To my family and friends who made the journey worthwhile, to Jane who made it possible, and to Dr. Barletta who helped me believe that I could – I wish you had been here with me at the end.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I would like to thank my co-chairs Dr. Robert Westin and Dr. Elizabeth Ross for their guidance and assistance throughout this project. Dr. Westin thoughtfully agreed to stay the course despite his retirement during the early phase of research and I thank him for affording me and this work that continuity. Dr. Ross has worked with me since my master’s thesis; my scholarship carries a great debt to her perspectives and knowledge. Her counseling has been truly formative. This research was also enhanced by the other scholars on my committee, Dr. Barbara Barletta, Dr. Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, and Dr. Robert A. Hatch. A particularly warm thank you to Dr. Barletta who also served as my master’s thesis reader and who has, since I arrived at the University of Florida as a young graduate student, always been kind and supportive. Your continued and genuine care has been sustaining.

Numerous libraries, archives, and historic sites have been utilized during the course of this dissertation and to all of them - this would not have been possible without you. To the staff at the University of Florida Libraries, thank you for all of your hard work, particularly Melanie Davis of the Interlibrary Loan office who went above and beyond, tirelessly working with me to track down rare and difficult sources. I am grateful to the Archives nationales for their permission to work with and photograph the inventory of Charlotte d’Albret, a critical document to my work. An especially heartfelt thank you to the family of Ivon Cloulas who graciously granted permission for me to view their private fond, also held there. To the Bibliothèque national, Forte Nettuno, Rocca Sforzesca, Archivio di Stato di Forli-Cesena, access to your facilities and holdings was deeply appreciated. Individually, to Anna Rosa Bambi, director of the Archivio di Stato Forli, who assisted me with the primary chronicles of the region, to John McNeill who corresponded with me in regards to the records of the British Archeological Association, to Dr. Linda Stone of the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies at
Victoria University in the University of Toronto, who provided me with a copy of pages from *Istoria di Bologna*, to the staff of the Biblioteca Berenson at the Villa I Tatti, especially Patrizia Corella who made me feel welcome, to Pilar Martínez de Olcoz of the Office of Tourism and Culture in Viana, Spain, who guided me to the locations in the city associated with Cesare Borgia and his death, and to Marc du Pouget, Directeur des Archives départementales et du Patrimoine historique de l’Indre who corresponded with me regarding Charlotte d’Albret’s death certificate – thank you very much, merci beaucoup, muchas gracias, grazie mille. There are a few individuals whose assistance deserves a personal address. Paolo Errani, thank you for your warmth and for sharing the Biblioteca Malatestiana with me. To Nick Humphrey of the Victoria and Albert Museum, your willingness to arranging for me to see the sword scabbard of Cesare Borgia while in conservation has continued to influence my scholarship and career. To Caterina Fiorani at the Fondazione Camillo Caetani, thank you for the great honor of viewing Cesare’s sword and the memory of your shared enthusiasm. Valérie Découx and M. Alain Langlois, the wonderful experience of meeting the two of you in La Motte-Feuilly to discover the history of the château and chapel is treasured. Thank you to Giacomo Cicognani for the scholastic adventure at the Rocca Malatesta in Cesena. To Sergio Spada and Christina Vallicelli for the tour of the Rocca di Ravaldino in Forlì and their continued help discovering “Valentina”, I truly cannot thank you enough for your dedication, patience, and hospitality.

Thank you to the University of Florida Graduate School, the James J. Rizzi Scholarship Fund, and the Grinter Fellowship Program for deeming me and this project to be a valuable investment. This research would of course have not been possible without the numerous grants and fellowships that funded my travel. All of the staff in the School of Art + Art History office
has played a great hand in keeping the momentum of this process going, a particular thank you to Patrick Grigsby who always brightened my day with his kindness.

To my dear friend Jessica Uelsmann whose invaluable translations of some of the key French publications made the foundational work on Cesare’s sword possible, I am blessed to have known you for so long. Thank you to M. Heloise Seailles, your wonderful instruction in French helped me eventually find my own way. And to Ilaria Niccolini whose generous spirit compelled her to assist me in translating some of the difficult passages written in older or dialectic Italian, thank you. Dave, the incredible amount of time you spent helping me edit and re-edit this document has been a blessing. Your patience and understanding throughout this entire process has been humbling. Mandy, sharing this journey with you has been a joy—thank you for all of the quick glances, thorough readings, and laughter that helped me get through it. Finally to my family, words cannot express my gratitude for your tireless support.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Literature on Cesare Borgia</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patronage</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-fashioning and Presentation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects and Events Used in Performance</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splendor and Magnificence</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephemeral Events and Spectacle</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 EARLY LIFE AND INFLUENCES</strong></td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Education</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 TRANSFORMATION</strong></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 THE PRINCE</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to Italy</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay in Rome 1500</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500 Campaign in the Romagna</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cesare’s Use of the Hydra as a Personal Device</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucrezia’s Third Marriage – Alfonso d’Este</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forte Sangallo</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forte Nettuno</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Fortresses</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1502 Romagna campaign</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbino</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella d’Este - Michelangelo’s Sleeping Cupid</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machiavelli</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court at Cesena</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorenz Beheim</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonardo da Vinci - Military Architect and Engineer</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonardo’s Travels</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cesena</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imola</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Maps</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imprese and Devices</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piratello</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome and Leonardo’s Departure</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelangelo</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinturicchio</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raphael</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signorelli</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1503 – The Calm Before The Storm</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 THE FALL</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 CONCLUSION</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURES</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF REFERENCES</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cesare Borgia (1475-1507), son of Pope Alexander VI, is an established historical character in the Italian Renaissance narrative, but his role as a patron of art and his use of visual projects has been largely overlooked by art historians. This research examines the idea that he was an important figure by reconstructing his art historical legacy through an examination of the art, artists, objects, and events that he patronized. He employed and impacted the careers of some of the most important artists of the time, including Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Pinturicchio, Antonio di Sangallo il Vecchio, Signorelli, and Bramante. For him they designed and executed paintings, civic architecture, weapons, coats-of-arms, personal devices, costume, and spectacular ephemeral exhibitions.

Much of this visual display was used by Cesare as a performative tool of self-fashioning, presented to make strong statements about his wealth, power, education, culture, tastes, and physical prowess. These elements have been coalesced to establish a general patronage oeuvre, and to construct a broad reconsideration of his far reaching impact on Italian Renaissance art. The great wealth of historical information about him has been viewed in a new context and through an art historical lens, bringing updated perspectives and details to the discourse. The
most notable of these findings are the detection of Julius Caesar’s apotheosis comet in the Pax Romana image on Cesare’s sword, the importance and meaning of the hydra in Cesare’s personal iconography, the connection between Leonardo’s sketch *Three Views of a Bearded Man* and the artist’s now lost altarpiece for the Sanctuary in Piratello. Other important examinations included the possible links between Cesare and Michelangelo’s commissions in Sant’Agostino in Rome and the Piccolomini altar in Siena, Pinturicchio and Raphael’s work in the Piccolomini Library, and Signorelli’s work in the San Brizio chapel in Orvieto.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

It must be admitted that Caesar Borgia was certainly capable of realizing all the ambitious enterprises he conceived, thanks to his remarkable qualities – both natural and acquired. The breadth of his genius, his sagacity, his grasp of everything, were all outstanding; and his thorough knowledge of every branch of the arts and the humanities was a quality of immense value to him in the administration, conduct, and organization of his troops. He meticulously noted all that he had ever read in Greek and Latin history, and was careful to enlist the services of only the most skillful helpers; and since he had the pick of everybody available at the time, he was able to do almost anything to which he set his mind.

–Father Aleson

Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI, dominated the political landscape of Italy during the late 15th and early 16th centuries. Although he is an established historical character in the Italian Renaissance narrative, his role as a patron of art and his use of visual projects has been largely ignored, despite his association with many of the major artists of the period. Leonardo da Vinci served as his military architect and engineer; Pinturicchio was the foremost artist involved in his patronage circle and court; other significant artists such as Michelangelo,

---

1 Charles Yriare, Cesare Borgia, trans. William Stirling (London: Francis Aldor Publisher, 1947), 12-13. Francisco Aleson (1635-1715) was a Jesuit who held the office of the official historian and chronicler of the Kingdom of Navarre. Beginning in 1689, he continued writing the Annales del reyno de Navarra, started by his predecessor P. Moret. The use of Jesuits to write this secular history displeased Pope Innocent XI, but after the pontiff’s death, Aleson proceeded without hindrance. I could find no scholar who offered a modern analysis of Aleson’s writing but judging by the quote he was filled with pride for Navarre, the region of Spain where he was born and where the Borgia family was from. Aleson was born in Viana, the town where Cesare died and was buried. He had a positive opinion of Cesare, and was truthful in his statement of the man’s achievements and associations, but perhaps was too forgiving of the ruthless behavior that was required of Cesare to accomplish what he did. The quote was chosen to open this dissertation because of the phrases that reference his ability to achieve anything to which he set his mind and his ability to select the artists and associates that he wanted. It sets an important stage on which to build the following research – his moves were at all times calculated and his associations were those that he desired. Both of these assertions will play a role in our understanding of why Cesare patronized the art and artists that he did.

2 Anyone wishing to conduct further biographical research on Cesare Borgia should consult Sarah Bradford’s Cesare Borgia (1976), Ivan Cloulas’s The Borgias (1989), Michael Mallett’s The Borgias: The Rise and Fall of a Renaissance Dynasty (1987), Gustavo Sacerdote’s Cesare Borgia (1950), and William Woodward’s Cesare Borgia (1913). Much of the biographical information that follows should be considered common knowledge, however, I have chosen to cite information that is particularly important to the argument or was found in a specific source and no or few others. This has led to an abundance of footnotes, some of which could be deemed unnecessary, but their inclusion is intentional allowing the reader to trace specific pieces of information.
Antonio da Sangallo il Vecchio, Raphael, Signorelli, and Bramante have direct ties to his sphere of influence. These figures mark Cesare’s court as an important element in Italian Renaissance art. For him, artists designed and executed paintings, civic architecture, weapons, coats-of-arms, costume, and spectacular ephemeral displays, but art historians have given them only cursory attention, failing to fully extract their artistic and aesthetic value.

This research will address that deficiency by reconstructing the art historical legacy of Cesare Borgia through an examination of the artists, objects, and events that he patronized. The view that emerges will be used to explore how Cesare employed art and the integral part that visual representation played in his self-fashioning. The biographies and oeuvre of a number of artists will also be examined and layered in an attempt to describe the prospective impact that Borgia patronage had on their relationships and on the development of Renaissance style. The connections formed among artists, patrons, and associates were critical to the development of careers and the fostering of commissions.  

This research will liaise with the disciplines of visual culture, performance studies, gender studies, theater, dance, and history, resulting in an inclusive illustration of Cesare Borgia as an important example of an Italian Renaissance patron. It will help to construct our modern understanding of Cesare as a historical and art historical figure, and of how visual staging—art, architecture, performance, and ephemeral spectacle—worked within the Renaissance aesthetic. Once this picture has been realized, he can be rightfully inserted into the art historical discourse.

This analysis will present Cesare Borgia’s visual programs chronologically, beginning in 1492 with his father’s rise to the papacy and ending with his own death in 1507. Brief attention

---

3 Peta Motture and Michelle O’Malley, ed., *Re-thinking Renaissance Objects: Design Function and Meaning* (West-Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 11. This will be very important for establishing Cesare’s connection to Michelangelo, Raphael, and Signorelli, and to a slightly lesser degree Pinturicchio. It is also relevant to Leonardo da Vinci and the relationship that he developed with Machiavelli while the two men were at Cesare’s court.
will be paid to the years of Cesare’s life before 1492. The strong influence of his father during this period can be viewed as a prologue to the style that Cesare would develop as an adult, showing that Cesare was a product of his heritage, as well as highlighting the contrast to later years when he began to assert himself and his own style. One important source for his adolescence and of his early environments is the correspondences of the Medici family in which they describe the extravagant household Cesare maintained at the University of Pisa during the years he and Giovanni de’ Medici both studied there. An additional focal point of foundational influence is the opulence of Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia’s palace in Rome. Magnificence and Spanish manner dominate this stylistic period.

From 1493-1498 Cesare Borgia was a cardinal, a position which dictated much about his lifestyle: decorum, dress, and outward display of wealth. Both Cesare and his father exemplified the lifestyles encouraged by Paolo Cortesi, Leon Battista Alberti, and Giovanni Pontano in their respective treatises. Cesare had a palace in Rome and also lived in the apartments now decorated by Raphael’s Stanzas in the Vatican, the suite of rooms directly above his father’s. Records in the Vatican document payments for work done in this space, indicating that he made both structural and cosmetic changes while he lived there. During these years, Cesare’s growing importance afforded him the role as host of momentous events, such as the banquets held in honor of the second wedding of his sister Lucrezia Borgia, and provided opportunities for personalized patronage. Through the descriptions of such events we see a playful but deeply dynastic and iconographic visual program progressively develop. In this

---

4 Paolo Cortesi’s *De Cardinalatu* (1510), Leon Battista Alberti’s *De re aedificatoria* (c.1450), Giovanni Pontano’s *De Splendore* (1498) and *De Magnificentia* (1498).

5 Cesare’s palace in Rome was built in 1480 for Domenico della Rovere and is today called the Palazzo della Rovere or the Palazzo dei Penitenzieri, and is located on the Via della Conciliazione. It currently houses the headquarters of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem.
period he began to stage large scale public spectacles, including producing and participating in a bullfight, enlivened by extensive pageantry and the prominence of his sportsmanship in the drama.

The year 1498 marks the shift in Cesare’s life and patronage possibilities, when he was released from his ecclesiastical dignity and shortly after married into the French royal court. His exceptional and theatrical entrance parade in Chinon, France was famously documented by an ancestor of the French writer Brantôme. Most of these artistic props remained in France, and some are outlined in the inventory of the possessions of Cesare’s wife, Charlotte d’Albret.¹⁶ The inventory is decisive to our understanding of how Cesare constructed his persona during this time. The consequent influence of French style becomes a cause to be tracked, and its power is evident upon Cesare’s return to Rome in 1500 and the marked shift in presentation.

In 1500 Cesare became Gonfalonier and Captain General of the Papal Army and began to slowly accumulate power in the differential he shared with his father. During this time he refined the strong visual association with Julius Caesar that he had developed. This relationship played an important role in Cesare’s perception and projection of self, as demonstrated through decorations of personal property such as a sword and scabbard and a signet ring, as well as through public display and official seals. The particular scene of the Crossing of the Rubicon took on specific importance and was used repeatedly in his visual programs, as did the symbol of the hydra, an obscure reference to the ancient Julius Caesar.

Cesare’s love of spectacle was seen in numerous events during this period, including banquets, parades, bullfights, and the wedding entertainments for Lucrezia’s third marriage,

¹⁶ The Inventory of Charlotte d’Albret, 1AP, 555, La Trémoïlle chartrier Thouars, Archives nationales, Paris. It was consulted in March 2011 during the course of this research. For the complete contents of 1AP see Charles Samaran’s Archives de la Maison de La Trémoïlle.
during which Cesare staged dances and theatrical metaphorical presentations of the political arrangement. His growing confidence and place at the head of the Borgia dynasty is evident through these displays.

In 1501 and 1502, Cesare established his own court in Cesena, Italy, enlivened by artists, poets, and humanists. He employed Antonio di Sangallo il Vecchio, the architect associated with Civita Castellana and Forte Nettuno, two fortresses central to the transition between an older style and modern architectural adaptations to accommodate the new artillery used in warfare. Cesare also engaged Leonardo da Vinci as a military architect and engineer, during which time he sketched maps, fortifications, canals, weapons, curiosities, and personal devices, all recognizable images in Leonardo studies but rarely discussed in detail as the result of Borgia patronage. There are sketches for what might have become a portrait of Cesare in a seldom mentioned altarpiece in Piratello, Italy that Cesare also commissioned from the artist. The impact of Leonardo’s travels and the other individuals whom the artist came into contact with during this time will be discussed as well.

Machiavelli first met Cesare Borgia in 1502. Their dramatic first meeting, staged by Cesare, set the tone for Machiavelli’s powerful impression of him, an opinion delineated years later in *The Prince* and elaborated upon later in this work. The impact of their close friendship carries additional art historical force since it was in Cesare Borgia’s court that Machiavelli met Leonardo da Vinci. This relationship eventually resulted in the joint, although unrealized,

---

7 William Woodward, *Cesare Borgia*, (London: Chapman and Hall, LTD., 1913), 240-244. On June 24, 1502 Soderini and Machiavelli arrived in Urbino after being sent by the Ten, at Cesare’s request, to discuss the future relationship between his duchy and Florence. They arrived at Vespers (around 6pm) and were escorted by Cesare’s secretary, Agapito, and Francesco di Remolino, to their rooms and were told to wait for Cesare to summon them. They were called around 11pm to a room in the ducal apartments in the palace of Urbino where Cesare was waiting alone for them in a dimly lit, guarded and locked room. The meeting lasted for two hours. The two Florentines were called to to a second meeting the following evening. In the June 26th dispatch, written by Machiavelli and signed by Soderini, included, in part, in chapter 4, one can already sense the powerful impact that Cesare had made on Machiavelli. Machiavelli’s impression of Cesare as delineated in *The Prince* is discussed in chapters 4 and 5.
attempt made by Machiavelli and Leonardo to re-route the Arno River around Florence, thus influencing Leonardo’s return to that city in 1503, and in Leonardo’s commission from the Signoria to paint the great battle fresco in the Palazzo Vecchio. \(^8\) Similar peripheral links exist between Cesare and Michelangelo’s work in Sant’Agostino in Rome and the Piccolomini altarpiece in Siena, Pinturicchio and Raphael’s work in the Piccolomini Library frescos in Siena, and Signorelli’s frescos in the San Brizio chapel in the Duomo of Orvieto. This research marks the introduction of these relationships into the art historical conversation, influencing not only our understanding of Cesare as a patron but of Leonardo, Michelangelo, Pinturicchio, Raphael, and Signorelli as artists.

The years between 1503 and 1507 saw Cesare’s dramatic fall from power. With the untimely death of his father the pope in 1503, Cesare no longer fashioned himself from a position of authority, but from one of desperation and was ultimately not able to weather the political and papal tides. On October 29, 1503, Cesare, a number of cardinals who served his interests, and Giuliano della Rovere met to discuss the terms upon which Cesare, and those cardinals in his control, would support Giuliano’s election to the papacy. A signed agreement was made guaranteeing, in exchange for his election, that Giuliano would reaffirm Cesare’s position as the Gonfalonier and Captain General and would allow Cesare to keep his holdings in the Romagna. Giuliano was elected and became Pope Julius II on November 1, 1503. A short time later, on November 22\(^{st}\), Julius II ordered Cesare to give up his fortresses in the Romagna.

---

When Cesare refused the Pope ordered his arrest. Ultimately Cesare was exiled and he later died in 1507, a young man in his early thirties, fighting a regional skirmish in Spain.9

A valuable document from this period, Fileno dalla Tauta’s *Istoria di Bologna: origini-1521*, lists Cesare’s property when confiscated by the Bentivoglio of Bologna.10 This record of possessions demonstrates the magnificence that he projected through visual aesthetics and could offer enough detail to, in due course, track down those objects that once belonged to Cesare but whose provenance has been lost. The possibility of identifying and reanimating to their full historic value some of the objects listed in dalla Tuata’s account, as well as those listed in Cesare’s wife’s inventory, is a further avenue of research.

**Historical Literature on Cesare Borgia**

Most treatments of Cesare Borgia are biographies and primarily historical in their perspective. We are indebted to many of them as the sources and chronicles that provide the foundation of our understanding of his life, but many are also not without bias, misrepresentation, and skewed perspectives. Marino Sanuto (1466-1536), Paolo Giovio (1483/86-1552), Tomaso Tomasi (b.1608), and Alexander Gordon (c.1692-1755) are among those most known for this partiality.11 Michael Mallett commented on Sanuto’s interest in scandal: “Sanuto, the Venetian diarist, into whose vast collection went every scrap of rumour and gossip about the Borgias.”12 Paolo Giovio wrote of Cesare that: “in his bloody character and

---


pitiless cruelty can be likened to the ancient tyrants” and stated that he was born “of accursed seed.”13 Ivan Cloulas discusses Tomaso Tomasi’s work as being a product of the Counter-Reformation’s need to atone for the sins of the past, and that it “served this purpose by emphasizing humanity’s darker side.”14 J.N. Hillgarth’s article “The Image of Alexander VI and Cesare Borgia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” further elaborates on Tomasi’s motives. Tomasi was trying to align himself with Vittoria della Rovere, the wife of Ferdinando II of the Medici of Florence, and the last surviving relative of Pope Julius II, the enemy of the Borgia. Tomasi described Cesare as longing to “satiate himself with the blood of his enemies.”15 Alexander Gordon’s work, first published in 1761, was influenced by the 1696 Specimen Historiae Arcanae, sive anedotae de vita Alexandri VI Papae by Leibnitz which exclaimed: “there has never been a court more contaminated with crime than that of Alexander VI, where shamelessness, treachery, and cruelty were the rule—three capital vices, all three crowned by villainy and covered with the sacred veil of religion.”16 Of Cesare specifically Gordon said:

Cæsar Borgia, duke Valentine, notorious for duplicated fratricide and incest with his own sister, and who by perfurier, poison, and assassinations in destroying his enemies, showed himself a son worthy of such a father, though at last a memorable example to the world of the bad success which attended his crimes, having before his death been an exile, and a victim to public vengeance, and forced to renounce all that tyranny, which was so far from being commendable, that it ought to be utterly detested, let Machiavel’s opinion be what it will; so that what the ancients feigned about a perfect tragedy, divine Providence permitted to be exemplified in him.17

Others like Stefano Infessura, an associate of the Colonna family, whose work has been called historically unreliable by Rafael Sabatini and Mallett, and Francesco Matarazzo, a client of the Baglione labeled as inauthentic and inaccurate by Sabatini and Mallett, were broadly anti-papacy. Ferdinand Gregorovius was simply anti-Borgia. Ludwig Pastor disliked the Borgia but was not inaccurate in his reporting; he used a vast number of documents from the Vatican Archives. Peter de Roo wrote almost entirely from primary documents but was too lenient, omitting documents unfavorable to the family or to his desired narrative. Charles Yriarte, a French scholar who published numerous volumes on the Borgia in the late 19th century, and Mario Menotti, an Italian scholar who published in the early 20th century, are invaluable sources for accurate presentations of Cesare’s history but are flawed due to newly discovered and determined information. More modern authors such as Michael Mallet strived to simply explain the Borgia’s actions without critique or judgment. His work has been hailed alongside Ivan Cloulas’s and William Woodward’s as the most accurate biographies. Sarah Bradford and Gustavo Sacerdote’s books should be added to this list as well.

Cesare was and continues to be a controversial figure whose reputation is often intensely negative. One result of this reputation is that despite his tremendous influence in a monumental phase of history and the fact that some of the most important artists of the time sought, without

---


20 See Hillgarth’s article for more details regarding the historical views on Cesare Borgia.
vacillation, Cesare’s patronage and favor, Cesare is, through omission or diminution, presented as having contributed little to the development of the Renaissance and to Renaissance art.21

In his Lives of the Artists, Giorgio Vasari, influenced by the negative contemporary opinion of the Borgia, completely denies the relationship of both Pinturicchio and Leonardo to Cesare Borgia, in an attempt to preserve their standing—it is a tone that largely survives today.22 Pinturicchio, painter of the Borgia Apartments, member of both Alexander VI and Cesare’s courts, and an artist whose patronage was dominated by the Borgia, is usually represented in non-monograph texts by his work for Pope Pius II in the Library in Siena. For Leonardo da Vinci, even modern sources are filled with justifications and explanations of how a man believed to be gentle and caring could possibly have worked for a “ruthless warlord” like Cesare.23 Charles Nicholl, the author of that description of Cesare, felt the need to explain why Leonardo would have chosen to work for someone like Cesare, even mentioning Freud’s belief that Leonardo sought employment by strong men because he was seeking a substitute for his father who had been absent during the artist’s childhood.24 Kenneth Clark states that: “we notice one of the apparent contradictions of his nature. The famous military engineer, the inventor of

21 Ferdinand Gregorovius, Lucretia Borgia, according to original documents and correspondence of her day (New York: B. Bloom, 1968), 100. This research is not alone in its assertion that artists did not shy away from Cesare’s patronage. This idea is discussed in more detail in regards to Leonardo da Vinci and the fact that many scholars feel the need to explain why he would or would not have worked for Cesare willingly. See footnote 21.

22 Giorgio Vasari, The Lives of the Artists, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. It is not explicitly clear why Vasari does this but it is likely that he was influenced by the contemporary sentiment which was largely negative because of many things including the Borgia’s power and Spanish heritage. Cesare is not mentioned at all in the “Life” of Pinturicchio or Leonardo da Vinci. Interestingly, Vasari does mention the fact that Torrigiano Torriginai worked for Alexander VI and Cesare Borgia. Torrigiano was the sculptor who famously shattered Michelangelo’s nose with a punch while the two were working for the Medici in Florence. Vasari mentions the episode and paints Torrigiano as an envious and outmatched competitor to Michelangelo. It seems that Vasari didn’t care if Torrigiano suffered because of his association with the Borgia because he was already set up as a lesser counter-point to Michelangelo, Vasari’s penultimate artist. Torrigiano’s “Life” is in volume 4 of the 1912 Lives of the Most Eminent Painters Sculptors & Architects.


monstrous war-machines, the friend of Cesare Borgia, was by all accounts a man of unusual
tenderness, to whom the destruction of any living organism was repulsive.”

There seems to be a need to find a reason for the relationship instead of believing that Leonardo willingly entered into the service of someone whose character is perceived to be so divergent from his own.

The importance of their relationship is also marginalized by the shallow depth of examination offered in even the important work of Kenneth Clark and Martin Kemp, two of the leading art historians to work on Leonardo in the 20th and 21st centuries. In his 258 page work *Leonardo da Vinci*, Kenneth Clark dedicates what amounts to little over a page on Leonardo’s time with Cesare, mostly referencing historical events. In his 348 page work *Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvelous Works of Nature and Man*, Martin Kemp dedicates close to three pages of text to Leonardo’s time with Cesare, but he too focuses on historical context.

Scholars in areas outside of art history have studied the relationship between the two men in much greater detail. Ladislao Reti has published numerous works about the association of Cesare and Leonardo, but he is a scholar of Renaissance technology. Carlo Pedretti is another important scholar who examines this relationship but he is an Italian historian. In “To Begin,

25 Clark, *Leonardo da Vinci*, 200. Clark’s comment implies a close relationship between the two men as does Martin Kemp’s suggestion that Cesare’s charisma and powerful personality was something that would have been attractive to Leonardo. (Martin Kemp, *Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvelous Works of Nature and Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 218-219.) This need to explain why a person as gentle as Leonardo would have worked for someone evil as Cesare’s reputation has manifested in theories of outside political influence. Nicholl suggests, as do other scholars like Paul Strathern, that Leonardo was sent to work for Cesare as a form of diplomatic exchange between Cesare and Florence, and that Leonardo served as a spy in Cesare’s court, mentioned as “our man” in notations by Machiavelli. (Nicholl, *Leonardo da Vinci Flight of the Mind*, 344) The idea that he was asked to work for Cesare at the behest of the King Louis XII of France is also not uncommon.

