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Michelangelo in Florence: 'David' in 1503 and 'Hercules' in 1506

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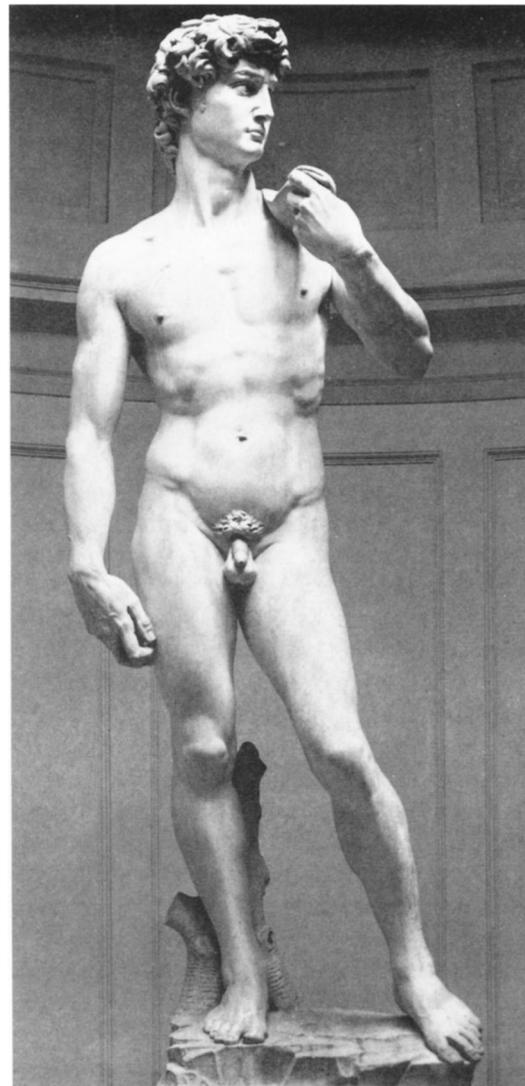
Michelangelo in Florence: 'David' in 1503 and 'Hercules' in 1506*

AT first sight, the chronology of the works that Michelangelo undertook after his return from Rome to Florence in 1501 might seem fairly free of problems. For the great public undertakings of these first Florentine years – the marble *David* for the Opera del Duomo (Fig. 12), the second of twelve marble Apostles likewise for the Opera, and the bronze *David* for the republican government – contracts survive. As we should expect, each contained clear stipulations concerning the time allowed for completion. To summarise very familiar facts: in the contract of 16th August 1501, Michelangelo was allowed two years to complete the marble *David*; in that for the bronze *David* of 12th August 1502 he was allowed six months; and in that for the Apostles, dated 24th April 1503, he was bound to deliver one statue every year over the following twelve years.¹ Added to these projects was the obligation he had brought with him from Rome in the spring of 1501, to deliver fifteen statues destined for the Piccolomini altar in Siena Cathedral within the following three years. In the agreement signed by Michelangelo in Florence on 19th June 1501, he undertook to accept no other work prior to the completion of Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini's assignment.² Just over eight weeks later, he signed the contract for the marble *David*.³

Unsurprisingly, contractual obligations and the reality of their observance begin to diverge in these early years of the new century. But this seems not to have happened all at once. For my purpose here is to introduce a small piece of evidence which goes far to vindicate the artist's record in the case of the marble *David*. As already noted, he had been obliged by the terms of the contract to complete the statue by August 1503. In the majority of accounts of the commission, it seems to have become traditional to state that the *David* was effectively finished in the early months of 1504.⁴ In fact, the *gigante* must have been substantially completed by mid-summer 1503.

Proof of this can be found in a very brief *Deliberazione* of the Operai of the Cathedral dated 16th June 1503. This makes provision for a public viewing of the statue one week later, on 23rd June, the eve of one of Florence's most important feast days, that of the Birth of St John the Baptist, the city's most important patron saint. On the day mentioned, the door of the structure which had been built around the

12. *David*, by Michelangelo. Marble, ht. 513.5 cm, including base (Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence).



David was to be opened. The text reads '*Dicta die* [i.e. 16th June] *Item deliberaverunt per tres fabas nigras deliberaverunt etc. qualiter die 23 videlicet vigilia S. Joannis Baptiste aperiatur hostium gigantis et tota dicta die apertum sit adeo quod possit videri gigas marmoreus ab omnibus volentibus videre etc. mandantes*'.⁵

*This article is dedicated to Paola Barocchi, and is an amplified and illustrated version of one planned for a celebratory volume which has remained unpublished. A few offprints, dated 1997, were printed by Riccardo Ricciardi and circulated. I am grateful to Giovanni Agosti, Jill Burke, Brenda Preyer and Diane Zervas for discussing points in the above text with me. A particular debt to Lucilla Bardschi Ciulich is recorded in note 35, and I am grateful to Gabriella Battista for improving the transcription of the document printed in the Appendix.

¹G. MILANESI: *Le lettere di Michelangelo Buonarroti pubblicate coi ricordi ed i contratti artistici*, Florence [1875], pp.620–23, 624, and 625–26 respectively, for the three contracts. For a complete transcription of that for the bronze *David*, see F. CAGLIOTTI: 'Il David bronzeo di Michelangelo (e Benedetto da Rovezzano): il problema dei pagamenti', in *Ad Alessandro Conti (1946–1994), Quaderni del Seminario di Storia della critica d'arte*, VI, Pisa [1996], pp.110–11.

²A copy of the contract survives in the Archivio Buonarroti, Codice 2–3, no.2. A dependable transcription has not been published. For a very imperfect one, see H.R. MANCUSI-UNGARO, JR.: *Michelangelo, the Bruges Madonna and the Piccolomini Altar*, New Haven and London [1971], pp.64–73.

³Michelangelo began work on the block on 13th September after having removed

the much discussed '*nodum*' four days earlier; K. FREY: 'Studien zu Michelagnolo Buonarroti und zur Kunst seiner Zeit', *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, XXX [1909], Beiheft, p.107, no.10.

⁴This conclusion is based on the description of the statue as '*quasi finita*' in the preamble to the pratica of January 1504 (for which see MILANESI, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, p.620).

