mantegna (New York, 1967), p. 114.

23 In addition, Judith has been identified as one of the female figures in a group attending the coronation of the Virgin in a fresco by Filippo Lippi in the dome of Spoleto Cathedral, and is included in simulated reliefs in the backgrounds of two further paintings by Botticelli. She was also represented in Florentine graphics of the Quattrocento, including Finiguerra's Picture Chronicle, an illustration which was copied in a copperplate engraving by Baldini about 1465-80.

24 In addition, in Northern Italy after 1500 emblematic depictions showing Judith with the severed head and, sometimes, the sword became very common in both half- and full-length formats.

25 Quoted in Janson, "Donatello," p. 199.
26 Compare, for example, Judith standing atop Holofernes in the Speculum Virginum illustrations of the "Triumph of Humility" (Zwettl, Stiftsbibliothek HS 180, fol. 45v; and London, British Museum; Plates 63 and 64) with the triumphant Virtues of the Bamberg Apocalypse or Strasbourg Cathedral. For these latter images, see Adolf Katzenellenbogen, Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art (Toronto, 1989 (1939)), which also includes an illustration of the London illumination.

27 The political significance was obviously dominant in the Piazza della Signoria, where it was moved in 1495.

28 Ringbom, "Icon," p. 30. Devotional works on panel were known in the late Middle Ages, and therefore there was a certain degree of continuity between Medieval and Renaissance religious practices in the use of small, painted images as objects of contemplation. Meditative activity was more characteristic of monastic communities during the early Middle Ages, spreading to secular contexts only in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when significant numbers of devotional paintings began to be created. However, the large expansion in the number of devotional paintings created in the Quattrocento probably cannot be accounted for solely by shifting patterns of religious practice. It is likely that economic opportunities, the wider availability of sufficient wealth to afford works of art to serve as a focus of meditation, also played a significant role.


31 A similar situation obtains with reference to the Ghirlandaio painting, though its content is unclear, and it may have been principally a decorative work.

32 A partial list of such artists includes Ghiberti, Donatello, Pollaiuolo or Verrocchio, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, Michelangelo, Fra Filippo Lippi, Mantegna, Giorgione, Titian, Sodoma, Sebastiano del Piombo, Correggio, Pordenone, Cariani, Catena, Tintoretto, and Veronese. In addition, the inscribed name "Johannes Bellinus" on one of the paintings of Judith by Marco Palezzano (1525, now in Geneva) has been taken by some to suggest that a prototype by Giovanni Bellini lay behind Palezzano's work. See Paul Joannides, "Titian's Judith and its Context," Apollo 361 (March 1992), p. 167.

33 She was also a prominent figure in lists of famous persons at least as early as Clement of Alexandria (d. c. 215 C.E.). See Enslin and Zeitlin, "Judith," p. 46.
34 This is not to say that no works of art depicting Judith were made in Florence during the sixteenth century. For example, Giovanni della Robbia made two small sculptures of her: a medallion in 1523, one of sixty-six of various prophets, apostles, saints, and Old Testament figures set in the spandrels of a cloister arcade in the Certosa in Val d'Éma; and a statuette of uncertain date (c. 1510-29; Plate 11). Important paintings of Judith were also made elsewhere in Central Italy, notably by the Sienese Baldassare Peruzzi and Sodoma in Rome in the second decade of the century. Judith also re-emerged as a figure in Florentine painting toward the end of the Cinquecento.

CHAPTER II

JUDITH IN EARLY CHRISTIAN AND MEDIEVAL LITERATURE AND ART

Though it is by no means the longest or most complex of the books of the Bible, Judith is rich in implications, and has provided its readers with a variety of insights into sacred truths for over 2,000 years. As early as the first century C.E., Christian theologians used it to exemplify a number of principles fundamental to the developing faith, and over the course of the Patristic and Medieval periods Judith came to be an important secondary figure in Christian literature and art.

Unfortunately, while Judith's content for its Christian readers can be readily traced in numerous pre-Renaissance texts and illustrations, the import of the book for its original Jewish audience cannot be so well documented. The time and place of the book's composition and its early history have been established only approximately by modern scholars, principally because there is so little primary evidence on which to base a probable date, or define with certainty the context in which it was written. The book itself makes no reference to the circumstances of its own creation, and is not mentioned in other literary sources until well after the time it was probably produced. Surviving ancient manuscripts of Judith are
widely divergent, so that linguistic analysis is of limited value for determining where, when, or by whom it was written: a problem compounded by the likelihood that no extant form of the text is entirely faithful to the lost original [1]. Even textual references to the names of documented rulers or events are of little value for dating the book because all its variants depart so much from historical fact. Thus, its date and place of origin, the identity of its author, and the conditions under which he wrote remain conjectural, and recent studies have succeeded in defining Judith's likely initial context only in general terms. As a result, the functions it might have fulfilled, and the meanings its writer meant to convey to its earliest audience can only be hypothesized.

Because of the lack of primary sources regarding its early history, the conditions under which Judith was probably written and the purposes it might have been intended to serve must be reconstructed from secondary evidence. Most recent studies suggest that Judith was composed in Palestine, and date the original text to the middle of the Hasmonean period, about 150-100 B.C.E. [2] This conclusion is based on the assumption that, although Judith is a work of historical fiction, the circumstances of its central conflict accurately reflect a real situation of deep concern to its writer. According to this theory, rather than composing a chronicle of the actual events of his day, the author addressed a contemporary crisis by means of a tale set in a fictitious past [3]. By endowing that fictional earlier age with a nucleus of referents to conditions of his own era, he was able to examine the major conflicts of his time
indirectly, both advancing a particular viewpoint regarding the nature of the problems and the actions necessary to remedy them, and exploring their larger theological dimensions. If, as seems likely the book were intended to function in this fashion, a significant correspondence between a set of conditions described in the text and those in a particular period of Jewish history would form a reasonable basis for positing an approximate date for the work, and serve as a guide for discovering the meanings the author meant to convey to his original audience. In **Judith**, defense of Israel and its theocratic culture against a threatening foreign power is clearly the major concern of the story. Sharp distinctions are drawn between foreigners, whose religion and social customs are seen as corrupt and evil, and Jews, whose way of life is seen as supremely good. The author especially favors the strict observance of a body of laws, rituals, and customs that seems to anticipate the development of the Talmud, and which constitutes a holy form of living ordained by God for the people of Israel, and intimately connected to their righteousness. The book strongly asserts the necessity of faithfully maintaining these traditions and resisting all others, regardless of the sacrifices required, because the law and its attendant ritual are intrinsically sacred, and their observance necessary to the continuance of divine favor and Israel's survival.

The author's concern with this issue suggests that **Judith** might have been addressed to a Jewish audience during a period in which this way of life was threatened by external forces. Dates ranging from the late fourth century B.C.E. to the second century C.E. have been
suggested for its composition, but during only one period in this span was this issue of pressing concern to the nation: the second century B.C.E., when intense nationalistic and religious fervor swept through Judea as a result of attempts by Hellenistic Syrian rulers to impose Greek religion and culture on the Jews, a policy that brought on the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus IV Epiphanes and his successors. The preceding Persian period was one in which the Jewish cult was either fostered or benignly neglected by the kings and their satraps, while the early years of rule by Hellenistic Greeks were so marked by conflict between Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria for control of the region that relatively little interference with local traditions occurred. Similarly, at least until the Zealot revolts of the mid-first century C.E., the Romans were content to allow the Jews to practice freely their ancient law and customs. Thus, among those periods which might have seen the creation of Judith, only that of the Maccabean wars against Syrian rule contained conditions analogous in significant ways to those central to the book, and it is therefore the best candidate modern scholarship can suggest for the time in which Judith was written.

Several of the text's characteristics indicate it was intended as a vehicle for meanings relevant specifically to Jews of the author's time. Despite the Mesopotamian origin of Holofernes and Bagoas, at least some of the customs referred to by the author reflect Greek practices against which the Maccabaeans struggled [4], most notably the general's demand that they give up their God and worship Nebuchadnezzar as a god-king. The name "Judith" is a generic one,
meaning "jewess," encouraging readers to see her as representative of the people of Israel as a whole, not merely as a particular individual. Her triumph over Holofernes is specifically identified as a reward for prayer and exact observance of the rules of legal and ritual purity, hallmarks of those contemporary Jewish practices that the Syrians sought to suppress [5]. The author's denunciation of foreign influences bears on the major political and religious crisis of his time, while his assertion of the necessity of worshipping only the one true deity, and of preserving a divinely ordained way of life, clearly echoes the ancient Hebrew prophets, reminding readers that active resistance to pagan practices is required by God of all Jewish people, regardless of personal risk, and that faithfulness in this cause would be rewarded by victory. The national and religious significance of the struggle is stated directly in the text by Achior, an Ammonite who is later converted to Judaism, who warns Holofernes that actions against Israel can succeed only if it has sinned against its god and is to be punished [6]. Thus, though apparently set in the distant past, the story obviously includes content relevant to political and religious conditions in Judea at the time of its composition, and can legitimately be seen on one level as a polemic designed to reassure and rally support for the party of observant Jews in their conflict with the Syrians and their Hellenizing Jewish supporters.

Judith also, however, functions as a morality tale, examining timeless issues of good and evil, virtue and vice. This is the level on which the book was most meaningful to later readers, including the
generations of commentators and apologists who established the import of Judith for the Christian world. There are good reasons for thinking that this dimension of the story was also a conscious concern of the author, and that he designed the text so that its larger implications might be readily understood. Though written in the form of a chronicle, the book displays a deliberate defiance of historical and geographical fact which may have been meant to alert readers that aspects of the story other than historicity should command most of their attention [7]. These discrepancies abound in the surviving ancient manuscripts, and almost certainly would have been apparent to its initial readers. The opening sentences, for example, are filled with anachronisms, such as designating Nebuchadnezzar King of the Assyrians, or naming Arphaxad, a figure completely unknown to history, King of the Medes [8]. As has been mentioned, while Bagoas and Holofernes are Persian names, they are linked to the practice of Greek customs. Furthermore, the itinerary given for Holofernes's army in Judith 2:12–28 is a geographical impossibility; and in Samaria, presumably more familiar ground for the author, place names are largely unknown and sound unusual for the region [9]. Even Bethulia itself, the story's locus, seems to have been an invention, for it cannot be identified with any historical site, despite the specificity with which it is described in the text [10]. It is unlikely that these anomalies simply reflect errors by copyists or translators; they are too many and too great, and too well integrated into the text, to be the result of accidents. Rather, they seem to have been intended to signal readers that the text is not literal history, but a complex
allegory containing a variety of deeper truths of both contemporary and general significance.

The author further focussed on the moral content by reducing the conflict to a confrontation between two people, Judith and Holofernes, whose characters are simplified to allow them to incarnate good and evil, respectively. Holofernes is depicted as an unmitigated villain, untouched by any redeeming qualities. He is the embodiment of vice: cruel, impious, and unjust, filled with pride and lust, a mocker of God intent on Israel's destruction. Judith, on the other hand, incarnates all that the author considers virtuous: faith in and humility before God, moral righteousness, strict observance of Jewish ritual, and a willingness to act courageously to defend the nation and its divinely ordained law, even at risk of death. Her execution of Holofernes prefigures the final, eschatological triumph of good over evil, as Judith 16:17 makes clear [11], but it is condensed into a vivid, readily comprehensible conflict between two human beings, one purely good, the other quintessentially evil, and thus made as accessible to any reader as a child's fairy tale. No knowledge of complex theological principles or the political and religious conflicts of the Hasmonean age is necessary to understand Judith's meaning on this level. Nonetheless, this simple story expounds two of the most profound core beliefs of Judaism and, subsequently, Christianity: that the kingdom of God and good must ultimately triumph, and that faithfulness to God on the part of his people will be rewarded in the end.
It is therefore likely that the Book of Judith was intended to function both as a morality tale and as religious and nationalistic polemic [12]. It exhorts the reader to faithfulness in resisting foreign customs, asserting that steadfast adherence to Jewish law pleases God, and brings victory over those who would destroy His people or their way of life. It thus reflects the beliefs and hopes of the Maccabaeans in an era of intense turmoil in Israel. But the text also carries a message of general significance to people in all times and places, speaking of the universal conflict between good and evil, and the ultimate triumph of those who act in God's cause; or, to be more precise, through whom God acts in defense of righteousness (Judith 16:7; "But the Lord almighty has thwarted them by a woman's hand.").

While contemporary scholars largely agree that Judith is ultimately fictitious, it has not always been regarded as such. Since the time of St. Jerome's Vulgate edition of the Bible, Judith, along with its companions Tobit and Esther, has been placed at the conclusion of the historical texts of the Old Testament [13]. Insofar as each is written more or less in the form of a chronicle, and appears to treat events of the Exile or post-exilic period, it is not difficult to understand why Jerome chose to place them with the histories, or why they were regarded as essentially true accounts of real events by early and Medieval Christians, even if not by their authors or initial audiences.

The original language of Judith is believed to have been Hebrew; however, that text of the book has not survived, and studies of the remaining ancient versions are very complicated [14]. It was included
in the Septuagint, and four Greek recensions of the text are extant, one of which was the source for the translations of the book in the Syriac and Old Latin variants [15]. St. Jerome apparently made the Vulgate translation, which differs in a number of details from the existing Greek, Old Latin, and Syriac versions, directly from an Aramaic ("Chaidean") manuscript, but the text on which he based his edition has also been lost, and appears to have been an abridgement of either the original Hebrew or a later Greek version [16].

In the Western Church, the book was early considered to be deuterocanonical, i.e., it was recognized as part of the canon only with hesitancy and after a period of doubt [17]. It was read and cited from Christianity's first century, however, and has appeared on official canon lists in the West since the Roman Synod of 382 [18]. The book's inclusion in the Greek canon was slower; though largely accepted in the first two centuries in the Greek-speaking churches of the East, its status thereafter was highly uncertain until 692, when the "in Trullo" Council of Constantinople officially declared Judith canonical [19]. Wycliffe rejected it, however, in his fourteenth century translation of the Bible into English, and Luther assigned it to the Apocrypha, where it remains in Protestant Bibles [20]. It was omitted from the Jewish canon for unknown reasons by Palestinian rabbis as early as the first century C.E. Judith's accepting attitude toward the towns of Samaria and positive portrayal of an Ammonite might have been factors in the decision [21]; however, the most likely impediment to its canonicity probably was that two incidents in it violated contemporary Jewish law. In Deuteronomy 23:3, it is
forbidden that a Moabite or an Ammonite should be accepted into Judaism, and though some felt the prohibition applied only to males, this still should have precluded Achior's conversion [22]. Moreover, while some Jews apparently had come to consider it permissible for Ammonites and Moabites to convert to Judaism, a conclave in 65 C.E. mandated that circumcision no longer sufficed, but that converts would have to undergo baptism as well [23]. The text of Judith does not mention baptism, and had the book been accepted as canonical, the absence of baptism as a condition of conversion would have been legitimized by holy scripture, thus invalidating the new rule [24]. In addition, the reading of Judith had come to be closely associated with the celebration of Hanukkah, and when that holiday fell into disfavor at the end of the Hasmonean period, so too might the book have declined in importance [25]. However, regardless of its rejection by Jewish scholars, the Book of Judith continued to be read in both Christian and Jewish communities throughout the Roman and Medieval periods, and seemingly without significant doubt as to its truth as a record of real people and events.

The range of Christian interpretations of the person and activity of Judith was established in the writings of the early Church fathers long before the first record of her representation in visual art. The initial import of the story was relevant to both its Jewish and early Christian readers, and is clearly stated in the text: that God will protect his chosen people if they are faithful; that tyrants will meet an inglorious end; and that good will ultimately triumph over evil. This core content could certainly have provided a message of comfort
and encouragement to followers of the faith during periods of tribulation in its initial decades; however, Judith's significance for the early Church was not static. If fact, it was considerably elaborated over the first few centuries of Christianity's existence, as the Church changed to meet new conditions and challenges. As Carey Moore pointed out, in commenting on the character and conduct of Judith writers have often said at least as much about themselves and their times as about her [26]. The changing perceptions of the heroine (e.g., the particular virtues she was successively seen to embody) are an interesting mirror of some of the major concerns of the faith as the Church evolved, and fixed the significance of her image for many generations. The comments of the patristic authors established a core of meanings relevant to their own age, and also highly influential on later writers and artists, who presented and elaborated this basic content throughout the rest of the Middle Ages. It was only in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that significant new interpretations of Judith arose in the literary and visual arts.

The earliest Christian view of Judith, formed at a time of intense pagan persecutions, is seen in the writings of Clement of Rome toward the end of the first century C.E.

Many women have received power through the grace of God and have performed many deeds of manly valor. The blessed Judith, when her city was besieged, asked the elders to suffer her to go out into the camp of the strangers. So she gave herself up to danger, and went forth for love of her country and her people in their siege, and the Lord struck Holofernes down by the hand of a woman [27].
In a time of trouble, Judith was seen primarily as a courageous and godly woman, an exemplar of heroism who, like Esther, the next figure to whom Clement referred, risked her life to save her people from extinction. In this letter, Clement did not make an explicit typological connection between Judith and Christ as saviors; rather, she is discussed in the context of those who undertake acts of self-sacrifice to save their people. That such an action is Christ-like is, however, implicit in his writing. While the primary purpose of the letter was to heal a schism in the Corinthian church, Clement addressed the problem through the dual themes of salvation and humility. On numerous occasions he raised the salvational sacrifice of Christ on behalf of humanity as exemplary for the Corinthians, including in Chapters 7, 8, 12, and 36. His series of human models for acts of salvation in Chapter 55 is designed to provide a parallel to Christ’s action, proving that human beings moved by the proper spirit can act humbly and bravely on behalf of others. Consequently, this letter established the grounds for the typological relationship between Judith and Christ that developed later in the Patristic period, and was depicted visually in the north portal at Chartres Cathedral in the early thirteenth century. Be that as it may, as the threat to Christianity from persecutions lessened, and the Church grew, Judith’s heroism received less emphasis. Other concerns became dominant, and they also are reflected in perceptions of Judith.

As emphasis shifted toward the creation of a celibate priesthood, theologians such as Tertullian (c. 160–c. 230), Methodius of Tyre (third century), and St. Ambrose of Milan (339–97) praised Judith far
less for her courage than for her chastity, in particular her self-imposed sexual abstinence after the death of her husband [28]. She became a model of chaste servitude to God. Tertullian linked her with "Isaac our monogamist father" and "John a noted voluntary celibate of Christ's" as being among "so many other examples of saints." [29] The Apostolic Constitutions lauds her several times, citing her as a perfect example of true widowhood for living "soberly and unblamably" for many years after the death of her husband, and links her to Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, Esther, and Mordecai as a moral exemplar [30]. In Methodius's Banquet of the Ten Virgins the character of Thecla ends the book with a hymn sung in honor of Christ and his bride, the Church, in which, after citing such worthies as Abel, Joseph, and Jephthah, Judith is praised as "daring Judith, by clever wiles having cut off the head of the leader of the foreign hosts, whom previously she had allured by her beautiful form, without polluting the limbs of her body." [31]

But it was St. Jerome, the apostle of virginity, who referred most consistently and urgently to Judith as an emblem of chastity. In a letter of 384 written to Rustochium on "The Virgin's Profession," Jerome compared Judith's decapitation of Holofernes to the Virgin's triumph over sin and death, "the old curse," establishing perhaps the first typological relationship between the two figures, while also linking Judith to Rachel as a type of the Church [32]. He went on to say that as soon as Christ set foot on earth, an act which he believed allowed the gift of virginity to be extended from men to women, "Then chaste Judith once more cut off the head of Holofernes," [33] making
her act of temporal salvation for Israel a type for the eternal, spiritual redemption brought to humanity by Christ, and firmly linking salvation with celibacy. In a letter of about 400 to Salvinam, he again referred to Judith as a type for the Church, this time in its function of destroying the devil (in typo Ecclesiae, diabolum capite truncavit), and linked her to Anna as a chaste and devout widow who spent her time in the temple in prayer and fasting [34]. Finally, it was Jerome who characterized Judith's triumph as that of chastity over lust, in a letter of 394 to Furia on the duty of remaining a widow.

We read in the book of Judith, if we may accept that record of a widow spent with fasting and unkempt in mourner's dress, who was not so much grieving for her dead husband but in squalor awaiting the advent of the Bridegroom. I see her hand armed with a sword and stained with blood, I recognize the head of Holofernes carried in triumph from the midst of the enemy. A woman conquers men, chastity beheads lust, and then suddenly changing her dress she returns again to her victorious squalor, a squalor finer than all the pomp of this world [35].

This formulation, combined with Prudentius's Psychomachia, would lead to numerous emblematic treatments of Judith as the embodiment of chastity conquering lust in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. St. Jerome's references to her as a type of the Church, and his comparison of her triumph over evil to that of the Virgin, also set the stage for later typological formulations tying Judith the Mary and other similar figures, relationships that found ample expression in art.

The final significant piece in the set of meanings that came to surround Judith in antiquity was set in place by St. Fulgentius (469-533), Bishop of Ruspe, in a letter to the widow Galla. In
addition to referring to Judith as the **embodiment** of chastity, he made her the **incarnation** of humility as well.

Chastity went forth to do battle against lust, and holy humility forward to the destruction of pride. (Holofernes) fought with weapons, (Judith) with fasts; he in drunkenness, she in prayer. Accordingly, a holy widow accomplished by virtue of chastity what the whole people of the Israelites were powerless to do. One woman cut down the leader of such a great army, and restored unhoped-for freedom to the people of God [36].

Thus, by the early sixth century, the essential meanings of the person and story of Judith for the Middle Ages, a content that was carried into the Renaissance, were established. She was seen as a heroine of faith and model of courage; the quintessential example of Christian widowhood; a sign of the victory of good over evil, and the ultimate destiny of tyrants; the embodiment of chastity and humility in their triumphs over lust and pride; and a type for the Virgin Mary and the Church, and probably for Christ as well. Little was added to this list during the later Medieval period, though she was discussed and praised by St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas, Hugh of St. Victor, the Anglo-Saxon poet Aelfric [37], Chaucer, and Boccaccio, among others. Toward the end of the period typological identifications were expanded and deepened, and during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Judith's iconography spilled over into those of Justice and Fortitude, but those developments took place primarily in the visual arts, and did not involve an extensive textual base. Similarly, there was only very limited expansion in Judith's meaning in the Renaissance before Donatello. St. Antoninus of Florence preached on Judith, and referred to her in his *Summa Theologica*, but his view was derivative
and highly traditional.

Manuscript illuminations provide the vast majority of representations of Judith in Medieval art. The earliest extant evidence for an artistic tradition in the presentation of her tale that survives in its original form comes from the San Paolo fuori le Mura Bible, a Carolingian manuscript dated about 870 C.E. [38] Henceforth, illuminated Bibles will be the major source for images of Judith, but she will also appear in the illustrations for historical volumes such as the *Histoire Universelle*, anthologies such as the *Hortus Deliciarum*, and typological and emblematic works such as the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, *Biblia Pauperum*, and *Speculum Virginum*. Depictions of the heroine in media other than manuscript illumination are rare. In sculpture, a single statue of her has been identified with certainty, from the archivolts of the south transept portal at Amiens Cathedral (c. 1236) [39]. Cycles are known only from the vousoirs on the right portal of the north transept of Chartres Cathedral (c. 1220), and the quatrefoils of the Portail de la Calende at the Cathedral of Rouen (c. 1280), and a single relief depicting the beheading of Holofernes appears in a larger, generally allegorical group of sculptures on the facade of the Palazzo del Podesta in Narni (c. 1280). The only extant monumental painting of Judith is a fresco by Guarento, once in the Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo in Padua (now detached and in the Accademia in that city, c. 1350) [40]. In addition, a half-length Judith holding a sword and the head of Holofernes appears in a quatrefoil on the entrance arch to the Baroncelli Chapel in Santa Croce in Florence. Painted by Taddeo Gaddi
between 1326 and 1335, this Judith is one of ten heroes of the Old Testament represented in a series also including David, Moses, Ruth, Gideon, Balaam, Sheba, Aaron, Jael, and Solomon. Appearances of Judith in the minor arts seem to have been uncommon in the Middle Ages. A cycle of scenes was represented in stained glass at the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris in the mid-thirteenth century; but, judging from what survives, she apparently did not become a popular subject in tapestries, for example, until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries [41].

Depictions of Judith are found in manuscripts in three basic contexts: in small fields, usually consisting of a single scene, placed at the beginning of a narrative of her story, sometimes standing independent of the script, but often forming part of an initial; in cycles of two or more episodes, presented either in separate panels or as part of a larger field of continuous narration; and as one figure in a set of types or allegories. Both narrative and emblematic depictions are known in each category; however, as a general rule narrative representation is more prevalent in the first two types, while iconic depictions are more common in the third.

Current evidence suggests that the earliest form in which illustrations of Judith's adventure appeared was the narrative cycle, i.e., the depiction of a group of incidents from various parts of a story placed together in a single composition. Such cycles occur almost exclusively in manuscripts [42], mostly in Bibles of rather early date [43]. A set of six scenes organized in three registers from
the Carolingian San Paolo fuori le Mura Bible, probably a product of the School of St. Denis [44] (c. 870; f. 231v), constitutes the earliest extant example, and others may be found in the Byzantine Bible of Leo, dating to the first half of the tenth century (Rome, Vat. Reg. gr. 1, fol. 383); the Spanish Roda Bible (eleventh century; Paris, Bibl. Nat. ms. lat. 6, fol. 134 v); the Catalan Bible of Farfa (eleventh century; Rome, Vat. Cod. lat. 5729); the English Winchester Bible (twelfth century; Winchester Cathedral Chapter House) [45]; and the Arsenal Bible (Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal 5211), a Crusader manuscript made in Palestine around the third quarter of the thirteenth century, but derived from earlier French sources [46]. A very fragmentary painting on the choir screen of Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome indicates that there was a tradition of such series in monumental scale reaching back to the eighth century, and it is generally assumed that such cycles originated much earlier than this mural fragment, with exemplars in Early Christian rotuli or codices forming the basis for early Medieval manuscript illuminations and putative wall paintings [47]. However, no direct evidence of any older series of illustrations of Judith's tale has survived. Elements in some of these paintings bespeak older models, however, and suggest that they were based on works created in late antiquity.

Given the small number of extant narrative cycles, generalization is dangerous. A given characteristic might be present in works of widely divergent periods, places, and styles without any direct connection between them having ever existed, so that caution must be exercised in hypothesizing that stylistic, compositional, or
iconographic forms present in extant manuscripts were derived directly from earlier, lost works of art. However, the likelihood of earlier works serving as a source for illuminations, at least in the Carolingian period, is perhaps enhanced by the fact that an antique form of certain elements is seen most clearly in the earliest manuscripts, the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura (Plate 41) and the Bible of Leo, and less so in later ones. Thus, the presence of elements indicative of an Early Christian source is on the whole weakest in the later Winchester (Plate 44) and Farfa Bibles, both of which move toward the use of contemporary fashions in clothing and architecture and assert a two-dimensionality in the rendering of volume and space in keeping with the English Romanesque and Mozarabic styles of their respective times and places. Indications that narrative cycles of illustrations for Judith originated in a period before the earliest surviving manuscripts can be found in three types of evidence: compositional format; the presence of classicizing elements in the style of the illuminations; and the presence of details in costume, setting, and other accoutrements that originated in periods before the ninth century.

The presence of antique styles in clothing and architecture, especially when they can be paralleled in Early Christian manuscripts or catacomb paintings, is the most telling indicator that the ultimate source for an illumination predates the ninth century. The presence of such details, particularly when their form differs significantly from those common at the time when an illumination was made, tends to confirm that at least some degree of copying from an earlier source
has occurred. Classicizing stylistic elements, such as three-dimensionality are a less reliable indicator. Only the Carolingian Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura and the Byzantine Bible of Leo, both made in periods of conscious emulation of antique sources and modes, really achieve a quasi-classical style in terms of volume and space. In these cases, however, the periods of their production were characterized by such interests, and this might have led to elements of three-dimensionality being present even if the cycles did not depend on earlier creations.

Compositional likenesses must also be viewed with caution, as perhaps deriving from fixed, general conventions rather than direct reference to earlier works. The illustrations in the Bibles of San Paolo fuori le Mura, Farfa, and Winchester, for example, display essentially the same compositional form, i.e., they are organized into a series of horizontal registers across which the story is presented. However, they are so different in their styles, the scenes selected for representation, the manner in which those scenes are depicted, and the way in which the narrative is read that they cannot have shared a common source, or be said to exemplify a single tradition of illumination. Still, the particular form of the cycles in this group is the most common among extant manuscripts, so that if any body of works can be said to define a norm for composition in narrative cycles, it would consist of these three. The illuminations in the Roda and Arsenal Bibles have somewhat different compositional formats, though they too are composed in tiers of horizontal registers, so that conceptually a loose kinship to the aforementioned group may be
present. The Bible of Leo, however, stands wholly apart in its free distribution of incidents over the pictorial field.

It is tempting to distinguish between Eastern and Western approaches to representing narrative cycles on the basis of this different compositional form, but the number of extant examples is far too small to make such a generalization valid. When criteria such as the way in which space and volume were created, the formation of the figures, or the styles of costumes and architecture are considered, it becomes clear that the Byzantine Bible and the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura have much more in common with one another in most crucial respects than with the remaining works. Consequently, if earlier manuscripts provided precedents for the cyclical narratives of Judith's tale in surviving Bibles, there must have been several such sources or traditions of illumination on which later artists drew. Still, it is noteworthy that the two earliest examples, the Bible of Leo and the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura, show clear parallels in their compositional formats, style, and details of costume and setting with works created several centuries earlier, permitting the hypothesis that illuminations in manuscripts of an early date underlie their illustrations.

The illumination in the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura best illustrates the probable origins of the narrative cycles in Early Christian manuscript painting. The use of small set pieces on an essentially flat, abstract ground to indicate location has precedents in Early Christian painting in a number of sources, including the Vienna Genesis, whose depiction of Rebecca and Eliezer (Plate 42)
includes a walled town strikingly like that of Bethulia in this Judith illumination. The cities are seen from a similar, slightly elevated angle, and include an imperfect and irregular system of linear perspective to suggest three-dimensionality in space and in the forms of the buildings. Architectural styles in each also echo the world of late Roman antiquity, with gabled roofs and square-topped towers, and small, rectangular windows set high in the walls; the Judith illumination even seems to include an indication of pediments. Similar apses are appended to the ends of buildings in the Judith illumination and a second illustration from the Vienna Genesis, the scene of Joseph's departure. This results in buildings whose form is reminiscent of such fourth century structures as the Basilica at Trier. The Rossano Gospels illumination of Christ Before Pilate (Plate 43) includes a canopy under which the governor sits that is similar in form to that under which Holofernes is seated. Each illustration likewise establishes space and setting by means of small set-pieces rendered in a rudimentary, but effective linear perspective, placed against an abstract ground. Though these three-dimensional spaces are quite shallow, convincingly robust volumes are developed for the figures by means of a shading technique employing both highlights and shadows, mixed with a certain degree of linearity in the handling of drapery folds. Both male and female costumes also are closely similar to exemplars found in fifth or sixth century sources [48].

The compositional format of the illumination also recalls Early Christian models. The field is divided into three horizontal
picture's representation of a concrete action occurring at a single point in time brings it closer to the narrative mode; however, its potential in this regard is not fully realized. In fact, the work preserves an iconic presence sufficiently strong to place it at the margin of the two spheres. Several factors contribute to this effect. Though ongoing activity is clearly depicted, its force is diminished by the lack of a real sense of either strenuous effort or motion in Judith's body. The only indication of an environment for the action is a sketchy rendering of a pallet on which Holofernes is placed, suggesting the bed on which he is lying in a drunken stupor. While this helps to give the figures a somewhat more specific and concrete spatial context, its effect is vitiated by the absence of a frame and a more detailed setting. The figures float on the picture plane, in an environment in which no three-dimensional space is present to provide them with room in which to move, or even merely to exist. Even if this visual anomaly is discounted, no scenic elements are provided to create a specific location for the events. Thus, the scene lacks the fullness of context and suggestion of that third-dimensional reality parallel to that of the viewer's world that generally contribute to a strengthened sense of narrative action.

A similar weakening of the narrative thrust results from inconsistencies in viewing point and in the relationship between the two figures. Judith is seen from the side, and standing, presumably on the ground, though no ground line or plane is indicated. Holofernes lies on his bed, which is tilted so that the viewer looks down on him from above. He is placed in such a way relative to Judith that,
rather than cutting down on his neck, as logic would seem to dictate if he is on either a bed or a mat on the floor, she must sever a head that is parallel to her shoulders, and thus strike up and across her body. While neither inconsistency of viewpoint, nor tilted space, nor some degree of illogicality in scale or figure placement are incompatible with narrative representation, in combination with other elements they can reduce its force. As a result, though this illustration carries a greater implication of figures acting in a narrative sequence than the Munich example, it is far from realizing its narrative potential. A rather strong emblematic, iconic character lingers, preserved by the quality of stillness in the figures, the sense of their having been posed rather than vigorously carrying through the action of the tale, and by the almost spaceless quality of the illumination. Again, however, the artist's intent may not have demanded a more successful rendering of an event from the story in the narrative mode. The illuminator's purpose seems not to have been to tell the story circumstantially, or even to show this single moment as fully and logically as possible in his limited space, but only to present an essential narrative core: to depict just enough of the central act as described in the text to establish the identity of the characters, remind the reader of the event, and help him to begin to visualize it (while at the same time decorating the page and indicating that the text that follows presents the story of Judith and Holofernes). He has given his viewers a concise, almost symbolic representation of the central act of the story; enough is present to recall it to the viewer's mind, everything vital to an identification
of the figures, the incident, and its location has been included, and to present more might well have been considered superfluous. The result is an image that hovers between the iconic and narrative modes of presentation, and it is only the slashing action implied by the sword that might tip the scale in favor of the latter.

In the second illumination, found in a Bible made in Parma (Rome, Vat. lat. 4; Plate 51), Judith is seen beside Holofernes's body. She stands with one foot planted on his hand, presumably to better control him, and raises the sword to strike his neck, despite the fact that she already holds the detached head. While the presence of the body, and especially the detail of her seeming to restrain his hand, give the scene a stronger narrative thrust than occurs in either of the preceding illustrations, its effect is somewhat mitigated by the stiffness of the figure and the seeming illogic of her action, i.e., raising her sword to strike again when the decapitation has already been completed. It is possible that the sword is raised to suggest that Judith is celebrating her triumph. There is, however, no sense of exultation in the image to establish a feeling of victory, and the position of the sword is one that most readily suggests it has been drawn back to be swung. It is also possible that the artist placed Judith in this posture so that a viewer could understand both the nature of her action, the process by which she executed Holofernes, and its successful result. This, however, requires that the image be interpreted in a sophisticated and somewhat unusual way: one not likely to have been obvious to a casual viewer of the image, but accessible only on careful analysis. Thus, it is perhaps most likely
that the artist simply chose to retain the most common Medieval Italian iconographic form of Judith, with raised sword, and inserted it into a context showing the moment after the execution, leading to a certain ambiguity. The clarity of the narrative is further compromised by the absence of any indication of setting, and most especially by the lack of a bed, for it is unclear in the depiction whether Holofernes is to be understood as sitting or recumbent on his couch, or even as lying on the floor. The last is an attractive possibility. It would explain how Judith came to stand on Holofernes's hand, an element of the depiction that makes little sense if he is still in bed, while also bringing the illustration into relatively close correspondence with a moment actually described in the text, which explicitly states that she rolled him off the bed after the decapitation (Judith 13:9). But even if this were the case, the illogic of her raising the sword to strike the already-beheaded figure of Holofernes remains, for the text describes no subsequent mutilation of the corpse to explain her posture. Such considerations, however, again are really beside the point. The artist clearly seems not to have been interested in such issues of narrative and naturalistic logic, and it is inappropriate and unfair to judge him by standards he was not trying to meet. Rather, he sought to create an image, in effect an emblem, that would serve to identify clearly the characters of the story to follow, and to remind the reader of its central event, and that he has done successfully. The static quality of the poses, and the absence both of a setting to provide context for the action, and of clear narrative logic, push the illumination
toward the iconic, even while the implications of action present in Judith's posture and the detached head pull it toward narrative. The result is another picture spanning the narrative and iconic modes, a condition that exists in most of the earliest images of Judith in single-field illustrations.

A more pronounced narrative thrust and a greater concern with narrative logic and clarity seem to have developed in the twelfth century, both in initials and in independent compositions. These characteristics, comparatively new in single-scene representations of Judith, are manifest in fuller settings and more active, dynamic poses, suggestive of real movement and action. One of the most lively and exciting images occurs in an early twelfth century Italian Bible from the Vatican (Rome, Vat. lat. 12958; Plate 52), in which Judith is depicted with bloody sword upraised, seeming to rush forward to strike Holofernes again, though she already holds his severed head in her other hand. Abra stands in the background gesturing toward Judith, and the scene presents a full setting, including the bed, a Corinthian column (a column is mentioned in the Biblical text), and a distinction between the floor and the walls of the bedchamber. A frame is placed around the scene, but it is broken by Judith's flying drapery and her sword, as if it could not contain the force and fury of her action. The combination of the active drapery, the dynamism of her body's diagonal thrust and counter-thrust, her twisting in space as she raises the sword again, and the lively expressions and gestures of the figures combine to create considerable energy in the illustration. As a result, a much stronger sense of a specific narrative moment and
clearly articulated action is generated than in the stiffer, more iconic and emblematic works of the previous century. Though her posture, hovering over the body with one knee bent, may have been meant to convey that she had placed her leg on the bed to gain leverage for the blow, its effect, in combination with the drapery, is to give the impression that she is hurling herself forward, determined to strike once again the already-dead Holofernes.

In some respects, this illumination is transitional, for while it features the greater specificity of setting, narrative clarity, and convincing portrayal of dramatic action typical of twelfth century illustrations of this subject, the lingering ambiguity of a raised sword in combination with a severed head, a trait characteristic of the eleventh century, remains. Nonetheless, the completeness of the setting and definite sense of fluid movement give the picture a strengthened feeling of a real action taking place in a specific time and place, providing an illustration of the text that both adheres to the written word more faithfully than eleventh century examples, and makes the incident, independently of the text, clearer, more comprehensible, and more exciting. In short, this illumination is a far more completely realized work in the narrative mode than earlier depictions of the scene.

Few illuminations of Judith in the single-scene format are as expressive as this Italian example; however, its general manner of representation became the norm in Biblical and historical manuscripts for the remainder of the Middle Ages, and even greater consistency in the rendering of settings, and more convincing depictions of action,
were eventually achieved. The essential functions of such illuminations continued to include the decoration of the page, and the identification of the story through the presentation of its most typical or well-known incident. Works in the new style fulfilled these purposes as competently as those in the older mode, and perhaps in certain respects even more successfully, providing more visually stimulating images for decoration, and clearer, less ambiguous narratives to identify the text and depict its essential action. Illuminations created after the early twelfth century generally manifested a higher degree of visual reality, a greater concern with naturalistic logic and simulating the appearance of the real world in the rendering of events, than was contained in earlier illustrations. While early versions of the theme were entirely adequate to identify the book, later representations were able to enrich markedly a viewer's experience of the story and its actors by means of more concrete and accomplished renderings of the environment and events, and less ambiguous and more literal depictions of the text. The actions of Judith took place in settings and were seen in forms that were more naturalistic, corresponding much more closely to the experience of daily visual reality. This made the events more readily comprehensible in themselves, and perhaps also promoted personal identification between the viewer and the figures of the story, giving a heightened sense of their relevance to the viewer's own life.

These characteristics might in turn have allowed the pictures to be used successfully for additional purposes. It is questionable whether such illustrations ever functioned as devotional images,
though if they did, the greater reality of the scenes might have
couraged easier empathic identification between the viewer and the
figures and events of the piece. On the other hand, it is quite
possible that the illuminations might have had didactic uses. In
simple expositions of the narrative, they could serve to make it more
vivid to the uneducated viewer, while also appropriately illustrating
whatever additional significance the interpreter of the image
attributed to Judith and her story, such as the virtue of chastity or
humility in a Christian life. Thus, the diminution of the iconic
character of earlier images, and the increasing fullness and clarity
in setting and action of later illustrations, both fulfilled the
traditional functions of illuminations depicting Judith more
successfully, and might have promoted their use for additional
purposes as well. Certainly, strongly active and assertively
narrative presentations of Judith became very common as the Middle Ages
advanced. While this development might be accounted partially, even
largely, to changing tastes and an increasing appetite for realism in
patrons and artists, it was a shift that served illustrations of the
story of Judith particularly well.

The initial for the Book of Judith from a German Bible from
Hohenfurt Monastery (ms. CLV-CLIX; c. 1260; Plate 53) demonstrates
the advances and advantages of the new manner of representation. In
this illumination, the form of the initial surrounding Judith and
Holofernes suggests a tent, establishing the general environment of
the scene. The setting is further elaborated and clarified by means
of a curtain strung behind these two figures from the bar across the
letter "A," creating a partition within the tent that separates the bedchamber from the space beyond. Abra waits at the side, outside the room in which the drama takes place, so that the whole arena of the action and the disposition of the characters is suggested concisely, but with precision, generating a field in which the narrative can be effectively conveyed. Judith raises her sword to strike the naked and recumbent Holofernes, who raises one hand as if a dim awareness of her pulling his hair had pierced his drunken sleep. The angle at which his head is placed is awkward, but suggests in its peculiar relation to his body both the lack of control of the inebriated, and that Judith may have struck once, partially removing the head, and is about to strike again [64]. The latter point is reinforced by a line drawn part-way across the base of his neck, while a thick, crooked trail, perhaps indicating blood, oozes from one end. Though the heroine's upright, relatively immobile pose and inexpressive face make this a less dynamic, exciting, and emotionally engaging composition than that in the Vat. 12958 codex, the comprehensibility of the setting and action is unrivalled in earlier single-panel depictions of this moment. In fact, the form of the illustration seen in this Bible is one of the most literal representations ever created of the scene as it is described in the text.

It grew late and his staff hurried away. Bagoas closed the tent from the outside, having shown out those who still lingered in his lord's presence. They went to their beds wearied with too much drinking, and Judith was left alone in the tent with Holofernes, who had collapsed wine-sodden on his bed. Judith then told her maid to stay just outside the bedroom and wait for her to come out, as she did every morning... With that she went up to the bedpost by
Holofernes' head and took down his scimitar; coming closer to the bed she caught him by the hair and said, "Make me strong today, Lord God of Israel!" Twice she struck at the nape of his neck with all her strength and cut off his head. She then rolled his body off the bed and tore the canopy down from the bedposts. Soon after, she went out and gave the head of Holofernes to her attendant who put it in her food bag. The two then left the camp together, as they always did when they went to pray. Once they were out of the camp, they skirted the ravine, climbed the slope to Bethulia and made for the gates (Judith 13:1-12).

This German illustration appears to correspond to the text quite exactly. Judith stands by the bed, holding Holofernes's hair in one hand while wielding his scimitar in the other. The neck has probably been struck once, and is about to be severed by a second blow, as described in the story. Abra stands without, waiting for Judith, holding a container into which the head will be placed. Every element necessary to illustrate this incident in a manner that corresponds faithfully to the written text in every essential is included in this tiny picture, and nothing extraneous is present. The elegance of its simplicity and clarity is readily apparent, and even the least informed viewer could be expected to grasp the location and the nature of the action depicted in this scene, and to derive from it the essential facts of the story and core of its meaning. In a sense, this illumination can be regarded as the quintessential Medieval formulation of the story of Judith and Holofernes in a single scene, one admirable not merely for its clever solution to the compositional problem of integrating the scene into a initial, but also for its concise presentation of all the visual information necessary to a complete understanding of the tale's central incident. Nonetheless, it is only one example of the range of options available to Medieval
artists in illustrating Judith's story in a single-scene format. Many variations on this general theme existed, and specific iconographic forms may characteristically be observed among groups of illustrations from various regions of Europe.

On the whole, representations of Judith in the single-field format are rather consistent throughout the later Middle Ages, though each work is individual, and there is a fairly wide range of variations within the general type. The moment chosen for illumination in Bibles was almost always that of the beheading; however, in the various *Histoire Universelle*, a number of other scenes were depicted in single-field formats. These include such incidents as Nebuchadnezzar commissioning Holofernes, Holofernes arriving before Jerusalem, and Judith being brought before Holofernes: scenes which provided the illuminator with an opportunity to depict either military processions or a ruler or commander exercising his authority, subjects appropriate to these general histories of the world and its great figures.

An emphasis on narrative action predominates in all the Judith illustrations of the period, and artists were normally highly successful in creating a sense of figures in dynamic motion in three-dimensional space. That action was usually depicted in settings which correspond to the textual description to at least a reasonable degree, though obviously there is a good deal of variation in details. Many of the smaller illustrations, in fact, provide only the bare essentials: a sense of a tent, a bed on which Holofernes is placed, and Judith wielding the sword. While the fields in which the action
is set are often small and irregular in shape, the illuminators' efforts to suggest a space in which the figures could reside and move were normally quite successful, at least within the limits of the artistic conventions of the time. Settings are generally sufficiently deep, specific, and clear in spatial terms to accommodate believably the forms and motion of the figures, creating a sense that the world of the illustrations corresponds in its visual logic to that of the viewer. At the same time, they establish clearly the location of events through the selection of elements of scenery. Thus, the historicity, and in a sense the truth, of the events depicted is declared by their placement in a world visually more or less like that of the viewer, and a vivid feeling for the nature of Judith's act is often conveyed.

The large majority of surviving illuminations depicting Judith beheading Holofernes occur as part of initials integrated into the text of her story. Representations in framed panels outside the context of initials seem to have been rather unusual, but are not unknown, as can be seen in a Crusader Bible made in the late thirteenth century at Saint-Jean d'Acre in Palestine (Paris, Bibl. Nat., Ms. nouv. acq. fr. 1404, fo. 238r; Plate 54), and in a German Bible from Heisterbach, c. 1240, now in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin (Theol. lat. fol. 379; fol. 209; Plate 55). The Heisterbach illumination includes two events in a single field, conflating the decapitation with the placement of Holofernes's head in a bag, a combination also seen in the Souvigny Bible, a French manuscript of the late twelfth century (Moulins, Musee Municipale, fol. 291v). While
this form is considerably less common than that which shows only the beheading, it appears often enough to be considered an alternate version of the traditional scene rather than an anomaly.

The Hohenfurt Bible's solution to the problem of creating a setting within the space of the initial was widely used in the later Middle Ages. The first word in the Latin text of the book is "Arphaxat." In scenes that occur as part of initials, the use of the letter "A" to create a tent as a setting for the assassination became quite popular. It is seen in manuscripts from all parts of Europe. For example, from France it appears in the Bible of Stephen Harding (Dijon, Bibl. Comm., mss. 12-15; early twelfth century; Plate 56), the Souvigny Bible, and a late thirteenth century manuscript, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York (Ms. 177, fol. 236v) [65]. From England, an example can be found in a Bible presently in the British Museum (Royal ms. I.D.I., dated 1251-74), while from Germany it may be observed in a relatively iconic form in a Bible in the Staatsbibliothek in Munich (Cim. 3901, fol. 121; twelfth century) [66]. Italian Bibles also use it, as can be seen in an early fourteenth century Bible also currently in the Pierpont Morgan Library (Ms. 436, fol. 173v) [67], and in the Nekcsei-Lipocz Bible, a Hungarian work executed by Bolognese illuminators in the fourteenth century [68]. In fact, the use of the form of the "A" to create a tent and frame the scene of the beheading is so ubiquitous as to be far and away the dominant mise-en-scene for Judith illuminations for the late Middle Ages, a circumstance that did not change until the Renaissance.
In scenes of Judith striking off the Assyrian's head, some variations developed in the form of the illustrations, particularly with respect to the handling of the sword. In the Bible of Stephen Harding, Judith is seen bending over the sleeping Holofernes. In typical French fashion, she has swung the sword, and it is seen passing through his neck. However, this illumination includes a significant departure both from the text and the artistic tradition for representations of this incident. In earlier versions of the scene, the sword virtually always occupied only one arm. In the Harding Bible, Judith wields the sword with both, despite the fact that the text explicitly states that she held Holofernes's hair in one hand and struck his neck twice with the other (Judith 13:6-10). This two-fisted swordsman ship did not become popular, however, and the vast majority of images of Judith beheading Holofernes show her pulling his head up by the hair with one hand, while using her other arm either to hold the sword above her head in preparation to strike, or to swing it through his neck. As has been mentioned, the former manner of depicting the scene predominates in German and Italian examples, while the French and English preferred the latter.

As might be expected, there is also considerable variety in details of settings for the decapitation. Almost all make its location in the tent quite clear, and place Holofernes unmistakably in bed. A number of illustrations include a scabbard hanging on the bedpost, an element which indicates where Judith obtained the sword, and which corresponds precisely to the text. Such is the case, for example, in both the Souvigny and Heisterbach Bibles, though the
overall form of the illustrations is so different that it is unlikely there was any relationship between them.

Overall, the combination of legibility and believability in space and location, and the artists' efforts to provide poses for Judith that were convincing and consistent with the strenuous nature of her task, make it clear that narrative logic and clarity were of significant concern to illuminators from the twelfth century through the end of the Medieval period, even if the depiction of facial expression often lagged considerably behind that of bodies in conveying effort and emotion appropriate to the scenes.

The issue of the meaning of these illustrations is rather oblique. On one level, they clearly functioned to identify the text by reference to its best-known incident. As such, they informed the viewer, but did not necessarily carry any additional significance of a symbolic or allegorical nature. At the same time they decorated the page, presumably providing aesthetic pleasure, almost always both a motive for making and a function of a work of art. A number of the manuscripts were probably intended for sacred uses in monasteries or other foundations. Where this was the case, a votive function might also have been present. The illuminations made the books more beautiful and precious, hence theoretically rendering them more pleasing to and worthy as gifts for God, and furthered the divine purpose through their use in services and in the edification of clergy and monks. The same general point could be made of volumes created as presents for illustrious people, for whom the presence of attractive pictures might have made the gift more welcome.
None of this, however, really establishes or bears on the potential content of images of Judith, whether they illustrated the decapitation or some other incident. The function of the illustrations did not endow them with any extended meaning, and as a general rule there are neither inscriptions nor other closely associated images to create a context or establish a significance beyond the revelation of the narrative. As a result, it is likely that these single-field illuminations of Judith in Bibles and other more historically-oriented tellings of her tale had as their primary meaning the recounting of the event or events depicted in the scene. They may, of course, have had a range of secondary or latent meanings; the literary tradition had by the Carolingian period given Judith a significance considerably larger than her status as a heroine in a conflict between Israel and its enemies. Thus, an individual viewer familiar with the implications assigned to Judith and her story elsewhere might have appreciated in a given image the triumph of chastity over lust, or humility over pride, or seen manifest in visible form the qualities of faith and courage necessary to the Christian in his battle against evil. He might even have used the illumination didactically, to explain and make vivid these principles to others. But such a content, when apprehended, must almost certainly have been secondary to the image, not primary.

There is only one exception to this statement that has any real likelihood of being true. There appears to have been a significant increase in all kinds of representations of Judith at about the time of the Crusades, and illustrations of her story are particularly
common in manuscripts of the Bible and the *Histoire Universelle* made in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Crusader fortress at Acre [69]. Her popularity at that time might reflect the militancy of the West toward Islam, and the determination of Christians to triumph over God’s, and their, enemies. The violence of images of the decapitation corresponded to the taste and emotional tenor of the times, and it may have been encouraging to users of these books to read and see assertions of the ultimate victory of God’s faithful regardless of the difficulties facing them. Of course, accidents of survival may have distorted modern perceptions, and the seeming expansion of interest in Judith in the twelfth century might be in part illusory. Still, it is tempting to suggest that she might have been seen as an emblem of militant Christianity facing and defeating its enemies, be they Saracens or heretics, and that this was a part of the content of Judith’s image perceptible to and appreciated by audiences of the time as part of the essential meaning of the works. It is a meaning implicit in the story itself in a general sense, and it may be that the idea of the inevitable triumph of the people of God over their enemies was sufficiently grounded in the person of the heroine and her tale that such a principle was comprehended more or less reflexively when they were depicted. No literary or other evidence establishes that this was the case, but if there is an extended primary content to illustrations of the story of Judith in these manuscripts, it would probably revolve around ideas such as this.

While it is likely that only a limited range of primary meanings could have been generated by manuscript illuminations of the story of
Judith in Bibles and historically-oriented sources, such is not the case with a number of other works dealing with her tale from the late Middle Ages. Few iconographic innovations occurred during this period. Judith continued to be identified principally by the episode of the beheading (or attributes such as the head and sword), and no significant changes in the manner in which it was represented were made prior to the Renaissance. But images of Judith, or cycles drawn from her story, began to be placed into larger contexts, principally typological programs based on parallels established by early writers between her and other figures, and this development considerably expanded the range of primary meanings expressed through depictions of the heroine. Among the most notable of the works in which this occurs is the earliest known sculptural representation of Judith's story, a cycle of five scenes carved in the voussoirs of the right portal of the North transept of Chartres Cathedral sometime around 1220 (Plates 57 and 58). These sculptures are part of a large, typological program, and, as such, inherently partake of a content that is far larger than that of the incidents of the narrative itself, or even of that body of traditional meanings that can legitimately be supposed to have been accessible to a very informed viewer of earlier manuscript depictions. By means of its setting in a larger context, one of relationship to other stories and figures represented in the portal, the sculptural cycle of Judith's adventure at Chartres begins to approach the literary tradition in the richness and complexity of meanings developed around the heroine of Bethulia, and to signal a significant expansion in the range of ideas that could be expressed directly by
representations of Judith and her tale in the visual arts.

The North transept portals of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame at Chartres contain three programs [70]. The central doorway, executed about 1210 [71], displays a Triumph or Coronation of the Virgin in the tympanum, her Dormition and Ascension in the lintel, angels and ancestors of Christ in the archivolts, and St. Anne and the infant Virgin in the trumeau, flanked by precursor figures in the jambs. Katzenellenbogen identified the image of the Virgin in the tympanum as Mary Ecclesia, Mary as the Church and bride of Christ, in her triumph as Queen of Heaven [72]. The left portal presents an Incarnation cycle: scenes from Christ's childhood, and hence the motherhood of the Virgin, the essential basis for her claim to glorification.

The right portal contains a series of Old Testament subjects that are related typologically to the central portal, and also to one another through parallel scenes that illustrate varying aspects of a given principle. In the tympanum is a scene of the suffering of Job, with the Judgment of Solomon below in the lintel. The two inner rows of the left archivolts are devoted to episodes from the lives of Samson and Esther, and the two inner rows on the right to those of Gideon and Judith; the entire ring of outer archivolts depicts scenes from Tobit. In the jambs are Balaam, Solomon, and Sheba on the left, and Jesus Sirach, a woman identified by Katzenellenbogen as Judith [73], and Joseph on the right. As Katzenellenbogen pointed out, these figures function typologically in relation to the central portal to illustrate a single idea, the union of Christ and his bride the Church, represented by Mary Ecclesia, the Virgin as Church [74]. Insofar as
the Church, the community of the faithful, must endure hardships, suffering, and danger such as those represented in the scenes in the right portal, but will ultimately emerge saved and triumphant, these scenes from the Old Testament form a meaningful and appropriate companion for the central portal's scheme [75]. While some display the evil and suffering to which the people of God are prey, many demonstrate the salvational activity of the Trinity, the Virgin, and the Church on behalf of the new Israel under the new dispensation by establishing parallels between these agents and holy persons acting on behalf of the people of Israel under the old dispensation, both revealing the continuity of divine concern and reinforcing the notion of divine action for a chosen people. In addition, figures whose suffering prefigures that of Christ, the Virgin, or the Church are presented as reminders that even the most sacred have been afflicted, but triumphed in the end, so that the pains endured by humanity in the temporal realm can be seen as necessary trials that will ultimately result in the victory of salvation.

The appropriateness of including Judith in this program can be demonstrated through a consideration of literary links between her and the Virgin that were established as early as the time of St. Jerome, who tied Judith to Mary typologically both in her aspect as the Church and as a destroyer of evil [76], hence an instrument of salvation. The Chartres portal provides one of the first instances in Medieval art in which figures of Judith and the Virgin were brought into sufficiently close proximity for this link to be demonstrated visually, although such a meaning might not have been as readily apprehensible
were it not for the repetition of similar themes in the other scenes in the portal. Five episodes from Judith's story are represented, and they and their basic content were outlined by Katzenellenbogen. In the first scene, Judith leaves an elder at the gate, as the Church entrusts the fortress of God to its priests (Judith 8:10ff) [77]. She then puts on a hair garment as a sign of repentance, lays ashes on her head as a remembrance of frailty, and kneels in prayer, hoping to be heard by God because of her humility (Judith 9:1ff). In the third scene, finely dressed she leaves the city with her maid, as the Church shines with the beauty of her virtues (Judith 10:3ff). In the fourth, she kneels before Holofernes, the Antichrist, giving honor to earthly power according to the law, and not because of adulation (Judith 10:20). Finally, she gives Abra Holofernes's head, as the Church leaves the faithful a reminder of the finished battle (Judith 13:10-11).

Katzenellenbogen's commentary includes interpretations which, though based in Medieval texts by such authors as Hrabanus Maurus and the Venerable Bede, and incorporated in the Glossa ordinaria [78], would not be readily apparent to a viewer of the sculptures without prior knowledge of the artist's use of these sources, for he did nothing to make this structure clear with either inscriptions or symbols. There is, however, a more readily perceptible meaning generated by the association of these scenes of Judith with the images in the tympanum and other archivolts: that though the faithful (or the Church) will suffer trials and afflictions, as is made manifest in the tympanum and lintel, this suffering and struggle will lead to ultimate victory [79]. This theme would be accessible to a thoughtful and
reasonably well-informed observer of the composition, even if he were unable to perceive the nuances of meaning attributed to the individual scenes by Katzenellenbogen.