26 Ibid, 171. Clark only specifically mentions the map of Imola, the sketch of Cesare in three views, and Leonardo’s time in Cesena where he designed “the canal to Porto Cesenatico and left numerous plans for fortifying the city.” His entry for 1502 in the list of dates reads: “With Cesare Borgia as his architect e ingegnero generale, maps. MS.L. At Urbino (30 July), Pesaro (1 August), Cesena (10 August), Porto Cesenatico (6 September).” Much more information is known about Leonardo’s movements and works during this time.


28 Refer to the bibliography for the specific works by Reti and Pedretti consulted in this research.
Continue and Complete: Music in the Wider Context of Artistic Patronage by Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) and the Hymn Cycle CS 15”, Stuart Robb, a music historian, suggests that Alexander VI has also been ignored despite the fact that his court was rich with notable artists and scholars, and he views his own research as a correction to the lack of directed study of Alexander’s cultural contributions.29 This dissertation is in part a companion piece to the valuable work that Robb has done, seeking to explore and acknowledge Cesare’s long-ignored art historical contributions.

There have been two Italian exhibitions, and auxiliary catalogues, that addressed the Borgia, including Cesare, as art historical figures, but their impact has remained largely regional. I Borgia, in 2002, was comprised largely of objects made during the time of Borgia prominence in Italy, which is necessary since very few tangible objects remain of their patronage, but nonetheless offers only limited understanding of their individual artistic spheres.30 Attention is divided between Calixtus III, Alexander VI, Lucrezia, and Cesare, which also limits the depth of the presentation. The second exhibition, 2003’s Leonardo Machiavelli Cesare Borgia: Arte Storia e Scienza in Romagna 1500-1503, which resulted in an exhibition catalogue of essays, was formed through a blend of perspectives—including art historical but predominantly historical and scientific.31 Although this is a valuable resource, the scope reflects only a small

29 Stuart Robb, “To Begin, Continue and Complete: Music in the Wider Context of Artistic Patronage by Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) and the Hymn Cycle CS 15” (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2011), 20-21. “For all the attention placed on political intrigue and despotic actions in which Alexander was involved, little investigation has been devoted to understanding the cultural and artistic elements of his reign. Research has shown that the papal court was a veritable hub of notable artists, scholars and musicians at the end of the fifteenth century. However, few studies have placed the patron of the papal court at the centre of a study. Indeed, even in musicology, studies of the singers, composers, musical institutions and their manuscripts have relegated Alexander to the role of a passing character, rather than as an important patron of the arts. Alexander VI’s papacy involves the support and patronage of many notable and important figures of the arts…This thesis seeks to present an investigation of Alexander’s artistic patronage, providing a context in which musical culture during his papacy may be understood.”

30 I Borgia (Milan: Electa, 2002).

facet and time period of Cesare’s patronage. A 2014-2015 exhibition in France at the Musée Maillol, Les Borgia et leur temps, was excellent but focused on the family as subject matter and as a historical reference point, not as patrons.

The most recent scholars to give genuine and extensive consideration to Cesare Borgia not historically but as a patron of the arts are Charles Yriarte and Mario Menotti. However salient these works are, they are still a century old and the discipline of art history has evolved, changing our understanding of the period and rendering that scholarship archaic. The material deserves to be viewed through the lens of contemporary information and methodologies. Art history is long overdue for a new appraisal.

In addition to the conventional consideration of paintings, sculptures, and architecture, this evaluation will respect the significance of patronage, self-fashioning, performance and the objects used in its service, splendor and magnificence, and ephemeral spectacle. A brief overview of their importance and impact will be given below so that the reader can bear them in mind as the main arguments, perspective, and contributions are discussed in the following chapters.

Patronage

Critical to this reassessment is the knowledge of the importance of the patron. Patronage studies has become a prominent field in art history, significant for its recognition that any art historical methodology that initiates examination at the artist fails to acknowledge and incorporate the active role played by the patron. Our understanding of a work of art must be bound both to the artist and to the person or people who were involved in issuing the commission.32 Dale Kent’s Cosimo de’ Medici and the Florentine Renaissance and Evelyn

Welch’s work on Visconti/Sforza Milan are just two examples of studies based upon the perspective that patrons were important driving forces behind many famous artists and art works in Renaissance Italy.\(^{33}\)

The acknowledgement of the patron had ancient roots in writers like Pliny and Cicero who felt that patrons should be given credit for recognizing genius and talent in the artists that they patronized. This idea was firmly entrenched in Italy by the 14\(^{th}\) and early to mid 15\(^{th}\) century. The patron played a significant role in determining form and content, and he often reaped the benefits of an artwork’s success.\(^{34}\) In this way, art, through artist selection, medium, size, setting, and subject can reveal a great deal about the individual for whom it was made and the expected outcome of its existence.\(^{35}\) Rulers knew the prestige that great court art and artists could bring so they were highly sought after commodities.

We see some patrons participating in what has been termed “meta-patronage,” using artists as props for the prestige of their own courts. This form of self promotion was exemplified by Lorenzo de Medici’s choice to send Leonardo da Vinci to Ludovico Sforza’s court in Milan as a token of political alliance.\(^{36}\) Cesare also utilized this form of patronage, using art as a form of diplomatic exchange, as will be discussed in regard to Isabella d’Este, but on a more

---

\(^{33}\) Dale Kent, *Cosimo de’ Medici and the Florentine Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). *Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan* is Evelyn Welch’s book that most closely matches this approach.


immediate and expansive scale, he employed art as form of visual communication, used in the fashioning of his desired identity.  

Elites needed to communicate status to advance and retain their own power and as a means to transmit power to future familiar generations. Investing in art, architecture, and visual displays helped accomplish this goal. The products of these commissions functioned as self-fashioning elements, acting as socially understood and accessible expressions of the patron’s interests, but more importantly their aspirations, eminence, wealth, and power. The patron is then, through his patronage, performing for an audience. In doing this patrons become creators with agency, artists of their own oeuvre comprised of the multi-sensory display through which they establish and negotiate their social and political identity.

**Self-fashioning and Presentation**

Self-fashioning, an idea introduced by Stephen Greenblatt, was a way of communicating and presenting an idea of oneself through socially understandable means, encompassing presentation, behavior, dress, and environment. The role of art in this largely historical and cultural theory is actually at its core; the things used in this type of presentation of self were

---

37 At her request, Cesare gave a Sleeping Cupid statue by Michelangelo to Isabella d’Este.

38 Nelson and Zeckhauser, *The Patron’s Payoff*, xiv. We will see Alexander VI do this with Cesare by letting him take center stage in the entertainments surrounding Lucrezia’s third wedding to Alfonso d’Este.


40 Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005). Greenblatt is a Professor of the Humanities in English Literature and his work is largely based on the use of text as a fashioning tool. However, it is also applicable to the visual culture of the Renaissance, and enriches our understanding of the function of art at the time. “In the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process…Self-fashioning is in effect the Renaissance…cultural system of meanings that creates specific individuals by governing the passage from abstract potential to concrete historical embodiment.”(2-4) The idea that self-fashioning occurs through the construction of an Other is also important. It reinforces the idea that these projections are dialogs that require a viewer to receive the performance and to reflect on what the performer is not. (9)
artistic creations. In addition to the academic triad of painting, sculpture, and architecture, costume, ephemeral events, performative spectacles, and the visual accoutrements that accompanied them were essential components. In order to fully appreciate the importance of this concept, one must recognize that, during the Renaissance, costume and ephemeral spectacles were of paramount importance and were created by the same artists that worked in the more traditional art historical mediums. Artists and patrons were products of their time and we must evaluate them by those standards, examining their respective contributions on a scale calibrated to what was valued and what forms of visual representation were at the fore at the time. This requires the inclusion of objects of virtue, furnishings and textiles, costume, and various types of staged events in any comprehensive analysis of a Renaissance figure’s art historical contributions.

Art was used in this “presentation of self in everyday life,” as Erving Goffman put it, as a means to convey subjects that were difficult to illustrate: elevated social status, wealth, power, morality, alliances, and devotions, to name only a few.41 Various guidebooks or manuals were written to help navigate the pitfalls of identity construction and playing one’s social role appropriately, including Paolo Cortesi’s De Cardinalatu (1510), Baldasar Castiglione’s Book of the Courtier (1528), Giovanni della Casa’s Galateo (1558), and The Civil Conversation by Stefano Guazzo (1574).42 Castiglione labels his own work as a description of “the form of courtiership most appropriate for a gentleman living at the Courts of princes.”43 He elaborates


on the importance of a graceful presentation to maintain the appearance of effortlessness and legitimacy:

Practice in all things a certain nonchalance which conceals all artistry and makes whatever one says or does seem uncontrived and effortless…true art is what does not seem to be art; and the most important thing is to conceal it, because if it is revealed this discredits a man completely and ruins his reputation.\(^{44}\)

Impression management was decisive to constructing and maintaining the desired identity.

Important figures lived their entire lives on display, constantly barraged by the judgment of others, not only during important public moments, but also in their everyday routines.\(^{45}\) Even in private spaces they were always observed and had to be constantly vigilant about their presentation. Only in the most intimate of circumstances or circles would they let their guard or performance down.\(^{46}\) The utilization of the “theater state” was ever-present in the manipulation of public opinion and was continuously reinvented through performance.\(^{47}\) Much of this representation was not viewed as a static image but as a presentation of narrative.\(^{48}\) The image or representation, be it figurally or symbolically illustrative of the individual, is performative.

---

\(^{44}\) Ibid, 67.


\(^{46}\) Machiavelli seems to have been an example of that intimate company for Cesare. Perhaps this exclusive access to both the joy and depression of Cesare’s changing condition, when joined with the extraordinary political persona that he executed, is what impressed Machiavelli so much.

\(^{47}\) Crane, *The Performance of Self*, 4. The term “theater state” comes from Clifford Geertz who discussed the idea of a political state focused on ritual and artful imaging through spectacle as opposed to forceful governance or effective administration in his work *Negara: The Theater State in Nineteenth-Century Bali*. In the case of Geertz’s state in Bali, the spectacle was the function of the government not the other way around so in that way it is not wholly applicable to Renaissance Italy’s use of visual effect in the service of the state. But the emphasis on and understanding of the impact these events were capable of producing is related to Geertz’s ‘theater state’. Geertz stated: “The state ceremonies…were metaphysical theatre: theater designed to express a view of the ultimate nature of reality and, at the same time, to shape the existing conditions of life to be consonant with that reality; that is, theater to present an anthology and, by presenting it, to make it happen – make it actual.” Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theater State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 104.

The most effective ones are adaptable and will continue to convey messages across time and changes in political climates.

Jacob Burckhardt titled part one of *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* as “The State Becomes a Work of Art,” and though he was not using the phrase to refer to the visual component of the mechanics of power, it is nonetheless an accurate description. That same power, however, does not distinguish between the real and the ideal, and the art it produces not only reflects definitive political messages, but constructs ideologies as well. It recalls the idea that visual representations can be converted into conceived realities. Peter Burke has produced a number of books on this subject, the most relevant being *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, which is a focused examination of how one ruler used the production and reception of visual symbolic form to address the metaphorical image of the king as projected by various media, texts, and visual performances. Burke’s purpose is to view the image as a whole, including all modes of communication used at the time to fashion an identity. He considers the art of power and the relationship between the two—how art was used in the “making of great men.” This research has a similar aim, though seeking to focus on non-text based media.

These images or representations of people were not considered imitations of reality but as elements of reality itself. In her work *Hollow Men: Writing, Objects and Public Image in Renaissance Italy*, Susan Gaylard coins what she calls the “monumental pose”: “a rhetorical stance…that demanded and authorized an outward projection of authority, which might or might not coincide with some inner sentiment.” Gaylard furthers this position by relating it to

---


Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood’s ideas on the anachronic nature of material artifacts and their participation in the past, “sometimes fictive original.”52 The use by Renaissance rulers of long established social cues and references to ancient individuals participates in the same type of “self-conscious substitution-performance tension.”53

Performance

The idea that objects and people are performing is critical to a comprehensive understanding of how art was used in the Renaissance context. In her book The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity During the Hundred Years War, Susan Crane discusses performance as an important part of postmodern scholarship, calling it “an immensely compelling act at the intersection of agency and prescription, innovation and memory, self and social group.”54 As a communicative behavior, it is an important source for our understanding of someone’s conception of self, the playing of social roles, and identity construction.55 Goffman defines performance as “all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants.”56 It is important to note that the umbrella of the performance is extended to cover anything environmental that was controlled, crafted, or designed by the patron or under his authority that would contribute to the desired influence. This would include the setting on which the human interaction was played out: the architecture,

52 Ibid, 4.

53 Ibid.

54 Crane, The Performance of Self, 3.

55 Ibid.

56 Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, 15. Goffman (1922-1982) was a professor of sociology and anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Pennsylvania. He published groundbreaking works which examined social interactions, using the theory of stage performance to analyze everyday human behavior. His perspective is commonly called symbolic interactionist. He believed that even the most mundane encounters were performances, staged to project certain ideas of self to an audience and to maintain them. This was the perpetual state of people when they were in public, only relaxing the performance when they were behind closed doors.
furniture, decoration, staging, and ambiance of the space.\textsuperscript{57} Often the identity that is being performed is not a true representation of self, but is a conception of the ideal version of oneself deemed necessary by the situation, short or long term. It is a mimesis of an ideal. Because it is performed so often, in time it becomes second nature and eventually an ingrained self-fulfilling concept.\textsuperscript{58}

Performances must be highly controlled and cannot fall subject to the corporal ups and downs of moods; the deliberate character is a designed representation of our desired selves and is not subject to whimsical flux.\textsuperscript{59} Diligent maintenance and attentiveness to each element was the only way to ensure that the message was managed. Goffman emphasizes the power that performance has to convince the audience that the staged reality is in fact real reality, and discusses the importance of the observer taking seriously the impression before them.\textsuperscript{60} He states that there is a danger of others perceiving that you are trying to influence them in a particular way.\textsuperscript{61} The earlier quote from Castiglione reveals that Renaissance figures were concerned with the same negative outcome.

In their book \textit{The Patrons Payoff: Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance}, Jonathan K. Nelson and Richard J. Zeckhauser apply game theory to this issue. They describe game theory as one which “focuses on how people behave in interactive situations, in which one person’s payoff depends on the behavior of another individual or group.”\textsuperscript{62} In this case, the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{57} Ibid, 22-24.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Ibid, 19-20.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 56-57.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Ibid, 17.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Ibid, 6.
\item \textsuperscript{62} Nelson and Zeckhauser, \textit{The Patron’s Payoff}, 7.
\end{itemize}
players in the game are the patrons, artists, and audience—all of whom must constantly keep in mind the benefits, cost, and constraints of each commission. Goffman speaks to this subject as well:

Regardless of the particular objective which the individual has in mind and of his motive for having this objective, it will be in his interests to control the conduct of the others, especially their responsive treatment of him. This control is achieved largely by influencing the definition of the situation which the others comes to formulate, and he can influence this definition by expressing himself in such a way as to give them the kind of impression that will lead them to act voluntarily in accordance with his own plan.

It should be acknowledged that performance does not occur in a vacuum, and just as the audience is evaluating a portrayal, they too are acting in their own production. The difficulty in staging a very specific performance, powerful enough to require no edits, or the ability to make real-time, subtle, audience specific manipulations, make a successful performance all the more impressive.

There has been an important shift in art history’s examination of art as something that contains its own intrinsic meaning, to the idea that meaning is produced by an interaction with a beholder, where the specific act of viewing plays a significant role in individual and collective identity formation. However true this may be, it is not enough to say that the meaning of a piece is created once a dialogue with a viewer has begun. It is critical to understand that the work was intended to be a communicative piece from its conception by the patron. If we don’t acknowledge that the exchange was deliberate and that an attempt was made to control the result of the exchange then we are missing a significant part of why art is important and what it can tell

63 Ibid.
64 Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, 3-4.
us, as well as denying the patron an important voice. The understanding of this is foundationally vital to recognizing the value of the patron and the performative nature of the objects and events that were created at their request.

**Objects and Events Used in Performance**

The objects that artists were creating for these conversational performances were vastly divergent. They were tailored for individual audiences and for varying purposes. They were at times narcissistic and false projections of ideology, and at others culturally necessary representations of the hierarchy of power; some were large scale projects or highly visible public works, and others were household objects or personal identifying emblems. In certain circumstances, the objects were created to simply exist as statements of power. Even though actual viewing was restricted, there was a belief that through merely existing, a projection was made.\(^6^6\) An inscribed signet ring that belonged to Cesare is an example of this. The phrase on the inner band, “Fais ce que dois advienne que pourra” (Do what thou must, come what will), had an intensely important meaning and served as a component of his overall public association with authority, but he was the only person who would ever see it.\(^6^7\) The purpose of its presence plays into the principal that identities are both material and conceptual constructions.\(^6^8\) Knowing that it was there was an ever-present reminder that helped convince Cesare, as would be the case with other patrons, that his projection was a reality—Goffmann’s idea that the mask becomes second nature.\(^6^9\)


\(^{67}\) Albert Hartshorne, "The Signet Ring of Cæsar Borgia," *The Connoisseur An Illustrated Magazine For Collectors, Notes and Queries* 18 (May-August, 1907), 59. This ring is discussed in greater detail in chapter 4: The Prince.

\(^{68}\) Crane, *The Performance of Self*, 1.

This ring is an important example of how objects outside of the triad functioned within the Renaissance framework of art. Although paintings, sculpture, and architecture served in the roles of the more highly visible, long term, and monumental representations, other objects like costume, objects of virtue, and ephemeral events worked as companion pieces of equal importance, in message making. These non-canonical objects (ephemeral events being included in the term “objects”) can elucidate the intentions behind the commissioning and acquisition of more traditional media, and they are essential to an accurate understanding of the Renaissance and its artistic history. A softening of the convention that separates the “fine” arts from “decorative,” craft, or functional art as well as spectacle, will allow us to form a better understanding of the broader place of art in the early modern world.\(^\text{70}\) All objects, tangible and evanescent, are primary documents, still projecting and performing information about the people and places associated with them.\(^\text{71}\) They are ideas manifested in material form.\(^\text{72}\) We must acknowledge their value and the prominent place they should hold in any examination of a patron’s or artist’s oeuvre.

Art in this period often served larger objectives. Excellence in material and skill in execution were utilized to achieve the desired outcome most effectively.\(^\text{73}\) The use of respected artists has already been discussed, but material value and the perception of the expense as happening without financial fatigue was of equal importance.


\(^{72}\) Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis, introduction to *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London: V&A Publications, 2006), 28.

\(^{73}\) Marina Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 79. Belozerskaya is a valuable source for understanding the important role of luxury arts during the Renaissance. Anyone seeking to learn more on the subject should also read her book *Luxury Arts in the Renaissance*. 
Domestic objects were a great part of this outlay, as were the necessary settings for entertainments that took place in the household. Of these, plate and other gold works were the most valuable. They marked their owners as economically and culturally superior as well as provided tangible evidence of their social status and power.\textsuperscript{74} At times these inanimate objects served as representations or surrogates for the patron.\textsuperscript{75} In his absence, Cesare was represented by his elaborate gold throne in a parade in Cesena, Italy on June 24, 1503.\textsuperscript{76} Medals, coats of arms, seals, banners, personal devices and \textit{imprese}, and mottos were also commonly used in this way, often serving as the most ubiquitous visual forms of basic identity management and political authority.\textsuperscript{77} Personal devices became increasingly important at this time.\textsuperscript{78} In addition to their large public use and appearance of seals and coats of arms, they were often worn on berets at ear level, as is seen in a supposed portrait of Cesare by Altobello Melone.\textsuperscript{79} (Figure 1-1) All presentations were carefully customized to the viewing audience: public or elite, temporary or permanent, immediate or lasting, fixed or changing.\textsuperscript{80} In crafting these visual performances,

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid, 79, 84.

\textsuperscript{75} Burke, \textit{The Fabrication of Louis XIV}, 9.

\textsuperscript{76} Giuliano Fantaguzzi, \textit{Caos}, ed. Michele Andrea Pistocchi (Rome: Instituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 2012), 309. “QUESTO ANNO IN CESENA, EL DI DE SAN IOVANNO BATISTA, IN PIAZZA A LA PRESENTIA DEL PRESIDENTE ET DE TUTTI LI DOCTURI DELLA RODA IN SU LA SEDIA ALTISSIMA DE PIU GRANDI DORATA, PINTA E ORNATA DE LA ROTA E TUTTO EL POPULLO DE CESENA FO FATE A LA PRESENTIA MOLTE REPRESENTAZIONE IN LAUDE DEL DUCA VALENTINO, ZO FO DE SA FRANCESCO SU LE CARRA E CONTRAFATTI MOLTI MARTIRI E IOVE SU UNO TORO E EUROPA ET UNO CARRO TRIUMPHALE DE CESARO E CLEOPATRA DE FANZULLE E FANZULLI, MOLTO BELLO. E RECETARNE TANTO BENE LI LOR VERSI CHE PIANSE ‘L PRESIDENTE E LI CIRCONSTANTI DE TENEREZA.” The room where the throne was usually housed is in the Rocca Malatestiana in Cesena. Today the room is part of a museum that showcases the history and agriculture of the region.

\textsuperscript{77} Evelyn Welch, \textit{Art in Renaissance Italy} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 215.


\textsuperscript{79} Lia Pierotti-Cei, \textit{Life in Italy During the Renaissance}, trans. Peter J. Tallon (Italy: Liber, 1987), 40.

\textsuperscript{80} Evelyn Welch, \textit{Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6.
the patron would consider the reaction of the audience and understand that those of varying levels of sophistication would receive the message differently.81

Costume and corporal presentation were other critical components in the fashioning of Renaissance identities and performance. In the Renaissance the term “fashion” referred to how things were made, which conflates with the idea that “clothes make the man”.82 This was often the literal case in that getting invested with or donning the appropriate garments or accessories established someone’s rank. A man’s costume was an animated object often viewed as a visual visiting card, indicating to others around him his rank, level of approachability, cultured tastes, and wealth.83 It was believed that appearance mirrored character, so dress, acting as a material mnemonic device, provided general social context clues that allowed observers to form and retain generalized notions regarding the wearer.84 Majesty, the external manifestation of an inner dignity, was an important part of this construct.85 Great attention was paid to outfitting oneself and retinue with the appropriate costume. Cesare was known to study the tailoring, color, and fabric of his clothes as well as the often precious accessories that adorned them.86

Splendid attire had the ability to transform the wearer visually and psychologically. It was an essential avenue for the performance of self, important especially in the convincing of oneself so that others might believe the projection. Clothing is the costume that the Renaissance man

83 Pierotti-Cei, *Life in Italy During the Renaissance*, 34.
donned to play the role required by his stage-managed identity. The expenditure on clothing was tremendous but patrons were willing to spend it because of the high yield results.

**Splendor and Magnificence**

The term used by Italians to describe the aim of the lavish expenditure on their household, furnishings, and personal adornment was *splendore*, stressing beauty and care in one’s self and surroundings. It was also associated with the ritual of the appropriately ostentatious entertainments that took place in the domestic space. This ideal was codified in Giovanni Pontano’s 1498 work *De Splendore* (On Splendor). A second 1498 work by Pontano, *De Magnificentia* (On Magnificence), also dealt with expenditure on a striking scale. These works discuss the “conspicuous consumption” made famous and criticized by Thorstein Veblan in his work *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, but while Veblan found that level of unnecessary spending deplorable, other scholars like Burke, who applied Veblan’s 19th century theory to 17th century Italy, approached the expenditure from a view that the affectation was necessary and purposed. This form of costly consumption was in and of itself a fashioning device.

The term magnificence was derived from Aristotle who defined the virtue as expenditure on a scale commensurate with status.

A magnificent man…has the capacity to observe what is suitable and to spend large sums with good taste. For as we said at the outset, a characteristic is defined by its activities and by its objects…A magnificent man will spend amounts of money of this kind because it is noble to do so…He will try to find out how to achieve the most noble and suitable result rather than how much it will cost him and how it can

---

87 Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, introduction to *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, 14.


be done cheaply…The most valuable possession is the most costly such as gold, but the most valued achievement or result is one that is great and noble: to look at it will be to admire it, and what is magnificent is admirable…In private affairs, magnificence is shown in those expenditure which are made only once – e.g., a wedding and the like, and anything of interest to the whole city or to eminent people – and also in receiving and taking leave of foreign quests…It is also typical of a magnificent man to furnish his house commensurate with his wealth – for it, too, is a kind of ornament – and to prefer spending his money on works that endure, they are the noblest.91

The early 1300’s saw a rebirth of the ancient idea of magnificence, and by the quattrocento, it was an entrenched element in visual display, particularly in secular courts.92 This level of magnificence required constant maintenance which was facilitated by a vast number of laborers. These court figures and artists had varying levels of status and often fluid definitions.93 Although all were critical, the *familiares* was considered of particular esteem.

Courts were in a state of continuous display and never-ending visual posturing using the senses to speak a language of power. They waged war for artistic and cultural dominance, a competition of intangibles that resulted in concrete political effect, most often manifesting in an extravagantly equipped retinue and in a great *palazzo(i)*.94 The level of expenditure associated with magnificence was possible for only an elite few.95 In the cost-benefit analysis the cost must be excessive to the point of distressing finances or the display is not impressive. It must be participation prohibitive.96

---

94 Ibid, 9-10, 18.
96 Ibid, 37.
Splendor and magnificence required a delicate balance of carefully determined expenses and luxurious objects or events styled to convey the desired message to the appropriate audience. Different viewers had different abilities to understand and decipher complex messages, and all levels of attendance needed to be catered to.\(^7\) The dance of display was elaborate and the well crafted visual choreography was essential for keeping on point. In 1552, Alessandro Piccolomini wrote a treatise on magnificence that offers a Renaissance perspective on Aristotle’s belief:

Only someone who makes great things while spending could be properly called ‘magnificent’…building of temples, porticoes, and theaters…public festivals and comedies…could show itself on private occasions, which happen seldom, such as weddings, parties, banquets, receptions of distinguished guests, expenditures on town and country residences, domestic ornaments and furnishings, and other similar things where one can see sumptuousness and grandness.\(^8\)

**Ephemeral Events and Spectacle**

The inclusion of ephemeral events such as festivals, weddings, and banquets in Piccolomini’s statement is noteworthy. Although, as previously stated, these forms of visual display are not commonly discussed in traditional art historical discourse, they are important elements in artistic patronage and self-fashioning strategies. Rebecca Zorach discusses the importance of time-based art in the introduction to *Renaissance Theory* and challenges art historians to search for and acknowledge its existence during the Renaissance.\(^9\) In asking this,

\(^7\) Ibid, 73.

\(^8\) Ibid, 69.

\(^9\) Rebecca Zorach, “Renaissance Theory: A Selective Introduction,” in *Renaissance Theory*, ed. James Elkins and Robert Williams (New York: Routledge, 2008), 12, 21. Performance, ephemeral movement as form, is an unquestioned component of the contemporary art world, but we see this introduction of time-based and performance art as a substantial change from what came before (Ibid, 16). Zorach suggests that is inaccurate and that performance and ephemeral art did exist in the Renaissance. She remarks on art history’s return to the study of media outside of Vasari’s academic triad, but acknowledges that thus far we have not projected performance as an artistic form back into the Renaissance (Ibid, 7). She cites the cause as our desire to find the roots of modernism in the Renaissance, and since modernism did not include performance, we have not sought to find it in the 15\(^{th}\) and 16\(^{th}\) centuries. There are certainly complicated questions to consider that will not be born out during this dissertation but are worthy of being kept in mind: Who or what constituted the performance? Who was the actor, artist, or spectator? (Ibid, 25).
she is not attempting to simply broaden the definition of artistic production in the period; she sees an advanced understanding of festival and other ephemeral, performed events as contributing to our collective knowledge of how art is used as a communicative form. For those objects that we can both see or must visually reconstruct through textual description, it is important to remember that they were, “given shape and significance by complex scenes of social and cultural performance” and that “objects were thus both performed and performing.”

