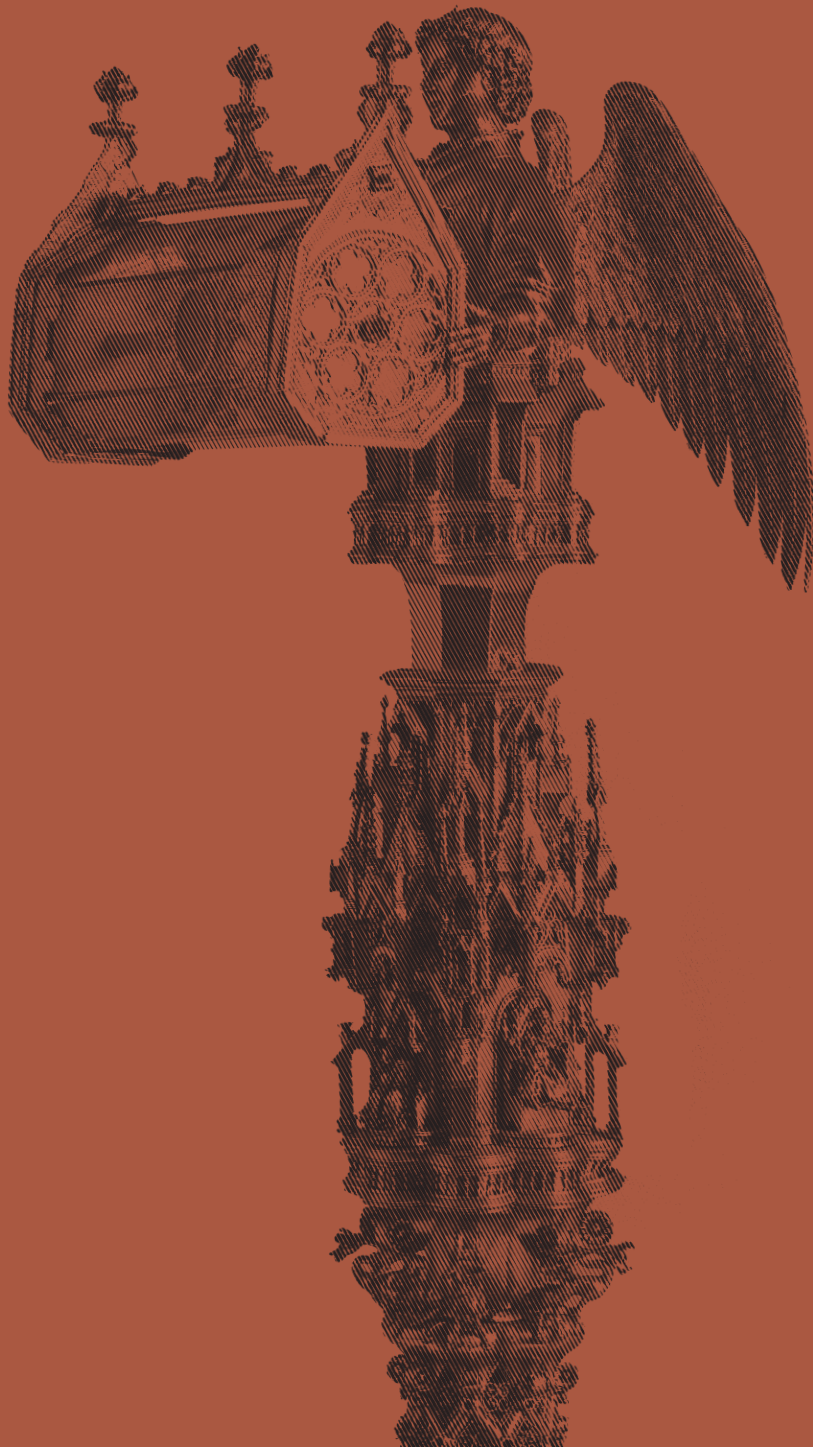


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_ Aufsätze _ Saggi

_ 295 _ Giampaolo Distefano

Il reliquiario con angeli in età gotica: un modello orafico da Parigi all'Italia

_ 325 _ Laura María Palacios Méndez

¿Flora? de Tiziano. Virtudes y verdadera amistad en el retrato de una reciente esposa