⁵Florence, Archivio dell'Opera del Duomo (hereafter cited as AOD), Seconda Serie II, 9, *Deliberazione* 1496–1507, fol.59v. The text of this *Deliberazione* is to be found neither in G. POGGI: *Il Duomo di Firenze*, ed. M. HAINES, Florence [1988] (original edition Berlin [1909]) nor in the documents relating to the *David* published in FREY, *loc. cit.* at note 3 above in 1909. My own attention was drawn to it by a note in the *Carte Poggi* now on deposit at the Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento. I have no doubt that Giovanni Poggi returned to study this volume of *Deliberazioni* at some date following the appearance of his own book and Frey's publication of the same year. The completion of the '*turata*' around the block in 1501 is documented (*ibid.*, p.107, nos.12 and 13 and other minor references which survive in the Opera Stanziamenti). For a catalogue of the Poggi papers, see *Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento. Biblioteca dell'Istituto. Carte Poggi*, ed. R. TEMPIERI, Florence [1997].

This public 'exhibition' of the *gigante*, eight months before the extended term agreed in 1502 for its completion, seven months before the celebrated meeting of January 1504 to decide on its location, and nearly a year before its laborious transportation to the Piazza della Signoria, reminds us that already, in February 1502, the statue had been referred to as 'iam semifactum'. The 1503 showing also effectively disposes of the notion that, because of alleged political implications, Michelangelo's work on the *David* was shrouded in secrecy, the statue carried out in an atmosphere of concealment that persisted until the meeting of January 1504.⁶

Such a display of a work of art at the time of the Feast of St John the Baptist was not unprecedented. But the circumstances in this case seem particularly striking, and bring to mind the public showing of Leonardo's cartoon of the *Holy Family and St Anne* at SS. Annunziata in the spring of 1501.⁷

One or two implications of the public exhibition of the *David* in June 1503 will be returned to below. But at this point we may turn to another Opera document of some months earlier, a lengthy text of a Deliberazione of 28th November 1502 (see the Appendix, below).⁸ It records the decision of the Operai, after consultation with the Consoli of the Arte della Lana, to order a substantial amount of marble from Carrara of no less than three hundred *migliaia* of material, the equivalent of one hundred and twenty *carrate*, to be delivered over the next two years, half in each year, by Matteo di Michele da Carrara, the dependable *conduttore* Matteo Cucarello, to whom Michelangelo was himself to turn in future years.⁹ In addition to the hundred and twenty *carrate*, the text alludes to six or more other *lapidi* included in the order, three to be delivered in each of the next two years. Unfortunately, we are given no details of the weight or scale of any of the individual pieces.

Stocks of marble at the Opera had been low for some time. Already two years earlier, Simone del Pollaiuolo, il Cronaca, *capomaestro* of the cathedral, had been instructed to cut up marble pieces in the storehouse of the Opera, some, interestingly, marble that had come from the property of Lorenzo the Magnificent.¹⁰ The material was now required to proceed with the tribune altars. The need became more urgent when attempts to restore the old 'cotto' pavement of the tribune chapels was abandoned in favour of substituting marble.¹¹ The order of November 1502 was, clearly, a response to these needs.

However, for our present concerns, the most interesting part of the text (see the Appendix) is a reference to the possible use by Michelangelo himself of some of the marble. We read '... et tutto el marmo che detto Matteo conduciessi o faciessi condurre qui abbia a essere et sia di detta opera tutto a dichiarazione, parere et voglia di detti operai . . . excepto che se detto Matteo ne rechasse per Michelagnolo Bonarroto, che quella quantità per lui rechata sia di detto Michelagnolo liberamente et per suo chonto et lavorare per sé proprio et non per altri . . .'. Payments to Matteo for the *condotta* of the three hundred *migliaia* are recorded in the Opera Stanziamenti; the first notice seems to be of May 1503.¹²

We cannot establish for what purpose Michelangelo might have required such marble in late 1502 without further evidence. The multiplicity of commissions referred to earlier makes the problem particularly difficult. In a brief note on the issue, Giovanni Poggi speculated as to whether the material could have been destined for the group of the *Virgin and Child* undertaken for the Mouscheron or for the two marble *tondi*. These cannot be excluded. But a further possibility, which he did not mention, is that Michelangelo was expecting marble for the Piccolomini altar commission. It is worth noting that a potential need to order marble for the Siena project from Carrara had been alluded to already in the agreement drawn up in June 1501: '... et quando in Firenze non habbia tucti marmi faccino le quindici figure sia tenuto farlo venire da Carrara alla sopradecta perfectione'.¹³ And if my suggestion that the lowest order tabernacles of the monument are also by Michelangelo is accepted, we can appreciate that his need for marble must have been all the more insistent.¹⁴ Given that the marble *David* had been carried nearer to completion in the winter of 1502–03 than has generally been perceived, it would not be surprising if Michelangelo felt some need to turn his attention to the onerous undertaking that he had already become involved with even before leaving Rome.

While the 'external' facts about the Piccolomini commission are fairly well established, the 'internal' chronology of the making of the four statues that were delivered is hypothetical. In his will of 30th April 1503, Cardinal Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini had expressed his wish that his project be completed and enjoined his heirs to take this duty on themselves: 'Volumus quod heredes nostri curam et sollicitudinem easdem imagines perficiendi et locandi suscipiant'.¹⁵ The postscript to

⁶For this proposal, see s. LEVINE: 'The Location of Michelangelo's *David*: The Meeting of January 25, 1504', *Art Bulletin*, LVI [1974], p.45; and for a critical rejoinder, R.N. PARKS: 'The Placement of Michelangelo's *David*: A Review of the Documents', *ibid.*, LXVII [1975], pp.560–70, esp. p.567.

⁷For the description of the work, see the celebrated letter of Fra Pietro da Novellara, in L. BELTRAMI: *Documenti e memorie riguardanti la Vita e le Opere di Leonardo da Vinci*, Milan [1919], pp.65–66, no.107. He states that Leonardo's cartoon is not yet finished: 'et questo schizo ancora non è finito'. We owe to Vasari, of course, the account of its public display over two days; he interestingly writes that men and women, young and old, went to see it 'come si va a le feste solenni'. So far as I am aware, diarists and chroniclers refer neither to the Leonardo display nor to the showing of the *David*. Fra Pietro's letter is dated 8th April, close to Easter, which fell on 11th April in 1501.