Some scholars like Ernst Gombrich, Erwin Panofsky, and Edgar Wind felt that ephemeral events fall outside of art history and are better served by visual culture or anthropology. However, because the same artists who created the great masterworks in paint and stone were responsible for much of the visual display in these events, any truly representative discussion of a patron’s or an artist’s oeuvre must include them, thusly so must art history as a discipline.

The study of Renaissance festivals and ephemeral spectacle developed in the mid 20th-century, emerging from the growing interest in a social science perspective of the past, the inclusion of self-fashioning in the discourse, and a shift of focus back to elite cultures. Although the Renaissance festival had medieval roots, it grew into something visually and purposefully different. Medieval festival was largely grounded in an ecclesiastical framework, and although its residual effects were very present in the Renaissance progeny, the 15th-17th century versions, which became spectacular displays of political power, were highly influenced

100 Ibid, 22-23.
101 Ibid, 7.
102 On page 193 of “The Art Seminar”, chapter in the 2008 book Renaissance Theory, James Elkins referred to studies that focus on performative events as being outlier(s), a term used by statisticians to refer to a point on a bell curve that lies at a marked distance from the mean. Although these outliers might be considered fringe by some, he offers Claire Farago’s work as an example of an established and respected scholar working in that realm, that at times have a great impact and introduce significant consequences to the center.
by the classical world. The basis for the escalation of theatrical effect was taken from Aristotle’s ideas of magnificence in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and the Vitruvian theory of stage spectacle.\textsuperscript{104} A holdover from the medieval practice was the tournament or public entertainment, and although it was adapted to the changing tastes and needs of the ruling class, it remained a prominent part of Renaissance display.

Ceremonies and spectacles were important because, not only were they demonstrations of power, but they were part of the process by which power structures were realized. Ceremonies included coronations, anointings, solemn entries, marriages, and funerals, and spectacles were theatrical events like tournaments and public entertainments, often with themes about the nature of power and bringing order out of chaos.\textsuperscript{105} Although divided, both categories are performances in their own way.

The ruling classes spent extravagantly on spectacles, using them as superbly contrived instruments of political and social exchange.\textsuperscript{106} They were power manifested as art, asserting a manufactured control over nature and the future. Upon their execution they were cohesive artistic statements, comprised of multi-faceted displays of art, permanent and temporary architecture, music, theater, martial display, costume, dancing, and feasting, all associated with the appropriate and public exhibition of magnificence and self-imaging.\textsuperscript{107}

Their ephemeral nature has commonly been misconceived as an indication of a trivial significance, but this could not be

\textsuperscript{104} Strong, *Splendor at Court*, 21, 72.


\textsuperscript{106} Millard F. Rogers, JR., preface to *Italian Renaissance Festival Designs* (Madison: Elvehjem Art Center, University of Wisconsin, 1973), 5.

\textsuperscript{107} Strong, *Splendor at Court*, 21, 76.
further from the truth. The transmutative nature of spectacle made it a powerful force.

Burke stated that in the performance of personal and court identities, “the mobilization of arts in an attempt to persuade” was at its greatest in the form of court festivals, events, and spectacle.

Festivals visualized the social temperament of the moment, offering previously untapped insight into the cultural forces that drove all art production. Festival designers [festaiuoli] were often multi-faceted artists, skilled in painting and architecture and knowledgeable about ancient traditions and humanism, into whose care the overall design and messaging of an event was issued. The interactive nature of their craft provided them with a particular avenue of proximity and access to their patrons that many other art forms did not. The result of this immediacy would indicate that these events could be viewed as more personal, inclusive representations of a patron’s fashioning model, although the diverse nature of the presentation does require a more expansive examination. Many major artists served as festaiuoli, including Baldassare Peruzzi, Raphael, Giorgio Vasari, and Leonardo da Vinci. They were responsible for the overall visual effect and the people’s reception of the desired impression.

All forms of art were employed in the service of the spectacle; painting, temporary architecture, sculpture, costume, armor, tapestries, furniture, banners, music, dance, culinary art,

---


110 Peter Burke, The Italian Renaissance Culture and Society in Italy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 139.

111 Strong, Splendor at Court, 16.


114 Blumenthal, Italian Renaissance Festival Designs, 9.
fireworks, and other more specialized disciplines. In addition to being the festaiuoli, we know that important artists were responsible for the execution of the objects used as elements in the display. They too were highly respected and well paid by the patron.\footnote{Jeffrey Kent Morehead, “Leonardo da Vinci’s Festa del Paradiso: Pagentry and Politics,” (Master’s Thesis, University of South Carolina, 2008), 21.} For the court of Ferrara, Dosso Dossi was:

Producing the works expected of most Italian Painters of the period: large-scale decoration, easel pictures both large and small, and portraits. In addition, he was responsible for much of the display that surrounded the pleasures and pageantry of a glittering Renaissance court, and accounts show that he and his team of assistants were ceaselessly employed in such varied activities as the design of theater sets and tapestries, the provision of banners for trumpets and flags for ships, the gilding of woodwork in the duke’s private apartments, and the polychroming and varnishing of carriages.\footnote{Peter Humfrey, “Dosso Dossi: His Life and Works,” in \textit{Dosso Dossi: Court Painter in Renaissance Ferrara}, ed. Peter Humfrey and Mauro Lucco (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 3.}

In 1515 while Cardinal Giulio de Medici was preparing for a meeting between Leo X and Francis I, a painter wrote to him asking to be selected:

For the painting of arms, standards and whatever other paintings in the residential palace of the above-said most reverend lordship or governor. And for the paintings of the banners of trumpets, flags, pennants, and the papal arms, and those of the legate, and other paintings on the gates of the city of Bologna and other different paintings in various public places.\footnote{Sheryl Reiss, “Per haveri tutte le opere … da Monsignore Rev.mo: Artists Seeking the Favor of ‘Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici,” in \textit{Possessions: Renaissance Cardinals: Rights and Rituals}, ed. Mary Hollingsworth and Carol Richardson (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 118.}

The artist viewed the opportunity to paint these temporary props as an honor, knowing their importance and value; his petition was granted.\footnote{Ibid.} An artist’s success at these tasks could also lead to other commissions by the same important patrons, so their role as vehicles to more
permanent, visible, and professionally impactful creations should be underscored.\textsuperscript{119} In 1476 Botticalli painted the standard of Giuliano de’Medici for a joust.\textsuperscript{120} While in Verocchio’s workshop, both the master and his assistant Leonardo da Vinci worked on spectacles, carnival masks, disguises, and stage sets for the festivities surrounding Lorenzo de’Medici’s rise to the head of the family in 1469.\textsuperscript{121} In Milan, for Ludovico Sforza, Leonardo and Bramante worked together on wedding festivities and the general pageantry of court. Leonardo is known to have also designed stage sets and costumes, most famously for the \textit{Festa del Paradiso}. Leonardo’s notebooks include references to some of these works; sketches for temporary architecture are found on MS \textit{B 28v}.\textsuperscript{122} There are certainly others that remain unidentified.

Temporary architectural elements [\textit{apparati}] were critical aids in the production and physical movement of ephemeral spectacles, and extraordinary sums were spent on the erection of the often very elaborate structures. Triumphal arches, one principle type of these \textit{apparati}, were constructed of wood and plaster, made by court artists in the weeks and months leading up to an event. (Figure 1-2) When in place during the event they were nodes of interactions, often featuring living interactive tableaux that caused the viewer to pause and engage for an extended

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{119} Bonnemaison and Macy, Introduction to \textit{Festival Architecture}, 1.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{120} Motture and O’Malley, \textit{Re-thinking Renaissance Objects}, 17.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{122} Morehead, \textit{Leonardo da Vinci’s Festa del Paradiso}, 1, 22. The \textit{Festa del Paradiso} took place in 1490 in the Sala Verde of the Castello Sforzesco in Milan. The text of the play was provided by Bernardo Bellincioni and the set designs were made by Leonardo. The event was requested by Ludovico il Moro to honor Isabella d’Aragona the wife of Gian Galeazzo Sforza, the rightful Duke of Milan. Ludovico had a complicated relationship with Isabella and Gian Galeazzo since he wanted to be the ruler of Milan but did not have a rightful claim to the title. He served as Gian Galeazzo’s regent and it has been speculated that Ludovico was responsible for Gian Galeazzo’s early death in 1494.
\end{flushleft}
period of time. They were used most commonly during triumphal entries or official parades, modeled after those described in the reliefs and writings of the ancient Romans.

Because so little remains from these types of events, a full understanding of the impact on the viewer can be hard to envision. Although it lacks the auditory component, throngs of spectators that crowded the streets, and the electricity of a large scale spectacle, a brilliant digital recreation of what the staging for Pope Leo X’s 1515 entry into Florence would have looked like was included in the 2013 exhibition *Nelle splendore mediciò Papa Leone X e Firenze* held at the Cappelle Medicee. Giorgio Vasari’s 1556-61 painting *Triumphal Entry of Leo X into Florence, 1515* visually describes the same event although it does not pay the temporary architecture due justice. (Figure 1-3)

Jacob Burkhard remarked that temporary architecture “deserves a chapter to itself in the history of art.” Despite the fact that throughout the history of architecture, temporary structures played a significant and large role, they have still remained marginalized in academic work. Art historians pay great attention to the grand palazzi designed by and made for important figures, but as Evelyn Welch shows in regard to the court building in Milan, they were often shells used to house the real visual statements, spectacular events. Families and rulers needed places to hold exhibitions of their power.

---


125 The event is also described in an essay in the exhibition catalog by Ilaria Ciseri, “‘Con tanto grandissimo e trionfante onore’ Immagini dall’ingresso fiorentino di papa Leone X nel 1515.”

126 Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc.), 245.


The banquets held in these *palazzi* were among these demonstrative ephemeral arts. (Figure 1-4) They were often part of larger scale celebrations like weddings or state visits. The expense of the food was an impressive statement of wealth, but the display and pageantry of the service was also considered. Rooms were staged with expensive works of art, plate and tapestries, and the food was often formed into impressive figures or scenes made from food. The visual affair was of equal concern to taste. To heighten the display for his wedding to Eleonora of Aragon in 1473, Ercole d’Este had a set of silver serving dishes designed by a well known painter and made for the occasion.

Banquets were often accompanied by interludes of theatrical performance. They were usually allegorical representations of court life or of those families showcased during the occasion. This was common practice at weddings where classical mythology and metaphor was used to explore the ideas of love, conquest, and union. The performances were themselves punctuated by musical interludes [*intermezzi*] which involved themed music, dancing, stage sets, and costumes. (Figures 1-5, 1-6) We will see Cesare hosting these events for his sister Lucrezia Borgia’s second and third weddings. The sound of court was not just a decorative or aural complement; it helped to define and disperse the desired image of the ruler, becoming an emotional form of propaganda. The dance masters and musicians that were part of this facet were highly paid intimate members of court.

---

131 Hollingsworth, *Patronage in Renaissance Italy*, 207.
133 Blumenthal, *Italian Renaissance Festival Designs*, 68.
accompany the lute indicates the overlap that frequently existed between the different components of the overall artistic presentation.

All of these elements played into the idea of the state as social theater, a carefully crafted performance used by rulers to fashion their own and familial identities. Guy DeBord acknowledges the power of spectacle to submiss all other forms of communication in his work *The Society of the Spectacle*. These selected theses from the 221 that fill his book offer the most insight into why spectacle and performative events were so prevailing in the Renaissance self-fashioning arsenal, and why their presence in this examination of the self-fashioning of Cesare Borgia’s identity through a patronage oeuvre is necessary.

The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images.

The specialization of power, is at the root of the spectacle. The spectacle is thus a specialized activity which speaks for all the others. It is the diplomatic representation of hierarchic society to itself, where all other expression is banned.

The spectacle presents itself as something enormously positive, indisputable and inaccessible…The attitude that it demands in principle is passive acceptance which in fact it already obtained by its manner of appearing without reply, by its monopoly of appearance.

---

135 See Welch, “Painting as Performance in the Italian Renaissance Court,” 20 for the idea of the state as social theater.

136 Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1983). Guy Debord (1931-1994) was a French Marxist associated with Lettrist International and Situationalist International, groups interested in the urban landscape and with the everyday experience. A goal of the Situationalist International was to blend art and culture with common life. *The Society of the Spectacle*, published in 1967, was his foremost work.

137 Ibid, 1.4.

138 Ibid, 1.23.

139 Ibid, 1.12.
The spectacle is the existing order’s uninterrupted discourse about itself, its laudatory monologue.¹⁴⁰

The spectacle subjugates living men to itself.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 1.24.
¹⁴¹ Ibid, 1.16.
CHAPTER 2
EARLY LIFE AND INFLUENCES

The ornament and hope of the house of Borgia, the illustrious Caesar, whose love of letters foretells the greatness that is to be his

—Paolo Pompilio
Symbolica, 1488

Cesare Borgia was born in Italy around 1475, one of the four famous children of Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia and Vannozza Cattanei. Rodrigo was elected to the papacy in 1492 and took

---

1 John Leslie Garner, Cesare Borgia: A Study of the Renaissance (New York: McBride, Nast & Company, 1912), 67. Paolo Pompilio (1455-1491) was a Roman humanist and poet. The Symbolica was a work on rhetoric and Pompilio chose to dedicate the work to Cesare Borgia. Pompilio was an early tutor of Cesare’s. The dedication is important because it shows the high opinion that Cesare’s contemporaries had of him. It is certainly exaggerated to provide the necessary flattery to an important figure but it should not be discounted as completely false. Pompilio was part of the Roman Academy, a group of humanists and scholars that thought highly of the Borgia family. The dedication is included in full on Sacerdote, Cesare Borgia, 80. It reads: “A Cesare Borgia protontario della Sede Apostolica saluti di Paolo Pompilio – Quali grazie posso io rendere a te, o chiarissimo Cesare Borgia? Si celebri pure come ò di festa questo fausto giorno, enl quale solo per amore tuo viene alla luce quest’opera, se qualcosa vale il nostro giudizio, ultissima alla prosperità generale. In questo libro noi insegniamo in che maniera si possa scrivere un carme, esplorando e manifestando tutti i segreti dell’arte metrica. Lavoro certamente a te piacevolissimo, quando avrai letto in San Girolamo che anche gran parte delle Sacre Scritture è scritta in versi e che ogni giorno nelle cerimonie divine e nei sacri templi risuonano versi d’ogni metro. Si aggiunga quel tuo grande e veramente efficace amore per le belle lettere: nel quale tu in questa età semini quel che, secondo si può argutamente argomentare dalla tua indole generosissima, un giorno misteri, abondantemente moltiplicato: tal messe godrai felicissimamante. Non mancherà alla tua nascente virtù un degno banditore. Infatti, secondo che si può prevedere da così lieti inizi, quale ingegno» non si sentirà portato a scrivere delle tue doti, a celebrare lo splendore dell’antica e nobile Casa Borgia, che ora come sempre brilla attraverso l’Italia e la Francia, e la Spagna e tutta l’Europa? Ma basti delle cose tue...Tu, Cesare, sei davvero degno di molto encomio, se in così giovane cià agisci con la sapienza di un vecchio. Avanti, dunque, o speranza e ornamento della famiglia Boriga, e accetta di buon animo queste nostre Sillabe, offerta di un tuo devoto amicissimo. Così io credo che il mio nome, unito all’eterno nome tuo e a quello dei tuoi, avrà ornamento e vita. Infatti, come suole dire il nostro amicissimo e tuo devotissimo Spannolio, onore e gloria di Maiorca, il quale mi ha spinto a stampare e dedicare questo scritto alla tua gloria: anche il vetro, incastrato nell’oro o nel lucido metallo, figura agli occhi quale gemma, e lì diletta. Addio.”

2 The Spanish Borgia (Borja) family was from the Kingdom of Valencia and claimed ancestry to the ancient kings of Aragon. Although they had regional prestige their success in Italy did constitute a significant shift in the family’s political power. Rodrigo Borgia (1431-1503) was the nephew of Alonso Borgia, a Spanish cardinal who eventually became Pope Calixtus III in 1455. Rodrigo studied canon law at the University of Bologna, coming to Italy probably in 1455. He was made a cardinal by his uncle at the age of 25. From then he ascended the ranks of the College of Cardinals and the papal court rapidly, eventually becoming Pope Alexander VI in 1492. Vannozza Cattanei (c.1442-1518) was the mother of the four children that appear to have been the most beloved (at least the most present in his life) by their father, Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia at their birth and the future Pope Alexander VI: Juan, Cesare, Lucrezia, and Jofre. It was not uncommon in Italy during this time for cardinals to have children. Some of Rodrigo’s children were allowed to accede to privilege because documents proclaiming false and legitimate parentage had been created. In Cesare’s case two separate papal bulls declare him first the child of Vannozza’s husband and in the other, secret bull, as the son of Rodrigo. Jofre’s parentage is debated by some scholars and was possibly doubted by Rodrigo but he was raised with the other three children as a sibling. Vannozza was the daughter of Jacopo Pintorist and was raised in Rome. She was married to two different men in addition to her affair with Rodrigo Borgia which was largely over by the time he was elected as pope in 1492. She was a
the name Alexander VI. As was dictated by his standing as the second male, Cesare was
groomed for an ecclesiastical life, and in 1493, at around the age of 18, his father elevated him to
the rank of cardinal. In 1497 Juan Borgia, Cesare’s brother, was murdered, leaving the secular
aspirations of the Borgia without a conduit, so in 1498 Cesare renounced his cardinalship to bear
the torch of his family’s political and dynastic ambition. He married into the French royal court
of Louis XII but returned to Italy with the king’s invading army in 1499. In 1500 he celebrated
his homecoming in Rome with a series of spectacular parades, became Captain General of the
Papal Army, and began a conquest of the northern Italian city-states. He was entitled as Duc of
the Romagna in 1501. In 1503, upon the untimely death of his father, Cesare controlled the
elections of two popes, but was ultimately not able to weather the political and papal tides. He
eventually died in exile in Spain in 1507.

The velocity of his rise to power alarmed many, and his adeptness at performing the role
of the Renaissance statesman, both the good and bad aspects, drew envy and fear. It was his
refusal to play by an established set of rules that perhaps incited the greatest dread. Cesare was a
virtuoso at using art to his political and social advantage. As noted in the quote that opened this
chapter, Paolo Pampilio called him “the hope and ornament of the house of Borgia,” a telling
statement that branded Cesare himself as a decorative accoutrement to Borgia political power. A
failure on Cesare’s part at successful presentation did not end with him but could result in the
downfall of his family’s place in the Italian landscape. This is a fact of which he was certainly
aware.

powerful woman in her own right and owned property, mainly inns, throughout Rome. One building that she owned
in the Campo de’Fiori is still marked by Alexander’s coat of arms.
The early descriptions of this nascent figure were glowing, seemingly not out of flattery but genuine admiration. Cesare Borgia was tall with a high-bridged nose, dark almond shaped eyes, and long auburn hair. Baldassare Castiglione said of him that: “He is a most gallant man to behold and amazingly beautiful to see.” Giacomo Trotti, a Ferrarese envoy, wrote in 1493: “Cesare possesses distinguished talents and a noble nature…his bearing is that of the son of a prince; he is singularly cheerful and merry and seems always in high spirits.”

Cesare was described as naturally jovial, a disposition that was also used in reference to his father. Giovanni Andrea Boccaccio, ambassador of the Duke of Ferrara, said of him on March 17, 1493:

I went to see Cesare in his home in the Trastevere; he was about to go hunting and was dressed in an altogether worldly manner. He wore silk, with his weapon at his side: a small circle in his hair was the only sign of a tonsure. We rode side by side, conversing. When others came up he treated me with great familiarity. He has a fine, remarkable mind and exquisite character; his manners are those of a potentate’s son, his mood serene and full of gaiety; he radiates joy. He has a great modesty, his demeanor being far preferable and superior to that of his brother the

---

3 These early descriptions are in sharp contrast to our modern understanding of him. Cesare Borgia has been developed as a character over the past 500 years. He has been crafted and molded through the centuries, primarily by those operating outside of his control, perpetually tinted by human nature’s love of the sensational. Yriarte wrote of this phenomenon: “A legend has gradually been built up, and historical facts have given way to pure fancy.” (Yriarte, Cesare Borgia, 11) This historically constructed character is a brooding, sulking, disfigured, masked man, fixed on maleficent action. These are the accretions of others’ making and a far cry from how many of his contemporaries perceived him and from his own self-imaging. The safety of distance has afforded some historians a perspective that allows them to see him for what he was, a “wolf battling other wolves.” (Antonio Medin, Il Duca Valentino nella Mente di Machiavelli (Florence: Stamperia editrice Ademollo, 1883), 4.) Gregorovius likened his presence to that of poisonous plant, an analogy that Yriarte found particularly fitting because, “the subtler a poison is, the more brilliant is the colouring of its foliage.” (Yriarte, Cesare Borgia, 12-13) Cesare Borgia’s patronage of art and his use of the visual was, in part, a way to refine and control his darkening and often unearned reputation.


6 Gustavo Sacerdote, Cesare Borgia: la sua vita, la sua famiglia, i suoi tempi (Milan: Rizzoli, 1950), 103.
duke of Gandia, who, however, has many good qualities. The archbishop of Valencia has never had any liking for an ecclesiastical career.7 He was clearly taken with the pleasures of a secular life. Cesare was competitive in physical challenges and learned the art of bullfighting from the Spanish members of his father’s court.8 He loved hunting and sought out the best falcons, hunting dogs, and horses. On May 28th, 1497, he sent one of his men to Germany to request from the Archbishop of Mainz, “some well-trained and sagacious hunting dogs; their quality to be more important than their number,” which were eventually sent the following September.9 The fact that the request was granted shows the power that his familial and ecclesiastical positions afforded him. Cesare was also described as habitually armed, usually carrying a hunting-dagger or a scimitar.10 His passion for pageantry and luxury, as will be shown, dominated much of his public engagement from a young age.

Cesare probably grew up in the house of Adriana Mila, the cousin of Rodrigo Borgia, who was married to Lodovico Orsini before she was widowed sometime prior to 1488.11 His education included Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, and French, which he wrote and spoke, as well as music, arithmetic, and drawing.12 His tutors were mostly Spanish although Italian Poet Laureate Pomponius Laetus also served Cesare in that role.13 Cesare’s classical education

---

7 The date of the letter is from Gregorovius, Lucretia Borgia, 57. For the quote see Cloulas, The Borgias, 77-78. The “duke of Gandia” in the quote is Juan Borgia and the “archbishop of Valencia” is Cesare.
8 Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 21.
10 E.L. Miron, The Derelict Duchess: a study of the life and times of Charlotte d’Albret, duchess of Valentinois (London: S. Paul & Co.), 71. A scimitar is a sword with a curved, convex, blade, which was usually carried by Arabs or Turks.
11 Yriarte, Cesare Borgia, 29.
13 Yriarte, Cesare Borgia, 29. Pomponius Laetus (1428-1497/98), is also called Giulio Pomponio Leto. He was a student of Lorenzo Valla and an Italian humanist who established the Academia Romana, a secretive society that
included an early introduction to the ancient Roman concepts of Fama, Virtu, and Fortuna which would be driving forces for the rest of his life; to gain Fama (fame or glory) one must exercise their own individual Virtù to tame the unforgiving force of Fortuna.\footnote{Bradford, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 21.}

\textbf{Early Education}

In the fall of 1489 Cesare went to Perugia to study at the Sapienza under Giovanni Vera.\footnote{Woodward, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 31. Giovanni Vera was Spanish gentleman that was appointed as a Cardinal by Pope Alexander VI and eventually became the Archbishop of Salerno. No other details about his life could be determined.} At the time Perugia was ruled by the Baglioni, and one of the family’s sons, Gian Paolo, was Cesare’s contemporary and later became one of his condottiere. It is likely that Cesare socialized with the family, hunting on their estates in Bastia and Spello. He was also documented as hunting at the Borgia stronghold in Soriano in 1491, a fortress later given to Giovanni Batista Orsini as a favor to secure Alexander’s elevation to the papacy in 1492.\footnote{Bradford, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 22-23.}

Cesare’s father had also built a palace in Pienza at the request of Pope Pius II, designed by Rosellino and now called the Palazzo Vescovile. Pienza was close to Perugia so it is safe to assume that Cesare and Rodrigo saw each other during this time. In the autumn of 1491, Cesare left Perugia to attend the University of Pisa. Beginning in 1473, Lorenzo de Medici paid a great deal of attention to the University, elevating its prestige.\footnote{F.W. Kent, \textit{Lorenzo de ’Medici & the Art of Magnificence} (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 49.} Giovanni di Medici, Lorenzo’s second son, was Cesare’s same age and was also attending.

\footnote{devoted itself to antiquity through the study of archaeology and ancient texts. Paolo Pampilio was one of his students. Algapito Gheraldini, Cesare’s humanist secretary, was also a student of Laetus. Upon his death Alexander VI ordered all of Rome to attend the funeral. Mallett suggests that like many of the artists that worked for Cesare and his father, Laetus suffered damage to his reputation because of his close association with the Borgia.}
Upon deciding to send his son there, then Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia wrote to Lorenzo saying that he was sending Cesare to Pisa as a sign of the love that he held towards the family and so that Cesare could be held “sotto l’ale et protection” (under the wings and protection) of the Medici.\textsuperscript{18}

This is a strong statement of a desired alliance. In 1490 Lorenzo had visited Pienza, and it is possible that at that time the two fathers discussed the benefits of a mutual future for their ecclesiastically bound sons.

While he was studying in Pisa, Cesare met both Lorenzo and Piero de’Medici.\textsuperscript{19} Francesco Guicciardini says that he went to Florence specifically to visit them.\textsuperscript{20} It is possible that while he was there he met other members of the family’s court: Botticelli, an artist already acquainted with his father, and Poliziano, the great humanist scholar. In Botticelli’s \textit{Punishment of Korah} in the Sistene Chapel, he painted himself in a conversational pose with then Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia. (Figures 2-1, 2-2) Botticelli likely came into contact with Rodrigo during his time working in the chapel. Rodrigo was the second most powerful individual in the Vatican, below only the Pope, but Botticelli’s choice to paint himself and the Cardinal this way suggests that perhaps they were on friendly, familiar terms. By the early 1490s Botticelli had returned to Florence and served as a member of the Medici circle, perhaps present to meet his former friend’s son. Cesare’s secretary, Carlo Valgulio di Brescia (1434-1517), was the teacher and a correspondent of Poliziano, the great humanist of the Medici Court and would certainly have wanted to meet him while they were in Florence.

\textsuperscript{18} Sacerdote, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 85.

\textsuperscript{19} Woodward, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 32.