_ 359 _ Edoardo Rossetti

Il testamento di Aurelio Luini e la sua eredità leonardesca (1593)

_ 377 _ Stephanie Hanke

Die Kunst der Verkleidung: Giovanni Benedetto Castigliones *Jupiter mit den Vögeln* als Allegorie der Malerei

_ Miscellen _ Appunti

_ 395 _ Giulio Dalvit

Michelangelo's Florentine Patrons, 1501–1502

_ 401 _ Maurizio Ricci

Domenico Tibaldi critica Palladio: un parere inedito sulla facciata di San Petronio a Bologna

_ Nachrufe _ Necrologi

_ 409 _ Wolfgang A. Bulst (*Wolfgang Loseries*)



1 Michelangelo, study sheet with a sketch for the bronze *David*, a right arm, and various inscriptions. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, inv. 714r

Michelangelo's Florentine Patrons, 1501–1502

Giulio Dalvit

On 22 June 1501, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici and Pierfrancesco Tosinchi, ambassadors of the Florentine republic to the court of France, sent a letter to the Dieci di Balìa, the magistrates responsible for the republic's foreign affairs. The letter stated that Pierre de Rohan, Maréchal de Gié, supreme commander of the French army, "would desire that a bronze figure of a David, like that in the courtyard of Your Lordships, be cast for him at his own expense"¹ The request had political significance. Since 1494, the Medici had left Florence as a consequence of Charles VIII's invasion of Italy; the city had proclaimed the republic but had meanwhile lost the port of Pisa. The republic had since been dependent on the whims of the French court to have Pisa reintegrated into its dominions. Rohan's request was, therefore, of the utmost importance and was to be dealt with

by the Dieci as a matter of foreign policy. When Rohan fell into disgrace in 1504, the republic selected a new addressee for what had by then become a gift, namely Florimond Robertet, the treasurer to the (new) king of France, Louis XII, to whom the statue was eventually shipped at the end of 1508.²

Last recorded in 1795, Michelangelo's bronze *David* has since gone missing, presumably melted during the Napoleonic Wars.³ We do know, however, that it weighed about 700 to 800 pounds (230 to 260 kilos) and was 5.5 feet tall (179 cm).⁴ It represented David with a sling in his hand as he tramples Goliath's head underfoot.⁵ Documentary evidence shows that the bronze could not have been cast before 5 March 1504;⁶ and that it was finished by Benedetto da Rovezzano in Florence while Michelangelo was in Rome.⁷

¹ "[...] ci [h]a pregato che noi scrivamo alle Signorie Vostre che 'llui desidererebbe che se gli faciessi gittare una figura di bronzo d'uno Davitte chome quello ch'è nella chorte delle Signorie Vostre et che lui pagherà la spesa" (cit. in Luca Gatti, "Delle cose de' pictori et scultori si può mal promettere cosa certa: la diplomazia fiorentina presso la corte del re di Francia e il Davide bronzo di Michelangelo Buonarroti", in: *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée*, CVI [1994], pp. 433–472: 440). All translations of Italian sources are by the author.

² *Ibidem*, pp. 444f. On Robertet's diverse collecting practices: Giovanni Agosti, *Su Mantegna, I: La storia dell'arte libera la testa*, Milan 2005, p. 112 (with further bibliography); but cf. also Anne Markham Schulz, *Giammaria Mosca Called Padovano: A Renaissance Sculptor in Italy and Poland*, Princeton 1998, I, p. 63.

³ Gabriella Rèpaci Courtois, "A propos du David en bronze de Michel-Ange", in: *Revue du Louvre*, XXVI (1976), pp. 250–254; Nicole Duchon, "Le David de bronze de Michel-Ange au château de Villeroy", in: *Mennecy et son histoire*, 48 (1996), pp. 6–18.

⁴ Gatti (note 1), pp. 451, 460; Rèpaci Courtois (note 3), p. 251. The contract specified a different height for the statue (two *braccia* and a quarter, that is, ca. 131 cm; Gatti [note 1], pp. 458f); yet such indication was probably due mostly to economical preoccupations about the amount of metal to be supplied (Francesco Caglioti, "Il perduto 'David mediceo' di Giovanfrancesco Rustici e il 'David' Pulszky del Louvre", in: *Prospettiva*, 83/84 [1996], pp. 80–101: 82). If so, by changing the height but not the weight of the statue, Michelangelo would not have been found in breach of contract.