A second element that would probably have been apprehended by a careful viewer is the emphasis on Judith's piety and humility, aspects of her character not addressed in most of the manuscript illuminations dealing with her story. While such concepts were a part of the literary tradition treating Judith, they represent an expansion, or at least a shift in focus, in her iconography. The Farfa Bible illumination included a small scene of Judith praying; however, her self-abasement is apparently unprecedented in the visual arts, and emphasizes her humility in such a way that the theme of the triumph of humility over pride might resonate as a part of the meaning of the cycle of scenes. This would certainly be an appropriate content for the cycle itself, isolated from the remainder of the triple portal, but it also serves to further the link between Judith and the Virgin because it is in part her humility which makes Mary worthy of her queenship. Be that as it may, the typological connection between Judith and the Virgin as Ecclesia was sanctioned by a literary tradition over 800 years old, and represented by writings such as St. Jerome's letters to Eustochium (384) and Salvinam (c. 400), even though it seems not to have been a subject treated in Medieval art before the thirteenth century.

But the typological structure of the portal is even more complex than this. While it clearly presents Judith as one of a number of individuals who prefigure or are types of Mary Ecclesia, there is also
a system of parallel opposites that operates between the two sides of
the archivolts, and which allows Judith and Esther to be seen as
manifesting different approaches or modes of action through which a
salvational mission might be accomplished. Esther is a more passive
figure, who accomplishes her act of salvation for the people of God by
means of prayer and pleading, while Judith is more active, attaining
her goal by an act of physical force. Each is a saviour for Israel,
but in functioning in different fashions, their activity in a sense
authorizes both the active and the passive or contemplative lives as
means to salvation. Moreover, as saviours of Israel, they are brought
into a typological relationship with Christ, the saviour of the new
Israel of faithful believers, adding an additional layer of richness
to the typological scheme of the portails [80]. The Church is the body
of Christ, a body which suffered and must suffer tribulation at the
hands of God's enemies on earth for the salvation of its members: even
as Christ endured the Passion, or Judith her trial with Holofernes. As
Mary Ecclesia is the Church, so too is Christ, and thus, as St. Jerome
noted in somewhat more oblique fashion, Judith can be seen as a type
for both [81]. Moreover, if the statue on the right side of the jambs
is Judith, as seems likely, she is placed opposite, and paired with,
the Queen of Sheba, traditionally identified with the Bride in the
Song of Songs, herself a type for the Church, and hence further evidence
that a conscious effort was made to establish clearly a typological
connection between Judith and the Church [82].

While there was a substantial literary basis for drawing these
complex meanings from the story of Judith, there was not, so far as
can be determined, a tradition for their visual representation before the Chartres portal. No models have been discovered for the individual compositions seen in the five sculptures, although none except the scene of Judith's self-abasement is either unprecedented as subject or particularly innovative in its form. The figures are seen in contemporary dress, but this had become standard practice by the thirteenth century, and the absence of settings is easily accounted to the severe limitations on space and the need for legibility in the small reliefs. The artists were able to evoke such a complex content visually because episodes from Judith's story were brought into close relationship with other stories and figures at Chartres, some of which had highly developed meanings of their own; and the comparative and typological relationships established visually by the proximity of these sculptures vastly expanded the range of ideas that were channeled through Judith as primary content. The absence of such connections, or an equivalent symbolic language, in narrative manuscript illuminations had substantially limited the content carried by those images, and left any meanings as complex as those at Chartres to the mind and imagination of the viewer. Brought into a larger context, the story was able to convey a broader and more complicated cargo of meanings than it had previously carried in the visual arts, though its various components had been present in the literary record for almost a millennium.

Judith's inclusion in the Chartres program is perhaps noteworthy for an additional reason. With its dedication to the Virgin, and its large number of figures of female saints, Old Testament figures, and
queens. Chartres is one of the supreme exaltations of women in a time when women were especially celebrated in Medieval culture. As a prime example of an active and virtuous woman, the appropriateness of Judith's inclusion in the sculptural programs at Chartres is clear, and the general elevation of women in this period might account in part for the heroine's popularity in both sculpture and manuscripts during the thirteenth century.

The meanings attached to Judith in the remaining extant monumental settings in which her story appeared before the Renaissance probably are considerably less complex than at Chartres. In the South transept portal at Amiens Cathedral, which dates to the mid-1230s, she is present in the second arch of the archivolts in the fifth scene from the top on the right side (Plate 59). In this portal, she is one figure in a cycle of fourteen, all but one of whom, John the Baptist, are drawn from the Old Testament. No typological connection to the tympanum, which primarily features episodes from the life of St. Honoratus, is likely. It is also improbable that she should be connected in any significant way to the Virgin and Child in the trumeau. She appears as one figure in a chronologically correct Old Testament sequence whose other figures generally cannot be linked to the Virgin in any of her aspects, and her identification with Mary was normally established through their mutual functions as destroyers of evil and types of the Church, not motherhood. In fact, it is even difficult to discern any strong thematic relationship between Judith and the other figures in this ring of archivolts. These scenes depict (from lower left to lower right around the row) Adam digging, Noah
building the ark, Melchizedek with wine and bread, Abraham and Isaac, Isaac blessing Jacob, Jacob blessing Ephraim and Manassah, Job, Moses, Aaron, David's anointing by Samuel, the judgment of Solomon, Judith holding the sword and Holofernes's head, Judas Maccabaeus, and John the Baptist [83]. Many of these figures and scenes were connected typologically to Christ, who is represented in a crucifixion at the apex of the tympanum, but that is the only significant thematic relationship that seems reasonably logical, and it holds true for only eleven of the compositions. It is difficult to see how the two scenes of blessing can be related typologically to Jesus, and though John the Baptist is a major prophetic figure for Christ, and a martyr as well, this relationship is not really a part of traditional typologies. The one program that can be readily seen to link all of these figures is their common participation in the history of Israel before the advent of the Messiah. Adam and Noah represent the founding and survival of humanity in its earliest days, the scenes from Melchizedek through Jacob's blessing the era of the Patriarchs, Job the early faithful, Moses and Aaron the Exodus, and David and Solomon the founding and glory of the kingdom of Israel. Judith was a well-known Old Testament heroine with a readily identifiable attribute, the head of Holofernes, so that she could be used to represent the latter days of the two kingdoms, even as Judas Maccabaeus could fill in the chronological gap between the return from exile and the prophecies of John on the eve of Christ's mission.

Such a reading of the relationship between these figures creates at least a plausible link between them, and also makes possible a
reading of the portal as a loosely unified whole: a cycle of figures constituting a kind of sacred history, or a program of scenes outlining several stages in the history of Christianity. Moving from the inner to the outer rings of archivolts, the rows include angels with censors and crowns; the Old Testament figures: major and minor prophets; and New Testament figures, including apostles, evangelists, and probably the Virgin and the three Marys [84]. Thus, read from the second through the fourth rings, a program showing the eras of the Old Testament ante legem and sub lege, the prophets, and the era of the New Testament is presented [85]. The life of St. Honoratus would then represent the post-Biblical era of the Church. Of course, a typological relationship that is not yet fully understood might exist between the Old Testament scenes and some other part of the portal; as Sauerlander pointed out, all of the scenes in the third ring contain types for the crucifixion in the tympanum [86], and a similar relationship might have underlain the choice of figures for the second arch, whether in reference to the crucifixion or some other part of the portal's sculptures. If related to the crucifixion, this would only reiterate a typological link between Christ and Judith as figures of salvation already established at Chartres, and so no new meaning would adhere to her image at Amiens. But if she is viewed not in this context, but rather as a significant participant in a cycle of sacred history, then some degree of innovation might exist in her appearance in this portal.

In the literary tradition, Judith had long appeared as a figure in a cycle of famous or exemplary men and women; she is mentioned as
such by Clement of Alexandria and Isadore of Seville, for example. There is, however, no record of her having been so represented in the visual arts before this putative use of her person at Amiens. This appearance would certainly not constitute a pure example of that genre, for the moral thrust of such cycles is largely lacking at Amiens, and other, better exemplars of this type of usage exist from the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance. Nonetheless, it may be significant that at Amiens, as was generally true of her appearance in such cycles of famous persons, the narrative mode was abandoned in favor of a more iconic presentation, for in this sculptural cycle Judith is depicted standing still, holding her identifying attributes, with no implications of current or recently-completed action. Narrative has been abandoned in favor of a mode much more like that employed for saints or holy figures in icons, though one that is consistent with sculpted figures in vousoirs generally. If this Judith were to be abstracted from her context and contemplated as an individual figure, as would happen in the Renaissance, the meanings a viewer could derive from the isolated figure would have to be supplied by him, out of his knowledge of and reflection on the story or the meanings traditionally attached to her. In and of itself, the image projects no meaning beyond Judith's presence and a reminder of her action; it is almost neutral in import, inviting the viewer to identify with the figure and supply what significance he can. Nothing in the image itself shapes its primary meaning; that can be known only in the context of its larger setting.
A similar situation presumably obtains for the two surviving monumental paintings depicting Judith prior to the Renaissance: a half-length quatrefoil by Taddeo Gaddi in the Baroncelli Chapel in Santa Croce in Florence (c. 1328-35; Plate 60), and a fresco by Guariento probably executed about 1350 (Plate 61) [87]. Gaddi's painting shows Judith holding the sword and Holofernes's head. She is located on the entrance arch to the chapel, along with nine other Old Testament figures, including David, Moses, Ruth, Gideon, Balaam, Sheba, Aaron, Jael, and Solomon. Each of the quatrefoils includes a portrait of a hero, which is iconic in character. While this usage clearly places Judith in a cycle of worthies from the past, constituting one of the earliest of such representations of the heroine, it is unclear whether any greater significance was intended for the figures. Like Judith, some of her companions have typological connections to the Virgin, whose life is memorialized in the chapel's main frescoes: David as an exemplar of humility, Jael as a destroyer of evil, and Solomon and Sheba as the Bridegroom and Bride of the Song of Songs, hence Christ and Mary Ecclesia. However, such connections do not exist for all of the figures, so that it is questionable whether any greater import was meant for Judith by her inclusion on the arch.

Guarriento's fresco was originally located in a chapel in the Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo in Padua, but is now in the Accademia in the same city. In this picture, which is set inside Holofernes's tent, the Assyrian general lies sprawled across his bed. Judith is depicted with upraised sword, about to strike his neck a second time.
Holofernes's head has already been largely severed from his body by the first blow. Though Judith stands on his hand, and in fact is not moving forward, the bend of her body, the dynamic play of crossing diagonals in the juxtaposition of bodies, arms, and drapery folds, and the activity of her dress, parts of which billow out slightly, create the impression of her rushing forward with an air of grim determination, a quality also visible in the expression on her face. There is a clear representation of a narrative moment, and one notably faithful to the text in its rendering of the action. In general, this painting is most reminiscent of the single-field narratives in post-eleventh century manuscripts, particularly the early twelfth century Italian exemplar found in Vatican Library manuscript Vat. lat. 12958 (Plate 52), which might almost be a direct, if distant, ancestor of Guariento's work. As in those illuminations, Guariento's highly dynamic narrative is essentially an entertaining and exciting means of recalling Judith's story through its best-known incident, and like them it includes no overt symbolic language to extend the meaning of the image beyond its statement of her action. The further meaning of this image, its primary content, can be seen only when it is related to its companions, for it relied on its proximity to them and a significance accumulated from their individual imports and the resonances between them for its larger meaning when it was in its original location. Guariento's fresco was part of a cycle of Old Testament scenes placed on the ceiling of the chapel of the palazzo, which was destroyed in 1769. Some of the paintings were lost at that time; remaining pictures comprise God the Father with Adam and Eve,
The Sacrifice of Isaac, The Destruction of Sodom, The Angel Visiting Abraham, The Young Men in the Furnace, Joseph Sold by his Brethren, The Story of Noah, and Judith Beheading Holofernes [88]. Given the loss of part of the cycle, it is impossible to be certain what the larger program of the ceiling might have been. Its extant scenes could have been part of an Old Testament history cycle, but a typological program focussing on salvation could also have been developed. Each of the stories represented treats persons who have fallen or are in danger, and who ultimately are saved [89]. This is at least a plausible program for the surviving fragments, and were it the theme of the ceiling the emphasis would be on Judith as a salvation figure, a type for Christ: again, an established meaning, though one without a long visual pedigree, particularly in Italy.

Since Judith's identification with the Virgin as a destroyer of evil was very strong and well-established in the visual tradition by the fourteenth century, this image, seen in isolation, might also have provided an informed viewer with the stimulus to reflect on that import, prompted by the ferocity of Judith's action. But it is difficult to believe that such a meaning was intended by patron and artist, given the subjects surrounding it, and with which it presumably participated in a community of significance. Thus, any such additional meanings, whether they focussed on Judith's links to the Virgin or her standing as an emblem of Chastity or Humility, would have to be considered secondary content, accomodated by the image, but supplied by the viewer. This point is worthy of mention because, by the end of the Middle Ages, in both the visual and the literary
tradiusions a broad range of meanings had come to be attached to the figure of Judith, and any image that did not shape the content of the depiction specifically through the use of inscriptions, symbols, or associated imagery might have carried an extensive latent content for a much larger body of viewers than was the case earlier in the Medieval period [90]. This latent content was carried into the Renaissance, and it must be considered when evaluating the significance of a given work of art for the audience of its time, as distinct from that meaning specifically intended by the patron or artist.

In addition to continuous narratives and single-field illuminations in Bibles and historical texts, a third kind of illustration including Judith existed in Medieval manuscripts: images of the heroine in typological and emblematic works. It was, in fact, these books and their pictures that probably did the most to create and perpetuate a visual language to accommodate the body of meanings derived from the literary tradition, in which Judith was presented as an emblem for a variety of virtues, and as a type for the Virgin, for these volumes were almost certainly the primary vehicle for disseminating Judith's image in the Gothic period and Renaissance. As Diane Apostolos-Cappadona pointed out, it was in her relationship to the Virgin that Judith was best known to the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance.

But for Christian artists and theologians, Judith's triumph is an antetype of Mary's triumph over the devil. Both of these noble women remain chaste despite their acts of seduction (Judith) and motherhood (Mary). Judith destroys Israel's, and therefore God's, enemies by decapitating the
enemy general, while Mary destroys evil by crushing the head of the serpent. Judith becomes a symbol of salvation as her chastity, piety, and faithfulness highlight her symbolic relationship to Mary the Virgin Mother. And in this regard, Judith finds her place in writings of the church fathers like Jerome, and in medieval Christian texts like the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* [91].

These typological and emblematic texts normally include both explanatory inscriptions and the juxtaposition of an image of Judith, almost invariably of or alluding to the beheading, with at least one other subject. The meaning of the depiction of Judith, which usually established her either as a destroyer of evil or as an exemplar of any one of several virtues with which she had come to be associated by tradition, was created by her association with the other figure or figures in the illustration.

The *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* essentially consisted of a series of visual illustrations of typological relationships. The set of analogous figures in which Judith was included seems to have been invariable. Depictions of the Virgin impaling the devil were set beside those of Judith decapitating Holofernes, Jael driving a spike into the head of Sisera, and Tomyris killing Cyrus. The forms of specific illuminations in various copies of this volume differ only slightly, and a similar consistency extends to the brief inscriptions identifying each scene.

A typical example of the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* illuminations can be seen in a fourteenth century manuscript of German origin (Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 146/1, fol. 32v and 33r; Plate 62). Judith is seen with her sword raised above her head and parallel
to the ground, prepared to strike, a pose common in German and Italian
depictions of the heroine in Bibles. Holofernes lies asleep on his
bed, his hair in Judith's grasp [92]. The illustration is very simple,
easy to understand, and probably very easy to identify even by
individuals who could not read the inscription. In these manuscripts,
the burden of making the meaning clear lies with the pictures, not the
text, and thus it is hardly surprising that they tend to be
straightforward, clear renderings of the most vivid and easily
identifiable moment from each of the narratives they depict, reducing
obscurity or elaboration to a minimum to maintain the highest level of
legibility and the greatest ease of identification possible. As
isolated pictures, such illustrations of Judith are very little
different from the initials or single-panel illuminations common in
manuscripts recounting the story of Judith. The expansion of their
meanings is made possible specifically by their juxtaposition with
other scenes, so that their primary content is derived from the same
kind of system that operated at Chartres, for example, though they are
considerably less complex in significance than that program.
Regardless, they constitute the principal means by which the
typological connection between the Virgin and Judith, and the meanings
accruing to Judith as a result of that relationship, were established
and disseminated in a visual, rather than literary, medium and form.
They also helped to make the core image of her tale, the beheading,
widely available, bringing it to audiences much larger than those
which had been exposed to depictions of her in illuminations in
Bibles, and thus they constituted a vital vehicle through which the
imagery of Judith was transmitted to a larger public in the waning years of the Middle Ages. As such, they form one of the most likely iconographic sources for reference by artists both of their own age, and of the Renaissance, who wished to depict Judith.

Judith was also used to represent several of the Virtues in manuscripts during the Middle Ages. Curiously, though the early Church fathers made her a prime example of Chastity, she seems not to have been utilized as an exemplar of that quality in the visual tradition before the Renaissance [93]. There is no readily apparent explanation for this fact. Given her typological relationship to the Virgin Mary, Christianity's prime example of chaste living, a reasonably informed viewer might have taken Judith's chastity for granted, seeing it as a central part of her personna, and a quality more or less automatically to be understood as belonging to her person and image. As a result, depictions of her triumph over Holofernes might inherently have included the implication of the victory of this Virtue over its corresponding Vice, Lust, even if that were not directly stated by symbol, inscription, or context. Such content would have to be regarded as latent, of course, but it might have existed for at least some viewers of the works.

She was, however, directly associated visually with Humility in at least one source, the Speculum Virginum. In an illustration drawn from a copy of this volume now in the Stiftsbibliothek in Zwettl (HS 180, fol. 45v; Plate 63), Humilitas is seen in a position closely resembling the most typical image of Judith, with her sword raised above her head, about to strike the figure of Superbia, whose hair she
grasps as Judith often does that of Holofernes [94]. Present in the same panel are depictions of Jael killing Sisera with a spike, and of Judith standing on the recumbent Assyrian commander, whose head is partially severed. Oddly, Judith appears to hold both a sheathed and an unsheathed sword in her hands. The object in her right hand is shaped like a scimitar, a form of sword that might have been familiar to the artist from its use in the Islamic world. However, as the Speculum Virginum illumination from the British Museum (Plate 64) makes clear, sometimes Judith was represented in this text holding a branch, perhaps a palm, in her hand. The artist of the Zwettl illumination may have misunderstood an element such as this in his model as a second sword, and so have included this anomalous element in his depiction. If this was not the case, then he either has intentionally included two swords, or has rendered an object that is not readily identifiable today.

The illustration is a curious one in other respects as well. It includes one figure, Jael, who is not normally associated with the virtue of Humility at all, though she is included, along with Judith and Esther, in the Medieval catalogue of Jewish heroines in lists of the nine worthies [95], and was depicted with Judith and Thomyris in typological illustrations in the Speculum Humanae Salvationis. In fact, it is to be wondered whether an illumination from that text might not stand behind this one, insofar as at least two of the groups recall the typical formulations of scenes in the Speculum Humanae Salvationis. Regardless, the extension of the iconography of Judith to Humilitas is clearly appropriate, identifying her visually with a
quality with which she had long been associated in the literary tradition, and providing a model for the mingling of the iconographies of the figures that was adopted by Renaissance artists such as Donatello.

It also presents Judith and Holofernes in a composition which more closely than any other from the Middle Ages emulates the standard formula for depicting the triumph of a Virtue over a Vice, for in this illustration Judith clearly stands on top of her enemy. As such, this represents a significant shift away from the essentially narrative representations of Judith in the Middle Ages, even in emblematic and typological books, and toward the more abstract, symbolic mode of psychomachia, a factor that might have contributed to developments in Judith's presentation in sixteenth century Italian works, such as that of Giorgione, which clearly shift into a static, iconic manner of representation.

Judith also came to be associated iconographically with the virtue of Fortitude, though the connection came later, and much less frequently, than might have been expected. The traditional Medieval formula for Fortitude included a figure holding a shield and spear or sword [96]. While the sword is an attributed shared with Judith, she was never depicted with a shield of any kind, a fact which would have clearly maintained their separate identities. Nonetheless, the earliest Christian view of Judith was one which emphasized her courage, her heroism in the face of danger, and it is surprising that this aspect of her character was not more overtly stressed during the Middle Ages, particularly in those periods of militant Christianity,
such as the Crusades.

In the fourteenth century, however, at least one clear example of the linking of the two iconographies was made, an illumination by Bartolomeo de Bartoli in a manuscript of *La Canzone della Virtu*, executed for Bruzio Visconti, and now in Chantilly at the Musée Condé (Ms. 1426, fol. 3r; Plate 65). In this picture, a scene of Fortitudo, depicted as a crowned male wrestling with a lion, is set beside one of Judith and Abra in the tent of Holofernes, where they are in the process of slicing off his head. The illustration is relatively complex, being set in a landscape with a tower in the middle ground, and, as Volker Herzner pointed out, appears to have been unprecedented before this time, c. 1350 [97]. It also does not appear to have been influential for later depictions of either figure, although, as will be seen, in Donatello's sculpture of Judith and Holofernes allusions to Fortitudo may have been present in a column on which the statue might have stood [98]. The juxtaposition of these two images serves to make the exposition of Judith's courage the main point of her scene, and to make her an emblem of courage, which again had not previously been a part of the visual tradition, though it certainly had been emphasized in literature.

This image notwithstanding, the fact of Judith's courage, and her use as an emblem of Fortitude, remained a small and comparatively insignificant part of her meaning in art, and her potential function as an exemplar of Fortitudo never became an especially overt or important part of her iconography.
Though Judith's standing as an agent of justice had not been a particularly prominent element in the literary tradition, during the fourteenth century she also came to be associated iconographically with this concept. The traditional formula for representing Justitia had been to depict her with scales [99]. At some point in the thirteenth century, the iconography of Justitia began to change, initially with the addition of a sword to the scales [100], and ultimately with the replacement of the set of scales by the sword in a significant number of representations [101]. The shift to the frequent use of the sword alone as the attribute of Justice occurred during the fourteenth century [102].

About the same time, Judith's iconography came to be mingled with that of Justice. Judith's link to the iconography of Justitia may have come through their common attribute of the sword, and the fact that Judith's execution of Holofernes can be interpreted as an act of divine retribution, of justice for Holofernes's sins of pride and lust, and his misdeeds toward Israel. However, given the fact that all of the earliest manifestations of this phenomenon seem to be from Italy, it is also possible that the link might have been suggested by the similarity in sound in Italian between Judith (Giuditta) and justice (giustizia).

The earliest firmly dated example of Judith's attributes being fully adopted by Justitia occurred in Siena, in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Allegory of Good Government (1337-9; Plates 66 and 67), in which the figure of Justice is depicted not merely with a sword, a shared attribute, but also with a head in her lap, an element that
specifically links the representation to Judith. The figure is
clearly identified by inscription as Justice, and should not be
understood as an image of Judith, or as an example of Judith serving
as an emblem of Justice; this development, as will be seen, took place
in Quattrocento Florence. Nonetheless, it serves to draw the two
figures considerably closer together visually, and almost certainly
contributed to Judith's ultimate status as a symbol of Giustizia.
This image did not become a dominant means of depicting Justice, but
it occurred in other fourteenth century exemplars, such as Nicolo di
Giacomo da Bologna's illumination to Giovanni di Andrea's Novella in
libros Decretalium (1354; Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Ms. B 42 inf.,
fol. 2r), and another miniature depicting the enthroned figures of
Justice and Fortitude from a manuscript made for King Robert the Wise
of Naples (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Cod. ser. nov. 2639, fol.
33) [103]. In each of these cases, the other accompanying Virtues also
possess severed heads. In the psychomachia's long tradition of
representing the Virtues triumphant in combat against the Vices, an
iconographic type reaching back to the ninth century [104], this
device was unprecedented. It seems reasonable to suppose that the
iconography of Judith was generalized to the Virtues as a whole
following Lorenzetti's example [105], so that the triumph of the
Virtues came to be represented not by their standing atop their
corresponding Vices, but by carrying their heads as trophies of
victory. Regardless, it is very difficult not to see an allusion to
Judith in Lorenzetti's painting, and in the Renaissance, as will be
seen, images of Judith came to be intimately linked to contents expressing ideas and concerns about justice in its various forms.

It is interesting, and probably significant that this link was made in the fourteenth century, when the phenomenon of civic humanism was beginning to make inroads into Italian social and political life. This melding of Judith's iconography with that of a civic virtue is the first step in Judith's development as a figure in secular art, extending the meanings carried by her image beyond the essentially religious realm. It would, however, be over 100 years before it was fully realized. It is also worth noting that when the figures of Judith and Justitia were conflated, there was a complete abstraction from the narrative context, and Judith took on the emblematic, iconic character common in representations of the Virtues. When, in the second half of the fifteenth century, Judith began to be depicted in Italian monumental art, a process of abstraction from the narrative tradition represented by Biblical illuminations of the heroine occurred. Initially, this was marked by an infusion of the iconic into essentially narrative works, such as Donatello's Judith Beheading Holofernes, Botticelli's Judith at the Opening of Holofernes's Tent, or Mantegna's paintings of Judith. However, this trend accelerated in the early sixteenth century in Venice, where, in works such as Giorgione's painting of Judith, and iconography dependent in part on the ancient practice of presenting the Virtues in an emblematic fashion was clearly an important element in shaping the final form of the Renaissance piece. Thus, though not a wide-spread phenomenon in the Middle Ages, the mingling of the iconographies of Judith and
Justice was one that would be of considerable significance for the Renaissance.

By the time of Donatello, the image of Judith was well-established in the art of the Christian West. Its use was international, though not without some regional variations in form. A variety of meanings had clustered around her person and tale, initially in literature, and later in the visual arts. These included several relatively straightforward concepts, such as the fate of tyrants or the enemies of God and his people: the victory of Virtue over Vice (specifically of Humility over Pride, and Chastity over Lust); and Judith standing as an exemplar of those virtues, as well as of Fortitude. She also came to represent broader concepts such as salvation and the ultimate victory of good over evil through her typological relationships to the Virgin Mary and Christ. Interestingly, however, in the strictly visual tradition, depictions of Judith generally had little inherent content until very late in the Middle Ages: a condition particularly true of Biblical manuscripts, where images of the heroine seldom did more than identify the text and decorate the page. Only when sets of symbolic or typological reference outside the basic image itself developed did Judith directly express complex meanings. The earlier images may have provided a ground on which a willing viewer could project meanings derived from his contemplation of the story or character of Judith, or from the literary tradition, but there is no way of knowing if, in fact, the illuminations were often so used. Though a few cycles of scenes narrating the story of Judith in more complete form were created, the most common means of representing her
came to be a single-field depiction of that subject that more than any other was the emblem of Judith: the decapitation of Holofernes. It was this image particularly that the Renaissance inherited as a starting point for its development of the iconography of Judith.
NOTES


3 This is the theory favored by the Encyclopedia Judaica, p. 452; The Jewish Encyclopedia, p. 389; and Charles J. Ball, cited in Moore, "Anchor Bible Judith," p. 53. Some scholars, however, deny the book even this degree of historicity, seeing it as a novel (the view favored by Zeitlin and Enslin in "Book of Judith," p. 1ff.), an apocalypse, or a folk tale recorded by the author (Moore, p. 78).
Moore, pp. 37-59, includes a long discussion of arguments for and against the historicity of Judith; briefer accounts may be found in The Jewish Encyclopedia, pp. 388-9, and the Encyclopedia Judaica, pp. 451, 459-60.

4 New Jerusalem Bible, p. 622. See especially Judith 3:7-8. The demand at the root of the Maccabaeans' conflict with Antiochus IV Epiphanes was that they give up their god and worship in the Syrian state cult.

5 New Jerusalem Bible, p. 623.

6 Judith 5:5-21. As an example of the anachronisms present in the book, Achior's reference to the exile of the nation and the razing of the temple of Jerusalem as events of the distant past should be noted in light of the fact that they occurred in the time of Holofernes's commander, Nebuchadnezzar (Judith 5:18-23). Regardless, the discussion of the exile and return would seem to fix the book in the period after the return from Mesopotamia and the reoccupation of Palestine, in the fifth century B.C.E. at the earliest.

The text employed for this study is The New Jerusalem Bible. This translation will be cited throughout in preference to the Vulgate. St. Jerome's Vulgate version of the story appears to be an abridgment, and differs from the longer Greek versions of the tale in some names of places and characters and a few of the details of the story (see note 16). The Greek versions, however, from which the Old Latin and Syriac, and all modern translations, were made, taken as a whole are the closest to the presumed lost Hebrew original. These Greek texts, and hence this version of the story, were available and known throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and unquestionably formed the basis for certain of the manuscript illuminations of Judith's story, such as that in the Farfa Bible. Fuller versions of the story than that offered by St. Jerome were certainly known both by early Christian writers and Jewish authors of the Midrashim, who included details omitted from the Vulgate (Zeitlin, "Introduction," pp. 34-5). As Leahy pointed out ("Judith," p. 403), though the Vulgate differs not a little in details from the Greek texts, there is substantial agreement in the narratives, and there is no doubt that Jerome was familiar with the earlier Old Latin translation, in addition to the (lost) Aramaic recension he used as a basis for his version, for he occasionally reproduced identically phrases from the Old Latin Bible. Insofar as there is no way of knowing what text, if any, a given author or artist consulted, or even if the story were taken from a Bible or some other historical account or theological work, in this study the fuller version will be used for textual references to ensure that any incident that could have been described by or known to a particular artist from any source receives due consideration. St. Jerome included nothing that is not in the Greek texts, and hence, even if the Vulgate were utilized by an artist as his source, the only significant difference for the purposes of this
study between it and the modern translation would be in the chapter and verse designations. In a larger sense, the issue of sources is really a moot one. Some artists, such as that of the Farfa Bible illumination, clearly used a translation other than the Vulgate: in this case probably the Old Spanish version, in which verses from the Septuagint were inserted into the Vulgate text [Frances G. Godwin, "The Judith Illustration of the 'Hortus Deliciarum'," Gazette des Beaux-Arts 36 (1949), p. 36]. But for most depictions of Judith's tale, the incident or incidents selected for representation were universally present in all variants, and no content that could bear on any possible religious or moral meaning in a work of art could have been generated out of episodes present in one source, but not another. The corpus of scenes actually represented in visual media is quite small, and most are found in all texts and do not differ substantially in any of the major sources. Any scene represented by an artist that is not in the Vulgate account would, of course, of necessity mean that the artist either knew another text, or imagined a scene not in any text, or conflated a scene from Judith with one from another source. Moreover, all of the basic meanings derived from or attributed to the text or the figure of Judith before the Renaissance expansion of the theme into secular contexts were at least outlined by various of the early Church fathers in independent writings during the first several centuries of the common era, and seem not to rely on a specific text (and certainly not on the Vulgate, which was produced after much of the basic interpretative work was done). Thus, it seems best to rely on a full and scholarly modern version of the text. Even though the Vulgate was the best known of the accounts, and may well have been the source used by most artists in the Renaissance, the other versions were known and available, and should be taken into account, even if it is very hard to find works in which the issue of the specific source is of any real significance.

7 New Jerusalem Bible, p. 623. It might also, of course, have been intended to minimize the hostility of Syrian authorities by disguising the work as a kind of folk tale taking place in an imagined time and location.

8 New Jerusalem Bible, p. 622.

9 New Jerusalem Bible, p. 622.

10 New Jerusalem Bible, p. 622.

11 Judith 16:17. The text reads "Woe to the nations/who rise against my race!/The Lord Almighty/will punish them on judgment day./He will send fire and worms in their flesh/and they shall weep with pain forever more."
12 New Jerusalem Bible, p. 624. There are also a number of affinities in the text with apocalyptic literature, such as Daniel, Ezekiel, and Joel, with their emphasis on the triumph of God's people and a triumphal return to Jerusalem. Though this can be considered part of the larger theme of the victory of good over evil, it also touches on the nationalistic aspects of the book, in a sense forming the bridge or area of contact between the two levels of meaning. Interestingly, the action takes place on the plain of Esdraelon near the plain of Armageddon, where St. John would later place the great eschatological battle of Revelation. New Jerusalem Bible, p. 623.

13 Such, at least, is the case in Roman Catholic and most Orthodox editions of the Bible (see below for a discussion of Judith's canonical status). There are, however, a few important Greek manuscripts where these books were placed with the wisdom writings. New Jerusalem Bible, p. 621.


16 The issue of St. Jerome's translation is discussed fully in Moore, "Anchor Bible Judith," pp. 95-103. As Moore notes, of the 340 verses in the Greek text, Jerome omitted part or all of eighty-seven, and is close to the Greek text only about half of the time in the remainder. He also added thirty-two verses unattested by the Greek or Old Latin versions, but that material adds nothing new, particularly to the narrative, only enlarges on a topic under discussion (p. 95). It is quite likely, moreover, that St. Jerome's translation was not so much a literal rendering of an Aramaic abridgment of Judith as a paraphrase, aiming for general sense (p. 96). It should be noted that Moore's conclusions are not undisputed. The New Jerusalem Bible asserts that Jerome revised an existing Latin version, perhaps with help from an Aramaic paraphrase (p. 621). Regardless, the Greek versions taken together are generally regarded as giving the best sense of the Hebrew original, though the precise degree of correspondence would vary from text to text, and is still debated (pp. 92-3).

17 New Jerusalem Bible, p. 621.

18 New Jerusalem Bible, p. 621.

19 New Jerusalem Bible, pp. 621-2. Among early Christian writers, Clement of Alexandria, Junilius, Ebedjesu, Hilary of Poitiers, Augustine, Innocent I, pseudo-Gelasius, Cassiodorus, Isidorus of Miletus, and probably Clement of Rome regarded the book as canonical. This position was endorsed by the Council of Nicaea and the Council of Carthage. However, Melito of Sardis, Origen, Athanasius of Alexandria,
Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius (Bishop of Constantia), Gregory Nazianzus, Amphiloctius of Iconium, pseudo-Chrysostom, pseudo-Athanasius, Leontius of Byzantium, John of Damascus, Neophorus of Constantinople, and the authors of the Laodicean Canons and the Apostolic Canons did not (Moore, "Anchor Bible Judith," p. 90). St. Jerome seems generally to have approved it, though he considered it a book to be read for edification, and not "for confirming the authority of church dogma" (Zeitlin, "Introduction," p. 50).


26 Moore, "Anchor Bible Judith," p. 64.


28 Moore, "Anchor Bible Judith," p. 64. St. Ambrose also saw her as specifically important for her act of saving the chosen people and its holy customs and sacraments from destruction (Zeitlin, "Introduction," p. 49).


31 Zeitlin, "Introduction," p. 49.


37 Aelfric praised Judith principally for her chastity in an Old English poem, "Judith," written c. 1000 (Moore, "Anchor Bible Judith," p. 64. Another poem, of the early tenth century, and probably by the Anglo-Saxon poet Cynewulf, exists only in fragmentary form (Zeitlin, "Introduction," p. 53).

38 Apostolos-Cappadona, "The Lord Has Struck Him Down," p. 85. For a review of this evidence, see Chapter I, note 4.

39 Adolf Katzenellenbogen, The Sculptural Programs of Chartres Cathedral [New York, 1964 (1953)], p. 68, and Louis Reau, "Iconographie," p. 331, identified one of the jamb figures on the North transept portals at Chartres as Judith. Willibald Sauerlander, however, in Gothic Sculpture in France, 1140-1270 (New York, 1972), Plate 93, suggested that she may represent Asenath. This is the central figure on the right jamb of the right portal (Plate 58).

40 Reau, "Iconographie," p. 332, describes a fresco in Prague in the cloister of Emmaus at the Slavonic Abbey as a scene from the Book of Judith in which she does not appear, i.e., a depiction of Achior tied to a tree and being flagellated by Holofernes. A typological cycle of eighty-five scenes was painted in the cloister in the mid-fourteenth century (c. 1360), and a typological tradition existed, and is represented in the Speculum Humanae Salvationis, linking the floggings of Achior and Lamech with that of Christ (Reau, p. 332). However, it was painted over in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, and though the overpaint was removed, the abbey and many of its frescoes were extensively damaged in Allied bombing in 1945. Destruction was particularly severe in the area in which this scene was represented. Fragments of a depiction identified as a Scourging of Christ found in this area of the cloister still exist, but while it may well be that a flogging of Achior was present nearby as an antetype for Christ's flagellation, it is impossible now to assess the original appearance of the work. Though a scene of considerable obscurity in itself, inscriptions were placed at the bottoms of the paintings, so that the identity of Achior and the parallel between his scene and its companions would have been made clear. For information on the Slavonic Abbey and its frescoes, see Karel Stejskal, European Art in the Fourteenth Century (London, 1978), pp. 146-161, and p. 220.

The subject of Achior's flogging is very rare in prior or subsequent art. Aside from the aforementioned "Speculum," it is known only from the Farfa Bible illumination. Though it is obviously exemplary of Holofernes' cruelty, it can also be seen as reinforcing the book's general theme of the contrast between humility and pride, juxtaposing Achior's submission to punishment in the name of truth to Holofernes' prideful rejection of the power of Israel's God.
41 The earliest tapestry listed by Reau ("Iconographie," p. 332), and also by the Encyclopedia Judaica, p. 460, is a Tournai tapestry of the fifteenth century, now in Brussels. Reau is the only source to mention the windows of the Sainte-Chapelle; however, he provides no illustrations of them, nor has one been located by the author in available sources.

42 Narrative cycles in sculpture with the context of larger programs occur at Chartres and Rouen; however, these represent a somewhat different phenomenon.

43 Illustrations of all the continuous narratives mentioned in this study may be found in Godwin, "Judith Illustration." As Godwin pointed out, full-page illustrations of entire Old Testament cycles were generally phased out during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and replaced by single scenes and initials depicting the most characteristic incident of the book which they introduce (Godwin, "Judith Illustration," p. 39). This type of illumination in pictures dealing with Judith resulted in single-field scenes of the heroine beheading Holofernes. The reasons for this shift are not altogether clear, and on the whole have not been satisfactorily explained. In the late eleventh and twelfth centuries historiated, rather than merely inhabited, initials became very popular [Otto Pacht, Book Illumination in the Middle Ages (New York, 1986), p. 92, a fact that could be explained in part by a desire for a greater integration of text and decoration on the part of patrons and illuminators. The development of initials depicting Judith's assassination of Holofernes clearly can be seen as participating in such a trend. This would not account for the presence of free-floating single scenes, such as those in several late eleventh century Italian Bibles, but that phenomenon was relatively short-lived, and may have led in the twelfth century to the practice of placing pictures of one or several events or scenes in separate, thinly-framed panels or strips in the manuscript before the text (Pacht, "Book Illumination," p. 129). The illustrations in the Vatican Library manuscript Vat. lat. 12950, an Italian Bible, and the German Heisterbach Bible exemplify this format applied to scenes depicting Judith. This often reduced the degree of integration of text and image achieved in the manuscript, but, particularly in Italy, it was a common alternative to the historiated initial (Pacht, "Book Illumination," p. 129. Some of these illuminations occupied a full page, but no such illustrations of Judith have survived. The shift away from full-page cycles might also have resulted to some extent from changes in the conditions of manuscript production. The early part of the twelfth century was a period of rapid expansion in the number of monastic foundations, spurred by the Cluniac reform and the emphasis on pilgrimage. This necessitated the rapid production of large numbers of Bibles and service books for worship in such houses [Walter Cahn, Romanesque Bible Illumination (Ithaca, 1982), pp. 242-6. It was typical of monastic Bibles, both before and during the twelfth century, that they were usually extremely large, and that
their production required immense labor [Christopher de Hamel, A History of Illuminated Manuscripts (Boston, 1986), p. 76]. They were probably so large so that they could easily be used for reading from a lectern, rather than for individual study (de Hamel, "History," p. 78). Creation of manuscripts with a rich store of full-page illuminations of Old Testament cycles would have been especially costly and time-consuming. Many of the Carolingian Bibles including such illuminations can be associated with imperial or court patronage, or were gifts to emperors and other especially important individuals [Robert G. Calkins, Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages (Ithaca, 1983), p. 119], where such factors might not have been considered disadvantageous. However, at a time and under conditions requiring the relatively rapid production of many Biblical manuscripts, it is easy to see how simpler forms of decoration might have been preferred, be they initials or small framed scenes.


45 According to Cahn, though left unfinished the Winchester Bible cycle would have been that one in which the story was illustrated most fully ("Romanesque Bible," p. 203). The Farfa Bible, however, as it currently exists, would seem to be by far the fullest series, including as it does six registers depicting a number of incidents which far exceeds that of any other manuscript, including several which cannot be clearly identified by comparison with any known text of Judith, or even be assigned with any certainty to the narrative of her story (Godwin, "Judith Illustration," p. 34).

46 Hugo Buchthal, Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (Oxford, 1977), p. 55. Buchthal cites as possible sources single scenes or cycles in slightly earlier French manuscripts such as the Souvigny Bible, the Bible Moralisee, and the Morgan Picture Book (p. 57), which themselves may have had ultimate sources in narrative cycles in earlier Bibles, either directly or through the mediation of initials or other single scenes in intermediary manuscripts.


48 Compare, for example, the robes and mantles of Judith and Abra with those of Leah or Bilhah in the scene of Joseph's Departure in the Vienna Genesis (Picture #30), or Rebecca in Rebecca and Eliezer (#13), or the Blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh (#45); or the costume of Pilate in the Rossano Gospels with that of Holofernes. These images may be found in Kurt Weitzmann, Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination (New York, 1977).

49 See, for example, the scenes of Joseph's Departure (Vienna Genesis picture #30) and the Tempting of Joseph (Vienna Genesis picture #31), or the composition of Christ Before Pilate from the Rossano Gospels (fol. 8r). See Weitzmann, "Late Antique," for images.
50 In fact, the inclusion of scenes of Holofernes ordering the flogging of Achior, an act of pride which follows on the latter's warning that the Assyrians can succeed only if the God of the Jews will permit it, and Holofernes's impious scoffing at the warning, suggests that the central thrust of the Winchester Bible illumination might have been directed toward an exposition of the general's vices and the manner in which they brought about his downfall at the hands of the virtuous Judith. The work would thus have been organized, and the scenes selected, to show both the triumph of virtue over vice (and of specific virtues over specific vices), and, ultimately, of good over evil in the defeat of the Assyrians by the Bethulians in the bottom register.

51 The Arsenal Bible is a Crusader manuscript from the third quarter of the thirteenth century, though it is based at least in part of French sources of a century earlier. In some respects, it is an odd or transitional work. It has been discussed with the continuous narratives because it includes an array of scenes on a single page; unlike them, however, it divides that page with frames into six smaller fields, a characteristic typical of the later period. It also includes contemporary dress and iconographic shifts that link it closely to later works, so that while it clearly continues older traditions in some respects, in others it is obviously a product of a later age.


54 For which reason, scenes of assassination might not have been considered particularly appropriate, especially where patrons were powerful men themselves.

55 Long sequences of large scenes over a series of pages depicting the story of Judith seem to have been very uncommon, if not non-existent; however, extensive cycles exist for other stories and figures, Biblical and otherwise. For example, in the same Histoire Universelle manuscript in which the two Judith episodes under discussion represented her whole tale, eight illuminations depicted the life of Alexander. It is likely that longer sequences dealing with Judith might once have existed, but if so, they now are lost.


57 Buchthal, "Miniature Painting," p. 57. See also note 46. The Souvigny Bible, a work of the late twelfth century, and a possible source for the Arsenal Bible, is itself something of a transitional piece, with some of its narrative cycles, such as the David scenes, reflecting the older mode of continuous narration in open registers, and others, such as the Creation sequence, being composed of a set of
individual, single-scene panels on the same page. The Judith illustration in the Bible is, however, only a single panel containing two successive incidents: the beheading, and the placement of the head in a bag. This scene resembles that of the Arsenal Bible sufficiently for them to be considered members of the same family of illustrations, but it is not likely to have been a direct model for the later work, and no direct model has yet been identified. An illustration of the Souvigny Bible illumination may be found in Godwin, "Judith Illustration."

58 That is, they could be displayed as a diptych, as in the Uffizi version of Botticelli's Judith Returning to Bethulia; or face to face on two pages of a manuscript; or separated, but sufficiently close together on various manuscript pages for the narrative relationship between the paintings to be seen.


60 In this regard, it is again interesting to recall the illumination in the Gumpert Bible, which comes from the twelfth century. In this picture, the unity of the series is asserted by a framing border, and is further established by the equal size of the three scenes into which the register is divided. The creation of that division is accomplished by means of a piece of scenery, the posts at the head and foot of the bed, which helps to maintain a sense of a continuously flowing narrative, while at the same time creating a strong, clear statement of the units of the story. The result is a picture which has both some of the quality of a narrative flow present in its predecessors, and some of the sense of clearly stated parts present in its successors, without partaking fully of the aesthetic of either. It may thus truly represent a transition, not only of artistic type, but of the modes of thinking that gave rise to varying transformations of form in differing periods.

61 Reau, "Iconographie," p. 332, lists only two manuscript sources: the San Paolo fuori le Mura Bible, and a tenth century Old Testament now in the Bibliotheque Nationale (Lat. 94). It is worth noting that Godwin argues forcefully that these single-scene depictions of Judith ultimately derived from scenes of the decapitation in the larger cycles (Godwin, "Judith Illustration," pp. 25-46).


64 A desire to suggest the occurrence both of the two blows and the decapitation might account for the seeming inconsistency or lack of logic in a number of relatively early representations, such as those more iconic works of the eleventh century, or the Barbarini
Codex. By showing the sword held aloft in one hand, and the severed head in the other, the artists might have meant to provide an indication of ongoing action combined with, albeit ambiguously, the result of the completed process. Thus, they might have hoped to convey the sense that Judith struck the neck to sever the head, and raised the sword again to complete the job, and that her endeavor was successful with the succeeding blow. It is equally possible, however, that such images were not so much intended to represent such a specific, if somewhat arcane, narrative process or moment, but rather were simply designed to embody the central action of the tale in a manner that was reasonably legible and would allow the image to be easily and immediately recognizable; i.e., to present a woman with a sword which she uses to behead a man, the core of the central event of Judith's story, and the quintessential element in her iconography.

65 For illustrations, see Godwin, "Judith Illustration."

66 For illustrations, see Godwin, "Judith Illustration."

67 For illustrations, see Godwin, "Judith Illustration."


69 See the catalogues in Folda, "Crusader Manuscript Illumination," and Buchthal, "Miniature Painting."

70 Unless otherwise indicated, the description of the iconography presented here is derived from that provided by Katzenellenbogen, "Sculptural Programs of Chartres," pp. 56-78.

71 Hence about ten years before its companions. Katzenellenbogen, "Sculptural Programs of Chartres," p. 54.


73 Katzenellenbogen, "Sculptural Programs of Chartres," p. 68. This identification, though probable, is not universally accepted (see note 39).


77 Katzenellenbogen, "Sculptural Programs of Chartres," p. 71. The following summary of the program is from this source. Katzenellenbogen drew heavily on commentaries by Hrabanus Maurus, including the Commentaria in libros IV Regum, Commentaria in librum Judicium, De sacramentis, Expositio in librum Esther, and Expositio in librum Judith. These, along with commentaries by the Venerable Bede, were summarized in the Glossa ordinaria, and would have been fairly widely available to at least clerics at the time of the building of Chartres.

78 Katzenellenbogen, "Sculptural Programs of Chartres," p. 70.

79 Katzenellenbogen, "Sculptural Programs of Chartres," p. 70.

80 Gideon, Samson, Tobit, and Tobias are also parts of this typological structure.


82 Katzenellenbogen, "Sculptural Programs of Chartres," p. 73.


85 Sauerlander, "Gothic Sculpture," p. 495.

86 Sauerlander, "Gothic Sculpture," p. 495.


88 Van Marle, "Italian Schools," Vol. IV, p. 112.

89 This presumes, of course, that Adam and Eve represent a humanity ultimately redeemed somewhere else in the ceiling, or in the altarpiece, by Christ; an escape from Sodom by Lot; and a fuller sequence of the Joseph story.

90 This is because representations of Judith had become common in a number of emblematic and typological works with rather wide circulation, including the Speculum Humanae Salvationis and the Biblia Pauperum.

91 Apostolos-Cappadona, "The Lord Has Struck Him Down," pp. 84-5.
92 A similar, but slightly more elaborate, example can be seen in an Italian manuscript of the same century. This image includes an indication of a tent and a horizon line to establish setting, and a floral pattern on Holofernes's blanket. See Bernard Berenson, Speculum Humanae Salvationis; being a reproduction of an Italian manuscript of the fourteenth century (London, 1926).

93 While there is no visual tradition conflating the iconography of Judith with that of Chastity, appearances in a format such as cassone panels, with their intimate associations with brides, might suggest that an intended content of such works was to remind the young woman of the virtue, indeed of the necessity, of her remaining chaste within her marriage, as Judith had done, and of conquering the temptations of Lust, even if no overt symbolic or inscriptive statement of this meaning were made in the composition.

94 Though Pride is represented here as a fully armed and alert figure who has been driven to her knees.


99 See, for example, the twelfth century reliquary from Germany, a mosaic from San Marco in Venice (c. 1200), Giovanni Pisano's sculptures of Justice and Temperance from the Cathedral of Pisa (1311), and manuscript illuminations such as those from the Cambrai Evangelary (second half of the ninth century; Cambrai, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 327, fol. 16v), the Lambeth Bible (twelfth century; London, Lambeth Palace Library), the Petersburg Psalter (mid-thirteenth century; Brussels, Bibliothèque Albert I, Ms. 9961-62, fol. 10r), and an Italian copy of the Somme le roi of Laurent du Bois (written 1279; manuscript dating to the late fourteenth century; Vatican Library, Cod. Urb. lat. 3984, fol. 52v). Each of these works is reproduced in Wolfgang Pleister and Wolfgang Schild, Recht und Gerechtigkeit im Spiegel der europäischen Kunst (Cologne, 1988).

100 The earliest mingling of a sword with scales appears to be the funeral monument of Pope Clement II in Bamberg Cathedral (1235-40). The use of both attributes continued for a very long time, and in fact never entirely ended. It can be seen in later examples such as a French illumination of the Somme le roi (1311, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ars. 6329, fol. 96v), an illumination by Bartolomeo di
Bartoli for La canzone della virtù (c. 1350; Chantilly, Musee Conde, Ms. lat. et Ital. 1426, fol. 7r), the figure of Justice from the Visconti-Sforza tarot cards (probably by Bonifacio Bembo, and dating to the middle third of the fifteenth century), and two lavish fifteenth century illuminations: a miniature of the four Cardinal Virtues from De quatuor virtutibus cardinalibus (c. 1470; Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, Ms. fr. 9186, fol. 304r), and one from the Fleur des histoires of Jean Mansel (1454/1467; Brussels, Bibliotheque Royale Albert I, Ms. 9232, fol. 448v). Each of these works is reproduced in Pleister and Schild, "Recht und Gerechtigkeit," except for Bembo's tarot card, which may be found in Michael Dummett, The Visconti-Sforza Tarot Cards (New York, 1986).

101 The use of the scales never disappeared entirely, however.

102 Examples of Justitia with a sword alone include a roundel by Taddeo Gaddi from Santa Croce in Florence (Baroncelli Chapel vault, c. 1328-30), Nicole Oresme's illustration to the Ethique de Aristote, Vol. II (fourteenth century; Rouen, Bibliotheque Municipale, Ms. 12, fol. 17v), Andrea Orcagna's 1359 sculpture from the Or San Michele in Florence, a French illumination from Guillaume de Deguileville's Pelerinage de l'ame (written 1555; miniature c. 1395; Paris, Bib. Nat. Cod. fr. 377, fol. 184v), an illustration depicting Justice with the Virgin Mary in an apple tree (Paris, 1393; Cod. fr. 823, fol. 133v), and a miniature by Jean Pions in a manuscript of Le Chateau perillieux and L'Horlage de Sapience (fifteenth century; Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, Cod. franc. 445). Each of these works is reproduced in Pleister and Schild, "Recht und Gerechtigkeit."

103 For illustrations, see Pleister and Schild, "Recht und Gerechtigkeit."

104 Katzenellenbogen, "Allegories," p. 3.

105 It is also possible, of course, that Lorenzetti copied an innovation made in manuscript illuminations, perhaps even without specific reference to Judith, but if this is the case, the development prior to the Sienese fresco cannot be traced in extant sources.
CHAPTER III

JUDITH IN FLORENTINE ART, 1425-1470: THE SCULPTURAL JUDITH

During the Middle Ages, Judith appeared in the visual arts primarily in manuscript illuminations. These illustrations occurred in both Bibles and other manuscripts narrating the history of Judith, and in an array of typological and allegorical works, some of which were widely popular. Almost all are quite small; most are in the form of initials, or of panels occupying a limited area on a page, and even when the illumination occupies a full page, it is still a small part of a comparatively small object. Representations of Judith in monumental form were rare, but did exist, as the fresco by Guariento from the Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo in Padua, or the sculptures from Chartres make clear. Many Medieval illuminations depicting Judith, particularly those in historical works, seem to have little primary content beyond the identification of the text and a straightforward narration of the story; others, principally those found in typological texts, rely on the association of Judith with other figures to generate meaning, as do the surviving depictions of Judith in monumental media, all of which occur within the context of larger programs.
During the mid-fifteenth century in Florence, Judith began to appear with greater frequency in monumental sculptures, statuettes, and panel paintings, in which meaning was less often developed by the juxtaposition of the heroine with figures from other narratives or artistic traditions such as psychomachia. The meanings manifest in figures of the heroine were usually derived not from an image's direct physical relationship to a manuscript text, or its position in relation to other visual images in a larger program, but inhered primarily in the image itself (and perhaps associated inscriptions). These developments occurred first in sculpture, the most important exemplar being Donatello's statue of Judith Beheading Holofernes, one of the rare images of Judith from this period that was created on a truly monumental scale. This work, which became a potent symbol in Florentine political life, but which may also have manifested other, non-political meanings for its initial patrons, was very influential and appears to have been the primary impetus for the creation of a number of other works dealing with Judith. In some cases, such as a small bronze statuette attributed to either Antonio del Pollaiuolo or Andrea del Verrocchio, or a group of engravings made by Florentine artists of the period after Donatello, the influence on the form of the works, and possibly their meanings, was direct, though the impact of Ghiberti's figure from the Gates of Paradise was also felt in the statuette. In other cases, such as paintings by Botticelli and Ghirlandaio, there is no evidence for direct formal influence, but the popularity of Donatello's monumental masterpiece was probably an important factor in the commissioning of works on the subject of
Judith's adventure. Over a relatively short span of years, a significant number of very important works of art representing Judith was created in Florence, and she came to occupy a place of prominence in Florentine iconography which, though less significant than that accorded David, nonetheless rivalled that of any other Old Testament or Classical figure over a period of about fifty years, and carried much of David's moral and political force.

The first of the Florentine sculptures depicting Judith is Lorenzo Ghiberti's figure of the heroine in the frame of the Gates of Paradise (East Doors, Florence Baptistry, 1425-52; Plates 1 and 2). Like most of these Florentine works, it is still relatively small. In this case, Ghiberti continued the Medieval tradition of including the heroine in a larger program, so that the meaning of the image depends significantly on its relationship to other parts of the work as a whole.

Judith appears as one of twenty-four niche figures, which alternate with twenty-four heads in the frames of the doors. While not all of the figures can be identified, according to Krautheimer they are probably all Old Testament heroes, prophets, or prophetic women [1]. The Biblical nature of many of the figures is affirmed by their costumes and accoutrements, including turbans, armor (for warriors), and scrolls (for prophets), while their actions and gestures further reinforce either their martial or prophetic roles [2]. Judith appears on the left side of the left door, occupying the bottom niche, with Miriam directly above her. Set in a scalloped recess, Judith raises a scimitar above her head with her right hand, and holds
the severed head of Holofernes at hip level with her left. As if blown by wind, a loop of drapery billows out behind her, framing her head and torso, and another arcs from behind her at waist level and runs down her right side. Otherwise, however, her drapery is static and inactive, suggesting that her contrapposto position and the sway of her pose is less an indicator of present movement than of adjustments necessary to maintain balance in an unstable posture: perhaps one created by the figure's having just come to rest. The lines of her drapery and of the sword and her arm converge on the head of Holofernes, drawing the viewer's eye to her trophy and identifying attribute, but Judith herself lifts her head and eyes up to heaven, an expression of rapt devotion on her face, acknowledging the source of her strength and triumph, but also perhaps emphasizing the spiritual notion of victory by submission to divine assistance over enemies of superior might [3].

The character of Ghiberti's Judith combines narrative and iconic elements in a complex blend. No moment from the Biblical text corresponds precisely to that evoked by Ghiberti. In the immediate aftermath of the assassination, she does not exult; rather, she hastily tears down the bed canopy, places Holofernes's head in Abra's foodbag, and departs. The moment closest to that represented by Ghiberti occurs after she has returned to Bethulia, when Judith pulls the head out of the bag and displays it to the citizens, proclaiming her triumph. By this time, however, she had discarded the sword, and displays the canopy as a second spoil.
The absence of setting to provide a context for her action leaves the choice of narrative moment open. Ghiberti might have had the moment of her triumphant return to Bethulia in mind, but substituted the sword for the canopy as a means of making her identity clear. Conversely, he might have imagined a moment of exultation immediately after the beheading, and represented that. Her emotion is so vivid, the sense of kinesthetic energy in the sculpture so strong, that it is difficult to see her pose and expression as anything other than the result of an action she has just completed. This gives the work a strong pull toward the narrative, because her posture and emotion are the direct result of an act that has just taken place, and are causally connected to it; in a sense, it completes the action of the decapitation with an expression of Judith's gratitude and joy, as she raises her sword as an offering or dedication to God.