The comments of Ser Stefano, an agent of the Medici in Pisa, reveal an insider’s view into how closely the family watched the young Borgia cardinal, observing his display and expenditure. Stefano specifically commented on the magnificence of the Medici palace in Pisa but relays that their objects of virtue could not contend with that of Cesare, particularly his tapestries and silver, writing: “We wished to invite him here one morning to dine, and if the weather is good it could be this week…It is true that he had come so well provided with hangings and silver that our not having anything to equal it has left us a little perplexed.”  

Cesare modeled his court at school after his father’s style, opulent and Spanish. Almost all of his household was from Spain, either Aragon or Catalonia, a fact that also made an impression on Stefano who wrote with scorn about the nature of his men: “It seems to us that these men of his who surround him are little men who have small consideration for behavior and have all the appearance of marrani.”  

Cesare always used the Spanish form of his name “Cesar” (also the spelling closest to the ancient Roman), Spanish always remained his first language, and Catalan was the tongue of the Borgia’s inner circle. The Catalan people had a specifically negative connotation to Italians, and were often accused of being marrani or secret Jews. That disdainful view is evident in Stefano’s remarks.

As for luxury, Cesare could have had no better teacher than his father. Pope Pius II likened Rodrigo’s palace in Rome, now the Palazzo Sforoza-Cesarini, to the Golden House of

---

21 Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 24.
22 Sabatini, The Life of Cesare Borgia, 32.
23 Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 23. Marrani were Spanish Jews who had been forced to accept Christianity, usually through the threat of punishment, during the Inquisition.
Nero. Two primary source descriptions reveal the true depth of Rodrigo’s sumptuous décor.

Jacopo da Volterra wrote:

He has a great quantity of silverware, of pearls, of draperies and sacred vestments worked in gold and silk; and of books, no doubt, precious manuscripts, of every branch of science; and he had everything adorned in royal and pontifical style; not to mention the innumerable ornaments of his beds and trappings of his horses made of gold, silver and silk; besides a wardrobe well filled with precious garments for personal use, and a great amount of gold coin, which, they say, he possesses. 

Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, the man who would inherit Rodrigo’s palace after he became pope, wrote:

The palace is splendidly decorated: the walls of the great entrance hall are hung with tapestries depicting various historical scenes. A small drawing room leads off this, which was also decorated with fine tapestries; the carpets on the floor harmonized with the furnishings which included a sumptuous day bed upholstered in red satin with a canopy over it, and a chest on which was laid out a vast and beautiful collection of gold and silver plate. Beyond this there were two more rooms, one hung with fine satin, carpeted, and with another canopied bed covered with Alexandrine velvet; the other even more ornate with a couch covered in cloth of gold. In this room the central table was covered with a cloth of Alexandrine velvet [a complicated dyeing process which resulted in a violet blue] and surrounded by finely carved chairs.

Alexander was also known for his fashionable attire. Giacomo Trotti, a Ferrarese envoy at the Court of Ludovico Sforza in Milan, wrote: “His Holiness went to meet them arrayed in a black doublet bordered with gold brocade, with a beautiful belt in the Spanish Fashion, and with a sword and dagger. He wore Spanish boots and a velvet biretta, all very gallant.”

The two Cardinals, Cesare and his father, exemplified what Paolo Cortesi wrote in De Cardinalatu about the appropriate way that a Cardinal was expected to conduct himself through

---

27 Bradford, Lucrezia Borgia, 14.
28 Ibid, 48.
all stages of life and personal presentation. Cortesi was a similar age to Cesare and shared his
tutor, Pomponio Laeto. The writer’s father, Antonio, was a member of the Roman curia who
exposed his son to the intellectual and political leaders of Rome, often taking him to various
palaces, many of which belonged to cardinals. Cortesi ultimately left Rome in 1503 and moved
to his family’s ancestral town of San Gimignano, thus ending his immersion in the magnificent
display of luxury and wealth that the eternal city had provided, but it is worth noting that
Cortesi’s Rome was the Rome of the Borgia. 29 In his younger life Cortesi certainly could have
visited Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia’s magnificent palace, and after 1492 Rome was completely
dominated by the family’s visual display. The fact that Michele Ferno wrote his work *Historia
nova Alexandri VI* for Cortesi suggests that Cortesi was at least acquainted with the powerful
family. 30 Their influence on his perspective and writing should not be overlooked.

Cortesi wrote *De Cardinalatu* in response to the humanist and artistic climate during
which the seat of influence had shifted from Florence to Rome, thus thrusting ecclesiastical
figures to the position of arbiters of culture. His work was supposed to serve as a guidebook for
behavior, helping Cardinals determine what they must do and what they should avoid. He was
highly influenced by Aristotle, Vitruvius, and Aquinas, as were other writers of the day who
addressed ideas of expenditure, magnificence, and splendor. Alberti’s *De re aedificatoria* was
an important modern influence. 31 Cortesi outlined a lifestyle of grand expenditure that he
considered necessary for a Cardinal. A sumptuous palace was of paramount concern as was

29 For information on Cortesi see Kathleen Weil-Garris and John F. D’Amico, *The Renaissance Cardinal’s Ideal

30 Ibid, 48. An additional source on Michele Ferno is Maria Grazia Blasio’s “Retorica della scena: l’elezione di
Alessandro VI nel resoconto di Michele Ferno,” in *Principato ecclesiastico e riuso dei classici Gli umanisti e

gracious entertaining. Giovanni Pontano’s (1426-1503) *De magnificentia* and *De splendore* offer similar suggestions to those in Cortesi’s work. Both writers stressed the importance of the magnificence displayed through one’s person and the splendor in one’s domestic space, lifestyle suggestions that the Borgia men executed superbly.

Cesare’s great wealth and personal display could have been the cause for the cool nature of the relationship between him and Giovanni de’ Medici while they were in Pisa. It does not seem that the two had a genuine friendship, but that they both understood the importance of their political association. Cesare served as a disputant [*arguenti*], when Giovanni’s advance to laureate was debated. The Medici son, of course, passed and was shortly after formally admitted into the College of Cardinals.

Existing correspondence supports the notion that Lorenzo and Piero de Medici, if for nothing other than political calculus, sought to have a good relationship with Cesare. The tone in the letters exchanged between them suggests that such a rapport existed, and the familiarity that reads through the note Cesare wrote to Piero de’ Medici offering his condolences after the death of Lorenzo implies that they had more than minimal contact. Cesare also wrote to Piero asking

---

32 Ibid, 56.
34 Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia*, 87-88,100. Sacerdote calls the tone familiar. The letter reads: “Magnificet et prestantissime vir, tanto me he stata molesta et trista la novella dela morte dela bona memoria del patre vostro, che non ho avuto animo ne potere de scrivere consolatione alcuna a la magnificentia vostra, si pel dolore che stimai el R.mo monsignor mostro el Card.le vostro fratello ensieme con la magnificentia vostra de tanta jactura pigliaria, como per lo amore che ala prefata bona memoria de vostro patre io portava, del quale non faceva altra stima que de patre, havendo cognosciuto ne la sua magnificentia una grandissima et paterna benivolentia verso di me: per la qual cosa, non solo la magnificentia vostra, ala quale con la prefata Signoria de monisgnor nostro e.mo principalmente questo danno inestimabile ha respecto, ma ancora io e tutti quelli che lo cosnoscevamo siamo sforzati piangere e molto dolerse de haverlo perso in questo mondo. Ma come me recordo de la singularità de la vita sua, accompagniata de fede carità prudentia iustitia et tutte le altre virtù che en alcuno homo se trovano, considerando che he morto tanto religiosamente et caholicamente, lasciando en questo mondo gloriosa et immortal fama, la sua anima haverà acquistata vita eterna e per la divina maiesta sera stata entre li sancti soi in gloria collocata, me pare debiamo commutar la mestitia et dolore en alegrezza e consolatione e congratularce con lui che habbia commutata questa vita temporale caduca transitoria e piena de afanni con vita eterna stabile e gloriosa e senza nulla molestia. Per la qual cosa, quanto più posso prego la magnificentia vostra che, vencendo la lege naturale che a piangere la
him to appoint Francisco Remolines, a member of his court, to a professorship in law at the University of Pisa. In exchange for such a favor, Cesare promised to do all that he could for the Medici “at the court of Rome.”\(^{35}\) The fact that his request regarding Remolines’ appointment was granted reinforces the existence of an affiliation at least on the grounds of mutual benefit.

On August 10-11, 1492, Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia was elected to be Pope Alexander VI. By March 1493, Cesare was in Rome where his growing power afforded him the influence he vowed to Piero he would exercise.\(^{36}\)

**Rome**

When Cesare arrived, he bore witness to Alexander’s Rome, a dazzling spectacle of Borgia power, brilliantly crafted by the great artists of the day. Alexander enlisted the help of artists more extensively than his predecessors and was more magnanimous in their rewards.\(^{37}\) Perugino and Pietro Turini worked on decorations for his coronation.\(^{38}\) He would go on to

---

35 Ibid, 100. The letter reads: “Magnifice vir. Uti frater amantissime. Per la mia repentina partita da Pisa et accelerato camino a venir qua, non posseti parlare con V. M.tia com era mio desiderio de certa facenda che assai me stageva in animo: tamen comisi al R.M.Ioan Vera mio preceptore che per me satisfacesse, e così me ha riferito haver facto con reportatione de grata resposta. La materia di questo è che disponendo M. Francesco Remolino, mio famiglier carissimo exhibitor presente homo docto et virtuoso, insistere nel studio et retornare a Pisa dove meco stageva, maxime non havendo animo a le cose ecclesiastice, desideraria se li concedesse una cattedra o vero lectura in iure cononico sotto più utile et honorevole conducta fosse possibile. Et perché so quanto la M.tia V. Possa in questa cosa satisfare al desiderio honesto de ipso M. Francesco et mio, con singular fiducia la chiedo et pregio etiam strectamnete dare is ciò tale opera, che onmino siano facti compiuti del voto nostro, come spero farà per humanitate sua voluntieri. Del che le resterò non poco obligato offerendomi per quanto possa et voglia qui et in corte di Roma sempre a tutti beneplaciti di quella paratissimo. Quae optime veleat. Ex arce Spoletina die V octobr. – Prego la M.tia V.ra haia rectomandato questo servitore mio. VR. Uti FR. Cesar de Borja, Elect. Valentin.”


commission projects from Bramante, Pinturicchio, Antonio da Sangallo il Vecchio, and many others. He became known for his fêtes, famous for their splendor and elegance. Alexander delighted in sensory entertainments that included public spectacle, music, dance, and performance, a love that he passed on to many of his children. Michele Ferno described the staged public movements of Alexander VI, on one such occasion of his passage to S. Maria del Popolo:

These holiday swarms of richly clad people, the seven hundred priests and cardinals with their retinues, these knights and grandees of Rome in dazzling cavalcades, these troops of archers and Turkish horsemen, the palace guards with long lances and glittering shields, the twelve riderless white horses with golden bridles, which were led along, and all the other pomp and parade!

Ferno also commented on the Pope’s ability to stage such complex events quickly; knowing that they took weeks or months to plan, he said that the Pope could orchestrate them in the blink of an eye because necessary actors and costumes were always ready.

Alexander patronized the University of Rome, rebuilding the Sapienza, a project that involved Florentine architects including Antonio di Sangallo il Vecchio. The concept of the Sapienza as a gathering place of important minds and Alexander’s patronage of them was made visual in a print by Adalbert Gerson, of which a copy is held in the Wellcome Library. (Figure 2-3) The key of figures that runs along the bottom of the image indicates the importance of the artistic and intellectual circle formed there. It is a 19th century imaginative construction, but the

---


40 Mallett, The Borgias, 239.

41 Gregorovius, Lucretia Borgia, 47.

42 Ibid.

Borgia association with these figures is not fiction. Argyropoulos and Copernicus lectured there while Alexander VI was pope, Copernicus on mathematics and astronomy.\textsuperscript{44}

Alexander VI’s support of scholars and humanists extended into his private circle as well. Lorenz Beheim, a German humanist from Nuremburg, managed Rodrigo’s household for 20 years, and was a Latinist and member of the Roman Academy of Pomponius Laetus.\textsuperscript{45} A connection existed, possibly with Beheim as the conduit, between Alexander and the Academy. Actors at many of the plays performed for Alexander in the Vatican were students from the Academy of Pomponius Laetus, and Alexander’s court attended Pomponius’ obsequies in 1498 at the Church Santa Maria in Aracoeli.\textsuperscript{46} Goritz of Luxemburg, another German familiar of the Borgia family, was an important academic who hosted meetings and discussions at his house in Trajan’s Forum. Many of the Germans who visited Rome sought out his company, including Copernicus and Erasmus.\textsuperscript{47} It is known that Cesare met and interacted with a number of these figures.

Cesare was also influenced by his father’s decision to continue the papal imprisonment of Prince Jem, the brother of Sultan Beyazet II, inside the Apostolic Palace.\textsuperscript{48} The Borgia sons, Juan and Cesare, were friends with Jem and were seen out in Rome at his side. They certainly

\textsuperscript{44} Mallett, \textit{The Borgias}, 247. On page 29 in \textit{Lucretia Borgia}, Gregorovius provides the subjects that Copernicus lectured on.

\textsuperscript{45} Gregorovius, \textit{Lucretia Borgia}, 32.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, 128-129. A connection between Laetus and the Borgia has already been discussed in reference to Cesare Borgia’s early education.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, 131.

\textsuperscript{48} Freely, \textit{Jem Sultan}, 16. The Sultan paid the pope an annual donation to keep Jem at the Papal court, thus depriving his brother of the ability to return and fight for his right of primogeniture – a position Jem claimed as the porphyrogenitus, meaning “born in the purple” and demarcating him as the first and only son born after Mehmet II conquered Constantinople. Jem’s apartments were on the upper floor of the north side of the apostolic palace, overlooking what is now the Cortile del Belvedere. Sigismondo de Condi described the sumptuous nature of his rooms as lavishly furnished and ornamented with gold and silver. (182-183)
joined him while he partook in his favorite pastimes which closely modeled their own: hunting, feasting, and music.\textsuperscript{49} Both Juan and Cesare were often seen dressed in Turkish attire or as janissaries in events of physical skill like tournaments and bull fights. Two portraits show Jem’s importance at the papal court; he is known to be featured in the \textit{Disputation} in the Borgia Apartments (whether he is the standing, turbaned figure or the man on horseback is debated), and he is depicted in a watercolor miniature in a choir book of the Sistine Chapel, Cappella Sistina Ms 41, dated to the end of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{50} (Figures 2-4, 2-5)

Closely following his coronation, the new Pope Alexander VI rented the Palazzo di San Clemente in Rome for his son Cesare to live in.\textsuperscript{51} The palazzo, today the Palazzo dei Penitenzieri, was built by Pontelli around 1478-80 for Cardinal Domenico della Rovere. By March 1493 Cesare had established his home there and lived in the Penitenzieri with his court in the same style and splendor that his household had kept in Perugia and Pisa.\textsuperscript{52} Although he kept the palace, by 1495 his official residence had moved to the suite of rooms in the Apostolic Palace known today as Raphael’s Stanzas, directly above his father’s, the Borgia Apartments.\textsuperscript{53} (Figures 2-6, 2-7)

This was not an unprecedented move. It was not uncommon for an incoming pope to move some of his most important staff members, positions often held by family members or his

\textsuperscript{49} Bradford, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 31.

\textsuperscript{50} Dawson Kiang, “Josquin Desprez and a Possible Portrait of the Ottoman Prince Jem in Cappella Sistina Ms. 41,” \textit{Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance} 54. 2 (1992), 426.

\textsuperscript{51} Beuf, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 37. Anna Cavallaro has done a great deal of work on the Palazzo dei Penitenzieri, specifically in the book she published with Maria Giulia Aurigemma, \textit{Il Palazzo di Domenico della Rovere in Borgo}. The examination of the Palazzo for any possible remains of Cesare Borgia’s tenure there is a future project that would greatly benefit from her guidance and expertise.

\textsuperscript{52} Sacerdote, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 103.

\textsuperscript{53} Woodward, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 100.
closest associates, into apartments near him in the Apostolic Palace, where they too were at times
given the allowance to redecorate or renovate their rooms. Because this practice has continued
over the course of the past centuries and numerous changes have been made, the situation of the
rooms in each period is not clear, making connections and accurate understanding of spatial
relationships and descriptions uncertain. The Borgia Apartments and the layout of Cesare’s
private rooms have certainly been affected by this custom.\textsuperscript{54} However, the floor plan of the
rooms as they exist today does give the reader the ability to envision the structure and proximity
of Cesare and Alexander’s suites.

Alexander made substantial changes to the Vatican after his arrival, finishing the Torre
Borgia and Pope Pius II’s loggia and decorating the Borgia Apartments.\textsuperscript{55} For the decoration of
the Torre Borgia, Alexander brought in Perugino, Pinturicchio, Volterrano, and Peruzzi.\textsuperscript{56} The
frescoes in his private residence were painted by Pinturicchio, who came from Orvieto to Rome
near the end of 1492, and worked with his team until February 1495.\textsuperscript{57} Piermatteo di Amelia and
Altonio da Viterbo are listed among his collaborators.\textsuperscript{58} The rooms that they decorated were part
of the previous papal apartments as well as a series of new rooms. The Sala dei Pontifici, the
Sala dei Misteri della Fede, the Sala dei Santi, and the Sala delle Arti Liberali are located in the

\textsuperscript{54} Loes L. Waarts, “The so-called <Bathroom of Alexander VI>,” in \textit{Functions and Decorations: Art and Ritual at
the Vatican Palace in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance}, ed. Tristan Weddigen, Sible de Blaauw, and Bram
Kempers (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003), 47.

\textsuperscript{55} Mallett, \textit{The Borgias}, 56.

\textsuperscript{56} Sabatini, \textit{The Life of Cesare Borgia}, 32,80. This is where the recently recovered portrait of Giulia Farnese as the
Madonna was once located.

\textsuperscript{57} Waarts, “The so-called <Bathroom of Alexander VI>,” 47, note 7.

\textsuperscript{58} Museo del Duomo Città di Castello website. \url{http://www.museoduomocdc.it/autori_e.htm}. Accessed September
19, 2014.
older wing built by Pope Nicholas V while the Sala del Credo and the Sala delle Sibille, new to Alexander VI’s pontificate, are in the Torre Borgia.\(^{59}\)

The decoration of important rooms in the fifteenth century varied, most dramatically in the adornment of the walls. Many had completely frescoed walls, a permanent and less expensive alternative to a figurative frieze at the top of the walls and ceiling, and a dressing of the blank walls with wall hangings, preferably tapestries. When tapestries were too expensive or deemed to be inappropriate for the situation, less expensive cloths such as silk, linen, or wool, enlivened with repetitive patterns, were used as an alternative.\(^{60}\) This tradition was often mimicked in fresco, for example in the stairwell of Clement VII in the Castel Sant’Angelo. (Figure 2-8) As is still visible today, the Borgia Apartments were decorated in the highest fashion, blank walls lined with hooks waiting to support the luxurious textiles. (Figures 2-9, 2-10)

The rooms are most famous for the portraits of the family, painted by Pinturicchio as figures in the stories. The visage of Cesare is featured on the seated emperor in the \textit{Disputation of St. Catherine} while Lucrezia appears as St. Catherine. (Figures 2-11, 2-12) Pinturicchio painted additional family portraits in an altarpiece for the chapel of St. Lucy in Santa Maria del

\(^{59}\) Waarts, “The so-called <Bathroom of Alexander VI>,” 47. The images are viewed as flamboyant examples of dynastic aggrandizement highly influenced by classical examples and painting styles like those in the Domus Aurea and Hadrian’s Villa near Tivoli. The strongest impressions were the gilded stucco, colors, patterns, and ornament, particularly \textit{groteschi}. (Waarts, “The so-called <Bathroom of Alexander VI>,” 53) The Borgia Apartments are often specifically cited as an example of an older mode, not yet taking part in what will become the Renaissance’s acclaimed shedding of the preceding style’s archaic characteristics, thus also painting Alexander, art historically, in a disparaging light. This characterization is, however, an unrealistic representation of the patronage climate at the time. Other major patrons, men credited with helping to fuel the Renaissance, were doing similar things to Alexander—the Medici and Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere. We do not deny them their due in the introduction and acceptance of what would become the Renaissance style, but Alexander has been deprived of credit for his association with leading artists or for influencing artistic trends or styles. This separation from Renaissance art and culture is a part of why Alexander and Cesare are so little discussed in art historical discourse. The rooms, however, are very traditional for the most elite manner of decorating domestic space.

\(^{60}\) Ibid, 47.
Popolo, a chapel patronized by Vanozza Cattanei, and the location of her and Juan Borgia’s graves. He also painted portraits of Cesare, Lucrezia, and Angela in the Fossi altarpiece intended for of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Perugia. (Figure 2-13) The contract for the Fossi altarpiece was signed in February 1496, right as Pinturicchio finished the Borgia Apartments.61 Unfortunately the Popolo altarpiece is lost, removed after the Borgias’ fall and the subsequent redecoration of the space. The high altar that Alexander VI commissioned for Santa Maria del Popolo from Antonio Bregno was also removed and is now held in the sacristy. Another possible portrait of Cesare by Pinturicchio is the painting Portrait of a Boy in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden. (Figure 2-14) If it is Cesare, it was likely painted when Pinturicchio was in Rome working on the Sistine Chapel in the late 1470s. The importance of Cesare in Pinturicchio’s life and his role as the artist’s patron will be elaborated in Chapter 4.

There are also documents preserved in the Vatican that detail expenditures for the work done in Cesare’s apartments. They are important because the names of the artists that they reference can be added to the list of artists that Cesare patronized, but more so because the fact that while Cesare lived in these rooms he had them decorated and modified has never been discussed in any depth.62 His station in life and standing as the son of the reigning pontiff required that he furnish his domestic space with splendor, staging the most luxurious environment monetarily possible. It would have been impossible that when Cesare lived in these

---

61 Mario Menotti, I Borgia: Storia e Iconografia (Rome, 1917-1918), 168.

62 One of the major contributions of this research is the re-acknowledgement of the fact that Cesare was responsible for a large amount of artistic intervention in his apartments in the Vatican. Eugene Müntz is the only scholar to recognize this at all, and although his work is critical it offers only a list of payments with no opinion by Müntz as to the importance of Cesare or his contributions to the space. Although, as will be discussed, to what degree the decorations and designs can be conceptually recreated and to what degree anything might remain visible is not fully determined, this serves as a springboard for future research.
rooms they were not exquisitely decorated. This research will outline the modifications that we
know were made and suggest additional works to consider.

The artists involved include Alexander of Tivoli, a carpenter, Master Stefano of Milan,
Agostino di Cremona, master mason Leone, and master painter Ambrogio. Artists and
craftsman of numerous types worked in the rooms, signifying the variety of changes that were
being executed following Cesare’s wishes. The documents, most of which record payments, are
published in Eugene Müntz’s Les arts a la cour des papes Innocent VIII, Alexandre VI, Pie III
(1484-1503).

On May 2, 1496, Alexander paid 10 florins to carpenters for work for the “camera” of
Cesare Borgia. On May 19, 1497, repairs to the pavement in Cesare’s rooms were noted. On
June 29, 1500, the floor of the Stanza di Constantino, which translates to the ceiling of the Sala
dei Pontefici, collapsed, caused by a chimney falling through the roof during a violent storm. The
Stanza di Constantino had been occupied by members of Cesare’s household and a dispatch
from the ambassador to Florence tells us that some of those individuals were killed, as was
Lorenzo Chigi, brother of Agostino Chigi and member of the powerful banking family that did
extensive business with the Borgia. The records, as outlined by Müntz, fall silent in the
following years, but in 1503 it appears that major renovations and redecoration were commenced
at Cesare’s behest.

---

63 Sacerdote, Cesare Borgia, 534.

64 Eugène Müntz, Les Arts A la Cour des Papes Innocent VIII, Alexandre VI, Pie III (1484-1503) (Paris: Ernest
Leroux, 1898), 192-193.


66 For Cesare’s household in the Stanza di Constantino see de Roo, Materials for a History of Pope Alexander VI, V,
67. For Lorenzo Chigi’s death see Charles Yriarte, Autour des Borgia (Paris: J. Rothschild, 1891), 38. The pope,
sitting in his throne, was almost killed as well. When the ceiling collapsed, the structure of the throne saved his life
by supporting the fallen beams. The fact that he survived was taken by some as a sign, not of divine protection, but
of a pact that he had made with the devil.
On May 9, 1503, a payment was made for a marble window for Cesare’s living quarters, and on May 22, 1503, Agostino de Cremona, a carpenter, was paid for additional work on some of the windows in the hall of Cesare Borgia. On June 3 and 16, 1503, it is listed that work was done on the dwelling of Cesare, and that on June 19 and 20, 1503, additional work was done by Agostino de Cremona and other craftsmen on behalf of Cesare. On June 26, 1503, the stonemason Francisco Gallo was paid for work done in Cesare’s apartments. On July 1, 1503, “Leoni architecto” worked in Cesare’s apartments in Apostolic Palace. On July 18, 1503, Agostino de Cremona was paid again. On July 31, 1503, bricklayers and the stonemason Francisco were paid for work in Cesare’s apartments. On August 12, 1503, the painter Ambrogio/Ambrosio was paid for various paintings done in the rooms of Cesare Borgia.

Müntz notes an additional payment made for work done for Cesare outside the Vatican; on January 16, 1502, money was paid for the stables and “scala” (stairs) of Cesare near “Sanetam Catharinam” (Saint Catherine). It is most likely that this location, described as near “Sanetam Catharinam,” is in the vicinity of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva which houses Saint Catherine’s tomb.

Peter de Roo, in his work Material for a History of Pope Alexander VI His Relatives and His Time, documents another expense in the Apostolic Palace in July of 1503:

Paid to Master Montino, a blacksmith, for the value of four hundred and three pounds of wrought iron, for the two chains fastened in the apostolic palace, in the passageway, in front of the hall occupied by the servants of the duke of Valentinois, which was recently restored, and for the cartage of the same chains, nine ducats and forty-four and a half bolognese.

---

68 de Roo, Material for a History of Pope Alexander VI, 4, 470. Also see document 185 (566).
De Roo also states that Perugino and Pinturicchio painted: “at the apostolic palace the ‘Stanza del’Incendio’.”

De Roo’s citation for this fact is unclear, but slightly further down in his text there is a footnote that lists a number of documents in the Vatican archives, “77. Archiv. Secret. Vatic., Alex. VI. Div. Cam., 1497-99, Lib. III, Armar. 29, no. 52, fo 37 vo.”

The archival numbering suggests that the activity likely occurred between the years 1497-99. This suggests that as well as painting the Borgia Apartment, Pinturicchio, and possibly Perugino, executed work in Cesare’s apartments, which included the room now known as the Stanza dell’Incendio, and that he was likely the patron.

Evidence commands us to acknowledge that extensive work was carried out in these rooms, probably under Cesare’s direction, and that some of it could have been done by major artists of the period including Perugino and Pinturicchio. The logical next step, which remains for future research, is to determine how much if any of the work sponsored by Cesare is intact. Because of the redecoration of this suite of rooms by Julius II and Leo X, the close time frame, which makes separation of the work by period style difficult, and the lack of clear documentation, this determination proves to be a challenge.