⁸AOD, Deliberazioni 1496–1507, fols.51v and 52r. Again, this Deliberazione does not appear in POGGI, *ed. cit.* at note 5 above. There is a brief reference to it in FREY (*loc. cit.* at note 3 above, p.111, no.35), where this marble order is wrongly related to the commission for the cathedral marble *Apostles*. As we have seen, these were commissioned only in April 1503, and subsequent payments for marble for the *Apostles*, some of which are in FREY, are carefully particularised.

⁹Matteo Cucarello deserves a mini-biography. His employment by the Opera in 1502 precedes the only reference to him in POGGI, *op. cit.* at note 5 above. Michelangelo would turn to him for his own purposes by late 1505 (see MILANESI, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, pp.631–32). When he began to undertake marble supplies for the Florentine Duomo Operai has still to be established. For the blocks he supplied for the *Apostles* project, see MICHAEL AMY's article in this issue, p.493.

¹⁰See POGGI, *ed. cit.* at note 5 above, p.228, no.1144: Cronaca is permitted to 'secare et secari facere omnia marmora existentia in dicta opera et que venerunt ex domo Laurentii de Medicis'.

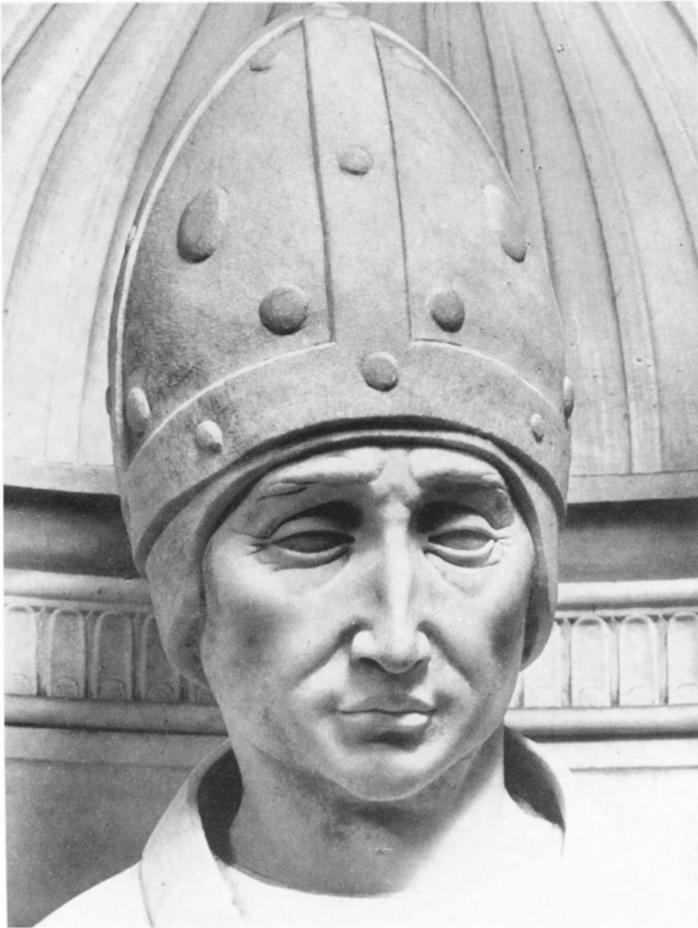
(See also F. CAGLIOTI: 'Donatello, i Medici e Gentile de' Becchi: un po' d'ordine alla Guiditta (e al David) di Via Larga, III', *Prospettiva*, LXXVII [1995], pp.54–55, note 162.) The reference brings to mind ASCANIO CONDIVI's much later allusion (*Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroto*, ed. F. NENCIONI, Florence [1998], p.11) to marble held at the garden of S. Marco at the period of Michelangelo's apprenticeship, destined for Lorenzo's projected library: 'i marmi, o volian dir concii, per ornare quella nobilissima libreria ch'egli e i suoi maggiori raccolta di tutto il mondo aveano'. Condivi's remark has been recently disparaged, but is important and one I hope to return to.

¹¹See, for example, POGGI, *ed. cit.* at note 5 above, p.229, no.1154. For a brief but useful summary of events, see L. ZANGHERI: *Il pavimento marmoreo di Santa Maria del Fiore*, in M. DEZZI BARDESCHI, ed.: *Aletheia, 5. La difficile eredità. Architettura a Firenze dalla Repubblica all'Assedio*, Florence [1994], pp.57–60.

¹²AOD, Series 11, Stanziamenti 1500–04, fol.63r: [5th May 1503] 'Matteo di Michele da Charvara conductore di marmi bianchi lire duecento dieci per parte di sua condotta di migliaia 300 tolte dall'opera paghato adì 5 detto . . .'.
¹³For the contract, see note 2 above. This is my own transcription. (cf. MANCUSI UNGARO, *op. cit.* at note 2 above, p.64).

¹⁴For this proposal, see M. HIRST and J. DUNKERTON: *Making and Meaning. The Young Michelangelo*, exh. cat., National Gallery, London [1994], p.81, note 58. It is presented at greater length and with illustrations in M. HIRST and J. DUNKERTON: *Michelangelo giovane, Scultore e Pittore a Roma 1496–1501*, Modena [1997], pp.84–85. Marble that must have been destined for the Piccolomini statues had been left in Rome when the artist decided (seemingly with little notice) to return to Florence in 1501 (HIRST and DUNKERTON [1994], pp.70–71).

¹⁵Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, MSS. Sanesi C.VI.9, fol.627v.