On the other hand, Judith is similar to, and ultimately perhaps derived from, depictions of the heroine in late Medieval manuscript sources such as the Speculum Humanae Salvationis, in which figures with similarly active poses, but ultimately iconic resonances appear. The absence of any setting, while occasioned by the spatial limitations of the door frame, is characteristic more of iconic representation than of narrative. Action requires a location in which it can take place, which absence here begins to suggest the abstract spatial and temporal realm found more commonly in the iconic. The elevation of the sword after the beheading has been accomplished should probably be understood in combination with her upturned gaze as a means of offering praise or thanksgiving to God, or as an expression of
exultation after she has accomplished the decapitation. This tends to define her pose as a result of narrative action. However, in the absence of a defined setting, the head, scimitar, and posture also take on the quality of attributes, and can be understood as representing a generalized or typical emotional state expressive of Judith's character: a characteristic normally found in iconic presentations. Read in this fashion, these elements shift the figure toward that of a portrait of Judith, rather than a representation of the heroine in a continuing action.

These iconic characteristics emerge most fully only on reflection, so that there is never any sense that the figure is merely a symbol of Judith, rather than an actor in a real event. Ghiberti's intention seems to have been to evoke a specific moment, one in which Judith reacts to her victory. Her posture is vigorous, the sense of emotional involvement and movement clearly pronounced, so that the narrative qualities of the piece predominate, even though the depiction does not correspond to any passage in the text. But there is an infusion of the iconic into the narrative, and this evocation of the eternal on Ghiberti's part helps to give the statuette a general significance which allows it to speak not only of the temporal triumph of Judith over Holofernes, but of the timeless victory of good over evil.

Judith is set next to a panel depicting David's triumph over Goliath, a context which is by no means accidental, and which lends the heroine her primary significance in the doors. The relationship of the figures in the frames to the main panels of the Gates of
Paradise is not consistent. Insofar as several have not been identified, it is impossible to speak confidently of how they relate to the neighboring narrative reliefs. Some of the figures continue or comment on the story of the neighboring narrative panel; such is the case, for example, with Miriam playing her tambourine and singing her song of victory next to the panel of the story of Moses. Others seem to depict prophets whose utterances were generally understood to refer to events or elements depicted in the panel next to them. Thus, Ezekiel flanks the Genesis panel because of his references to the gates of Eden, while Jeremiah stands on the other side because of his allusions to creation [4]. Yet other figures, however, including that of Judith, embody typological parallels with their associated narrative scenes, expanding the meaning of the panels in a fashion similar to that found in manuscripts such as the "Speculum." [5] The linking of David and Judith in a typology was a common one in the Middle Ages and Renaissance in both the literary and visual traditions [6], foretelling the salvation of mankind and Christ's victory over death [7], and in some cases probably carrying additional implications, such as that of the triumph of Humility over Pride, as well. This typological metaphor seems to embody the primary significance of Judith in the doors.

There is no clear or consistent relationship among the twenty-four niche figures, either in terms of meaning or function; rather, each seems to have been selected for inclusion on the basis of some relationship to its neighboring panel. Similarly, the complex interweavings of meanings and relationships between scenes in
multi-episode Biblical narratives typical of the Medieval scholastic tradition, and reflected in Leonardo Bruni's initial program for the doors, was abandoned by Ghiberti in favor of a simpler structure which presents a series of single episodes without relating them to one another except as scenes drawn from Biblical history [8]. As Krautheimer points out, there are good reasons for believing that Greek literary and, perhaps, visual sources might underlie the selection of scenes in the panels, as well as elements of their final form [9]. The Old Testament commentaries of St. Ambrose and Origen seem to have been particularly influential, but such writings would bear principally on the organizational and narrative structures of the doors, and would not have created complex meanings built on the relationship between individual scenes or groups of episodes [10]. As far as can presently be discerned, the only significant relationship for Judith in the doors appears to be that with the panel representing David's victory over Goliath, and it is from this typological correlation that she derives her larger meaning.

As has been mentioned, the form of Ghiberti's Judith, with its upraised head and sword, clearly seems to express the notion of gratitude for divine assistance, and to carry the implication that God will aid the righteous in their combat with evil. These significances also inhere in the story of David's victory over Goliath, and probably formed at the very least a part of the primary content of Ghiberti's images, each carrying a meaning reinforced by the other. The only direct visual links between Judith and David in Ghiberti's doors are the beheading of an enemy and the notion of triumph. Judith holds the
severed head of the Assyrian in one hand, and with the other she raises her sword and exults in her victory over Holofernes. Though widely separated in the panel by the tumult of a battle scene, David's beheading of Goliath in the lower center leads to his triumphal entry into Jerusalem with Saul (and the head of Goliath) in the upper part of the panel. The implication of divine assistance is not stated with equal strength in the two works. In the sculpture of Judith, divinity is directly invoked by her gaze and gesture, a statement of divine presence so strong that it is as if she sees God hovering above her, receiving her attention and devotion. While there is no direct reference to God in the David panel, anyone sufficiently familiar with the story to recognize it would be aware that David himself attributes his success to divine aid (I Samuel 17:34-7). Thus, divinity is active in this scene, on the authority of David's statement in the text. Consequently, both by virtue of its form and visual relationship to the neighboring panel, and through the typological relationships between Judith and David, the assertion that God will assist the righteous in their battle with evil, leading them eventually to triumph, can be established as the primary and irreducible content of this depiction of Judith.

Further meanings might have been intended. An aforementioned literary tradition dating back to St. Augustine coupled the two as foreshadowing the salvation of humanity and Christ's victory over death; and, as will be seen in the context of Donatello's sculptures of Judith and David, each could be understood to represent the triumph of Humility over Pride as well. The necessary relevance of these
additional meanings for this Judith is, however, somewhat uncertain. The leap from the idea that God's assistance would bring about the triumph of his righteous over evil foes, which can legitimately be characterized as primary and intended by the artist, to the implication that these figures are types for Christ, and prefigure his ultimate triumph over evil and death, is not made explicit in these sculptures, either visually or through inscriptions. Consequently, such a reading of the paired images is optional. It is not unlikely that a meaning so common in the visual and literary traditions would have been readily accessible to reasonably informed viewers of the doors; but, if Ghiberti meant it to be understood as primary, as content that must be apprehended for the work to have fully conveyed its meaning, he did not succeed in making that clear.

Nonetheless, the strongly and specifically Christian context of the doors, and the fact that they hung on a Baptistery, a building in which the Christian triumph over sin and death was regularly manifest in the rituals of eucharist and baptism, celebrating Christ's sacrificial triumph and the believer's hope for a similar victory through Christ, make it possible that the typological triad of Christ, David, and Judith, and the notion of the victory of Christ over death that they embody, would have been more or less automatically understood by members of the intended audience, and hence form a part of the primary content of the work.

Additional possible significances, however, must be understood as secondary, in particular that of the triumph of Humility over Pride. This theme is a common one in depictions of Judith, well-established
in the Medieval corpus, particularly through the illuminations of the *Speculum Virginum*. Nonetheless, in the absence of any direct reference to the psychomachia tradition, i.e., of the victorious virtue standing in triumph over the vanquished vice, any apprehension of such a theme in Ghiberti's work must be considered an imposition on the part of the viewer, albeit a not untraditional or unreasonable one.

The best reading of the figure of Judith in this piece, then, is as a simple typological counterpart of David, demonstrating God's assistance to the faithful in their combat with evil, and, by extension, recalling the ultimate triumph over sin and death in their metaphorical, though visually unstated, relationship to Christ. Any additional significance must be seen as requiring too much content supplied by the viewer, and too little stated directly, or even allusively, by Ghiberti to be considered primary to the work.

The precise date of the statuette of Judith in the *Gates of Paradise* cannot be fixed. The niche figures are probably among the twenty-four pieces of frieze cast along with the ten narrative reliefs by 1436 or 1437 [11]. However, while Krautheimer argues that the David relief was among the last panels executed [12], there is no reason that Judith should have been modeled at the same time; indeed, a date as early as 1425 for her initial design is possible. Bruni's original plan of 1424-5 called for twenty-eight panels, but this number had been reduced to twenty-four by the time the back plate of the door was cast in 1429 [13]. It is not inconceivable that designs for the figures in the frame were executed with the original plan in mind,
particularly since, if the reliefs of reclining figures of Adam, Eve, Noah, and Puarphera are included, the number of such frame sculptures matches that of Bruni's panels. Such a possibility is enhanced by the fact that a number of the niche figures lack identifying attributes that link them specifically to the narratives beside which they are set in the final doors, so that the identity of a given prophet, for example, if it can be deduced at all, rests solely and insecurely on the tradition of a prophetic relationship to the neighboring episode. The absence of identifying attributes could suggest that these figures were not designed with the context of the final doors in mind, but rather were adapted from an earlier program [14].

A further element favoring a relatively early date for the design of the figures is their style. Many feature the same kind of broad, sharp-edged, looping drapery folds falling horizontally across the body, and functioning in part decoratively and in part to conceal rather than reveal the underlying form, that can be found in such early works by Ghiberti as the St. John the Baptist (1412-6), St. Matthew (1419-22), and the North Doors of the Baptistry (completed 1425). This kind of drapery treatment is less common in the Gates of Paradise narrative panels, where the folds in the cloth are generally more shallow and naturalistic, and function to define the underlying body to a considerably greater extent. However, judging from the East Door narrative reliefs, which had to have been executed between 1429 and 1436/7, Ghiberti's art underwent a rather rapid stylistic evolution during the first half of the 1430s, and given the variations in style among the frame figures it is not impossible that their
design was roughly contemporary with that of the narratives, and that they were modeled either in the late 1420s or first years of the 1430s. Be that as it may, it is unlikely that the figure of Judith was known publicly before the doors were gilded and finally hung in place in 1452, shortly before the return of Donatello to Florence from his sojourn in Padua in 1453.

In the final analysis, there is nothing remarkably innovative in Ghiberti's Judith, either in its form or its iconography. Her pose has precedents in manuscript illuminations. While the emotional and spiritual significance of Ghiberti's figure are strongly, skillfully, and movingly stated, he broke no new ground, established no new insights into the character of Judith except, perhaps, in the strength of her reaction to the events. Her attitudes and attributes are both traditional, and the meanings created from her typological relationship to David were well-established in the Medieval literary and visual corpus.

Such is not the case with Donatello's monumental sculpture of Judith Beheading Holofernes (bronze, with traces of partial gilding; 236 cm. from bottom of base to top of Judith's head; c. 1453-64; Plates 3-5). In this work, Donatello created the first monumental, free-standing sculpture of the heroine, and invested it with a significance which, though partly derived from traditional literary and visual sources, also included meanings which were distinctly new: secular and political in their implications. He also invested Judith with a psychological complexity new to images of the heroine, and the sensitivity with which the sculptor captured the mixed emotions of the
heroine at the moment of her terrible victory, one in which she had to
shed blood and take the life of Holofernes to save her people, is one
of the work's most remarkable features. Donatello realized a human
dimension in the story of Judith that had never before appeared in
representations of the Bethulian widow, and attained a level of
realism in both form and psychology that makes his the first fully-
realized Renaissance representation of the heroine.

It is difficult today to come to an accurate understanding of the
original primary meaning of Donatello's Judith Beheading Holofernes,
or of those meanings that would probably have been broadly understood
by the Florentine audience of his time. Both the date of the work and
the circumstances of its commissioning are unknown, and continue to be
the subject of speculation. Modern scholars universally agree that
it could not have been executed before or during Donatello's Paduan
residence, so that 1453 is the earliest possible date for the
commencement of work [15]. The latest possible date for its completion
is 5 August 1464, when the piece is mentioned in a letter from one F.
Franciscus cognomento paduanus to Piero il Gottoso de Medici
expressing his condolences on the death of Cosimo de Medici. In this
letter, a copy of which was possessed by Bartolommeo della Fonte, the
following passage occurs:

How many men laden with honors and riches do we not recall
that were cast down from that pinnacle of power without
warning ... as you yourself have taught me. Kingdoms fall
through luxury, cities rise through virtues; behold the neck
of pride severed by the hand of humility (Regna cadunt luxu
surgent virtutibus urbes caesa vides humili colla superba
manu) [16].
In the margin opposite this phrase, della Fonte noted "In columna sub
judith in aula midicea," a comment universally interpreted to indicate
that this was inscribed on the base of Donatello's Judith: which
conclusion is supported by Luigi Passerini's note in the second
edition (1845) of Agostino Ademollo's Marietta de'Ricci, in which
Passerini asserted that in a codex in his possession both this
inscription and a second one were recorded as having been placed on
the sculpture when it stood "in the Medici Gardens at S. Marco." [17]
Passerini's codex has since disappeared, and his placement of the work
in the Medici Gardens at S. Marco is problematic since no evidence
exists for its being located anywhere other than in the garden of the
Medici Palace prior to its 1495 removal to the Piazza della Signoria.
Nonetheless, such evidence as exists clearly provides a terminal date
of 1464 for the sculpture, and it is not unlikely that it was
completed at least a year or two before the death of Cosimo de Medici,
and possibly as much as five or six years before.

Speculation on the dating of the Judith has centered on three
possible periods of execution: the four years before his 1457-61
sojourn in Siena [18], the years during which he was in Siena, and a
discontinuous period of time including both the years immediately
following his return from Padua and those of his stay in Siena, with
work on the piece being temporarily abandoned for some duration in
the interim. In the absence of documentary evidence, discussions
of its dating have devolved onto two issues: style, and the possible
commissioner(s) of the piece. On general stylistic grounds, the work
is indisputably representative of Donatello's late style, with its
intense psychological and spiritual realism and deep insights into human responses to extreme circumstances; its abandonment of classical idealism, particularly in the face of Judith; the thick massings of drapery, which often obscure underlying form; and the irregular and highly active play of drapery folds and hair, suggesting a renewed commitment to the expressivity of the linear element of surfaces operating, at times, independently of the underlying masses.

There is an evolution in Donatello's style over the period between his return to Florence and his death, and this to some extent provides clues to the approximate date of the work. The relief panels of the pulpits for San Lorenzo go beyond the Judith in their violent linearity and in the expressive intensity of emotion and action. This work is considerably closer to the Paduan style of the High Altar of the Santo (S. Antonio), c. 1447-53, manifesting a still-strong commitment to mass, and the subordination of line to mass despite an increasing linearity. It also shows an insistence on psychological and physical realism, on substantial and solid volumes, and on textural mimesis in surfaces, as well as a strong similarity in the forms of heads and faces between the Bacchanalian putti on the base of the Judith and the angels in the Altar's reliefs. In many respects, Judith Beheading Holofernes seems to stand about mid-way between the major works from Padua and the last decade of Donatello's life, showing less of the lingering classicism of the former and only some of the wild linear expressivity of the latter. A number of scholars, including John Pope-Hennessy [19] and Prekerick Hartt [20] have favored a date in the mid-1450s; and, on the whole, the period 1453-7 seems to
be best supported by the style of the piece. Its closest stylistic analogue, in my view, is the Sienese St. John the Baptist, firmly dated on the basis of documentation to 1456-7. Others, such as Charles Seymour [21] and H.W. Janson, favor dates at the end of the Sienese period, around 1460-1. Janson's argument, in fact, saw it as the product of two periods of labor: the lower portions of the figure group as completed before 1457, and the base and upper portions of the sculpture dating to 1460-1 [22]. As Martha Fader points out, part of the difficulty in utilizing style as a basis for dating Judith Beheading Holofernes is the fact that individual responses to Donatello's style are so individual and subjective [23]. Severe from clear documentation, nuances of style lying very much in the eye of the beholder result in shifts in date within a period of about six or eight years. That period spanned work in Florence and Siena, and the point at which the Judith is placed within it determines authors' views on the circumstances of its creation and the meaning of the sculpture for its original patrons and audiences. Insofar as the stylistic evidence points most clearly to a date in the mid-1450s, a date of c. 1454-7 will be assumed in this study.

Another issue that must be considered in dating the work and analyzing its significance is whether Judith Beheading Holofernes is the result of a Sienese or Florentine commission. Janson argued for the former, in part because of a 1457 document referring to a payment for bronze, and in part because Donatello signed the work "OPUS DONATELLI FLO." Janson suggested that had the work been intended for a Florentine patron, it would have been unnecessary for him to refer
to himself as a citizen of Florence [24]. He denigrated the notion
that the signature was a way in which Donatello could, in a symbolic
sense, reclaim or reassert his Florentine identity for a Florentine
audience after his Paduan sojourn, as well as the idea that the
sculpture might have been a result of Cosimo and Piero de Medici
finding work for the aging and forgotten sculptor in a climate of
indifference [25].

It is, in a sense, impossible to refute Janson's thesis because,
necessarily, his ideas are based on a mixture of intuition and
speculation. It is, for example, no more unreasonable to suppose that
the Medici might have wished to help a neglected friend, and one who
had formerly done important work for them, than it is to suppose that
stories asserting such circumstances were Medici propaganda spread by
Vespasiano da Bisticci, the biographer of Cosimo [26]. However, there
are two powerful arguments against Janson's contention that the work
was initially the product of Sienese patronage, and they arise in part
from the very document on which he based his argument for an original
Sienese provenance.

A document of September 1457 recorded a payment of twenty-five
ducats by the chamberlain of Siena Cathedral to Urbano da Cortona on
Donatello's behalf [27]. This payment was for the purchase of bronze
for a half-figure, described in the document as "mezza fighura di
Guliatte" [28]. As Janson points out, early commentators tended to
interpret "Guliatte" as a corruption or misunderstanding of the name
"Golia" (Goliath), and he rightly argued that it is unlikely that a
half-figure of Goliath would be commissioned, since it is very
difficult to imagine any context in which it might be placed, and no
evidence exists that such a figure was ever set up in Siena [29]. He
further disallowed this particular linguistic corruption, preferring
instead to follow Clarence Kennedy, who posited that the name
"Guliatte" was, in fact, a corruption of "Giuditta," the normal
Italian name for Judith. Janson argued that "Giulitta" and "Giuletta"
are common Italian versions of "Giuditta," and hence that the document
in question referred to Donatello's Judith Beheading Holofernes, a
piece of which was thus about to be cast and prepared for shipment to
Siena [30].

However, as John Pope-Hennessy points out, there are significant
problems with Janson's hypothesis. A further text, found in the
Cambini account books, was uncovered by Hartt and Corti and published
in 1962. This document records a payment to Donatello of 100 florins
of 14 October 1456, and payments by Donatello for 965 pounds of copper
and bronze between this date and 19 November 1456 [31]. While Hartt
and Corti connect these payments to the casting of Judith Beheading
Holofernes [32], the materials purchased cannot have been used solely
for this piece. The sculpture is unusually heavy, but the weight of
bronze and copper purchased far exceeds that necessary for its
casting [33], making it at least possible that only part of the bronze
was purchased by the Sienese, and was intended for another sculpture,
such as that of St. John the Baptist, which was under commission at
that time. Further, "Giulitta" and "Giuletta" seem not to be
particularly common corruptions of "Giuditta," and in fact neither
"Golia" nor "Giuditta" are especially close to "Guliatte," though the
former could be an alternative derivation from it. The linguistic
evidence leads nowhere, and the meaning of the phrase in the original
document is a mystery.

Thus, while the documentary evidence provides a strong indication
that Judith Beheading Holofernes was cast at least in part in 1457, it
does not indicate that the sculpture was commissioned by a Sienese
patron. In fact, it is most reasonable to think that the opposite was
the case, and that the Judith was the result of a purely Florentine
commission. There was no tradition in Siena for Judith appearing as
either an important civic or religious symbol. The figure of Justice
in Lorenzetti's Allegory of Good Government borrows Judith's
attributes, but that figure is clearly identified as Giustizia, and
was neither meant to be, nor was it ever likely understood to be,
Judith. Moreover, there is no extant evidence of further use of
Judith in important public contexts in Siena between that time and
the third quarter of the fifteenth century. Judith, however, seems to
have been an important referent in Florentine public life throughout
the middle part of the Quattrocento. She appeared in Ghiberti's
Gates of Paradise, as has been discussed, and she was also a fairly
prominent subject in the sermons and writings of St. Antoninus of
Florence. Consequently, though the precise circumstances of the
commission for Judith Beheading Holofernes are unclear, on the
available evidence it is more likely that the work was the result of a
commission originating in Florence than of one originating in Siena,
and it is most likely that it was executed between about 1454 and
1457, although it is possible that work continued up until around
1461.

The presumed Florentine patron for *Judith Beheading Holofernes* remains undocumented. The first known reference to the sculpture, Fontio's copy of the 1464 letter to Piero il Gottoso de Medici from F. Francischus cognomento paduanus, placed the work in the garden of the Medici Palace. It was from this location that the work was removed to the Piazza della Signoria in October of 1495, as documents in the State Archives of Florence reveal.

1495, October 9: Two bronze statues, a David in the courtyard of the Palace of Piero de'Medici and a Judith in the garden of the same palace, are to be turned over to the operai of the Palazzo Vecchio together with their pedestals (*cum omnibus eorum pertinentiis*); the operai are to install them in whatever places they deem suitable.

October 14: Marco Capello, the macebearer of the Signoria, reports that all the above objects have been duly consigned to the operai.

It is interesting to note that Vasari, writing in the mid-sixteenth century, did not know that the work had ever been located in the Medici Palace, but rather assumed that it was the result of a commission by the Signoria [34].

The date at which the sculpture was placed in the palace is, like the commissioner, undocumented. A Medici commission is the most likely scenario, however. The sculpture's first recorded location was in their residence, and there is a close similarity between the putti bearing a ring on Judith's yoke and those carrying a wreath atop the sarcophagus on the tomb of Giovanni and Piccardia de Medici in the Old Sacristy in San Lorenzo (1429 ff.), one of Donatello's earliest Medici commissions, and possibly a self-referent for the artist in one of his
last works for the family. Consequently, it would seem most reasonable to suppose that the commission for the work originated with a member of the Medici family, that sometime between about 1457 and 1461 the sculpture was finished, and that it entered Medici possession at that time. It was then set up on the garden of the Palazzo Medici, where it remained for over thirty years.

The two most logical candidates as commissioner of Judith Beheading Holofernes are Cosimo and Piero de Medici. For its original primary meaning, the question of which of the two commissioned the sculpture may be of some importance. In her dissertation on the sculpture in the Piazza della Signoria, Martha Agnew Fader based her interpretation of the Judith principally on the premise that Cosimo, the head of the family at the time, had to have been its commissioner. If it can be shown that he was not responsible for its creation, or is unlikely to have had a major hand in shaping the work, her analysis of the content must be questioned seriously. Fader's dissertation is in some respects an important contribution to scholarship on this work, principally because she is one of the few commentators who perceived the importance of its civic or public content: an insight directly connected to her conclusions regarding the commissioner and his probable motives in ordering the piece. Fader's arguments will be discussed at greater length when the meaning of Judith Beheading Holofernes is considered. However, her evidence for Cosimo's being responsible for the commission makes the most compelling available case for his primacy in the project, and should be reviewed in considering the probable identity of the work's principal patron.
Fader pointed out several iconographic elements in Judith Beheading Holofernes that link it to Cosimo de Medici. In her view, the paired flying putti holding a ring on the yoke of Judith's garment is a reference to the motto "semper," which she asserted is frequently signified in Medici iconography by a ring, and linked specifically to Cosimo [35]. Fader admitted that the only other instance she could locate of this combination of winged putti and ring occurred in another sculpture by Donatello, the panel of the three Marys at the tomb from the South Pulpit in San Lorenzo [36]. However, this project was undertaken for the church most specially associated with the Medici, and seems to have commenced shortly after the probable completion of the Judith, closely linking the two appearances of the device to a single family within a restricted period of time. Insofar as Cosimo might have commissioned the San Lorenzo panels, this device could be a sign specifically indicating his patronage, in which case it would do likewise for Judith Beheading Holofernes. Unfortunately, as with the Judith, there is no documentary evidence relating to the commission for the San Lorenzo pulpits, so the possibility of Cosimo's involvement in that project must remain only a possibility.

The presence of the ring and putti motif in each work also cannot be used to link either definitively to Cosimo because the ring as an emblem was not employed exclusively by him, but is a commonplace of Medici iconography. In fact, the use of single or linked rings exists in Medici imagery over at least four generations, and sometimes in contexts demonstrably independent of any involvement by Cosimo: as,
for example, in Botticelli's painting of *Pallas and the Centaur* (c. 1482-3), a work executed long after Cosimo's death, in which single, triple interlocking, and quadruple interlocking rings adorn the goddess's robe. Indeed, one of the problems with trying to use the devices of Medici iconography to link a work to a particular individual is that the family tended so often to treat such symbols in a general or corporate manner. Rather than devising and possessing personal emblems, or creating unique variations on a general theme that could link a particular device to a single person, family members, once an image became part of the corpus of Medici devices, seem to have regarded it and used it as collective family property, and often to have used it over several generations. The sole early authority on Medici devices, Paolo Giovio, for example, indicated that while Cosimo de Medici invented the device of three interlocking rings, it was subsequently widely used by other members of the family, including Lorenzo il Magnifico [37]. As a result, neither the device of the single ring, nor that of the ring carried by flying putti, can unequivocally denote Cosimo de Medici as a work's commissioning party.

A similar situation obtains with regard to the other Medici device Fader used to tie *Judith Beheading Holofernes* to Cosimo. Beneath the aforementioned flying putti appear three feathers bound together by a ring. Fader argued that this was conclusive proof that the sculpture was Cosimo's [38], linking it to imagery appearing on supposed portraits of Cosimo in the fresco of *The Journey of the Magi* by Benozzo Gozzoli in the chapel of the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi [39]. However, as Haritt pointed out, there is no conclusive evidence that
the figure identified as Cosimo is in fact he [40]. Moreover, Paolo Giovio stated that the device of a single ring with three feathers was devised by and became the personal emblem of Lorenzo il Magnifico [41]. If this is in fact true, it would tend to link the commission to Lorenzo rather than Cosimo, though no one has suggested that the younger member of the family had anything to do with Donatello's Judith. Consequently, Fader's attempt to link the sculpture specifically to Cosimo through these images must be considered a failure. Clearly the devices present indicate a Medici context for the work, but none of them can be taken to indicate that Cosimo himself commissioned it. Cosimo remains a possible, indeed a likely, source for the commission, but on the basis of the devices cannot be considered the sole possibility.

A second argument advanced by Fader for considering Cosimo the commissioner of the work is that it was in his house (or at least in its garden) [42]. However, as Fader herself pointed out, the Medici family lived in the palazzo [43]; it was a dynastic home, not a private residence, and by the time Donatello was creating the Judith, it was also the locus of Cosimo's political activity [44]. Consequently, while the public nature of the palazzo, and even more of the garden, makes it reasonable to posit a public meaning for the work, it does not follow that Cosimo must have had the initial idea to commission the statue, or a significant voice in its form. Another important family member could have commissioned, and been consulted in the planning of, the work: a figure such as Piero il Gottoso, whose involvement with the sculpture at some point cannot be doubted, since
he was the author of two inscriptions fixed to its base. This is not to say that Cosimo did not commission the piece, or have a hand in its planning; certainly he must have approved the idea at some point, since he was the head of the family into whose home and political base it was to be placed. But this argument again only makes it plausible he commissioned the piece, not inevitable.

In Fader's interpretation of the sculpture, the primary content is seen as an attempt to express, in a purely civic or public context, the idea that the ruler must cultivate humility and respect for laws and justice so that his pride will be restrained and he will refrain from tyranny [45]. The final reasons she offered for linking the commission to Cosimo depend directly on her interpretation of the work's meaning. Part of her reasoning is linked to her sense of Cosimo's psychology and his thinking about the current political situation in Florence, most particularly anxieties about the accumulation of power in Medici hands [46]. In her view, Cosimo was motivated to commission the statue by a desire to show that this concentration of power in his family was a good thing, ensuring peace, prosperity, and justice for the city, while simultaneously reassuring the populace that he was aware of the temptations of power, and would not abuse his privilege [47]. Her logic in arguing her case is perfectly reasonable, and makes Cosimo a viable candidate for commissioning the work, if her interpretation is correct.

However, Fader was unable to locate any independent evidence for the state of Cosimo's mind, either generally or with reference to the particular issues she believes the sculpture treats. There are no
letters or other written documents on which to draw. Her arguments basically devolve on to suppositions and intuitions into Cosimo's state of mind and way of thinking, and such evidence is always subject to challenge, particularly when the individual being examined lived in a culture and time so far removed from that of the researcher. In the absence of documentary data, it is not possible for a scholar to know the mind of his or her subject; any conclusions based on such premises can ultimately be considered nothing more than assertions. Fader's reconstructions of Cosimo's character and reasoning are logical, thoughtful, and reasonable, but they are in the end nothing more than supposition; they are not proof that Cosimo must have commissioned the work.

Similarly, her sense that Cosimo must have commissioned the sculpture because only a ruler would be concerned with those issues she sees as addressed by the primary content of the sculpture is open to question. Certainly, Cosimo might have been concerned with these issues, and addressed them visually through a major sculptor. But there is no proof that this was so, and it is conceivable that anyone connected with the Medici regime, and most especially its heir apparent Piero il Gottoso, might have been concerned enough with these issues to have sponsored a work speaking about them: particularly if he had any anxiety himself about a smooth succession. In the final analysis, all Fader could do was provide an argument that makes Cosimo an eminently logical possibility as the source of the commission, not the only possible commissioner.
A little better case can be made for Piero il Gottoso de Medici as the originator of Donatello's commission, though again no definitive proof can be offered. Many of the same concerns Fader outlined as likely to have preoccupied Cosimo would probably have interested Piero, his successor-in-waiting, so that even if her reading of the sculpture is correct Piero would remain a plausible patron. Moreover, Piero is specifically associated with the sculpture in a way that neither Cosimo nor any other family member is. In his letter of condolence to Piero on the death of his father, Franciscus of Padua explicitly credited Piero with teaching him the lesson embodied in the "Regna cadunt luxu" couplet, writing, "How many men laden with honors and riches do we not recall that were cast down from that pinnacle of power without warning... as you yourself have taught me. Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues; behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility." Fader interpreted the use of the quotation in the 1464 letter to mean that Franciscus Padovanus was eulogizing Cosimo through a quotation attached to one of his artistic commissions, refusing to do more than mention in passing that Gombrich had found a text attributing the placement of the inscription on the sculpture to Piero [48]. Every other scholar writing on the piece, however, has been in agreement that Piero was the author of the quotation, and that it was in place by 1464. There is no reason why an inscription authored by Piero might not have been placed on a sculpture by Donatello commissioned by his father; indeed, if it were felt that the meaning of the work were elucidated by such an inscription, and the monument really were meant
primarily for public purposes, Cosimo might have been glad to have Piero's aphorism attached to the statue. But Piero's likely authorship of the inscription unequivocally indicates that he was strongly interested in the ideas treated in the sculpture: a connection that can be made to any other member of the Medici family only by supposition. The probability that Piero authored the statement is not proof he commissioned the sculpture, but it speaks for an intimate involvement with the piece and the ideas it embodies. He was interested enough in the project to participate in it in a meaningful way, hence, quite possibly as the originator of the commission.

As to when the inscription was written and when affixed to the work, evidence does not exist. Nor is there a record of where, how, or how permanently it was attached to the sculpture. It is really not even certain that it was added at all, since it could have been intended from the beginning, or plans for its inclusion made prior to the completion of the work. If either of the latter two cases were true, it would demonstrate that Piero had an involvement in the planning and execution of the work that bore directly and significantly on its meaning, and while this would not eliminate Cosimo as the principal commissioner, it would reinforce the case for Piero significantly. But no such proof exists.

There are, however, additional indications that Piero had an involvement with the sculpture that was far from casual. He can be unambiguously credited with supplying a second inscription, one reading "Salus Publica. Petrus Medices Cos. Fi. libertati simul et
fortitudini hanc mulieris statuam quo cives invicto constantique animo
ad rem pub. reddeerent dedicavit (The Public Weal. Piero Son of Cosimo
Medici has dedicated the statue of this woman to that liberty and
fortitude bestowed on the republic by the invincible and constant
spirit of the citizens) [49]. The date at which this inscription was
placed on the sculpture is currently unknown. Most commentators
follow Janson in believing that the texts were put on the work at
different times, and that the second post-dates Cosimo's death [50].
Janson's argument was that the two inscriptions express a different
ethos, one (Regna cadunt luxu) establishing a point of moral theology,
the other (Salus Publica) one of civic virtue [51]. To his way
of thinking, the expressions were sufficiently different to generate
two distinct meanings, and he therefore concluded that it was unlikely
that they were placed on the work simultaneously. Rather, he
preferred to think that the addition of the second inscription
modified or enriched the meaning of the work.

Joachim Poeschke, on the other hand, theorized that both of the
inscriptions might have been in place by 1464 [52], raising the
intriguing possibility that each was added at the same time, or even
that each was original to the piece. If Poeschke's supposition is
correct, then the two different meanings which Janson rightly
indicated were embodied in the words might have been intended to exist
together as complements from the initial conception or early stages of
the work. In other words, it raises the possibility that Judith
Beheading Holofernes was intended to express multiple meanings, and
that either the form of the work was planned to express those
different imports from the beginning, or that it was realized early
that it would accommodate them. The fact that Franciscus Paduwanus
does not mention the second inscription is not a barrier to its having
been in place at an early date; he is commenting specifically on that
text that appropriately expressed his sentiments on hearing of the
death of Cosimo, not describing the sculpture. Unfortunately, it is
not known when either text became part of the work. However, as will
be seen, the fact that each text may have been early or original is
important, for the sculpture manifests a range of meanings expressed
through a series of dualistic elements in its form. If the two texts
could be shown to be original, it would indicate that the meanings
clearly embodied by the Judith at the time of Piero's death in 1469
were intended from its conception, and did not result from an additive
process, as would be the case if the second text came later.

Regardless, the fact that Piero seems to have had a hand in the
composition and placement of both inscriptions on Judith Beheading
Holofernes indicates that he was deeply interested in it; and, given
the fact that in the second inscription Piero names himself as
dedicating the work to the citizens of Florence, it would be difficult
to argue against him as the commissioning party if it could be shown
that this text was in place before Cosimo's 1464 death, since it is
unlikely Cosimo would have permitted Piero to usurp credit for the
work while he was living. Again, however, firm evidence is lacking.
Nonetheless, Piero's close association with Judith Beheading
Holofernes from a very early date is significant, and might tip the
balance in his favor when the question of whether he or Cosimo
commissioned the work is raised [53].

In the final analysis, the issue of who commissioned Donatello to create *Judith Beheading Holofernes* cannot be resolved. All available evidence indicates that the commission came from the Medici family, in whose palazzo the sculpture was when it first entered the literary record. Of the family members who might have commissioned such an important work, Cosimo and his son Piero il Grottesco are the most likely. Piero's interest in the work is documented by two inscriptions placed on it and authored by him, and might tip the balance in his favor slightly. Regardless, whether they were original or later modifications to the meaning of the work, the texts devised by Piero at some point came to control its expression, and must guide interpretations of the significance of the statue during the time it was a Medici possession.

Donatello's *Judith Beheading Holofernes* is one of the artist's more complex figural groups, an interlocking spiral of bodies and limbs that carries the eye around the piece in a full 360 degrees. Judith stands literally on top of the dying Assyrian, her right foot planted on his left thigh, and her left foot set behind him on his upturned right wrist. She faces Holofernes on a diagonal, covering the right half of his torso with her leg, and appears to straddle his right shoulder, so that Judith's body begins to open out away from the plane of her victim's legs and abdomen. The Assyrian's head and upper chest turn to his left away from the plane of his legs, in a direction opposite to that of Judith's body, setting up a spiral motion that, combined with the three reliefs on the sides of the triangular base,
requires the viewer to walk around the statue to fully understand it and its significance [54].

Judith holds Holofernes's scimitar upraised in her right hand behind and approximately equal with the top of her head, poised to strike a blow. Her head is tilted slightly down toward him, and her body bends slightly forward from the waist up. The voluminous character of her drapery conceals any possible tension in her back or arm that might help convey a sense of the effort or imminence of the blow, but she grips the sword's hilt tightly. She wears a thick veil, with a second, lighter veil beneath [55]. Under this second veil is a third, even lighter cloth that has an embroidered border. This piece is damaged where it crosses the middle of her forehead, probably as a result of a casting accident. The light fabric of this veil, almost transparent in its delicacy, is carried down along the sides of her face and around her neck in the manner of a wimple, an appropriate style for a widow in Medieval and Renaissance times.

Judith's uncovered face is handsome, but no longer really beautiful, and no longer young [56]. Her expression is one of utmost seriousness, but does not signal great effort or strong emotion. Rather, it is contemplative, even sad from certain angles, expressing her awareness of the gravity of the event, and the mixed feelings she is experiencing. Donatello's remarkable insights into human psychology, and his complete mastery in the recording of the subtlest of emotional effects is present in this face. As with the bronze David, the artist realized that Judith, at the moment of her triumph, is also suffering a great loss, the loss of her innocence, in both a
psychological and a ritual sense [57]. Her face is full of conflicting emotions as she does what she must, despite its cost to her. This sense of emotional pain is conveyed most impressively by the slightly opened mouth and the stark, tense quality of her eyes, and reinforced by the downward cast of her head, though this is also a part of the posture that will allow her to fix her gaze on and execute Holofernes. When viewed from the front, it is clear that Judith is not looking directly at her enemy, but rather slightly off to her left side, so that the sense that she is sunk inside herself in contemplation, and so has paused or hesitated is strongly conveyed.

From other angles, however, the orientation of her head to Holofernes is such that it is possible to think she is looking at him, and that she will shortly snap back to awareness of the task at hand, and finish the decapitation. The mixture of grim determination and melancholy, qualities whose relative proportions alter depending on the angle at which her face is viewed, is both eerie and compellingly human, and helps to make the heroine's face one of Donatello's supreme achievements.

Judith's face and neck preserve a great deal of their original coppery bronze tone, as does the blade of the scimitar. Most of the remainder of the sculpture is encased today in a turquoise- or gray-green patina. Judith is clothed in a long, loose-fitting robe, over which she wears an even looser tunic [58]. Her robe is cuffed with wide, embroidered bands. On her raised arm, where the fabric has fallen away from this cuff, the designs are more readily apparent. They appear to be figural in nature, but are almost impossible to
Straps depending from them bind up the looping folds of drapery along her arm, to clear them out of the way as she wields the sword. The tunic is belted just beneath her breasts with a sash that winds around her and falls in back in a diagonal from her hips to her knees.

Over the top of her tunic is a fringed yoke, on the front of which the aforementioned designs of two putti bearing a ring and three bound feathers are found. The yoke has a short fringe at the sides and bottom of the front and rear panels. The design on the front seems to be repeated on the rear, though the hanging veil obscures the center of the surface. On the sides of the yoke are large rectangular panels with arched tops. The left panel bears a design of an antique vase with flowers, flanked by a chubby putto on each side. The putti stand with crossed legs on vines, their fat bellies thrust out before them, their heads thrown back and mouths opened as if in ecstatic song. The flowers coming out of the vase are quite abstract, unidentified as to species. They are simply circular discs with an "X" etched into the top. The design on the panel on Judith's right shoulder is more difficult to make out, lying atop her upraised arm, and probably was never really meant to be visible. An abstract floral or vine motif moves along the side, but the remainder is obscured both by its location and the veil. Her left foot is wrapped in drapery; her right sticks out from underneath her robe, and reveals a sandalled foot.

Judith braces the head of the seated and upright Holofernes against her left thigh, apparently to better control him in preparation for the second blow. She grasps him by his long locks of hair, and
pulls his head back to expose his neck to the sword. His face is relatively peaceful, but carries a look of latent pain in the tension of his brow and eye sockets. His mouth sinks open, and his eyes are shut, perhaps in drunken sleep, perhaps in death. A gash left by the first blow of Judith's sword is on his throat. Given the fact that there are several flaws in the eleven cast pieces from which the group was assembled, some scholars have wondered whether this is actually a casting error left unreppaired by the artist [59]. The angle at which Holofernes's head is held suggests otherwise: that the cut was an intentional part of Donatello's design, particularly since the gash fulfills the requirements of the Biblical narrative, which states that it took two blows for Judith to remove the general's head.

Holofernes appears to be nude from his neck to his waist. Michael Greenhalgh asserted a slight possibility that Holofernes is wearing a cuirass which reproduces the muscles of the chest and back, but conceded that any points on the figure that would allow the viewer to determine this are obscured by either his hair or loincloth [60]. On his back is a disc, too large to be a simple pendant. Greenhalgh suggested that it might have been derived from Etruscan examples such as the Capestrano Warrior, or have been intended to represent similar types of ornamental armor worn in other ancient cultures; but he admitted that it might also have been intended to be read as having simply slipped around from the front [61], an element that could indicate either Holofernes's drunken stupor or the force of Judith's actions. Regardless, he considered that the tassels around its border mark the medallion as honorific rather than practical, also positing
that the scene engraved on the disc is a reference to luxuria [62], although at least half the design is obscured by Judith's leg, making any reading problematic.

Around his hips and upper thighs Holofernes wears a skirt or loincloth, but his lower legs and feet are are. His legs have occasioned some controversy. Bruno Bearzi, whose technical examination of the work established that it was cast in pieces, and that actual cloth soaked in wax was used in casting Judith's drapery, posited that the Assyrian's legs had been taken from a life cast; this, however, seems highly unlikely [53]. As Janson pointed out, the legs show features such as veins and sinews with a degree of plastic clarity impossible in a life cast [64]. It also would have been very difficult to match life-cast legs in size or position to the torso of Holofernes, and the process required an outside-in method of working, rather than the more structurally based method of working from the inside out favored by Donatello [65]. Holofernes's arms hang limp at his sides, and his torso sinks into his pelvis, but whether because of drunkenness or death is not obvious, nor essential to the meaning of the work. His legs are splayed, and though Judith stands atop his hand and leg, her robe falls conspicuously over and between his thighs, providing, along with the proximity of his head to her genitals, a reminder that lust was one of Holofernes's sins, and a direct cause of his downfall.

Holofernes is seated on an object generally identified as a pillow. Pope-Hennessy considered it to be a wine-skin, and hence a reminder of his drunkenness [66]; however, the holes at its corners can
be explained as part of the pipe system for the fountain of which the sculpture seems to have originally been a part, and both its general form and the use to which it is put in the sculpture strongly suggest that this object was intended to represent a cushion. The use of a pillow as a base for a sculptural figure has precedents in Donatello's own work, such as the St. Mark on Or San Michele, in which the form of the cushion is very similar. In both works, the pillow functions in part as a means by which Donatello could display convincingly the physicality, the weight and mass of his figures, as the pillow responds to the pressure of their bodies. In the Judith, it also provides a way for Donatello to allude to the environment of the action as a bedchamber: a device for giving the narrative's setting a more concrete visual reality within the limited confines of the sculptural group. The pillow has a covering attached by a series of buttons; the cloth of the cover bulges open between them and at the corners along one side, a detail that augments the sense of the figures' weight. In addition, the pillow provides a rectangular base for the action of the figures, smoothing the transition between them and the triangular base, and providing a visually more substantial platform for the narrative. It is on this pillow that Donatello signed the work.

The figural group stands atop a substantial triangular base. This base has balusters at each corner, and on each face a relief flanked by pilasters shows putti engaged in some phase of wine preparation or consumption. There appears to be an order ideal to the viewing of the reliefs, for one panel represents the harvesting of
grapes, the second their trampling, and the final a Bacchanalian celebration in full swing. It is possible that, in the original context of the sculpture in the garden of the Medici Palace, a primary axis of approach or view might have guided the viewer in approaching this sequence in the proper order. This is, however, far from certain, for that relief that would be the first in the sequence corresponds to the least revealing view of the sculpture, that in which only Judith's back and Holofernes's legs sticking out from beneath her robe can be apprehended. It seems unlikely that this view would have been favored as the first with which a spectator was to be confronted, though the orientation of the sculpture in the Medici garden is unknown.

This fact casts doubt on Martha Fader's proposed six-part scheme for viewing the work during a circumambulation, an idea based on the notion that a viewer should peruse the sculpture from the center of each relief, and from the corners where they intersect [67]. In her argument, the sequence of views of the reliefs is co-ordinated with views of the figural group, so that the primitive passions and the putti's revelling climaxes in juxtaposition with the views most obviously asserting Judith's guardianship against vice [68], and Holofernes's death. Her idea is an attractive one, showing virtue most triumphant where vice is most riotous, and drawing a clear parallel between sin and its deserts [69]; unfortunately, the problem of the sequence beginning with the least attractive view of the sculpture, and whether a Renaissance artist or patron would have allowed that to happen, at the very least makes her theory somewhat
dubious.

If the reliefs are viewed in a narrative sequence, however, the first would be that showing putti gathering grapes for the vintage (Plate 6). Four large putti demonstrate a sequence of activity from left to right, moving from picking the grapes, to placing them in a basket, to their subsequent removal [70]. Additional, smaller putti are seen in the background. In the lower left corner a larger figure reclines, his legs in the corner, his open mouth in the lower center of the relief, where it forms the opening for one of the spouts of the fountain. While most of the putti are nude, this figure is naked, his clothes having slipped from his body as he became drunk from the pot of wine in his right hand. He demonstrates the worst effects of alcoholic dissipation, his flesh sagging, his breasts so flabby and pendulous that he might almost be mistaken for a female were it not for his male genitalia. At his feet a box or basket is piled high with grapes. The drunken figure is so large that he cannot be a putto; rather, he seems to be a form of Silenus or some other adult devotee of Bacchus. For the most part the representation in this relief shows an orderly sequence of events, and is without frenzied activity or, compositionally, the tangled, overlapping forms, complex poses, and strong diagonals present in the other two reliefs. Only in the figure of the drunken male do any of these elements appear. Rather, regularly spaced verticals dominate the composition, asserting an order and regularity mirrored in the activity of the working putti, and only slightly disrupted by the drunken figure in the lower tier.
The second of the reliefs is that observed from the face of the sculpture from which a viewer can see more or less frontally the torso of Holofernes, along with the side of Judith in a closed position as she wields the sword. A scene of putti making wine appears on this panel (Plate 7). Two putti are climbing from a large, bowl-shaped vat, where they have apparently been trampling grapes. A molded garland runs around the top of the vat as a border, and a lion's head is set in its center at the bottom; like the mouth of the large figure in the first scene, this seems to have functioned as a spout for the fountain. At the bottom corners of the relief two putti recline. The one on the right seems to have fallen into a drunken sleep, while that on the left raises himself indolently on his right arm. Above him a putto dunks his head into the vat to drink, while opposite him a second figure raises his tunic as if to urinate (perhaps on the sleeping figure). Two further revellers appear in the background, one to either side, and a garland is hung above between the two flanking pilasters. In this relief, the figures are posed more dynamically, with more visually complicated postures, more overlapping and intertwining of figures, and a stronger emphasis on diagonals and conflicting movements in the composition than was the case in the first panel. In addition, more of the putti here show the effects of overindulgence in wine, so that the work takes on an appearance at once more riotous and more revelatory of the loss of control that takes place in drunkenness: an absence of consciousness and function that is precisely the condition that places Holofernes in such jeopardy. Thus, as the grapes mover closer to being wine, so too
did Donatello intensify visually both the energy of the composition and his presentation of the destructive effects of alcohol on its consumers [71].

The third relief shows a Bacchanale underway (Plate 8). It is by far the most complicated of the three panels compositionally, filled with energizing diagonals, complex poses, dynamic actions, and a tangle of overlapping and interlocking bodies and limbs pressed with such concentration into the foreground that it becomes difficult to separate out individual figures; the relief is truly an image of drunken frenzy. In the right foreground, two putti are shown blowing crossed horns in front of a pair of piers or pilasters, a large bowl of wine set between them. The putto on the right stands upright, providing a vertical accent at the edge of the field and closing off the composition; however, the trumpeter on the left throws back his head and runs right at full tilt, the line of his trailing leg, outstretched arms, and horn providing a strong diagonal to counter that of the second trumpet, and to challenge, if not disrupt, the stability provided by the first putto [72]. In the opposite corner, an almost-naked putto, his flesh beginning to sag, and his belly swollen and barrel-like, seems to be running out of the field, signalling behind him for others to follow. An object similar to a thyrsus rises before him, but he does not seem to be carrying it, and its base is outside the relief. The strong diagonal of this putto is countered by a second figure directly behind him, who bends over, his head disappearing behind the face on the end of a vat or trough set in the lower center of the panel. It is unclear whether this putto is
drinking or vomiting, but the latter is favored by the fact that the face on the trough, providing the spout for the fountain on this side, appears extremely drunk and sick, and might itself show a figure vomiting from the effects of his inebriation.

Above these foreground figures, sitting on a couch on a platform, a youthful, putto-like Bacchus presides over the celebration. To his left two additional putti revel, while another figure, possibly female, is seated on his lap kissing him. He holds a jar of wine out before him, and below him and his companion a disembodied hand holds a second thyrsus. The sex of the person sitting on Bacchus's lap is not specifically rendered; the figure is placed in profile, so that genitalia are not visible, and the breast is treated in a highly summary fashion. But regardless of its gender it successfully makes the point it is designed to make: that the excesses of gluttony, of which drunkenness is a part, are intimately linked to lust. This principle clearly connects this panel to the story of Judith and Holofernes, for it was his lust for Judith that led Holofernes to hold the banquet at which he became inebriated, giving her the opportunity to execute her plan.

Fader noted that the panel in its position relative to the figures above demonstrates more clearly than any other viewpoint both Judith's guardianship against the primitive passions that explode into vice, and the close connection of those passions and vices to Holofernes, in whose figure their cost is made clear, and who appears at his most death-like from this angle [73]. That being true, it would seem that this juxtaposition makes one of the best possible
cases for seeing the overall composition as representing at least on
one level the general triumph of virtue over vice, and more
specifically of Chastity over Lust; however, Fader did not pursue this
possibility in her arguments, and in fact tends to be dismissive of a
content so connected to personal or private morality. Nonetheless,
along with visual allusions to the psychomachia tradition, these
panels form a principal means of identifying part of the core content
of the sculpture, creating such unambiguous images of gluttony and
incipient lust (the vices which, underlain by pride, brought about
Holofernes's death) that it is difficult to see how any complete
reading of the sculpture would not have to take this visual
recommendation of personal virtues into account [74].

The inspiration for the Bacchic reliefs on Donatello's Judith
Beheading Holofernes doubtless came from classical sarcophagi, such as
those in the Camposanto at Pisa [75]: a meaningful matching of referent
and work that reinforces the certainly of Holofernes's impending
death. However, no specific model has been located, so that the
artist was probably generally inspired by antique sources without
being directly imitative of them [76]. Their principal function is
clear, for they establish the cause of Holofernes's helplessness as
his overindulgence in wine, and allow the artist to address issues of
virtue and vice through the persons of Judith and the Assyrian general
in the parallels and juxtapositions created between the two levels of
the sculpture. Some scholars have sought to push the significance of
the reliefs beyond this point: Kauffmann, for example, tried to
establish eucharistic implications in the close juxtaposition of wine
and death [77], though no contemporary scholars take his argument seriously. In fact, as Greenhalgh pointed out, no one has really been able to elucidate a more precise connection between the reliefs and the group of Judith and Holofernes than that of establishing the drunkenness of the Assyrian [78]. A good case can be made for the third panel's also bringing lust into the picture, so that the reliefs allude to a broader spectrum of Holofernes's vices, and hence of the circumstances of his downfall. But this connection is simple and straightforward, and if a larger or more complex message was intended by Donatello, it remains undeciphered today.

Before turning from these panels, one final observation should be made. Fader noted an apparent contradiction between Donatello's inclusion of putti, traditional symbols of life's vitality and regenerative forces, and the allusion to vice and death that is implied by the parallel between the state of Holofernes and the actions depicted in the reliefs [79]. Her discussion is centered on the degree to which Bacchus and Holofernes should be viewed as analogues, and the closeness of the relationship of each to the putti. It is arguable whether Fader initially drew too close a connection between Bacchus and Holofernes in her analysis. In her view, their states are closely parallel, the god so insensate with drink he is stupefied, insensitive even to the kiss of a putto seated on his lap. The expression on Bacchus's face is not a particularly strong one, it is true, but he is not unconscious, as she asserted. If no indication of delight is given, neither is there any sense of pain, or disgust, or any other negative emotion [80]; rather, his expression is
ambiguous, as ambiguous as wine itself, the dualistic nature of which, both blessing and curse, has a long literary pedigree [81]. This quality of ambiguity and paradox, creating a sense of multiple levels of meaning, is inherent in both the story of Judith and this sculpture. Fader posited that the putti, those symbols of ebullient life, might have been intended to represent the vitality of evil, against which Judith must be on guard [82]. This point again seems to pull the work, on at least one level, into the realm of the psychomachia's battle between virtue and vice, a potential significance which Fader largely wished to eschew. She does this in part by immediately, and contradictorily, arguing against seeing too close a parallel between Holofernes and Bacchus, insisting that the putti's activity in the reliefs related strictly to the latter, and is celebratory in nature, thus denying them any real ties to the Assyrian, and hence any real part in the revelation of vice. But they do in fact participate in and reveal vices, and the consequences of vices, such as those of Holofernes, and themselves are linked to him by inebriation and stupefaction that mirror his own. They are symbols of joy, celebration, vitality, and life, but at the same time they are images of vice, dissipation, and death [83], and as such they embody in microcosm the multivalent significance of this work.

A revelation of the complexity of the relationship between good and evil is one of the richesses of Judith's story, and of Donatello's work. A deep irony lies at the very core of the way in which Christianity traditionally has viewed the tale of Judith. On a symbolic level, she has virtually always been seen as an exemplar of
virtue battling vice: of Chastity defeating Lust, of Humility defeating Pride, and indeed on a typological level of Good and Life defeating Sin and Death. But on a narrative level, vice is the ally of Judith, that factor that allows her to succeed. Holofernes's pride makes it impossible for him to view her as a threat, and allows her to approach him closely. His lust for her induces him to hold the banquet, then ensures her privacy in his tent. His gluttony leads to his drunkenness, and his vulnerability to her attack. The dualistic nature of the putti's activity in the vintage, their joy in the wine that also makes them sick and distorts them in body and behavior, the duality of wine itself both actually and symbolically, mirrors the complex relationships between virtue and vice in the story of Judith, and the complicated moral and emotional position that Donatello expressed through the mixed feelings that pass across her face. In fact, rather than drawing back from the implications of her observation, Fader might have done well to embrace them, for Donatello seems to have well understood the complexities and ambiguities of the story, and to have expressed them in his sculpture.

Beside each of the relief panels on the base, Donatello placed a pair of pilasters. Each pilaster includes a pair of figures stacked one above the other in mandorla-like niches composed of paired volutes top and bottom linked by thick, vegiform lines. The identity of these figures has not been established; however, they are not winged putti. Some appear childlike, but others are older. Most are dressed more chastely than the Bacchanalian revellers, and none are as active in their postures, though some of these figures twist and turn in their
shallow spaces. That there are twelve of them might ordinarily suggest that they represent the twelve apostles of Christ, or the twelve tribes of Israel [84]; but there is no iconographic evidence for their identities. If they could be identified, they might either enrich or clarify the meaning of the sculptural group as a whole, or cast light on the manner in which the reliefs are to be understood. But their identity, and the significance they might lend to the work, remain a mystery.

While in the garden of the Medici palazzo, Judith Beheading Holofernes stood on an additional base, on which Piero il Gottoso's inscriptions were placed. No definitive evidence exists concerning either its specific form or the way in which it related to the sculpture, consequently no extant objects can be identified with this base. Early sixteenth century sources listed a granite vase with marble ornaments that was used as a fountain base in the Palazzo inventory; Bennett and Wilkins speculated that it might have functioned as the base for Donatello's sculpture [85]. As Janson pointed out, however, both Bartolommeo della Fonte and Passerini referred to the statue as having a columnar pedestal [86]. It is not impossible that this is the pedestal on which the sculpture rests today, though if so, the two original inscriptions have been removed [87]. Regardless, the likelihood that a column of some sort was used as a base is of some significance for the meaning and narrative thrust of the work. In the Book of Judith, a column is described as having stood at the head of Holofernes's bed as a bedpost (Judith 13:6), and in Donatello's sculpture the presence of such an element could have been intended to
Further specify the setting [88]. It might also have been meant to enrich the significance of the work. For example, Judith was a traditional symbol of Fortitude, as was the pillar, and their conjunction might have been intended to reinforce the recollection of this virtue in the viewer's mind [89]. Hrabanus Maurus stated that this column "signified the hardness of his (Holofernes's) depraved heart," [90] though it is also a symbol of spiritual strength [91]. Unfortunately, though any of these meanings would contribute something important both to the richness of the sculpture's significance, and to an understanding of its precise content, it cannot be said which, if any, are applicable. The column's form, if indeed that is what stood beneath this sculpture, is unknown, and any discussion of its import must ultimately be speculative. Similarly, the form of the fountain basin in which the pedestal stood is unknown, though early sources specifically refer to the presence of such a basin [92].

Because of the probable loss of the original base, the absence of any indication of the size or height of the fountain basin, or of its location in the garden, it is fruitless to try to reconstruct the precise height or viewing angles of the work as originally sited, the experience of a viewer walking around it, or the effect of this experience on meaning. The presence of multiple viewing points clearly implies that it was meant to be seen from all sides, and it might have stood in the center of the garden as a focus of attention. It might also have been aligned with Donatello's bronze David, which was placed in the courtyard of the palace. In his "Life of Baccio
Bandinelli," Vasari noted that the David's low base permitted a view through from the street into the garden, and Pope-Hennessy and Bennett and Wilkins have taken this statement of indicate that there might have been an axial alignment between the two sculptures and the street door, so that the two statues could function together in at least a partial community of meaning [93]. This possibility is compelling and, if true, could serve as a further guide to Judith's meaning; it is, however, ultimately only speculative.