With Cesare’s help, Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere was elected to the papacy in November 1503 and took the name Julius II. After his election, he lived in his predecessor’s rooms, the Borgia Apartments, and although it was suggested to him that the frescoes and decorative elements in the Borgia Apartments should be destroyed, Julius II rejected the idea saying that would not be appropriate. Instead he chose to move into the suite above them, the

---

69 Ibid, 4, 460.

70 Ibid.

71 Christine Shaw, *Julius II: The Warrior Pope* (Cambridge: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997), 196. Paris de Grassis, the master of ceremonies to Pope Julius II and Pope Leo X, is the individual who made this suggestion to Julius II. This indicates a real animosity towards the Borgia on the part of de Grassis and should caution scholars reading his work.
spaces that had housed Cesare. Julius II only occasionally occupied the rooms until the decision to make a permanent move that involved the remodeling of the space was solidified in November 1507.\textsuperscript{72} Julius II hired artists including Perugino, Bramante, and Sodoma to begin the redecoration, but quickly abandoned them in favor of Raphael who took over the project in its entirety in 1508. We now know these rooms by the famous frescoes painted on their walls under his hand and design.

The majority of the walls were bare when the project began; Cesare had staged his rooms like those of his father, with textile covered blank walls.\textsuperscript{73} The ceiling is most likely where we can find remains of Cesare’s patronage, also potentially in the window niches, although we know that Julius II made some structural changes to the windows, both adding and modifying existing ones.\textsuperscript{74} There is also a small room located between the Sala di Constantino and the Stanza di Eliodoro, which Julius II used as a bedroom, but it is not open to the public because of the deteriorated state of decoration. It is not pictured in any of the sources that were consulted, so any art remaining inside was unavailable for inclusion in this research.\textsuperscript{75}

The suggestion is not that Cesare had these rooms decorated with a full pictorial program, as history would likely have recorded such a thing, but that perhaps some of the skeletal framework of geometric compartments and \textit{groteschi} are the result of his patronage. The Stanza

\textsuperscript{72} Roger Jones and Nicholas Penny, \textit{Raphael} (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 49.


\textsuperscript{75} Ingrid D. Rowland, “The Vatican Stanzas,” in \textit{The Cambridge Companion to Raphael}, ed. Marcia Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 96. Rowland’s essay makes the only reference to this room that I have read.
della Segnatura and the Stanza di Eliodoro are the two rooms where traces of pre-Raphael work remain.

In both of the rooms Raphael kept parts of the ornamental paintings that had been executed by the artists working before him. In the Segnatura, the octagon in the center of the vault showcases the arms of Pope Nicholas V, which along with some other intermediate elements and images positively date to the quattrocento.76 (Figure 2-15) The ceiling decoration itself, a configuration of tondi and rectangles around a central shape, is taken from ancient models like Hadrian’s Villa, in a quattrocento style exemplified by Pinturicchio’s work. It is acknowledged that the basic layout had already been established before Raphael began working in the space. Vasari comments that Raphael preserved the existing divisions and grotesques and limited his work to the principal figural fields, a fact that has been confirmed by technical analysis.77 Although the vault is credited to both Sodoma and Raphael, the actual contribution of each artist is debated.78

In the vault of the Stanza di Eliodoro, Raphael kept part of the ornamental painting from the quattrocento style, limiting his alterations to the four large pendentives which house episodes from the Old Testament.79 (Figure 2-16) Some areas of the grotesque work and painting on the arches has been attributed to the artists that worked before Raphael arrived: Signorelli, Bramantino, Lorenzo Lotto, and Cesare de Sesto. But no definitive attributions were found during the course of this research.


77 Jones and Penny, *Raphael*, 55-56.


The very uncertain nature of the paintings and stucco work in these rooms leaves an opening for the idea that some of the decoration could also be from even earlier artists working for Cesare, who was painting so close in time proximity and style to those working for Julius II that their hand has gone unnoticed. Currently nothing conclusive can be determined, but the possibility remains for additional research in this area to uncover new documents or evidence that assists scholars in developing a clearer picture of how the transformation of these apartments unfolded.

One description does exist that elevates the potential for such a hypothetical find, made by Francesco Albertini, in *Opusculum de Mirabilibus Novae Urbis Romae*, which details another room in the suite of Julius II:

Est praeterae biblioteca nova secreta perpulchra (ut ita dicam) Pensilis Iulia, quam tua beatitude construxit signisque planetarum et coelorum exornavit, additis aulis et cameris ornatis. atque deambulatoriis auro et picturis ac statuis exornati non longe a capella syxtea.80

Albertini describes a room that is a new, secret library, beautifully and fully ornamented in gold with paintings of the heavens and sculptures. This room would still be as it had been under Cesare’s tenancy, not yet decorated by Julius II. B. Feliciangeli, in his article “Un probabile indizio del nazionalismo di Giulio II” also discusses this space. He mentions a particular camera or studio in the Apostolic Palace, described as the library of Julius II, but says explicitly that by description of location it does not agree with the series of rooms that we know as Julius II’s apartments and more importantly not the Stanza della Signature which is now

80 August Schmarsow, *Francisci Albertini Opusculvm de Mirabilibvs Novae Vrbis Romae* (Heilbronn: Verlag von Gebr. Henninger, 1886), 34-35. For alternative meanings of this passage including references to astrological tables or celestial globes instead of wall decorations see Pastor, *History of the Popes*, VI, 582-583. Rough translation by the author: “And in addition a new library, secret and thoroughly beautiful (so to speak) Pensilis Julius quam tua beatitude made images of the planets and heavens embellished with the addition of stars and ornamented rooms, while walking down [presumably a staircase] furnished with gold and paintings and statues, not far from the Sistine Chapel.”
widely believed to have been Julius’s library.\textsuperscript{81} Perhaps the space described by Albertini was used as a temporary one while the Stanza della Signatura was being painted, which would explain Albertini’s description of the small room as a library. August Schmarsow believed that the room Albertini described was in the Torre Borgia which we know housed some of Cesare Borgia’s apartments.\textsuperscript{82} The reference to a “deambulatoriis”, or passage down, supports the association with the Torre Borgia as evident through the staircase that can be seen on the floor plan. (Figure 2-7)

The rooms that match these criteria are now the Sala Sobieski and the Sala dell’Immacolata. Cesare had lived in Sala dell’Immacolata as late as 1503, and Julius did not initiate the renovation work in Cesare’s suite of rooms as a whole until late 1507. The first payments made by Julius II were in 1508 and 1509, and are for work done on the fourth floor, the level above the Stanzas, which only further pushes back any change made to the Sala Sobieski or Sala dell’Immacolata.\textsuperscript{83} Peter Fabre states that Albertini finished writing \textit{Opusculum de Mirabilibus Novae Urbis Romae} in June 1509, as the new work is occurring in the new apartments, but what Albertini describes is a fully decorated space.\textsuperscript{84} This leaves no room for it to be a description of any early paintings done by Julius II’s initial artists—something that Raphael eventually covered. More likely Albertini is describing a room that was decorated before, possibly during Cesare Borgia’s occupation of the space, and whose frescoes and

\textsuperscript{81} B. Feliciangeli, “Un probabile indizio del nazionalismo di Giulio II,” \textit{Arte e Storia} 8 (1916), 230. In his work \textit{La Vaticane de Sixte IV}, Paul Fabre also states that the library Albertini is discussing is not the Segnatura. Paul Fabre, \textit{La Vaticane de Sixte IV} (Rome: Imprimerie de la PMX, Philippe Cuggiani, 1896), 27.

\textsuperscript{82} Schmarsow, \textit{Francisci Albertini Opvscvlvm de Mirabilibus Novae Vrbis Romae}, 35.


\textsuperscript{84} Fabre, \textit{La Vaticane de Sixte IV}, 26.
ornament were eventually destroyed by Julius II’s renovations. If so, it stands as the only known account we have of permanent decorations in one of Cesare Borgia’s residences.

One other place in Rome that could still bear some of Cesare’s patronage is Santa Maria Nuova, today called Santa Francesca Romana, Cesare’s titular church while he was a cardinal. (Figure 2-17) It sits among the ruins of the Ancient Roman Forum, specifically on the site of the Temple of Venus and Roma. We do know that he was attentive to his relationship with the church; Burchard records his presence at ceremonial services, and Cesare stayed there after his return from the coronation of King Federigo of Naples in 1497.85

The church has been completely remodeled, so any architectural trace of patronage by Cesare would be gone; however, there is a painting in the sacristy that could be related to him. The painting *Madonna and Saints* has been attributed to both Girolamo da Cremona and Liberale da Verona. (Figure 2-18) Bernard Berenson saw them both as a possibility, as have other authors, but most recently Liberale da Verona has gained favor as the proper attribution. This is important because there is no known date for the painting and the terminal dates for Girolamo da Cremona, active 1450-1485, set the painting’s execution out of Cesare’s timeframe. Keith Christiansen firmly cited Liberale da Verona (1445-1527/29) as the painter, which greatly expands the possible date of execution.86 Girolamo da Cremona was principally a miniaturist while Liberale da Verona did paint panels, another point in favor of his ascription as the artist of the work.87 Additionally, it is known that Liberale did go to Rome to paint an altarpiece, a fact supported by cassoni paintings done by Liberale which show influence from equestrian groups

---

87 Ibid, 291.
on ancient Roman sarcophagi.\textsuperscript{88} It is safe to project that Cesare would have given something to
his titular church during the years that he served as its cardinal, and it is possible that this
painting was commissioned by him for the church.\textsuperscript{89}

This same time period in Rome was one of great growth in influence and power for
Cesare. During the winter of 1493 and spring of 1494, he rose in his father’s favor, further
nourishing his maturing self-confidence. He became a political partner to Alexander, respected
by outside parties as an important authority. By 1495 he took part in major discussions,
decisions, and maneuvers.\textsuperscript{90} Charles VIII of France sent Cesare a letter asking for his persuasive
influence with the pope.\textsuperscript{91} This increase in clout also manifested in an amplified role in
ceremonial affairs. In 1496 he hosted a group of new cardinals in his apartments, all of whom
recognized his position as his father’s confidant, and in May of that year he shared with
Alexander the role of organizing the entrance of Jofre, Cesare’s younger brother, and his wife
Sancia into Rome.\textsuperscript{92} More descriptive of the point, though, was his position in the
entertainments surrounding Lucrezia Borgia’s second marriage, to Alfonso Bisceglie.

For Lucrezia’s first marriage on June 12, 1493, to Giovanni Sforza, Alexander had been
responsible for the ceremonies and festivals and Juan Borgia served as the master of ceremonies.
After the ceremony, in the papal apartments, Plautus’s comedy the \textit{Menaechmi} was performed as

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid, 297. His cassoni paintings have been specifically compared to the \textit{Battle of the Amazon} sarcophagus housed
today in the Capitoline Museum.

\textsuperscript{89} Marino Sanudo, a Venetian historian, mentions in his \textit{Diarii} (1496-1533) that work was done on the campanile of
Santa Maria Nova in April 1501 by Nicolò Moresini and Jacomo (Giacomo). It is remotely possible that Cesare had
something to do with this work. This is mentioned in volume IV, 27.

\textsuperscript{90} Bradford, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 40-41.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid, 37.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid, 53, 55.
well as an eclogue by Serafino Aquilino. The more intimate later meal was also taken in the pope’s apartments. For her second wedding, on August 5, 1498, Cesare played a prominent role. The dramatic change in the depth of his contribution is a sign of his emerging importance but also of his superlative status, outpacing his now deceased brother Juan on the level of involvement afforded to the men of the family outside of the patriarch. The events that Alexander and Cesare staged together, as well as those Cesare hosted alone, offer a glimpse into the rich metaphoric tapestry common in Renaissance ephemeral display, executed here at the highest level, requiring a tremendous depth of education, performative skill, and luxury that few hosts were able to provide.

After the wedding ceremony and traditional feast hosted by Alexander, Cesare was responsible for the personal celebrations and tableaux that were held in the Borgia Apartments. The decorations were elaborate. There was a fountain whose workings depicted cobras and other poisonous snakes. In another room was a set of a forest through which walked seven masked participants [mummers] who were dressed as individual animals: Jofre as a sea goose; Ludovico Borgia, a cousin, as an elephant; and four of Cesare’s men as a fox, a stag, a lion, and a giraffe. Cesare himself appeared wearing a horned mark in the guise of a unicorn. They were all dressed in colorful satin, selected to represent their animal persona, and danced before the Pope. Each totem was chosen specifically for the wearer, and Cesare’s use of the unicorn was likely a multi-layered and light-hearted allusion. Unicorns were known symbols of female chastity, a reference to Lucrezia and her wedding night, but also a joke about Cesare’s well

---

93 Cloulas, The Borgias, 75-77.
94 Bradford, Lucrezia Borgia, 73.
known, less-than-chaste, behavior. Unicorns were also associated with the masculine “spirit” [spiritus], an alchemical association for the union of the male and its opposite on the wedding night, and a comment on Cesare’s own virility. The unicorn horn, the source of spiritus, also legendarily had the ability to protect against sickness and neutralize poison, mentioned by Ctesias, an author that was known and widely circulated. This was likely another jovial layer, referencing the Borgia reputation for using poison to dispose of their enemies.

The next day, Monday, August 6th, Cesare gave a party in the loggia of the Villa Belvedere.

Cesare, seated beside Alexander, wore lay dress, splendid in a doublet of crimson satin and white brocade in the French style, white buskins or half-boots, a cape and a bonnet of black velvet with golden tassels and a white plume, adorned with a gold medallion showing a woman’s head. Lucrezia, Cesare and Sancia danced together, then the others danced and at one hour of the night they brought in the table for supper. Cesare, who had changed his clothes once again, acted as master of ceremonies to the Pope while the principal men of his household carried out the service of the table. Others acted as pages bearing flaming torches, including Cesare’s henchman, the sinister Don Miguel de Corella. Afterwards the company watched ‘some buffoons who performed many tricks’. Then Cesare danced another dance with Lucrezia, and another eight with Sancia; then the Pope ordered Cesare, Lucrezia and Sancia to dance together, followed by general dancing, after which the company retired to rest. At sunrise the Pope got up and went to the loggia where they were all served with a collation of sweetmeats, with Cesare again acting as master of ceremonies. There were one hundred dishes of sweetmeats and conserves. Then came ‘diverse and very beautiful inventions’ – sugar statues presented by Cesare with diverse motifs. One placed before the Pope was in the figure of a woman with an apple in her hand signifying his mastery of the world; for Alfonso there was a cupid with verses in his hand; for Lucrezia a woman supposed to be the Roman matron Lucretia; for Cesare—significantly—a knight with arms given to him by the goddess of battles.


96 Ibid, 19-20. Gotfredsen says that Ctesias’s reference to the unicorn was in his work Persica, however, I was unable to find any reference in this work. The animal is instead mentioned in Ctesias’s Indica, F45q. Ctesias (born late 5th century BCE) was a Greek historian.

97 Bradford, Lucrezia Borgia, 74.
The festivities continued for days. On August 12th a bullfight was held in the park outside of Cardinal Ascanio’s villa, for which there were 10,000 spectators. Cesare had a large platform constructed for the occasion that was draped with tapestries and decorated with yards of silk. Tournament as an art form, used to showcase the skills, prowess, and costume of the high ranking participants, was still in its apogee—a fact on clear display through the great pageantry and expense of this event. Cesare went onto the field mounted on a white horse, costumed in jewel-studded tack and white brocade, and carrying a lance worked in gold and silver. Although he was accompanied by 12 knights, 12 boys, and 12 cavalymen, all wearing his crimson and yellow livery, he killed all the bulls himself.

August 1498 proved to be a halcyon time for Cesare. Fresh from hosting many of Rome’s most important figures at Lucrezia’s wedding, on August 17, 1498, Cesare publicly declared his decision to put off the purple, to relinquish his cardinalate and become a secular player in his family’s dynastic agenda. On August 23rd there was a formal consistory, and it was officially done. As the anticipation for the worldly life that he had always desired grew, so did the anxiety over his public presentation and political prospects.

He began actively acquiring fine cloth, known through a brief in the Archivio di Stato of Venice, which describes a baggage train of mules, weighed by silk and cloth of gold, on their way to Cesare in Rome that was plundered in the forest of Bolsena by the people of Cardinal Farnese. Physical exercise also became paramount. A description of him by Cristoforo

---

98 Ibid, 75.


100 Bradford, *Lucrezia Borgia*, 75.

101 Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 76.

Poggio, on January 19th, 1498 noted: “Monsignor of Valencia every day exercises the practice of arms and seems resolved to be a gallant soldier.”

On August 18 1498, Cattaneo reported:

In these days Valencia, armed as a janissary, with another fourteen men, gave many blows and proofs of strength in killing eight bulls in the presence of Don Alfonso, Donna Lucretia and ‘his princess’ [Sancia] in Monsignor Ascianio’s park where he had taken them remote from the crowd for greater privacy. In a few days time I hope to see him fully armed in the piazza.

This was a much more private affair than the event held during the wedding. The purpose was not a grandiose public spectacle, but instead a self-attestation of ability. This need for affirmation was certainly in part due to the apprehension caused by the deterioration of his once illustrious beauty. Blotches and a brown rash had begun to appear on his drying skin—the secondary signs of syphilis.

In July 1497, Cesare had gone to Naples to serve as the papal legate for the coronation of Federigo of Aragon, and while there, contracted the little known disease brought back to Spain from Hispaniola with Columbus’s crew. Syphilis spread from Spain, most rapidly through the Spaniards that entered the army of Charles VIII of France for his invasion of Italy, and subsequently through the Spaniards that were sent to defend Charles’s opponent, Naples. The disease was transmitted rampant through the behavior that came with Renaissance fighting forces. When Charles’s army left Italy, the disease followed their path up the peninsula and was dispersed over the rest of Europe. A figure suffering from the disease seen on the title page woodcut for Joseph Grünpeck’s 1496 work *Tractatus de Pestilentiali Scorra Sive Mala de*

---

103 Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 74. Cristoforo Poggio was an agent and secretary to the Bentivoglio family of Bologna.

104 Ibid, 80. Gian Lucido Cattaneo was an envoy from Mantua.

Francos demonstrates the swift panic that gripped Europe as soon as the disease arrived on their shores.\textsuperscript{106} (Figure 2-19)

Cesare’s infection occurred in the incipient phase of the disease’s presence, so much so that the 1497 treatis \textit{Tractatus Contra Pudendagra}, a seminal text on the disease written by Gasper Toralla, a Spanish physician and long standing member of Alexander’s household, was dedicated to him.\textsuperscript{107} Cesare was still a young man in his early twenties, and the emotional effects of this unknown, incurable, painful, and visually marring disease would have been marked.

Valeria Finucci, in her work \textit{The Manly Masquerade}, discusses “the performative nature of masculinity to show how problematic indeed it is for men to be virile, phallic, and active,” acknowledging that like femininity, “masculinity is a construct, a display, a performance.”\textsuperscript{108} This is important for the current discussion because she also points out the gender anxiety caused by syphilis and the possible denigration to the penis.\textsuperscript{109}

At this precipitous moment in his life, Cesare had begun to suffer from a disease that threatened his corporal magnificence as well as the construction and core of his masculinity.\textsuperscript{110} The blotches and rash of the secondary stage are, however temporary, and before he left for France in 1498 to marry and begin his military career, they had subsided; nonetheless, the fear of their return and the physical consequences was lasting. The scars which are common to sufferers


\textsuperscript{107} Garner, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 119.


\textsuperscript{109} Ibid, 46.

\textsuperscript{110} Quëtel, \textit{History of Syphilis}, 21. Because there was a variation in symptoms from one patient to another, we cannot be sure what afflictions he suffered.
of the disease are likely the reason that he is known to have commissioned only one portrait of himself. More immediately, it is also probably the cause for the particularly extravagant amounts expended to outfit his departure.

The importance of this phase in Cesare’s life is the formative nature of his surroundings and early patronage. He lived much of this time under the influence of his father whose luxurious lifestyle set an extravagant example for Cesare to follow. He also learned from his father’s investment in public pageantry and personal presentation. Cesare was exposed to humanist learning through his education and the important figures of the Roman intellectual community, and he was likely exposed to various books on appropriate decorum, conduct, and expenditure. In line with those teachings were the decorations in his apartments in the Vatican. The significant structural and decorative work that was executed in the space while Cesare was living there introduces us to his first crafted environment, and although little can be said conclusively, it remains art historically remarkable. The possibility of his patronage at Santa Maria Nuova, his titular church, further reinforces the idea of him as an early patron, perhaps in this case of an extant work. Through the examination of the festivities held for Lucrezia’s first two weddings, one can see his evolving role, and his escalating ability to command and manage large scale artistic performances. This introduction to the impact and nuances of such events and edification culminated in Lucrezia’s third wedding, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. The next phase of Cesare’s life simultaneously reinforced this early development and separated Cesare from his father’s influence, beginning a path of independently designed iconography, display, and style.

111 The portrait mention here was a part of an altarpiece that he commissioned from Leonardo da Vinci in 1502 and will be discussed in great detail in Chapter 4: The Prince.
CHAPTER 3
TRANSFORMATION

A man can do anything he wills…

—Alber1

Over 200,000 ducats were raised in preparation for Cesare’s departure for France. The money was spent on opulent items, rich stuffs, jewels, plate, and objects of virtue made of gold and silver. A Mantuan envoy, likely Cattaneo, reported that Rome was exhausted of its goods, so much so that additional luxuries had to be imported from Venice. Cesare wrote to Francesco Gonzaga requesting that he send horses from his famous stable: “we find ourselves absolutely destitute of fine coursers suitable to us in such a journey.”2

Cesare left Rome on October 1st, 1498. His dress and retinue was described by Cattaneo: he wore a white damask doublet trimmed in gold, a black velvet cloak “in the French style”, a black velvet cap adorned with a white plume and large rubies, and boots ornamented with gold chains and pearls.3 His horse, and those of his closest companions, came from the Gonzaga stables in Mantua, and were, for the occasion, caparisoned in red silk and gold brocade. The trappings, including the horseshoes, were said to be of solid silver.4 Cesare was accompanied by over 30 men as well as a train of baggage carriages and mules.5

---

1 Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 21. Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) was an Italian humanist and architect, famous for a number of treatises on painting, architecture, and sculpture. His artistic approach and advice focused on the inclusion of elements of design and style inspired and directly derived from the ancients. This is his most famous quote and exemplifies the contemporary view of him as a “Renaissance man”, stressing the humanistic idea that men were active forces in their own lives.

2 Ibid, 82.

3 The description of Cesare’s dress is taken from Cloulas, The Borgias, 156 and Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 83.


5 Beuf, Cesare Borgia, 99.
He disembarked in Marseilles in late October and headed for Avignon. Once he arrived, he was fêted by Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, who spent over 7,000 ducats on gifts and festivities including banquets, parades, and other various entertainments. Temporary triumphal arches with the arms of the Pope, Cesare, and the delle Rovere family were erected as were decorations for other tableaux. Cesare was also presented with gifts of silverware and fruit preserves. A local chronicler wrote that “Avignon never witnessed such an enthusiastic welcome, never such a splendid procession.” From there Cesare went to Lyon, where he was honored with an enormous feast held by the city dignitaries; the food was endless and exotic, punctuated by plays and dancing.

Chinon was selected as the backdrop for Cesare’s formal meeting with King Louis XII, and it was where he put on display the full magnificence of his retinue. This theatrical performance was witnessed by a relative of the writer Brantôme, who used the account as a source in his work *Femmes Galantes*.

The Duke Valentinois entered thus on Wednesday, the eighteenth day of December 1498. Before him marched the Cardinal of Rouen, M. De Ravenstain, the Seneschal of Toulouse, M. de Clermont, with many Lords and Gentlemen to the foot of the bridge; he was preceded by twenty-four handsome mules carrying trunks, coffers and chests, covered with cloths bearing the Duke’s arms, then again came another twenty-four mules with their trappings halved in red and yellow…the colours of the King, then twelve mules with coverings of yellow striped satin. Then came six mules with trappings of cloth of gold, of which one stripe was of cloth of gold cut, the other smooth, which made seventy in all…After them came sixteen beautiful chargers, led by hand, with trappings of gold, red and yellow brocade and bridles of jannets, as was customary in this country. *Item* followed

---

8 Ibid, 87.
eighteen pages, each on a horse, sixteen dressed in crimson velvet and the other two in cloth of gold. These, thought the populace, were *ses deux mignons*, as they were dressed better than the others. In addition, as was customary in those days, there came six beautiful mules richly caparisoned with bridles, saddles and trappings, all of crimson velvet. They were led by six lackeys dressed in the same color. Then followed two mules carrying coffers, which were all covered by cloth of gold. These, the populace believed, were carrying more exquisite things than the others – either beautiful and precious stones for his fiancée, or some Holy Relic – that is what the world said. After them came thirty gentlemen dressed in cloth of gold and cloth of silver. *Item* there were three musicians, that is to say, two drums and one rebeck which were much the fashion in those days...these two drums were covered in cloth of gold, as was the custom of the country and the rebeck was hung with gold ribbons while the instruments were in silver with gold chains. These musicians were going between the aforesaid gentlemen and the Duc de Valentinois, always playing. Then came four trumpeters, with trumpets and clarinets of silver, were playing their instruments all the time. There were also twenty-four lackeys dressed in crimson velvet lined with yellow silk, they surrounded the aforesaid Duke, near whom was the Cardinal of Rouen to entertain him. The Duke himself was riding on a great and beautiful charger, spendidly harnessed, in a suit of red satin, striped with gold – personally I cannot understand this stuff – and embroidered with large pearls and precious stones. His bonnet was ornamented with five or six rubies which appeared to be of great value. On the reverse of his sleeves and even on his boots, which were all of gold thread and embroidered, there were great quantities of pearls and valuable stones...The horse on which he was mounted was laden with gold leaf and his trappings were adorned with pearls and jewels. Besides, he had a nice little mule to use when he was going around town, with all its harness, such as saddle, bridle, and breast-band adorned with golden roses, one finger thick. And finally there came twenty-four mules with red coverings bearing the arms of the said lord, and also a train of wagons carrying many other things, such as camp beds, dishes, and other chatels.10

---

10 This account is a combination of the descriptions offered on Beuf, *Cesare Borgia*, 100-102 and Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 89. There is an Italian version of this entrance that was interestingly found in the papers of Machiavelli. The significance of that will be discussed in Chapter 4: The Prince. It is Note A in the appendix of Edmond Bonnaffé’s work but will also be included in full here: “Nota della pompa con quale entrò il Valentino in Cynone, quando andò a torre donna, e dare il cappello a Roano; e prima: Erano dodici canette piene di forzeretti con coperte di panno rosso e giallo. 40 muli con coperte di velluto chermisi e giallo. 12 cavalli grossi con fornimento di velluto e broccato, fra quali era uno cavallo bellissimo con fornimento alla tedesca e sonagli d’argento, e selle di broccato, e chi menava i cavalli era vestito di velluto. Seguitavon dapoi XX paggi in su cavalli grossi e giannetti, tutti vestiti di velluto chermisi riccamente; li paggi avevano saioni listrati di broccato, con velluto et con le berette. Seguivono poi scudieri, quali erano 60, con collane d’oro e saioni di velluto nero, dietro a quali erano certi romani bene ad ordine, fra i quali era il signor Giovanni Orsino. Seguiva poi el fratel del Cardinale Borges e di Perugia molto bene ad ordine, e altri gentili uomini. Dapoi otto trombetti vestiti di velluto, dopo a’ quali era il duca, che cavalcava uno grosso corsieri liardo, e avea a pié 18 scaffieri con pitocchi di velluto. El cavallo del Duca avea uno fornimento largo dinanzi, e di dietro era alla Tedesca con molte e varie gioie, e in sulla groppa presso alla sella era un carciofo d’oro, grande al naturale, e alla coda del cavallo era una sferza d’oro piena di grosse perle e altre gioie bellissime. La persona del Duca avea una veste alla francese dal lato manco di velluto nero, con XII rasi d’oro, in ciascuno de’ quali era uno grande ballascio, e nel petto...
Cesare himself wore a doublet of black velvet with wide sleeves, a French fashion, with gold buttons decorated with balas rubies. Attached to his breast was an elaborate hand-mirror, set with diamonds and pearls. The “bonnet” that Brantôme referenced was a velvet beret enhanced with pearls, one of which was legendarily the size of an acorn.11

On the morning after his entrance, the ostentatious display of costume continued; he wore a black velvet cloak in the Spanish style, with a blue lining and loops of gold cord. On top of it sat a gold collar set with rubies with a medallion of diamonds suspended from it.12 The collar alone made such an impression that a rhyme was coined to preserve its worth,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Et un collier pour dire le cas,} \\
\text{ Qui valait bien trente mille ducats.}\end{align*}
\]

Although this display was meant to impress, the French found it to be too grandiose, and Cesare’s introduction into France did not go as smoothly as he would have hoped.14 This type of peacocking was specific to Cesare’s early life and a behavior that he would ultimately outgrow.