13. Head of S. Pio, by Michelangelo. Marble. (Cappella Piccolomini, Siena Cathedral).



14. Head of the Virgin in the Pitti *tondo*, by Michelangelo. Marble. (Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence).

a Florentine re-enactment of the 1501 contract in September 1504, after the patron's death in the previous year, refers to the non completion of the contract: '... non est sortita debitum effectum et negotium ipsum remansit infectum'.¹⁶ However, when a new contract was drawn up in Florence in October 1504, it is stated that Michelangelo has delivered four statues.¹⁷ Such a sequence of events seems compatible with the suggestion that the marble Cucarello was to supply on Michelangelo's behalf, referred to in late November 1502, was destined for the Siena project. The very clear signs of haste in the carving of the statues indicates that the artist carried them out in a brief period of time.¹⁸

Another point of interest yielded by the Opera del Duomo documents, which has hitherto escaped attention, is relevant here. Less than a month after the public showing of the *David*, two new Operai assumed office on 1st July 1503. One of them was 'Bartolomeus Silvestri Roberti de Pictis', that is Bartolommeo Pitti, for whom the artist undertook the un-

finished marble *tondo*, now in the Bargello.¹⁹ The coincidence is striking and, at the least, implies that sculptor and patron must have encountered one another in the Opera when the *gigante* was nearing completion. It does not prove that the work's inception, or even a promise to undertake it, dates from exactly this moment, but it is, nevertheless, a datum to be reckoned with, all the more suggestive given our total lack of information to help with the dating of the *tondo*. If all four Piccolomini statues were carved at a relatively late moment, close in time to the declaration that they had been delivered, it is all the more telling to compare them with the marble relief. Close morphological similarities between the two 'Papal' statues, especially St Pius, and the head of the Virgin in the Pitti *tondo* (Figs. 13 and 14), have been noted in the past and are, indeed, compelling.²⁰

If the progress the sculptor had made with the *David*, sufficient to warrant a public showing by June 1503, renders a relatively late dating for the execution of all four Siena statues

¹⁶See MILANESI, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, p.618.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p.628. The executors now declare 'dictum Michelangelum usque in hunc diem de dictis figuris iam fecisse et consignasse quatuor figuras et statuas marmoreas...'

¹⁸More telling in this context than the unworked back of St Paul is the lack of finish to the head of St Peter; see in particular E. CARLI: *Michelangelo e Siena*, Rome [1964], pls.XVII and XVIII.

¹⁹Florence, Archivio di Stato, Arte della Lana 39, fol.44v; and, not less, AOD, Deliberazioni 1496–1507, fol.61v. Pitti was paid his salary for his first six months of office on 14th December 1503 (AOD, Stanziamenti 1500–04, fol.8r).

²⁰F. KRIEGBAUM: 'Michelangelo's Statuen am Piccolomini-Altar im Dom zu Siena', *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, LXIII [1942], p.70. He wrote of the head of the Virgin in the Pitti *tondo*: 'Die Ähnlichkeit ist so gross, dass man die Madonna geradezu die Schwester des Papstes nennen möchte'. Kriegbaum concluded that Michelangelo worked

on one statue at a time, beginning with the St Paul in 1501. Although such a procedure might have been prompted by the terms of the contract, it seems to me much more likely that he worked on at least two concurrently, in the first instance Sts Paul and Peter and in the second Sts Gregory and Pius (one can recall here his concurrent work on the two Louvre *Slaves*). As my text suggests, I think it very unlikely that Michelangelo did anything about the Piccolomini statues as early as 1501. Nevertheless, at present, Kriegbaum's article remains the most perceptive assessment of the four statues in Siena Cathedral. And it was his reappraisal of them that led him to change his mind about the dating of the Pitti *tondo*, which a little earlier he had dated as late as 1508 and which he now, without our knowledge of Bartolommeo's rôle as Operaio, dated 1503–04. For a useful recent commentary on the commission, see G. BONSANTI, in *Giovinezza di Michelangelo*, ed. K. WEIL-GARRIS BRANDT *et al.*, exh. cat., Florence [1999], pp.308–10.

admissible, it makes a little less inexplicable another event: the decision of the Opera del Duomo to proceed with the commissioning of twelve marble Apostles by as early as April 1503. The speed with which the sculptor evidently worked on the *gigante* must have been reassuring to the Operai and the Consoli of the Lana who, we should recall, now specified that an Apostle of no less than four and a quarter *braccia* should be delivered each year.²¹ The contract was drawn up just two months before the June ‘unveiling’, when the qualities of the *David* must have been fully apparent. Did the decision of the Operai reflect their satisfaction with the *gigante* or, perhaps, some presentiment that history might repeat itself and that Michelangelo’s *David*, like Donatello’s marble *David* of nearly a century earlier, would come to be sequestered by the city’s government?

The June exhibition of the *David* took place just nine months after Piero Soderini’s election as Gonfaloniere di Giustizia for life and seven after his subsequent move into the Palazzo della Signoria. His staunch support of Michelangelo is well known and is most clearly exemplified in his later attempts to press for a pendant to the *David* which are discussed below. It is, nevertheless, at this point worth recalling Ascanio Condivi’s information, undoubtedly based on Michelangelo’s *viva voce*, that it had been Soderini who had been instrumental in the decision to award the artist the commission to carry out the bronze statue of *David* for Pierre de Rohan, Maréchal de Gié.²² The contract for the bronze *David* preceded by three months Soderini’s election to life office. However, Condivi’s reference deserves our serious attention in the light of Soderini’s own profound attachment to the French alliance. We may also note a further detail in this context. The first documented reference to the Frenchman’s wish for a *David* is in a letter of the Florentine ambassadors of 22nd June 1501. Soderini had served as Gonfaloniere di Giustizia in the spring of 1501.²³

The bronze *David* was the earliest of the government commissions given to Michelangelo in these crowded years. Its drawn-out history has recently been reviewed at length.²⁴ Reference to it here may be limited to one curious detail. In a letter of 29th April 1503 from the Dieci di Balìa about the

artist’s progress on the project, they report Michelangelo’s promise to finish his own work in modelling the figure by the Feast Day of St John, at, that is, the very moment when the marble *David* would be displayed by the Duomo Operai.²⁵ Observations on the later events concerning the marble *David*, including the *pratica* held in January 1504 to determine where it was to go, must await another occasion. It is, however, worth noting here that the decision in favour of the *ringhiera* in front of the Palazzo della Signoria, instead of the Loggia dei Lanzi, seems to have been a late one. In a Deliberazione of the Duomo Operai dated 30th April 1504 concerning the moving of the statue, it appears that the intention was, at this point, to situate it in the Loggia, ‘*in lodiam dictorum magnificorum Dominorum . . .*’²⁶ And it is only at the end of May that we find, at least in the documents, the destination of the *gigante* defined as the place where Donatello’s bronze *Judith* is situated, ‘before the door of the Palace’.²⁷