Martha Fader argued that the pillow beheath Holofernes did not function as part of a fountain system [94]; it is unclear whether her objections extend to the base, but she favored the notion that the sculpture simply surmounted a quiet pool, where Judith could guard and preside over a place of peace [95]. Her principal objections are three-fold: that water does not flow from cushions, especially the cushion of Luxuria, so that its use was too non-literal; that the flow of water, in effect the transformation of blood to water beneath the wounded Holofernes, was too immediate; and that the sculpture shows no apparent corrosion from the water's flow [96]. However, the corners of the cushion are, as Pope-Hennessy pointed out, undeniably bored for the extrusion of water, as are the mouths of figures in the lower center portions of the reliefs [97]. The absence of visible corrosion today can be accounted for in part by the fact that the work was cleaned between 1946 and 1950 [98], which process might have removed any traces of damage, and in part by the fact that it could have served as a fountain only for a relatively limited period of time, at most about forty years between 1456 and 1495, so that corrosion might have
been minimal in any case.

Fader's other objections seem to be based principally on her sense of the way the work ought to have been. It is true that water generally does not flow from cushions, but there is no reason to suppose that water ought not flow from pillows in fountains, regardless of their possible symbolic import. It is also ridiculous to hold an artist of Donatello's genius to such a finicky standard of realism in a work which is, by its nature, a mixture of reality and symbolism; particularly since, because of the spatial limitations inherent in free-standing sculptural groups, such works are often marked by compromises between realistic detail, generalization, and simple omission of elements that might augment the reality of the piece were there room for their inclusion. Similarly, there is no proof that Donatello meant the viewer to understand water flowing from the pillow as implying a transformation of blood into water. Nothing in the imagery of the sculpture makes that linkage inevitable, even if the juxtaposition of the bleeding figure and the water spurting from the pillow makes such a reading possible. Fader's feelings on the appropriateness of such a motif simply cannot be presumed to duplicate Donatello's. In short, Fader's objections ignore the conventions of fountain sculpture, and are based on little or no scholarly evidence. Virtually every commentator on the group agrees that it once was a fountain, as contemporary sources indicate, and there is no good reason for doubting that this was so.

Few scholars have dealt with the possible implications for the Judith's meaning as a functioning fountain in the Medici Palace.
Janson was somewhat troubled by this question, but principally because of the potential problems that it presented for his thesis that the work was originally intended for Siena [99]. Only Michael Greenhalgh has really addressed the possible significance of the fountain itself for the work's meaning. As he noted, on one level it can be seen as part of the narrative structure of the piece, an allusion to the springs of Bethulia which Holofernes besieged, and whose water, necessary to the Bethulians for survival, was one of the principal reasons they contemplated surrender, and Judith undertook her mission [100]. Further, Medieval commentaries supply a rich source for additional, symbolic understandings of water in this context. Hugh of St. Victor, writing with specific reference to this incident in the Book of Judith, explained it as an analogue to the Gospels and their doctrine, which come from a living fountain:

... thus learned men, illuminated by the grace of the Holy Spirit, introduce the Gospel as from a living spring into the city of Holy Church, through the pipe of their mouths. The persecutors of the faithful prohibit it and threaten death, so that the faithful are killed through lack of spiritual drink [101].

Donatello's imagery does not appear to invoke this specific body of meaning, for there is no visual allusion to the Gospels or the Bible even in a symbolic sense, unless the twelve pilaster figures were meant to be understood as such: a point that cannot be proved. Other water analogies were drawn in Medieval literature by such figures as St. Augustine (water as the spiritual life), Guibert of Sta. Maria de Novigento (Holy Scripture), and Venerable Rupert (abundance) [102]. However, the most common significance for water was as a cleansing and
renewing agent, as in the waters of Baptism, which remove sin and provide a promise of new life for believers [103]. If water were meant to function symbolically and meaningfully in this sculpture, its significance would probably fall into this range.

If Judith is seen as an analogue of Virtue triumphant over Vice, and if her typological relationship to Christ (himself living water) were understood as part of the content of the work, then the water might be viewed as part of the promise or scheme of salvation. It is Christ’s triumph over sin and death in which the believer participates through the waters of Baptism, and through partaking spiritually of the living waters of Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Since Judith was on one level commonly understood as a type for Christ, and her victory as analogous to that of Christ, this significance could have formed part of the content of the work. However, it is not an area of meaning that is particularly stressed either by the images themselves or the inscriptions, and hence should probably be considered potential latent content, rather than primary significance. Since the "Salus Publica" inscription makes Judith a symbol of Florence [104], the waters might also allude to the Arno, the city’s river. But the significance of the fountain and its water is unclear, and will remain so unless some new evidence can be located concerning either the original form of the sculpture in the Medici garden, or the circumstances under which the commission was executed.

Opinion is sharply divided as to whether Judith Beheading Holofernes is essentially narrative or iconic and symbolic in its
mode. As John Pope-Hennessy pointed out, early interpretations of the work tended to stress its narrative aspect, reading it as a relatively literal rendering of the Biblical text; scholars beginning in the 1930s, on the other hand, tended to lean toward a more symbolic understanding of the sculpture, seeing in its allusions to the Medieval psychomachia tradition a static and non-narrative quality that placed it in the iconic category [105]. Early commentators such as Schmarsow, Semper, Schottmüller, and Justi dwelt on the work's psychological content, speculating on whether Judith is hesitating before delivering the fatal blow, and questioning whether she is repelled by or throwing herself into her bloody task [106]. Issues such as these, however, were dismissed as of no significance by scholars like Kauffmann, who denied the work any real narrative significance, even going so far as to maintain that the gash in Holofernes's neck is nothing but a casting flaw [107]. Though Janson preferred to see the slash as a seam separating two pieces of the bronze, he concurred with Kauffmann's view that the work is essentially non-narrative [108]. He presumed that the opening in the Assyrian's throat was left either because Donatello thought it could not be seen (unlikely given its multi-facial character), or because after the fact he liked the suggestion of a partially severed neck; regardless, Janson denied it any place in the original design of the group, and regarded Judith's gesture of raising the sword as no more than ritual in nature. He also spoke of the rigid and static quality of Judith, conceding that it gives her an awesome solemnity, but also finding in it evidence that Donatello did not conceive of the statue as representing any
specific moment of action: a feeling that was intensified by Janson's observation that Judith does not look directly at Holofernes, and his opinion that the sword is not aimed at his neck. Given the absence of overt narrative action and of any real psychological connection between the two, Janson saw the Judith as purely symbolic, an iconic representation of the idea of the triumph of Sanctimonia-Continentia-Humilitas over Luxuria-Superbia [109], rather than a depiction of a dramatic action.

Most recent commentators have tended to appreciate the narrative implications of Judith Beheading Holofernes more fully. These scholars reject the notion that the gash in Holofernes's neck is an accident that either could not be or was not repaired, seeing it instead as a feature of the work intentionally placed so that the action could be established as falling between Judith's two swings of the sword. John Pope-Hennessy considered the choice of a dramatic moment represented in progress as an essential element of the realism of the work, without which the validity of the whole scene would have been compromised [110]. In his view, Judith is brandishing the sword actively, preparing to bring it down on the Assyrian's neck for the second time. She does this not merely because of the demands of the narrative, but also because, thinking naturalistically about the event, Donatello felt it a matter of fact that a woman could not sever a man's head at a single blow [111]. Thus, Pope-Hennessy saw the work as a dynamic and realistic rendering of a sequence of action near its climax, with the implication that Judith should be understood as a figure more of less in motion who, having completed a certain range of
movements up to this point, is clearly destined by the form of the work to carry through additional actions to finish the chain.

Pope-Hennessy's opinion that Judith is in motion represents the extreme among those viewing Judith Beheading Holofernes as essentially narrative in thrust. Other commentator's tend to consider Judith's movement as either arrested or transitional, and often blend elements of Janson's and Pope-Hennessy's visions, seeing in the sculpture a melding of iconic and narrative elements, with the emphasis falling on the narrative side. Joachim Poeschke, for example, saw Judith's gestures not as free and active but as labored, angular, and mechanical; noting that she seems to cling to Holofernes for support, he asserted that this was Donatello's way of establishing that Judith is not acting out of her own inner strength, but rather is the tool of a higher will acting through her [112]. In his view, Judith gazes directly at Holofernes, but looks through him, caught up in her thoughts, so that God is both her guide and, truly, the actor in the event: characteristics of the work that enhance the sense of Judith as an image of Humility [113]. Nonetheless, for Poeschke there is nothing ritual or symbolic about Judith's actions; she is engaged in severing Holofernes's head.

Bennett and Wilkins, on the other hand, agreed that the action represented in the sculpture is that between two blows of the scimitar, and went further by positing that Judith's standing on Holofernes was a realistic element, designed to keep Holofernes from moving and to help brace him against the cutting of the sword [114].
Curiously, however, while they saw the sculpture as revelatory of an action, they denied it represented any particular moment, rather agreeing with Janson that Judith's gesture is ritual, frozen, and immobile [115]. They disagreed with Janson, however, on the import of this ritual or immobilized quality, for they saw it as psychological, not symbolic in nature; i.e., in their view Judith is depicted as pausing while she realizes the implications of her action [116]. The issue here may be more one of an imprecise use of language on the part of Bennett and Wilkins than of any real attempt to assert that the statue synthesizes narrative and iconic in its form. If Judith's pause is to be understood as psychological in nature, and not an iconic freezing that transforms her fully into a symbol of some virtue battling a vice, then this caesura can be considered a part of the narrative event, motivated by a naturalistic impulse on the part of the artist to bring the psychology of the heroine realistically into play. If this is the case, then despite their use of such problematic words as "ritual," Bennett and Wilkins's view of the mode of the work would probably have to be described as essentially narrative, with an admixture of the iconic.

Martha Fader also saw narrative implications in the sculpture's form, though in a quite different sense from other recent scholars. Throughout her discussion, Fader evinces a strong desire to distance herself from interpretations connected to the emblematic tradition of the psychomachia, such as those of Wind and Janson [117]. Her anxiety to show that the work is focussed exclusively on the public behavior of rulers, and is bereft of content treating personal or private
morality, is so great that she denies Judith almost all aspects of the
iconic: the mode in which the psychomachia was usually expressed [118].
Instead, she argues that the Biblical narrative forms the heart of
Donatello’s depiction, explaining the manner in which Judith came to
be in her current posture, but, oddly, not controlling the course of
future events the sculpture’s form seems to imply.

Fader’s analysis of the work’s narrative import requires reading
it in a very particular way. In her view, the action in Judith
Reheading Holofernes is arrested and incomplete [119]. She feels that
Donatello did not mean to create a sense of continuing action in the
sculpture, an understanding that while Judith is temporarily pausing,
she will shortly complete the decapitation. Rather, the viewer is to
understand that the implied action of a preceding narrative sequence
has been halted, and that Judith’s posture has become a static state
which will be maintained indefinitely.

In Fader’s reading, the gash in Holofernes’s neck and the
elevation of the sword make it clear that a prior action has taken
place. Because the gash in Holofernes’s neck reminds the viewer of
the first slash, and the elevation of the sword implies a potential
second, Judith’s posture is the result of a narrative sequence.
However, in her view at this point Judith has stopped the process of
decapitation, freezing into this position. Because the second stroke
is not actually being delivered, Fader asserts that the action should
be understood as arrested, frozen, without the implication that
Judith will strike again. Rather, she assumes a static position and a
new role: that of guardian, not assassin.
Consequently, the action of executing Holofernes is transformed into a static state of vigilance. Judith has not yet killed Holofernes by swinging the sword a second time, and will not do so; the triumph will not be consummated [120]. Fader strongly stresses the fact that Holofernes's head has not yet been removed from his body, and that the scimitar is only elevated over Judith's head, not being swung, leaving the events in medias res [121]. She further emphasizes the absence of the celebratory in Judith's demeanor, arguing that the combination of these elements leaves the final victory of the heroine in doubt, and removes the viewer's focus from the act of the decapitation onto the protagonists themselves [122]. Since Judith has not yet killed Holofernes, she has not completed her victory over evil, but is standing guard against it as a continuing danger. The sculpture is thus an image of guardianship or continuing vigilance, rather than one of triumph [123].

Fader's interpretation of the sculpture is conditioned by her sense of the sculpture as a static image, no longer bound to a continuing sequence of action. Again, the point she feels the work was meant to express is that the pride of a ruler can lead him to excess and tyranny, and that the remedy for this is for him to humble himself before the rule of justice and law [124]. To do so, he must remain eternally vigilant against pride and other vices to which he might be prey. As can be seen, her view of the meaning is more complex than the simple victory of virtue over vice, encompassing the additional notion of the necessity for being on guard against evil, while modifying the traditional concept of the psychomachia to state
that evil in a sense cannot be defeated, only contained. The transformation of the action into a state of constant vigil becomes the vehicle through which the necessity of remaining on guard against vice is expressed. As a consequence, rather than being an evocation of vigorous narrative action, the sculpture is a frozen, iconic portrait of the heroine and her victim. In effect, Judith and Holofernes are transformed into emblems rather than being actors in a drama: she of vigilance against evil, he of the vice that must be eschewed. Though Fader resists the notion that the psychomachia's triumph of virtue over vice, all she has really done is substitute the notion of vigilance for victory. The figures are no less representations of abstract concepts than in the traditional psychomachia [125], though they are set within an identifiable narrative, rather than being unidentified except as principles. Thus, though Fader describes the work as narrative, the visual effect of her putative transformation and the meaning expressed through it is to pull the work into the iconic realm. There is no real, continuous flow of action, as narrative requires, but rather a depiction of a static, even symbolic state. Fader's view leaves the work a narrative residue, but the sculpture is perceptually iconic as she sees it, despite her resistance to employing the vocabulary of or acknowledging its similarities to the psychomachia of the late Middle Ages.

Though Fader is accurate in perceiving a blend of narrative and iconic in the work (even if, again, she does not formally acknowledge the presence of the latter), there are nonetheless a number of significant problems in her view of the piece; and, because her
interpretation of its meaning requires that her sense of this transformation of action into static state be correct, it is important to discuss these weaknesses. Most devolve onto a single point: that while her explanation often has a certain logic, in almost every instance there is an equally or more reasonable alternative.

For example, Fader credits the lack of a sense of celebration to Donatello's desire to shift the work expressively from triumph to vigilance [126]. However, other factors can account for this phenomenon. Fader is correct when she says that the sculpture's action, the process of the beheading, is incomplete. But it is difficult to see how she can maintain that the outcome is uncertain. The gash in Holofernes's neck is so deep that if it has not already killed him, it certainly shortly will. He is no longer a threat to Judith, a potentially potent evil she must guard against. Even a viewer unfamiliar with the conclusion of the story would understand that a fatal blow had been struck from the location and depth of the gash: and perhaps also from the angle of his head, which suggests that his neck might have been broken by her first strike [127]. However, while the conclusion of the story is clearly implied by the slash and Judith's elevating the sword to strike again, for Judith this action is still in progress. She must remove the head to carry out her plan, and consequently she has not completed her action. Thus, there is no cause for her to celebrate; her victory is assured, but there remain several actions necessary to bring it to fruition. The absence of this quality in the sculpture need not be explained by a transformative moment or uncertainly in the outcome. In a strictly
narrative sense it is a result of the moment Donatello selected for presentation, and need be indicative of nothing more.

However, there may be an additional reason for the absence of the celebratory. One of the curious features of Fader's discussion is that at no point does she consider the psychological response of Judith to the events. Beyond stating that a sense of Judith's tragic dignity is generated [128], she eschews all consideration of emotional states or psychological engagement on the part of either Judith or the viewer. It is as if her understanding of Judith as an emblem of vigilance has stripped the heroine of her inner life (a trait which, if true, would further pull the work toward the iconic). But Donatello's sense of and skill in representing human psychology, and the individual's response to the events in which he or she is engaged, is one of the great glories of his art, and an interest that is not neglected in Judith Beheading Holofernes. A subtle display of mixed emotions plays across Judith's face, indicative of Donatello's understanding of her probable feelings in this difficult circumstance: one which will give her people cause for exultation, but which is accomplished at a great emotional and moral cost to her. For Donatello's Judith, the awful gravity of shedding Holofernes's blood, and soiling herself with his murder, however justifiable, makes the very concept of celebration almost inconceivable. The grim determination of her expression makes it clear that she will carry through to the end this assassination for the sake of her people, but it is balanced by a sense of pain at the consequences of her endeavor so great that it seems to have interrupted the action, causing her to
pause; or such, at least is one way of interpreting her abstraction, for she is sunk inside herself in thought, unaware of the immediate surroundings. Nonetheless, her face is not expressionless; it is filled with interior life. Consequently, the absence of celebration can also be explained as reflective of Judith's emotional state. Others may rejoice at what she has done, but she does not. Thus, both because of the nature of the moment chosen by Donatello, and his sense of Judith's very human psychological, emotional, and spiritual reactions to this even, any celebratory tone in the sculpture would have been out of key.

Another difficulty is that Fader maintains that Judith is on vigil. While her elevated sword, viewed as a generalized expression of readiness in defense, might connote such a state, Fader's argument is considerably vitiated by the fact that Judith is not vigilant. She looks neither at Holofernes nor out toward some other threat. Rather, she is abstracted, sunk in her own thoughts, paying little attention at this moment to the events at hand. In a narrative context, this self-absorption can be understood as her reaction to what she has just done, and hence as causally connected to the preceding narrative; in an iconic one, it might be viewed as an absence of that interior life that makes a figure capable of participating in a narrative action. But in no case can it be maintained that Judith is alert or vigilant against present or future evil or danger. Insofar as an emblem of vigilance ought to convey at least a sense of alertness, that Judith is in an emotional state so opposed to this one severely undercuts the notion that she should be understood as on guard against a potential
threat, even if that danger is purely moral.

Fader's assertion that Judith's slightly attenuated body further creates the sense of vigil is also problematic [129]. She seems to imply that Judith's slenderness connotes a weakness that should be understood as signalling that she cannot complete her triumph by removing the head, and hence can only stand guard against the vice Holofernes represents. This view is highly idiosyncratic, and one which no other scholar endorses. The sword is not so large that Judith is having difficulty raising and wielding it, and even if she must strike Holofernes's neck repeatedly to remove his head, Donatello provides no visual reason why she cannot do so. There is no suggestion in either the narrative or the sculpture that Judith is not sufficiently strong to accomplish the decapitation, and for Fader to imply that this is so stretches credulity.

The largest problems for Fader's understanding of the sculpture revolve around Donatello's faithfulness to the narrative, the potential presence of implied action, and the perceptions and expectations of the work's initial audience when confronted with the story of Judith. Donatello's depiction is, within the limitations of free-standing sculpture, quite faithful to the Biblical text. The pillow and putative column could function as allusions to the bedroom, creating the setting for the action. The narrative specifically states that Judith struck Holofernes's neck once while he slept drunkenly, then pulled back her sword and struck again. All of this is manifest in the sculpture, including an allusion to his inebriation in the reliefs below the figure group. Given Donatello's
faithfulness to the narrative, and the likelihood that his original audience would have known the story of Judith, it seems more likely that they would have understood Judith's gesture as implying the well-known conclusion to the tale, i.e., that she is about to remove his head, than that they would have seen her posture as representing a sudden transformation into a permanent pose expressive of a meaning never before associated with Judith's story. True, Judith is pausing, so that the action has temporarily ceased. She may be contemplating the emotional and moral consequences of her deed; she may be planning how best to proceed with the decapitation. As Poetschke pointed out, her pose is stiff and angular, and does not suggest that an immediate fluid motion, such as swinging the sword, is about to take place in the next moment [130]. Indeed, Judith could scarcely sever Holofernes's head without some further adjustment in her posture, since a blow struck directly at his neck in their current positions would result in her cutting into her own thigh: a realistic element of the narrative Donatello is unlikely to have overlooked if he meant to convey the sense that the next blow is imminent. However, as has been mentioned, there are good reasons for the artist to impose a pause at this juncture without necessarily meaning to imply that the second stroke would never come. The psychological reality it lends to Judith is one such reason. A second is that this enforced pause does in fact help to generate a sense of an emblem, serving an iconic structure that, as will be seen, Donatello seems to have intended to reside in the sculpture alongside the narrative. The problem with Pader's theory is not her understanding that Judith is pausing; it is in reading that
pause as a permanent, rather than a temporary arresting of the action, and seeing it as abstracting from, rather than continuing the narrative development. In fact, it does both, as will be seen: but not as a means of generating a feeling of vigilance and incompleted action. The completion of the action is manifest in the form of the sculpture, even if its conclusion is not immediately at hand, and it is likely that its original audience, conditioned by the narrative, would have understood this.

Finally, Fader's reading of the action as arrested in perpetuity, so that Judith will not complete her triumph, raises some questions as to whether such a meaning could have been understood by the initial audience. There are no visual clues that tell the viewer that Judith's pause is an eternal one, and nothing which indicates how long her pose has been held, or will be held; i.e., there is nothing in the sculptural form that makes Fader's reading inevitable, and since it is an unusual manner of understanding either the narrative or the implications of Judith's posture, nothing really guides its audience unequivocally to her conclusion. Every element she points to as affirming her interpretation can be readily and reasonably understood in a different and contradictory way. But if a viewer saw the work in the same way as she, a problem would still exist where its meaning is concerned, at least for its original audience. If Judith cannot complete her triumph over Holofernes, that means that she cannot defeat the evil the Assyrian represents. It is as if, for Fader, the point of the work is not that evil will inevitably be defeated, but that it cannot be defeated, and thus that one must be eternally
vigilant against it.

Such a meaning is not inconsistent with the general beliefs of Christianity [131], but to deduce it from the story of Judith and Holofernes is truly problematic. In Christian contexts, Judith's story had always been interpreted as expressing the victory of good over evil, or virtue over vice. To use this tale to make the point that evil cannot be defeated would have been an innovation so radical it is questionable whether such a meaning could have occurred to a fifteenth century viewer, even in such a limited realm as Fader describes (the behavior of a ruler). Only if Donatello had done something to eliminate the possibility of seeing the work otherwise might this meaning have been established without inscription. This he did not do; in fact, both the form of the work, with Judith standing atop Holofernes, and the inscriptions allude directly to victory. Consequently, Fader's interpretation of the implications of this moment in the sculpture is inconsistent with the visual clues to meaning given by Donatello, and the way his audience is likely to have perceived it.

In the end, neither the narrative nor the form of the sculpture support a reading in which Judith is seen as a figure of vigilance or guardianship. She is an active agent in a drama, depicted in a pause in that story. She attacks and defeats evil, rather than passively guarding against it, and thus the significance of her pose and the choice of narrative moment must be sought elsewhere.

Whether Judith Beheading Holofernes is essentially dramatic or iconic in its mode is of some importance to its meaning, as Fader's
position makes clear. Nonetheless, it is not an easy issue to resolve, if only because perceptions of the work are so individual that such eminent scholars and Janson and Pope-Hennessy can be in complete disagreement on this point. The difficulty lies in part in the fact that the very subjective eyes of diverse beholders of the sculpture, attempting to assess the potential for motion in an unmoving object, ultimately determine how they will classify it. Thus, one commentator will see Judith's posture as implying full, active, and continuing motion; a second will see movement as temporarily stilled, or in transition, while a third will see her as frozen and immobile, in a symbolic pose which essentially becomes an attribute of her iconography. Many of the scholars arguing for the non-narrative mode also favored a meaning reflective in some measure of the psychomachia, whose Medieval form was generally, though not exclusively, iconic. It is possible that those who favored symbolic meanings for the piece discounted its narrative implications because they were conditioned to associate the psychomachia with the iconic mode, and were perhaps uncomfortable with the notion that Donatello might have chosen to transform this figurative battle into an essentially realistic and dramatic one. Several elements in the work recall the appearance of the symbolic Judith as it exists in the manuscript tradition, both in initials and in typological works where she demonstrates the victory of some virtue over an affiliated vice, and these may have predisposed scholars who strongly associated the psychomachia with iconic representation to overlook narrative potential in Judith Beheading Holofernes. The rigidity of Judith's
posture, in which the implications of motion can reasonably be overlooked; the fact that she holds the sword seemingly motionless above her head rather than swinging it through his neck; the minimal setting; and her standing directly on top of Holofernes are the most important of these characteristics [132]. For other scholars, however, the narrative implications of the piece have been considerably the stronger: so much so that the same elements interpreted by some commentators as iconic are viewed by others as strongly narrative in character.

In the final analysis, the issue of narrative or iconic dominance may be insoluble on purely visual grounds. However, given the split among eminent commentators on this issue, it is possible that this difference of opinion is not so much indicative of simple ambiguity with respect to Donatello's choice of modes, but rather reflects a duality present in the form of the sculpture itself. Donatello may have embraced each of the modes in a fully developed form, and brought them together in a single work as a means of enriching the piece's significance through intentional ambiguities and the potential for double readings of single elements, and multiple meanings accessed most readily through one or the other of the two modes.

Before considering how very strong iconic and narrative presences might exist simultaneously in Judith Beheading Holofernes, the exclusive perception of one or the other of which could have led scholars to the extreme positions occupied by Pope-Hennessy and Janson, it will be fruitful to make a few observations about the two modes. As has been mentioned, pure narrative and iconic pieces are
rare; most representational works include a mix of elements that are associated primarily with one or the other of the types. When attempting to determine the mode of a particular work, one must assess each of its elements in terms of its own narrative or iconic potential or presence, and also examine them in relation to the other elements of the work. In most cases, a preponderance of characteristics will be essentially narrative or iconic in their impact, and this fact will allow the viewer to place the work in its proper category. In practice, an exhaustive analysis is rarely necessary; most works have a presence in one of the modes sufficiently strong that the viewer need only intuit what type of painting or sculpture the piece is, and very often the question of mode is of no real significance for an understanding of the object. However, in some instances in which the mode is relevant to the import of the work, the threshold between the modes can be uncertain, and careful analysis is required.

Insofar as a total context will be developed in most works that allows them to be seen with reasonable clarity as either iconic or narrative, viewers ordinarily have some guidance in comprehending the potential function and meaning of each object or characteristic present, even if that element is serving a dual purpose: for example, as both a symbol and a realistic part of the piece's setting [133]. Only rarely will a work of art include so many and such fully developed and strongly stated elements associated simultaneously with each mode that it can, or almost must, be seen as both narrative and iconic at the same time, particularly when the array of objects, figures, poses, and other critical items is so limited that each must
serve two functions, existing simultaneously in both modes. Nonetheless, a careful analysis of Judith Beheading Holofernes reveals that many of its parts can very reasonably be seen as either iconic or narrative in their implications, and could exist comfortably in their present forms in either of the modes. One of the more interesting characteristics of this particular sculpture is that there are such fully realized narrative and iconic systems existing simultaneously in the form of the work that the viewer is encouraged to feel both its dramatic and symbolic potentials with approximately equal strength. As a result, any given feature can be understood as part of a basically iconic or a basically narrative statement on Donatello's part, depending on how the viewer interprets other portions of the work to which he relates it, or the individual commentator's predilections for seeing the overall dramatic or symbolic potential as greater. Thus, in Judith Beheading Holofernes two highly developed and internally coherent systems, one iconic and one dramatic, exist simultaneously, and it is only on the strength of a couple of elements that the final mode of this sculpture tilts, in my opinion, slightly toward the narrative.

Among the elements of Judith Beheading Holofernes that have a kind of double life, Judith's psychological state, her pose, her position on top of the Assyrian, and the pillow on which he sits most clearly indicate how this duality functions, demonstrating how the possible readings of each feature exist side by side in a rich and complementary manner. The balance between the two modes with respect to these elements is delicate; the way in which a viewer perceives
very fine details of the work, and his familiarity with the
conventions of visual traditions such as the psychomachia, will be of
crucial importance in whether he understands the Judith as primarily
narrative, primarily iconic, or simultaneously both. For example,
there is a legitimate dispute as to the quality and degree of Judith’s
psychological engagement in the action depicted [134]. She does not
look directly at Holofernes, and her eyes have an unfocussed appearance
that suggests that at this moment she is not placing her attention on
him or the act of severing his head. Her face and body convey
neither intense emotion nor the strenuous effort required for wielding
a sword; instead, her body is still, and her feelings seem subtle and
internally centered, rather than directed out toward Holofernes or
what she is doing. It is as if her mind is elsewhere. It is
important to note that it is not legitimate to see Judith as
psychologically dead or void of internal life. There is a quiet but
strong expression on her face that speaks eloquently of thoughts and
feelings running through her; and though her eyes are not focussed on
any specific object, nonetheless there is a powerful if inwardly
turned concentration in them that makes her psyche vividly alive.
Moreover, while the balance in her posture and absence of any
indicators of vigorous activity create the impression that her body is
calm and motionless, a subtle bend in her torso, a slight twisting at
her waist, and the placement of the sword all bespeak a potential for
movement that makes it difficult to see her as frozen eternally in
this position; her pose has a definite feeling of the temporary, and
she is better seen as pausing than settled into this attitude. Thus,
any consideration of *Judith Beheading Holofernes* really must proceed from the premise that Judith is not a mere abstract symbol of victory or metaphor of triumph, a static being void of emotion, movement, or life. Rather, she must be accounted a human being with thoughts and feelings, even if she is understood also as removed from the cause and effect sequences and specific locales of narrative to a non-specific iconic realm.

One possible view of the implications of Judith's pose and expression is to see in her seeming stillness and abstracted mood the kind of self-absorbed psychological state typical of many works in the iconic mode. A number of scholars, for example, have seen Judith's pose as implying activity that is essentially ritual re-enactment [135], and Judith herself as psychically divorced from the decapitation of Holofernes, and their position is not unreasonable. Under such an interpretation, Donatello did not actually represent an assassination taking place in the Assyrian's tent. Rather, he depicted either a symbolic or ritual recreation of the defining moments of Judith's life in a non-specific place and time, or the heroine's assumption of a pose expressing her triumph over Holofernes in a similarly unspecified setting. Viewed in this way, Judith's facial expression and gestures cannot be seen as conditioned specifically by a beheading taking place at the present moment in the general's bed; no such event is occurring, only a ritual re-enactment or symbolic statement of it. If a spectator so interprets the apparent action of the sculpture, then he must understand Judith's emotions either as the result of memory, a reliving of the feelings and thoughts of the original event, or as
"typical," i.e., as representing Judith's general character or normal internal disposition, but not as derived directly from her participation in the assassination or her memory of it. In other words, her facial expression is simply a product of who she is, and not a result of what she is doing. Of the two possibilities, the notion that she is remembering is probably to be preferred: in part because her emotions appear so mixed, and typical emotion tends to be general, simple, and not particularly subtle; and in part because the act of recalling the event can be seen at least partially as an explanation for her psychological abstraction from Holofernes's body and the sword she seems to be about to swing. Her gestures could then be seen as either an imitation of the execution she is recalling, or a posture temporarily assumed as a sign of her victory, which she will perhaps shortly abandon to assume a new position.

It is interesting to note that if Judith is understood as in the act of remembering, and her gestures are seen as either arising from or provoking it, then a certain element of causality has been introduced into the sculpture. The work could still be considered essentially iconic in mode; however, in this reading of the piece it would not be placed as far along the spectrum toward symbolic expression as would be the case if her emotions were understood purely as typical or general. If such were the situation, even a limited sense of narrative causality would be destroyed. Regardless, however, of how Judith's expression is interpreted, under the assumptions present in the purely iconic view of the sculpture it cannot be understood as arising from the action of assassinating Holofernes, because that
action is not actually taking place. It is only being enacted
ritually or symbolically in a non-narrative context, and in an
abstract place and time.

The iconic vision of Judith Beheading Holofernes is a credible
way of interpreting Judith's pose and expression because it can
successfully explain the form which they take in the sculpture. The
absence of a definite reference to a setting for the action permits
the viewer to see it as taking place in a non-specific location: in
heaven or on earth, in a purely symbolic or spiritual realm, or even
nowhere in particular. Judith does not look at Holofernes or focus
her attention on what she is doing because she does not need to; she
is not really engaged in the act of severing the Assyrian's head, only
reliving the experience or recreating the gestures of the
decapitation. At best, any thoughts or feelings recorded on her face
are being evoked by memory, and even this reading is unnecessary for
the work to succeed as an iconic statement; in fact, if the artist
wished to stress the symbolic nature of the event, it would probably
be advantageous to minimize the sense that she is reliving or
recreating her past, to abstract her even more toward an existence as
a purely symbolic presence. But mere symbols do not think or feel,
and Judith appears to be doing both in Donatello's sculpture. Hence,
in an iconic view of the work it is probably best to think that the
quality of self-absorbed abstraction in the figure is the product of a
lapse into memory that takes her focus away from her gestures, the
person at her feet, and the objects around her. Thus, she is detached
spatially and temporally from the original execution, her attention
centered deep within herself as she recollects her triumph and re-enacts it in a ritual or symbolic fashion. Instead of interacting with Holofernes in a dramatic event, in this interpretation of the implications of her expression and attitude Judith co-exists with him in a metaphor beyond time, space, or real, present-tense action. Therefore, in this view, Judith is really the object of a holy portrait: an emblem of triumph surrounded by the reminders of her victory, rather than a person actively striving to accomplish it. In the end, the events depicted take on less the quality of immediate and original action than of symbolic re-enactment in a kind of timeless iconic void, with the pose, sword, and even Holofernes himself reduced to attributes of Judith, identifying her and perhaps participating in a metaphorical statement represented by her triumph: the recipe for a work in the non-narrative mode.

There is, however, another way of interpreting Judith's pose and expression, one that allows them to be understood as elements in a narrative representation. Judith's subtle feelings and seeming abstraction can be seen as arising from the events implied, and as indicative of Judith's psychic and spiritual responses to the awful act she is committing. As has been mentioned, Judith's killing of Holofernes places her in a state of ritual impurity, a heavy burden for an observant Jew such as she. She is also engaged in taking a human life for the first time, and regardless of the righteous necessity of her cause, this is not an act without a certain psychological impact. As sensitive an observer of the human psyche as Donatello is likely to have realized this, and perhaps chose to give
the work an emotional reality greater than that present in simple images of triumphant action by showing how the event affects Judith, and by making the power of her realization of the implications of her action all the more clear by showing that realization as interrupting the assassination. In this interpretation of the sculpture's form, Judith must be understood to be performing a real action in the present tense in a particular time and place; i.e., she is killing the drunken Assyrian commander in his bed late at night. The reliefs help to establish Holofernes's inebriation, as does the lassitude of his body. The pillow on which he sits suggests the location, and Judith's gestures can be understood as signifying that a beheading is occurring. Thus, her desire to save her people has brought Judith to the point of executing Holofernes; however, having begun the decapitation, the first blow of the sword has caused thoughts and feelings to arise in her which lead her to pause before delivering the second. Rather than being seen as generalized or cooled by memory, her emotions can be viewed as actuated by the thoughts this action has provoked, ideas which distract her from immediately completing her task. She is in no sense a symbolic abstraction, only a person who is momentarily abstracted, contemplating the implications of this killing.

Seen in this light, Judith's expression and contemplative demeanor arise directly from her prior actions, and hence are causally related to them. As a result, Judith's psychological state must be seen as part of the dramatic stream of cause and effect, pushing the work strongly into the narrative mode. Similarly, the implications of
motion latent in her pose should be viewed as indicating that her abstraction is temporary, and that her thoughts and feelings will be resolved into a determination to complete the execution of Holofernes, leading her to bringing the sword down onto his neck for a second time. Thus, in this view, her emotional expression and contemplative mood are derived from and conditioned by the narrative moment, so that in fact she is psychologically engaged in the course of the events, even if the activity's effect on her has caused her to temporarily pause to meditate on its import, and therefore shifted her attention from Holofernes and the act of decapitating him to her own thoughts.

An analysis of Judith's expression and psychologically abstracted demeanor, the quality and degree of her engagement in or detachment from the action implied by the sculpture, can thus be seen in two distinct ways. In one case, Judith's emotional state is seen as either typical and general, not derived from the action of the piece; or, alternatively, as the product of a memory of the assassination which is caused by or motivating its ritual re-enactment. On the other hand, Judith's gaze and expression, her inward concentration, can be seen as her response to unfolding events. The important point is that both views can be accommodated by the form of this part of the sculpture; neither is necessarily right or wrong, each is reasonable and can be substantiated on the basis of the visual evidence. Of course, Judith's expression does not exist in isolation; it is only one feature of the sculpture. But, as will be seen, many other elements are similarly double-edged, and the fact that her psychological state can be interpreted in two separate, but not mutually exclusive ways
introduces the possibility that dual modes might exist simultaneously in this work.

One further issue should be addressed briefly during a consideration of Judith's contemplative attitude in this sculpture: its intended effect on a viewer. Had Donatello shown Judith in vigorous action, the work would have had overwhelmingly strong narrative implications, and the viewer's response would almost certainly have been primarily to the story's dramatic sweep. Such a sculpture of Judith decapitating Holofernes would probably have directed a viewer's attention less toward symbolic statements and more toward a significance derived closely and directly from the action represented: the fate of tyrants, for example. On the other hand, it is possible that the meditative quality of Judith in Donatello's work was designed to guide the viewer's response to the piece, to induce in him a similar kind of contemplative mood that might open the way either for more subtle or complex symbolic meanings, or the kind of multiple layers of meaning that require long consideration for a full realization of their presence and significance. The implications of the completed action in Judith Beheading Holofernes are clear enough that meanings likely to be obvious in more vigorously active compositions could still be encompassed by this form. However, Judith's contemplative demeanor, if accepted as a guide by a viewer, could lead him on to wider realms of meaning than might otherwise be accessible; and, given the indications of a complex symbolic language in this work, it is at least possible that part of Donatello's intent in showing Judith in this attitude was to lead the viewer into a
Similarly meditative state.

Judith's bodily posture should now be considered. The presence of or potential for movement are of considerable importance in a discussion of the respective narrative and iconic readings of the piece. If Judith is perceived as standing motionless in a frozen pose that carries no suggestion of continuing or impending action, the iconic quality of the sculpture is likely to be understood as dominant [136]. This is in fact the character the work assumes when seen directly from the front. Viewed at this angle, Judith's body appears balanced, rigorously upright, and settled. There are no obvious tilts or strong twists in her figure, no stresses that imply further motion is necessary, or even likely. While she holds the sword above her head, Judith seems to maintain it so comfortably in its elevated position that there is no sense that she must lower it. It is as if a sequence of physical activity has come to an end, and that she has adopted a position which she could hold indefinitely, and perhaps intends to: qualities that accord well with iconic presentation. Moreover, insofar as the upraised scimitar can carry connotations of triumph, from the front it is reasonable to see Judith's pose as a symbol of accomplished victory. Purely as an emblem of conquest, though, the sculpture is not particularly successful; no sense of exultation is conveyed either in Judith's face or body, and the sword is not raised high above her head in joyful celebration. Ghiberti's figurine from the Gates of Paradise is a far more effective symbol of victory, both because Judith visibly glories in her triumph, and because the scimitar is raised so high above her that there can be no
doubt that she is displaying it proudly after having dispatched her enemy. Still, in the frontal view of Donatello's work it is certainly possible to interpret the position of the sword as permanently static, and its elevation as a token of the defeat of Holofernes. As a consequence, from this angle at least the sculpture can take on the quality of an emblem, particularly if the viewer is predisposed to see it in that way, a fact which further confirms its potential existence in the iconic realm.

However, as the reliefs on the base make clear, Donatello's work was meant to be experienced from at least three angles, and the back and side views imply motion much more strongly than the frontal one, pulling it toward the narrative mode. Particularly from Judith's right side, a strong sense is generated that at any moment she could swing the sword. If the scimitar is not in a position that really connotes exultation in victory, it very clearly is situated in a manner that suggests it has been pulled back with the potential to be swung again, and the intention of doing so. Rather than being held high above Judith's head, as in Ghiberti's figure, the blade is just behind her head, angled slightly up in a position of readiness. Her arm is bent at the elbow and tilted forward, and her shoulder is pulled back a little beyond parallel to her torso, creating a stress or imbalance in her body that she likely will resolve by swinging her arm, and the sword, down in the direction of Holofernes. Combined with the twist at her waist, Judith's position clearly implies that she has pulled the weapon back and swivelled to deliver another blow, but that she has paused before doing so: perhaps to brace herself and her
victim for the final stroke, perhaps to reflect on what she has done, and what she is about to do.

The position of the sword and Judith's posture imply the kind of continuing action that is generally part of dramatic representation. Views from her back and left sides reinforce the sense of impending motion, revealing a slight forward bend in her upper body and a more pronounced tilt to her head, suggesting she is bending to gain greater control of his body, or leverage for delivering the final blow. Thus, from the other sides of the sculpture, the implications both of motion and of a continuation of the activity established by the gash in Holofernes's throat, itself invisible from the front, suggest the kind of sequential action that is part of the narrative mode. From these other viewing points, Judith's pose is not the upright, balanced, rigid or frozen posture of a symbol of victory, but the attitude of a figure who is still trying to accomplish it.

Consequently, while a frontal view of this sculpture tends to reinforce its iconic character, moving around it pulls it back toward the narrative category. Given the power of the frontal viewpoint, from which the heroine's face is most clearly seen, and the compromise celebration and an active wielding of the sword suggested by its position relative to the diverse viewing points, there really is a balance between narrative and iconic here. There is a human tendency to be more interested in the faces and feelings of other people than in almost anything else, and this helps to make the frontal the primary view of the sculpture. This is also the position in which the subtle stresses and imbalances in the work resolve themselves, and is
thus the point at which a viewer is likely to feel most comfortable contemplating the sculpture for a prolonged time. From this primary view, it is reasonable to see Judith as fully static, and to interpret Holofernes and the sword as identifying attributes, not narrative elements. Only from subsidiary (but required) viewing points does the implied movement of the narrative sequence strongly emerge, re-establishing dramatic causality and the presence of the narrative mode. From these positions, it becomes obvious that Judith still must act on Holofernes with the scimitar if she is to achieve her goal, and the implications that she will do so are clear. In the final analysis, the sense of latent motion generated from the side angles, and the necessity of finally removing the head to resolve the story, should probably be considered decisive, since the sculpture requires these views and this action for a full apprehension of its significance. But it requires careful and considered viewing to perceive this, and the iconic presence of the frontal view is so strong that the two modes are very nearly equal in force. In fact, for a viewer who chose to contemplate the sculpture only from this angle, the iconic expression might well become the dominant one [137].

Judith's position standing on top of Holofernes, and the potential significance of the pillow on which he sits, are the final two elements that can be seen as manifesting each mode simultaneously. From the standpoint of pure narrative action, Judith's stance on the body of the Assyrian can be understood both as a means of controlling him should he regain consciousness, and as a way of bracing his head and torso to gain leverage for the decapitation [138]. There is a
tradition in both manuscripts and monumental paintings for Judith standing or kneeling on Holofernes's body as a means of accomplishing her aim, as can be seen in the illumination in the Bible from Parma (Vat. Lat. 4, fol. 120v; Plate 51), and in Guariento’s fresco from Padua (Plate 61); and as an element in the narrative action this posture makes a certain amount of sense. It is true that standing on top of his hand and thigh while swinging a sword is potentially awkward; however, balancing on top of a soft, flexible pillow would be only a little better, and Donatello really removed this concern from consideration by showing Judith firmly and stably planted on Holofernes. Given the absence of space in the form of the sculpture for Judith to take a stance free of the Assyrian, and the narrative logic of her need to control and brace him, a case can be made for seeing her posture as essentially realistic, rather than symbolic. Thus, an unsophisticated viewer of the work could reasonably consider Judith's position a purely dramatic device, and understand it simply as a narrative feature making clear how she carried out her plans, without any symbolic or allusive references being manifest in the pose.

On the other hand, the tradition of representing a Virtue standing in triumph on the body of a Vice had a long pedigree in depictions of the psychomachia by the Renaissance. There can be little doubt that as an artistic type the psychomachia was well-known to the educated classes of Renaissance Italy, both through copies of Prudentius's book, and through depictions of other spiritual battles in widely distributed volumes such as the Speculum Humanae Salvationis,
the Speculum Virginum, and the Biblia Pauperum. There are a number of scenes of the psychomachia in manuscripts, ivories, and other small forms in which Virtues are seen in active combat with Vices on more or less equal terms; however, by and large these images are early in date [139], and by the ninth century Virtues came to be depicted most often standing or kneeling on top of an antithetical evil [140]. In some representations, the battle has not yet reached its conclusion, and the Virtue is still attempting to dispatch its foe [141]. Far more commonly, however, the Virtue is shown as triumphant, standing atop her defeated enemy, whom she may or may not already have killed [142]. This latter image is generally iconic in character: frequently void of a setting, psychologically abstract, and with postures which, even when the Virtue is engaged in executing the Vice, have a stiff, posed, frozen quality that makes them seem more symbols of action that representations of it. These characteristics are certainly not true of every depiction of a psychomachia, but as a general rule they accurately describe the tradition, which was essentially non-narrative and symbolic.

Since Judith's position on Holofernes recalls the form of the psychomachia, and since her combat with him had a long history of analogical associations with diverse virtues and vices, it is reasonable to suppose that artistically informed viewers of the sculpture would have recalled the earlier tradition and seen Donatello's work in its reflected light. Indeed, when the form of the work is combined with the inscriptional allusions to Virtue, Vice, Pride, and Humility, and the presence of imagery associated
specifically with Superbia and Luxuria, it is difficult to see how any viewer familiar with the psychomachia could fail to appreciate meanings concerned with the battle of good and evil [143]. The specific way in which Judith is placed on Holofernes, the utility of her posture and the way in which she straddles him and her body is visually interwoven with his, is different from the typical form of psychomachia, in which the vice is ordinarily fully recumbent, and the virtue plants one or both feet on its torso, so that it forms a kind of pedestal for her posing. However, an artist as committed to innovation and naturalism as Donatello could be expected to modify the received form of the psychomachia as he conceived his work, perhaps even breaking with the (usually) iconic character of the type and recasting this spiritual battle in terms of a combat between two human beings in the context of a narrative. Donatello's allusion to the psychomachia is inescapable; and, appreciating an allusion as obvious as that in Judith Beheading Holofernes, and given an opportunity to see the work in the non-narrative style typical of that form, its initial audience might well have been ready to apprehend and respond strongly to the iconic elements present in the sculpture, even if their primary reaction was to its dramatic aspects. As has been seen, both Judith's pose and her expression and gestures can be interpreted in a way that places the work in the iconic mode, so that an informed spectator could begin to build a non-narrative version of the sculpture on at least one level of perception. In fact, so strong is this recollection of the psychomachia that, combined with other elements that could be interpreted as symbolic or iconic, it could have
prompted early viewers of the piece to overlook completely its
dramatic qualities, as a number of modern commentators have done.

Thus, depending on the predilections of the viewer, Judith
Beheading Holofernes could, on the basis of her position relative to
him, be seen as either essentially iconic or narrative, with elements
of the other mode taking a strongly secondary place. However, for a
careful spectator, an analysis of the position of Judith on top of
Holofernes could also reveal that it has in fact a dual nature,
dramatic and symbolic, accommodating expressions in both of the modes
simultaneously.

Similarly, the pillow on which Holofernes rests can be
interpreted as either a symbolic or narrative element; and, as with
Judith's position, pose, and expression, it in fact encompasses both
functions, and exists simultaneously and comfortably in both modes.
As Janson pointed out, pillows are an attribute of Luxuria [144].
Seen thus, it might promote an interpretation of the sculpture as a
psychomachia, alluding to the battle between Lust and Chastity,
especially when reinforced by the symbolic implications of her stance,
and a reading of other dualistic features of the work as non-
narrative. Such a reading of the cushion could therefore confirm
the tendencies of a viewer inclined to see the work as iconic.

On the other hand, the cushion on which Holofernes sits might be
seen exclusively as an indicator of setting, without any special
symbolic or allusive overtones. Fader, for example, felt that an
identification of the pillow with Luxuria was misleading unless it
were understood to represent the more inclusive sin of insensate
gluttony, in which capacity it could function as a means of establishing the source of Holofernes's loss of consciousness as overindulgence in drink [145]. Such a reading really brings the symbolic potential of the pillow into the narrative context of the piece, since it explains how the Assyrian came to be in this place and condition at this point in the dramatic action. Fader, however, considered even this allusion only marginally relevant, interpreting the cushion primarily as a literal reference to Holofernes's bed, while also appreciating its potential association with death [146].

Given the restrictions on size and complexity inherent in a free-standing sculpture designed for a palazzo garden, any attempt on Donatello's part to suggest a locale for the story could only have been limited. It would have been virtually impossible for him to represent a bed fully, or even to include enough of a couch on which Holofernes could sleep to generate a reasonably comprehensive setting. However, by placing a large pillow beneath Holofernes, Donatello was able to create an adequate sense of the specific location required in the story for a spectator to recollect that Judith killed Holofernes in his bed in his tent. Establishing this specific site is highly desirable if this moment in the story is to be understood by the viewer. Thus, Holofernes's pillow can also be seen as having a definite narrative function, contributing to the comprehensibility of the action by indicating the location in which it takes place, and shedding some light on the means by which Judith was able to achieve her goal of executing her enemy.
Superficially, the pillow's implications for the story's locus might seem inescapable; however, an analyst like Kaufmann or Janson dedicated to an interpretation of the piece that stressed its symbolic import might place the figures in a wholly non-specific, or even non-material realm, denying any associations with the temporal and spatial logic of an earth-bound narrative, thereby preserving the metaphorical clarity of the expression by eliminating present-tense action in a specific location. Thus, the interpreter could see the pillow (and other elements such as Holofernes and Judith themselves) as pure symbol: an emblem of Luxuria utterly divorced from historical or material existence, and void of any scene-setting. Conversely, an oppositely-biased spectator might understand the pillow as nothing more than a means of establishing the location where the action takes place. These use need not be seen as mutually exclusive, of course. A spectator could easily apprehend both possible meanings of the pillow, seeing it as symbol and setting in a narrative work, or an indicator of location and an emblematic device in an iconic one, or as each in a work accommodating both modes. Symbols commonly occur in narrative compositions, and iconic works often have settings. In the case of *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, the dual uses of the pillow can clearly function in a complementary manner, and each can be meaningfully invoked at the same time in almost any of the possible conceptions of this work, be they predominantly dramatic or symbolic, or equally both [147].

The form of the sculpture, then, is dualistic, with many of its elements inviting two (or even more) readings. The fact that Donatello
seems to have made two modes or systems of expression co-exist in the work suggests that he might have meant it to accommodate two different functions, two differing experiences, and perhaps two streams of meaning as well: one centered on the symbolic struggle of virtue and vice, and possibly reached most readily through the iconic mode; the other on a real conflict between two people in a historical narrative. This does not guarantee that an individual spectator will perceive the presence of each system operating in Judith Beheading Holofernes. The state of a viewer's prior knowledge can be crucial in what he is able to apprehend, and can open up or close off avenues of approach and significance present in the work. For example, if a spectator was familiar with the conventions of the psychomachia, he might see the form of the sculpture as embodying this spiritual struggle, and understand its meaning in terms of the victory of some kind of good over a corresponding evil, even if he experienced the work principally in terms of a narrative representation [148]. Such a realization need not exclude other potential meanings; the viewer might well also recognize content not derived from the psychomachia, and could even consider it primary. But this symbolic structure would probably always be in his mind, and remain an important part of his perceptions and understanding of the piece.

If, on the other hand, he had no cognizance of this artistic tradition or its conventions, that avenue would be unavailable to him, though the inscriptions and echoes of triumph in Judith's pose might allow him to arrive at least at a general notion of its metaphorical import. In such a case, the likelihood that such a viewer would
understand the piece exclusively in terms of the revelation of the narrative and its impact on the characters, or as a commentary on the fate of tyrants, would be significantly enhanced. Thus, ignorance of some element in Donatello's referential structure will probably mean that a viewer will arrive at only a partial comprehension of the potential import of *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, even if a correct one within the scope of his understanding.

A viewer could also perceive the possibility of the simultaneous existence of both modes, but reject one system as invalid owing to his understanding of the nature of the art of the period, the circumstances of the work's creation, or other elements dealing with the life of the sculpture, its patrons, and its artist. Each mode can be seen as exclusive, and only one as a true representation of Donatello's intent. The fact is, so little is known about the way in which *Judith Beheading Holofernes* came into existence that no possibilities can be foreclosed with certainty. The loss of the probable original context of the work, the way in which it could be experienced in the gardens of the Palazzo Medici, becomes especially crucial as the question of the way its initial audience approached and used the sculpture is addressed. For example, in its original site Donatello might have situated the work in a fashion that would have led to a state of balance in the perception of the two modes, so that its full richness could be appreciated by a viewer with sufficient time to contemplate it. However, he might instead have increased the perception of one of the modes, either by placing the work's more iconic face in a direction that encouraged or discouraged prolonged
viewing, or by inhibiting spectators from walking around the piece and pausing at its subsidiary faces. In this fashion, Donatello might have stressed one potential way of approaching the work, and hence privileged one meaning and experience of it over all others. Regardless, he would have predicted the effect of its placement on the way its viewers would understand the piece, and could have used this knowledge to manipulate perceptions of its form and significance. If more were known, one system might emerge as unlikely to have been intended, and its validity would be open to challenge. However, there are reasons for thinking that it was in fact Donatello's desire to create dual modes, to embody in the sculpture two systems that might encourage a viewer to approach the work in different ways, and perhaps to realize different aspects of the sculpture's meaning through those varying approaches. Such a viewer of the piece might then apprehend each, see both as valid and internally consistent ways of understanding it, and begin to appreciate its full complexity.

The most logical explanation for Donatello's decision to endow Judith Beheading Holofernes with two contrasting modes of expression in such a delicate balance is that it had to accommodate multiple meanings and functions, and each content needed to be accessible to its intended audience. The sculpture was originally located in a place that was both public and private: the garden of the Medici Palace. In that site, it was exposed to persons who came into the garden for widely varying reasons, including members of the family seeking refreshment or recreation, guests and visitors to the house, and political allies and other individuals awaiting an audience with
one of the Medici: a diverse set of people who likely would have experienced the work in different ways. With this in mind, Donatello may have shaped the sculpture so that certain meanings could have been easily perceived by one group of viewers, while other spectators would have had access to a different body of content.

For example, a member of the family enjoying the garden would probably have had time to explore the work at some leisure, and could have used it as an object for contemplation, perhaps even devotional meditation. Such a person, gazing up at Judith's face, might have been guided by her contemplative demeanor in his own response to the work, and so turned his thoughts inward. The opportunity to examine the piece carefully would have allowed him to register those details of the work which bear on its more oblique meanings, particularly the characteristics and content that treat private morality. The references to the psychomachia and its imagery present in the Judith would almost certainly have been readily perceptible to the Medici and their circle; but small features of the piece such as the relief panels, the disc on Holofernes's back, and even the pillow probably required careful observation and thought before their import could be fully understood. Viewers engaging the sculpture in prolonged meditation would probably have been drawn most strongly to the side of the work in which a spectator looks directly into the heroine's face: easily the most compelling view, and the one likely to hold a person's interest for the longest time. This is the point from which a viewer can observe at the same time Judith's stance on top of Holofernes, the medallion on his back, the pillow, and the relief that shows most
strongly the effects of drunkenness and incipient lust; consequently, this is the angle from which the group's symbolic implications are clearest, and as a focus for meditation would likely have brought forward that content dealing with personal morality in relation to other potential meanings.

It is interesting to note that the Middle Ages tended strongly to link the iconic mode with devotional functions in works of art, and it is from the view of the sculpture that most clearly asserts the form and content of the psychomachia that its iconic presence is strongest. As a result, the side of the work most likely to have commanded prolonged attention, and which is best designed to accommodate lengthy contemplation, is also the angle that expresses the more abstract personal moral and spiritual contents most strongly: those meanings that probably would have taken the longest to perceive, but which would have been of most interest to an individual using the work as a focus for devotional meditation. A person contemplating the work in this spirit thus could have found in Judith an exemplar of good moral conduct, and used her conflict with Holofernes and the symbolic imagery of the piece as a spur for reflecting on personal battles of pride and humility, or chastity and lust. Through the strength of the iconic presence and the placement of the majority of its metaphorical imagery on this side of the Judith, Donatello created a closed system in which the devotional use to which family members would probably have put the sculpture in their private moments was answered by the work's strongest statement of the appropriate content for their meditations, and the mode in which it was best accommodated. Of course, they could
also have appreciated the other, less personal meanings present in the piece, but that function which the work could have fulfilled best for spectators who experienced the sculpture for lengthy periods of time was promoted by imagery, import, and a viewing experience appropriate particularly to this audience.

On the other hand, an individual coming to the palazzo on public business might have had less time to examine the sculpture, and probably would have been more engaged by its more overt or obvious meanings, which are centered primarily on civic concerns. Many of these are manifest in the more superficial visual and narrative levels of the work, where the expression is conveyed chiefly by the story's events, the act of decapitation first among them. According to Bennett and Wilkins, Judith was widely accepted as an emblem of Florence [149]. Insofar as her story is on one level a tale about the fate of tyrants, such a viewer might have appreciated the work as a warning to the city's strong and tyrannical enemies, such as Milan or the papacy, of inevitable Florentine victory, and as a statement of the divine favor enjoyed by the Republic. Alternatively, as a Medici possession, it might have also been perceived as a notice to the family's enemies within the city of their fate if they persisted in opposing Cosimo's or Piero's will [150]. Given the conventions and imagery of the time, these are meanings that would have been accessible on even a quick inspection of the sculpture, since they are carried in the narrative and implicit in the moment selected for representation, i.e., the beheading, the most obvious element of the work. Thus, Judith Beheading Holofernes had something to say even to
someone without time or opportunity for prolonged meditation on its full moral content; though this, too, could have been accessible even if he were not permitted to sit quietly and meditatively before the work if he recognized the more obvious signs of the psychomachia, and was familiar with its imagery or read the inscriptions. Still, Donatello's ability to capture the essence of the story, and the meanings carried by the events of the action, would have given virtually any individual aware of the narrative some meaning to take away from the work, and it is important to note that that significance was likely to be primarily civic in nature for visiting members of the public [151].