---

11 Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 119.
12 For the rubies in the collar see Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 119. For the medallion of diamonds see Sabatini, The Life of Cesare Borgia, 161.
13 Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 119. Rough translation by the author: And a necklace to tell in this case, That was well worth thirty-thousand ducats
14 Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 83.
Louis XII dressed very simply in black velvet and the French king’s style inspired Cesare; he adopted it upon his return to Italy, exemplified in his February 1500 entrance into Rome.\textsuperscript{15} This emulation is a humanizing example of how a young man absorbed and implemented influences, modeling himself on pieces of the powerful men he met during his life. The year 1499 marked the first time that as an adult Cesare had operated apart from his father and witnessed how other figures on the world stage conducted themselves and functioned within their own courts. He started to play the political and diplomatic game independently, and although his father would continue to always be a collaborative partner, this was the beginning of an internal shift that manifested itself in his outward appearance and plans.

The marriage contract between Cesare and his new wife, Charlotte d’Albret, was signed on May 10, 1499, in the apartment of Queen Anne de Bretagne in Blois. Although the ceremony itself was simple, small, and intimate, Cesare hosted an extravagant wedding breakfast. Because his own apartments did not have enough room to stage the place settings and environment necessary for the occasion, he had large tents of silken cloth set up on the grassy field near the castle.\textsuperscript{16} For a wedding gift, the Queen gave Cesare a horse and an engraved ring that he was to wear “for the love of her.” The King gave him the collar of the Order of St. Michael, the most important of the initiation items that Cesare received upon his induction into the prestigious group; the others included a mantak of white damask and velvet cap. The gold collar was a necklace formed by interlaced cockleshells with loops in between. It also had a pendant with an

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. For more on black clothing see John Harvey, \textit{Men in Black} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995). Harvey traces the use of clothing by the French court that influenced Cesare’s dress to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy who started the style in the early 15\textsuperscript{th}-century. For Philip it began as mourning attire in 1419 but he continued to wear it as a conscious statement of style for the rest of his life. Through that transition it became associated with the moral high ground and earned authority. (52-54) Castiglione’s Book of the Courtier includes the statement: “I am also always more pleased when clothes tend to be sober and restrained…so it seems to me that the most agreeable colour is black.” Castiglione, \textit{The Book of Courtier}, Bk II, 135.

image of St. Michael engaged in combat with Satan as a dragon. One can see an example of the collar in Jean Perréal’s portrait of Louis XII. (Figure 3-1) Cesare was officially invested with the Order, the highest chivalric order in France at the time, on May 19. On the occasion, Louis also authorized Cesare and his future descendants to use the name and arms of the royal house of France. From this point forward, Cesare’s arms were quartered with the lilies.

For their wedding Cesare gave Charlotte sumptuous gifts worth 20,000 ducats, brought in his baggage train from Italy, and used to set up a household equipped with the necessary items for display and dress. They included countless:

Necklaces, carcanets, pendants, rings, bracelets, chains, and head ornaments, a great, pear-shaped pearl set as a brooch, a ruby and emerald ring, a ruby set in gold, a chain of gold, with a cabochon ruby pendant, five emeralds set in gold, a large and long emerald set in gold, a ruby and emerald necklace, a necklace of twenty rubies and eighty pearls, a hair ornament of twelve diamond roses and thirteen pearls, gorgerins of filigree encrusted with pearls, handfuls of unset gems, rubies, pearls, emeralds, and diamonds.

We know some of these objects through the inventory of Charlotte’s chateau, La Motte-Feuilly, taken after her death on March 11, 1514.

Household inventories can offer a great wealth of information about a family or an individual at a certain time in history because they document some of the most important expenditures made and offer a picture of the overall visual impression presented by the associated entity. Although their value is at times overlooked by scholars, domestic objects communicated effective social cues about a family’s reputation, refinement, and social standing, and were highly prized items in the Renaissance. Silverware, jewelry, clothing, and textiles were

19 Miron, *The Derelict Duchess*, 156.
the most valuable possessions. They were important investments, and inventories were done to protect inheritances. Their practical application is illuminated by the 1512 use of the 1492 inventory of the estate of Lorenzo de’ Medici, to reclaim the property that had been confiscated, stolen, or sold following the family’s exile in 1494. The execution of an inventory was motivated by economics, not personal sentimentality towards individual objects, and the items described, works of art being no exception, were included because of their value and status as commodities. Because of this technical approach, the descriptions often leave art historians wanting more, but even without fully elaborated details, one can often imagine the powerful presentation of wealth and status created through the enumerated objects.

The hand-written inventory of Charlotte d’Albret, housed today in the Archives nationales in Paris, includes 677 objects. A transcription by Edmond Bonnaffé, published in 1878, makes the list more widely available to scholars. After reading the long list, one cannot help but be impressed by the wealth. Although Charlotte came from a wealthy family herself and was a lady in waiting to the French royal court, her household far exceeds her means,


21 Ibid, 16.


25 Miron, *The Derelict Duchess*, 237. Miron described her wealth as exceeding, particularly in plate and objects of virtue, the belongings of even the Queen of France.
suggesting that most of the objects were brought by Cesare to France or were purchased by Charlotte after her marriage. A number of the items are identifiable as having specifically belonged to Cesare and are therefore valuable for this research’s examination of his self-fashioning during this phase of his life.

To begin, some of the items that were mentioned in Brantôme’s account can be identified in the inventory. The mule driven coffers from the description are the bahuts that are noted. One held bed-linens and the other is described as being used by Catherine Challoppin, Charlotte’s femme de chamber. Some of the cloths that were draped over them in Cesare’s entrance parade are also mentioned. Two cassoni, described in the inventory as, “Deux coffres blancs à la mode de Ytallie,” have been identified by Bonnaffé as some of the chests mentioned by Brantôme as well. Bonnaffé offers an additional, more detailed description, suggesting that what was considered to be the Italian style was a white wood covered in applications of white paste or molded pulp, possibly pastiglia, and then gilded in gold or decorated with paintings, and says that this method was not practiced in France at all. The type of cassone that he describes

---

26 Bonnaffé, Inventaire, 17. Bonnaffé list some of the gems found in the inventory that he suggests might have been a part of Cesare’s costume during the entrance in Chinon, “Les bijoux ne sont pas moins magnifiques, et consistent en diamants, en perles, en émeraudes et en rubis formant des carcans, pointes, pendants, bagues ou coiffures. Une pointe de diamants est évaluée 2,000 écus d’or, — un carcan d’or avec onze diamants, 3,000 écus, — une bague avec émeraude et rubis, 2,000 écus, — une chaîne avec rubis balais, 1,500 écus, — un collier de 20 rubis et de 80 perles, 1,000 écus, — une coiffure en rubis, 1,000 écus, une autre en plumes, diamants et perles cotée 1,500 écus; — une (1 table de dyamant, enchâssée en or, montée sur une ceinture émaillée », 1,000 écus, etc.’’ A ces merveilles, dont quelques-imes ont dû faire partie du costume officiel de César, décrit par Brantôme.”

27 Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 117. Bahuts are footed chests with a flat or convex top that are often used for seating when empty. Inventory entry 505 – “Une couverture de coffre à bahu, bandée de drap rouge & jaulne.” Inventory entry 609 – “Une couverture de coffres à bahut.”

28 Bonnaffé, Inventaire, 91. Bonnaffé suggests that these are from his entrance into Chinon, through comparison with Brantôme, in the footnote to entry 505. Inventory entry 505 – ”Une couverture de coffre à bahu, bandée de drap rouge & jaulne.” Inventory entry 581 - ”Et fur ledict coffer avons trouvé une couverture de drap rouge & jaulne.” Inventory entry 673 – "Une couchecte garnye de couecte, coueffin & une couverture partie de drap joulne & rouge.”

29 Ibid., 89. Inventory entry 461. Bonnaffé’s footnote reads, "Coffres rapportés d'Italie par César Borgia et faisant partie de son bagage. Ces cassoni, comme les appellent nosvoisins, étaient en bois blanc couvert d'applications en
is likely that of one housed today in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for which the medium is described as: “pinewood and poplar, gesso, partly gilded, form- molded, and painted.”30 (Figure 3-2) Two German trumpets, used in the auditory component of the entrance, are also identified.31 In the Italian version of the entrance, a “carciofo d'oro” (artichoke of gold) is described as decorating the back of Cesare’s saddle. Bonnaffé believe it was described by the individual(s) taking stock of Charlotte’s household and described as: “Une chardon dor efmailhé de verd & rouge poifant quatre deniers”—as a golden thistle (artichoke) of green and red enamel.32

A number of objects that Cesare was given while he was in France are also found in the inventory. The following items were given to Cesare by the consuls and citizens of Avignon during his stay in the city in October:

- Two basins in fine silver plate, for washing the hands,
- Two ewers, also in fine silver.
- Twelve large cups in fine silver.
- Two ewers in silver-gilt.
- One large cup, gilt within and without, on the outside the twelve months of the year painted in enamel – called also in some records the twelve apostles.
- A large basin in silver-gilt of the fashion of Catalonia.
- Two large pitchers in fine silver.33

---


32 Miron, *The Derelict Duchess*, 119. Bonnaffé, *Inventaire*, 62. Inventory entry 250. The phrase in the Italian version that describes this object is, "...e in sulla groppa presso alla sella era un carciofo d'oro..."

The plate in its totality was worth 946 écus du Roi, and each piece was engraved with the arms of Avignon in enamel. The large basin is listed in Charlotte’s inventory as: “A large basin for washing the hands, having a great coat of arms in the centre, encircled with a wreath of leaves, a sun half-risen, and two crescent moons, risen, chased and gilt, shells below, and the beak gilt, weighing 9 marks.”

Most of the value that Cesare brought with him to France was bound in the form of gold and silver plate. His setting included the items in the following description:

Thirteen articles in solid gold – salt-cellars, dishes, forks, and spoons; thirteen in rock-crystal – ewers, flagons, open and covered dishes; 334 in silver or silver gilt, the greater part enameled – cups, dishes, six drageoirs, nine basins, nefs, tankards, and trenchers; besides the twenty silver ornaments which we shall find in the chapel inventory of Madame la Duchesse de Valentinao… For table decoration on ceremonial or festive occasions there were several ornaments of remarkable beauty. They included more than one specimen of those exquisite receptacles for spices, wines, spoons, and table-napkins, sometimes for the fan or gloves of host or guest, known as nefs, miniature ships of war, fully rigged. Two beautiful examples in the list of the Valentinao possession are described as being of mother-of-pearl, masts, sails, and cordage complete, supported, the one by four griffins, the other by four snails. There was also a citadel, with four towers, in silver, and a ewer of rock-crystal, set with six sapphires and seventeen pearls, and a table-fountain, for spraying rose-water, made in the shape of a belfry, with female figures enameled on silver-gilt.

---

34 Ibid., 109.

35 Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 109. Bonnaffé, Inventaire, 43. Inventory entry 58 — "Un autre grant baffin à laver mains ayant ung grant armoirrie au millieu, ung rond alentour taillé de feuilles d'espargne, ung foleil demy enlevé, fizellé et doré, & autour du bourg des croiffans enlevez, fizable & dorez, des coquilles au-deffus, & le bout doré, poyant neuf marcs."

36 Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 157-158. Bonnaffé, Inventaire, 49, 52. Inventory entry 113 – "Une nef de coquille de perle, garny de maz, de voille, & de cordage, d'un chafteau devant & darrière, d'argent, avec ung pied fizellé à quatre griffons aux quatre coins & deffus deux beftes vellans ayans tefte d'homme ; le tout vermeil doré, poyant avec lescaille de perle cinq mars deux onces, ladicie ecaille de perle vallant par le rapport dudit Geoffroy Jacquet, orfèvre des fidéicts, la femme de dix efcuz." Inventory entry 137 – "Plus ung chafteau, ouquel y a au millieu ung criftal à roche, au pied quatre tourseilles dargent, & au feft ung chafteau, ledict feft à pied dargent doré, ledict argent doré poyant troys mars, eftimé le tout, tant argent que criftal par ledict orfèvre juré, à vignt quatre efcuz."
One drageoir was a wedding gift to Charlotte and was decorated with the double crown of Aragon with a shield in between.37 These comfit dishes took the form of a basin or covered cup with handles and were always presented on a tray with two small tongs or spoons to lift the spices or fruits.38 Of particular novelty are the forks, which were not commonly used in France at the time and did not come into favor until the reign of Henri III (1551-1574).39 Two altars not found in the Duchess’s chapel but in the house, are listed in the inventory and likely belonged to Cesare, accoutrements from the time when he was a cardinal.40 There are two other interesting objects, a letter C in gold and a double C in red enamel that could have been wedding gifts for Cesare and Charlotte.41

Some additional objects, less used it would seem, were found in the cellar of the Château: seven copper candlesticks, various vessels for holding and pouring wine, jugs, tankards, flagons, pots, and ewers. They were primarily pewter but some were made of finer materials and

37 Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 186. Bonnaffé, Inventaire, 16. Bonnaffé assigns a number of the most exquisite objects in Charlotte’s inventory as wedding gifts from Cesare: "La vaisselle comprend 13 pièces en or massif, 13 en cristal de roche et 334 en argent ou en vermeil, la plupart émaillées; des tasses à pied, plats, saucières, pots à vin et à eau, 18 coupes pesant de 3 à 9 marcs, 6 drageoirs de grande dimension variant de 13 à 17 marcs, 9 bassins de toutes formes, des nefs, salières, flacons, tranchoirs, etc.; plus 20 pièces d'argent servant à la chapelle, le tout d'une grande richesse, ciselé, repoussé à feuillages et à personnages. La plupart des pièces sont de provenance étrangère, on peut aisément le reconnaître à la description minutieuse de l'inventaire; d'ailleurs, les mots façon d'Italie ou façon d'Espagne ne laissent aucun doute sur l'origine. Ce sont les cadeaux de noces que l'ancien cardinal espagnol, devenu Don César Borgia, rapportait à dos de mulets lors de son entrée à Chinon."

38 Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 212.

39 Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 158. Bonnaffé, Inventaire, 35, 53. Inventory entry 9 – "Deux fourchettes, l’une plus grande que la autre, - 6 onces 6 gros. Inventory entry 145 – “Une fourchette auffi d’or, poyfant troys onces deux gros & demy."

40 Bonnaffé, Inventarie, 56. Inventory entry 185 – "En ung coffre couvert de cuyr trouvé oudiet cabinet e efté trouvé ung benoifier d’agaecte de demy pied in largeur & demy pied un longueur, le defius & le deffoubz garny dargent doré avec quatre bandes & l’ance garny dargen doré, eftimé & aprecié par ledict orfevre juré a huit mil efeuz dor." Inventory entry 186 – "Une table de jafpe pour ung haultier, garnye dargent doré, garnye de quatre piedz, dont les deux autres entiers, eftimée par ledict orfevre juré à cinq efs efeuz dor."

41 Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 179. Bonnaffé, Inventaire, 62. Inventory entry 256 – "Ung C dor, poifant cinq gros." Inventory entry 257 – "Ung double C efmailhé de rouge, poifant ung gros."
elaborately decorated with serpents and the ducal arms. The workmanship was Italian.\textsuperscript{42} E.L. Miron, a biographer of Charlotte d’Albret, suggests that Cesare brought them with him from Italy. If this is true, it means he was already experimenting with snakes and their possible place in his coat of arms—a fact that will become important in a later discussion of the hydra.

Numerous pomanders, decorative spheres usually made of gold or silver gilt designed to hold perfumes, like the example held today in the Victoria and Albert Museum, are listed in the inventory.\textsuperscript{43} (Figure 3-3) Although pomanders were commonly worn or carried by women, it was noted that Cesare frequently toyed with a perfumed golden ball, and it possible that some of those listed in the inventory belonged to him.\textsuperscript{44}

One very personal item that belonged to Cesare was a barber or surgeon’s case of instruments, described as a leather sheath with a gold chain, with the figures of St. Cosmo and St. Damian and two coats of arms in the center.\textsuperscript{45} There is no doubt that the object belonged to Cesare; Charlotte never remarried and spent her final years draped in mourning cloth, so no other man would have belongings in the château. Bonnaffé notes that the kit was made in Italy, so it is likely that Cesare brought it with him as opposed to acquiring it in France.\textsuperscript{46} Although Cosmo

\textsuperscript{42} Miron, \textit{The Derelict Duchess}, 261. It is unclear exactly which objects Miron is referring to but entries 18, 77, 97, 98, 101, 122, 220, and 461 all specify objects of Italian origin or manufacture.

\textsuperscript{43} Bonnaffé, \textit{Inventaire}, 49. Inventory entry 23 – "Deux pommes ayant chafeune une boucle defius & troys souelleiz dorez pour fervir à tendre pavillon de lictz, - 12 marcs 4 onces 6 gros." Inventory entry 111 – "Deux pommes efquelles y a à chafeune une viz, feue dame, garnyz de chefnes, poyfans, deux mars, fept onces & demye." Inventory entry 231 – "Une pomme de fanteurs dor faicte en façon de grenade à jour, poifant deux onces dor." Inventory entry 253 – "Une pomme de fanteurs, couverte de C, en laquelle y a quatre bandes dor, extimée à fix efcuz." Inventory entry 255 – "Une pomme de fanteurs, à filh dor. Eftimée en tout à cinq efcuz." Inventory entry 374 – "Une paire de landiers efquelz a une pomme de cuivre deffus."

\textsuperscript{44} For the information about pomanders association with women see Currie, \textit{Inside the Renaissance House}, 63. For the information on Cesare see Yiarte, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 14.

\textsuperscript{45} Miron, \textit{The Derelict Duchess}, 245. Bonnaffé, \textit{Inventaire}, 16. Inventory entry 14 – "Ung eftuict à barbier couvert tout al fil, ung S cosmo & S. Damyen au milieu, ou il y e deux efeuffons armoyz, une cefine à laquelle pend ledict eftuict, les garnifons toutes dorées, trouvé auffi en ung eftuict de cuyr, - 6 mars 3 onces et demye."

\textsuperscript{46} Bonnaffé, \textit{Inventaire}, 36.
and Damian were the patron saints of surgeons, they were also the patron saints of the Medici, evident in their presence in the Medici Chapel. This case could have been a gift and memento of his close relationship with the family during his time in Pisa. Lorenzo de Medici also had a shaving kit: “A case with four razors and silver mirror, completely decorated with silver.”

Another source of great wealth for Charlotte’s estate was her collection of exquisite textiles. Of the collection, scattered throughout the inventory, listed in various uses, there are cloths of gold, bed-hangings, furniture covers, Turkish carpets, and tapestries. Forty-seven of the 82 tapestry pieces listed were of Felletin manufacture, then at the height of its reputation, its pieces distinguishable from those of the other leading center of production in Aubusson by brown borders. Many of the textiles were menu-vert or la menue-verdure, described as the category of “forest or flourished work, wherein gardens, woods, or forests are represented.”

Entries 407 and 408 are examples of this type. There are also a number of haut lisse tapestry cycles: a six piece cycle of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, a five piece cycle of the infant Moses, a five piece of Moses as an adult, a two piece cycle of Alexander the Great, and a four piece cycle of the labors of Hercules. Other large single pieces include the Battle of Troy, the Battle of Holland, scenes from the Old and New Testament, the Passion, the Tower of Babylon,

---


48 Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 240.

49 Bonnaffé, Inventaire, 84. Inventory entry 407 – "Ladicte chamber a efit trouvée garnye de fept pièces de tappicerie de Felletin tant grandes que petites à feuillage." Inventory entry 408 – "Premiérement, dix pièces de tappicerie de Felletin à champ doré, à verdure, feuillage & beftes, avec le ciel de mefmes, & une petite pièce de ladite forte ou il y a à faire trois carceaulx."

50 Ibid, 84-85. Inventory entry 419 – "Six grans pieces de tappicerie de haulte life faicte à foie, contenant liftoire de la paffion nofite Seigneur avecques la refurrection & autres chofes." Inventory entry 412 – "Cinq pieces de tappiferie de haulte lice, nommée le petit Moyfes." Inventory entry 425 – "Deux autres grans pieces de tappicerie auffi de haulte liffe, contenant les geftes de Alexandre le grant." Inventory entry 424 – "Quatre grans pieces de tappicerie auffi de haulte liffe, contenant les geftes & faiz de Herculles."
and Jupiter and the Titans.\textsuperscript{51} The inventory includes numerous others, but the entries are non-descript. Most of the larger cycles and major figural works, as well as many of the smaller cloths, were likely Cesare’s.

A continuing goal, and one to be the focus of future research, is the attempt to locate some of these items, possibly held today in museums, most likely the Louvre or other institutions once associated with the royal collection. The connection of the inventoried objects to these museums is through Louise Borgia or Louise de Valentinais, who was the only child of Cesare and Charlotte. She was only 14 when her mother died and her care was entrusted, at Charlotte’s request, to Madame d’Angoulêm, Louise de Savoie, the mother of Francis I.\textsuperscript{52} It was not just Louise de Valentinois herself, however, it was also her goods. The inventory was taken so that both parties would know what property Louise de Valentinois had inherited.\textsuperscript{53} A May 12, 1514, letter written from Louise to her grandfather implies that she was having difficulties with Madame d’Angoulêm and that there were issues regarding the inventory.

Monseigneur, your gentlemen and those of Madame d’Angoulême cannot come to any agreement concerning the taking of the inventory of the goods, which they have sealed up, in virtue of their commission, but they have been advised that they should make request to the civil judge to make the said inventory, and leave the goods under seal until I shall have informed you of the facts, in order that you may acquaint me with what you may be pleased to ordain both as to my person and my property, and whether it is your wish that, in accordance with the will of Madame, my later mother, I should go to Madame d’Angoulême, I and my goods. Also, I

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid, 78,82,84,85. Inventory entry 354 – "Deux paires & demye de lincieulx de toille de Troye." Inventory entry 355 – "Deux autres paires de ladicte toille de Troye plus petiz." Inventory entry 357 – "Une paire de lincieux de toille de Troye." Inventory entry 360 – "Oudict coffre a efé trouvé ung grant linceux de toille de Troye." Inventory entry 352 – "Deux coctepiontes de toille d’Olande." Inventory entry 353 – "Vingt neuf paires & demye de lincieulx de toille d’Ollande." Inventory entry 358 – "Six foulhes dorilliers de toille de Hollande." Inventory entry 390 – "Une autre grant piece de tappicerie faicte de fil dor & de foye, ou est contenu le viel teftament & le nouveau." Inventory entry 420 – "Deux autres grans pieces, aufti di haulte liffe, lune de la paffion, lautre à personnaiges." Inventory entry 413 – "Plus une grant piece de tappercerie de haulte lice, ou eft liftoire de la tour de Babillone ou eft escript Jupiter, & à lun des boutz Titan."

\textsuperscript{52} Miron, \textit{The Derelict Duchess}, 312.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, 314.
would that it might be your good pleasure to undertake my wardship yourself. I entreat you most humbly, Monseigneur, that it may be thus...for I am put to great expense here.\textsuperscript{54}

Louise was speaking literally when she said that the goods had been “sealed up”; the entire château was walled closed with stone after Charlotte’s death.\textsuperscript{55} It seems that Madame d’Angoulême did not serve as the steward that Charlotte had hoped, a notion reinforced by her reputation of being reckless and malicious during her time as regent for her son.\textsuperscript{56}

The taking of Charlotte’s inventory was clearly an economic survey, which although normal, in this case adopted a more uneasy tone since an outside party had such a high stake in knowing the value and because Louise had a fear of confiscation of her property or impropriety. Another letter written by Louise to Isabella d’Este, the Marchesa of Mantua, strengthens the idea that Louise had genuine worry.

Madame, that which I desire above all else in the world is to hear how my good relations and friends are and prosper, and to be advised of you and of Madame the Duchess Ferrara, my aunt. I have given charge to and sent the bearer of this letter to see you, and to advise me of your news…I have also charged him to tell you something else from me. I beg of you to believe it, and to be good enough to help in the matter of which he will speak to you.\textsuperscript{57}

The tone suggests a close connection and the possibility that correspondences had passed between La Motte-Feuilly and Mantua before. The fact that Louise is communicating with Isabella about things that she will not commit to paper suggests a close and long-term

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, 316.

\textsuperscript{55} Alain Langlois and Valérie Découx, Interviewed by Elizabeth Bemis, Personal Interview, La Motte-Feuilly, France, March 3, 2011. This fact was relayed to me during the interview with Alain Langlois, a local historian, and Valérie Découx, an employee of La Motte-Feuilly.

\textsuperscript{56} Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 314.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, 318-319.
relationship. At a young age Louise had been promised to Isabella and Francesco Gonzaga’s son and heir Federico, and it is likely that this was the initial cause for the correspondence.

That union was never fulfilled and Louise ultimately married into the French royal family, wedding for her second husband Philippe de Bourbon, Seigneur de Busset and eldest son of Pierre de Bourbon. This association is the main reason why Cesare and Charlotte’s belongings are more likely to have found their way into French museums associated with the royal collection. Another is the possibility that Louise’s fears came true and that Madame d’Angoulême, mother of King Francis I, did manage to acquire some of the inventory items.

After Louise gained enough control over her affairs, she commissioned two monuments to honor her mother. Following French tradition, Charlotte’s body and heart were buried in separate places: her heart in the chapel of La Motte-Feuilly and her body next to her friend, Jeanne de Valois, in the Chapel of the Annonciades at Bourges. The effigy of Charlotte in Bourges was destroyed in 1793 during the Revolution, but the tomb in La Motte-Feuilly, although damaged at the same time, was restored and stands today. (Figure 3-4)

Another interesting story about Charlotte’s post-mortem remains is the “Madonna of the Ermine” legend which revolves around a set of bed hangings that were given to Charlotte by Cesare. The legend states that after her death, because of her love for Cesare and his gift, Anne de Bretagne had Charlotte’s body wrapped in the textiles before burial in the cathedral in Bourges. During the French Revolution, when her tomb was disturbed, it was recorded that her body had not decayed. Rumor quickly pinned the nefarious miracle on Cesare, claiming that he

---

58 Ibid, 326.

59 Ibid, 302. On the French tradition to bury the heart separate from the body see Welch, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 227.
had poisoned the hangings in a failed attempt to kill her and that the poison had preserved her body.  