A fortnight before this Deliberazione of 28th May, the statue had already left the Opera on what Luca Landucci states was a four-day journey to the Piazza della Signoria, arriving there on 18th May.²⁸ Both he and Parenti refer to the nocturnal stoning of the statue while on its way. Their accounts differ in minor details. Important, however, is Parenti’s statement that those involved were youthful and that they were subsequently arrested by the Otto di Guardia.²⁹ The records of the Otto establish their number as four and reveal their identities. They are named as Vincenzo di Cosimo Martelli, Filippo di Francesco de Spini, Gerardo Maffei de Gherardini, and Raffaello di Agostino di Panciatichi. All four were, therefore, from branches of families who could be regarded as generically committed to the Medicean cause.³⁰

Soderini’s personal rôle in the decisions to deprive the Opera del Duomo of their statue and to situate it on the *ringhiera* cannot be quantified. Nevertheless, the presumption that it was a significant one is strengthened by his part in initiating the making of a pendant statue; here we have excellent evidence of his own involvement. His actively pursuing the idea of a second statue is still frequently dated as late as 1508 in the bibliography. But, in point of fact, it began at the

²¹The conditions of the Apostles contract are notably stringent. The term of twelve years allowed for the completion of the series was to begin on the day that the contract was drawn up, 24th April 1503. Michelangelo himself is obliged to go personally to Carrara to obtain the necessary marble, a clause no doubt reflecting the anxiety of Consuls and Operai to avoid the delivery of badly hewn blocks of poor quality. Whether the artist observed this clause is unknown (see now MICHAËL AMY’s article in this issue, p.493); however, his concern about the quality of marble required for the *Pietà* carved in Rome is well attested (see HIRST and DUNKERTON [1994], cited at note 12 above, p.35).

²²Condivi’s passage about the bronze *David* presents a textual ambiguity, for which see CAGLIOTI, *loc. cit.* at note 1 above. Nevertheless, his remark about Soderini’s intervention is unambiguous, indeed emphatic: ‘*dopo il Gigante, ricercato da Piero Soderini suo grande amico, gittò di bronzo una statua grande al naturale, che fu mandata in Francia*’ (CONDIVI, *ed. cit.* at note 10 above, p.22).

²³For his two-month term, see G. CAMBI: *Istorie fiorentine*, in *Delizie degli eruditi toscani*, ed. I. DI SAN LUIGI, XI–XXIII, Florence [1785–86], XXI, p.159. However, Soderini’s rôle in government was already, in 1500, of an importance enough to lead Parenti to list him among the four leading figures in the conduct of business; see R. PESMAN COOPER: ‘L’elezione di Pier Soderini a gonfaloniere a vita’, *Archivio Storico Italiano*, CXXV [1967], p.176. His authority in dealing with the French was unrivalled; for the tributes paid to him by the French governor of Milan and Louis XII himself on his election in 1502, see PESMAN COOPER, *ibid.*, p.180.

²⁴Many of the relevant documents were first published in G. GAYE: *Carteggio inedito d’artisti dei secoli XIV, XV, XVI*, Florence [1840]. For recent republication of the material and accompanying commentary, see L. 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” bronzeo Michelangelo Buonarroti’, *Mélanges de l’Ecole Française de Rome*, CVI, 2 [1994], pp.433–72, and CAGLIOTI, *loc. cit.* at note 1 above,

pp.85–132.

²⁵‘*La figura del Marcial di Gié sarà fornita a San Giovanni, se il maestro ci terrà fermo la promessa sua, la quale non è molto certo, atteso e’ cervelli di simili genti.*’ (CAGLIOTI, *loc. cit.* at note 1 above, p.99).

²⁶AOD, Deliberazioni 1496–1507, fol.78v; ASF, Deliberazioni dei Signori e Collegi 168, fol.38v; FREY, *loc. cit.* at note 3 above, p.108, no.20 (and also p.107, no.19). For the etymology of *lodium* or *lodia*, see K. FREY: *Die Loggia dei Lanzi zu Florenz*, Berlin [1885], esp. his Excursus 41, p.94.

²⁷ASF, Deliberazioni dei Signori e Collegi 168, fol.49v; FREY, *loc. cit.* at note 3 above, pp.108–09, no.24. The Signoria decides ‘*quod statua marmorea gigantis ad presens in eorum platea existens collocetur et ponatur in eo loco, in quo ad presens est erea statua Iudit, ante portam eorum palatii . . .*’.

²⁸L. LANDUCCI: *Diario Fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516*, ed. I. DEL BADIA, Florence [1888], p.268.