⁵ Duchon (note 3), pp. 13–15.

⁶ Tommaso Mozzati, "Florence and the Bronze Age: Leonardo and Casting, the War of Pisa, and the Dieci di Balìa", in: *Leonardo da Vinci and the Art of Sculpture*, exh. cat. Atlanta/Los Angeles 2009/10, Atlanta/New Haven, Conn./London 2009, pp. 194–206: 199 and 204, docs. 7f.

⁷ Gatti (note 1), p. 450. See also: Francesco Caglioti, "Il David bronzo di Michelangelo (e Benedetto da Rovezzano): il problema dei pagamenti

Other than the documentary reconstruction of its vicissitudes, scholarship on Michelangelo's bronze *David* has mostly concentrated on two subjects. First, the reconstruction of the statue's appearance, as it can be gleaned from written sources, drawings for or after it, wax or clay models, and later works in its wake.⁸ Part and parcel with this problem is that of the identification of the referent of the ambassadors' cryptic words "a David, like that in the courtyard of Your Lordships" – was that Verrocchio's or Donatello's? As the latter had been forcibly removed from Palazzo Medici at the time of the family's expulsion from the city, the answer to this question has political implications too.⁹ Second, the role played by Pier Soderini, *gonfaloniere* of the Florentine republic, in the commissioning of both this statue and its marble counterpart (and in Michelangelo's return to Florence).¹⁰ For the sake of brevity, this note only contributes to the latter debate, by recovering previously overlooked pieces of evidence which show Soderini's early involvement in the commission and shed new light on Michelangelo's Florentine circles of patronage in the very first years of the cinquecento.

On 16 August 1501, Michelangelo signed a contract for the marble *David*, later installed in the Piazza della Signoria.¹¹ Recovering important documents pointing to Giuliano di Francesco Salviati's early involvement, as *operaio* of the Duomo, in the commission of the marble 'giant', Joost Keizer interpreted such new evidence as undermining Vasari's and Condivi's references to Soderini as Michelangelo's main supporter at this moment in his career.¹² According to Keizer, the main promoters of the marble *David* instead were the Salviati family of bankers, later to become great supporters of Mi-

chelangelo's (and the Sangallos'). This discovery came a few years after yet another documentary breakthrough, which had revealed that, while Michelangelo was formally contracted for the bronze *David* on 12 August 1502, almost one year earlier (on 26 August 1501), the Signori had already ordered that the Capitani di Parte Guelfa provide Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici with the material to cast a bronze *David*.¹³ Since Lorenzo was one of Michelangelo's closest patrons and friends in that period, it has since been assumed that Michelangelo had been chosen to carry out the commission already in 1501, if only informally.¹⁴ Granted, evidence suggested that Soderini was personally attached to David as a biblical hero, as proven by both his seal, which featured an image of the young king and a motto taken from David's psalm, and by a letter written to him by Matteo Bigazzi da Cascia, a canon of San Lorenzo, soon after his election to *gonfaloniere a vita*, extensively comparing him to David.¹⁵ But, Keizer concluded, in the case of both the marble and the bronze *David*, it was only around 1504 that Soderini appropriated for his own ends two sculptures of David originally promoted by – respectively – Giuliano Salviati (and his family) and Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici.¹⁶ Hitherto disregarded by scholars, two pieces of evidence on the one hand expand and on the other hand contradict Keizer's thesis.

First, on 20 March 1501, a member of the Salviati clan, Lorenzo di Lotto, was elected to the Dieci di Balìa.¹⁷ This means that, when – on 2 July 1501 – the Opera del Duomo deliberated to raise the giant recumbent marble block for the *David* upright, inviting Michelangelo to test the feasibility of carving it, *operaio* Giuliano Salviati might have already

ti", in: *Ad Alessandro Conti [1946–1994]*, ed. by *idem*/Miriam Fileti Mazza/Umberto Parrini, Pisa 1996, pp. 85–132: 87–132; partly misinterpreted in Victoria Avery, "Brazen Defiance: Young Michelangelo, Bronze and the *David* for France", in: *Michelangelo Sculptor in Bronze: The Rothschild Bronzes*, ed. by *eadem*, London 2018, pp. 23–47: 39.