Consequently, Judith Beheading Holofernes might have been shaped to provide different expressions appropriate to different audiences at different times, guiding them in their apprehension of those meanings by encouraging them to experience the work in different ways, while maintaining an appropriate balance between the diverse expressions latent in it. Given the dualistic contents contained in the inscriptions, and the double-edged ambiguities already discussed with reference to the putti, wine, and the role of vice in the Christian view of Judith's story, the multifarious nature of the work's significance might have best been accommodated by Donatello designing it in this way. The notion of multiple modes to accommodate varied experiences, functions, and meanings for different audiences thus provides a reasonable explanation both for the form of the sculpture, and for Donatello's choice of dualities as an organizing principle in the shape and content of the work.
Two final comments on the importance of the modes should be made before passing on to a consideration of the content of Judith Beheading Holofernes. During the late Middle Ages, many images of Judith were clearly and unambiguously iconic in nature, though narrative representations of the heroine continued to be made. One of the ways in which the treatment of Judith in the Florentine Renaissance differed from that in previous times was in the near absolute dominance of narrative. Insofar as Donatello’s sculpture ultimately has a predominantly narrative presence, it exemplifies these more dramatic presentations of Judith on a monumental scale, and in a work whose influence was felt in the Judiths that came after it in both painting and sculpture. It embodies the shift in the way the heroine was presented that set her use in Florence apart from both the Medieval tradition and the practice in Northern Italy during the early sixteenth century, and as such it is an important exemplar.

In addition, as the psychomachia is manifest visually not only in the iconic but also the narrative aspects of Judith Beheading Holofernes, some consideration should be given to why this is the case. On one level, this might be because Donatello wished as much of the potential content of the piece as possible to be accessible to viewers, so that its moral import could be realized through the narrative. But it is also important to remember that in his deepest artistic impulses Donatello was essentially a realist, so that he would tend to couch even the most symbolic of contents in the form of real people enacting real events. Thus, while the modes can be seen as separate, in fact they are also interwoven, at least with respect
to the contents conveyed through them, though each carries a somewhat
different stress.

Scholars have suggested a range of various meanings for the
original significance of *Judith Beheading Holofernes*. These seem
generally to fall into two categories: those in which the sculpture
is seen as representing a psychomachia centered on private virtues and
vices, and those which see a civic import for the piece, sometimes as
a symbol of the community, sometimes as a psychomachia centered on
public morality. Scholars have generally seen significance as
confined to one or the other of these categories. As the previous
discussion suggests, however, such views might well be too limited,
ailing to arrive at a sense of the full import of this piece.

In attempting to define the initial content of the work, that
expression which was in the minds of the patron and/or artist when
the sculpture was made, commentators curiously have tended not to rely
extensively on the two early inscriptions. The inscriptive evidence
is admittedly problematic. There is no record of when they were
placed on the sculpture; and whether either or both were present from
the beginning, or later additions, is unknown. Thus, it is uncertain
if either reflects the original meaning of the piece, or if they
record attempts to change or add to its intended significance.
Nonetheless, they constitute primary evidence as to how the Medici
wished the work to be understood early in its existence, and provide a
record of at least an intended content at the time of Piero's death in
1469.
The more famous of the two texts is that which read "Regna cadunt luxurient virtutibus urbes caesa vides humili colla superba manu (Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues; behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility)" [152]. Insofar as recent scholars have looked to these texts for guidance, this aphorism is universally the one to which they have referred in attempting to define the original meaning of the sculpture. It must have been in place by 1464, when it was quoted in Francischus's letter to Piero il Gottoso on the death of Cosimo de Medici; and, given its proximity to the probable time of the sculpture's completion around 1458-61, it could well have been attached to the base at the time the work was finished. Regardless, it must have come so early in the life of the Judith that it should be regarded as a primary guide to its intended significance.

The second inscription presents rather more difficulties, not the least of which is that it is unattested in any extent sources from the fifteenth century. It was first cited by Passerini in 1845, who noted that it was recorded in a small Quattrocento codex in his possession [153]. Unfortunately, this document has been lost. Nonetheless, Passerini's account is generally accepted by contemporary scholars, who give the second text full credence. This inscription, which Passerini's source said was placed on the side of the columnar base opposite the first, read "Salus Publica, Petrus Medices Cos. Fi. libertati simul et fortitudini hanc mulieris statuam quo cives invicto constantique animo ad rem pub. redderent dedicavit (The Public Weal. Piero Son of Cosimo Medici has dedicated the statue of this woman to
that liberty and fortitude bestowed on the republic by the invincible and constant spirit of the citizens)" [154].

Virtually all recent scholars have considered this dedication a late addition to the piece, placed on it by Piero during his brief reign as head of the Medici family (1464-9), possibly at the time of the suppression of the Pitti conspiracy in 1466 [155]. There is, however, no documentary evidence that this was the case; Passerini's source said only that the inscription was on the statue in the garden, not that it was added to it. The text could have been placed on the base any time before 1469, including at the time the sculpture was completed; it could even have been intended from the conception of the work. There is a generally unspoken assumption on the part of scholars that Piero was not the Judith's commissioner. In this view, his text represents a kind of rededication of the sculpture as a means of celebrating a political victory, and solidifying his position in power by crediting and identifying the Florentine citizenry with his triumph. However, as has been seen, Piero's recorded connections to the Judith were closer than any other's. He is identified with both of the inscriptions, and placed his personal stamp on the latter. While it has been argued that he could not have dedicated such a large, impressive monument in his own name during Cosimo's lifetime since he was not the head of the family (and, effectively, state), in fact there is no reason why he could not have done so with Cosimo's permission. Piero explicitly identifies himself in the text as Cosimo's son, and if there was any concern at all about the dynastic succession, the inscription could have served both to identify him as
heir apparent and to win over the public to the idea that Piero would take up his father's position. It is clear that a reasonable argument can be advanced for Piero as the commissioner of the work, and the possibility that this text was placed on the sculpture as early as the first cannot be excluded. Each is at least partially civic in its content, and it could be argued that for that reason it would be redundant to place both on the sculpture at the same time. However, the specific meaning of each text is different, and they could be viewed as a complementary pair creating a broad significance for the work, regardless of when they originated.

The first inscription establishes grounds for seeing the content of Judith Beheading Holofernes as embracing two separate areas of concern. A civic import is generated by its reference to kingdoms and cities. On this level, Judith and Holofernes represent the small and large, or weak and powerful in human affairs. Judith herself might have been intended specifically to symbolize the city of Florence; though that link is made explicit only in the second inscription, her relationship to David generally, and specifically that of this work to Donatello's bronze of the hero, makes it a real possibility that such a meaning was intended from the beginning, regardless of when the second text was attached. In such a case, Holofernes could then be identified with the kingdoms of the inscription, i.e., Florence's external enemies.

Judith's status as a civic emblem and symbol of Florence was probably established initially through her analogical relationship to David. Florentines from a relatively early date made an ideological
connection between the two, pairing them in works such as Ghiberti’s Gates of Paradise [156]. A similar kind of relationship might have existed in the Palazzo Medici between Donatello’s bronze David and the Judith: a possibility which, if true, could perhaps have made the Judith’s significance more plain for its original audience, even in the absence of inscriptions. Judith Beheading Holofernes and the bronze David were probably executed about twenty-five years apart, so that they cannot be seen as part of a single project. However if, as Bennett and Wilkins suggest, they were placed on line with one another visually from the entry to the palace through the courtyard to the garden, then the Medici might have meant them to be seen as an affiliated pair [157]. That being the case, the later work might have been designed to function in the same way as the earlier, and with a complimentary significance.

David’s status as a symbol of Florence was well-established by the time of the Judith. The putative link between them could have allowed Judith to share in this status, serving as an emblem of the city even in the absence of the second inscription. Both David and Judith are examples of people favored by God who were able to use divine strength to conquer more powerful oppressors or tyrants, and hence they could function as metaphors for the city’s resistance to its larger neighbors. This was especially true of David; in fact, Bennett and Wilkins suggested that Donatello’s bronze sculpture of the hero might have been commissioned as a symbol of Florentine liberty and the triumph of the Medici faction in conflicts with Milan and the anti-Medicean party in the 1430s and 1440s [158]. Though each also
obviously maintained a life and significance of its own, insofar as they were tied together both by a unifying idea and visual proximity, Judith Beheading Holofernes was able to draw on the significance of the bronze David to reinforce that content generated independently by the work's imagery and inscriptions. Thus, Judith's analogous relationship to David would have strengthened any pre-existing associations with Florence and, on one level, made her a more obvious emblem of the city.

However, this inscription also establishes a basis for seeing the statue as treating private virtues. The second phrase of the text refers to pride and humility, one of the traditional pairs of the psychomachia, while the first half mentions luxury, another established vice. In the latter case, the evil is attached specifically to kingdoms, and so it probably should be understood principally as a warning against public extravagance or licentious behavior on the part of citizens and their rulers. However, given the presence of imagery probably intended as an emblem of Luxuria, and the lust apparent in the reliefs, it is not unreasonable to see "luxu" as having implications for Holofernes, both as a powerful leader and a private individual. In such a case, Judith would then be seen as Chastity, Luxuria's opposite, a meaning long-established for her in literary sources.

Regardless, pride and humility are a pair clearly connected to the two figures depicted in the sculpture above. Judith and Holofernes should certainly be seen metaphorically as representing the apparently weak and powerful in general or national terms; but the
text should also be understood to refer to their personal characters and conduct, those private virtues and vices that make the Assyrian vulnerable to Judith, and allow her to defeat him. That this more direct linkage of figure to virtue or vice was intended is made clear by the fact that Donatello seems to have attached an emblem of Superbia to Holofernes. The disc on the Assyrian's back has a rearing horse inscribed upon it, which Kauffmann identified as a symbol of Pride [159]. Judith's drapery obscures half the medallion, so that only the front part of the horse is visible: a fact that is of some importance since the emblem of Superbia requires that a rider be falling from the horse [160], and no rider can be seen. However, because of the reference to pride in the inscription, it is reasonable to think that the image on the medal was meant to imply the emblem of Superbia. That being so, the disc worn around Holofernes's neck provides additional, visual evidence that he should be viewed as an exemplar of that vice, and further establishes that this meaning was intended from the beginning.

The explicit identification of Holofernes with Superbia makes it highly likely that Judith should be seen as Humilitas. It is the heroine's humility before God that gives her the divine strength and inspiration to carry out her plan, and makes her worthy to receive that aid; just as her chastity and moderation allow her to resist the temptations of drink and lust that have incapacitated Holofernes, and placed him in jeopardy of his life. He, on the other hand, is susceptible to Judith's attack precisely because his pride will not allow him to see her as a threat; just as his lust and gluttony,
elements alluded to in the imagery, lead him to his drunken stupor after he has given her access to his private quarters. Consequently, though the references to Superbia and Humilitas can be seen in light of the public conflict between great and small powers, they must also be understood as referring to the private moral qualities of the two human beings represented in this work; and, through them, to the virtues and vices of any viewer of the piece. Judith and Holofernes act on a public stage, but their individual and personal moral characters create the conditions of action in the story and in Donatello's sculpture. Thus, the first inscription can be seen to have implications for meanings in both the private and civic spheres, with each conflict couched at least loosely in terms of the psychomachia.

The primacy of meanings connected to Humility's victory over Pride is reinforced again by the probable relationship between the Judith and the David, the latter of which also might have carried a content expressing the triumph of Humilitas over Superbia. There was a long tradition of associating David with Humility. Prudentius referred to the "humble David" through the character of Spes, and this link was made visible in a number of Medieval works [161]. It might also have been manifest in the imagery of the David. On Goliath's helmet is a relief which Pope-Hennessy indicates may be of The Triumph of Pride [162]. This putative symbol of Superbia, the sin which ensured the Philistine's defeat in the same way that it brought about that of Holofernes, is beneath David's foot, who embodies humility before God. There is nothing in the imagery of the work that
specifically identifies him as an emblem of Humility. However, since Goliath's helmet might carry an image of Pride (and he was in any case identified with that vice by Prudentius), and David was closely associated with Humilitas, the sculpture probably contained this meaning as either primary or latent content (depending on whether the relief is actually a Triumph of Superbia). Moreover, the story of Judith, and Donatello's sculpture, contain a warning of the fate of tyrants, and the inscription on the base of the David while it was in Medici possession expressed a similar sentiment: The victor is whoever defends the fatherland./All powerful God crushes the angry enemy./Behold, a boy overcame the great tyrant./Conquer, O citizens [163]. Thus, just as Judith Beheading Holofernes contains a statement of the victory of Humilitas and the dangers of tyranny, so too might the bronze David, further reinforcing the possibility that the two sculptures were intended to function as mutual reinforcements in a community of meaning.

The second inscription unambiguously makes Judith an emblem of the city. It begins by referring to the welfare of the state, then dedicates this Judith to the citizens of Florence, praising their "invincible and constant spirit" as the source of the continuing liberty and fortitude of the Republic. There is no room in this text for considerations of private morality, but it really is less a clue to possible meanings for the piece than a dedication, in which the Florentine public is lauded for safeguarding their city in the same way Judith protected hers. Insofar as both the Assyrian general and Florence's enemies were viewed as tyrannical, and one of the
inexplicable imports of the story was a revelation of the fate of tyrants, the inscription also can be seen as implying or drawing out in a somewhat more explicit fashion that potential meaning from the range of contents latent in the tale. But its primary importance is the connection it makes between the heroine and the city, helping to further establish Judith as a symbol of Florence, and Holofernes as representative of her foes. Thus, if this inscription was original to the work, then from the very beginning the sculpture would have been intended to symbolize the triumph of Florence over its enemies in an utterly unambiguous fashion, surpassing the expression of this concept implicit in the other text, the work's possible connections to the David, and the moment selected for representation. However, even if it was added later, by at least 1469 this significance would have been understood by the inscription's readers as a part of the primary content of the work, regardless of whether its initial meaning included such a concept.

If the precise timing of the placement of the inscriptions on the base of the sculpture cannot be known, at least it is clear that by 1469 two texts were present which gave the work broad significance. This condition might have existed from the very beginning, particularly since both personal and civic morality are invoked in the first epigraph, which would seem to be the earlier of the two (if in fact they were not contemporary). If this aphorism was original to Judith Beheading Holofernes, or part of its initial planning, then this might help to explain the systems of dualities Donatello built into the sculpture; if the meaning itself was dual, the presence of two modes
might have facilitated perception of those different contents, or at least suggested their existence. However, it is also possible that each text simply acknowledges a reality already manifest in the form of the piece when it was added, perhaps as a means of further reinforcing that two streams of meaning were included. Regardless, the inscriptions must be considered a guide to meaning in the early life of the work; indeed, since its potential symbolic elements could conceivably be understood as purely narrative devices void of any metaphorical content, it is the texts which both provide clues to the significance of Judith Beheading Holofernes while it was under Medici control, and establish that at least part of that import was allusive in nature.

Scholars interpreting Donatello's Judith have usually seen its meaning as either exclusively private or entirely civic, despite the fact that the first inscription, normally the only one to which they refer, indicates significance may be found in both spheres. Hans Kauffmann and Edgar Wind first defined the work's content in terms of a psychomachia of personal morality in separate works published in 1935 and 1936, respectively (see below). The former placed the meaning in a combat between Humilitas and Superbia, the latter in one between Continentia and Luxuria. Most subsequent scholars have followed either Wind or Kauffmann, often slightly modifying their positions, but seldom adding anything of great significance to their interpretations. Martha Fader, however, in her dissertation on the sculpture placed in the Piazza della Signoria during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, presented an interpretation of the work that is
distinctly civic in emphasis [164]. Fader's evidence and analysis of Donatello's sculpture have been questioned in this study, and her conclusions will also be criticized. This should not, however, be understood as a negative comment on her study as a whole, of which her discussion of Donatello is only a modest part. It should also be understood that her study, though flawed with respect to the Judith, nonetheless represents an important contribution to scholarship on the work, because she brings into focus the work's civic, secular content. However, in her rejection of a meaning simultaneously embracing its personal and civic significances, she errs in the same way as those who view the piece as exclusively concerned with private morality. Donatello's sculpture contains meanings in both the private and public spheres, and expresses them with approximately equal emphasis. Both bodies of meaning are established by the inscriptions, and each content is also addressed formally by the moment selected for representation, the composition of the work, and the imagery included within it, even though each feature does not expose each import in equal measure, and each is approached most readily through one or the other of the modes. Virtually every scholar writing on this work has placed its total significance in one area, excluding the other, and it is in this that previous interpretations of the Judith have been inadequate. Only Volker Herzner developed a vision of Judith Beheading Holofernes that embraces content in both the public and personal spheres, and he did it primarily on the basis of the sources on which Donatello drew in composing the work [165].
The way in which the narrative levels of the sculpture create its public content has been discussed above. Judith was established as an emblem of Florence by convention, her putative visual links to David in the Palazzo Medici, and the inscriptions. Her victory over Holofernes is thus a metaphorical statement of Florence's triumph over her foes: a fact that is established in the decision to show the climactic moments of the tale, in which the Assyrian has been dispatched, and Judith is standing on top of the body of her defeated enemy.

Bennett and Wilkins sought to establish that both Judith Beheading Holofernes and the bronze David were also symbols of the triumph of Justice over Tyranny [166], forming a pair of psychomachia treating civic virtues. By Donatello's time, the iconographies of Judith and Justice had become closely intertwined in Italian art, with major public statements of this conflation of imagery reaching back at least to Ambrogio Lorenzetti's frescoes in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena (1337-9). For this reason, it is not unreasonable to believe that Donatello's sculpture might have carried such a meaning latently; however, there is nothing in the imagery or inscriptions of Judith Beheading Holofernes that establishes that the heroine was meant to be seen as an emblem of Justice, at least as primary content. It is possible that a viewer of the work aware of prior confluences of Giuditta and Giustizia might have made a connection between them, and the appropriateness of that link is clear. Such a realization would enriched a spectator's experience of the work in a way generally consistent with what seems to have been the artist's intentions and
with the content of the narrative. However, in the final analysis, the tie between the two figures is supplied by the viewer, not the artist in the form or imagery of the work, and thus this significance can only doubtfully be considered part of its core meaning.

Nonetheless, insofar as the Judith was an emblem of republican liberty in the possession of the Medici, and served as a means of identifying them with the citizenry and welfare of Florence, Bennett and Wilkins's contention that the work served as a means of bridging the gap, or clouding the distinction, between the Medici family's ambitions and the city's ideal of self-rule is well-observed [167], and might partially explain the family's motivation in commissioning the sculpture.

Scholars who interpret the significance of Judith Beheading Holofernes principally in terms of a psychomachia of personal morality have seen the meanings of the work in terms of only a few themes. The earliest proponent of this position was Hans Kauffmann, who identified the rearing horse on Holofernes's medallion as Superbia and, concentrating his attention on the second half of the first inscription, saw the sculpture as an expression of the triumph of Humility over Pride [168]. Edgar Wind, however, felt that Kauffmann's understanding of the piece was too limited. He did not deny the validity of the Superbia-Humilitas reading; however, he considered the work's primary content a statement of the victory of Sanctimonia over Luxuria [169]. Durandus, in his Rationale Divinorum Officiorum had established Judith and Holofernes as an opposing pair: the former representing Ecclesia, Sanctimonia, and Continentia, and the latter
the Devil and Luxuria [170]. Wind felt that the poet who wrote the first inscription had Durandus in mind when he composed it, and that this meaning would have been passed along to Donatello, who manifested it visually in the contrast between the half-naked Holofernes lying on the soft cushion of Luxuria, with three orgiastic Bacchanalian reliefs directly below him, and the long veils and heavy garments of Judith, modestly covering even her forehead and arms [171]. Consequently, while Kauffmann and Wind each cast Judith Beheading Holofernes strictly in terms of a psychomachia of personal virtues and vices, relying principally on the imagery of the work and the content of the first inscription for their evidence, they differed on the precise significance of the sculpture.

Both Wind and Kauffmann appear to presume that the first epigraph was original to the work, and not a later addition. This assumption has also generally been made by more recent scholars who have tried to establish the initial meaning of Judith Beheading Holofernes as exemplifying a battle between private moral or spiritual traits. By and large, these interpretations are refinements of the theories of Kauffmann and Wind, who published their thoughts only about a year apart, in 1935 and 1936, respectively. Janson, for example, argued for a conflation of the views of the two earlier scholars, so that the piece would represent the triumph of Sanctimonia-Continentia-Humilitas over Luxuria-Superbia [172]. He went on to give its content a twist toward public expression, stating that the Medici could have used the symbolic import of the statue for their own purposes by associating "luxus" with monarchies and "virtutes" with city republics, casting
themselves as defenders of republican liberty [173]. Though an interesting theory, this meaning is not manifest in any way in the visual form of the sculpture itself; it can be derived only from the inscriptions. Consequently, it should be considered a part of the original content only if it can be proved that the first inscription, which most directly implies this point, was intended from the beginning, and placed on the work before its unveiling. This possibility can neither be proved nor disproved, undercutting the validity of Janson's argument to some extent.

John Pope-Hennessy essentially endorsed Wind's interpretation of the piece, though he gave slightly greater equality to the Superbia-Humilitas pairing [174], while Joachim Poeschke follows Kauffmann's view more closely [175]. Frederick Hartt saw the writings of St. Antonine of Florence, a copy of whose Summa Theologica was owned by the Medici, as holding the key to the meaning of Judith Beheading Holofernes, even regarding him as the likely author of the program of the sculpture [176]. St. Antonine had compared Judith's victory over Holofernes to that of the Virgin over Luxuria, which according to him derives from the primordial sin, pride [177]. If Hartt intended to imply that Judith should be seen as a type for the Virgin in this work, his interpretation becomes problematic. There is no visual or inscriptive evidence in the piece for seeing it as asserting the typological connection between the Virgin and Judith, though it is not unreasonable to think that at least some of the work's initial audience might have made the link, independent of the direct expression of the sculpture. However, if Hartt's argument is understood to mean
only that *Judith Beheading Holofernes* should be seen as an assertion of the general victory of virtue over the vices of Lust and Pride, and not as a typological statement requiring the viewer to see Judith as Mary, then his view of the primary content is really little different from that of Wind or Janson.

The only really distinct visions of the meaning of the work among recent scholars have been those of Martha Fader and Hans Martin von Erffa. Erffa's interpretation is not unlike that of Hartt; he considered the work to be a direct expression of the triumph of the Virgin over the Devil, with the additional significance that Judith was an emblem of Ecclesia [178]. Erffa based his arguments on the illustrated typology of the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* and texts by St. Jerome that established Judith as a type for the Church; however, as was the case with Bennett and Wilkins's links between Judith and Justice, Erffa cannot be considered as having done more than define potential latent content for Donatello's sculpture. Again, the connections between Judith, the Virgin, and the Church were well-established by the mid-Quattrocento, and there is ample reason to think that some of the audience for Donatello's work might have seen it in this light. However, there is nothing in either the form of the piece or its inscriptions that speaks of the kinds of meaning attributed to it by Erffa, and any viewer who saw this content in the sculpture would have been supplying it himself, rather than deriving it from the artist's work. Thus, it cannot be considered a part of the primary significance of *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, even though it is not unreasonable to speculate that some members of its initial
Martha Fader's interpretation is the most extensively argued of the modern views of the work, and the one that most assiduously attempts to transform the elements of the piece that seem to speak of private moral behavior into a statement of public virtue. She conceived the significance of the sculpture entirely in terms of the civic or governmental realm, sharply attacking the notion that it in any way represents a personal spiritual content in the tradition of the psychomachia. Fader reserved her strongest criticism for the theories of Edgar Wind [179]. A portion of her critique of Wind is certainly valid: e.g., her contention that he is incorrect to assert that the total meaning of Donatello's work is encompassed by the conflict between virtue and vice [180]. As has been established, there was very early a civic significance to the work as an emblem of Florence in relation to her external enemies; and broader commentary on the relative merits of different political systems, God's protectiveness toward the virtuous, and the fate of oppressors and tyrants might have been intended as well. Thus, Wind's position is really too narrow to reflect accurately the total content of the work, ignoring an entire area of significance clearly indicated by both of its inscriptions.

However, Fader went well beyond a critique of the weaknesses in Wind's discussion, attacking the notion that any of the apparatus of the psychomachia, in her view the prime vehicle for expressions of content treating personal moral characteristics, is relevant to the work. Her argument against seeing Judith Beheading Holofernes as
manifesting any private, moral content rests in part on her insistence that the sculpture's apparent links to the psychomachia tradition are either false or grossly overstated [181]. She asserted that the psychomachia was essentially a northern theme, rare in Italian art; that the psychomachia did not admit of a work with a narrative thrust, or rather one so specifically linked to the representation of a particular narrative moment as is the case in Donatello's piece; and that, in any case, the traditional depiction of Humilitas defeating Superbia required that she pierce the chest of the vice, rather than sever its head, as was the custom in Biblical illuminations of Judith from Italy. Consequently, for Fader, interpretations depending on the visual or iconographic type of the psychomachia, or manifesting the individualistic moral concerns she associates so closely with it [182], are inappropriate to Donatello's sculpture, and she rejects them almost out of hand from serious consideration.

Each of Fader's arguments, however, suffers from a significant flaw. While it is true that the psychomachia found especially rich soil in which to flourish in northern Europe, it is not true that the tradition was unknown in Italy, or that Italian artists never treated these concepts in this specific visual form, as Nicolo di Giacomo da Bologna's illumination in the Novella in libros Decretalium of Giovanni di Andrea (1354) makes clear [183]. Volumes like the Speculum Virginum and Speculum Humanae Salvationis were widely distributed throughout Europe [184]. They provided a ready visual source for the theme of the psychomachia and the visual motifs in which its meanings were manifest, so that there is ample reason to believe that the
educated humanists of Florence would have been familiar with this artistic type. Such manuscripts could also have served as a model for artists like Donatello who wished to incorporate elements of the psychomachia into their own works, drawing on its conventions as a basis for the form and content of a particular piece. There is no way of knowing whether Donatello consulted texts such as these, or incorporated elements of their illuminations in the Judith. However, the fact is that examples of psychomachia were available to Donatello and known by many among his audience, even if this was not one of the major creative forms of late Medieval or early Renaissance Italy. He could have used it as a referent for Judith Beheading Holofernes in the expectation that its significance would be understood by his audience, and the close formal and iconographic ties between the sculpture and the psychomachia's traditions almost certainly assures that he did.

Fader's argument also overstated the degree to which references to specific narratives were eschewed in psychomachia, and ignored the possibility of innovation in this regard on the part of Donatello. She asserted that the narrative thrust of Judith Beheading Holofernes belies any connection to this generally iconic tradition. However, it was common practice to include specific narratives such as those of Judith or Jael killing Sisera in typological illustrations including these spiritual battles, as is demonstrated, among others, by British Museum MS Arundel 44, fol. 34v (Plate 64), a Speculum Virginum illumination of the victory of Humilitas over Superbia. In these cases, the narrative scenes derive their significance from the
symbolic battle with which they are associated, so that the narrative motif could be expected over time to acquire the content of the psychomachia for viewers familiar with the typological connections.

Even if that were not the case, however, it would hardly be atypical for Donatello to function as an innovator, recasting a subject iconic by tradition into the framework of a specific narrative, particularly if he wanted to stress aspects or meanings other than those normally emphasized, or to expand its significance beyond ordinary bounds. Unexpectedly complex forms and unique interpretations of old iconographic elements are present in a number of his works, most notably the bronze David, the Cantoria, the reliefs of the "Miracles of St. Anthony" from the Altar of the Santo in Padua, the wooden St. Mary Magdalen, and the San Lorenzo pulpits. In fact, it would almost be a surprise had Donatello not innovated in some fashion in a major work such as Judith Beheading Holofernes, and incorporating the received form of the psychomachia into a specific narrative context is precisely the kind of development that might have been expected from him. Implications of action are latent in the iconic stillness of many psychomachia, so that the transformation into narrative would have been both logical and simple for an artist of Donatello's talents, and readily understood by an audience of the sophistication of the Medici circle. Moreover, for an artist whose impulses were so deeply rooted in realism, to speak metaphorically through a story involving real people behaving emotionally and intellectually in a realistic way, and engaged in actions performed in a naturalistic fashion, is both the most natural and reasonable thing for him to do.
There is no reason to suppose that he would have felt bound by
tradition or inclined to observe it if he could made the expression he
desired in another way that was more in tune with his basic artistic
predilections. Thus, insofar as Fader's objections ignore Donatello's
tendency to innovate, they cannot be regarded as constituting a
serious obstacle to seeing content and forms in this sculpture as
derived from the psychomachia tradition.

Finally, Fader seems not to have appreciated sufficiently that
the single most characteristic iconographic element of late Medieval
psychomachia illustrations is the one explicitly present in the
Judith: the stance of the virtue on top of the vice as a means of
signalling its victory. This feature links the sculpture specifically
to that tradition. While the particular form of the Humilitas-Superbia
pair in the Speculum Virginum shows the virtue killing her foe with a
spear, to argue that for this reason Judith could not be understood as
an emblem of Humility because she wields a sword borders on the
ludicrous. Judith was in fact one of the standard typological figures
paired with Humilitas [185], and both the imagery and the inscriptions
of Donatello's work make it clear that she is to understood here as a
symbol of this virtue. The language of this sculpture, its pose,
symbols, and first inscription, is the language of the psychomachia;
that is a visual fact.

In fairness, it should be noted that Fader did not deny that
issues of pride and humility have some place in the sculpture; indeed,
she recognized that the concept of humility is very much a part of its
meaning. However, she denied that this touched in any way on humility
as a personal moral or spiritual quality, instead connecting it exclusively to the rather abstract concept of the humility of the powerful before law and justice: the kind of humility that guides a ruler and safeguards him from the excesses of pride, which lead to tyranny. It is not improbable that the kind of civic humility referred to by Fader formed a part of the content of the sculpture; Judith and Holofernes were both private persons and exemplars of general types of human beings, including those in positions of power and those subordinate to them. The problem lies in the fact that she dismissed the notion that a part of the primary content of the piece lies on the personal level, arguing the need for individuals to conquer their own pride with humility. This meaning's implications seem too obviously present to be ignored. In denying the Judith's connection to the psychomachia, she negated a whole area of potential content, and precluded the possibility that multiple layers of significance might be present. Thus, Fader is as restrictive as Wind in her reading of the piece, entirely omitting its treatment of issues of personal morality from consideration, and seeing it as an exclusively civic and essentially secular and anti-symbolic expression. Consequently, even if her interpretation of the work were correct as far as she went, she failed to delineate its total content.

There are, however, further problems with her analysis of the meaning of Judith Beheading Holofernes. According to Fader, Judith is an emblem of Justice [186]. Owing to the lack of a celebratory tone in the sculpture, she saw the heroine as conveying a sense of vigilance [187], a quality based on her interpretation of Judith's pose
as arrested, and indefinitely motionless, the fact that she sees the outcome of the narrative as still in doubt, and her vision of Judith as too frail to actually accomplish the beheading [188]. Holofernes represents the twin evils of pride and tyranny, the former of which leads to the latter [189]. In Fader's view, fear of tyranny was one of the prime elements in Florentine political life and theory, an omnipresent concern from the fourteenth century forward in her art and literature [190]. This tyranny was restrained by a ruler's humility before law and justice [191]. Insofar as Cosimo de Medici was de facto ruler of Florence, it would have greatly behooved him to allay any concerns on the public's behalf that he would infringe on their liberty and become tyrannical himself. Consequently, in Fader's interpretation, the sculpture was designed to express the idea that, like Judith, Cosimo was on guard against tyranny and pride, and a defender of justice, so that the best way to avoid a tyrannical state was through an orderly and peaceful government under the Medici [192].

A major difficulty with Fader's interpretation is that she insists on the unprovable assumption that Cosimo must have been the person who commissioned the sculpture, and that it was intended to express a meaning centered directly on him. As has been seen, Cosimo may have conceived the project, but at least as good a case can be made for his son, Piero il Gottoso. Fader's argument for Cosimo is, in a sense, circular; i.e., he must have ordered the piece since it deals with the civic virtues of a ruler, and the piece must be about a ruler's civic virtues because Cosimo commissioned it. There is certainly ample reason for Cosimo to have sponsored a sculpture with a
meaning such as she delineates. As Fader, following Vespasiano da Bisticci, points out, it is far from clear that Cosimo's hands were clean of such co-mingled sins as pride, tyranny, lust, and avarice [193], and he may have appreciated an opportunity to associate himself with an acknowledgment of their dangers as a means of denying he was prey to them [194]. Moreover, Fader's case would be reinforced if her understanding of the first inscription, "Regna cadunt luxu, surgent virtutibus urbes; caesa vides humili colla superba manu," were correct. This phrase has been almost universally (and rightly) translated to mean "Kingdoms fall through luxuria;" however, Fader preferred to read it as "Rulers (or tyrants) fall through luxuria," [195] shifting its significance more strongly to the individual, and away from the corporate body. Her reading, however, depends on an idiosyncratic and highly questionable understanding of the Latin. The word "regnum," the root for "regna," is not a personal noun, but a corporate one, meaning either royal power, authority, or monarchy, or a realm ruled by a king, i.e., a kingdom. The concept of a tyrant is conveyed in Latin by the word "dominus," and that of tyranny by "dominatio," "dominatus," or "tyrannis." Very rarely was the word "regnum" used to convey the idea of tyranny, and its use was so restricted that this meaning cannot have been intended by the author of the first inscription. Consequently, this portion of Fader's argument is almost certainly rendered void, and her attempt to use the text to tie the work to Cosimo moot. There is simply no way to establish that Cosimo commissioned Judith Beheading Holofernes, and without that link her interpretation is damaged.
However, regardless of whether Cosimo initiated the project for Donatello's sculpture, Fader's view is problematic on purely visual and iconographic grounds. As has been noted, Judith is not established as an emblem of Justice in this work either by symbolic imagery or inscription, and so this potential meaning cannot be accepted as primary content. Given the links between their iconographies, and the semi-public or civic nature of the garden of the Palazzo Medici, a significance connected to Justice might have formed a part of a valid secondary content for the piece; but, again, that import would have come from the viewer, not the artist or patron. As has been seen, her notion that Judith is on guard against a still potent danger, and that the outcome of the conflict is in question, are also unsupported by the form of the work. Judith, seen close-up, does not look vigilant; in fact, she appears so self-absorbed as to be momentarily unaware of her situation or surroundings. Certainly she does not look at the threat she is supposed to be guarding against, nor does she scan the distance for future trouble. She simply stares unfixedly past and to the side of Holofernes, apparently too absorbed in her own thoughts to really be seeing anything. Neither is she merely standing guard in a frozen posture. There are clear implications of impending motion in her retracted shoulder, twisting waist, and the position of the sword, which is angled for a downward blow; she is preparing to dispatch the evil at her feet, and it is clear, as the story confirms, that she will succeed in doing so [196]. Consequently, rather than presenting his audience with an image of an inactive, but attentive guardian against an evil that still threatens,
Donatello created a heroine who is temporarily abstracted from vigilance, but in whose posture is the clear implication that she will shortly resume her action with victory assured. Regardless of whether Judith represents any kind of virtue, or Holofernes any vice, her triumph over him is inevitable, and this certainty is manifest in the form of the sculpture.

Thus, Fader's interpretation falters on several points. She cannot establish that the work is not a psychomachia of private virtue and vice, and her contention that Holofernes is still a threat, and that Judith is guarding against this evil are belied by the gash in the Assyrian's throat, the heroine's abstraction, and the fact that her pose and stance speak of certain victory. Even her reading of Judith as Justice cannot be accepted as primary content, because nothing either Donatello or the author of the inscriptions did makes that connection for the viewer; the spectator must supply it himself, out of his prior knowledge of the relationship between the two, or the similarities in their iconographies.

Nonetheless, there is a real value in Fader's work, because her insistence on a public or civic context for the meaning of Judith Beheading Holofernes helps to redress the balance between this realm of significance and that treating private morality. Many scholars have concentrated so exclusively on the latter area of content that the public resonance of the work has been severely understressed. Unfortunately, Fader's view of the symbolic and narrative as incompatible, ultimately perhaps the core problem in her reading of the piece, prevented her from acknowledging those levels of the work's
significance that might address personal spiritual or moral qualities, and thus she was unable to see that it might possess multiple meanings encompassing both public and private concerns.

The meaning of Judith Beheading Holofernes as a Medici possession seems to have lain in the simultaneous presentation of two different but compatible bodies of content: one centered on personal virtues and vices, the other on a civic significance glorifying Florence and its citizenry. Both are supported by the visual imagery and original inscriptions of the sculpture, both were authorized by traditional meanings attached to the story of Judith in the Republic, and neither is eliminated from consideration by anything in the form or life of the piece. Insofar as there were at least two audiences and two kinds of function the work was probably intended to serve in its position in the garden of the Palazzo Medici, Donatello and his Medici patrons might have chose to accomodate each with a different import and a different viewing experience, incorporating into the work a network of dualities that became its organizational principle, and is reflected in the full development of narrative and iconic systems simultaneously in its form, and in the paradoxical implications of the Bacchanalian reliefs, the role of vice in Judith's success, and the nature of wine.

Thus, on one level, Judith Beheading Holofernes asserts the victory of Humility and Chastity over Pride and Lust, encouraging viewers to subordinate the latter to the former in their own lives. It provides in Judith an example of continence and humility, as well as an exemplar of courage in defense of one's country. It is possible that Judith was also intended to be seen as an example of Fortitude;
the second inscription makes reference to this quality, and if the original base was a column, it could have been intended to refer to this virtue. But this remains uncertain; the form of the original base and its function in the meaning of the piece are unknown, and so the initial content of the sculpture can perhaps never be fully known. Nonetheless, it seems clear that Donatello was addressing issues of virtue and vice through the Judith. Additional meanings in this area have been suggested, such as the victory of the Virgin over the Devil (or Pride, or Lust), but such content must be regarded as latent or secondary. The visual imagery and inscriptive evidence refer only to the two pairs of qualities delineated above; movement to a further significance can take place only on the initiative of the viewer, applying prior knowledge or his own imaginative insights to the sculpture.

On the other hand, there is also a civic significance in Judith Beheading Holofernes, and one that is probably apprehensible on a more cursory examination of the piece. Judith functions as a symbol of Florence triumphant over her enemies. The story and the work speak of the fate of tyrants, who are probably to be identified with the city's (generally) non-republican foes in Judith Beheading Holofernes, though perhaps its initial viewers would have understood it as alluding to tyrants in any place or time. Identifications of Judith with Justice have a certain logic, but, again, nothing in the form of the work or its inscriptions authorizes this connection as primary content. At most, Judith can be seen as an emblem of republican liberty, as exemplified and ensured by the city of Florence and its citizens.
against external threats. Finally, a willingness to defend one's people or country, regardless of personal risk, is propounded as an implicit good in the story of Judith, and such a meaning is at least latent in the sculpture.

Both the personal and civic meanings of the work are expressed in part through the visual conventions of the psychomachia. Nonetheless, for the most part the two areas of content should be seen as complementary, but separate. While the initial audiences for the work might have appreciated the total body of meanings it contains, each significance seems to have been endowed with a separate path or mode through which it could be most readily apprehended. It is problematic to tie one body of content to a given audience, and another to a different group of viewers. The opportunity for extended contemplation afforded to family members might have facilitated apprehension of the content treating moral issues of virtue and vice, which are expressed principally through symbols which must be discovered and interpreted. But the Medici would doubtless have been interested in its civic content, and members of the public could have discovered and appreciated its significance for personal morality. Thus, though apparently rather simple and general in form, while in the Medici garden the sculpture actually contained as primary content a complex and sophisticated body of meanings requiring careful viewing of the imagery and inscriptions for full comprehension. The result was a work whose significance embraced both the civic sphere and the morality of the individual, and spoke both of the life of the city, and the life of the soul.
The content delineated above describes the meaning of Donatello’s *Judith Beheading Holofernes* by 1469, when Piero il Gottoso died, and was succeeded by his son, Lorenzo il Magnifico. Piero’s death provides a terminal date for the second inscription, apparently the last addition to or modification of the sculpture’s meaning (if in fact it was one) while in Medici hands. In 1495 the Medici were expelled from Florence, and the work was seized by the Signoria. A document of 9 October 1495 ordered that the *Judith* and the bronze *David* be removed from the Medici Palace, and turned over to the operai of the Palazzo Vecchio, who were to install them wherever they deemed most suitable [197]. On 14 October Marco Capello, macebearer of the Signoria, reported that these and other objects had been consigned to the operai [198], after which a discussion ensued as to where they were to be placed. Luca Landucci noted in his diary that on 21 December 1495 *Judith Beheading Holofernes* was placed on the ringhiera of the Palazzo Vecchio, next to the portal, in the Piazza della Signoria [199]. It remained in this location until 1504, when on 8 June, it was replaced by Michelangelo’s monumental *David*. Landucci recorded that initially it was then placed on the ground inside the Palace, but on 10 May 1506 it was installed in the Loggia dei Lanzi, under the first arch toward Vacchereccia, where it remained until 1582, when it was removed to another arch [200], where it has generally remained up to the present.

When the work was taken from the Medici garden, its base was also confiscated. It is uncertain today whether the two inscriptions placed on the base by the Medici were stripped from it, so that the
extant pedestal is the original, or whether a new base was created; on the whole, the latter seems more likely, since there is no evidence of the presence or removal of the two early texts on the foundation currently in use. Regardless, a new inscription was placed beneath the sculpture by the Signoria, reading "Exemplum Sal Pub Cives Pos MCCCXCV" (The citizens place this as model of a safe republic 1495) [201]. In removing the Medici texts from the sculpture, and replacing them with a new epigraph, the Signoria shifted the meaning in a significant way, though one accommodated by the form of the image and the broad implications of the story of Judith. Because they are manifest in the symbolic language of the piece, the content dealing with personal moral issues was not removed; however, once the sculpture was shifted out of the context of the garden, where individual contemplation could be undisturbed and private significances appropriately realized, its new and very public location might have made this body of meaning less prominent. Certainly it could still be apprehended, but there was less encouragement, and perhaps even opportunity, to do so, as its second setting tended to bring its civic meanings much more strongly to the foreground.

The public import of the work also changed. Judith Beheading Holofernes had always carried the implication of the fate of tyrants. However, while in Medici control, those tyrants had almost certainly been the external enemies of Florence, such as the papacy or Milan. Once removed from the Palazzo Medici and erected in the heart of the city's civic life, the tyrants became the Medici, who had been expelled in the interests of the safety of the Republic. Thus, rather
than being a symbol of the Medici, perhaps as protectors of the liberty of the city, it became an emblem of the Republic aggressively protecting itself against its Medici enemies [202]. While it is questionable whether this should be regarded as an entirely new meaning, at least it represents a significant twist in the original content of the work; and while it is unlikely that this import was much trumpeted in the years after the restoration of the Medici in 1512, the work remains a potent expression of revulsion against tyranny.

Donatello's Judith Beheading Holofernes is one of the towering achievements of its age. Its complex, dual levels of content make it expressively rich, and the way in which the artist was able to integrate such apparently conflicting elements as the narrative and iconic modes, public and private levels of meaning, and the symbolic tradition of the psychomachia with the dramatic bias of the story and of Italian Biblical illuminations of Judith's tale speaks of his remarkable abilities. Beyond this, however, three aspects of Donatello's work stand out as important innovations in the history of representations of Judith. The first of these is the psychological realism of the piece. For the first time, Judith becomes a complex person, having a very human response to the terrible events in which she is involved; her emotions are mixed, her realization of the consequences of her action so strong, that she must pause before completing the decapitation to come to terms with what she is doing and its implications. Donatello demonstrated his sensitivity to the human psyche, and his commitment to psychological realism in his
depiction of Judith, and the group remains a moving testimony to his ability to understand people in extreme situations and to represent their reactions subtly yet clearly. The second innovation is that Donatello framed a psychomachia in terms of a specific narrative, in the process confirming the essentially narrative bias of Florentine Quattrocento Judiths. In addition, his Judith seems to have sparked a small increase in the production of works dealing with Judith in succeeding years. Oddly, perhaps, the sculptures look back at least as strongly to Ghiberti's Judith in their form as to Donatello's piece. Finally, Judith Beheading Holofernes seems to mark the first time a large-scale representation of the heroine was created for a site other than a church or chapel; i.e., it was intended for a secular location and at least partially a secular expression [203]. As such, it marks the beginning of Judith's use as a figure for the public expression of civic content, a function it was to fulfill in several additional instances in the decades to come.

Donatello's Judith had no successors in the realm of monumental sculpture for the remainder of the Quattrocento; indeed, Judith very nearly passed out of the sculptural repertory after its completion. However, at least one further treatment of this theme in sculpture was created in Florence before 1470, a small (42.9 cm.) bronze statuette of Judith (Plate 9), now in the Detroit Institute of Arts. Neither the artist nor the precise date of this work are known, and it did not enter the public consciousness until 1879, when it was exhibited in London, so that its initial provenance is obscure [204]. Lionel Ettlinger proposed that the work was not a product of the Renaissance
at all, but a nineteenth century pastiche compounded of various fifteenth century sources, including Donatello's Judith, Botticelli's Uffizi panel, and an early Florentine engraving of a drawing once attributed to Maço Finiguerra [205] (Plate 10). Doubts were also raised as to the age of the bronze, and at one time it was tentatively classified as Dutchish Baroque; however, technical examination revealed that the bronze is acceptable as a Florentine cast of the second half of the fifteenth century [206], and today the sculpture is largely accepted as a Renaissance work of about 1455-70.

At its earliest appearance, no attribution of authorship was made; however, since it was acquired by the Detroit Institute in 1937, most scholars have given it to Antonio del Pollaiuolo, including Leo Planiscig [207], who made the initial attribution, Valentiner [208], Ragghianti [209], and Middendorf [210]. Sabatini [211], Ortolani [212], and Busignani [213] dissented, but without suggesting an alternative [214]. Steingraber noted affinities to the work of Antonio di Salvi, but did not make a specific attribution [215]. Salvi is not a likely candidate, however, because the sculpture is of too high a quality to have been executed by this artist, whose works are marked by awkwardness in articulation, insecurity of stance, and a confused approach to the handling of drapery [216].

The most serious challenge to Pollaiuolo's authorship was made by E.P. Richardson, who attributed it to Verrocchio. Though he conceded that the work was a little cruder than the typical product of Verrocchio's hand, he argued for this master's authorship on several stylistic grounds: that it is a draped figure, typical of Verrocchio,
while Pollaiuolo preferred nudes and was singularly uninterested in clothing; that the relaxed and easy but vigorous swing of the body, with a contrapposto pose in which weight is poised on one foot, with the other merely steadying the body in its position, finds analogues in Verrocchio's *Risen Christ, David*, and *Christ and St. Thomas*; that the naturalism of the twist in the weight-bearing ankle is typical of his understanding of anatomy; that the long, thin neck, meager chest, and large, body, rather awkward hands and feet are typical of Verrocchio's naturalistic idiom of the human form; and that this is also true of the face, which reminded Richardson of that of the faces of harpies on the artist's marble fountain for the Old Sacristy in San Lorenzo, and the figure of Faith in the Forteguerri monument [217].

If Richardson's attribution were correct, it would be of considerable interest because he regarded the work as an early sculpture by Verrocchio [218]. Insofar as virtually all of this artist's documented early projects were commissioned by the Medici [219], it might be reasonable to posit that a small bronze of Judith might have been executed for them. Since Donatello's sculpture and at least one painting each by Botticelli and Mantegna can be linked to Medici patronage, it might then be possible to suggest that the Medici embraced Judith as a special symbol, above and beyond her general significance as a civic emblem. Given the number of works depicting the heroine that were owned by the Medici, this still might be a reasonable supposition; however, the likelihood is that Verrocchio was not the artist of the Detroit statuette, and while the Medici could have patronized Pollaiuolo as easily, the strength of the
relationship is considerably weaker, and it is questionable whether this piece should be used as evidence for a Medici-Judith link. As Anthony Radcliffe, writing in the Detroit exhibition catalogue, pointed out, more persuasive arguments can be made for seeing Pollaiuolo's hand in this work [220]. The lines of the work, its silhouette, is more angular and broken, less fluent, than is typical of Verrocchio, while the draperies are less broken. The facial type, with its sloping forehead, high-bridged nose, projecting upper and receding lower lips, and pointed chin is foreign to Verrocchio and distinctly typical of Pollaiuolo. The hands and feet of Judith are in fact highly reminiscent of those of Pollaiuolo, particularly in the presence of small, rounded toenails set in broad-ended toes with big knuckles, a characteristic found in his work in all media. The facial and physical type, including Judith's narrow shoulders and restricted chest, are similar to those found in the angels of the silver reliquary cross made by Pollaiuolo for the Florence Baptistry in 1457-9, and each sculpture also possesses an interest in dynamically swirling draperies: a characteristic also found in the silver relief of The Birth of the Baptist, in the angels on the painted panel of The Elevation of St. Mary Magdalen at Staggia, and in scenes of The Dance of Salome and The Presentation of the Head of the Baptist from the embroidered Baptistry vestments now in the Museo dell' Opera del Duomo. Consequently, though the possibility that the work was made very early in Verrocchio's career, before he had formed his mature style, cannot be entirely discounted, there are ample reasons to tie the statuette to Pollaiuolo or his workshop, and
the high quality of the piece makes it at least likely that the master himself had a hand in its execution.

If the work is by Pollaiuolo, then its style seems to dictate a date of between 1455 and 1470, i.e., either contemporary with or just after Donatello's monumental sculpture. Its closest stylistic analogues in Pollaiuolo's oeuvre fall within this period, and a date much later than this is largely ruled out because Antonio's late drapery style was assimilated to that of Verrocchio, and departs significantly from that of this piece [221]. If the sculpture is the early work of Verrocchio, it would also have to fall into the period between about 1460 and 1470, so that this range of dates seems reasonably secure.

Judith is posed in a contrapposto posture, with her weight on her right leg. The sword is elevated over her head, but is held out to her right side and up at about a forty-five degree angle. Her left hand is placed on her hip; however, she does not hold the head of Holofernes. In fact, he is nowhere to be found. Her left leg is retracted behind her and to the side, creating a thrust of her hips to her right to maintain balance, and providing for a dynamic, if still ultimately stable posture. Her sleeves are puffed at her elbows, but otherwise her tunic clings rather tightly to her torso, blooming out only a little around its belt, but flowing more loosely below this point. Her skirts are ankle-length, revealing her unshod feet, and sweep up behind her to her left, as if blown by a puff of wind. Her facial expression is not particularly strong: confident, with perhaps a hint of a smile, but not expressive of determination or a desire for
revenge. Nonetheless, her eyes seem focussed, as if she is looking at something in the distance, so that her psychological presence is not fully abstract or generalized. Her hair is swept tightly back from her face and clasped behind, falling down her neck in a tail.

There is no real implication of motion in her stance; she is posed stably, really almost posturing. It is tempting to see her as celebrating her victory with upraised sword, in the manner of Ghiberti's figure, but the absence of Holofernes makes the moment difficult to read. It is impossible to be certain that the beheading has been accomplished, and her pose can be understood as easily as a threatening posture as one indicative of triumph after the execution, if a specific moment is sought. This, however, may be the key to understanding this sculpture, i.e., that no particular moment in the narrative is isolated here. Rather, though Judith has a living expression and a visual focus, she really should be understood as an iconic figure, abstracted from the temporal and spatial specifications of the story: the only Florentine work from the century to be unambiguously iconic in its mode. The sword is not poised to strike, or really raised in active celebration. It is an attribute designed to help identify the figure, and the celebratory note struck by its elevation is probably a device intended to remind the viewer of Judith's ultimate victory, not to convey the sense that she is exulting in her triumph in the immediate aftermath of her success. Thus, the audience is given a symbol or image of Judith, an iconic portrait, rather than a person engaged in action in a narrative event.
This Judith’s function and meaning also represent significant departures from the norms established by Ghiberti and Donatello, and maintained by most of the paintings in the period after 1470. As a small bronze, it is unlikely that the piece was intended to make a major public statement. It is the kind of work that was almost certainly intended for domestic use. A purely decorative purpose is likely to have encompassed its primary function, and it is quite possible that this was its sole use. It might also have been used as a focus for some kind of devotional meditation on Judith and her story, though it seems unlikely that this was its primary function. As for its meaning, there is absolutely nothing in the form of the work to serve as a guide to its significance: no symbolic elements, and no narrative allusion to shape its content. The work is a kind of tabula rasa on which the viewer can project any meaning he knows or imagines can be attributed to Judith and her tale, and there is simply no way of knowing how it was understood by its initial owners or others who came into contact with it. Its form is so general that it has no primary content beyond identifying the figure as Judith, and perhaps obliquely recalling her victory; however, its latent content is as large as the ways in which Judith's character, life, and victory can be conceived, encompassing potentially the whole of the literary and visual traditions connected to the heroine. Thus, while typical Florentine Judiths convey a fairly specific meaning, this statuette’s expression is as general as it could be.

This small bronze sculpture of Judith is the last of the extant fifteenth century statues of the heroine. While the number is very
small, the overwhelming presence of Donatello's work, and the importance of Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise*, give Judith a significant place in Florentine iconography of the period: an importance that is enhanced by the paintings by Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, and Mantegna depicting the heroine, which might have been generated at least in part by the influence of Donatello's piece. There was a small flowering of representations of Judith in sculptural form in the early sixteenth century in the form of ceramics from the workshop of Giovanni della Robbia. In 1523, Giovanni included a figure of Judith among sixty-six medallions of prophets, apostles, Old Testament figures, and saints set in the spandrels of the arcade surrounding the cloister in the Certosa in Val d'Enza [222]. He also produced great numbers of glazed terracotta statuettes of Judith about twenty inches high [223] (Plate 11). These figurines seem to be a conflation of Ghiberti's *Judith* and the Detroit statuette: like the former she has a comparatively compact silhouette and holds the head of Holofernes at her left hip, but like the latter she looks out toward the viewer, though with an expressionless gaze, and holds the sword at an angle more similar to that in Pollaiuolo's work. However, these small sculptures represent a significant departure in representations of Judith in Florence, both because after about 1470 depictions of the heroine tended to be in paint, and because any works in which she was featured were rare after the Medici restoration in 1512, perhaps because of the anti-Medicean overtones Donatello's sculpture had acquired in the Piazza della Signoria. Regardless, however, of whether the sculptural Judith essentially ceased to exist after about
1470, or was represented in other small works no longer extant, the impact of Donatello's *Judith Beheading Holofernes* was monumental, establishing an enormous presence for Judith in the public consciousness of late Quattrocento Florence, and almost certainly functioning as one of the stimuli which led to the creation of a body of important paintings of the heroine in the last third of the century.
NOTES

1 Richard Krautheimer, Lorenzo Ghiberti [Princeton, 1982 (1970)], p. 173. Of the statues, seven are of women: the three prophetesses, Judith, Miriam, Eve, and Puarphera. As Krautheimer notes, the women have sometimes been identified as sybils. However, whereas sybils normally appear in groups of six, eight, or ten, and had done so since the time of Giovanni Pisano, only five candidates appear here, and two can be identified by attribute as Judith and Miriam. Moreover, sybils traditionally were accompanied by putti and were enthroned, rather than standing alone, as here. Consequently, Krautheimer's identification of these figures as prophetesses of the Bible seems probable. Krautheimer, "Ghiberti," p. 173.


4 Krautheimer, "Ghiberti," p. 174. Because the identity of these prophets is uncertain, however, the relationships defined by Krautheimer must be considered tentative.


6 John Pope-Hennessy, Donatello Sculptor (New York, 1993), p. 281. This linkage clearly continued into the Early Renaissance, as can be seen by illuminations in two Medicean manuscripts: a psalter of about 1460 for the convent of Saints Cosmas and Damian, now in the Museo di San Marco, which shows St. Francis flanked by Judith and David; and an Evangelary presented by Piero de Medici to the Duomo in Florence in 1466, which shows Judith and David as ancillary figures in a Last Judgment illumination.

7 Krautheimer, "Ghiberti," p. 173. This comparison seems to have originated with St. Augustine, in his Enarratio in Psalmum 33. The linkage of the two as exemplars of humility will be discussed more fully below with regard to Donatello's sculpture.

8 Krautheimer, "Ghiberti," p. 175.

9 Krautheimer, "Ghiberti," pp. 177-88. Krautheimer suggests Ambrogio Traversari might have been the conduit through which this knowledge passed to Ghiberti.

11 Krautheimer, "Ghiberti," pp. 164-5. There is some question as to whether a document describing the completion of this first stage of casting is incorrectly dated 4 April 1436, with 4 April 1437 being the correct date. The Florentine year had changed only about ten days before, and force of habit by a proveditore writing 1436 might have led to an error. Krautheimer, "Ghiberti," p. 163.


14 On the other hand, as the Campanile prophets and other such figures executed by Donatello make clear, for a number of prophets there is no widely recognizable attribute by which their specific identities can be established.

15 Several nineteenth century scholars, such as Semper, Schmarzow, and Bode suggested dates between 1430 and 1440; but, from 1887, when Tschudi related the Judith to the St. John the Baptist, virtually all commentators have favored the 1450s. Fader, "Sculpture," p. 131. It is worth noting that the precise reasons for Donatello’s return to Florence are unknown. While the wooden Mary Magdalen would seem on stylistic grounds to antedate the Judith, it is not impossible that a commission for this work was involved in his decision to return, though there is no evidence that such was the case.


17 Janson, "Donatello," p. 198.

18 As John Pope-Hennessy pointed out, his actual work for Siamese patrons on the bronze St. John the Baptist may have begun as early as 1455, but it was not delivered until September, 1457, when an export tax (gabella) was paid for transport of half the figure from Florence to Siena, with the remainder following the next month. Pope-Hennessy, "Donatello," pp. 277, 288.


22 Janson, "Donatello," p. 205.


28 Janson, "Donatello," p. 203.

29 Janson, "Donatello," p. 203.

30 Janson, "Donatello," p. 203.


33 Pope-Hennessy, "Donatello," p. 280. It would have been sufficient, in fact, to cast Judith Beheading Holofernes, the Siena St. John the Baptist, and other sculptures as well.