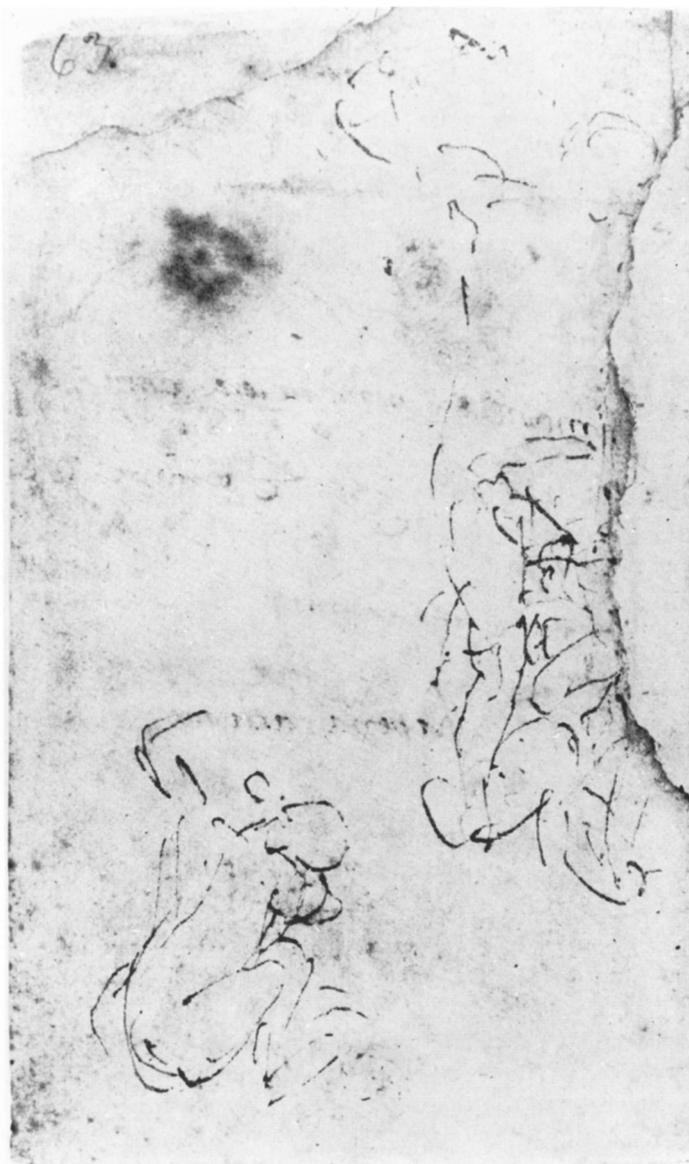
²⁹Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS11.11.134 (P. PARENTI: *Storie Fiorentine*), fols.9v–10r.

³⁰ASF, Otto di Guardia, Repubblica 129, fols.38r–39r. The text confirms Landucci’s statement that the attack happened on the first night of the *David*’s journey. The sentences of the first three to imprisonment in the Stinche were to be lifted in the event of payment of fines. Raffaele Panciatichi had eluded arrest and was threatened with severer punishment in the event of non-appearance. As Lorenzo Polizotto has kindly pointed out to me, none of the names suggests a *piagnone* interpretation of the episode. It might be added that, as a fervid anti-Savonarolan, Parenti would probably have made a comment had this been the case. Nor, however, does the new evidence decisively substantiate an anti-republican interpretation, for, as Polizotto has indicated, none of the names appears on subsequent lists of Medici *amici* in the period of the Medicean restoration. Perhaps after all, this much discussed episode was a case of youthful vandalism without political motivation.

latest by 1506.³¹ This is proved by the survival of a letter that he wrote to the Marchese di Massa, Alberico Malaspina, on 7th August 1506, a letter which, although published, has been neglected. Referring to business between the Florentine Opera del Duomo and their marble suppliers at Carrara, Soderini refers to a '*pezo di marmo molto grande*' that has already been quarried. He asks marchese Alberico to reserve it, '*che desideriamo farne una statua quanto maggiore ne eschi*'.³²

A second letter of Soderini to Malaspina survives, dated 21st August 1507, written one year later. Although published in the nineteenth century, this too has been overlooked by most recent students of the subject; it confirms the significance of the earlier one. Soderini here refers to Michelangelo's imminent return to Florence and the fact that he has been absent on account of the Bologna bronze statue of Julius II. He assures the marchese that, on his arrival, he will be sent to inspect the marble block.³³ Three further letters of 1508 are more familiar. The earliest of the three is dated 10th May 1508. Soderini refers very clearly to the proposed employment of the block and again expresses his wish to Malaspina that it will be kept for the Florentine project, now explicitly spelt out: '*. . . che ne vorremo fare fare una statua che stesse in sulla piazza di questa città, et per questo ne verrebbe V.S. a gratificare a tucto questo popolo . . .*'.³⁴ This is followed by two further letters, of 4th September and 16th December, which reflect the *gonfaloniere's* frustration over Michelangelo's removal to Rome to work once more for Pope Julius II. In the later of the two, he insists that only Michelangelo can superintend the rough-hewing of the block; Soderini was clearly mindful of the wretched state of the block for the *David* and must have been very anxious to avoid another one '*male abbozzatum*'.³⁵

Soderini's letters to Alberico Malaspina exhibit that combination of patience and tenacity which has been seen as characterising his conduct of political affairs. They were qualities severely tested by the unreliability of his chosen artist's behaviour.³⁶ The date of the earliest, August 1506, is noteworthy, for at this juncture, over a period extending from April to November 1506, Michelangelo was once more in Florence. The letter was, therefore, written at a moment when *gonfaloniere* and artist were able to discuss the second statue for the *piazza* together; it was also a moment when Soderini was making efforts to restore peace between the artist and Pope



15. Sketch for a *Hercules and Cacus* group, by Michelangelo. Pen and ink, 14.8 by 9 cm. (Casa Buonarroti, Florence).

Julius II.³⁷ It has been plausibly argued in the past that the very decision to place the *David* on the *ringhiera* to the left of

³¹The date 1508 still regularly appears in the literature concerned with the *Hercules* project, partly because it was retained in the influential publication, v. BUSH: *The Colossal Sculpture of the Cinquecento*, New York and London [1976], pp.118ff. Bush's later correction to 1507 (see note 33 below) is frequently overlooked; see, to give two examples, K. WEIL GARRIS: 'On Pedestals: Michelangelo's *David*, Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus* and the Sculpture of the Piazza della Signoria', *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, XX [1983], p.398, and W.E. WALLACE: 'Michelangelo In and Out of Florence Between 1500 and 1508', in *Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael in Renaissance Florence from 1500 to 1508*, Washington [1992], p.65, who notes how remarkable it was that a huge block was found, quarried and made ready for transportation in less than three months.