⁸ Cf. mainly: Edith Balas, "Michelangelo *Concetti* (1505) in the Château de Blois", in: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 6th ser., CI (1983), pp. 49–53; Saul Levine, "Michelangelo's Marble *David* and the Lost Bronze *David*: The Drawings", in: *Artibus et historiae*, V (1984), 9, pp. 91–120; Caglioti (note 4); Claudia Echinger-Maurach, "Zu Michelangelos Skizze für den verlorenen Bronzedavid und zum Beginn der *gran maniera degli ignudi* in seinem Entwurf für den Marmordavid", in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, LXI (1998), pp. 301–338; Francesco Caglioti, *Donatello e i Medici: storia del David e della Giuditta*, Florence 2000, I, p. 317; *I bozzetti michelangeleschi della Casa Buonarroti*, ed. by Pina Ragionieri, Florence 2000, *passim*; Paul Joannides, *Michel-Ange, élèves et copistes*, Paris 2003 (Musée du Louvre: Département des Arts graphiques, Inventaire général des dessins italiens, VI), pp. 68–73, no. 4; *idem*, *The Drawings by Michelangelo and His Followers in the Ashmolean Museum*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 147–152, no. 25; Avery (note 7); Zoltán Kárpáti, "Michelangelo, the David, and Donatello", in: *Triumph of the Body:*

Michelangelo and Sixteenth-Century Italian Draughtsmanship, exh. cat., ed. by *idem*/Eszter Nagy/Péter Ujvári, Budapest 2019, pp. 67–87: 79.

⁹ Caglioti (note 8), I, pp. 313–319.

¹⁰ Joost Keizer, "Giuliano Salviati, Michelangelo and the 'David'", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CL (2008), pp. 664–668: 667f. (with further bibliography).

¹¹ *I contratti di Michelangelo*, ed. by Lucilla Bardeschi Ciulich, Florence 2005, p. 12 (cf. *ad diem* for all of Michelangelo's contracts mentioned hereafter).

¹² Keizer (note 10).

¹³ Caglioti (note 8), I, pp. 314f.

¹⁴ Cf. Michael Hirst, *Michelangelo, I: The Achievement of Fame: 1475–1534*, New Haven, Conn./London 2011, p. 50.

¹⁵ Lorenzo Polizzotto, "*Iustus ut palma florebit*: Pier Soderini and Florentine Justice", in: *Rituals, Images, and Words: Varieties of Cultural Expression in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by F. W. Kent/Charles Zika, Turnhout 2005, pp. 263–276: 273f.

¹⁶ Keizer (note 10), pp. 667f.

¹⁷ Florence, Archivio di Stato, Tratte, 905, fol. 125r, and also *ibidem*, Dieci di Balìa, 49, fol. 100r.

known that a sculptor was needed for a bronze *David*, too.¹⁸ By mid-July 1501, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco also was back in Florence, likely advocating for his *protégé*, who had recently carved a work for another French patron, the so-called cardinal of Saint-Denis Jean Bilhères de Lagraulas: the Vatican *Pietà* (1498–1499), by then housed in the Chapel of the Kings of France adjacent to Saint Peter's Basilica.¹⁹ It was only ten days after the contract for the marble colossus was drafted that the Signoria decided Lorenzo should be supplied the bronze for the French *David* by the Capitani di Parte Guelfa. Against this backdrop, it is indeed very likely that Michelangelo, as he signed his contract for the marble *David* on 15 August 1501 or very soon thereafter, had already been selected to cast a bronze statue of the same subject, too – most likely due to the intervention of both the Salviati and Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco. Importantly, that Michelangelo's payment for the marble *David*, though contractually set at 144 florins, always “was and is” 400 florins (as stated by the *operai* on 28 February 1502) may reflect oral agreements parallel to the written contract. This would indeed provide a justification also for Michelangelo's meagre payment for the bronze, which would turn out to be only seventy florins.²⁰ For the first time in his life, Michelangelo thus found himself working on the same subject in two very different sculptural media – a half-worked thin marble block; and an alloy with as much tensile strength as bronze. It would be tempting to speculate about the importance of this double process for Michelangelo's growth as a sculptor, but such discussion, vital as it may be, far exceeds the scope of this notice. Suffice it to say that one of Michelangelo's most famous drawings, today at the Louvre (Fig. 1), features a sketch for the bronze *David* (the severe undercutting of the leg could never be achieved in marble) next to Michelangelo's famous verses “David with the sling, and I