34 Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, Vol. I, translated by George Bull (New York, 1987), p. 179. Vasari wrote: For the Signoria of Florence Donatello made a casting in metal, showing Judith cutting off the head of Holofernes, which was placed in the piazza under one of the arches of their loggia. This is an excellent and accomplished work in which, by the appearance of Judith and the simplicity of her garments, Donatello reveals to the onlooker the woman's hidden courage and the inner strength she derives from God. Similarly, one can see the effect of wine and sleep in the expression of Holofernes and the presence of death in his limbs which, as his soul departed, are cold and limp. Donatello worked so well that the casting emerged very delicate and beautiful, and then he finished it so carefully that it is a marvel to see. The base, which is a simply designed granite baluster, is also pleasing to the eye and very graceful. Donatello was so satisfied with the results that he decided, for the first time, to put his name on one of his works; and it is seen in these words: Donatello Opus.
35 Fader, "Sculpture," pp. 157-8. Christopher Hibbard has indicated, however, that "Semper" was the motto of Piero il Gossosso, though he did not say whether it was shared with or derived from Cosimo, or held by Piero alone. Christopher Hibbard, Florence: Biography of a City (New York, 1993), p. 110.


38 Fader, "Sculpture," p. 158.


40 Frederick Hartt, History of Italian Renaissance Art, 3rd edition (New York, 1987), p. 299. Moreover, careful examination of photographs of Gozzoli's work by the author has failed to reveal the presence of this image on the figure considered to be Cosimo. The identification of this figure as Cosimo seems first to have been made by Ernst Gombrich, and is still widely accepted today. Ernst Gombrich, "The Early Medici as patrons of Art," in Norm and Form (London, 1966), p. 41.


44 Fader, "Sculpture," p. 159.

45 For a fuller discussion of Fader's argument, see below, and Fader, "Sculpture," pp. 147-70.


49 Janson, "Donatello," p. 196.


53 A second, small point in Piero’s favor might be the possibility, suggested by Saul Levine and endorsed by Bennett and Wilkins, that the model for Judith was Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Piero’s wife. Bonnie A. Bennett and David G. Wilkins, *Donatello* (London, 1984), p. 89.

54 The fact that the group seems to have been planned to require circumambulation for full perception might be advanced as another argument in favor of Medici patronage. Such a composition would tend to indicate that it was meant to be placed in the middle of a space and seen from all sides, rather than against a wall or in a niche. Insofar as the first records of the work locate it in the garden of the palazzo, where it could have easily been set in the center of the space and seen from all sides, it seems reasonable to suggest that Donatello designed it with that site in mind, and meant it to require movement around the sculpture on the part of the spectator for full apprehension of the piece.

55 Michael Greenhalgh interprets this as one veil doubled over and pinned. Michael Greenhalgh, *Donatello and His Sources* (New York, 1982), p. 188. However, the second layer of fabric appears to be somewhat lighter in weight than the first, making his reading problematic.

56 Pope-Hennessy, "Donatello," p. 285. Pope-Hennessy places Judith in early middle age. This is contrary to the practice of Ghiberti and other sculptors and painters of Donatello’s time and the period after his death, all of whom depict Judith as youthful.

57 According to Levitical law, one who sheds blood, even in a legitimate cause such as self-defense or battle, becomes ritually impure. See *Numbers* 19:11–16 and 31:13–24. It was in part for this reason that David was forbidden to build the Temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem; 1 Chronicles 8–9.

58 Greenhalgh interprets this as a single garment with a very deep tuck at the waist. Greenhalgh, "Donatello," p. 188. However, the tuck would have to be so deep that if it came loose, and the sash is really not bound tightly enough to hold it, it would envelop Judith’s feet, making walking impossible. In addition, between the cuff and tunic on her right arm another, tighter layer of fabric is clearly visible.

59 See the aforementioned break in Judith’s veil, and the gaping hole in Holofernes’s left heel, a flaw only partly repaired. Bennett and Wilkins, *Donatello*, p. 116. It was Hans Kauffmann, who maintained that the sculpture lacks all narrative intent, who first suggested a
casting flaw as the explanation for the gash. Hans Kauffmann, 
Donatello (Berlin, 1935), p. 167. Janson, while not endorsing 
Kauffmann's conclusion, viewed the gash as a simple seam between the 
head and torso pieces of the sculpture which Donatello liked and left, 
denying that a slash was originally intended to appear in Holofernes's 

60 Greenhalgh, "Donatello," p. 190.

62 Greenhalgh, "Donatello," p. 190. Kauffmann, on the other 
hand, identified the image as a rearing horse, a reference to 

63 Janson, "Donatello," p. 201.
64 Janson, "Donatello," p. 201.
65 Janson, "Donatello," p. 201.

66 Bertha Harris Wiles, The Fountains of Florentine Sculptors 
endorsed this reading.


68 Fader viewed Judith's posture less as one of preparation to 
swipe a sword violently than as posing, and saw it as implying 
guardianship of the city's welfare, as will be seen in a summary of 
her interpretation of the sculpture (see below).

69 In Fader's view, however, this would only be a form of civic 
virtue, the humility of the ruler before law, and the avoidance of the 
kind of pride that leads to excess and vice, as will be seen. Oddly, 
her interpretation of this sequence really probably better supports an 
understanding based on a view of the work as addressing private 
virtues and vices, such as Chastity and Luxuria and Gluttony. The 
last two, at least, are the sins most obvious in the Bacchanalian 
reliefs, and were a standard part of the received meaning of the story 
of Judith and Holofernes.

70 It is possible that the group should be read as two putti and 
three stages of an action, with one putto shown plucking, then placing 
the grapes in a basket, and the second receiving the grapes, then 
carrying them away.

71 In fact, though probably designed by Donatello, the actual 
execution of two of these reliefs was almost certainly left to 
assistants: the picking and trampling of the grapes. Donatello 
himself is believed to have largely executed the climactic panel.
72 Fader attempted to set up a contrast between these two trumpeters and the putti on the left shoulder of Judith's yoke, calling the latter "outrageously sad," and seeing them as unable to blow their trumpets. Fader, "Sculpture," p. 152. However, as photographs of these putti after a relatively recent cleaning reveal, they seem less sad than ecstatic, and give no evidence of any desire or inability to blow their horns. Indeed, their postures are highly energetic, almost dancelike, and do not carry the aspect of grief (though, admittedly, facial expressions particularly are notoriously difficult to interpret out of a narrative context). It is possible that a combination of dirt and a distant viewing point led Fader to misinterpret the figures.


74 Though, as will be seen, this has been done, most particularly by Fader.


80 In fact, from some angles it seems as if a hint of a bemused smile is creeping onto his lips and into his eyes. But facial expressions are, as has been noted, very difficult to read or interpret in isolated contexts, and it would be problematic to assert this possibility too strongly, much more to draw conclusions from it.

81 Including in the Bible. See, for example, the story of Noah; or contrast Proverbs 23:30-5 with Proverbs 31:4-7.


83 They are, after all, probably taken from sarcophagi, so some allusion to death in their presence is not unreasonably understood.

84 This possibility would provide the closest relationship to the narrative of the story, since the nation of Israel, which was composed of twelve tribes, are the people whom Judith saves. However, even this simple connection would be redolent of additional significance in a Christian culture, in which believers are seen as the new Israel, the successors of the twelve tribes. Thus, the
allusion to Christ's salvational mission, and Judith's standing as a type for Christ, might come into play. There is, however, neither concrete visual imagery, nor any inscriptive evidence, to substantiate this possibility, attractive though it may be.

85 Bennett and Wilkins, Donatello, p. 35, n. 12.

86 Janson, "Donatello" p. 200.

87 Janson, "Donatello," p. 201. It is known that both the statues of Judith and David, and their bases, were taken to the operai of the Signoria in 1495. Bennett and Wilkins, Donatello, p. 83.


89 Greenhalgh, "Donatello," p. 185.

90 Quoted in Greenhalgh, "Donatello," p. 184.


92 Bennett and Wilkins, Donatello, p. 83. In the second (1568) edition of Vasari's "Lives," in the "Life of Baccio Bandinelli," he mentions this arrangement.

93 Pope-Hennessy, "Donatello," p. 83, and Bennett and Wilkins, Donatello, p. 83. However, as each of these sources indicate, this should not be taken to imply, as Kauffmann and Francis Ames-Lewis suggested, that the two statues were either commissioned together (they likely were made twenty-five or thirty years apart), or part of a larger program in the palace, only that they may have shared a theme or themes. The possible significance of this relationship will be discussed below.


99 Janson, "Donatello," p. 203. He resolves it by declaring the issue irrelevant, since it could have been intended as a fountain in Siena as well.

100 Greenhalgh, "Donatello," p. 186.


104 See below; and Chapter 4, discussion of Botticelli's Judith Returning to Bethulia.


107 Kauffmann, Donatello, p. 167.

108 Janson, "Donatello," p. 204. The following summary of Janson's points is from the same source.


114 Bennett and Wilkins, Donatello, p. 220.

115 Bennett and Wilkins, Donatello, pp. 220-1.

116 Bennett and Wilkins, Donatello, p. 221.


118 Fader, "Sculpture," pp. 146-52. See especially p. 146, in which she explicitly agrees with Pope-Hennessy's assessment of the work as narrative, and pp. 156-7, in which she attacks a symbolic interpretation of the pillow, asserting that it is simply an allusion to the bedchamber, and hence an exclusively narrative element, creating a setting for the action.


120 Fader, "Sculpture," p. 150.


122 Fader, "Sculpture," p. 150.
123 Fader, "Sculpture," pp. 150-2. Fader uses the term "revenge" rather than "triumph." This seems a curious choice of words, since she is really trying to prevent Holofernes's victory over her people, rather than exact retribution for a previous wrong. Nonetheless, since this putative vengeance would be accomplished by her killing him, it seems acceptable to consider her triumph and this revenge as essentially synonymous.

124 See below; and Fader, "Sculpture," pp. 146-70.

125 As Katzenellenbogen demonstrates, it was far from uncommon in the psychomachia to leave the outcome in doubt. Many representations show the virtues and vices still engaged in combat, with victory uncertain. Adolf Katzenellenbogen, Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art [Toronto, 1989 (1939)], pp. 7-11. See, for example, the Melisanda Psalter Book Cover, illustrated in this source.


127 Though whether Holofernes is alive or dead, or whether the viewer is meant to understand him as doomed to die shortly, is a matter of individual interpretation, of course. But the issue is not an insignificant one. A narrative understanding of the work can accommodate any view, but Fader's interpretation requires that only one be true, i.e., that he is still and will remain alive. The issue of his life or death is critical to Fader's hypothesis, since a dead Holofernes provides no threat against which vigilance must be maintained. However, though she speaks of her view as indisputable fact, actually this is very much an open question, and to the degree that the validity of her interpretation hinges on it, her point of view is weakened owing to that openness: the uncertainty, at least, as to what Donatello meant the viewer to understand.


129 Fader, "Sculpture," p. 150. When this is discussed by other scholars, they tend merely to see her as slender; though for Poetschke it is a part of the work that further emphasizes the presence of divine action working through Judith, since in his view she is insufficiently strong in her own body to carry out the execution, and hence a part of her humility is that she accepts God's aid. Poetschke, "Donatello," p. 404. Given the height at which the sculpture was probably originally displayed in the Medici Palace garden, the elongation of her torso might have been present as foreshortening to adjust the form so that her proportions would appear normal from the proper viewing angle. This kind of optical realism is characteristic of Donatello. But any such attenuation here is minimal, in any case. Judith is slender, but the canons of beauty at the time had come to favor slimmness in women, and in showing her as worthy of being desired by Holofernes, the slenderness of her body may have been Donatello's way of giving her an obvious beauty (in the terms of his time) appropriate to the object of Holofernes's lust.
131 Outside of the ultimate eschatological triumph of good over evil. However, it is precisely in such eschatological terms that the typological significance of Judith was generally understood.

132 For rigidly posed figures of Judith in iconic compositions, see, for example, "The Triumph of Humility," from the Zwettl *Speculum Virginum* (Plate 63); that of Judith from the Munich *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* (Plate 62); or the initials from Munich Staatsbibliothek Clm 13001, fol. 88r (Plate 49); and Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana Lat. 4, fol. 120v, a Bible from Parma (Plate 51). Each of these also shows an elevated but clearly immobile sword, except for the first. For Judith standing on top of Holofernes, see the aforementioned *Speculum Virginum* and Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana, Pal. Lat. fol. 120v. In the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* cited, Judith stands behind the bed of Holofernes, but in the same typological series the Virgin is depicted standing on her foe. This element had also occurred in narrative contexts prior to Donatello's work, such as Guariento's fresco (Plate 61), in which Judith stands on Holofernes's hand. That such a motif for conveying the notion of a Virtue triumphant over a Vice was transferable to figures from Biblical stories in narrative or iconic contexts is made clear by images such as Taddeo Gaddi's *David from the Baroncelli Chapel in Florence, Santa Croce*, c. 1328-38, which may be seen in Andrew Ladis, *Taddeo Gaddi* (Columbia, 1982).

133 This should not be taken to imply that the presence of symbols is inconsistent or incompatible with either naturalism or the narrative mode. Symbols, of course, are often present in narrative works, so that their existence does not automatically signal that a work is primarily iconic; indeed, even objects at the extreme points of narrative representation can easily accommodate symbols, and such elements should probably be understood as characteristic of both modes, even though the iconic is likely to lean more heavily on metaphorical or allegorical images as primary bearers of meaning. It is also the case that in a given work an object can have a dual function of the sort outlined by Panofsky in his discussion of disguised symbolism in Northern Renaissance art. Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, Vol. I [New York, 1971 (1953)], pp. 131-48. In this system, a single item can function both as a necessary and realistic part of a narrative setting, and as a part of a metaphorical structure. However, it is also true that objects which in certain contexts could be understood as symbols might not always function as such; such could be the case, for example, with the pillow in Judith Beheading Holofernes, as will be seen.

134 Janson, for example, considered Judith to have an intense internal life, but a generalized one, expressive of a psychological state near delirium that she shares with Donatello's St. John statues.
Her action, however, is seen as purely ritual and symbolic. Janson, "Donatello," p. 204. Pope-Hennessy, on the other hand, regards her as deeply engaged and responsive psychologically to the task at hand. Pope-Hennessy, "Donatello," p. 266.

135 This, for example, is the position held by Janson ("Donatello," p. 204); Charles Avery [Florentine Renaissance Sculpture (London, 1970), p. 93]; and Bennett and Wilkins (Donatello, pp. 220-1), who considered her pose as revelatory of an action, but not a moment, even while maintaining that the freezing was caused by a psychological factor, i.e., her sudden perception of the meaning or consequences of her action.

136 The sense of immobilization is what is perceived most strongly by authors such as Janson ("Donatello," p. 204), Kauffmann (Donatello, pp. 167-70); and Bennett and Wilkins (Donatello, pp. 220-1).

137 Given the fact that for a very long time the subsidiary viewing points of the sculpture were suppressed, as it was placed under an arch in the Loggia dei Lanzi (1506-1914; 1918-present), it might be wondered whether this contributed to the perceptions of Kauffmann, Janson, and others of the work as predominantly symbolic and iconic. Since the frontal view was the one most accessible to them, and the side views less so.

138 Bennett and Wilkins, Donatello, p. 220.

139 See, for example, the book cover of the Melisanda Psalter, c. 1131-44 (British Museum); "Ira in the Midst of Vices," from a ninth century Psychomachia text in Leyden; or "Operatio (Largitas) Battling Avaritia" in Psychomachia MS 1298 (Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale). These examples may be seen in Katzenellenbogen, "Allegories."


141 See, for example, "Fides Defeating Cultura Deorum," from Prudentius MS. 264 (Bern, Burgerbibliothek; late ninth century), illustrated in Katzenellenbogen, "Allegories."

142 See, for example, the ninth century ivory of Virtues Triumphant (Florence, Museo Nazionale); the "Virtues Triumphant and Human Examples," from the Bamberg Apocalypse (Bamberg, Staatliche Bibliothek, 1101-2); "Humilitas Triunphant and Virtuouos Women" (including Judith posed standing on the body of Holofernes), from a Speculum Virginum manuscript, c. 1125-50 (London, British Museum); the "Triumph of Christ and of Humilitas," from the Ratisbon Manuscript (Munich, Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, c. 1170-85); the Virtues Triumphant from Strassburg Cathedral (c. 1280); and the Virtues Triumphant from a Troyes Cathedral reliquary (c. 1200). Each is illustrated in Katzenellenbogen, "Allegories."
143 Even if the inscriptions were added later, the reliefs, the pillow, and perhaps a columnar base were present from the beginning, and on one level can be understood as an allusion to the established iconography of figures from the psychomachia.

144 Janson, "Donatello," p. 203.

145 Fader, "Sculpture," pp. 156-7. Fader's argument with reference to the pillow as an image of gluttony in fact makes little sense. She denies that it refers to sexual incontinence, the principle meaning of Luxuria. Gluttony has its own name, Gula, and its own symbolic language. Gluttony and Lust are closely associated sins, and references to sexual sin often include allusions to other forms of venality; however, if Donatello meant for the viewer to understand insensate gluttony with the equal or stronger presence of lust, he doubtless would have employed another image. If the pillow is Luxuria in any sense, it must encompass lust in its primal, sexual sense, particularly since it is an element that is strongly present in the story, for Holofernes gave the banquet as a means of seducing Judith. Both gluttony and lust are present in the reliefs below the pillow, and it is very reasonable to assume that Donatello meant them to be seen mixing together in this situation, perhaps even through the image of the cushion; but the sexual component must be dominant for the image to make sense symbolically.


147 In the original form of the sculpture, another element might have functioned in a similar way. If the statue originally stood on a columnar base, that column might have been understood as establishing a location for the action as a reference to the bedpost; or as referring to Judith as an image of Fortitude, a virtue with which she was closely associated, and of which she was sometimes an emblem.

148 It is important to note that a view of Judith Beheading Holofernes as essentially narrative in no way compromises an interpretation of the sculpture as an embodiment of the spiritual warfare of the psychomachia.

149 Bennett and Wilkins, Donatello, p. 83. They base this assertion on the connection between Judith and David, represented in Florentine art by Ghiberti's pairing of the two in the Gates of Paradise and more generally by a Medieval tradition linking the two as slayers of oppressors of the chosen people.

150 Though generally regarded as a Florentine emblem, in fact whenever early provenance can be established for works dealing with Judith, there seems to be Medici involvement. This is the case with Donatello's work, at least two Medici-sponsored manuscripts which include Judith illuminations, and, as will be seen, one of Mantegna's paintings of the heroine, which was in Medici hands. In addition, the
earliest record of one of Botticelli's *Judith* also places it with the Medici, although a century after it was executed. Thus, it might be wondered whether the heroine had a special significance for or association with the Medici, almost acting as a personal emblem as well, at least prior to their expulsion in 1495.

151 Again, it is interesting to observe that in this case the sculpture would tend to be fulfilling a principally didactic function, and that narrative, which is dominant in the kinds of expression under consideration, was most closely associated with this function in Medieval practice.

152 Janson, "Donatello," p. 198. Gombrich translated "virtues" as "virtue," which seems especially to connote sexual virtue (the opposite of Luxuria) more strongly, at least in modern usage. However, there is no real evidence that such an implication is carried in the Latin, or was understood by its original audience. Ernst Gombrich, *Meditations on a Hobby Horse* (London, 1963), p. 93. Janson's rendering of the final phrase is more exactly translated as "the proud neck severed by the humble hand."


154 Janson, "Donatello," p. 198.


156 Bennett and Wilkins, *Donatello*, p. 83.

157 Bennett and Wilkins, *Donatello*, p. 83. Bennett and Wilkins's hypothesis of an axial arrangement of the *David* and the *Judith* with the palace entry is based on Vasari's "Life of Baccio Bandinelli" in the second edition of his "Lives," in which he notes that the base of the *David* was so low that people in the street could see into the garden. From this, Bennett and Wilkins speculate that the *Judith* might have been situated in the garden to take advantage of this opportunity to associate it visually with the *David*, generating a community of meaning. Their theory is unprovable, since the site of *Judith Beheading Holofemnes* is unknown, but it is an attractive and reasonable possibility. The two works express similar concepts, and may have been intended to reinforce one another (indeed, even if they were not arranged axially, their common presence in the house and gardens might have linked them together in a significant way).

158 Bennett and Wilkins, *Donatello*, p. 90.

159 Kauffmann, *Donatello*, p. 170.

161 Katzenellenbogen, "Allegories," p. 9. See, for example, the illumination of "The Virtues and Human Examples" in Munich, Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek Cod. lat. 13002, fol. 4r; a similar illumination in the Lisbon MS., 1165, in the same library; "The Virtues Triumphant and Human Examples" from the Bamburg Apocalypse (Bamburg, Staatliche Bibliothek); and the cover of the Melisanda Psalter (London, British Museum). Each is illustrated in Katzenellenbogen, "Allegories."

162 Pope-Hennessy, "Donatello," p. 152. He does not establish the basis for his opinion, however, and the image itself is difficult to decipher iconographically. Only the fact that a figure is being drawn in a wagon in a traditional image of triumph makes this reading possible; nothing obviously present identifies the figure as Pride, except perhaps its placement on Goliath's helmet.


164 See below; and Fader, "Sculpture," pp. 128-70.


166 Bennett and Wilkins, Donatello, p. 83. Fader also endorsed the idea that Judith is an emblem of Justice. Fader, "Sculpture," p. 130.

167 Bennett and Wilkins, Donatello, p. 83.

168 Kauffmann, Donatello, p. 170.


172 Janson, "Donatello," p. 203.


177 Hartt, "History," p. 286.


182 Fader seems not to have considered the existence of psychomachia treating civic virtues as relevant.

183 For an illustration, see Wolfgang Pleister and Wolfgang Schild, Recht und Gerechtigkeit im Spiegel der europäischen Kunst (Cologne, 1988).


185 Examples of this include the British Museum manuscript of the Speculum Virginum (Plate 64); Conrad of Hirsau's "Speculum" in Zwettl (MS. 180, fol. 45); Berlin Preuss. Staatsbibliothek MS. phil. 1701, fol. 340; British Museum Arundel 44, fol. 34v; the Trêves reliquary; and de Bartoli's La Canzone della Virtu e delle Scienze, made in 1355 for Brizio Visconti in Bologna, and now in Chantilly, Musee Condé MS 1426 (Plate 65). Plates not appearing in this study may be found in Katsenellenbogen, " Allegories." Greenhalgh, "Donatello," pp. 182-3.


194 This argument is not unlike that of Gombrich, who asserted that the first inscription can best be understood as a warning against Luxuria, and as an attempt on Cosimo's part to forestall criticism of his having two large bronze sculptures in his home, a kind of conspicuous consumption that the Florentine public might have found dangerous or objectionable. Gombrich, "Early Medici," p. 41.

196 Fader really admitted as much when she discussed the pillow as alluding to tombs and death. Fader, "Sculpture," p. 157.

197 Janson, "Donatello," p. 198.

198 Janson, "Donatello," p. 198.

199 Janson, "Donatello," p. 198.

200 Janson, "Donatello," p. 198.

201 Fader, "Sculpture," p. 179.


203 On a small scale, depictions of Judith in a secular context had previously occurred in moralizing histories such as the Histoire Universelle.

204 Detroit Institute of Arts, Italian Renaissance Sculpture in the Time of Donatello (Detroit, 1985), p. 199.

205 L.D. Ettlinger, Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo (Oxford, 1978), catalogue number 65 (rejected attributions). The print has generally been considered the work of Baccio Bandini, although attributions to individual members of a circle of early engravers including Finiguerra, Baldini, and Pollaiuolo are difficult to substantiate with certainty. Detroit, "Italian," p. 201.


207 Planiscig's attribution was not published. Detroit, "Italian," p. 199.

208 Detroit Institute of Arts, Catalogue of An Exhibition of Italian Gothic and Renaissance Sculpture (Detroit, 1938), no. 52.

209 Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, "La mostra di scultura italiano a Detroit (U.S.A.)," Critica d'Arte 3 (1938), pp. 170-83.


214 Detroit, "Italian," p. 199.


219 These include the inlaid marble gravestone of Cosimo de Medici in San Lorenzo; the marble fountain in the Old Sacristy in San Lorenzo; the bronze candlestick for the Palazzo della Signoria; the copper ball and cross on top of the lantern of the Duomo; and the tomb of Piero and Giovanni de Medici in the New Sacristy in San Lorenzo. Richardson, "Bertoldo," p. 210.

220 Detroit, "Italian," pp. 200-1. The following summarizes this source.

221 Detroit, "Italian," p. 201.


CHAPTER IV

JUDITH IN FLORENTINE ART, 1470-1512: PAINTINGS OF JUDITH

Prior to the last third of the Quattrocento, the most prominent depictions of Judith and her tale by leading Florentine artists were sculptural, with Ghiberti, Donatello, and either Pollaiuolo or Verrocchio all rendering Judith in bronze between about 1425 and 1470. A certain number of painted representations of the heroine were created during this period, of course; however, they were generally not by such important artists, nor were the individual works equal either in quality or impact to Donatello's masterpiece or Pollaiuolo's small treasure. In fact, painted images of Judith from this era are found almost exclusively in manuscript illuminations, as had been the case in the Middle Ages, and on cassone panels: forms which were principally the province of minor masters. While it is conceivable that in some instances a major painter might have been involved in the design of such small-scale pieces, in no case among extant objects can such an involvement be posited convincingly, and depictions of the heroine seem to have been extremely rare in independent panel paintings and frescoes, where the participation of major artists might be more readily expected.
As far as is known, there are no extant panels from this period featuring Judith in the oeuvre of any major Florentine painter, and current evidence, whether literary or visual, provides an indication of only two frescoes by important Tuscan Quattrocento artists prior to 1470 in which Judith was included, though in each case she is only a small element in a work that is not essentially concerned with her narrative. One was a series of frescoes of famous historical persons commissioned before 1432 from Masolino by Cardinal Giordano Orsini for the Sala del teatro in his palace at Monte Giordano in Rome, and the other is an apse fresco of the coronation of the Virgin by Filippo Lippi in Spoleto, executed between 1467 and the painter's death in 1469.

It is difficult to say precisely how large a part representations of Judith played in the production of small, decorative works such as manuscripts or cassoni during this period; although, as the aforementioned illuminations in two manuscripts made for the Medici, her frequent appearances on cassone panels [1], and the numerous references to her in the homilies and the Summa Theologica of St. Antonine of Florence make clear, she was a figure in the public consciousness of Florentines, and possessed some degree of importance. Current evidence does not suggest that she was a truly dominant figure even in these relatively minor genres; certainly she was considerably less well-represented than some other Biblical personalities who carried similar import, such as David, and there is no real evidence that there was a marked increase in her popularity over the first seventy years of the century. Rather, she remained on
the whole a secondary figure, her tale essentially the province of minor painters working in the decorative arts, and the vessel for a restricted range of expressions centered on the virtues of chastity in brides and married women, participation in traditional illustrated typologies, and the identification of specific portions of text in illuminated manuscripts.

Nonetheless, her limited appearances in the major projects of Masolino and Lippi are not without importance for the development of the use and image of Judith in Florentine art. Masolino's frescoes have not survived. However, they were at least partially recorded in five manuscripts that copy the general appearance of individual figures, and in some cases settings, from the cycle: a manuscript signed by Leonardo da Besozzo, in the Crespi Collection in Milan; the Libro del giusto in the Gabinetto Nazionale in Rome; a picture chronicle in the Biblioteca Reale in Turin; a recently discovered set of illuminations of Florentine origin that was on the New York art market in 1985, but whose current location is unknown; and nine dispersed pages from an unfinished text, the "Cockerell Chronicle," one of which, currently in the Woodner Collection, includes a depiction of Judith [2].

The illuminations in the "Cockerell Chronicle" (Plates 12 and 13) were executed at some time in the middle of the fifteenth century, perhaps a decade or two after Masolino's project was completed. It is uncertain who painted the miniatures, which include a scene of Judith walking away from the Assyrian camp carrying both the head and sword of Holofernes. Berenson considered them the product of a Florentine
artist, though he was unable to identify the hand with certainty [3]. In 1952, Ilaria Toesca suggested that, since the Latin inscriptions are accompanied by French translations, it was more likely that a French artist with Italian training was responsible for the illuminations, proposing the young Jean Fouquet, who was probably in Rome in 1446 as a member of a mission, as a good candidate [4]. Toesca's hypothesis that a French artist painted these miniatures is widely accepted today [5], though with the caveat that neither documentary evidence nor specific details of style tie the work with certainty to any particular painter, or require the participation of a figure with Italian training, since Florentine elements in the work could simply record characteristics of Masolino's style without requiring that the French artist be able to work creatively in this mode.

According to Scheller, the most accurate copies of Masolino's paintings are those in which backgrounds are included [6]. In many cases in the "Cockerell Chronicle" the figures have been abstracted entirely from the environments putatively provided by Masolino, and set floating on the page without any indication of setting. However, in some of the illuminations, including that of Judith, settings are present, so that this illustration provides at least a general idea of her appearance in Masolino's cycle.

Unfortunately, even for the Judith it is difficult to determine from the manuscript either the precise appearance of Masolino's painting or how direct was its influence on the development of the iconography of the heroine in Florentine art. Two Renaissance descriptions of Orsini's vast cycle of over 380 single figures and
groups are extant, but these texts provide only lists of the figures, and do not describe the frescoes themselves in any detail. Thus, it is unclear how closely the Cockerell miniatures, or any of the other illustrated texts, copy Masolino's frescoes beyond the general appearance of figures.

Judith is located on a page with Brutus, Peisistratus, Cambyses, Pythagoras, King Darius, and the Prophet Haggai. Lists of famous historical figures had been compiled as exemplars of virtuous and evil living as early as the Patristic period, and are found in the writings of Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria, and St. Isidore of Seville, among others [7]. They formed a fundamental aspect of Christian education in the Middle Ages, and were often supplemented in manuscripts by pictures of the subjects of the text [8]. Though such cycles might have had a primary function as decoration, the figures were also intended to recall the lives of the individuals depicted, and to suggest moral lessons thereby, be they of behavior to be emulated or avoided. Monumental cycles of famous persons in painting or sculpture were rare before the Renaissance, but at least one example is extant in Florence, the series of portraits of Old Testament figures painted in the Baroncelli Chapel in Santa Croce by Taddeo Gaddi about 1330, a precedent certainly known to Masolino. It was common in such cycles of heroic men and women to include figures from the Bible, classical history, legend, and the Middle Ages, so that there is nothing unusual about the combination of secular and religious figures in Masolino's cycle of famous personalities [9].
The Cockerell manuscript almost certainly does not accurately reproduce the compositional layout or general appearance of (a segment of) the cycle, and it definitely distorts the relationship between its individual figures. In the palazzo, the figures were set in rows on the walls of a great room. In the manuscript, the sense of these registers is only loosely preserved, and the figures are spaced irregularly on the surface of the pages, destroying all sense of vertical alignment, which may not have been the case on the walls in the palace at Monte Giordano.

The precise arrangement of the figures in the palazzo is also not preserved in the manuscript. For example, in the Cockerell page including Judith, Brutus and Peisistratus are placed above Cambyses and Judith, who in turn are above Pythagoras, Darius, and Haggai. In the fresco cycle, Brutus and Pythagoras were placed at the end of the fourth epoch, while Cambyses and Judith began the fifth. In the list compiled by Marco Attilio Alessi, perhaps from an earlier source, Pythagoras, Darius, and Haggai followed directly after Judith; that in an anonymous German manuscript of 1463 omits this Darius, though it includes a later one much further along in the epoch, after forty-six additional figures or groups [10]. While the German text describes the cycle more fully, recording, for example, the inscriptions attached to some of the figures, the Cockerell miniature suggests that in this instance Alessi's list might be the more accurate record of their ordering [11]. Regardless, there is no reason to believe that each epoch occupied a single row of the composition; indeed, this cannot have been the case, since the first two epochs have eight and seven
figures, respectively, while later ones have close to a hundred. Some of the figures in this illumination might have been at the end of one row, with others at the beginning of the next; but this need not have been the case, and even if it were they could not have been spread over three rows, as in the illustration. Thus, the lists make it clear that the Cockerell miniaturist abstracted seven (probably) consecutive figures from the cycle, and rearranged them in a composition perhaps generally suggestive of the form of Masolino's frescoes, but not identical to it in the relation of individual figures to one another. It also probably distorts the visual effect of the horizontal and vertical registration, though the latter is uncertain, so that the Cockerell illumination can be regarded only as a partial reflection of Masolino's composition, probably following its general form, but not accurately recording the arrangement of the figures it abstracted from the source.

Similarly, the specific details of figures and backgrounds, and how the figures were related to their settings, are subject to question. The figures are rendered in a sketchy fashion, and lack the kind of detail familiar in Masolino's frescoes from the Brancacci Chapel in Florence, for example. The images are generally portrait-like; some merely pose, and where action is suggested, it is typically generalized, rather than tied to specific narrative representation. Thus, Pythagoras is seen teaching, and Brutus speaking. Judith is an exception to this, however, for she is seen fleeing the camp, and thus is engaged in action that clearly relates to her narrative [12].
In like manner, while Cambyses is set well in front of his setting, and relates to it only in a casual way, Judith is related to her environment in a more significant fashion. She also is well in front of the setting, but she seems to turn back slightly toward it, and it is the locus from which she is fleeing. Owing to the small number of figures with settings in the Cockerell manuscript, it is not possible to say which approach is typical of Masolino's handling of figures and settings in the original; but the generalized nature of the action of most figures, and their posed, portrait-like quality, suggests that the artist may have viewed the settings principally as background, and that he did not feel that a careful integration of figures and settings spatially or narratively was important.

Thus, while the illustration of Judith is probably generally accurate in its pose, the moment represented, and the narrative character of the depiction, specific details of setting, costume, and expression may have been lost, and she is unlikely to have appeared in relationship to the other figures on the wall as she does in the manuscript.

In the original fresco cycle, the figures were arranged chronologically, so that individuals living in the same (broadly-defined) age were grouped together. This appears to have been the only rationale for the ordering of these historical figures. There is no evidence, either inscriptive or in the imagery, that the juxtaposition of individual celebrities was meaningful, nor are there indications that any of the figures were intended to function as an exemplar of specific moral qualities or of good and bad living.
Inscriptions were brief, identifying the figure and perhaps briefly quoting a prophecy, or providing a little more information about those few figures who might have been sufficiently obscure, or whose names were shared with another in the cycle (there are two Dariuses, for example), to further aid in identification. In fact, many of the philosophers, theologians, and authors in the set led rather characterless lives, and were not included in the canonical Patristic and Medieval lists, where texts often explicitly drew morals from the lives or characters of famous people, providing a guide to meaning. The relative neutrality of the images of Judith and her companions in the Cockerell manuscript, comprising only a painting of the figure accompanied by an identifying inscription and attribute (and in the cases of Judith and Cambyses by settings as well), thus probably reflects the appearance of the original cycle [13]. Settings might have been present for all of its figures, but they need not have been, for the comparative simplicity and iconic, portrait-like character of the Cockerell illuminations probably captures the tone of Masolino's frescoes quite well, even if they lack the detail likely to have been in the original pictures.

Consequently, neither narrative or symbolic elements, nor typological structures, appear to have been used by Masolino to suggest specific meaning for figures in the cycle. Inscriptions were present, but only to identify the figures. It would thus appear that the figures in Masolino's cycle did not have a highly specific content. Certain figures, such as Judith, had bodies of traditional meaning, but none of this was stated in the compositions; they can
only have served as a point of departure for unguided personal meditations, if they were apprehended as more than decoration.

Nonetheless, two significant developments in Judith's iconography can be seen in the Cockerell illumination. Judith is walking away from the Assyrian tents (albeit carrying the sword and head herself, without her maid accompanying her, in violation of the Biblical narrative). Her body is oriented toward the right, but she turns and looks back toward the left, as if she will look behind her toward the Assyrian tents, and the sway in her hips creates the impression of arrested motion. Masolino chose not to represent the beheading, but rather an incident more like Judith's return to Bethulia: a fact that sets this picture apart from the dominant sculptural tradition, and makes it a forerunner of the later panel paintings by Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, and Mantegna in eschewing the decapitation itself as a subject. Moreover, the sense that Judith is pausing to look back, perhaps regretfully, toward the scene of her deed is also present in Botticelli's two early paintings of her return to Bethulia. Consequently, while the precise form and significance of Masolino's fresco cannot be determined today, it seems to have anticipated the major iconographic change in the handling of the theme of Judith between sculptural and painted representations of the heroine, and may have been influential both in bringing about the shift in the moment predominantly selected for depiction by artists and their patrons after 1470, and in the specific form of Judith in at least two early paintings.
Of Lippi's fresco (Plate 14) little need be said. Judith appears among a large group of figures as witness to the coronation of the Virgin. Included along with her are Esther, Leah, and Bathsheba, all of whom shared with Judith a status as types for the Virgin, particularly as the Church or as victors over evil [14]. In this composition, Judith is integrated into a mass of figures on the right side of the picture, and identified only by inscription. She is clearly a member of the court of heaven whose presence at this event is appropriate by virtue of her typological connections to the Virgin. While no explicit reference is made in the fresco to Judith's story, her inclusion in this painting is not without significance. The tradition of associating Judith with the Virgin visually was well-established in manuscripts in the latter part of the Middle Ages, particularly in the Speculum Humanae Salvationis; however, Lippi's painting represents both the first explicit depiction of Judith among the court of heaven, and the first instance in Italy of the Virgin and Judith appearing together in even a loose typological statement on a monumental scale [15]. However, neither of these new elements in Lippi's treatment of Judith was particularly influential, as succeeding representations of the heroine in Florentine art do not place her either in heaven or in close association with the Virgin. Rather, they return her to Bethulia and its environs, and depict her either posing before the tent of Holofernes, or in some phase of her return to the town after the decapitation.

After about 1470, two significant changes occurred in treatments of Judith in Tuscany. The medium in which she was most often
represented changed from sculpture to painting, and the moment selected for presentation shifted from the beheading or display of its results to subsequent incidents in the tale. Every extant representation of Judith either in Tuscany or by a Florentine artist from the time of Pollaiuolo and Donatello to the terracotta figurines of Giovanni della Robbia in the 1520s was painted. Moreover, while sculptural presentations of Judith showed her either in the act of beheading Holofernes or posing with the attributes of that action in its immediate aftermath or a symbolic eternity, in the paintings new narrative moments came to be represented, and that of the decapitation was utterly eschewed. These new episodes included Judith placing the severed head in Abra's foodbag, Judith pausing at the opening of the tent prior to her departure, the return to Bethulia (sometimes with the subsequent battle in the background), and the discovery of Holofernes's body by the Assyrians.

All of these incidents had precedents in the full-page illuminations of Judith's adventure in early Bibles, where they were depicted in continuous narratives of the sort also found on cassone panels. However, it is unlikely that the ancient Bibles formed a point of reference for artists such as Botticelli who developed these new themes. Cassone paintings are more likely to have been a factor, providing an inspiration for either the artists or their patrons in the search for new ways of dealing with Judith's tale; and the possible influence of Masolino's fresco or other lost works cannot be excluded. At this point, it is impossible to say whether a particular cassone panel might have provided a direct model for one of the panels
of Botticelli or Ghirlandaio; none of the extant cassone panels are possible sources, however, and it is not unlikely that the compositions of Botticelli in particular were independently invented, relying, if at all, on other sources only for general inspiration. All that is clear is that, except in cassone panels, the decapitation of Holofernes or the display of the sword and head as attributes of a victorious Judith definitely passed out of fashion after 1470, and that this subject was avoided by painters in favor of subsequent episodes from the story that alluded to the beheading in a more oblique or delicate way.

It is interesting that the shifts in medium and subject matter occurred at the same time, but it cannot be asserted with confidence that they were causally linked. Given the limitations in the number of figures and the difficulty of representing extensive settings in free-standing sculptural groups, it might have been difficult, though not impossible, to depict the new themes in this form. The compression required by free-standing sculptures might have encouraged the use of the decapitation as both the incident which most clearly identifies the story as that of Judith and Holofernes, and that which encapsulates its potential meanings most succinctly. But these advantages would also have held true for paintings, and relief sculptures could have accommodated the demands of the new incidents without difficulty, if the impulse for possessing works treating Judith in marble or bronze had been sufficiently strong.

The shift in meaning in the paintings is not a radical one, though the precise balance of possible imports changes with the
moments represented. In each of the new scenes, the head of Holofernes clearly has been removed from his body, so that Judith's victory and its implications can be understood as at least latent content in these works. The fact that most of the paintings are small works on panel might suggest that a new function was served by these pieces, as will be seen, and this probably accounts in part for the appearance of Judith in a new medium. The possibility that economic factors entered into the decision of the patrons of these new works to commission paintings rather than more expensive sculptures also cannot be ignored. However, shifts in taste could well have been a major factor in the change to these other episodes. In 1504, during the debates concerning the location in which Michelangelo's marble David was to be placed, Francesco di Lorenzo Filarete, the herald of the Signoria, suggested that the giant should replace Donatello's Judith Beheading Holofernes on the ringhiera because "the Judith is a deadly symbol (segno mortifero) and does not befit us whose insignia are the cross and the lily, nor is it good to have a woman kill a man." [16] While it is dangerous to project sentiments back over a span of over thirty years, Botticelli's patrons too, for example, might have felt that an incident in which Judith was not directly engaged in violent activity, but in which the outcome of her adventure was nonetheless clear, was more decorous or tasteful for the work's intended function. Such a hypothesis is only speculation, and in at least one of Botticelli's works the headless body of Holofernes is depicted in a particularly graphic manner. Still, it is not unreasonable to suppose that either the patron or the artist felt reluctant to show Judith in
the act of killing as a matter of decorum, and so this must be considered as a potential reason for the change in the incidents favored for representation in the years after 1470.

In evaluating the apparent shift in media in representations of Judith and her tale in the final third of the Quattrocento, it is necessary to consider whether this phenomenon reflects a real state of affairs, or is merely an accident of survival. The absence of any extant paintings before Botticelli except for manuscript illuminations or cassone panels is probably not simply a result of the fortunes of time. Rather, it seems likely that none have survived because very few, if any, were made. To some extent, this is not surprising, for it is difficult to find a context in which a representation of Judith might have been commissioned in the Florentine art market before the last part of the Quattrocento outside of the decorative arts. Judith would not have been an appropriate figure for inclusion in an altarpiece, or even a devotional picture, since she was not a saint, but only an Old Testament heroine. The kinds of typological series in which she appeared in the late Middle Ages continued to be found principally, if not exclusively, in manuscripts. Insofar as galleries of worthies became relatively common during the fifteenth century [17], Judith might have been included in another cycle such as that commissioned from Masolino by Cardinal Giordano Orsini; however, there is no evidence for such an appearance in any other Florentine Quattrocento project, and one factor at least might minimize its likelihood. While Orsini's gallery was apparently quite extensive, most such projects seem to have been more limited. A custom had
developed during the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance of representing a relatively modest group of nine notable figures, generally encompassing three great leaders each from the pagan and modern worlds, along with three Old Testament figures, who tended to be prefigurations of Christ [18]. These groups usually comprised nine male figures; only occasionally were Jewish heroines such as Jael, Esther, and Judith included [19], so that even if cycles containing Judith were made during this period, they probably would have been rare. Thus, while monumental paintings including Judith in such a context might have been made in the period before 1470, it is unlikely they were common, and there is no surviving evidence of such a work either in Florence or by a Florentine artist.

In fact, there really are no truly large-scale independent paintings of an episode from Judith's story in fresco, or on panel or canvas, extant from before the sixteenth century, and Lippi's Coronation of the Virgin contains the only large figure in any context. The earliest really monumental works to include Judith in even a quasi-independent fashion were Giorgione's panel of the heroine (c. 1500-5; Hermitage, Petersburg); Titian's figure of Judith as Justice from the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice (1508-9); Michelangelo's representation of Judith and Abra leaving the tent of Holofernes in the Sistine Chapel (1508-12); and a scene of Judith and Abra placing Holofernes's head in a foodbag from the funeral chapel of Mantegna in St. Andrea in Mantua (1516. though based on designs originating with Mantegna himself from the fifteenth century); and large-scale works on canvas seem to appear even later in the century,
by artists such as Veronese and Tintoretto. Consequently, it is at least possible that the complete absence of any depiction of Judith in large-scale or independent fresco or panel paintings before 1470 is not a mere accident of survival, but reflects the fact that few, if any, representations of the heroine were created either in Florence or by Florentine artists during the fifteenth century prior to Botticelli's pieces of about 1470-2.

Andrea Mantegna's depictions of the heroine should be considered before turning to Florentine paintings of Judith. This artist, whose work was known in Florence from 1466 (at the latest), represented Judith in at least four paintings either by his hand or from his workshop [20]; in addition, there are four extant drawings [21] and two engravings after Mantegna on this theme [22]. No attempt will be made here to establish which are by the master's hand, which from his studio, and which merely copies of his works [23]. Such a consideration is irrelevant to the question of their possible impact on Florentine Judiths, since each is at the very least derived from a design by Mantegna. Rather, it is important to consider his general treatment of the theme, because at least one of Mantegna's Judits is known to have been in Florence during this period.

In the 1492 inventory of the property of Lorenzo il Magnifico, an entry described "a small panel (tavoletta) in a box (cassetta) showing Judith with the head of Holofernes and a servant, the work of Andrea of Squaracine (sic)." (i.e., Mantegna) [24]. This piece has apparently not survived. The grisaille paintings in Montreal and Dublin are both on canvas; in each case this appears to have been the original
support [25], and so neither can be the small panel in question. Contemporary scholars generally agree that the lost Medici painting should not be identified with the work in the National Gallery in Washington [26], although critical opinion continues to be sharply divided on the question of whether that piece is autograph, a later copy, or by somebody else entirely [27]. No documents dealing with either the commissioning or purchase of a picture of Judith from Mantegna by the Medici have been discovered, and consequently the date of his work for the family is unknown. Mantegna was in Florence in 1466, and it is conceivable that the painting might have been executed at that time. However, Mantegna almost certainly passed through Florence on his way to Rome in 1488, and as he was returning to Mantua in 1490, so that he probably had an opportunity to renew his contacts with the Medici on these occasions, though there is no evidence that he stayed in Florence either time long enough to execute a painting there. He might have received a commission for the work on one of these visits, or indeed at any time after Mantegna became known to the Medici, even in the absence of any face to face contact. But it is tempting to think that the panel might have come from the period between 1488 and 1492 as a result of a renewed acquaintance between Lorenzo and Mantegna, since the Uffizi drawing (Plate 18), which represents a variation on Mantegna's typical way of handling this subject, and which cannot be connected to any known work, is signed and dated 1491 [28]. The initial provenance of this drawing is uncertain; however, it is in the state collection of Florence, which was founded on Medici possessions, and so it might be wondered whether
the drawing either records the painting executed for Lorenzo, or, more probably, was a study forwarded to the patron for his approval. But such a link can be no more than speculative, and ultimately questions of the relationship of the drawing to the Medici painting, and of the latter's appearance and date, are unanswerable; drawing and panel may have been widely separated in time, and have had no relation to one another at all, and Mantegna's Medici Judith thus could have originated any time after 1466.

All of the extant works either by or after Mantegna depict the same moment from Judith's story, the heroine placing the severed head in Abra's foodbag, and there is little reason to doubt that this was also the subject of the lost Medici painting. There are minor, but significant variations among the paintings, drawings, and engravings that treat this subject. The paintings in Dublin (Plate 16) and Washington (Plate 17) each include the opening of the tent, and reveal part of Holofernes's bed inside, with the sole of a foot partially visible above the mattress, though most of the body is concealed. Each of these works, however, surrounds the tent with an abstract ground: a stoney, marbleized surface in the grisaille from Dublin, and a simple black ground both within and without the tent in the Washington panel. In the painting from Montreal (Plate 15), the tent and bed are absent, and Judith and Abra are placed on a rocky patch of earth before an abstract, marbleized ground. In the works in Dublin and Montreal, Judith turns toward her maid and looks down to the bag as she places the head within it; in the Washington painting, however, she faces away from Abra, looking up and out to the viewer's right as
she passes her left arm across her body, holding the head away from her right side as Abra pulls the bag up over it. Consequently, in this version Judith is abstracted from the task at hand, her body essentially still despite the spiral torsion and active contrapposto of her pose. Still, while the emotional tenor of the three paintings is slightly different, and the settings and compositions are somewhat varied, the similarities among the three are far more important than the changes.

In each case, the basic compositional formula is the same. The tent and bed in the Washington and Dublin paintings form a visual synecdoche, creating a spatial paradox between the suggestion of a real location for the action and the iconic netherworld suggested by the abstractness of the black or marbleized grounds. The bed and tent in each work create a location in which narrative action can take place, but the abstract ground removes it from the context of present-tense action near Bethulia, as full narrative representation would require. Judith and Abra thus are not so much engaged in a narrative action in time and space as re-enacting or recreating an event from their lives: a sense that is more strongly developed in the Montreal painting, where even a vestigial sense of setting is absent. Despite the apparent action, Mantegna's conception ultimately shifts toward the iconic, abstracted from the real spatial and temporal world of the original tale. The abstractness of the setting surrounding the bed and tent, and the lack of any sense of urgency in Judith and Abra (conveying the impression that there is no real danger with which they need be concerned), deny the paintings a strong,
specific narrative thrust. Nonetheless, those environmental elements present in the Dublin and Washington works allude to the story strongly enough to engender recollection of the original narrative and its locus, focusing the viewer's attention on a specific episode from the tale. Thus, particularly in these two paintings a secondary narrative presence is established that brings the range of responses and associations to this specific event into play, narrowing a viewer's options for interpreting the meaning of Judith and her action.

This mingling of narrative and iconic is not unlike that found in sculptures such as those of Ghiberti and Donatello, though in these paintings the balance ultimately shifts in favor of the latter. Each work tastefully asserts Judith's victory, but in the end these paintings make no strong statement of their own. None includes symbolic elements beyond the head and sword, which function both as attributes and elements in the narrative re-enactment. In the case of the grisaille paintings, each was a part of a set of pictures, and each image together with its pendants generated primary meaning in cycles which use incidents from tales such as this one to provide examples of virtuous and evil people and behavior. The Dublin Judith has been successfully associated with the Samson and Delilah in the National Gallery in London, perhaps as a pair, perhaps as a part of a larger series illustrating virtuous and villainous women, or the wiles of love [29]. The Montreal Judith has a Dido as its pendant; they may have been part of a series of virtuous or heroic women of the Old Testament and classical antiquity [30]. In the case of the Washington
panel, the intended primary meaning appears general; the image is one in which the viewer can see virtually any of the meanings appropriate to Judith's story depending on his prior knowledge and point of view. In this sense the picture is much like Medieval Biblical illuminations including Judith, or like the iconic cultic and devotional pictures of an earlier time. In fact, it is to be wondered whether this Judith might have been intended to function as a devotional image on which a viewer could meditate without the intervention of the artist guiding him toward a particular body of significance, for by the 1490s the range of figures considered appropriate subjects for such works and contemplation had been expanded, and there are precedents in the work of artists like Botticelli for seeing Judith as a suitable object of devotional paintings.

The drawings and engravings also generally display marked similarities to one another. Some are clearly related to the extant paintings, but others seem to signify the existence of lost works. The engravings by Giovanni Antonio da Brescia (Plate 19) and the Premier Engraver (Plate 20) are obviously related to the Washington panel (or the original from which it derives). Three of the drawings, including one of the two at Chatsworth (Plate 21), and sheets in Washington (Plate 22) and the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam, are related to one another, and are presumably derived from studies for a lost painting [31]. These are generally similar to the grisailles in Dublin and Montreal, though each lacks a defined background, and Abra stands to Judith's right in these pictures rather than to her left. In addition, as in the Washington painting, the
heroine reaches across her body and deposits the head in the foodbag with her left hand; however, unlike that painting's, these Judiths do not face away or evince any abstraction. Rather, they look down at the bag as they place the head within it. The drawing in the Chatsworth collection includes a signature and date on Judith's sword: Andreas Mantinia MCCCLXXXII (1482). Martineau, who favors placing Mantegna's Judiths in the 1490s, was troubled by this inscription, suggesting that a copyist misread the date [32]. If this date is correct, and not a misreading by a copyist, then it would tend to indicate either that the Dublin and Montreal works, to which it is most closely related, should be dated in the 1480s, or that her putative link between the drawing and paintings is incorrect. Though generally similar in composition, this work may in fact not be closely related to the grisailles. The stress and tension in Judith's pose, body, and facial expression speak of a sense of urgency and immediacy absent in the grisailles, for which a date in the 1490s makes most sense on stylistic grounds. Consequently, it is reasonable to think that this drawing represents an initial, less iconic conception of the later paintings, perhaps as an initial stage in the development of those works, but perhaps supplying evidence for a project either lost or never executed. Regardless, it indicates that Mantegna was thinking of Judith during the 1480s, even if no paintings survive from that period (or even if none were made).

The other drawing in the Chatsworth holdings (Plate 23), dated 1472 by inscription, would, if the inscription is correct, represent a still earlier and still less iconic phase of Mantegna's conception of
this subject. It includes elements found in the others, but as in the engravings, the tent is fully contained within the field, whereas it is cut at the top and edges in a significant fashion in the two paintings in which it appears. The inside of the tent also includes a view of a portion of the bed and Holofernes's foot, but there are faint indications of other tents in the background, establishing a deep spatial context for the work absent in every other piece. Judith faces away from Abra, and again looks out and up, as in the Washington painting; however, the maid is now to Judith's left, and she places the head in the bag with her left hand, so that she no longer reaches across her body. In this posture, she resembles the figure in the Premier Engraver's work; in that of Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, the configuration of the figures is similar, but reversed, so that Abra is again on Judith's right, and she places the head in the bag with her right hand.

As can be seen, though there are variations in background, setting, and the precise disposition of the figures, all of the paintings, drawings, and engravings discussed above spring from a common idea or way of approaching the general composition of the scene. The only extant work that departs significantly from this scheme is the Uffizi drawing (Plate 18): interestingly, the only piece that is undoubtedly autograph. In this composition, the figures are placed on an abstract ground, with no indication of setting. Abra faces Judith in three-quarter left position, thrusting the foodbag out before her. Judith stands in one-quarter position to the right, with her back to the viewer, looking down at the bag as she places the head
into it with her left hand. She stands in a stable contrapposto pose, forming a verticle barrier to the forward motion of the maid. Though the moment selected for representation is the same, this is a distinctly different conception of the composition from that present in all Mantegna's other designs. The relation of the two women to one another has been markedly altered, and, despite the lack of any indication of environment, there is a sense of urgency and real action in the drawing that is absent from most of the other works, and all of the paintings of comparably late date, in Mantegna's career.

Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing how this drawing relates to the remainder of Mantegna's oeuvre, extant and lost. If it is a preparatory drawing for a painting, that work is missing. It could thus be related to the panel from the Medici collection, but there is no evidence that this is so. Similarly, the aforementioned group of three related drawings also seems to be derived from or related to a lost work, which again could be the Medici panel, but which might equally be something altogether different. If either the Uffizi drawing or the group of three were studies for that lost painting, then it is possible to say that Mantegna can have had only minimal influence on Botticelli's Judith at the Opening of Holofernes's Tent (c. 1495-1500). In this picture, which is very different in its form from all of Mantegna's drawings, Judith is seen striding out of the tent holding the head aloft, with Abra trailing her: a moment different from that depicted in any extant Mantegna. Only if Mantegna supplied the Medici with a painting depicting this other moment could its compositional scheme have directly influenced
Botticelli. However, the form of the tent, opening in a rough A-shape that frames the figures, the way the figures relate to the tent opening, and the use of flat, abstract grounds within and around the tent in Botticelli's painting all recall the Washington picture in general terms, providing a basis for positing the possibility of broad influence by Andrea. Of course, there are other artistic precedents for relating the figures and tent in this fashion, as numerous manuscript illuminations encasing the figures inside the initial "A" of the text make clear [33], and this source might have provided the initial impetus for this compositional form for Mantegna, or Botticelli, or both. Nonetheless, if Mantegna's painting had no other influence on Botticelli, at the very least it might have provided the latter master or his patron with the general idea of creating a painting showing Judith in the immediate aftermath of the decapitation, rather than on the way back to Bethuliah, as Sandro had previously done.

Among Florentine artists, no one dealt with Judith and her story as often as Sandro Botticelli. In the period between 1470 and 1500, he painted scenes from her tale on at least five occasions, including a double-sided panel of Judith Returning to Bethuliah (Plate 24), combined with his only known landscape on the reverse (Plate 25), now in the Cincinnati Museum; a diptych of The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes (Plate 27) and Judith Returning to Bethuliah (Plate 26) in the Uffizi in Florence; and a single panel of Judith at the Opening of Holofernes's Tent (Plate 28) in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. In addition, the heroine makes an appearance in the simulated relief
sculptures painted in the background of *The Calummy of Apelles* (Plates 31 and 32), also in the Uffizi, and of *The History of Lucretia* (Plates 33 and 34), in the Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum in Boston. These works span the major part of Botticelli’s working career, with the first two projects coming at the very beginning of his production as an independent master, in the early 1470s, and the latter three coming toward its end, in the mid-1490s.

As with so many Renaissance representations of Judith, there is no documentary evidence to suggest why Botticelli depicted her on these occasions; the circumstances of the commissions and identity of the commissioning parties are unknown, although in the case of the Uffizi diptych there may be clues to the identity of the patron in the imagery of the work. The precise function of these pieces, as well as the order in which the closely-related Cincinnati panel and Uffizi diptych were executed, are also undocumented; although, as will be seen, at least two of the works might have been devotional paintings, and there are good reasons for thinking that the Cincinnati Judith represents his first essay on this theme. Regardless of these issues, however, Botticelli’s paintings of Judith constitute the largest body of images of the heroine by any fifteenth century Florentine artist, and though all the pictures are small, they nonetheless comprise a very important group of works showing how Judith and her tale were treated in late Quattrocento Florence.