Certainly the legend can be largely dismissed, but elements of it could retain kernels of truth. The description of the ermine tapestry, a square headboard hanging with an image of the Madonna enthroned, whose robe was of fleurs-de-lys and woven in cloth of gold, with real gems sewn into her crown and a painted ermine mantle, does not match anything in her inventory, nor is anything like it mentioned in family correspondences before her death. The tapestries were described as hanging in the state guest-chamber, a room known as the “Bedchamber of Anne de Bretagne,” Queen of France to whom Charlotte was a lady in waiting, and although the Madonna enthroned tapestry set may be a legend, Charlotte’s inventory references another tapestry that could also have ties to Anne de Bretagne and to one of the most famous tapestry cycles in the world. 

In Charlotte’s inventory item 417 is of particular interest here. Described as “une autre grant piece de tappicerie de haulte liffe, au milieu de laquelle eft faicte mencion de liftoire de la fontaine & de la licorne,” it tells us that she owned at least one tapestry with a unicorn as the subject matter.  

Although the evidence is shallow it is possible that this entry is describing one of the tapestries in the Met cycle, most likely with the reference to a fountain, The Unicorn is Found. 

---

60 Elizabeth W. Champney, “The Madonna of the Ermine Mantle,” *Harper’s Monthly Magazine* 103 (June/Nov, 1901), 777. Elizabeth Champney says that this story was relayed to her during a tour of the chateau.

61 Ibid, 776-777.

Very few definitive facts are known about the Unicorn Tapestries. They are of the highest quality so the patron was from an elite group of the very wealthy. They are haute lisse tapestries (like the piece described in Charlotte’s inventory) woven in the Netherlands and are dated, by costume style, to 1495-1505.

The entry for The Unicorn Defends Itself in the catalogue Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence says that the design and cartoon are “attributed to the Paris’ workshop of The Master of the Tres Petites heures of Anne of Brittany.” From this and from other elements in the tapestries themselves (specifically the AE cipher), Anne is the figure most commonly associated with the cycle, and the only one who is associated repeatedly—most scholars believing her to be the patron.

Due to use and poor condition, the tapestries have lost much of their size and the sky areas in four of them have been replaced, leaving it more difficult for art historians to determine original details and dimensions, but it is generally thought that they were woven in honor of a marriage. They were likely designed as hangings for a bridal chamber, with the larger square pieces as wall hangings, and the narrower pieces for use on the bed or under the canopy.

The unicorn as a symbol is associated with weddings, often appearing in the entertainments and offering gifts to the couple in costumed form as well as being present in the

---

63 Gotfredsen, The Unicorn, 115.
65 Ibid. Anne of Brittany and Anne de Bretagne are the same historical figure.
66 For the tapestry’s size and condition see Adolfo Salvatore Cavallo, The Unicorn Tapestries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 14-15. For the fact that they were woven for a marriage see Margaret B. Freeman, The Unicorn Tapestries (New York: E.P.Dutt & Co., Inc., 1976), 60.
67 Gotfredsen, The Unicorn, 115.
bridal chamber on textiles. We saw this in Cesare’s mask at Lucrezia’s second wedding. Unicorns are often also depicted on Minnekätchen, love coffers, which were given as bridal gifts in Germany and France. The association with weddings is tied to their status as a symbol of chastity. This is a well documented iconographic relationship, illustrated in countless examples including the back of Piero della Francesca’s Battista Sforza and in Petrarch’s Triumph of Chastity. (Figures 3-6, 3-7) In The Unicorn is Found there is a weasel/genet/ermine, an animal also strongly associated with pregnancy and chastity during the Renaissance. The tapestries could have been a wedding gift to Cesare and Charlotte from the king and queen.

There are a certain pieces of information about the tapestries that are generally considered true and although they all narrow the field of patrons to an array of potential owners, in each circumstance Cesare and Charlotte are included: the tapestries were designed in a workshop associated with Anne de Bretagne, Queen of France, they were connected to the French Royal circle, they required a wealthy patron, and the subject matter determines them to be woven for a wedding. The fact that sets the argument for Cesare and Charlotte’s ownership apart from others is their daughter’s association with the Rochefoucauld family.

Outside of the information about site of manufacture, general date, and possible royal association, the tapestries were lost to history until 1680, when they were inventoried in the

68 Ibid, 88.
69 Ibid, 83.
70 Freeman, The Unicorn Tapestries, 79.
71 There is at least a small history of tapestries as wedding gifts. Francis I gave a nine-piece set to Renée of France, daughter of King Louis XII and Queen Anne de Bretagne, on the occasion of her 1528 wedding to Ercole II d’Este, Duke of Ferrara ad son of Lucrezia Borgia and Alfonso d’Este. Campbell, Tapestries in the Renaissance, 484.
72 Cavallo, The Unicorn Tapestries, 10. There were coats of arms woven into the sky of most of the tapestries, but they were removed during the Revolution in an attempt to save them from the blanket destruction of objects with any royal ties. Even if you dismiss the AE cipher from its association with Anne, Cesare and Charlotte were still wealthy enough in their own right to commission or purchase them from a prestigious maker.
possession of François VI de la Rochefoucauld (1613-1680) in his Paris townhouse—described as *haute lisse* tapestries depicting a unicorn hunt. With her second husband Philippe de Bourbon, Louise de Valentinois, daughter of Cesare and Charlotte, had six children. One of them was Claude de Bourbon, who in 1564 married Marguerite de La Rochefoucauld, whose uncle was Françoise II de La Rochefoucauld, the great-grandfather of Françoise VI. (Figure 3-8)

As the only child, Louise de Valentinois was the sole inheritor of her mother’s estate, and it is possible that some of Charlotte and Louise’s belongings found their way into the Rochefoucauld estate. The path to light that these famous tapestries took could include Cesare and Charlotte at their origin, likely as the recipient of them as a royal gift upon the occasion of their wedding, passing through Louise’s son, and eventually finding their way into the hands of François VI de la Rochefoucauld through the marriage of the two families.

These tapestries, if they were associated with Cesare, should be added to the list of items from Charlotte’s inventory as objects that bear significance to this project and the goal of reconstructing Cesare’s patronage and use of art. These objects and the primary descriptions of events associated with Cesare’s time in France offer us the opportunity to track his investment of wealth in visual display during this phase of life, staging it for comparison with future efforts.

---

73 Ibid, 13.
CHAPTER 4
THE PRINCE

Thus, if I summed up all the actions of the duke, I would not know how to reproach him; on the contrary, it seems to me he should be put forward, as I have done, to be imitated by all those who have given rise to empire...whoever judges it necessary in his new principality to secure himself against enemies, to gain friends to himself, to conquer either by force or by fraud, to make himself loved and feared by the people, and followed and revered by the soldiers, to eliminate those who can or might offend you, to renew old orders through new modes, to be severe and pleasant, magnanimous and liberal, to eliminate an un-faithful military, to create a new one, to maintain friendships with king and princes so that they must either benefit you with favor or be hesitant to offend you – you can find no fresher examples than the actions of that man.

—Machiavelli
The Prince, VII

Return to Italy

Cesare returned to Italy from France with Louis XII’s invading army, reaching Milan on August 6, 1499. Baldassare Castiglione, sent by Francesco Gonzaga, witnessed his entrance into the city and described Cesare as riding on horseback next to the king, dressed in luxurious attire glittering with gems. He called Cesare “gallant” and said that his retinue was the most splendid.

---

1 Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), VII, 32-33. Machiavelli and Cesare Borgia had a long-term, seemingly personal and respectful relationship. They were likely introduced in 1502, although is has been suggested that they met earlier, and continued to meet until Cesare’s departure from Italy in 1504. In The Prince, Machiavelli presents Cesare as an ideal model for a ruler who is attempting to gain and to retain power, admiring Cesare’s ability to be both feared and admired by his soldiers and subjects. This quote and many others in the text suggest Machiavelli’s true veneration for Cesare, and it is this author’s belief that these were genuine sentiments. However, Machiavelli’s true feelings about Cesare are debated. For more on this discussion see John T. Scott and Vickie B. Sullivan, “Patricide and the Plot of the Prince: Cesare Borgia and Machiavelli’s Italy,” The American Political Science Review 88, 4 (Dec. 1994): 887-900. For more general and recent writing on Machiavelli’s The Prince see Maurizio Viroli, Redeeming The Prince: The Meaning of Machiavelli’s Masterpiece (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), and Philip Bobbitt, The Garments of Court and Palace: Machiavelli and the World That He Made (New York: Grove Press, 2013). The general belief in regard to Cesare is that Machiavelli revered him because of his unification of the city-states of the Romagna and the stability that it brought to the region and the reduction that his presence had in the papacy’s role in politics.

2 Yriarte, Cesare Borgia, 89.

3 For the comment calling Cesare “gallant” see Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 103. For the discussion of his retinue see Sabatini, The Life of Cesare Borgia, 171.
The next month in Milan was spent in festive atmosphere with hunts, processions, and banquets. The day after their arrival Louis XII and others, including Cesare Borgia, went to Santa Maria del Grazie to admire Leonardo’s *Last Supper*. Cesare also went to Leonardo’s studio in the Corte Vecchia. Cesare did not share the French’s disregard for the art and culture of Milan—they had destroyed Leonardo’s clay model for the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza and sullied the beautifully frescoed rooms of the Castello.

Leonardo was in Milan for a few weeks after the French arrived and would have witnessed these events, both the admiration of his work and its senseless destruction. This is the first time that he and Cesare Borgia would meet, laying the foundation of a relationship that would be important for both. Serge Bramley speculates that they would have liked each other and shared a mutual respect. Both fashioned themselves elegantly and commanded a tremendous presence. Like Leonardo, Cesare enjoyed riddles, puzzles, and intricate devices which evidence indicates were a topic of discussion between the two men during this time.

While in Milan, Cesare was given control over a group of French troops that he would use during his first campaign in the Romagna, but he also spent this time gathering his own troops, ones that would serve under his own livery and in his personal service. Until this point Cesare was not known to have had a personal device or livery, but very shortly after his

---

4 Yriarte, *Cesare Borgia*, 94.

5 Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 103.


9 Beuf, *Cesare Borgia*, 179.
departure from Milan on November 27th, 1499, during his February 26, 1500, entrance into Rome, a selection of his personal guard was dressed in a uniform with CESAR embroidered in silver on the chest.\textsuperscript{10} It is possible that the chest decorations described as simply CESAR, were in the form of a monogram and not spelled out as has been assumed. This is the time period that Cesare’s parade sword was designed and executed and it can be deduced that the CESAR monogram that we see on his sword could be of the same design. (Figure 4-1) The intricate working and overlapping of letters call to mind the type of knotwork that Leonardo employed in the Sala delle Asse. (Figure 4-2) More importantly the intertwining cipher also bears resemblance to drawings found in Leonardo’s notebook indicating that he did execute such projects. (Figures 4-3) It is possible that Leonardo designed this monogrammatic device for Cesare while both men were in Milan and that the time necessary to craft the garments delayed its debut until the spectacular events of early 1500.

Cesare’s entrance into Rome on February 26, 1500, was a carefully crafted and elaborate spectacle, designed to showcase his new rank and consequence. The organization was managed by Burchard, the papal master of ceremonies, but Cesare was in clear control over the visual display of himself and his army. The colorful parade of figures began at the Porta del Popolo and processed down the Via Lata (now the Via Corso). Dignitaries, members of the curia, and ambassadors highly fashioned and surrounded by their appropriate retainers were the first to return the gaze of the waiting public that lined the streets, but they were not the desired sight—the people had come to see Cesare and the magnificent train of his court. His baggage wagons came first, pulled by mules draped in his colors of crimson and gold. Behind them his two

\textsuperscript{10} Bradford, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 114.
heralds walked, one dressed in the colors of France and the other marked with Cesare’s coat of arms. Next followed 1000 infantry in full campaign armor and 100 favored grooms and macebearers from his personal guard wearing a garment that had “CESAR” embroidered in silver on the chest. One hundred men in black velvet walked behind them setting the tonal palette for Cesare who rode on horseback dressed simply in a black velvet robe, the sobriety of which was punctuated only by the gold collar of the Order of St. Michael. His once extravagant and ostentatious dress had given way to a dramatic change in his personal style. Black dress was a sign of solemnity, whereas attire that combined too many different colors risked fashioning the wearer as thoughtless or unreliable. Cesare’s donning of a more subdued palette was a reflection of his self-possession and confidence. His outward projection of drama set the stage for the public consciousness to construct a character of striking power.

In his diary Burchard specifically mentioned the numerous decorations erected for the event and the large standards hung from the Castel S’Angelo accompanied by musicians and gunmen firing volleys from the fortress’ newly added garden. The banners displayed devices and mottos alluding to Cesare’s recent exploits. It is possible that one such motto was “Aut Caesar aut nihil,” (Either Caesar or Nothing) a phrase ever after associated with Cesare through both his own commissions and other representations of him. It appears in the 1591 Symbolica Heroica of M. Claudius Paradin above a description of Cesare and an image of him in the guise

11 Ibid.
12 Currie, Inside the Renaissance House, 13.
13 Burchard, Diarium, III, 22.
14 Yriarte, Cesare Borgia, 104.
15 Sacerdote, Cesare Borgia, 236. The phrase translates to “Either Caesar or Nothing.”
of an ancient Roman soldier.16 (Figure 4-4)  The event was also described by Petrus Franciscus Justulus of Spoleto, a Latin poet, who composed twelve panegyrics in Cesare’s honor, three of which survive in a volume printed by Mazochius in Rome in 1510.17

On the following day, Thursday February 27th, the public exhibition continued with a display of war and beauty staged as a parade of the Triumphs of Julius Caesar.18 It consisted of 11 chariots decorated with allegorical tableaux represented by groups of ephemeral constructions, designed and executed by papal artists, offered as a classical Roman triumph with Julius Caesar seated in victory in the last coach.19 Cesare rode with the parade—it was perceived as being in his honor and under his direction.20


17 R. Garnett, “A Laureate of Cesare Borgia,” *The English Historical Review* 17, 65 (Jan., 1902), 15-17. One of the three that survive was written on this occasion and is relayed through the voice of Venus who is speaking to Jupiter.17

Sed video atratas ipso cum principe turmas,
Ire simul plausus vix agnoscente secundos.
O hominum miseram sortem! Rhamnusia torvo
Invida Borgiadae respexit lumine claros
Successus, illosque volens turbare sorores
Candida ter geminas abrumpere stamina fratris
Unanimis iussit, sacri cui prima senatus
Gloria Romulei, cui summa arcana parentis
Nosse datum soli, legum permissa potestas
Omnis, et excelsos cognendi in foedera reges.
At mihi summa tuos oculos spectare voluptas
Sidereos, Caesar, dulcique simillima Phoebus
Ora, puellarum placidis accommoda votis,
Et non apta minus Martis fulgentibus armis;
Robur inexhaustum membrorum istosque lacertos
Praevalidos, sublime becus cervicis honorae ;
Pectoris et lati spatium admirabile, quantum
Cerimus Herculeis nitido de marmore signis…

18 Burchard, *Diarium*, III, 22.

19 For the information on the decoration and number of chariots see Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia*, 370. For the information that they were decorated by papal artists see Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 115.

20 Burchard, *Diarium*, III, 22.
Italian pageants of this nature had their origin in religious processions, but by the mid 15th century numerous worldly elements had been introduced and the events were being staged in honor of secular individuals, adopting as their foundation the triumph of ancient Roman victors. Alfonso I of Aragon’s 1443 entry into Naples was one of the earliest Italian Renaissance triumphal entries. There were several ancient examples for artists to use as inspiration or blueprints for their own designs, particularly the Arch of Titus and written accounts by ancient authors. Andrea Mantegna’s famous series the *Triumphs of Caesar* shows accurate armor and accoutrements indicating that he took advantage of these kinds of sources.²¹ The standard Renaissance representation of the Triumphs of Caesar, both in art and performance, followed a similar formula; no particular scenes were referenced and they were instead general standardized processions that mimicked the antique practice and style. Mantegna’s *Triumphs* are also an example of this formulaic method depicting the triumphal chariot, the spoils of war, standards, and a sacrificial bull. (Figures 4-5, 4-6, 4-7, 4-8)

It was a common Renaissance social and political trope to use ancient figures as a tool for constructing a public persona, creating representations or allusions to them in Renaissance art and ephemeral events. Emperor Charles V took his tapestry cycles of Alexander the Great and Hercules on campaign to serve as visual metaphors of his rule; Guidobaldo II della Rovere literally fashioned himself as an ancient Roman General. (Figures 4-9, 4-10) These individualized references grew to be important weapons of political propaganda, used by prominent figures of the Renaissance to charge themselves with the specific virtues commonly conceived to be held by the historic figure. The development of these self-fabricating statements

was intensely individualized, bound to how the beneficiary saw his or herself and how they wished to be seen by others. Cesare’s choice of Julius Caesar was clearly a reference to his name but it was also something more.

Cesare began to develop his use of Caesar in his iconography after 1498 when he broke his ties to the church and took on a secular, militaristic life. His use of Caesar as a reference point continued to grow after he became Captain General of the Papal Army in 1500 and constructed his own Duchy in northern Italy. However, Cesare deviated from the traditional and generalized uses of Caesar in Renaissance imagery by uniquely making repeated references to a specific event in Caesar’s life, the Crossing of the Rubicon. He would ultimately place the capital of his Duchy near the site of the crossing. Because the use of any individual scene was unusual, the fact that Cesare continually cited the same scene is noteworthy.

Cesare employed this historical moment in a variety of ways. The first example is the aforementioned parade on February 27th. The event intentionally blended together Caesar’s triumphs and Cesare’s recent military victories over Imola and Forli. All but one of the wagons that wound through in procession through the streets of Rome was adorned with trophies, true to the ancient and now Renaissance tradition. However, the final wagon showcased the conspicuously added tableau of Caesar Crossing the Rubicon, enacted through riders and constructed scenery.\(^{22}\) The viewer was intended to associate both men with each other and with the enacted events. The desired effect for Cesare had to do with the projection of an idea, that like Julius Caesar, he was the dominating power in the peninsula and that his military power was a force to be feared. The fundamental elements behind Renaissance triumphs and state

---

\(^{22}\) Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia*, 370.
ceremonies were consistent in the desire for one thing: the substantiation and dissemination of the idea of rulership, not the reality.

A second example of Cesare’s use of the scene is in the etchings on an elaborate parade sword, dated through previous research to 1500/01, probably designed and executed at the same time as the staged Triumph of Caesar. The sword is a *cinquedea*, a late 15th early 16th century style weapon, marked by curved cross guard arms [*quillions*] and a broad double-edged blade, fluted by two shallow channels. The visible blade, from the guard to the tip, measures 32 1/2 inches and 3 3/8 inches wide its base. The hilt is constructed of a circular pommel, grip, and cross guard. It is gilt in gold and further decorated with elaborate filigree work and colored enamel. The quillion block, on both sides of the hilt, holds a triangular field of blue enamel that protrudes into the face of the blade. One side of the field has the Borgia coat of arms and the other bears the inscription, “Ces. Borg. Car. Valen.” (Cesar Borgia Cardinalis Valentinaus).

---

23 My thesis project titled, “The Sword of Cesare Borgia: A Re-dating with an Examination of His Personal Iconography” and finished in 2007, dealt with the dating of the images on the sword. The common date offered by scholars is 1492-1498, but through an examination of a number of iconographic and biographical elements, most specifically Cesare’s use of the scene of the Crossing of the Rubicon, I revised the date to 1500/1501. This was a redating of the images alone, not the date of fabrication for the sword itself.


25 Claude Blair, “Cesare Borgia’s Sword Scabbard,” *Victoria and Albert Museum Bulletin reprints 6*, reprinted from the Bulletin, 2,4 (Oct., 1966), 3. All of the subsequent translations of the phrases on the sword and scabbard (unless otherwise indicated) are also taken from Blair. The original text is found on page 3 with the translations appearing in the associated notes on page 14.

26 The fact that the enamel of the coat of arms, seen in Fig. 4-14, is missing adds an interesting element to the dating of the sword. One can make out the original coat of arms which showed the Borgia bull on the left and the Lanzol stripes on the right, and early device used by Cesare and the Borgia family. However, all of the enamel has either been lost or removed and the design is only visible through traces in the metal. In the bottom left quadrant there is enamel work but it matches the outside patterns and not the coat of arms. The possibility exists that when the sword was repurposed in 1500/01, the outdated coat of arms was removed and an attempt was made to fill the space with decoration.
The first third of the blade is also gilt in gold but its decorative program is both narrative and complex. There are eight total scenes etched on the blade, four on each side. Two are thematically separate from the others; one shows two winged putti holding up a caduceus and the other holds the name “CESAR”, the letters assembled as a multi-level monogram. (Figures 4-15, 4-1) Again, it is an example of the monogram that this research suggests Leonardo designed for Cesare while the two men were in Milan.

The remaining six scenes are of the classical world. On one side of the face of blade, the first is a representation of the Sacrifice or Worship of a Bull with the inscription “CVM NVMINE CESARIS OMEN” (A favorable omen with Caesar’s divine will). (Figure 4-16) The bull stands on an architectural base inscribed with the phrase “D.O.M Hostia” (Deo option maximo hostia/a sacrifice to the most high god). The animal is surrounded by figures in mostly nude but varying stages of dress that partake in the celebratory event. The subsequent compartment is the monogram which is encased in a circle flanked by decorative foliage and two winged bulls.

The next scene is Caesar Crossing the Rubicon. (Figure 4-17) The historic episode as depicted here is derived from the account given by Suetonius in his Lives of the Twelve Caesars.

He caught up with his cohorts at the River Rubicon, which was the boundary of his province, where he paused for a while, thinking over the magnitude of what he was planning, then, turning to his closest companions, he said: ‘Even now we can still turn back. But once we have crossed that little bridge, everything must be decided by arms’. As he paused, the following portent occurred. A being of splendid size and beauty suddenly appeared, sitting close by, and playing music on a reed. A large number of shepherds hurried to listen to him and even some of the soldiers left their posts to come, trumpeters among them. From one of these, the apparition seized a trumpet, leapt down to the river, and with a huge blast sounded the call to arms and crossed over to the other bank. Then said Caesar: ‘Let us go where the
gods have shown us the way and the injustice of our enemies calls us. The die is cast.\textsuperscript{27}

In the bottom left corner of the image we can see the figure, unique to Suetonius’ version, who blew the trumpet call that signaled the crossing.\textsuperscript{28} A similar figure can be seen in Jean Fouquet’s interpretation of the same account. (Figure 4-18) On the sword the group of figures spans both sides of the river, the cavalrymen carrying javelins, some of which are mounted with flags decorated with a “C.” The image is inscribed with Caesar’s famous phrase, spoken at this epic moment, “\textit{lacta est alea}” or “The die is cast.” We will return to this depiction after the full description of the sword’s decorative images and discussion of the accompanying scabbard.

The final etching on the face is the worship of Love. (Figure 4-19) A single figure, a cupid or personification of love, stands on a base inscribed with the letters “T.Q.I.S.A.G.” The phrase represented by the letters is unknown but a sound possibility was proposed by Abbate Ferdianndo Galiani, one time owner and enthusiast of the sword, in the margins of his notebook. He suggests that is was the dedication of the work “\textit{Tibi. Quem. Ille. Sextus. Alexander. Genuit}” (To you son of Alexander VI).\textsuperscript{29} Other additional nude figures populate the space and an architectural structure stands over the figures on the left side. The word “\textit{AMOR}” is written on the side clearly referencing the subject of the scene.

The column of narrative design on the other side of the blade begins with the Triumph of Julius Caesar and the word “\textit{BENEMERENT}” (to the well deserving). (Figure 4-20) A parade of figures surrounds the triumphal chariot upon which Caesar sits, crowned by laurels and carrying an olive branch. Although visually obscured by wear the outline of the orb of the world can be

\textsuperscript{27} Suetonius, \textit{Lives of the Caesars} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 16-17 [31-32].

\textsuperscript{28} Anke Rondholz, “Crossing the Rubicon: A Historiographical Study,” \textit{Mnemosyne}, Fourth Series 62, 3 (2009), 440-441. The fact that this figure is unique to Suetonius’ version will become important later.

\textsuperscript{29} Yriarte, \textit{Autour des Borgia}, 173.
seen resting in his lap. The side of his chariot reads “D.CES” most commonly read as “Divus Caesar” (Divine Caesar). The nude figures that accompany the victor carry the trophies of war, elevated alongside banners above the crowd. The two upper corners hold Borgia coats of arms. They are directly below the second ornamental band, which mirrors the position of the monogram on the face. As stated, it holds two winged figures that support a caduceus.

The next narrative scene is of Faith. (Figure 4-21) She is depicted as a shrouded woman seated in an architectural niche, reminiscent of similar compositions by Pinturicchio in the Sala delle Arti Liberali in the Borgia Apartments. Here Faith is surrounded by nude figures paying homage. “FIDES.PREVALET.ARMIS” (Faith is more prevalent than arms) is the scene’s accompanying inscription.

The last scene, which terminates the program, is of the Pax Romana. (Figure 4-22) In the center a column supports a globe with an eagle, wings spread, on top. Musicians stand around the column playing their instruments. A doe sits at the base of the column. The eagle stands for imperial power which extends its domination over far reaching territory. Its use as a symbol of Caesar and as a focal point for Cesare Borgia is self-evident. The doe is also associated with the name of Caesar, as is demonstrated in a sonnet by Petrarch:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Una candida cerva sopra l’erba} \\
\text{Verde, m’apparve, con due corna d’oro,} \\
\text{Fra due riviere a l’ombra d’un alloro} \\
\text{Levando il sole a la stagion acerba.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Nessun mi tocchi, al bel collo d’intorno,} \\
\text{Scritto avea di diamanti e di topazi;} \\
\text{Libera farmi al mio Cesare parve.}^{30}
\end{align*}
\]

\begin{quote}
Rough translation by author:
A white deer on the grass
Green, appeared to me, with two horns of gold,
\end{quote}
A final piece of information duplicated on both sides of the base of the blade is the inscription “OPUS.HERC.” This has long been considered the signature of the artist, believed by many to be Hercule de Pesaro, a goldsmith known to be associated with the Vatican. Hercule de Fideli has also been offered as a possibility. More recently Claude Blair has revisited the name of Angelino di Dominco de Sutri which had been originally been proposed by Cyril G.E. Bunt in his book *The Goldsmiths of Italy.* No certain authorship can be applied to the sword’s fabrication at this time. The artist of the design is believed to be Pinturicchio.

The scabbard that was made to accompany this sword deserves its own recognition. It was described by Henry Cole, the director of the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1869 when the piece was acquired, as “the finest piece of Art in leather known.” (Figure 4-23) Cole’s impression was strong despite its unfinished state, completion perhaps ceased because of the large split in the back of the leather. The decoration of the face of the scabbard is dominated by a scene of the Triumph of Love. The figure of Venus stands on a short domed column and is framed by a barrel vaulted triumphal arch. Here, like on the sword, the venerated is surrounded by celebratory nude figures carrying trophies, banners, and sacred accoutrements. The back of

---

Between two rivers in the shade of a laurel
The rising sun of the young season.
  Without touching, around the beautiful neck,
Written in diamonds and topaz;
Free my Caesar made me feel.