with the bow [drill]”, which only makes sense in relation to marble carving.²¹

Second, on 10 June 1502 both Giuliano Salviati and Pier Soderini were elected together as new members of the Dieci (as they both had been two years prior, in September 1500).²² Importantly, this suggests that Salviati may indeed have played an instrumental role in awarding also the commission of the bronze *David* to Michelangelo, for it was only a few weeks later, on 2 August 1502, that the contract for it was finally signed. However, considering the presence of Soderini among the Dieci, his unrivalled authority in dealing with the French, and the possible role played by Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco up to this point, it is worth asking here if, while the Salviati's importance for Michelangelo's early career becomes even greater than previously believed by Keizer, it is also possible that Giuliano Salviati, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, and Pier Soderini were working as a team to promote the young Michelangelo upon the latter's return to Florence.²³ Such a powerful triumvirate may also help explain why, against Florentine traditions of ‘shared commissions’ and *concorsi* – such as for the dome of the cathedral or, later, the frescoes in the Sala dei Cinquecento – Michelangelo would be single-handedly assigned two major commissions, and of the same subject at that.

Contemporary testimonies indeed show that, between 1501 and 1503, the Popolani branch of the Medici family (to which Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco belonged), the Salviati, and Soderini had been close political allies. It was only after Soderini's election as *gonfaloniere* for life (26 August 1502) that, in Filippo de' Nerli's account:

Cominciarono Bernardo Rucellai e Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco Medici e alcuni altri cittadini a discostarsi da lui [Pier Soderini] e ne fecero, forse, troppo presto dimostrazione, e molto

¹⁸ Cf. John T. Paoletti, *Michelangelo's David: Florentine History and Civic Identity*, Cambridge 2015, p. 234, doc. 52.

¹⁹ Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, “Michelangelo's *Pietà* for the Cappella del Re di Francia”, in: *“Il se rendit en Italie”: études offertes à André Chastel*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Babelon et al., Rome 1987, pp. 77–119.

²⁰ Cf. Paoletti (note 18), p. 23; Caglioti (note 7), p. 101. In this perspective, it is possible that Soderini's satisfaction at how little the bronze *David* had cost the state may in fact conceal his satisfaction at having had the Opera del Duomo ultimately pay for both *Davids*.

²¹ Pen and brown ink, 26.4 × 18.5 cm. Many scholars have persuasively suggested that the arm should be connected to the marble rather than the bronze *David* (cf. at least Robert J. Clements, *Michelangelo's Theory of Art*, New York 1961, pp. 415–420; Charles de Tolnay, *Corpus dei disegni di Michelangelo*, Novara 1975–1980, I, pp. 37f.; Irving Lavin, *Past-Present: Essays on Historicism in Art from Donatello to Picasso*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford 1993, pp. 29–61; Joannides 2003 [note 8], p. 73; Kathleen Weil-

Garris Brandt, in: *Giovinezza di Michelangelo*, exh. cat. Florence 1999–2000, ed. by eadem et al., Florence/Milan 1999, pp. 414f., no. 75; Leonard Barkan, *Michelangelo: A Life on Paper*, Princeton/Oxford 2011, pp. 109–126; Kárpáti [note 8], p. 79). It might be worth asking if Petrarch's verses on the same sheet (“Roct'è l'alta cholonna e 'l verd[e] lauro”), *Canzoniere*, 269), originally composed in 1348 for the almost simultaneous deaths of both Laura and Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, the poet's main patron and supporter, could not be a sophisticated reference to the death of Lorenzo (Laurentius) di Pierfrancesco – this would naturally require shifting the date of some of the drawings on this sheet to after 1503.

²² Francesco Guicciardini, *Storie fiorentine dal 1378 al 1509*, ed. by Roberto Palmarocchi, Bari 1931, p. 227; Florence, Archivio di Stato, Tratte, 905, fol. 125r. For the term starting in September 1500: Guicciardini, p. 206; Florence, Archivio di Stato, Tratte, 905, fol. 124v; *ibidem*, Dieci di Balia, 49, fol. 1r.