Sometime around 1470, Botticelli executed a small (c. 11 ½ x 8 ½ inches), double-sided panel, now in the Cincinnati Museum of Art (Plates 24 and 25). On one side of the piece is an image of Judith
returning to Bethulia with her maid. Judith and Abra are walking across an elevated stretch of ground from left to right, and are placed close to the picture plane, so that they dominate the composition. They appear to be near the bottom of a hill which ascends steeply to the left, but below them to the right is a valley considerably below their level. Judith is in the center of the picture, trailed closely by Abra. She looks back over her shoulder, and there is a slight twist in her shoulders that suggests she may be listening to or about to speak to her maid, who looks at Judith intently. Abra's front foot is about mid-way between Judith's front and rear feet, so that she is approximately level with the heroine, and is pulled around to her side in a position that suggests that direct communication between them is possible, even imminent.

Judith's gaze, however, is not fixed on Abra; in fact, there is nothing in the painting to serve as a focus for her look, which seems unfixed, and helps to emphasize the melancholy expression created by her downturned lips. Thus, Abra's intense but questioning expression seems more to assert her wonder either at why Judith has slowed down to glance back, or why her mistress seems so melancholy and reflective, than to be the result of conversation between them.

A diadem is set on Judith's head, with a silver disc or medallion hanging in her hair at the middle of her forehead; though the design is difficult to read, it appears to include a bowl or basket with a round fruit, such as apples, inside. It may in fact be a cornucopia, emblematic perhaps of the prosperity that her people will enjoy as a result of her victory, but the surface of the panel is much abraded,
and many of its details difficult to see. Judith wears a tight, long-sleeved undergarment of metallic bluish gray, visible only just above her wrists. Over this she wears a looser, grayish violet gown, and a white, high-waisted robe of a thin fabric, gathered beneath her breasts, and at her waist and hips, so that the garment breaks just below her knees. Originally there was gold trim on the clothing, though much of this has eroded away. According to Horne, these clothes represent Judith’s “garments of gladness,” [34] indicative of her joy at her triumph, though on the whole it seems more likely that Botticelli meant them simply to represent the finery in which Judith dressed to allure Holofernes at his banquet. In her right hand, Judith carries Holofernes’s sword, which has the shape of a small scimitar, though it has been identified as a fifteenth century falchion [35], while in her left is an olive branch, a symbol of the peace she brings to the Jews [36]. Abra carries Holofernes’s head, swathed in linen and resting in a reddish-brown basin, on her head. She wears a white veil on her head, which loops down to the top of her bodice and over her shoulders, and carries a round flask attached to a rope on her forearm. She is clothed in a rather rich, dark olive-green undergarment, clinging tightly to her arms and visible only below the elbows, with an overgarment of a striking, slightly rusty orange. This garment is high-waisted, and almost suggests harem trousers rather than a dress. In fact, a trailing skirt can be discerned between her legs, making it clear that Botticelli intended a dress to be understood, but on the whole her costume is rather ambiguous. She pulls it up between her legs, and a flap of cloth with
a hem like a skirt falls from her hand, but the garment is gathered so tightly around her ankles that trousers are suggested. At her right ankle, it looks as if the cloth has been tied tightly around the leg, and on her left it looks as if it has been tucked into her shoe.

While Abra's clothing can be a bit disconcerting on close inspection, it seems likely that it is indicative not of any intentional ambiguity on Botticelli's part, or an attempt to render a suggestion of Near Eastern costume, but rather demonstrates that, as a still-young artist, he had not fully mastered the means of resolving Abra's garment, body, and the sense of movement. In fact, pentimenti reveal that he also had some trouble with Judith's feet and their relationship to her position, motion, and clothes: factors which are significant principally because they tend to help place this panel before the Uffizi diptych, which is more accomplished in its handling of the figures. To the right of Judith, in the middle ground of the picture, is a group of Assyrian horsemen moving to attack the town [37], which lies in the background at the right side of the panel, nestled in a valley under a clear blue sky, and beside a barely visible patch of blue water, which appears to be a lake, but which was probably intended to represent the springs of Bethulia.

On the reverse of this composition is a very badly damaged portrayal of two pairs of animals in a landscape setting: two deer, a stag and a doe, resting atop a flat hillock, and facing left, with two monkeys, one seated and one walking left, in the foreground below them. To the right, far below and in the deep middle ground, is a fortified town on the shore of a large body of water, with distant
hills, atmospherically rendered, stretching back to a high horizon. The smaller, seated monkey in the lower right corner of the piece has been largely effaced, and in fact at one time could not be seen. It was revealed only during the course of x-ray analysis of the panel in 1954, during a project in which much overpaint was removed from both sides of the work [38]. In addition, all of the paint has been lost down to the bare panel in the upper right corner of the surface, resulting in the loss of a substantial portion of the face of the (presumably) female deer. Though greatly damaged, this work is precious, because it is the only extant example of an independent landscape painting by Botticelli. It might also provide the key to the meaning of this version of Judith Returning to Bethulia, and establish the contrast between the meaning of this double-sided piece and that of the Uffizi diptych.

There is no written evidence regarding the original patron for any of Botticelli's early works on the Judith theme. In fact, the Cincinnati panel did not enter the literary record until 1867, and since that time significant questions regarding its status as autograph, replica, copy, study, or a work by another master in Botticelli's general style have been debated. The painting was first mentioned in 1867 in Volume 11 of the Leipzig Zeitschrift fur Böllende Kunst (p. 279), where Mundler, in a review of the first edition of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's A New History of Painting in Italy, called attention to a Judith in the ducal palace of the Prince of Fondi in Naples [39]. At that time, Mundler noted the similarities between this painting and the Uffizi diptych, but attributed the work to Filippino
Lippi [40]. This began a ninety-year history of scholarly debate on the panel’s artist, during which time it was attributed variously to Lippi, Mantegna, Botticelli, and Botticelli’s studio. In 1895, the Fondi collection was auctioned in Rome, at which point this painting was catalogued by Vicomte Alexandre d’Agoult as a Mantegna [41]. It was purchased by an anonymous buyer, probably Stefano Bardidi, in whose sale it appeared at Christie's in London in 1899, at which time it was attributed to Botticelli, though the animals on the back were felt to be "in the style of Pisanello" [42]. The Christie's catalogue reproduced the painting, documenting that Judith's head had not yet been repainted in 1899, though other retouching had been done, including overpainting of Judith's drapery, the foreground, and the shrubbery on the cliff behind the figures [43]. The work was purchased for 1,000 pounds by an agent named Adams, probably for the dealer Bohler [44]. It was mentioned in notes by Langton Douglas to the 1911 edition of Crowe and Cavalcaselle, where he identified it as a replica from Botticelli's shop, but not by Filippino Lippi, and stated that it was in Bardini's hands in Florence [45]. It is unclear how Bardini retained or reacquired the work, but it was in his hands in Paris at the time of his death in the early 1920s [46].

Ugo Bardini, son of Stephano, took the panel to Florence with the stamp of French customs on it, so that it was technically never under the jurisdiction of Italian authorities [47]. In 1949, it was shown at the Strozzi Palace in Florence in the exhibition Lorenzo il Magnifico e le Arti, where it was listed as a replica of the Uffizi diptych, painted some years later under the supervision of Botticelli by studio
assistants; there is no mention of the landscape on the rear, and the work is misidentified as oil on panel, rather than oil and tempera, in the catalogue [48]. The catalogue entry reflects the beliefs of Count Carlo Gamba, with the Superintendency of Fine Arts concurring, recording it as "opera di bottega (work of the studio)" [49]. Finally, in 1954, Roberto Longhi examined the panel prior to its purchase by the Cincinnati Museum, and several discoveries were made that permitted him to declare that there was at least some direct participation in the execution of the painting by Botticelli himself; in fact, Longhi considered the piece a very important example of Botticelli's work [50]. Subsequently,

X-ray not only brought out the remains of an additional monkey on the reverse, but more importantly looked under a complete and prettified repainting of Judith's head to show a vigor of drawing that would be hard to ascribe to anyone but Botticelli. Microscopic examination by the Museum's restorer Harry Gothard added new evidence such as the use of ground gilt in the ornament on Judith's opaque gray right sleeve. When the overpaint was removed, a translucent purplish blue characteristic of Botticelli as well as traces of proper gold-leaf ornament appeared. Three tense weeks of cleaning and minimum retouching to cover occasional actual blanks in the painted surface were a most instructive art-historical experience and led the Museum's staff to wholehearted endorsement of Longhi's statement [51].

Longhi's assertion sparked something of a scholarly controversy. Both Carlo Ragghianti and Dr. Fiametta Gamba continued to argue for Filippino Lippi [52]. Berenson, in a letter to the museum, maintained that the work was not autograph, but the work of an excellent assistant, and that it was later than the Uffizi panels [53]. However, over succeeding months a number of other scholars came to agree with
Longhi's opinion, including Henry S. Francis of the Cleveland Museum, and W.G. Constable of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston [54]. The attribution to Botticelli himself is generally, though not quite universally, accepted today. Rita de Angeli, for example, omitted it from her catalogue of Botticelli's works [55]; however, Gabriel Mandel and Michael Levy [56], B.B. Frekerickson and F. Zerl [57], and Ronald Lightbown [58] list it among the autograph works.

Lightbown particularly has defended its authenticity, feeling that its damaged condition has prejudiced critics excessively against it, and noting such features as Botticelli's unmistakable delicacy of touch and subtlety of coloring, comparable to the Uffizi Judith's, on the front, and the beautiful painting of the animals on the reverse [59]. In contrast to scholars who considered it a replica by Lippi or another studio assistant, Lightbown asserted that in fact the Cincinnati panel was an earlier essay on the theme, dating to perhaps 1468 or 1469 [60], which the artist developed with more assured dramatic power in the Uffizi composition [61]. While Lightbown's dates might be somewhat optimistic, with a date of c. 1470-2 representing a safer estimate [62], his insights into the close stylistic affinity between the Cincinnati and Uffizi panels is acute, and provides a foundation on which even more evidence for Botticelli's personal authorship of the former painting can be developed [63].

Several characteristics of Cincinnati's Judith Returning to Bethulia mark it as an early work from Botticelli's hand. There is a relatively strong stylistic and compositional debt to Botticelli's teachers and older colleagues, for example. While the possibility
that Botticelli based his compositional scheme on an earlier, unknown cassone panel cannot be entirely discounted, a clear model for the composition can certainly be seen in Piero del Pollaiuolo's *Tobias and the Angel* (Turin, Pinacoteca), normally dated c. 1470, roughly contemporary with, but probably just prior to, the Cincinnati panel. Both the disposition of the two figures in relation to one another and their placement high above a landscape, which they dominate by their size and proximity to the picture plane, are carried over into Botticelli's panel, though there is a somewhat more convincing integration of the figures and the foreground with the background in Botticelli's work [64]. The interest in rendering physical movement is another factor that owes something to the Pollaiuolo brothers, especially Antonio, though Verrocchio could also be a factor in this phenomenon. The triangular facial type of Judith, with widely set eyes and a fairly prominent chin, is a commonplace among sculptors in this period, and can be found in works by both Pollaiuolo and Verrocchio. Finally, while Pollaiuolo is the most likely source for the use of active postures to convey movement, the use of drapery patterns of this particular type, both for their decorative qualities and to help create a sense of motion, and also the specific figures, are drawn from the works of Filippo Lippi, Botticelli's teacher [65], specifically his frescoes of *The Dance of Salome* and *The Birth of St. Stephen* in Prato, and the panel of the *Madonna and Child with Scenes from the Life of St. Anne*, a tondo in the Pitti.

Botticelli appears to have drawn strongly on Lippi's figure of Salome in both of his versions of *Judith Returning to Bethulia*. She
is almost certainly the direct model for the Abra in the Uffizi
diptych, and served as a general inspiration for both Judithec, as
well. In the Cincinnati panel, Botticelli seems to have drawn on
Lippi's Salome for Judith's elongated neck, the dressing of her hair,
the tilt of her head (though they incline in opposite directions), and
in a very general sense for the disposition of her body. She is, however,
perhaps less indicative of direct figural borrowing than of
inspiration by Lippi's type, which itself finds its ultimate origin in
Donatello's Princess Sabra in the St. George and the Dragon relief.
Botticelli's debt to Lippi for the figure of Abra is much more direct.
Two figures of maids from Lippi's work probably formed the basis for
the appearance of Abra in the Cincinnati panel. The maid striding in
with a basket on her head in the Prato fresco of The Birth of St.
Stephen is similar in general disposition to Botticelli's figure, and
they share a number of specific details, such as the trailing belt and
the cloth hanging over the basket on her head. Abra's costume,
however, as well as the flask at her wrist suspended from her forearm,
seem to have been inspired by the maid entering on the right in the
tondo of the Madonna and Child. In each, the skirt is drawn up in a
fashion that creates the illusion that the figure is wearing trousers,
and the basket on the arm of Lippi's maid could be the precedent for
Abra's flask. It is interesting to note that this maid could also
have contributed to the development of the figure of Judith, whose
stride and physical attitude, barring the disposition of her arms, is
quite similar if the two are rotated. Given the proximity of Florence
to Prato, there is every likelihood that Botticelli saw Lippi's
frescoes, in light of the close professional and personal relationship between the two men. Consequently, it seems reasonable to posit that Botticelli's Cincinnati version of *Judith Returning to Bethulia* finds its base quite directly in a combination of Piero del Pollaiuolo's compositional scheme and figures drawn from Lippi's work, resulting in a pictorial conception that he was to refine shortly thereafter in the Uffizi version of the subject.

Aside from his relatively over reliance on compositional and stylistic sources in other masters, several other characteristics tend to mark Cincinnati's *Judith Returning to Bethulia* as a piece by Botticelli's hand, rather than a copy by a student or assistant, and as an early work, containing his first thoughts on this subject. There is a quality of generalization, and a tendency toward a restricted, somewhat grayed color range in the landscape that often appears in Botticelli's works of the mid-1470s and later. In the Cincinnati panel this characteristic is not carried as far as in the Uffizi piece, and this suggests that the latter might come from a more developed time in the artist's career. The deep space in the Florence *Judith* is rendered less ambiguously than in the Cincinnati version, and the former also shows a more successful accomplishment of compositional balance and closure, including a tall tree at the right edge of the picture plane to halt the visual momentum off of the surface created by the motion of the figures and the downward slant of the hillside: a movement which is stilled less adequately in the Cincinnati panel, where the dark shadow of the heroine actually tends to carry the viewer's eye past the Assyrian horsemen in the middle
ground and out of the picture. The integration of fore-, middle-, and backgrounds, and of the figures into the landscape, is also slightly more accomplished in the Uffizi panel, again suggesting further development on the part of the young artist: as do his greater ease in creating a sense of motion, and his more successful resolution of the problem of integrating the feet and costumes of the figures with the sense of movement and the ground in the Uffizi panel. The figure proportions in the Cincinnati panel are both taller and more slender than in the Uffizi version, in which the somewhat more compact and solid proportions adopted by Botticelli in the mid-1470s begin to emerge. The facial types of the two Judiths also speak of a development in the artist's style from the Cincinnati piece to that in Florence, as the former's very triangular and rather Verrochio-esque shape, typical of the early Botticelli, gives way to the rounder and fuller shape of the mid-1470s in the Uffizi panel. In addition, as Lightbown points out, there is a stronger, more accomplished narrative thrust in the Uffizi diptych [66], realized in part through subtle adjustments in body position and posture and the physical relationship between Abra and Judith, as well as a greater psychological richness. However, as will be seen, these changes are also related to a shift in meaning, focus, and probably function between the two pictures, and so further discussion of these points will be deferred until the meanings of the two works are analyzed in greater detail [67].

Botticelli's handling of color in the two panels also demonstrates that each is probably by his hand, and that the
Cincinnati Judith is almost certainly earlier. The color harmonies in the Cincinnati panel clearly exemplify the palette and taste of the youthful master, even showing him at a turning point in his career, when his sense of color began to grow more restrained and refined. In the figure of Abra, the depth of color and the bold, even slightly harsh contrast of the steely blue and olive undergarments with the orange of her outer dress is suggestive in kind, if not in hue, of the harmonies of deep, sometimes rather strident and metallic blues, reds, and greens in other early works, such as the Naples Madonna and Child with Angels (c. 1468–9), Fortitude (1470), The Finding of the Body of Holofernes (c. 1472), and the rectangular London Adoration of the Magi (1472), in all of which a very similar peculiar green is used. On the other hand, in the figure of Judith in the Cincinnati panel something of the subtle, delicate, and surpassingly beautiful color harmonies of the mature Botticelli of the mid- and late 1470s appears, particularly in his use of relatively low saturations of a single hue. Striking examples of this can be seen in the modulations of blue and blue-violet in her sleeve, set against the blue sky and steely shadows of her white overgarment and the deep blue-green at her wrist: an ensemble of colors focussed and set off by the beautiful red-blonde of her hair. The orchestration of colors developed by Botticelli in the Cincinnati panel are another indication that it is likely to have been painted earlier than that in the Uffizi, for in the latter the color harmonies, particularly in the figure of Abra, grow even more subtle and are even more skilfully arrayed throughout the composition, seeming to pull that work further in the direction of
pieces like the 1475 *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi, the 1476 *Nativity* in Santa Maria Novella in Florence, the *St. Augustine* of 1480 from the Ognissanti, and the great mythologies of the early and mid-1480s.

Finally, compelling arguments both in favor of the Cincinnati panel's being the first of the two versions to be completed, and of its being an independent and fully finished work of art, can be made by examining the technique of the artist and his work on the painting. Even though the surface is badly damaged, there is a degree of finish on both sides of the Cincinnati work that strongly argues against its being only a study, whether a preparatory sketch for the Uffizi version by Botticelli himself, or a student work, copied from the master for instructional purposes. The actual application of gold leaf to the picture would by itself speak against its being anything short of a finished composition, but the obvious care with which the forms of figures and animals were painted is also atypical of pieces executed principally as compositional studies. Nor is it likely that the Cincinnati panel was a close copy by an assistant, or a replica painted by Botticelli himself for sale to a second patron. There are too many differences between the panels to consider them the result of an attempt to create two identical, or nearly identical, works; moreover, the presence of pentimenti in both works indicates that in each case the artist was making adjustments to the figures. As will be seen, these changes create a different emotional sense in the two works, and help to generate two distinctly different meanings: facts that are unlikely to have occurred if either work were merely a copy
of the other. Consequently, both on account of its more developed style, and the greater technical facility, compositional accomplishment, and psychological richness of the Uffizi painting, there is every reason to believe that it is the later of Botticelli's two versions of this scene. However, the evidence also strongly argues that the Cincinnati panel is by Botticelli's hand, and not that of an assistant, that it was executed around 1470, and that it represents his first thoughts on a theme that he revised with a different intent in the Uffizi diptych.

The function and patronage of the Cincinnati panel are unclear, as is the relationship of the landscape on the reverse to the scene of Judith's return to Bethulia on the front of the panel. As has been mentioned, the specific identity of the patron of this work is unknown. Nonetheless, the type of person who might have commissioned the panel, the use to which he might have put it, and its meaning might be clarified if the relation of the landscape on the back of the image of Judith to the narrative scene can be defined. While double-sided panels are not common in Italian painting of the Renaissance, they are not unknown. As Lightbown points out, a certain number of small, double-sided cabinet paintings, often kept in leather or wooden cases or bindings for close, private inspection, were produced in Italy [68]. Rene Schneider noted that this work is miniaturist in both size and technique [69], making it likely that it was intended to serve such viewing. Since paintings were essentially luxury items, it can be presumed that the original patron would have been, not necessarily of the Medicean quasi-aristocracy, but at least
of the wealthy middle class. Moreover, because of the miniatuрист
detail and finish of the piece, it is logical to think that it was
intended for prolonged, private viewing, where its minute qualities
could be appreciated by the spectator, who could linger over it at
leisure, and perhaps examine the sides of the panel alternately,
reflecting not merely on their aesthetic qualities, but on their joint
significance. It seems reasonable to assume that some relationship
between the two sides would exist in a double-sided panel, and in the
absence of any obvious narrative connection, it is likely either that
the landscape refers to the original patron, or that it in some way
modifies, extends, or reinforces the meaning implicit in the narrative
side of the panel.

It does not appear that the landscape is an indicator of the
patronage of the work. The particular combination of deer and apes
does not occur in the heraldic insignia of any Florentine family of
the Quattrocento, nor do the words for deer (cervo, or daino) or ape
(scimmia) seem to be a punning reference to a known family or
individual's name. However, an allegorical or symbolic reading of
this landscape does provide a possible significance that would work
together with the story of Judith and its traditional meanings to
create a panel in which each side contains, in a very different form,
especially the same import.

In Christian iconographic and literary traditions of the Middle
Ages and Renaissance, the deer, especially the stag, was a symbol of
virtue. Like Judith, it was associated with piety and religious
aspiration, owing to its use in Psalm 42:1 [70], and of solitude and
purity of life, since it seeks freedom and refuge in high mountains [71]. Judith's careful observation of religious ritual, and her life of prayer and faith make her an image of piety, and she seeks solitude and piety in her way of living both before and after her adventure with Holofernes. The stag was also a symbol of prudence, because its keen hearing allowed it to cautiously avoid danger [72], another quality exemplified by Judith in her careful plotting against Holofernes [73]; and of penitance, owing to its association with St. Julian the Hospitator [74]. In addition, it was used metaphorically in referring to the Bridegroom in the Song of Songs (2:9, 17 and 8:14), creating an identification of the animal with Christ [75]. Judith is an antetype for Christ as a savior of her people and destroyer of evil; but, given the presence of male and female deer, she might better be linked to the Church, for which Judith is also a type [76], as Bride to Christ's Bridegroom. The animals are resting on a rocky hillock composed of rectangular plates of stone, which rises so steeply and suddenly from the surrounding terrain that it takes on an altar-like character, perhaps further enhancing the possible relevance of the passages from the Song of Songs. Thus, there is ample evidence for seeing Judith and the deer as analogous, since each expresses a similar content in their bodies of traditional meaning. Each is an emblem of piety, purity, solitude, and perhaps prudence, and both can be connected to the idea of the marriage of Christ and his Church as part of the scheme of salvation; though in this case the reference is less direct, and requires some fairly sophisticated theological knowledge and reasoning on the part of the viewer. Nonetheless, if
the image were designed to function as a vehicle for devotional contemplation, such a deep meaning might well have been intended by the artist and patron, so that it is not unreasonable to think that it might have been part of the primary content on the image.

On the other hand, apes are a symbol of the devil, and of vice: particularly the vice of lust [77], that sin which contributed so heavily to the downfall of Holofernes. In the Biblical text, Judith's purity is explicitly defined by her chastity after the death of her husband (Judith 16:22), and one of her pronouncements before the people after her return to the city is that she did not compromise her sexual continence with Holofernes (Judith 13:16). This aspect of Judith's character was also stressed by such early writers as Tertullian, Methodius of Tyre, St. Ambrose of Milan, and St. Jerome. The elevation of the deer on the hillock above the apes can accordingly be read allegorically, within the context of a realistic landscape, to assert the same principle as the story of Judith: the triumph of virtue over vice, generally, and specifically of purity over lust. If this reading of the landscape is correct, it would clearly establish an intentional relationship between the two sides of the panel, as well as serving as a guide to the specific significance Botticelli intended the composition depicting Judith to convey.

The form of Judith Returning to Bethulia tends not to stress the triumphal aspects of the story; Holofernes's head, concealed in the basket, is not made a point of emphasis in the composition, and Judith's attitude is hardly triumphant. Indeed, she looks positively melancholy, and though the olive branch she carries promises peace to
her people, the town of Bethulia is so far removed to the background, and is so inconspicuous a part of the painting, that the potential public or civic significance of the tale seems to have been suppressed to a considerable extent by the artist. Clearly it is not the aspect of the story he wishes the viewer to consider foremost. The stress of the composition is thrown onto Judith herself: perhaps her reaction to the events, but certainly on to the person that she is and the qualities which are manifest in her. Her triumph is not ignored, but neither is it the focus of the picture; indeed, her retention of the sword might suggest that Botticelli is reminding the viewer that in the realm of the moral conflict between virtue and vice, the battle is never really over. Of course, it is also possible that the landscape could be read in a sense as a part of a narrative, showing the viewer that Judith's actions would result in peace and prosperity for her land. However, the unlikely combination of apes and deer in a single landscape, their prominence, and the fact that the meanings that can be derived from those animals and their arrangement on the surface accord so well with traditional interpretations of the significance of the life, actions, and person of Judith, strongly suggest that an allegorical or symbolic reading of the landscape was intended by the artist, and that it was meant to work in tandem with the narrative of Judith to create a panel in which each side contains, in a very different form essentially the same content.

A final few points should be made regarding the Cincinnati panel. If the meaning of this piece, and the way the two sides function in relation to one another, has been accurately described above, then it
is hard to escape the conclusion that this picture must have 
functioned at least in part as a devotional painting. This is not to 
deny that the picture was a precious object, and could be appreciated 
and treasured for its aesthetic beauty, but its potential function was 
clearly something greater. Consequently, this panel would represent 
an early example of the expansion of subjects of devotional 
pictures beyond the realm of holy persons and Christian saints, and 
perhaps occasional prophets such as Moses or David, to figures whose 
lives and significances were perhaps more secular, and were centered 
outside the prophetic stream of the Old Testament. It is also 
important to note that the scene of Judith Returning to Bethulia, like 
all of Botticelli's representations of Judith, is strongly narrative 
in character. This is typical of most of the depictions of the 
heroine from the late Quattrocento, including the cassone panel by 
Jacopo del Sellaio and, on one level at least, of Donatello's Judith. 
As will be seen, Ghirlandaio's composition is a peculiar one, in which 
the narrative thrust of the figures may be subverted to some extent by 
the setting. Nonetheless, Botticelli's narrative emphasis 
established, or accords with, a norm for representations of Judith in 
his time.

Finally, mention should be made of the fact that his rendering of 
the scene is not particularly faithful to the literary text. The 
Biblical verse describing the return is very brief and general, 
leaving some scope for the artist's imagination and invention: "The 
two then left the camp together, as they always did when they went to 
pray. Once they were out of the camp, they skirted the ravine,
climbed the slope to Bethulia and made for the gates." (Judith 13:12) Nonetheless, on at least four counts Botticelli's depiction violates conditions present in the Biblical account. No mention is made of Judith's retaining Holofernes's sword, though neither does the text state explicitly that she rid herself of it. However, since she and Abra are pretending to be going out to pray as usual, it would seem logical to infer that they would not be carrying it. The head is carried in a basket, rather than a foodbag; and the text speaks of their ascending to the town, rather than descending, as they do in the picture. Finally, in the text they return to Bethulia in the faint light before dawn and not the clear, bright light of morning, as Botticelli indicates. This latter characteristic might be explained by the fact that the picture might actually represent a conflation of two moments, the return and the preparations of the Assyrians to attack the town, which occurs slightly later in the story. However, as a practical matter Botticelli may also have simply been reluctant to modify his palette to simulate the half-light of pre-dawn (he never painted such an outdoor nocturne). Regardless, it is unclear whether any or all of these deviations from the text represent innovations in the iconography of Judith on Botticelli's part, or are drawn from a model, perhaps among the cassone panels that commonly represented her tale. Either is possible, but if the latter were the case, the source has not yet been discovered.

Unlike the Cincinnati panel, the Uffizi diptych (Plates 26 and 27) is universally attributed to Botticelli [78]. It was first mentioned in the literary record by Raffaello Borghini, who noted in
his Il Riposo in 1584 that it had been presented to Bianca Capello, wife of the Grand-Duke Francesco I de' Medici, by Ridolfo Sirigatti, a collector, amateur painter and sculptor, silk merchant, and Medici functionary [79]. It is not known how the paintings came into the possession of Sirigatti, whether by inheritance or purchase, but they remained in the hands of Bianca Capello until her death, when they were inherited by her son, Don Antonio, and listed in the 1587 inventory of the Casino. They were again mentioned in the 1621 inventory taken after Don Antonio's death, and in 1632 were handed over to the custodian of the Tribuna with the rest of his works of art. By 1635 they had entered the Galleria, and have remained in the Uffizi to this day. Although their surfaces are much rubbed, and some damage and discoloration has occurred at the sides, especially in the curtains of The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes, the tempera on wood panels are otherwise in good condition [80].

Both the circumstances and the originator of the commission are unknown. The diptych has been dated by scholars from 1468 to 1472 [81]; however, if the stylistic traits of the Cincinnati panel argue most persuasively for c. 1470 as the time of its execution, then the somewhat more advanced characteristics of the diptych would suggest a date of about 1470-2, with some preference given to the latter part of that time-span. The only clue to the original ownership of the pair occurs in the hat of the figure on a white horse in the back right of The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes. On the front of this cap is a design of three feathers springing from a ground line. Insofar as an insignia of three feathers is a Medici device [82], this could
indicate that the panels were commissioned either by or for a member of the family, particularly since, as has been mentioned, they seem to have had an affinity for Judith. This is slim evidence for making a firm attribution of patronage; however, as will be seen, if the work was created in 1471 or 1472, there are other elements in the political life of Florence that might make a Medici commission for the work plausible. The diptych does not, however, appear in any of the surviving Medici inventories of the late Quattrocento, making an attribution of patronage to the family problematic.

In Borghini's reference to the Uffizi diptych, the two panels are described as being set side by side in a single frame [83]. Lightbown speculates that originally they may have constituted a double-sided panel, like that in Cincinnati, which was later sawn in two to make separate objects; however, there is no physical evidence of this, and the fact that the two pieces are slightly different in size (31 x 24 cm. for Judith Returning to Bethulia, and 31 x 25 for The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes) would argue against this conclusion, especially since there is no indication that the former picture was cut down.

Lightbown's notion might have been influenced by the manner in which the panels were displayed by the Uffizi during much of the recent past: placed back to back in a single frame, so that they looked much like the Cincinnati painting [84]. However, today they are shown side by side [85], and there are good reasons for thinking that this was the original form of the work beyond their being in this configuration in their first mention in the literature. When the two
panels are placed side by side, with The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes on the left, Judith's glance is directed back directly at the headless corpse of the Assyrian. This helps to explain her psychological state, creates a clearly legible, three-part narrative across the panels, and, as will be seen, contributes in a significant way to the shaping of the meaning of the diptych as well. Therefore, it seems that the most logical arrangement on both narrative and thematic grounds is side by side, with Judith Returning to Bethulia on right, and it is this configuration that will be assumed as correct for the remainder of this study.

In The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes, a rich, dark blue drapery of thick cloth, with heavy gold trim at its edges, hangs across the top of the picture, falling down to the floor on the right side of the painting, and down a little less than one quarter of the way on the left, where it is blocked by the figure of a mourner. This drapery, now somewhat discolored and rubbed, forms the inner chamber of Holofernes's tent. An A-shaped opening deeper in the space establishes the outer chamber and wall of the quarters, and opens on to a highly generalized landscape of rolling hills and a light blue sky filled with clouds. The very beautiful, but headless body of the Assyrian lies entangled in disordered, white sheets on the bed, the long side of which is set approximately parallel to the picture plane. The stump of the neck faces the spectator, and bleeds down the side of the bolster on which his head rested. In front of the bed is a small stretch of ground, rising slightly to the right, and covered with grass and small plants to the left, so that the viewer is
distanced slightly from the corpse.

At the foot of the bed, a grieving figure dressed in a red robe and blue mantle, and leaning on a sword held in his right hand, gazes down at his dead commander. He holds white gloves in his left hand, and is separated from the bed by a large swath of red cloth with white lining, conceivably a bedcover. Behind him, on the right side of the panel, are two additional mourners, visible only above the shoulders. They look down toward Holofernes with expressions of quiet, almost meditative pain on their faces, in sharp contrast to the first figure, who almost seems enraged at the sight. Behind them are two additional men, seated on horseback in the outer chamber of the tent. The one on the right sits on a brown horse, only the head of which is visible, and expresses his sorrow by gazing up to heaven and throwing his arm over his head. His companion, on a magnificent white horse, rests his head on the back of his hand and closes his eyes, mourning silently Holofernes's demise. Even his horse seems caught up in the mood of sadness, as the animal raises one foot and bows his head, as if in tribute to the dead general.

On the left side of the panel are four more mourners, each more active in both pose and emotional response than those on the right side. The man closest to the bed has pulled back the sheets with his right hand, and is bent over so far that only the top of his head is visible. He leans so far, in fact, that he appears to be toppling onto the corpse, as if overcome by emotion and fainting, though this effect may be caused more by difficulties Botticelli had in foreshortening the figure than by any such intent on his part. Behind
him, an elderly figure with long gray hair and beard, dressed in a red robe with a gold belt, leans forward to look past his companion, but raises his hands as if drawing back in shock and dismay. Like the previous figure's, his pose and action are a bit ambiguous, and he seems almost to float or hover weightlessly behind the bed. Behind him, to his right, appears the head of a young man, his face buried in his hands as he weeps. Further to the left side of the panel, a somewhat older man dressed in a red robe and dark blue mantle peers around his fellows, his hands clasped before him, and his face showing deep, but quiet grief and concern. He wears an especially elaborate turbaned headdress, and has a good deal of gold trim at the shoulders of his costume, suggesting that he might be one of the senior commanders of the army. This group of mourners forms a block of figures on the left side of the picture, balancing a similarly massed group on the right. As a result, despite the strong emotions and active poses of some of the individual figures, the composition itself is dominated by horizontals, verticals, and large, stable shapes. This gives the picture a feeling of symmetry and formality, a kind of static balance that belies the chaos and panic which the death of Holofernes caused among the Assyrians. Consequently, though these features bring this panel more into a community of mood with Judith Returning to Bethulia, the composition of the piece in many ways works against the emotional tenor of the figures and the expressive and narrative demands of the story.

The representation of this scene is unprecedented among depictions of individual scenes from the story of Judith, either in
manuscripts, or panel paintings, or frescoes. It was included in two of the continuous narratives from early Medieval Bibles, both from Spain, the Farfa and the Roda, but in neither case can those illustrations have influenced Botticelli. It also could have appeared on at least some of the cassone panels created in Florence prior to Botticelli's time, though, again, no specific source has thusfar been discovered. Thus, the conception of this scene may have been entirely the artist's own. It should perhaps not be surprising to find that it has no precedents among single-scene depictions of Judith's tale; even in this case, it does not stand alone, but functions as part of a two-panel narrative, and it seems an unlikely theme for an independent work. It is doubtful that the scene could stand on its own as a recognizable episode in the absence of Judith; it is thematically meaningless without her presence, and the subject is hardly one that seems suitable for purely decorative purposes. These facts further suggest that this work was meant to function in tandem with the panel of Judith Returning to Bethulia, further supporting the theory that they were always meant to be viewed side by side, so that Judith's recent presence could be implied in The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes, and the narrative and thematic significance of the relationship between the two pictures be made clear to the spectator. Placed back to back, both would have been less obvious.

While the Uffizi Judith Returning to Bethulia appears compositionally similar to the Cincinnati panel, in fact there are numerous crucial differences between them, both in the disposition and relationship of Judith and Abra, and in the landscape background.
Judith is placed in the center of the picture. Her body is oriented in a three-quarter front position to the right, but she turns her head and glances back to the left. If the painting of The Discovery of the Body of Holofernes is set beside this one to the left, Judith's gaze is directed precisely at his headless corpse, a fact that both explains Judith's apparently contemplative, even melancholic demeanor and helps to humanize the heroine, giving her a greater psychological richness. Like Donatello's Judith, this Judith does not exult in her triumph; rather, she is a person who has lost almost as much as she gained in her victory, and who is sensitive enough to realize and reflect on the implications of her actions even in a time of some urgency. So powerful is this response, in fact, that, as in Donatello's sculpture, Judith seems to have paused in the course of her action. Thus, Judith's gaze back to the first panel both enriches her psychologically and draws a narrative connection between the works.

The heroine wears a diadem more complex than its Cincinnati counterpart, though the motif on its front disc is also illegible. She wears a white, tight-sleeved undergarment, visible only at the cuff, a looser blue gown with sleeves puffed at the elbows over it, and the familiar high-waisted white outer garment on top. This outer dress has a more complex, ornamented collar than in the Cincinnati work, and decorative frills at the shoulder, but it, too, is gathered beneath her breasts, at her waist, and at her hips, so that it falls to just below her knees. In her right hand she carries Holofernes's scimitar, and in her left is again the olive branch, symbolic of the peace she brings to Bethulia.
Abra wears a white undergarment, visible on her arms and at her hemline, and a gold-orange dress, with short, flounced sleeves at the shoulders. Here, there is no question that she is wearing a dress, not trousers, and the artist has been much more successful in resolving the relationship between her skirts, her feet, and the motion implicit in the figure. She is veiled in white, and carries Holofernes's head in a basket on her head; in this case, however, his head is more clearly revealed, and a more prominent part of the picture. At her left wrist is a rope, from which two flasks hang. In contrast to Judith, who wears sandals, Abra appears to have soft leather boots on her feet, one of which sags around her left ankle, the only one visible in the composition.

Judith and Abra are moving from left to right on rather flat ground. There is no steep hill behind them, as in the Cincinnati panel; rather, there is only an indication of a large rock or bush behind the maid, and the ground on which they walk slopes gently to the right. Their relative positions place them on a diagonal parallel to the line of the plateau on which they stand, which appears to fall away immediately behind them, so that they seem to be walking along a ridge. A few small plants grow around their feet, and a tree at the right edge of the panel provides a visual stop for their motion, though a bit of the landscape background is seen on the side of the tree opposite Judith, at the extreme right edge of the surface. This landscape is considerably more extensive than that on the Cincinnati panel's recto, but its forms are also highly generalized. A large plain ringed by hills stretches out behind and below the two women.
At the far right, a fortified town beside a river is placed in the middle ground, from whose gates stream Bethulian troops to attack Assyrian forces (both cavalry and infantry) deployed in other parts of the landscape. In some cases, the Assyrians are entrenched, but most appear to be fleeing from the town in panic.

It is clear that Botticelli meant the background in this picture to depict a subsequent scene in the story, and one different from that in Cincinnati. In the Cincinnati painting, the troops at the right of the picture appear to be Assyrians preparing to move on Bethulia, while in the Uffizi panel the Bethulian forces are seen attacking and putting to rout the invaders after Judith's return and the discovery of Holofernes's body (Judith 14 and 15). This change from the earlier work gives the Uffizi diptych a more extensive narrative, as well as considerably greater dramatic cohesion and clarity. In the earlier picture, it is even possible that only one moment is present, for the Assyrian troops could be moving off for Bethulia even as Judith is returning to it. In the Uffizi diptych, however, a clear story is unfolded. Holofernes's body is discovered in the left panel. Judith's agency in the execution is revealed in the center of the overall composition (though obviously on the right panel) by the presence of the severed head and sword, but this moment in their return can legitimately be understood as taking place either concurrent with or after the discovery of the corpse. In the background, the consequences of both the decapitation and Judith's return can be seen in the Bethulians' victory in battle. Consequently, while the single panel allowed Botticelli to represent only a single,
or two unrelated, episodes(s) from the tale, the diptych permitted him
to develop a more complete story, and also allowed him, as will be
seen, to shape a specific meaning for the piece.

As has been mentioned, there are numerous and significant, though
sometimes subtle, differences in the two versions of *Judith Returning
to Bethulia*. Besides those enumerated above, several more help to
implement major changes in meaning and function between the Cincinnati
panel and the Uffizi diptych. While Judith's body position differs
little from one composition to the next, her long dress was lengthened
in the Uffizi piece, concealing her rear foot. The cloth pools around
her feet and, as a consequence, rather than seeming to move forward,
as in the earlier painting, she has apparently just come to a stop,
pausing in her journey. It is clear that she has not been at rest for
any length of time, however, because there are still indications of
movement in the bottom of her white overgarment, which blouses out
slightly behind her. The direction of her glance was also altered. In
the Cincinnati painting, she looks behind herself, and roughly at
eye-level, so that she seems either to glance aimlessly back, or to be
in the process of turning to engage Abra. In the Uffizi diptych, on
the other hand, she looks down and back. This both focusses her gaze
on the body of Holofernes in the neighboring panel, establishing a
connection between the two narratively and in terms of her mood, and
directs her attention away from her maid, enhancing Judith's isolation
in thought and emotion from her companion. The feeling of separation
present in the Uffizi piece was clearly desired by the artist, for it
was further developed by Botticelli during the execution of the
painting. A pentimento reveals that Judith's right foot was pulled back from its original position, effectively closing her off even a little more from Abra: an element that serves to increase her psychological isolation, and makes her meditative reflection on the consequences of her action both stronger and more obvious to the viewer of the picture. This quality is less fully stated, if not largely absent, in the Cincinnati version, where Abra is drawn further around toward the picture plane and communicates more directly, if incipiently, with her mistress.

If, in the Cincinnati panel, there is a slightly greater sense of motion in the figure of Judith than in the Uffizi diptych, the situation is reversed with respect to the two maids. In the earlier work, Abra is more or less on the same plane as Judith, and appears to have been walking along comfortably just behind her, and at the same pace. Both her feet are planted on the ground, and she looks intently at her mistress, leaning forward as if to communicate with, or perhaps to stop her. In the Uffizi panel, Abra also looks intently at Judith; however, she is placed distinctly behind her. Abra's very active drapery, trailing out behind her, and the extreme retraction and elevation of her right leg, which terminates outside the picture's space, create the impression that she has been following Judith at some distance, and has hurried along to catch up to her mistress. The flasks clatter at her hip, and the veil she wears, and the cloth covering the severed head of Holofernes, fly out behind, making for a highly effective rendering of a running figure. As a result, it is possible to interpret Judith's apparent pause not merely
psychologically, as a product of her emotional response to or reflection on what has happened in the tent, but also narratively, implying that she is waiting for a moment so that her maid can join her before they complete the journey together. In this way, Botticelli was able to insert a somewhat heightened sense of action and drama in the Uffizi panel, an element in keeping both with the more pronounced narrative thrust of the diptych as a whole, and the necessity of maintaining some balance between the emotional tenor and level of action in the two neighboring pieces.

Despite the fact that Judith appears static in the Uffizi painting, there is a greater degree of apparent motion, a more dynamic sense in the overall composition of this panel. This is in large part a result of Abra's forward rush, but is further enhanced by the backward-tilting diagonal of the olive branch: an element which also completes a triangle formed by Judith's arm, the sword, and this limb. This triangular shape, but especially the branch, returns attention continually back onto Judith's face, from which it is directed by her gaze ultimately back to the headless body of Holofernes, and thus through the pair of panels again, reinforcing the cycle of dramatic, thematic, and emotional connections that run between them, and the meaning that is expressed through the structure of the narrative. This compositional action around her also has the effect of creating an even richer and clearer contrast between the actual and visual movement at the periphery of the surface and the stillness of the heroine in the center, increasing her psychological isolation. The tension between this motion and stillness expressively mirrors the
tension within Judith, and strengthens the emotional and dramatic power of the picture.

The lack of this contrast in both motion and pose between Abra and Judith in the Cincinnati panel tends to deny the work this complexity and emotional edge, even as the more upright olive branch reinforces the verticals of the figures, creating a more static sense in the composition, and fails to bring the focus back to Judith's face, throwing less stress on her response to the events. The failure of the artist in the earlier panel to achieve this complexity and focus might be seen as indicative of the struggle of a young painter to control and find the most effective composition for his expression. However, it is also possible that these adjustments were determined by the different purpose and meaning for which the Uffizi work was created, and that Botticelli's less emotionally and dramatically charged composition in the Cincinnati panel better serves the reflective mood and meditative import and function of that piece. Judith carries the branch a little higher in the Cincinnati panel, where it is a more prominent part of the iconography, and if her expression is a bit melancholic, there is nonetheless a slightly stronger, and less unmixed, sense of the positive aspects of Judith's triumph for her, and generally, in the earlier work. This matches the meaning of the allegorical landscape on the reverse; even as the emotional tenor of the Uffizi panel accords very well with that of its companion picture, in which the horror of that scene both explains and justifies Judith's mixed feelings of triumph and regret, and the psychological tension within her.
A final important difference between the two panels can be observed in the landscape backgrounds. In the Cincinnati Judith, a group of Assyrian horsemen are seen moving toward Bethulia, which is far in the distance: a relatively unimportant part of the pictorial surface. The town is seen nestled in a valley between two ranges of hills, a circumstance that departs markedly from the Biblical narrative, in which Bethulia is located on a hilltop protecting one of the mountain passes into Israel (Judith 4:5-8). However, there does not appear to be any particular expressive significance to his decision, though the inclusion of a lake might tie the image of the city on the narrative side of the panel to that of the allegorical landscape, strengthening the relationship between the two. In the Uffizi picture, Botticelli again failed to place the town on top of a hill; rather, he set it beside a river on a broad plain, with surrounding hills in the distance, and brought it up into the middle ground at the right side of the painting, so that it is a more prominent part of the composition. In this case, however, there seems to have been a definite reason for Botticelli's departure from the Biblical description of the town, one that is intimately related to the meaning of the diptych.

As Horne pointed out, the topography of the Uffizi panel is very similar to that of Florence, a city on a plain bounded by hills, beside a river, the Arno [86]. Botticelli's rendering of the landscape in this piece essentially makes Bethulia an analogue of Florence, a not unexpected parallel given the status of Judith as an emblem of the city, and the political situation in Tuscany at the time the work was
painted, which its meaning seems to have been intended to address. The period around 1470 was a tense one in Florence. Aside from internal clashes between the Medici and the Pazzi, the city faced conflict with Venice in the 1460s, Milan in the 1470s, and a very hostile pope, Sixtus IV, following his election in 1471. The effect of the narrative emphasis and the scenes selected for presentation in the Uffizi diptych seem designed to make a statement about this situation. Florence, like Bethulia, felt itself set upon by larger and powerful neighbors. The presence of a scene showing the headless Holofernes establishes a ground for a painting dealing both with tyrannicide, particularly applicable in the case of the pope and the dukes of Milan, and the defeat of a powerful enemy by a smaller foe. The prominence of Holofernes's dead body in the painting of its discovery, and the close association of the Assyrian's head (more prominently displayed than in the Cincinnati panel), the sword (the vehicle of his destruction), and Judith (his slayer, and an emblem of Florence) in Judith Returning to Bethulia suggests that the diptych is an assertion or an assurance of the triumph of the city over its more powerful, but less righteous, enemies. The decapitated corpse speaks of the fate of tyrants who attempt to oppress the city, the association of Judith with the severed head indicates that Florence itself will be the agent of their destruction, and the inevitability of Florence's victory is assured in the background of the Judith, in which the Bethulian/Florentines rout their foes. The particular episodes chosen for representation by Botticelli, or his patron, lend themselves particularly well to statements treating the fate of
tyrants and those who oppose God's people, which status the
Florentines assumed for themselves; and the way in which the scenes
were depicted, the stress on both the severed head and the city by a
river in the panel of Judith Returning to Bethulia, clearly pull these
meanings forward, pushing imports dealing with personal moral issues
into the background, where they would reside as latent content,
potentially perceptible by a viewer, but not as the primary
significance intended by the artist.

Moreover, just as the format of a double-sided panel enhanced the
depth and guided the viewer's perception of the essentially private
and moral meaning of the Cincinnati panel, so, too, would the side by
side format that probably was used for the diptych facilitate
perception of the kinds of meanings discussed above, allowing both for
the causality of the narrative to be made clear, and for appropriate
emphasis to be given to those elements that draw out the political
relevance of the story for then-contemporary Florence [87]. Even the
format itself accommodated more public expression, for while the
Cincinnati panel could really be examined by only one or two people at
a time in a private chamber of the house, the Uffizi diptych, despite
the small size of each painting, could be observed by more people in a
more public location. Thus, in the Uffizi panels Botticelli created a
pair of pendants that embraced the potential of Judith for expressions
of a civic or public nature, assuring the viewer of the triumph of his
city in a time of trouble, and predicting the fate of all those
tyrannical, larger enemies who might be tempted to move against
Florence.
After his early essays into the theme of Judith, Botticelli seems to have neglected her as a subject until the 1490s (interestingly, another time of trouble in Florence), when he produced at least three, and possibly four paintings which either featured or included the heroine: a small panel, 36.5 x 20 cm., of *Judith Leaving the Tent of Holofernes*, today in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam; *The Calumny of Apelles*, in which Judith appears in the background simulated reliefs; *The History of Lucretia*, in which she is also a sculptural background figure; and possibly a lost painting similar in form to the Amsterdam picture. There is no direct evidence in Botticelli's oeuvre for this presumed additional work; however, there are two drawings, one in the Albertina in Vienna (Plate 29) and one in the Biblioteca Communale in Siena (Plate 30), which are variously attributed to Giuliano and Antonio da Sangallo, and which might bear on this question.

The drawings in question might merely be copies of the Rijksmuseum painting; the relationship between Judith and Abra, and the former's pose, are somewhat similar to those in that work, though the drawings lack any setting, and that in the Albertina is clearly a preparatory sketch for the Siena. However, the drawings differ in a number of details from Botticelli's work, including the pose of Abra, the basket she holds (absent in the Botticelli), Holofernes's hair and beard, and elements of Judith's costume. As a result, some scholars, most notably Eeke Crabbendam-Kruyt, have argued that they must have been based on a second, lost painting similar to that in Amsterdam (88). This suggestion is not without merit; Botticelli frequently repeated compositions with small, though often significant, variations, as his
numerous pictures of *The Adoration of the Maqil*, or his early Judith paintings, demonstrate. However, there is no documentary evidence for this putative second Judith at the *Opening of Holofernes's Tent*, and the drawings might as reasonably be explained as studies by one of the Sangallos for a projected Judith of his own inspired by Botticelli's work. Ultimately, the problem is insoluble, lying in the judgment of individual scholars whether the drawings are tolerably close to the extant painting to consider them genuine, if loose, copies of it, or whether they should be taken to indicate the presence of a lost Botticelli, or an independent Sangallo project. However, if they record a lost picture, then it would indicate that Botticelli was even more involved with the theme of Judith during his later career than currently extant pieces demonstrate; and, even if it records a Sangallo project, it shows that there was a fairly substantial market for images of the heroine in the 1480s and 1490s, the time from which Botticelli's pictures, and those of Sellajo and Ghirlandaio, come.

Like the Cincinnati panel, the Amsterdam Judith *Leaving the Tent of Holofernes* did not emerge into the public record until the late nineteenth century, when it was in the possession of the restorer Buttery in London [89]. It was purchased from Buttery by Professor Richard von Kaufmann of Berlin around the turn of the century. In 1917, it was acquired from his estate by Julius Bohler, a Berlin dealer, who sold it in 1919 to J.W. Edwin vom Rath, who bequeathed it to the Rijksmuseum in 1941. Unlike the Cincinnati painting, however, from its first appearance this work has been universally acknowledged as an autograph Botticelli, and no scholar has ever seriously
challenged that status [90]. It was cut down prior to its first
literary notice on three sides, although the loss seems to have been
minor, and the painted surface had been transferred to a new panel,
which was itself subsequently cradled [91]. A crack from the upper
dge through Holofernes's head has been painted in, and there is much
repainting, particularly in the black interior of the tent, the lower
part of the curtain, and the ground [92]. Judith's face has been
softened by rubbing, and the maid was revealed only after overpaint
was removed between 1946 and 1948 after x-ray examination disclosed the
presence of this highly abraded, ghostlike form [93]. Nonetheless,
the figure type, the delicate draughtsmanship, and particularly the
painting of the face are unmistakably those of Botticelli, and the
opaque, aciɒ colors and sharp, angular drapery patterns help to mark
the composition as a late work by the master, probably of the mid- to
late 1490s, though it has been dated as late as 1500 [94].

The composition is a remarkably simple one. Judith is seen
emerging from the tent of Holofernes, trailed by her much smaller
maid. She is an elongated, towering figure, filling the A-shaped
opening of the tent almost to its top. She is walking at an angle
toward the left side of the panel, but turns her head back to the
right to gaze at the severed head of the Assyrian, which she holds
aloft in her left hand. Her red hair is partially veiled by a striped
cloth of orange and black. She wears a red robe, which is partly
covered by a thin, almost diaphanous gown of steel-blue. Her lower
forearms reveal the presence of another garment with tight sleeves,
and loose, green sleeves come down around her elbows; these might be a
part of the red dress, but the structure of her clothing is most unclear. Over it all she wears a bright golden mantle, which is pulled across her shoulders and breast, and hangs to the floor behind her. In her right hand, at about the level of her waist, she carries the scimitar angled up and out of the pictorial field. Behind her is a flat, black ground; this is overpaint, and there is no record of what might have originally lain behind the heroine, or if this was Botticelli's original conception. She is framed by the open tent flaps, which are bright red where the interior of the cloth is revealed. To her right, the red color runs all the way to the floor, but on the heroine's left only a small swath of the color runs across the upper right corner of the panel. At the far left of the surface is a large, flat mass of light green. While this is undoubtedly intended to represent the outside of the tent, in effect it is so unmodulated that, combined with the black area inside the tent, it reads as a flat, abstract ground, denying any implications of real space, much as was the case in Mantegna's paintings on the theme. Of course, as has been mentioned, it is possible that Botticelli was influenced in some way by the picture by Mantegna in Medici possession by the time of the 1492 inventory of Lorenzo's goods; however, these areas of the panel have been so altered by subsequent overpainting that it is difficult to judge precisely what the initial appearance of the painting was, or the nature of Botticelli's intentions in his conception of the work.

Neither the circumstances of the commission of Judith Leaving the Tent of Holofernes, nor the function of the work, are known. As a
result, it is difficult to speculate on what meaning it might have been intended to convey to its original audience. It is very general in form. There are no symbolic elements present, so that meaning is not created allusively. Her identifying attributes, the sword and the head, also function as parts of the narrative, and, as is always the case in Botticelli's scenes of Judith, the work is in the narrative mode: the heroine is walking away from the tent after having completed the beheading, so that continuous action is implied. However, of all his paintings of Judith, this one has the strongest iconic presence: in part because there is so little dramatic action or tension in the piece, a quality magnified by the calm of Judith's demeanor, and in part because Judith's walking motion is understated. Her weight is equally distributed on both feet, and only the fact that her feet are separated, and her left knee is bent, as if in the process of transferring weight and balance, convey the sense of movement. As a result, she has something of the quality of a posed figure, particularly in the upper part of her body. This, combined with her central placement in the field, looming size, and fixed concentration on the severed head all tend to pull the feeling of the work toward the "holy portrait with attributes," the epitome of the iconic mode: a sense that is enhanced by the volumeless and spaceless quality of the tent, which tends to deny to the place and her actions the three-dimensional reality of the earthly world. Of course, as regards the setting, Botticelli's original intentions cannot be known, since overpaint apparently remains in these areas. Nonetheless, given the way in which the tent flap and the darkness within frame her,
Judith is very similar in this composition to the kinds of statue-like painted portraits of famous people, depicted as standing in niches, that occupied so many galleries of *uomini famosi* in the Quattrocento, and it is not impossible that this work was part of such a program composed of small paintings on panel. Its size, however, also suggests that it might have been a cabinet picture, perhaps of the sort already seen in the Cincinnati panel, and thus it may also have served a devotional function.

The absence of either a sharply focussed narrative or a network of symbols leaves the meaning of the work very general. Though Judith's facial expression is not especially lively, there is a considerably stronger sense of triumph conveyed by this painting than by either of its predecessors in Botticelli's œuvre. This impression is created in part by the sheer monumental dignity of the figure, and by the absence of the melancholy or mixed reaction seen in the Cincinnati and Uffizi panels. But this quality of triumph is especially emphasized by the way in which she holds Holofernes's head aloft as a trophy, fixing her attention on it, and displaying it to the viewer openly. It becomes her prize and her possession, not a thing to be hidden, as was the case in the earlier works. Interestingly, however, because of the absence of any elements of the psychomachia, or of any symbolic language to establish Judith as a representative of any particular virtue, or Holofernes of any vice, there is not an especially strong sense of the picture's depicting the triumph of good over evil. Rather, it is more the personal victory of a heroic individual that is celebrated here, which again might tend to
reinforce the notion that this may have been a part of a gallery of
worthies, or perhaps even just a single work devoted to an exemplary
human being, without an extensive overlay of allegorical meanings.
Nonetheless, where significance is not shaped strongly by the artist,
the potential for an extensive body of latent content projected
legitimately by a spectator is present, and in fact the note of
triumph present in the piece would certainly permit an informed
spectator contemplating this painting to recall Judith's position as
an emblem of a range of virtues, and the Assyrian's as an embodiment
of vice. The image is so general that no specific primary meaning can
be designated. Like Pollaiuolo's small bronze, the work is relatively
a tabula rasa on which the viewer can project, or from which he can
derive, virtually any of the imports appropriate to Judith and her
tale.

Brief mention should be made of two final works by Botticelli in
which he included images of Judith, even though she is not the
principal subject of either piece. These paintings are The Calummy of
Apelles, a panel generally dated c. 1494-5 (Plates 31 and 31), and The
History of Lucretia, dated c. 1496-1504. The former picture is
derived from a story found in Lucian, in which the famous painter
Apelles was falsely denounced for conspiracy in a revolt by a rival,
Antiphilos, to their patron Ptolemy IV, Philopater of Egypt [95].
Ptolemy believed this calumny, and reproached and imprisoned Apelles
under penalty of death. He was saved only when one of the real
conspirators, already under arrest, testified to his innocence. The
remorseful Ptolemy restored Apelles to his position, made him a
present of 100 talents, and gave him Antiphilos as a slave; however, 
Apelles exacted revenge on Ptolemy by painting an allegorical picture. 
The painting by Botticelli represents his recreation of that 
long-lost work by Apelles, though it is modified by variations in 
diverse fifteenth century translations of Lucian’s text [96]. The king, 
wearing the long asses’ ears of Midas signifying a bad judge [97], sits 
on a throne, with Ignorance and Suspicion beside him, whispering into 
his ears. He extends his hand toward Calumny, a beautiful young woman 
in a blue mantle, who holds a flaming torch in her left hand, and 
drags a young man behind her with her right. His hands are clasped in 
prayer; presumably he is appealing to the gods to witness to his 
innocence. Rancor, an ugly man in ragged clothes, goes before her, 
and two women, Fraud and Perfidy, attend Calumny, arranging her hair 
and dress. Behind this group comes Remorse, an aged woman in a torn, 
black mantle and frayed white dress. She turns her head to look at 
Truth, a naked female figure who stands still, facing front, pointing 
up toward and gazing up to heaven. She is the furthest figure from 
the king, and the least involved in the unfolding events.