³²The text was first published in C. KLAPISCH-ZUBER: *Les Maîtres du Marbre, Carrara 1300-1600*, Paris [1969], p.112, note 26, and is discussed, along with the other letters considered here, in M.J. AMY: *Michelangelo's Commission for Apostle statues for the Cathedral of Florence*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1997, pp.148 and 155-56. I here publish Poggi's text: '*Magnifice domine. Abbiamo operato che questi vostri di marmi hanno apunctato con li operai qui di Sancta Maria del Fiore et lo habbiamo facto volentieri et fareno sempre per quella et cose sue dove le cede honore o commodo. Come per altre le dicemo pare che costei maestri de marmo habbino spicchato un pezo di marmo molto grande il quale desideriamo che la S.ria V. ce lo facci salvare che lo satisfareno convenientemente et ce ne farà cosa molto grata et accepta che desideriamo farne una statua quanto maggiore ne eschi. Bene valeat D.V. Ex Palatio Florentino Die VII augusti MDVT°/ Petrus Soderinis Vexillifer in perpetuum Populi Florentini.*'

³³The letter was published in C. FREDIANI: *Ragionamento storico di Carlo Frediani su le diverse gite fatte a Carrara da Michelangelo Buonarroti*, Massa [1837], doc.II, pp.67ff. It is

referred to in KLAPISCH-ZUBER, *op. cit.* above, p.112, note 26 and has been noted in v. BUSH: 'Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus* and Florentine Traditions', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, XXXV [1980], p.169. The relevant passage (following Poggi's transcription), reads: '*Quanto al marmo, aspettiamo qui in breve M° Michelangelo Bonaroti scultore il quale è stato a Bologna più mesi per gittare là di bronzo il pontefice: è horamai alla fine della opera. Come sarà qui lo mandareno subito costì a vedere decto marmo . . .*'

³⁴First published in part in GAYE, *op. cit.* at note 24 above, II, p.97, no.XLII. Soderini's anxiety about the safe-keeping of the block is reflected in his adding: '*V.S. potrebbe farli fare dinanzi una armatura di legname un pocho forte la quale difenderebbe decto marmo et li altri verrebbero qui senza pericolo di rompersi . . .*'

³⁵First published in GAYE, *op. cit.* at note 24 above, II, p.107, no.LI. Of the need for Michelangelo himself to attend to the block Soderini adds: '*non essendo homo in Italia ad expedire una opera di costeta qualità è necessario che lui solo et non altri la vengha et a dirizzarla*'. The notorious problems provoked by the condition of the block for the *David* need not be discussed here. The description of it in the *Deliberazione* of 2nd July 1501 (AOD, *Deliberazioni* 1496-1507, fol.36v) has always been difficult to read. I owe the correct text to the help of Lucilla Bardeschi Ciulich; it in fact reads: '*male abbozzatum et supinum*' (cf. POGGI, *ed. cit.* at note 5 above, no.448, and FREY, *loc. cit.* at note 3 above, p.106, no.8).

³⁶For Soderini's personal qualities, see R. PESMAN COOPER: 'Pier Soderini: Aspiring Prince or Civic Leader?', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, I [1978], pp.69-126, esp. pp.119ff.

³⁷See, for example, his letter to Francesco Alidosi of July 1506, published in GAYE and discussed in M. HIRST: 'Michelangelo in 1505', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE*, CXXXIII [1991], p.765.

the entrance to the Palazzo della Signoria, a late one as we have seen, carried with it an implied requirement for a companion statue.³⁸ Soderini's letter of 1506, even if not as explicit about the block as we might wish, nevertheless goes far to confirm the proposal and implies that an exceptionally large block had been ordered earlier for the purpose.³⁹

None of the surviving letters refers to the subject of *David's* projected companion, but it has always been assumed, in the light of later events concerning the project, that a statue of Hercules was planned. The choice of Hercules to accompany *David* before the seat of the republican government was, it has recently been shown, one sanctioned by previous Florentine history. It has been established that, even at a date prior to the Signoria's appropriation of Donatello's marble *David* in 1416, an image of Hercules, almost certainly a painted one, already existed in the palace.⁴⁰ The intention on the part of Gonfaloniere and Signoria to place monumental images of these two closely related republican heroes in front of the palace at this time, when the war to recover Pisa was still going on, could not have been more appropriate.⁴¹

Exactly what figuration was to be given to Hercules at this point is not mentioned in the sources. However, a brief pen sketch by Michelangelo in the Casa Buonarroti (Fig. 15) has been plausibly related to the artist's concern with Soderini's project at this moment.⁴² Although only a fragment, the most convincing interpretation of the subject of the sketch is that it represents Hercules with a vanquished Cacus at his feet. Hercules, arm raised, is drawn in an upright rather than a stooping pose, one, in other words, that would have been appropriate for a companion for the *David*.⁴³ The choice of Hercules and Cacus was, once again, a subject sanctioned by long-standing Florentine tradition.⁴⁴

A review of the later history of Michelangelo's involvement cannot be attempted here. His failure to honour his commitments to Piero Soderini – we must remember the projected mural in the Palazzo della Signoria in addition to the giant *Hercules* to stand at its entrance – robbed Florence of two of the most cherished objectives of the *gonfaloniere's* patronage. Reflecting on the course of events in these years, it seems appropriate to conclude by quoting Soderini's own words in a letter of 1509 to Machiavelli: '*Ricordandovi che il naturale di questo mondo è ricevere grande ingratitude delle grandi e buone operationi . . .*'⁴⁵

Appendix

Contract for the supply of marble between the Operai del Duomo and Matteo Cucarello, 28th November 1502 (Florence, Archivio dell'Opera del Duomo, Seconda Seria II, 9, Deliberazioni 1496–1507, fols. 51v and 52r).