²³ On Soderini and the French, cf. Roslyn Pesman Cooper, “Lelezione

pubblica, non volendo essi convenire al convito, che fece il gonfaloniere innanzi la sua entrata, nel quale convennero tutti gl'altri primi cittadini della città.²⁴

As they parted from Soderini, Bernardo Rucellai – the owner of the Orti Oricellari and late Lorenzo the Magnificent's brother-in-law – and Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco went on a “rather lonely course”, for the Salviati still believed that the *gonfaloniere* could more or less be tamed.²⁵ Confirming the close allegiance between the Salviati and Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, it is worth reminding that, upon Lorenzo's death, Giuliano Salviati was designated as his testamentary executor.²⁶

Indeed, it was only after the death of both Lorenzo on 20 May 1503 and Piero the Unfortunate on 28 December of the same year that it dawned on the Salviati that Soderini was acquiring too much power. In this connection, Francesco Guicciardini, whose wife Maria was the daughter of Giuliano's relative Alamanno Salviati, clarifies what happened in the first months of 1504:

Aggiugnevasi che circa alla giustizia, lui [Pier Soderini] ne aveva tenuta cura nessuna; in modo che in questa parte, da poi che e' fu creato [gonfaloniere di giustizia], la città non era medicata nulla, anzi più tosto piggiorata e trascorsa; nondimeno, per ancora questo disparere stava coperto o si manifestava poco. Ma in questo anno [1504] si venne a aprire, perché Tommaso Soderini, nipote del gonfaloniere, maritò una sua piccola figliuola [Maria] a Pierfrancesco de' Medici, figliuolo di Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco che era morto l'anno dinanzi; e perché questo parentado non si trattò per mano de' parenti e degli uomini da bene [...], ma sfug-

giacamente e per mano di notai, Giuliano Salviati, che era parente di Pierfrancesco, ed Alamanno ed Iacopo [Salviati], sdegnati, e così e' Medici instigati da costoro, stracciorono la scritta ed intorbidarono in modo, che quello parentado rimase in aria e sospeso.

Erano e' Salviati sdegnati con lui [Soderini], perché non piacevano loro e' sua governi e perché, sendo stati sua fautori ed operatori assai che e' fussi condotto a tanto grado, pareva loro gli pagassi di ingratitudine [...]. E così si cominciò a dividere la città: da una parte Piero Soderini gonfaloniere, da altra molti uomini di qualità, de' quali si facevano più vivi e' Salviati [...].²⁷

Prior to 1504, Guicciardini states, the Salviati had been Soderini's closest allies. It was only in 1504 that the allegiance fell apart, allowing Bernardo Rucellai to plot a wedding – that between Piero de' Medici's daughter Clarice and Filippo di Filippo Strozzi, celebrated in July 1508 – which would later become instrumental in the crumbling of Soderini's rule.²⁸

Until at least the final days of August 1502, however, Soderini, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, and the Salviati had formed a cohesive power group. Although Soderini may have tried to later appropriate a group enterprise as his own personal achievement, it seems plausible that he cooperated from the start to assign both *Davids* to Michelangelo. Thus, against the landscape of contemporary politics and considering that Soderini was in fact one of the Dieci di Balìa, it seems unreasonable not to give some credit to contemporary sources that emphasise his key role in both commissions, if not in the artist's return to Florence.

di Pier Soderini a gonfaloniere a vita: note storiche”, in: *Archivio Storico Italiano*, CXXV (1967), pp. 145–185: 176–180.

²⁴ Filippo de' Nerli, *Commentari de' fatti civili occorsi nella città di Firenze dal 1215 al 1537*, ed. by Sergio Russo, Ph.D. thesis, Università degli Studi di Napoli “Federico II”, 2005/06, p. 102 (“Bernardo Rucellai and Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici started to distance themselves from him [i.e., Soderini]. And, of this, they made, perhaps too early, a very public demonstration, by refusing to take part in the banquet that the *gonfaloniere* organized before his entrance, in which all the other foremost citizens of the city participated”).