The allegory, of course, concerns the ease with which an 
individual may be vilified and subjected to injustice. The scene is 
set before a loggia, composed of large piers supporting barrel vaults. 
On these piers are relief sculptures depicting famous stories 
concerned partly with justice, as well as niche statues of figures, 
some of whom are also either emblems of or participants in stories 
about justice or injustice [98]. Two relief panels and a niche 
figure depicting Judith are found on the extreme right of the picture,
immediately behind the throne. At the top of a pier, as part of a
frieze of panels that runs around the walls, is a scene of Judith and
Abra placing the severed head in a foodbag, while below in a similar
frieze at the bottom of the wall is a depiction of the return to
Bethulia. The former is an episode not depicted by Botticelli
elsewhere in his oeuvre, while the latter was, of course, the subject
of two earlier paintings, but is unlike them in form. The reliefs
may stand as a warning to tyrants or purveyors of injustice, but they
are such a small part of the painting that it is questionable whether
too much stress should be laid on their contribution to the meaning of
the work.

More prominent and important than these, however, is the niche
figure of Judith. She stands in a contrapposto position, her head
turned slightly away from the scene of the king and Calumny, with an
expression of dismay, even disgust on her face. At her feet is the
severed head of Holofernes, and in her right hand is the sword,
pointing down, and appearing to touch the forehead of the Assyrian
with its tip. The statue appears to be responding to the travesty
that is taking place before her, and her reaction is appropriate, for
in this context Judith was almost certainly intended to serve as an
image of Justice. As has been mentioned, during the late Middle Ages
the iconographies of Judith and Justice had been conflated, and it was
not unusual to see a figure of Giustizia represented with a sword and
severed head. Judith herself executes divine justice on Holofernes,
making her an appropriate emblem for this virtue. In The Calumny of
Apelles, Judith is doubtless present as an image of Justice, and her
reaction guides the response of the viewer, reinforcing his presumed revulsion at what is taking place. Though a small part of this painting, Botticelli's inclusion of Judith in this composition is nonetheless important, because it provides another example of how the heroine could be used to manifest civic content: though the composition as a whole is an allegory whose import is not limited to judicial proceedings, a trial is taking place, and the necessity for truth and justice to be present in such circumstances forms a part of the meaning of the piece. Thus, Botticelli's use of Judith in this context includes, even if it is not limited to, the concept of civil justice: a meaning which might have formed part of the latent content of Donatello's sculpture, and which certainly was to inform Titian's fresco on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice in the next decade.

Botticelli's inclusion of Judith in *The History of Lucretia* (Plates 33 and 34) serves a function similar to that in *The Calumny of Apelles*, providing a contrast to and a commentary on the action. Above a scene of Tarquin accosting Lucretia with a knife, the commencement of the rape, in a doorway on the left side of the panel, there is a simulated relief showing three episodes from Judith's story: Judith and Abra placing the head in a bag, their arrival at Bethulia, and the Bethulian victory over the Assyrians. The significance of the relief is clear. On one level, it provides an example of the ultimate victory of chastity over lust, a contrast to its temporary defeat by Tarquin in the narrative below. It also probably alludes to the consequences of the rape, for it led to the Roman revolt against their Etruscan masters, which can be considered
to parallel the Bethulian victory over their would-be conquerors. Insofar as he had already established a precedent for himself in using Judith to comment on other stories in a meaningful way in *The Calumny of Apelles*, this painting is not a novelty either in the function of the reliefs or their meaning. However, it serves as an example both of the continuing interest of the artist in the story of Judith until very late in his career, and the flexibility with which she could be used to manifest a variety of meanings in different situations. Moreover, insofar as both *The History of Lucretia* and its companion piece, *The Sacrifice of Virginia*, represent important events in the history of the Roman Republic, encompassing its founding and restoration. Judith might here be placed in a context in which she became, like Donatello's *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, an anti-Medicean symbol. Both works seem to date from the period immediately after the expulsion of the Medici and the founding of the Florentine Republic, and it is difficult not to think that they might have had some relevance to those epic events in the life of the city. In such a case, Judith would have been only a small part, but a contributory one, of this statement in this painting.

Botticelli's representations of Judith set an example for other artists who treated the heroine in works from Florence in the last quarter of the Quattrocento. Two pictures survive which demonstrate his influence on other masters: a painting of Judith's return to Bethulia sometimes attributed to Domenico Ghirlandaio, and a cassone panel by Jacopo del Sellaio.
Ghirlandaio's *Judith Returning to Bethulia* (Plate 35), which is today in the Gemaldegalerie in Berlin, is a very curious picture. At one time it was believed to be the work of Mantegna, and it seems to have been given to Ghirlandaio only around the beginning of the twentieth century [99]. There is accordingly no record of its commissioning, though it is dated 1489, and came to Berlin in 1815 from the Giustiniani Collection. It is almost completely ignored in the literature on the artist: in fact, substantial doubts can be raised whether Domenico Ghirlandaio was its executant. The simulated historical reliefs in the background are generally similar to certain of those found in the fresco cycles of *The Story of the Virgin* [100], and *The Story of the Baptist* [101] in Santa Maria Novella (1486 ff.). However, they lack the aggressive volumetricity and clarity of composition of the reliefs in those works, appearing more as jumbled tangles of figures, with individual faces particularly repeated a number of times with minimal variation. The abstract, classicizing floral decoration on the background piers is almost identical to that found in the stable structure of Ghirlandaio's *Adoration of the Magi with the Slaughter of the Innocents*, from the Spedale degli Innocenti in Florence (1485-8); so much so that it might be wondered if the master would repeat himself so closely, particularly since his autograph works show great variety and inventiveness in this kind of detail. Even the landscape beyond the low parapet rings false, for it has a soft, atmospheric quality that is almost Leonardesque, in contrast to the crisp, almost Flemish sharpness typical of Ghirlandaio's landscape forms even in deep space.
Significant stylistic problems in assigning the work to Domenico's hand are present in the handling of Judith and Abra as well. The figure types, faces, and rendering of drapery in the two are so different that it seems as if they were painted by two hands or, more likely, derived from two different sources. Judith's mantle lacks the sharp, angular quality typical of Ghirlandaio's drapery folds; they are thicker and rounder, and tend to flatten into broad loops and planes. The billowing skirts of Abra's dress, which might pass for a stiff version of the flowing draperies of Botticelli's maid, are repeated almost exactly in the figure of Salome from the Santa Maria Novella Feast of Herod [102] (Plate 36), and the maid carrying a basket of fruit on her head from The Birth of St. John (Plate 37) from the Santa Maria Novella frescoes was without question the source for the face and general form of this Abra.

There is something of Ghirlandaio's rather harsh realism in the faces of the women. Abra's face is so clearly copied from the Santa Maria Novella maid that, again, it must be wondered if Ghirlandaio would reproduce his own figure so closely. That of Judith is generalized to a degree uncommon in this artist's panels, and her face is more a soft, fleshy mask than organically related to the underlying structure of the skull. This Judith also lacks the slender delicacy and pointed, angular features of Ghirlandaio's representations of women, being far rounder than is ever typical of his female type. Both her face and the handling of the draperies are, however, very similar to those of the Virgin in a mosaic of The Madonna and Child with Angels (Plate 38), now in the Musee Cluny in Paris. This work,
which was formerly signed and dated 1496, is the one certain work of Davide Ghirlandaio, the younger brother and assistant of Domenico. Not only is the Madonna linked to Judith by her face and the handling of drapery folds, but the drapery of the angel entering on the right of the mosaic is quite similar to that of Abra in this picture.

Bernard Berenson attributed this painting to Davide, and it is an ascription that makes a great deal of sense [103]. As a member of Domenico’s shop, Davide would have had ample opportunity to master elements of his brother’s style, and it is not unlikely that he might have copied elements of Dominico’s work in his own paintings. Indeed, it is distinctly possible that Davide might have painted some of the Santa Maria Novella figures referenced in this Judith, for there was extensive workshop participation in some of the frescoes in the Tornabuoni Chapel. Thus, while Domenico is unlikely to have executed this Judith on stylistic grounds, Davide is an excellent candidate, both by virtue of the similarities with his known work, and because of his opportunity to work closely in the manner of his brother on numerous occasions.

In Ghirlandaio’s Judith Returning to Bethulia, the heroine and Abra are standing in a bay of a loggia on a patterned tile or stone floor. At the extreme right edge of the surface a small section of a pier can be seen, suggesting that the structure continues both in front of and behind them. Relief panels of Romans battling barbarians, and what appear to be domestic scenes of the latter, appear on a wall and a low parapet in the background. These scenes cannot be identified with any known, extant ancient reliefs, and may be a
fantasy devised by the artist. They might be intended to refer to the battle that follows Judith's return, and the victory of the Bethulians, but they could also be either simple decorations, without iconographic significance, or general references to Judith's temporarily martial character. A deep landscape of hills, with a fortress beside a large body of water, is set in the upper left corner above the parapet. This topography is very different from that of the Biblical description of Bethulia, but this characteristic is not uncommon in the Renaissance. Botticelli's Cincinnati panel is only loosely faithful to the text, and his Uffizi diptych places Bethulia beside a river: inaccurate, but effective in stressing its link to Florence. The significance of the choice of a lake, if intended to express meaning, is unclear, but Ghirlandaio's approach to this scene is sharply at odds with the Biblical text on a number of grounds. Judith's return took place out of doors, but Davide has shifted it to a loggia in which Judith and Abra are alone. In the Biblical text, the two are greeted at the city gate on their return, and so are at no point alone in the city, as they are seen here. Judith does not retain the scimitar, present here, in the text, but she does bring back the bed canopy, which is absent from this representation [104]. Such lapses in narrative logic are not unusual in the work of Domenico and his shop, and are not surprising here. Though atextual in its setting, the scene is still clearly comprehensible as a narrative of the return, and Davide's shift in locale neither compromises nor significantly alters its meaning.
Judith stands on the right side of the picture. She is dressed in a rusty orange robe, with a blue mantle slung over her left shoulder and around her body at waist-level. A light blue scarf binds her copper hair, and her dress includes an elaborate collar with a large pendant pearl. She stands in an exaggerated contrapposto pose, her left hand resting on her outshot hip, and holds the scimitar cradled against her right arm. Her body is turned slightly to her left, but she looks back to her right at the approaching Abra. The maid wears an olive-brown undergarment, visible only at the breast and forearms, covered by a light peach dress, split up the side and fastened by a large circular pin at the top of her thigh. On her head she carries the enormous head of Holofernes in an open basket, utterly uncovered, steadying her burden with her right hand. In her left hand she carries a pitcher as she strides up to her waiting mistress. The top part of the figure, as has been mentioned, is derived from Domenico's maid in the Santa Maria Novella fresco of *The Birth of St. John*, while her lower draperies and legs closely resemble those of Salome in *The Feast of Herod*. Oddly, there is no indication that she is about to slow down and stop her purposeful stride, so that she seems to be on a collision course with the tip of the scimitar held by Judith, and is about to have it pierce her throat. Though Judith and Abra occupy the same space, and appear to look at one another, they are such different types of figures, and are so poorly related to one another narratively and compositionally, that it is clear they have been drawn from at least two different sources, and placed together in the picture without sufficient modification for them to seem to really
belong together in this scene. This can be explained by the fact that while Abra is a conflation of two figures from the Santa Maria Novella frescoes, and hence derives from designs by Domenico, Judith is more clearly the invention of Davide, and more reflective of his own figure style.

As is usually the case in Florentine depictions of Judith from the second half of the Quattrocento, this work is predominantly narrative. For a viewer familiar with the story of Judith, the shift in setting could be disconcerting, pulling Judith and Abra away from the narrative's traditional locus, but there is no visual basis for speaking of an iconic netherworld or a symbolic realm in which the figures could relive or re-enact their adventure. The combination of their actions and suggestions of a specific place are too strong to admit either of sacred portraiture or a spiritual universe. The work is essentially a visually attractive antiquizing painting, using the Biblical episode as a pretext and perhaps for a certain emotional fillip, and does not aspire to reveal its deep significance.

The function of the work is unknown. Its primary intent seems to have been decorative, though a devotional use is not beyond question, and it could be a scene from a gallery of worthies or group of exemplars of virtue and vice, such as were painted by Mantegna. The intended meaning is similarly difficult to fix. Judith's attitude is quite jaunty, giving the picture a fairly strong sense of her triumph, but there are no other indications, narrative or symbolic, of a highly specific meaning. Rather, like Botticelli's Judith Leaving the Tent of Holofernes, this is a work with little or no defined primary
content, but a large body of latent significance that could be applied to it by an interested viewer. Regardless, however, of its intended function and meaning, like the Sangallo drawings it demonstrates interest in the story of Judith in the Florentine milieu outside the work of Botticelli, and is indicative of her popularity in the last two decades of the fifteenth century.

Jacopo del Sellaio's cassone panel of *The Story of Judith* (Plate 39) is also undocumented. It was acquired by the Dayton Art Institute from the collection of Harold I. Pratt of New York in 1964, after appearing in two exhibitions at the Wildenstein Galleries in that city, in 1947 and 1962 [105]. Its attribution to this artist, however, is unchallenged. It is by far the largest of the paintings dealing with Judith's tale thusfar discussed, 15 3/4 x 58 1/2 inches, and is highly decorative in nature, and very conservative in style. In fact, with its bright colors, stylized landscape forms, use of contemporary costumes for people of the past, and scale distortions (the human figures are very large in comparison to architectural elements, for example, much in the manner of fourteenth century works like Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes or Duccio's *Maesta Altarpiece*), the picture is quite reminiscent of the International Gothic style of the early Quattrocento, recalling the works of Fra Angelico, Lorenzo Monaco, or Gentile da Fabriano more than those of Filippo Lippi, Sellaio's teacher. However, there is a consistency in the use of linear and aerial perspective that marks the work as fully Renaissance, and its stylistic anachronisms, common in Sellaio's work, probably are choices based on the essentially decorative context for which the picture was
created, rather than any lack of skill or awareness of recent
developments in style on the part of the artist.

The panel has not been precisely dated. Sellajo was listed among
the members of the guild of St. Luke in 1460, when he was nineteen,
1472, and 1473, and he died in Florence in 1493 [106], providing a
terminal date for the work. It seems, however, to demonstrate
knowledge of either Botticelli's Cincinnati or Uffizi panels; in the
scene of Judith and Abra returning to Bethulia, the heroine holds the
scimitar across her body and glances back over her shoulder in a
manner very similar to that of Botticelli's figures, and Abra's pose,
and the manner in which she gathers her dress up in one hand in front
of her to clear the skirts for her hurried pace also strongly recall
Sandro's works. Moreover, the color scheme of the two women's
costumes is identical to that of Botticelli, but reversed, so that in
this panel Judith is seen in oranges, and Abra in violets. Of course,
Sellajo and Botticelli could conceivably have been drawing on a common
source, and it is not impossible that Botticelli was influenced by the
slightly older Sellajo. However, if it is assumed that it was Sellajo
who borrowed from Botticelli, as seems more likely, the cassone panel
could not have been created before about 1472, and so it can probably
safely be assigned to c. 1472-93.

Cassone panels carried the Medieval tradition of continuous
narratives of Judith's story into the Renaissance, and Sellajo's panel
is no exception. It is read narratively from right to left. On the
far right are the tents of the Assyrian camp, with that of Holofernes
in the foreground. Guards stand at either side of his quarters, but
they are unaware of what is taking place either inside the tent, where Judith is vigorously removing Holofernes's head in a manner vaguely reminiscent of Guarieto's fresco from Padua, or in front of it, where Abra kneels beside a basin, holding the cloth with which she will cover the severed head at the ready. The curtains of the tent are placed between Abra and the guards, and conventionally it is probably to be understood that she is inside the tent, and that they cannot see her. While this violates the strict word of the text, where Judith and Abra are not in the same chamber during the execution, since there is no division into inner and outer rooms in his quarters this was probably Sellajo's way of suggesting that they are not in the same space.

To the left of the guards Judith and Abra are seen again at the beginning of a winding road that leads back to the walled city of Bethulia, which occupies the top of the panel for a little more than half of its width. Judith and Abra are shown here entering the gates of the town, constituting the third scene of the panel. The left half of the picture is devoted entirely to scenes of soldiers. While those in the lower half of the field seem to be preparing for battle, those in the upper left corner of the panel appear to be retreating from the city, suggesting that two phases of the military activity are represented in the picture: the pre-battle maneuvers of the Assyrians, and their retreat after learning of their commander's death. Consequently, in this panel Sellajo has probably included five episodes or phases of action, though it may be arguable whether it is appropriate to divide the military activity on the left of the
surface into two distinct parts.

The meaning of Sellajo's picture is essentially controlled by its function. As a cassone panel, its primary purpose was decorative; however, this does not preclude the possibility that a larger import was intended in the work. Insofar as cassoni were often wedding chests, and gifts to brides, it is normal to see Judith's presence as a reminder of the virtues of chastity and, perhaps, humility, and the penalties of lust; i.e., as a moralizing revelation of the virtues of a wife. This may well have been the significance of Sellajo's work. However, cassoni were not inevitably wedding chests or possessions of women, and given the large amount of space on this panel devoted to military activity, it might be wondered whether the chest were originally owned by a man, with a meaning more appropriate to his concerns. The presence of the stream might allow the viewer to identify Bethulia with Florence, as was the case in Botticelli's Uffizi diptych, and the incidents depicted could signify a content based on the fate of tyrants and an assertion of the city's divinely-given protection against external foes as easily as one centered on domestic virtues. The question is, as has so often been the case, insoluble because of uncertainty regarding its original patron, and, in any case, neither of these contents would bring anything new to the significance Judith had in Florentine Quattrocento art. Nonetheless, this panel is a fine example of Judith's place in the decorative arts in Florence, and demonstrates again the flexibility of the heroine in accommodating a wide variety of meanings.
The final manifestation of the Florentine Quattrocento tradition in paintings of Judith was not created in the city, nor does it come from the Quattrocento. It is Michelangelo's inclusion of the heroine in the spandrel scenes on the entry wall of the Sistine Chapel (1508-12; Plate 40). Like its forebears in the work of Botticelli and Davide Ghirlandaio, it has a narrative emphasis, and eschews the beheading, shifting instead to the moment in which Judith and Abra conceal the head: the scene preferred by Mantegna, and probably available to Michelangelo in the lost work owned by the Medici.

However, while these characteristics link the work to the past, there are also a number of small, but significant innovations in the picture that take it beyond Quattrocento representations of Judith, and link it to sixteenth century North Italian depictions of Judith.

Judith is placed in the center of the irregular, triangular field. She is dressed in a blue undergarment with long sleeves, over which she wears either a white or light green sleeveless gown (the shot color makes it difficult to determine whether she wears a white dress with green shadows, or a green dress with white highlights). She is seen in a one-quarter view from the rear, her left foot raised from the ground and trailing behind her has she prepares to cover the severed head of Holofernes, which is in a metallic (probably silver) trencher on Abra's head, with a white cloth. Her head is twisted around to allow her to look at the corpse of Holofernes, which lies sprawled on his bed in the right half of the picture, so that her face is not visible to the viewer. Unlike that in Botticelli's Discovery, the stump of the Assyrian's neck faces away from the spectator, so
that Michelangelo's is not a particularly bloody scene, though his right arm is raised in a fashion that suggests the body is writhing in its death agonies. Abra is to the left of Judith, bending to allow her mistress to cover the head. Her face is only partly visible, and has an expression of distaste. She is dressed in a yellow gown, with what appears to be a red vest over it, and a swath of purple cloth encircles her waist. The active poses of the two women lends this painting an urgency absent in most other depictions of this scene. A sleeping soldier, leaning against the tent in the upper left corner of the field, completes the composition.

Michelangelo's composition includes at least three important innovations in the Florentine tradition. This is the first time in Florentine painting that this particular scene, in which the head is concealed in its carrying vessel, was represented in an independent work [107]. While conceived differently, it is essentially the moment depicted in Mantegna's oeuvre, though there is no evidence of direct influence from that master except in the fact of Judith being seen with her back to the spectator, as in the Paduan master's drawing in the Uffizi. Judith is also represented without the sword, which more accurately reflects the Biblical text, though it had become an almost inevitable element in her iconography by the Renaissance. Finally, this is the first time that Holofernes's head was placed in a metal trencher. Though seemingly insignificant, in fact this was perhaps the most important innovation on Michelangelo's part in terms of subsequent repercussions, for it led to the common use of this object as a receptacle for the head in North Italian representations of
Judith in the sixteenth century, and to occasional confusion in paintings from this milieu between images of the heroine and of Salome [108].

With the Sistine Judith, the practice of including her as a part of larger programs of diverse figures and stories resumed. Because she is one small part of an immense design, both in sheer size and the scope of its significance, the meaning of this painting is subsumed into the content of the ceiling as a whole. While it would be inappropriate in this study to attempt to define the full import of the Sistine Ceiling, at least two meanings for this depiction of Judith can be understood from its integration into the whole. On one level, she is a participant in, and representative of a period of, a sacred history. At the time Michelangeio completed the ceiling, the Sistine Chapel decorations comprised a history of the world in Christian terms from the beginning of time through the period of Noah (in the ceiling's central panels); on to the life of Moses (in the Quattrocento decorations on the walls); and thence to the history of Israel (in the spandrels and medallions of the ceiling, as well as in the figures of prophets and ancestors of Christ); the life of Christ (in the Quattrocento frescoes); and finally the history of the Church (in the portraits of popes along the walls). This was probably not a new function for Judith; she had been represented in world histories such as the Histoire Universelle during the Middle Ages, and her presence at Amiens in the voussoirs of the South transept portal may constitute a similar use in a purely Biblical context. Masolino's frescoes at Monte Giordano essentially constituted a world history in
terms of its great figures, such as that in the *Histoire Universelle*. However, there are no earlier Renaissance examples of her presence in a comprehensive history of the Biblical and Christian worlds, and, given the likelihood that Michelangelo was not familiar with any of the Medieval works in which she was placed in a similar context, it is at least possible that her inclusion here represents an independent invention on his part.

She also participates in a body of content generated by the four spandrel scenes. The other three paintings to which Judith is related include a *David and Goliath* on the other side of the entry wall, as well as depictions of *The Brazen Serpent* and *The Execution of Haman*, from the *Book of Esther*, on the altar wall of the chapel. Each of these scenes deals with a kind of salvation. Judith and David save the Jews from foreign invaders, Esther rescues her people from the machinations of their enemy, Haman, and the bronze snake heals those who gaze on it during a plague of venomous serpents sent by God to punish the Israelites for their faithlessness during the exodus. These episodes were understood in the Christian tradition of Biblical exegesis to represent the triumph of the Church and of Christ over evil [109]. Again, typological comparisons between Judith and either Christ or the Church were far from new; in the writings of the early Church fathers such a significance was assigned to Judith and her tale. However, the particular group of scenes Michelangelo included to illustrate this concept appears to be unique in the visual arts, and certainly this typology had never before been developed on quite such a monumental scale. Nonetheless, the meanings generated by the figure
of Judith in the Sistine Ceiling fall comfortably within the general
tradition of meanings assigned to the heroine, so that Michelangelo
broke no new ground with regard to content in this project.

With Michelangelo, the Quattrocento tradition of painted
representations of Judith in Florentine art came to an end.
Depictions of the heroine are rare in Cinquecento Tuscan art until the
end of the century, when Judith was revived, at least in some contexts,
as a symbol of the militant Roman Church in its struggle against its
(Protestant) enemies. This absence perhaps owes itself principally
to the anti-Medicean associations of Donatello’s Judith Beheading
Holofernes, which may have become sufficiently strong by the time of
their 1512 restoration to power that the family found her unpalatable,
and she fell out of favor in Florence. Nonetheless, Judith did not
disappear as a figure in Italian Renaissance art, for from the
beginning of the sixteenth century she became a highly favored figure
in the art of Venice and North Italy, where depictions of the heroine
flourished during the next two centuries, though in forms, and
sometimes with contents, different from those established in Florence
during the fifteenth century.
NOTES


2 Christopher Lloyd, et al., *Master Drawings: the Woodner Collection* (London, 1987), p. 201. Of the remaining Cockerell pages, one is in Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum), six are in the Cockerell Collection at Kew, and one is in an unknown location. The identification of these manuscripts with Masolino's cycle was made by R.W. Scheller, "Uomini Famosi," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum Amsterdam* X (1962), pp. 56ff; and further explored by W.A. Simpson, "Cardinal Giordano Orsini as a Prince of the Church and a Patron of the Arts," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XXIX (1966), pp. 135-59. Prior to that time, the manuscripts were known and discussed, but had not been connected to any particular Renaissance cycle of famous people. Scheller, however, connected the illustrations in the Crespi collection manuscript to two Renaissance lists of the Monte Giordano cycle, and found they matched almost exactly. According to Scheller, the "Cockerell Chronicle" was copied directly from the Crespi manuscript, which he believes is closest to the original appearance of Masolino's frescoes because it seems to reproduce the backgrounds of the works. However, other scholars, such as Bernard Berenson, *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, Vol. II (Chicago, 1938), no. 164c, and Ilaria Toesca, "Gli 'Uomini Famosi' della Biblioteca Cockerell," *Paragone Arte* 3, no. 25 (1952), pp. 16-20, do not regard the Cockerell illuminations as a copy of another manuscript, but as derived directly from an original set of frescoes (at the time they wrote as yet unidentified with Masolino's, though Toesca regarded this cycle, along with one by Domenico Veneziano in the Casa Baglioni in Perugia, as possible candidates). The "Cockerell Chronicle's" surviving pages reproduce only about fifteen percent of the original cycle. Nearly all of it appears in the Crespi manuscript and the Turin picture chronicle, though in the latter case only one illustration appears on each page; the set in the *Libro di giusto* is very incomplete (Simpson, "Cardinal Giordano Orsini," p. 137).

Nonetheless, the complete manuscript cycles have not been published, and to the author's current knowledge only the Cockerell Judith illustration has been reproduced. Insofar as it has a setting, by Scheller's criteria it is likely to be among the more accurate recreations of the original frescoes, and consequently is the picture that will be used in attempting to understand Masolino's treatment of Judith.
3 Berenson, "Drawings," no. 164c. The text reads: "By a finer artist than Dominico di Michelino or Strozzi, and more delicate than Benozzo and on a level with Pesellino, whom these miniatures most resemble, although almost certainly not by him. There are reminders as well of Dominico Veneziano." Among the characteristics typical of Florentine art at the time are the delicate coloring and color harmonies and the expressive character of the figures. Lloyd, "Master Drawings," p. 201.


6 Scheller, "Uomini Famosi," pp. 56ff. These include the depictions in the Crespi manuscript, and some of those in the "Cockerell Chronicle."


11 There are a number of small discrepancies between the lists, including the ordering of figures, and the omission of some from one list or the other. Consequently, the precise ordering of the cycle can never really be known.

12 This mixing of portraits and more narrative compositions is generally typical of the Cockerell pages.

13 These characteristics typify all of the other Cockerell pages, at least.


15 A previous example from France, however, exists in the North transept portals at Chartres Cathedral, c. 1210.


19 Greenhalgh, "Donatello," pp. 183-4. Greenhalgh, however, cites no visual cycles from the late Middle Ages or Early Renaissance including Judith, and speaks principally of literary sources in his discussion. Consequently, though Judith may have appeared in such cycles, there is no evidence that she actually did so in Florence in the period before Botticelli.

20 One of these, owned by the Medici, is known to have once existed, but is lost. The other three are extant, and are in Washington (National Gallery), Montreal (Museum of Fine Arts), and Dublin (National Gallery). For a fuller discussion, see Nini Garavaglia, The Complete Paintings of Mantegna (New York, 1967), pp. 109-10, 114; and Jane Martineau, ed., Andrea Mantegna (New York, 1992), pp. 403-5, 411-3, 435-42. In addition, a fresco on the theme, designed by Mantegna (probably during the fifteenth century), but executed only after his death, is in his funerary chapel in St. Andrea in Mantua. Ettore Camesasca, Mantegna, (Firenze, 1981), p. 76.

21 Three of these are probably copies after lost drawings by Mantegna, while one, in the Uffizi, is undoubtedly genuine. Martineau, "Mantegna," pp. 439-42.


23 These questions have been and continue to be the subject of extensive scholarly debate, so much so that they could almost form the subject of a lengthy study in themselves. With the exception of the Uffizi drawing, every painting or drawing is held to be by Mantegna himself by some scholars, and either after him or a copy of a lost original by others. Readers wishing a summary of these debates are referred to Martineau, "Mantegna," pp. 403-5, 411-3, and 435-44, which catalogue entries will provide references to the full discussions of scholars such as Berenson, Erica Tietze-Conrat, Garavaglia, Lightbown, and numerous others who have studied this issue.

24 Martineau, "Mantegna," p. 435. This might be the same picture listed in a late sixteenth century inventory of the possessions of Don Antonio de' Medici, but the issue has not been resolved (Martineau, "Mantegna," p. 435). If it were not the same painting, this would establish a second lost picture by Mantegna, and bring the total number of such works to five.


27 For a summary of opinions, see Garavaglia, "Mantegna," p. 114; and Martineau, "Mantegna," p. 435. If it is an early sixteenth century copy, however, then it might record the appearance of the lost Medici panel.

29 Martineau, "Mantegna," p. 405. This painting has been associated less successfully with The Judgment of Solomon (Paris, Louvre), and two works in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna: a David with the Head of Goliath, and a Sacrifice of Isaac.


33 Among these are an early fourteenth century Italian Bible (Pierpont Morgan Library ms. 436, fol. 173v); a twelfth century German Bible (Munich, Staatsbibliothek Clm. 3901, fol. 121); a German Bible of about 1260 (Hohenfurt Monastery, mss. CIV-CLIX); an early twelfth century French Bible, the Bible of Stephen Harding (Dijon, Bibl. Comm., mss. 12-15); a late thirteenth century French Bible (Morgan Library ms. 177, fol. 236v); and the late twelfth century French Souvigny Bible (Moulins, Musee Municipale, fol. 291v). Each may be seen in Frances G. Godwin, "The Judith Illustration of the 'Hortus Deliciarum'," Gazette des Beaux-Arts 36 (1949).


37 The return to Bethulia is described briefly in Judith 13:10-2. The detail of the Assyrian horsemen does not appear in the text, but corresponds generally to the narrative, in which the Assyrians are in the countryside guarding the springs and besieging the city, and expect to attack on the morning of Judith's return.


41 Adams, "Botticelli," p. 5.


44 Adams, "Botticelli," p. 6. It is unclear whether the work entered Bohler's possession, or was bought back from the auction house by the Bardini family (see below).


Adams, "Botticelli," pp. 6, 8. Ragghianti's assertion was recorded in the January-February 1955 issue of Seic Arte, which published a review of the problem. Gamba's comments are recorded in Atti del Siminario pisano di storia dell'arte 1953, p. 161.


Rita de Angelis, Botticelli: Every Painting (New York, 1980).


Dates for the Uffizi Judith, which has been the object of considerably more commentary than the Cincinnati panel, range from an early, and almost certainly inaccurate, estimate of 1467 by Yukio Yashiro, Sandro Botticelli (Boston, 1925), p. 13; to c. 1472, a more generally favored date, accepted by most recent scholars (Mandel and Levey, "Botticelli," p. 89). As will be seen, the style of the Uffizi diptych is really too far advanced toward that of the mid-1470s for Yashiro's date to be given much credence. If, as will be argued, the
Cincinnati panel was executed shortly before the Uffizi pair, c. 1470-2 would seem to be a reasonable estimate, given the probable rate of Botticelli's stylistic development at this time, and the fact that the piece shows somewhat less reliance on the style of preceding masters such as Piero del Pollaiuolo than the Fortitude, which is securely dated to 1470.

63 A discussion of the priority of the Cincinnati or Uffizi panel will appear below.

64 This is even more accomplished in the Uffizi piece, as will be seen. For an illustration of Tobias and the Angel, see L.D. Ettlinger, Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo (London, 1978).

65 However, the drapery style in particular is part of a broader tradition, which J. Albert Dobrick identified with antique maenad figures ["Botticelli's Sources: A Florentine Quattrocento Tradition and Ancient Sculpture," Apollo 110, no. 210 (1979), pp. 114-27.], but which probably came to Botticelli more directly from Donatello, Lippi, and Fra Angelico. Illustrations of Lippi's paintings may be found in Gloria Fossi. Filippo Lippi (Florence, 1990).


67 See below.


69 Rene Schneider, Botticelli (Paris, n.d.), p. 16.


71 Ferguson, "Signs," p. 25.


73 This is not a virtue closely associated with Judith in the literary and visual traditions, though it is one which a thoughtful viewer might reasonably link to her. There was, however, a visual tradition in which Judith was linked with Delilah and Campaspe in companion pictures as an allegory of man's misfortune at the hands of scheming women. Hall, "Dictionary," p. 181. Mantegna's pendants of Judith and Samson and Delilah may have formed a pair with such a meaning.
74 Ferguson, "Signs," pp. 127-8. St. Julian, a huntsman, was warned by a stag that he would kill his parents. Though Julian fled to avoid this fate, he accidently killed his parents when they came searching for him, and spent years in penance seeking God's forgiveness.

75 A link made visible in the iconographies of St. Bustace and St. Hubert, where a crucifix appears in its antlers. See, for example, Durer's engraving of The Conversion of St. Bustace (Hubert?), or Pisanello's painting on the same theme (London, National Gallery).


77 Ferguson, "Signs," p. 11.


79 Lightbown, "Botticelli," Vol. II, p. 21. The following account of the provenance of the painting is from this source.


81 Lightbown, "Botticelli," Vol. II, p. 22. Bettini favored the earliest date, Salvini the latest, with most scholars falling in between.


86 Horne, Botticelli, p. 25.

87 As an aside, the diptych format in the Uffizi pair might also have allowed Botticelli to maintain a greater sense of decorum, since he could clearly show the result of Judith's violence, and associate her with it, while physically removing her from its presence.


89 Lightbown, "Botticelli," Vol. II, p. 97. The account of the panel's history is from this source.


93 Lightbown, "Botticelli," Vol. II, p. 97. Neither Lightbown nor Crabbendam-Kruyt, who authored the entry on this painting in the Rijksmuseum Catalogue [Rijksmuseum (Netherlands), Catalogue of Paintings (Amsterdam, 1960)], indicate that anything appears beneath the black paint on the inside of the tent. Lightbown's phrasing is ambiguous, but seems to imply that overpaint was removed only in one area to reveal the presence of the maid. The same implication can be derived from Crabbendam-Kruyt's entry in van Os, "Florentine Paintings," p. 63. Accordingly, it would seem that the black paint represents overpaint, but that nothing has appeared beneath it in x-rays to suggest it should be removed.

94 Lightbown, for example, favors this late date [Botticelli," (1989), p. 236]. The earliest dates suggested are those of Bode and Friedlander, who placed it c. 1490. Horne, Venturi, and Mandel all assigned it to the middle of the decade, while Yashiro, van Marle, Gamba, Mesnil, Salvini, and Bettini all preferred the 1497-1500 range. For a summary of the proposed dates, see Lightbown, "Botticelli," Vol. II, pp. 97-8; and Mandel and Levey, "Botticelli," p. 107.

95 The account of the subject matter is derived from Lightbown, "Botticelli," (1989), pp. 230-1, where a fuller description can be found.


98 Not all of these figures and tales are related to justice themes, however, in any way. They represent a rich mix of classical Biblical, and historical sources, and many of the simulated reliefs seem to have been based either on descriptions of ancient paintings by classical artists (Apelles himself, or Zeuxis) found in Greek or Roman texts, or in works by Botticelli and his shop (Mandel and Levey, "Botticelli," p. 105). A partial list of these figures and stories, to demonstrate their range, includes the Novella of Nastagio degli Onesti, Hercules and Lychas, Apollo and Daphne, Trajan's justice, Bacchus finding Ariadne (or Mars and Venus), David (or Theseus), David and Goliath, Mucius Scaevola, St. George and the Dragon, The Judgment of Paris, St George (or Mars), The Fall of the Titans, Prometheus, Jupiter and Antiope, Minerva with Medusa's Head, and diverse scenes of centaurs.

100 See especially The Slaughter of the Innocents, which may be seen in Emma Micheletti, *Domenico Ghirlandaio* (Florence, 1990).

101 See especially The Angel Appearing to Zaccharias, in Micheletti, "Ghirlandaio."

102 Which painting was probably executed largely by assistants. Micheletti, "Ghirlandaio," p. 57.


104 This departure from the narrative is, however, virtually universal, even occurring in Sellaio's cassone panel, in which Judith and Abra pass Assyrian guards on their way back to town. This suggests that in the minds of Florentine Renaissance artists the clarity lent to an identification of the figure of Judith by the sword's presence outweighed any lapse in narrative logic it might signify.


107 It may have occurred as an element in cassone panels.

108 For a full discussion of this issue, see Paul Joannides, "Titian's Judith and its context," *Apollo* 361 (March 1992), pp. 163-70.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

At the end of the Middle Ages, Judith was a figure largely confined to manuscript illuminations and the decorative arts. In the former context, she appeared most commonly in either typological or emblematic volumes, or as an initial in historical or Biblical texts. On rare occasions, she appeared on a larger scale as a part of programs such as that of the North transept portals at Chartres, or the fresco cycles of Guariento or Gaddi, but these are very much exceptions to the rule. During the fifteenth century in Florence, however, she began to be represented in independent, and occasionally even in monumental, works, and her significance was expanded to include secular as well as sacred meanings.

She was depicted by some of the most important artists of the day, including Ghiberti, Donatello, Botticelli, and Michelangelo, and probably Pollaiuolo as well. Ghiberti's treatment of Judith was traditional in its content, drawing a typological connection to David long-established in the literary tradition. Her apparent exultation, though not identifiable with any specific moment in the Biblical text, combines with her active posture to give the work a strong sense of the narrative. Nonetheless, there is also an iconic presence that
emerges on reflective viewing. This conflation of strong narrative and iconic presences in a single work is part of Ghiberti's achievement, and an element that was developed in an even more sophisticated way by Donatello.

Donatello's *Judith Beheading Holofernes* combined narrative and iconic elements in a complex manner as a means of expressing a range of meanings. The artist built his sculpture around a system of dualities: narrative and iconic, meanings connected to both civic and personal moral spheres, the dualities inherent in wine and the role of vice in Judith's story, and the simultaneously public and private nature of the Medici Palace garden. Through this system, he was able to infuse the sculpture with a significance embracing the triumph of Humility over Pride, and Chastity over Lust; the fate of tyrants and the enemies of God and of Florence; and the inevitability of the victory of good over evil, and of Florence over its enemies. These meanings were manifest both in the imagery and the inscriptions attached to the *Judith* at an early date by the Medici. Though she was initially associated closely with the Medici and their *de facto* rule of Florence, after the removal of Donatello's *Judith Beheading Holofernes* to the ringhiera of the Piazza della Signoria in 1495, she was transformed into a potent symbol of resistance to their supposed tyranny, and of the Florentine's determination to eschew rule by that family.

Though Donatello drew on the visual tradition of the psychomachia, he transformed it into a specific narrative context: one enriched by his subtle and sensitive treatment of Judith's
psychological response to the events at hand. The result is a work which is one of the highlights of the artist's career, and which seems to have engendered production of a number of other works centered on the heroine in the years after its completion.

While Judith was never the subject of an altarpiece, it seems likely that the functions which she could serve were expanded to include her use as an object of devotional meditation, perhaps in sculpture, and almost certainly in painting. Such is a possible function of the small bronze statuette attributed most commonly to Pollaiuolo. Though active in posture, this work is the one truly iconic piece from Quattrocento Florence in which Judith was featured. The absence of either a narrative moment or symbolic imagery (aside from her attributes) makes it impossible to derive a specific meaning, but its small size implies personal use: if not as a devotional object, then at least as a decorative one.

Judith also became a subject in panel paintings during this period: most prominently by Botticelli, but also perhaps by Domenico Ghirlandaio or, more likely, his brother Davide. In addition, at least one work by Mantegna on the subject was in Medici possession. In his early double-sided panel in Cincinnati, and the Uffizi diptych, each of which includes scenes of the return to Bethulia, Botticelli used quite similar compositions to express two different meanings. The Cincinnati panel has a content centered on the triumph of virtue over vice, private moral qualities that suggest this work might have been a devotional painting. The Uffizi diptych, in which the city of Bethulia functions prominently and transparently as a symbol of
Florence, speaks of the fate of tyrants and the victory of God's people (be they Israelites or Florentines). Thus, in a pair of similar works, Botticelli expressed both private and civic contents through the image of Judith, much as Donatello had done (albeit in a single sculpture).

Botticelli also followed Mantegna in treating Judith at the opening of Holofernes's tent after the assassination. The meaning of this piece is far less clear than that of his early, more dynamically narrative compositions, since it depicts a relatively characterless moment narratively, and lacks symbolic imagery. It begins to shift toward the kind of less specific meanings and stronger iconic presences typical of sixteenth century North Italian treatments. Nonetheless, it would function very well as a devotional work, a kind of holy portrait on which a viewer could reflect in hopes of conforming himself to Judith's example.

In addition, Botticelli included Judith in decorative reliefs in two other of his paintings: The Calumny of Apelles, and The Story of Lucretia. In each of these, the image of Judith comments on the action: in the former by providing an example of justice against the injustice being rendered in the main scene, and in the latter by predicting the cost to Tarquin of his lust for (and rape of) Lucretia.

In each painting by Botticelli, the moment selected for representation was shifted away from the traditional moment depicted in the Middle Ages and by Donatello: the beheading. Instead, incidents in the aftermath of the decapitation were depicted. This may have been because it served a sense of decorum on the part of late
Quattrocento Florentines, who may have felt it inappropriate to show a woman actually shedding a man's blood. By moving to a slightly later moment, Botticelli was able to make Judith's victory clear through the presence of a discreetly displayed head, while avoiding an unseemly display of violence.

Davide Ghirlandaio's painting perhaps makes Judith's story more the pretext for a pleasing, antiquizing painting than a significant inquiry into the meaning of Judith's actions. As is typical in Florentine Quattrocento art, the work preserves a narrative emphasis, though for a viewer familiar with the episode of the return this formulation might strain his credulity in shifting the scene to an indoor loggia where Judith and Abra are alone. It lacks, however, symbolic imagery that might make a further meaning more plain; consequently, it becomes another work which might have accommodated devotional meditation, but whose function was more likely primarily decorative, and whose specific significance, if one was present, is impossible to understand today.

Finally, Judith was included by Michelangelo in the Sistine Ceiling in the early years of the sixteenth century. Though the full iconographic program for the chapel is quite complex, it is likely that his Judith expressed at least two levels of import: as a participant in a sacred history, and as a type for Christ as a savior. This composition, however, brought to a close the great tradition of Quattrocento Judiths in Florence or by Florentine artists. In the same year the chapel was completed, the Medici returned to power in Florence. Perhaps owing to the anti-Medicean content Donatello's
Judith had acquired, they seem not to have been interested in sponsoring works depicting the heroine, and she receded from prominence in the city that had elevated her so much in significance.

Judith had always remained a secondary figure in Florentine iconography, and was never depicted as often as analogous figures like David, whose status as an emblem of the city she came to share. Nonetheless, Judith's treatment in Florence during the Quattrocento was distinctly different in several ways both from the preceding Middle Ages and from the sixteenth century in North Italy. While Judith's meaning for the Middle Ages was essentially sacred and moral, in fifteenth century Florence she acquired new, secular meanings: in part as an emblem of the city and the aspirations of the Florentine people, but also as a direct emblem of Justice, in Botticelli's Calumny of Apelles. A conflation of Judith's iconography with that of Giustizia had occurred as early as Lorenzetti's Good Government fresco in 1337-9. But such fourteenth century figures are unambiguously images of Justice, not Judith. The step to complete identification of the two was made in Florence during the Quattrocento. Of course, Judith still carried important moral or spiritual content of a personal kind for the Florentines, but her significance was expanded into the civic realm by artists such as Donatello and Botticelli for the first time.

During the Middle Ages, images of Judith in both the narrative and iconic modes were common. During the late Medieval period, however, a significant number of these were clearly iconic, especially in manuscripts of an emblematic or typological nature. Quattrocento
Florence saw a dramatic shift toward narrative in images of Judith. Though several works, such as the sculptures of Ghiberti and Donatello, contain an admixture of iconic, the overwhelming majority of Florence's Judiths are clearly narrative in mode. This characteristic also sets Florentine Judiths apart from most of the Judiths from sixteenth century Venice and Lombardy, where the heroine was depicted most often in the iconic mode until the time of Tintoretto and Veronese: initially in full-length seated or standing figures such as those by Titian on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, or Giorgione (now in the Hermitage), but by about 1510 largely in half-length portraits. The narrative emphasis in Florentine treatments of Judith sets them distinctly apart both from the preceding and succeeding periods; and while this treatment cannot be considered innovative, it gives Florentine Judiths a strongly individual character among late Medieval and Renaissance works featuring the heroine.

Florentine artists probably also brought Judith into the realm of devotional imagery, in works such as those by Botticelli and, perhaps, Pollaiuolo or Verrocchio and Ghirlandaio. This devotional function is probably absent in Medieval Judiths, at least as the primary function of works, but many of the sixteenth century North Italian figures created before about 1540 are excellent candidates for this function, and so this constitutes an important innovation in the treatment of Judith by Tuscan artists. The painters also shifted the moment represented in depictions of Judith significantly, from the beheading to its aftermath. This, too, is important for the first half of the sixteenth century. In these North Italian paintings, the severed head
is depicted as an identifying attribute of Judith. Though not narrative in their emphasis, insofar as these works recall the story to viewers' minds, the moment referenced in again after the assassination has been accomplished, as was the case in Florentine paintings. However, this portrait-with-attributes format almost certainly derives from the half-length pictures of the Madonna and Child, and similar sacred figures, common in Venetian art, and consequently the impact of this shift in moment on North Italian art should not be overstressed.

Finally, Florence brought Judith into the realms of monumental, free-standing sculpture, bronze statuettes, and panel paintings (outside of cassoni) for the first time. The former two developments had only a relatively small impact on future treatments of the heroine, but her expansion into panel painting obviously was of major significance for the future, whether those sixteenth century and later works were executed on wood or canvas.

The creation of paintings representing Judith did not cease in Italy with the reduction in Florentine production. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the subject was picked up by North Italian artists such as Titian, Giorgione, Cariani, Catena, Palma Vecchio, Pordenone, and numerous other leading figures in Venice and Lombardy. At first, many of these images of Judith were holy portraits, very much in the iconic mode, in contrast to the narrative dominance of Florentine depictions. This iconic character is also dominant in those more decorative, erotic depictions that form a part of Venetian production. However, about the middle of the century more dramatic
representations were created by masters such as Veronese and Tintoretto, and their legacy was passed on to the seventeenth century, when Judith's popularity reached its height, perhaps because as a type for the Church she could serve as an emblem of the militant Roman Church in its conflict with its Protestant and non-Christian enemies; perhaps because the violent drama of the decapitation, which returned as a dominant scene, and the vague, latent eroticism of the tale, appealed to the emotional tenor and aesthetic taste of the times.

Considerable areas for research into Judith and her iconography remain to be explored. Though a summary of her presence in Medieval art has been presented in this study, a more complete examination is needed. Similarly, her appearances in sixteenth century art will prove a fertile ground for further research. Fortunately, coverage is adequate and increasing for the seventeenth century, and some attention has been paid to her revival in works by modern artists such as Gustav Klimt in recent years. This latter-day rebirth of Judith as a subject for art has tended to dwell on her potential status as a psycho-sexual archetype or stereotype, a meaning very different from that which dominated during those periods when the Christian Church was the primary force in Western European culture. It is, however, exemplary of the large range of ideas and contents that can be expressed through the figure of Judith and her story, a wealth of significance that makes her one of the richest of the secondary figures in the pantheon of Old Testament and Christian subjects in European art.
APPENDIX

THE STORY OF JUDITH

The story of Judith is summarized below. Chapter and verse designations, placed in parentheses at the conclusion of each paragraph, refer to the translation in The Jerusalem Bible and The New Jerusalem Bible, which has been used throughout this study.

Nebuchadnezzar is king of the Assyrians in Ninevah. While preparing to wage war against Arphaxad, king of the Medes in Octabana, he calls on the inhabitants of the western countries, including Israel, to send troops to assist him. They refuse, since he appears weak and isolated, and Nebuchadnezzar swears revenge. (1:1-12)

Nebuchadnezzar defeats Arphaxad. After a council, in which death is decreed for all who refused his earlier request, Nebuchadnezzar summons Holofernes, his chief general, and commissions a campaign against the western lands. Holofernes ravages the northern territories (Syria and the Lebanon). As he moves toward the coast, he is sued for peace by varying cities. He destroys their religious shrines, and imposes on them the sole worship of Nebuchadnezzar as a condition of peace. He encamps on the borders of Israel, and rests. (1:13-3:13)
Israel is terrified at his approach. Nonetheless, they fortify
the mountain passes under the orders of the high priest, Joakim, and
the whole nation enters into a period of fasting and prayer, humbling
themselves before God in sackcloth and ashes. Their prayers are heard
by God, who is pleased with them. (4)

Having heard of Israel's preparations for war, Holofernes is
furious. He summons men of the surrounding regions, the Moabites,
Ammonites, and coastal dwellers, to gather intelligence about them.
Achior, an Ammonite, tells Holofernes the history of Israel, then
warns him that if God is angry with the Israelites, they will be
conquered, but that if He is not, they will defeat their enemies.
Holofernes and his officers, as well as the coastal peoples and
Moabites, crowd round Achior, threatening and deriding him.
Holofernes is urged to attack. He berates Achior, and orders him to
be taken near to one of the towns of Israel, so that he may share
their fate. They take him into the highlands, near the springs of
Bethulia. The men of Bethulia take up arms to repulse the invaders,
who take cover. They leave Achior bound hand and foot at the base of
the mountain, and return to Holofernes. (5:1-6:13)

The people of Bethulia unbind Achior and take him into the town.
He is questioned, and tells them all that happened in the Assyrian
camp, including Holofernes's threats of total destruction against
Israel. The people fall to the ground, and worship God, praying for
their preservation. They reassure Achior that he is welcome, and
praise him. Uzziah, one of the chief men of the town, gives a banquet
for the elders, and they pray to God for help. (6:14-20)
The next day Holofernes orders the army into action. They march on Bethulia, occupying the mountain passes to open the campaign against Israel. The vast horde of the Assyrian army, over 120,000 infantry, 12,000 cavalry, and retainers moves into the valley near the springs of Bethulia, and camp. The Israelites despair at the sight of this force. On the next day, the cavalry deploys near Bethulia, seizing the sources of water, and scouting the slopes leading up to the town. The Moabites counsel a siege so that no soldiers will be lost in fighting. The hills are steep, making an assault difficult, and the Bethulians are totally dependent on a spring at the foot of the mountain for water. If they are cut off from both escape and food and water supplies, the town will be forced to capitulate, and Holofernes can take his revenge. Holofernes is pleased with the plan, and sends troops forward to engage the siege. For thirty-four days, the siege holds. Finally, the people of the town surround the elders, urging surrender in hopes of preserving their lives, even if it means slavery and exile. Uzziah urges them to hold out for five more days. If no help arrives during that time, he will do as the people have urged. They return to their homes in despair. (7)

Judith is a widow of the town. For three years and four months she has stayed inside her home, mourning the death of her husband, Manassah, wearing sackcloth and widow's weeds. She fasts every day except Sabbath eve, Sabbath, and festival days. She is very beautiful, and her husband left her with ample wealth. She lives devoutly and without stain before God and the community. (8:1-8)
Judith hears of Uzziah's promise, and sends for two of the town's elders, Chabris and Charmis. She berates them for making the promise to the people, for it shows a lack of faith in God, and tests Him by imposing a five day limit on His action on their behalf. She urges them to continue their resistance, for if Bethulia falls, all of Israel will be defeated. She says they should give thanks to God for His testing them, for it is a warning for them to remain faithful to Him. Uzziah approves of what she has said, but reasserts the desperation of the people. He urges Judith to pray for rain to refill their cisterns and give the people strength. Judith reveals that she has a plan. That night she and her attendant intend to leave town. She will not reveal what she means to do, but assures them that God intends to use her to save them. She tells them to meet her at the town gate that evening, and that she will accomplish her aims before the time of the planned surrender. The elders agree to do as she says. (8:9-36)

Judith throws herself to the ground, scatters ashes on her head, and prays to God to prosper her plan and save Israel. She removes her widow's clothing, washes and perfumes herself, and puts on a fine dress and jewelry. She takes provisions of food for herself and her maid, and leaves the house. At the gate of the town, she is met by the elders, who bless her, and after praying, she leaves the town with her servant and descends the mountain into the valley. The Assyrians intercept her. She asks to be taken to Holofernes, promising that she has valuable intelligence for him. She is promised rewards for coming to him of her own accord, and escorted to Holofernes. Outside his
tent, a crowd gathers round her on account of her beauty even before she has been summoned to see him. Judith is led into the tent of Holofernes, where he has been reclining on his bed. He comes to the open part of the tent when she is announced. When he enters, Judith's beauty astonishes the whole company of his retainers. She falls on her face and does homage to him, but is raised to her feet by his servants. Holofernes assures her she has nothing to fear if she has come to serve Nebuchadnezzar, and asks why she has left her town and come to him. (9:1-11:4)

Judith feigns loyalty to the Assyrians. She speaks of their reputation, and the fear in the town. She discusses the deprivations of the siege, telling him the Bethulians have decided to eat of the first fruits, the offerings set aside for God, and tells him that this has angered God. They have sent to Jerusalem for permission to eat the offerings, and on the day it is granted, they shall be delivered to Holofernes for their destruction. She tells him that out of her devotion to God, she wishes to disassociate herself from the townspeople. She promises to Holofernes that she will go out nightly into the valley to pray to God to let her know when they have committed their intended sin. When she knows it is done, she will tell Holofernes, so that he can advance with his whole army to certain victory. Holofernes is pleased, and agrees to her plan, promising her great rewards if they succeed. He offers her his own food and wine, but she prefers to eat her own provisions lest she incur some impurity. Holofernes is concerned that her supply will run out before the plan is accomplished, and that they will be unable to re-provision
her properly, but she assures him that God will act before this happens. She is shown to her quarters, where she sleeps until midnight. Just before the morning watch, she rises. She had already requested Holofernes to give orders that she be allowed to go out and pray, and he had done so. Thus, unhindered by his guards, she leaves camp and goes out into the valley and washes at a spring where a picket has been posted. For three days and nights she does this, praying to God to guide her in her plan and relieve Israel. After purifying herself, she returns to her tent and remains in it all day, until her meal is brought in the evening. (11:5-12:9)

On the fourth day, Holofernes throws a banquet for his staff. He sends his eunuch, Bagoas, to persuade Judith to come, commenting that he will be disgraced if he does not get to know her better, and that everyone will laugh at him if he fails to seduce her. Judith agrees to come, and puts on her finest garments. Her maid spreads the fleece Holofernes had given Judith on the ground before him, and she enters and takes her place at the banquet. Holofernes is seized with violent desire for her when he sees her. He commands all to drink, and Judith speaks of her delight. She eats the food prepared by her maid while facing him. Holofernes is enchanted with her, and drinks more than he has ever drunk in his life. (12:10-20)

It grows late, and his staff hurries away. Bagoas closes up the tent, and Judith is left alone with Holofernes, who has collapsed drunk on his bed. She tells her maid to remain outside the bedchamber and wait for her, just as happened every morning. She had let everyone understand that as usual she would go out for her prayers,
and had informed Bagoas of her intentions. Alone beside the bed of Holofernes, she prays, then takes down his scimitar from the bed post. She appeals for strength, and, striking his neck twice, severs his head. She rolls his body off the bed and pulls down the canopy. Then she goes out and gives the head to her maid, who puts it in the foobag. The two leave camp together as usual, but his time they skirt the ravine, climb the slope to Bethulia, and head for the gates, shouting for the guards to open them. The town gathers around her, and Judith reveals Holofernes's head and the bed canopy. She tells them her face alone seduced him, and that she committed no sin with him. The people fall on their knees and worship God, and Uzziah blesses Judith for what she has done. (13)

Judith encourages the Bethulians to hang the head on the battlements, take up arms, and march out as if to attack. The Assyrians will rush to the tent of Holofernes, find him dead, and be so siezed by panic they will flee. At that point the Israelites are to pursue and slaughter them. First, however, she orders that Achior be brought and shown the head of Holofernes. He faints on seeing it, but is revived, and Judith tells the assembly all that has happened in the past few days. At the end of this time, Achior recognizes the power of God, believes, and is circumcised and accepted into the House of Israel. (14:1-10)

At daybreak the head of Holofernes is hung on the ramparts of the town. The Bethulians march out. The Assyrians send word to their leaders, who go to rouse Holofernes. Bagoas goes inside, discreetly clapping his hands to wake Holofernes since he expects to find him in
bed with Judith. When no one comes, he goes into the bedroom and finds the headless body. Shouting, weeping, and tearing his clothes, he rushes to the tent of Judith and, finding it empty, runs out to tell the commanders what he has found. The camp is thrown into a panic, and the whole army begins to flee. The Bethulians begin to attack them, and send word throughout the highlands to join in the slaughter. The Assyrians are thoroughly defeated, and their camp is looted at great profit for thirty days. Judith receives the tent of Holofernes and all its furnishings, as well as the praise of Joakim the high priest and all the Elders of Israel. A great celebration takes place, and Judith sings a song of victory in a great procession to Jerusalem. All the property of Holofernes is given by Judith to God as a dedicated offering. For three months she remains at the temple rejoicing with the people. (14:11-16:20)

When the celebrations are over, Judith returns home to live on her estate. Though highly honored and beset by suitors, she remains faithful to Manassah until her death at 105. Before her death, she distributes her property to her relatives and those of her husband, and on her death she is mourned by the nation for seven days. During the rest of her lifetime, no one troubled Israel again. (16:21-30)
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