Antonius Paganellus
Jacobus del Vigna et
Petrus de Pazis

Locatio marmoris facta Matteo da Charrara [28th November 1502]

Spectabili homini operai dell'Opera di S. Maria del Fiore di Firenze ragunati etc. nella loro solita audientia di decta Opera ragunati et prima havuto più volte colloquio colla Signoria de Consoli di decta Arte di decta allocatione etc. et consentienti etc. nella visitatione per loro facta all'Opera secondo gli ordini etc. et la consuetudine soto di 21 settembre et soto di 24 d'ottobre di detto anno 1502 et più altre volte etc. et per tre fave nere etc. . . . allogorono et concederono ad fare per la decta opera Matteo di Michele da Charrara alias di Chucherello presente et conducente etc. migliaia trecento di marmo bianco charrarese netto di chotti, fessure et pelati a fare dette migliaia 300 nel tempo et termine d'anni dua hogi, questo presente di cominciato et da farsi ogni anno de' detti dua anni la meza et metà di decte migliaia 300 cioè migliaia 150 per anno da chondursi per lui et averlo condotto ogni anno detta meza et metà da Charrara nella città di Pisa per quello prezzo et pregio che altra volta in una sua condotta di migliaia 50 si dette et ne fu facto, cioè lire 7 et soldi dieci per qualunque migliaio condotti come di sopra nella detta città di Pisa a qualunque sue spesa. Et più lapide sei oltre a dette migliaia 300 cioè ogni anno tre et se più ne rechassi, quello più sieno di decta Opera et da condursi et condotte come di sopra et per prezzo l'una di decte lapide quanto ne sarà facto da Simone del Pollaiuolo capomaestro di decta Opera et tutto perfettamente abbozzato et da starsene al iudicio di decto Simone et da farsi detto marmo et pezzi di quelle misure, quantità et qualità in quello modo et forma come saranno date le misure et qualità con quelli modi et modelli dati et da darsi o che si dessino da detto Simone e quali modoni et misure o modelli date da detto Simone et soscripte di sua mano propria detto Matteo le habia a rapresentare alla detta Opera . . . facta detta condotta acciò decto Simone et li operai possino vedere se è secondo dette misure abbozzate. Com pacto che qualunque volta la città di Pisa tornassi o venissi sotto el dominio fiorentino che allora et in tal caso detto Matteo habbia . . . quello meno et mancho di prezzo quanto più per non essere nostra detta città, si spende in gabelle, in vetture, in noli et charreggi o altro per el non esser detta città nostra et tutto el marmo che detto Matteo conduciessi o faciessi condurre qui abbia a essere et sia di detta Opera tutto a dichiarazione, parere et voglia di detti operai . . . excepto che se detto Matteo ne rechasse per Michelagnolo Bonarroti che quella quantità per lui rechata sia di detto Michelagnolo liberamente et per suo chonto et lavorare per sé proprio et non per altri et oltre ad ciò quando detti marmi saranno condotti nella città di Pisa che detto Matteo sia tenuto detti marmi condurli et farli condurre da Pisa in sul nostro et in luogo sicuro et in luogo dove possino essere presi da' nostri schafaiuoli senza alcuno sospetto per a Firenze senza alcuno pericolo o danno di detti schafaiuoli infra detto tempo come di sopra in qualunque anno la metà et bisognando et achadendo al detto Matteo di havere o volere salvocondotto per insin al nostro et se bisognassi più qualche somma di spese più da Pisa in sul nostro terreno sicuro che detta Opera habbia a pagare detta spesa . . .

³⁸BUSH, *op. cit.* at note 31 above, p.118, and *eadem, loc. cit.* at note 33 above, pp.163ff.

³⁹See the remarks in BUSH, *loc. cit.* at note 33 above, p.170, note 33. Her evaluation of the letter of 1507 led her to conclude that the block for the pendant statue could have been requested three or four years earlier. The letter of mid-summer 1506 only strengthens this conclusion. The presumption that the large and fine block brought to Florence in 1525 was the one already quarried by 1506 seems likely but at this point cannot be proved; for its scale, see note 43 below.

⁴⁰See the important article, M.M. DONATO: 'Hercules and David in the Early Decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio: Manuscript Evidence', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, LIV [1991], esp. pp.83ff; for the argument in favour of a painted figure, p.89, and for remarks about Donatello's *David*, pp.90ff. See, most recently, N. RUBINSTEIN: *The Palazzo Vecchio 1298–1532: Government, Architecture and Imagery in the Civic Palace of the Florentine Republic*, Oxford [1995], pp.54–55.

⁴¹DONATO, *loc. cit.* at note 38 above, pp.97–98. She writes: 'In the circumstances of the Pisan War – which would once more recall the heroic climate of about a century earlier – it was appropriate to revert to the symbolic images that had received their consecration in the Palazzo Vecchio at that stirring time.'

⁴²C. DE TOLNAY: *Corpus dei disegni di Michelangelo*, Novara [1975–80], I, no.65. The early date for the sketch was first proposed in J. WILDE: *Italian Drawings in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, Michelangelo and his Studio*, London [1953], p.67, and convincingly confirmed in P. BAROCCHI: *Michelangelo e la sua Scuola. I disegni di Casa Buonarroti e degli Uffizi*, I, Florence [1962], pp.18–19.

⁴³The appropriateness of the motive in this drawing, which so clearly shows the artist's concern to respect the vertical limits of the block (excellently discussed in BAROCCHI, *op. cit.* above), raises once more the problem of identifying the two-figure clay model in the Casa Buonarroti with Michelangelo's revised project of the 1520s for a pendant to the *David*. It is difficult to reconcile the model's proportions with those of the block described by CAMBI (*ed. cit.* at note 23 above, XXII, pp.274–75); he gives the measurements, prior to its raising, as 'braccia 8. e $\frac{1}{2}$ lugo, e alto braccia 2. et $\frac{1}{2}$ chera quasi quadro'. For the argument against the suitability of the model as a projected pendant, see J. WILDE: *Michelangelo's 'Victory'*, Oxford [1954], pp.18–19. And for a recent point in favour of the argument, E.D. SCHMIDT: 'Die Überlieferung von Michelangelos verlorene Samson-Modell', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XL [1996], pp.79–146, particularly pp.98–103.

⁴⁴It is not necessary to review all the literature here: See L. ETTLINGER: "'Hercules Florentinus'", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XVI [1972], pp.120ff, and BUSH, *loc. cit.* at note 33 above, *passim*. For the large relief of Hercules and Cacus in Palazzo Guicciardini, see *Il Giardino di San Marco. Maestri e compagni del giovane Michelangelo*, ed. P. BAROCCHI, exh. cat., Casa Buonarroti, Florence [1992], fig.5 and pp.26–27.

⁴⁵The letter is published in part in P. VILLARI: *Niccolò Machiavelli e i suoi tempi*, II, Milan [1895], p.537, note 1. The present sentence is quoted in English by PESMAN COOPER, *loc. cit.* at note 34 above, p.125.