²⁵ Felix Gilbert, “Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari: A Study in the Origin of Modern Political Thought”, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XII (1949), pp. 101–131: 109.

²⁶ Bartolomeo Cerretani, *Ricordi*, ed. by Giuliana Berti, Florence 1993, p. 79.

²⁷ Guicciardini (note 22), pp. 272f. (“Additionally, about justice, he [i.e., Soderini] cared so little that, since he had been created [gonfaloniere di giustizia], the city had not been healed at all, rather it had gotten worse and disregarded. Nonetheless, these opinions against him were still con-

cealed or little manifested. But in that year [i.e., 1504], the opposition became overt, for Tommaso Soderini, the *gonfaloniere's* nephew, married a little daughter of his [i.e., Maria] to Pierfrancesco de' Medici, son of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, who had died the year before. And, since this kinship had not been negotiated by [his] relatives [...], but fugitively and by the hand of notaries, Giuliano Salviati, who was a relative of Pierfrancesco's, and Alamanno and Jacopo [Salviati], took offense, and therefore the Medici, stirred up by them [i.e., the Salviati], tore up the contract and muddled it in such a way that that kinship remained up in the air. The Salviati were disdained with him [i.e., Soderini], because they did not like his ways and because, having been supporters of his, and having operated much in order to have him lifted to such an office, it seemed to them that he was being ungrateful [...]. And so, the city started to split – on the one side, the *gonfaloniere* Piero Soderini; on the other, many distinguished men, among whom the Salviati were most active”). On Guicciardini's position in this context: Carlo Dionisotti, *Machiavellerie: storia e fortuna di Machiavelli*, Turin 1980, p. 14.

²⁸ Gilbert (note 25), p. 110; Mary Hollingsworth, *The Medici*, London 2017, pp. 213f. The marriage between Maria Soderini and Pierfrancesco

It is unclear when exactly, in 1501, Michelangelo went back to Florence. In December 1500, his father wrote him a letter, alluding to the fact that there would be work to do in Florence, if he decided to come back – an allusion which, in the light of a passage in Vasari's *Lives*, is usually interpreted as a reference to the Opera's decision to resume work on the marble block for the 'giant'.²⁹ The same passage in Vasari also gives the impression that, as of 1501, Soderini could assign the marble block for the *David* to whomever he pleased.³⁰ This version of the story has long seemed implausible, not least because Vasari there calls Soderini "gonfaloniere a vita", while his lifelong appointment only started between August and September 1502.³¹ However, this mistake is not present in Vasari's first edition (1550), published when Michelangelo was still alive:

Gli fu scritto di Fiorenza d'alcuni amici suoi che venisse, perché non era fuor di proposito che di quel marmo, ch'era nell'Opera [del Duomo] guasto, egli, come già n'ebbe volontà, ne cavasse una figura; il quale marmo Pier Soderini, già gonfaloniere in quella città, ragionò di dare a Lionardo da Vinci [...].³²

In March and April 1501, Pier Soderini was indeed the bimonthly *gonfaloniere* of the city.³³ And exactly on 18 March 1501 Michelangelo deposited money into his Florentine bank account.³⁴ Although some scholars disagree, documentary ev-

sco de' Medici did eventually take place, when the Salviati thought it would be convenient for them (H. C. Butters, *Governors and Government in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence: 1502–1519*, Oxford 1985, p. 103; Niccolò Capponi, *Il principe inesistente: la vita e i tempi di Machiavelli*, Milan 2012, p. 124). Lorenzino de' Medici, Duke Alessandro's assassin, was Maria and Pierfrancesco's son.

²⁹ *Il carteggio di Michelangelo*, ed. by Giovanni Poggi/Paola Barocchi, Florence 1965–1983, I, pp. 9f., no. VI; Hirst (note 14), pp. 42f. (with further bibliography).

³⁰ "Gli fu scritto di Fiorenza d'alcuni amici suoi che venisse, perché non era fuor di proposito che di quel marmo, ch'era nell'Opera [del Duomo] guasto, egli, come già n'ebbe volontà, ne cavasse una figura; il quale marmo Pier Soderini, fatto gonfaloniere a vita allora di quella città, aveva avuto ragionamento molte volte di farlo condurre a Lionardo da Vinci, et era allora in pratica di darlo a maestro Andrea Contucci dal Monte di San Savino [i.e., Andrea Sansovino], eccellente scultore, che cercava di averlo" (Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. by Rosanna Bettarini/Paola Barocchi, Florence 1966–1997, VI, pp. 18f.).

³¹ Cf. Hirst (note 14), p. 284, note 7.

³² Vasari (note 30), VI, p. 18 ("From Florence, some friends of his wrote to him that he should come back, because it was becoming possible for him to carve a figure, as he had already desired, from that marble

idence suggests that Michelangelo, at the time he signed the contract for the statues of the Cappella Piccolomini in Siena, on 5 June 1501, had already been in Florence for quite some time.³⁵ Be that as it may, the bank deposit shows that it must have been in March, under Soderini's *gonfalonierato*, that Michelangelo made the (much procrastinated) decision to move back to Florence.

As for the bronze *David*, Ascanio Condivi's account, in all likelihood following Michelangelo's *viva voce*, also acquires further credibility: "[...] doppo il Gigante, ricercato da Piero Soderini suo grande amico gittò una statua grande al naturale, che fu mandata in Francia, e similmente un David con Goliad sotto".³⁶ What is more, the chronology set out by Condivi, though long neglected, has recently been confirmed by newly-discovered documents: while the marble *David* was delivered on 1 April 1504, the tin needed for the casting of the bronze was only supplied to Michelangelo a month before, on 5 March 1504 – almost three years after Rohan's request.³⁷ This makes it all the more likely that he started to work on the statue only after the completion of the marble *David*.

As Michael Hirst first pointed out, the original intention was to first show the two *Davids* to the public on the same day, the feast of Saint John the Baptist on 24 June 1503.³⁸ As per Condivi's and Vasari's account, the unfolding of both commissions could not be more intimately intertwined with Soderini's rise to power. Ultimately, Soderini appropriated in full what had already been his, but only in part. Indeed, ev-

which rested, damaged, in the Opera; a marble which Pier Soderini, then *gonfaloniere* in that city, thought of assigning to Leonardo da Vinci").

³³ As first noted in Michael Hirst, "Michelangelo in Florence: 'David' in 1503 and 'Hercules' in 1506", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXLII (2000), pp. 487–492: 490.

³⁴ *Idem*, "The Artist in Rome, 1496–1501", in: *Making and Meaning: The Young Michelangelo*, exh. cat. London 1994/95, New Haven, Conn./London 1994, pp. 13–81: 81.

³⁵ Hirst [note 14], p. 53. However, for this document see also Francesco Caglioti, "La Cappella Piccolomini nel Duomo di Siena: da Andrea Bregno a Michelangelo", in: *Pio II e le arti: la riscoperta dell'antico da Federighi a Michelangelo*, ed. by Alessandro Angelini, Siena 2005, pp. 387–481: 456. It should be noted that the signatures at the end of the document are not autograph (*I contratti di Michelangelo* [note 11], p. 11, no. 2).

³⁶ Ascanio Condivi, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, ed. by Giovanni Nencioni, Florence 1998, p. 22 ("After the giant, [Michelangelo], sought after by his great friend Pier Soderini, cast in bronze a life-size statue, which was shipped to France and [which was] likewise a *David*, with the head of Goliath under[foot]"). Caglioti 2018 (note 7), p. 108, note 46, and *idem* 2000 (note 8), I, p. 317, clarified why from a grammatical point of view the sentence bears no ambiguity.

³⁷ Mozzati (note 6), p. 199.

³⁸ Hirst (note 33), p. 490.

idence presented here demonstrates that at the time of their commission both the marble and the bronze had likely been assigned to Michelangelo at the behest of a closely-knit group of patrons who, as of 1501–1502, were yet to part ways – Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de’ Medici, Giuliano di Francesco Salviati, and Pier Soderini.

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Fig. 1.

Umschlagbild | Copertina:

Romolo di Sennuccio, Reliquiar des Heiligen Kreuzes (heute des Schleiers
der Jungfrau) | reliquiario della Vera Croce (oggi del velo della Vergine).
Pistoia, Museo della Cattedrale di San Zeno
(Detail aus S. 317, Abb. 22 | particolare di p. 317, fig. 22)

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