33 Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia,* 224. This association is not known to any level of certainty. It is a plausible suggestion since Pinturicchio was so closely associated with the Borgia family but it is possible that another artist was responsible for the designs. The inclusion of what could be a monogram designed by Leonardo is a compelling reason to further investage that possibility.

34 Blair, "Cesare Borgia’s Sword Scabbard," 3.
the scabbard is decorated with downward pointing flames, another Borgia symbol, and the same intertwining monogram encased in an oval. There is also another badly damaged figure of Venus.

Venus is both a link to the Borgia family’s emblem, through her association with the zodiac sign of Taurus whose symbol is the bull, and to Julius Caesar the emerging iconographic focus of Cesare Borgia’s self-fashioning program. In this instance she is the Venus Genetrix, the mythical forbearer of the Gens Juliiua, the house of Julius Caesar. The allegories outlined by the visual program that comprises the sword and scabbard proclaim Cesare’s rule to be one of military dominance, prosperity, and lasting peace.\(^{35}\)

A third personal object that demonstrates Cesare’s building relationship with Julius Caesar and specifically Cesare’s use of the crossing of the Rubicon, is a ring. A signet ring, held in a private collection, similar to a combination of known types, was described by its owner as once belonging to Borgia and was dated to 1503.\(^{36}\) Although the current location of the ring is unknown, a description of it survives because Rev. Charles Henry Hartshorn displayed it at the British Archeological Association in April 1864.\(^{37}\) His son Albert Hartshorne confirmed that the family still owned the ring in 1907 and offered an eyewitness description in his response to a query published in *The Counnoisseur* magazine in 1907. The gold ring had a small amount of enamel work with a box center. The word “Borgia” in reverse letters on the top of the box marks the ring as a signet. The familial moniker was circumvented by the phrase “Cor unum una via”

\(^{35}\) Cloulas, *The Borgias*, 182.


\(^{37}\) “Signet”, “The Signet Ring of Cæsar Borgia,” *The Connoisseur: An Illustrated Magazine For Collectors*, Notes and Queries 17 (Jan-April, 1907), 116. John McNeill, secretary of the British Archeological Association, Email sent to Elizabeth Bemis, February 7, 2013. During the course of this research, the British Archeological Association was contacted in a hope that they had more detailed information or an illustration of the ring, but unfortunately their records were destroyed during the Second World War.
Although this ring stands alone as an important visual marker of Cesare’s self-imaging, the most telling element, and most important to the discussion of Cesare’s continued reference to Julius Caesar and specifically to the crossing of the Rubicon, is the phrase that ran along the inside band of the heavy ring: “Fais ce que dois advienne que pourra” (Do what thou must, come what will.)

These are the words spoke by Caesar immediately following the utterance “the die is cast,” the phrase that appears on Cesare’s sword under the scene of the Crossing of the Rubicon. Once again on an object of intense personal proximity and in a location very few but the wearer would see there is an explicit reference to the episode of the crossing. Not only was Cesare trying to project a persona to his contemporaries, but it seems he also wore a constant reminder of the gauntlet which he had thrown for himself. This is insightful into how powerful Renaissance patrons used the objects and works of art in their possession—as functioning didactics speaking in dialogue to both the owner and others.

Cesare referenced the scene of the crossing repeatedly. It was a moment of surprise and astute political calculation, and he wanted to continually bask in the glow of its legacy. Remembering that the Renaissance convention of dressing one’s identity in the guise of a hero from the classical world afforded the patron the opportunity to masquerade as the restorer of that concept of antiquity, this was no small statement to make. Cesare’s association with Julius Caesar and this moment was complex and the subject of the crossing was likely intended to be perceived as a threat.

---

39 Ibid.
When Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon, it marked a transition from peace to war and ultimately from one form of rulership to another. Anke Rondholz suggests that the apparitional figure in Suetonius’ version of the crossing of the Rubicon, seen on Cesare’s sword, is a direct representation of that passage. Cesare’s military movements changed the political climate of the peninsula as well. In the final years of his life, Cesare waged war on the city-states in central Italy and subjugated many of them through physical force and the ever present anxiety of his assault. He did this as an instrument of the papacy (as head of the papal army) stripping power from those whose vicariates the Pope had declared forfeit, and unifying the once separate dominions under one ruler. Because this resulted in a duchy for Cesare, the papal presence behind the maneuvers is often forgotten. The short-lived nature of Cesare and Alexander’s achievement of a largely unified papal state is also rarely noted, likely due to the substantial shadow cast by Julius II’s subsequent and similar actions. Insight into the perception of the Borgia’s activities can perhaps be best glimpsed through how the analogous conquest by Julius II in 1507 was perceived.

After Alexander’s death and Cesare’s descent from power, the city-states under his control either fell to their previous rulers or were taken over by Julius II. Eventually Julius II led the papal army on a military campaign and unified all the papal territories in Umbria and Emilia-Romagna under direct papal control. Julius’ move was seen as enlarging the imperium of the Roman Church, unifying and bolstering the territorial power of Rome. Erasmus said of his

---

40 Rondholz, “Crossing the Rubicon: A Historiographical Study,” 441. In the story (included above) the figure begins with a musical reed instrument and then takes a trumpet from one of Caesar’s men to sound the time to cross the river. Rondholz reads this as the transitional moment from peace to war.

41 For more on the reasons behind the declaration of forfeiture and the Borgia’s plans for these vicariates see Mallet, The Borgias, 178.
behavior: “Pope Julius wages war, conquers, triumphs, and acts wholly like Julius [Caesar].” 

Through war, triumphal processions, and other forms of visual display, Pope Julius II staged a fusion of God and Caesar, imperial and religious glory. The church became the new empire. There were those who viewed Roman imperialism as a negative political ideology, but when both Julius II and Cesare Borgia referenced it, it was a clearly displayed statement designed to project unquestionable and infallible power. Although the two cannot be directly compared because of the difference in their positions, Cesare, through his own actions and display, had planted many roots of the relationship between the leader of the army of papal Rome and the ancient Caesar seen in the contemporary response to Julius II. Cesare referenced Julius Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon as a symbol of the war and unification to come, and as a visual representation of his personal relationship with that power.

**Stay in Rome 1500**

After the spectacle of Cesare’s performances in February 1500 had faded, Carnival continued to rage outside in the street of Rome, marked by the traditional running, swimming, and horse races. Cesare however, remained now separated from the plebeian fray surrounded by his growing court of poets, humanists, and artists to whom he suggested enigmas and offered subjects for their literary works. He interacted with them personally and took pleasure in actively participating in their designs. His actions were described by Charles Yriarte as that of a Maecenas, the 1st century BCE Roman statesman who was a respected patron of Virgil and

---

43 Ibid, 238.
44 For more on the support of republicanism versus emperialism see Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, beginning on page 71.
45 Burchard, *Diarium*, III, 22.
Horace and whose name has become synonymous with a great patron of art and literature.

Maecenas served as an honorary minister of arts and as a political councilor to Emperor Augustus. Cesare’s liberality gained acclaim, and the number of esteemed individuals seeking advantage as his court was ever increasing—they called his munificence liberalitas Caesarea.46

On Sunday March 29, 1500, Cesare was named Gonfalonier and Captian General of the Papal Army.47 His power was ever increasing which manifested in ever more spectacular visual displays and assertions of importance. Rafael Sabatini, an important biographer of Cesare, believed that it was during this time in Rome that Pier di Lorenzo painted the portrait of Cesare that Vasari claimed to have seen later in Florence. Its current location is unknown. He also believed that at this time Bramante was part of Cesare’s court, as was Michelangelo, who Cesare held in tremendous esteem throughout his life.48

46 Yriarte, Cesare Borgia, 105. This phrase refers to Cesare’s generosity. Interestingly the phrase could be translated as referring to “imperial generosity” or “Caesar’s generosity,” both are tinted with a reference to Julius Caesar. This reinforces Cesare as a figure of immense and far reaching power. Aristotle discusses the idea of liberality/generosity in IV.I of his Ethics.

47 Burchard, Diarium, III, 26.

48 Sabatini, The Life of Cesare Borgia, 210. Michelangelo had recently finished the Pietà, commissioned by Cardinal Jean Bilhères de Lagraulas, whose subject and/or composition Anna Maria Voci and other scholars believe was influenced by a desire to honor Juan Borgia, Cesare’s brother and Pope Alexander VI’s favorite son who had been murdered on June 14/15, 1498. On the evening of the 14th, Juan, Cesare, and their cousin Cardinal Juan Borgia dined with Vannozza (Juan and Cesare’s mother) at her vineyard near Monte S. Martino dei Monti and parted ways on their way back to the Vatican. When Juan had not returned by the evening of the 15th, the Pope became worried and the city was searched. Eventually Juan’s body was found in the Tiber, punctured by nine stab wounds. The Pope was overcome with grief. Saying to an assembly of ambassadors and cardinals on the 19th: “The Duke of Gandia is dead. His death has given us the greatest sorrow, and no greater pain than this could we suffer, because we loved him above all things, and esteemed not more the Papacy nor anything else. Rather, had we seven papacies we would give them all to have the Duke alive again. God has done this perhaps for some sin of ours, and not because he deserved such a cruel death; nor do we know who killed him and threw him into the Tiber.” Rumors that he was killed by the Orsini family or the jealous husband of one of his lovers circulated, but more lasting has been the famous rumor that it was an act of fratricide, that Cesare murdered his brother so that he could take his place at the head of the Borgia family’s secular affairs. This is highly unlikely and no evidence exists to support it. The rumor did not appear until months later in Venice, fueled by mistrust and not facts. The Pope’s grief was, however, undeniably real and again, it has been suggested that Cardinal Jean Bilhères de Lagraulas was referencing this loss through his commission of the Pietà, possibly even having a portrait of Juan sculpted in the face of Jesus. Even if this is not true, Cesare would have been aware of the significant addition to the basilica when the Pietà was installed in Chapel of Santa Petronilla in 1499. To read more about the relationship between the Borgia and Michelangelo’s Pietà see Anna Maria Voci. Il figlio prediletto del papa: Alessandro VI, il duca di Gandia e la Pietà di Michelangelo in Vaticano (Roma: Istituto Storico Italiano per l’età moderna e contemporanea, 2001). To follow
Paolo Capello, a Venetian envoy in Rome, is an important source for Cesare’s presence in the Eternal City. Capello describes the extravagant bullfight that Cesare staged on June 24, 1500, in the piazza of St. Peters, remarking that he “killed seven wild bulls, fighting on horseback in the Spanish style, and he cut off the head of one with his first stroke, a thing which seemed great to all Rome.” His descriptions of Cesare’s physical appearance are a testament to the effort Cesare made in his visual presentation: “The Pope loves and fears his son, who is twenty-seven [he was just 25], physically most beautiful, he is tall and well-made…he is munificent, even prodigal.” Capello’s description of Cesare as beautiful dispels much about his rumored appearance and the gossip spread by Paolo Giovio’s characterization of him as disfigured by syphilis and constantly sulking behind a mask. Although the secondary signs of the disease did affect his appearance in 1498, they would have likely long since disappeared. Capello certainly saw Cesare on numerous occasions; the primary witnessing of that which was relayed in his dispatches and descriptions should be held as accurate.

Capello’s comments also provide insight in the complicated relationship that was evolving between Cesare and Pope Alexander VI. The observations suggest that Cesare was gaining power and was considered his father’s equal in political import. On September 16, 1500, fearful for the coming army of Cesare, Venice made a deal with the Pope to remove their protection over Rimini and Faenza and ennobled Cesare as a gentiluomo, a hereditary rank.

---

49 Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 122. Much of what Capello reported was documented by Marino Sanudo in his *Diarii*. Sanudo’s work is a wonderful source for technical movements, locational minutiae, and historical information but he offers very little visual description. The work is similar to Burchard’s documentary approach but with even less extraneous detail.

50 Ibid, 130.

51 Ibid, 131.
distinguishing Venetian born gentleman.\textsuperscript{52} They inscribed his name in the *Libro d'Oro*, made him a citizen, and on October 18 they gifted him a palace in the city.\textsuperscript{53}

Cesare was preparing for his new campaign in the Romagna, and incredible funds were needed to support his army. A group of six new Cardinals were made to help raise the necessary capital for the upcoming campaign. The nominations were made on September 28, and raised close to 120,000 ducats. Cesare played a role in their selection, the ceremony of their investiture, and the associated entertainments.\textsuperscript{54} Sanuto reported: “After their investiture they went to the Duke, offering themselves to him, and dined there, and settled their accounts and swore fealty to him.”\textsuperscript{55} Capello reported on September 26\textsuperscript{th}: “I understand that the order has been given that, after the cardinals have been created, Duke Valentino will depart within two or three days, according to what that astrologer indicates as the favorable moment.”\textsuperscript{56} He continued with a more foreboding declaration: “He will be, if he lives, one of the first captains of Italy.”\textsuperscript{57} Capello had perceived a possibility that also occupied Cesare’s mind despite what seemed like an inevitable and unstoppable rise. Gian Luciddo Cattaneo, a Mantuan envoy at the Papal court, wrote on March 17, 1500, that Cesare was preoccupied with the idea of his own death and that he suspected he would die “In arme e cum arme” (In arms and by arms).\textsuperscript{58} This mindset was likely inspired by a horoscope that Lorenz Beheim was known to have read for him that predicted an

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid 133.

\textsuperscript{53} For the note about the *Libro d'Oro* see Sabatini, *The Life of Cesare Borgia*, 227. For the fact that Venice made him a citizen and gifted him a palace see Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia*, 400-401.

\textsuperscript{54} Burchard, *Diarium*, III, 77-78.

\textsuperscript{55} Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 132-133.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, 133-134.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, 134.

\textsuperscript{58} Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia*, 377.
early death. Cattaneo also echoed Capello’s predictions of Cesare’s military success, writing: “The Pope plans to make him a great king of Italy.”

1500 Campaign in the Romagna

Cesare left Rome on October 2, 1500 with a large retinue of scholars, humanists, and artists; an entourage worthy of his ever increasing status. For functionality it included Ramiro de Lorqua, master of household; Gaspare Torella, his personal physician; Agapito Geraldini, his confidential secretary; and Alessandro Spaocchi, his treasurer. For artistic, cultural, and historical enrichment Cesare took numerous others, the poet Vincenzo Calmeta; Pier Francesco Giustolo of Spoleto (also called Petrus Franciscus Justulus), who was to write a chronicle of Cesare’s exploits and who also served as his panegyrist; and Pietro Torrigiano, the sculptor who broke the nose of Michelangelo and who had worked with Pinturicchio on the stucco work in the Borgia Apartments. Vasari wrote that for Cesare, Torrigiano “changed himself in a moment from a sculptor to a soldier.” Torrigiani had been part of the army of Condottieri Paolo Vitelli in 1499 during the struggle that took place between Florence and Pisa, so he was not unfamiliar with military life but certainly could have served artistic purposes for Cesare as needed.

The status of these individuals is a testament to the consequence of Cesare’s court. Calmeta, Francesco Sperula (a future member), and Giustolo were members of the esteemed

---

59 Ibid, 377-378. Sacerdote also discusses this horoscope on 77-78. This will be discussed in greater detail later.

60 Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 134.

61 Ibid, 135.

62 For Vincent Calmeta see Cloulas, *The Borgias*, 185. For Justulus see Garnett, “A Laureate of Cesare Borgia,” 15. For more information on Torrigiano see Vasari and the note below. Justulus composed 12 panegyrics of which three are preserved in a volume printed by Mazochius in 1510 in Rome.

Academia di Paolo Cortese, formerly of Pomponius Laetus, in Rome. Calmata was also one of the main characters in Baldesar Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier*.

Cesare’s contributions to the literary world of Italy did not end with his insular circle of courtiers or personnel; he also played an important role in establishing one of the first consequential printing presses in Italy. Gershom Soncino (d.1534) was a member of a famous Jewish printing family and a significant printer of Hebrew books in Renaissance Italy. He was the last Hebrew printer in Italy during the 15th-century and the first of the 16th. Following a period of inactivity in printing that spanned the two centuries, Gershom resumed this work in Fano in 1501 after being granted permission from Cesare, then ruler of the city, to operate a press there. His first title for distribution, a book of Latin poems, was published on April 10, 1502. Gershom dedicated the 1503 edition of Petrarch’s *Rime Sparse*, printed in Fano, to Cesare.

Cesare’s campaign in 1500 only fueled the momentum that had begun in Rome earlier in the year. After taking Pesaro, Cesare was introduced to Pandolfo Collenuccio, envoy of the Duke of Ferrara, who was greatly impressed by the Borgia prince. He wrote of Cesare in a report describing his schedule:

> He is considered brave, strong, and liberal [by which he meant munificent], and it is said that he sets great store by straightforward men. He is hard in revenge, so I

---

66 Marvin J. Heller, *Further Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2013), 436. Gershom was one of the most important members of the Soncino printing family, who took their name from the Italian town where they began their five centuries of printing history but who established presses in Italy, Egypt, Turkey. Gershom was one of the most prolific and principal printers of his time. He was one of the group of printers that have been called the “wandering printers” because their presses moved from one town to another as opposed to having a permanent fixed location. From 1492-1516 Gershom was the only Hebrew printer in Italy. For more information on Gershom see Moses Marx’s article “Gershom (Hieronymus) Soncino’s Wanderyears in Italy, 1498-1527 Exemplar Judaicae Vitae.”
67 Ibid. 437. Sabatini suggests that he printed, for the first time in history, the statutes of Fano as early as January 1502 which would make it the first document to be printed. Sabatini, *The Life of Cesare Borgia*, 308.
have been told by many; a man of soaring spirit, thirsting for greatness and fame, he seems more eager to seize states than to keep and administer them.68

On that same occasion in Pesaro, after inspecting the citadel, Cesare commissioned a (now lost) painting of it to be sent to his father.69 On May 14/15, 1501, Alexander VI invested him with the title of Duke of the Romanga.

Cesare’s Use of the Hydra as a Personal Device

Most interesting to this research is a device which is first mentioned during Cesare’s entrance into Pesaro on October 27, 1500, one which used the hydra—the seven-headed beast from ancient Greek myth that guarded the underworld and was eventually killed by Hercules. In his book *Monsters and Their Meanings in Early Modern Culture*, Wes Williams describes the hydra:

> A monster that can strike at any time, that grows the more elusively omnipresent, the more it appears defeated, the Hydra calls for correspondingly heroic, energetic, self-renewing government, constant vigilance, a politics of suspicion, and obsessionial purges both of those closest to the center of power and of those deemed to be supportive of the Beast.70

It is easy to see why this character was an enticing association for Cesare Borgia to make, describing well his definition of self and approach to the acquisition and retention of power. This new symbol was part of the Renaissance tradition of using figures of antiquity to self-monumentalize. One of the most important features of the images used to visualize these relationships is that they needed to remain flexible enough to be altered and re-directed as new circumstances demanded. Julius Caesar was a complicated figure to Renaissance Italy; he was

69 Ibid, 137.
ambitious, powerful, and someone to be feared. The hydra was a multi-layered symbol, capable of embodying all that Caesar, as an icon, stood for.

The connection between the hydra and Julius Caesar is through the emperor’s apotheosis comet. Ancient sources recount that during the funeral games of Julius Caesar, the *ludi Victoriae Caesaris* that took place in July 20-30 44BCE, a comet appeared in the sky that lasted for seven days. It has been deduced that the comet’s path in the sky was located near the constellation hydra. The comet itself was seen as an omen and was interpreted as a sign of Caesar’s apotheosis. It became known as the *sidus Iulium*, the Julian star. The celestial event was discussed in numerous sources including Seneca, Pliny, Plutarch, Virgil, Ovid, Suetonius, and Augustus—certainly many of which were known to Cesare Borgia.

A significant example of Cesare’s reference to and use of Caesar’s apotheosis comet has, until this research, gone unnoticed. In the Pax Romana image on Cesare’s sword there is a star-shaped object over the shoulder of the eagle, most certainly an image of the *sidus Iulium*. (Figure 4-24) The oversight of its absence in research is likely due to the fact that it is not included in any of the circulated and early published drawings of the sword. (Figure 4-22) This initial omission has been perpetuated by all subsequent scholars who used the drawings as their source instead of the original object. Additionally, when looking at the sword itself, the detail is difficult to determine and must be viewed at an angle—even then remaining obscure due to the gilding and shallow nature of the grooves. It is, however, definitively there.73

---

71 Hollingsworth, *Patronage in Renaissance Italy*, 84.


73 This important discovery was made and photographed during a second viewing of the object in 2010. Although it does not include a reference to the hydra, it is a reference to a foundational association between Cesare Borgia and the comet which allows us to make the more far-reaching connection between Cesare, Caesar, and the hydra.
Comets were themselves complicated references. They were generally held to be bad omens or prophetic meteorological events, that, as Seneca said, occurred: “because they are meant to reveal the future.”\textsuperscript{74} In his 1503 \textit{Chronicle of the City of Perugia, 1492-1503}, Francesco Matarazzo recorded that during the marriage celebrations of Astorre Baglioni in 1500:

A very dreadful storm of wind…And this was held to be an omen of most evil presage; and it followed on other omens that had portended evil…there appeared a comet with a very great train of fire…and another showed in the Kingdom of Naples. It was a very terrible and awful sight.\textsuperscript{75}

In reference to a June 1502 series of events Matarazzo states:

That month four signs were sent down from heaven on our city and suburbs. True it is that many mock and give no credence to these omens, yet we know that the ancient Romans would always take note of the omens before engaging in any deed or enterprise, wherefore I am minded to make mention of them to you.\textsuperscript{76}

Machiavelli shared Matarazzo’s perspective, writing in his \textit{Discoures on Livy}: “Both ancient and modern examples demonstrate that no serious event ever occurs in a city or a province that has not been predicted either by fortune-tellers, revelations, extraordinary events, or by celestial signs.”\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{74} Craig Martin, \textit{Renaissance Meteorology: Pomponazzi to Decartes} (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 51.

\textsuperscript{75} Francesco Mattarazzo, \textit{Chronicles of the City of Perugia 1492-1503}, trans. Edward Strachen Morgan (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1905), 102-107. This demonstrates the Renaissance belief that comets were omens and symbolic of larger, more powerful forces at work.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid, 223.

\textsuperscript{77} Niccolò Machiavelli, \textit{Discourses on Livy}, trans. by Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford : Oxford World Classics, 2008), 138. This quote is taken from Book 1, Chapter 138 which is titled “Before Important Events Happen in a City or a Province, Signs that Foretell Them or Men Who Predict Them Appear.” He references the lighting that struck and damaged the Duomo in Florence before the death of Lorenzo d’Medici, Savanarola’s predictions of the French invasion of King Charles VIII into Italy, and of Livy’s recount of the invasion by the Gauls. Of the phenomenon he says: “The cause of such occurrences, I think, must be discussed and interpreted by men who have the knowledge of things natural and supernatural, which we ourselves lack. It may be, however, as some philosophers maintain, that the air is filled with intelligences, who by some means of natural abilities forsee future events and, having compassion for men, warn them with similar signs so that they can prepare their defences.”
However, Julius Caesar’s comet comes with a dual-nature of menace and exaltation, a combination to which Cesare would have related after the reading of his horoscope which revealed his rise to power, brutal fall, and untimely death. In Virgil’s *Georgics*, the source of Cesare’s motto “TENTANDA VIA EST,” the poet comments on the uncertain and volatile time following Julius Caesar’s death:

> Never did more thunderbolts strike earth of a clear Sky, nor ill-boding comets, blazing, streak by so often.\(^7\)

Ovid offers a similar notation as well as a divergent perspective in his *Metamorphosis*, the source for the motto on Cesare’s leather scabbard:

> Caesar is a god in his own city…changed to a new heavenly body, a flaming star…They say that the clashing of arms amid the dark storm-clouds and fear-inspiring trumpets and horns heard in the sky forewarned men of the crime…Often firebrands were seen to flash amid the stars…catch up the soul from the slain body and make him a star in order that ever it may be the divine Julius who looks forth upon our Capitol and Forum from his lofty temple…Venus…caught up the passing soul of her Caesar from his body, and not suffering it to vanish into air, she bore it towards the stars of heaven. And as she bore it she felt it glow and burn and

\(^7\) Virgil, *Georgics*, trans. Janet Lembke (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 488-489. This is taken from Book 1. “TENTANDA VIA EST” (A way must be tried) is taken from line 8, Book III of Virgil *Georgics*. Lines 8-9 read: “I must try for a new path on which I may rise from the earth and soar triumphant from the lips of men.” In his *Divise-Motti Imprese di Famiglie e Personaggi Italiani*, Jacopo Gelli notes that the device was used by the Gonzaga family and Cesare Borgia, “Con un significato non dubbio di audace speranza di riuscire negli intenti (non sempre leciti) prefissisi. È tolta da Virgilio il quale la usò per dimostrare la necissità di cercare la gloria e lodare il desiderio di onore. È prova di volontà ferma e di carattere deciso, mentre il,” saying that Virgil’s purpose for the phrase is to demonstrate the necessity to seek glory and desire honor, as well to reveal a strong will and character. This speaks to Cesare Borgia’s desire to gain infamy, which in turn references his relationship to Julius Caesar. Interestingly the lines around line 8 reference Hercules, the great slayer of the hydra. This device is also mentioned by Mario Praz in “The Gonzaga devices” and on folio 11 in volume one of Jacobus Typotius’s *Symbola Divina* (1601-1603). Typotius actually references Pope Alexander VI as the Borgia associated with the device. Until a concrete object associated with either Cesare or Alexander and the motto is found it can not be determined which one or if both men used the phrase. Jacobus Typotius (1540-1601/02) was a Netherlandish humanist, historian, and political propagandist who worked at the imperial court of Rudolf II. For more on Typotius see, Nicolette Mout, “A Useful Servant of Princes: The Netherlandish Humanist Jacobus Typotius at the Prague Imperial Court Around 1600,” *Acta Comeniana = Archiv pro badání o životě a díle Jana Amose Komenského* 13 (1999): 27-49.
released it from her bosom. Higher than the moon it mounted up and, leaving behind it a fiery train, gleamed as a star.\textsuperscript{79}

Here Ovid references the comet as a sign of Cesare’s divinity. Suetonius also takes this view: “A comet rose at about the eleventh hour and shone for seven days in a row, and it was believed that is was Caesar’s soul taken up into the sky.”\textsuperscript{80}

Augustus’ account of the comet in his \textit{Memoirs, De vita sua} was the most cited version. His account is also the most important for this argument in that it describes the location of the comet in the sky. It states that the comet was observed: “In regione caeli sub septentrionibus” (In the region of the sky beneath the \textit{septentriones} [viz. the seven bright stars in Ursa Major which form the Big Dipper]).\textsuperscript{81} In a diagram taken from John T. Ramsey and A Lewis Licht’s work \textit{The Comet of 44 B.C. and Caesar’s Funeral Games}, one can see the comet’s path marked by the dotted line, calculated by ancient texts and astrological charts.\textsuperscript{82} (Figure 4-25) The trajectory parallels the constellation Hydra, shown along the bottom edge of the arc. Any astrologer in Cesare’s service, most likely Lorenz Beheim, could have made the same computation and subsequently collaborated with Cesare to devise this obscure association to Julius Caesar.

In choosing to reference the celestial event of Caesar’s apotheosis through the imagery of the hydra, Cesare Borgia was complicating his representation of and relationship with Caesar, highlighting his desire for a powerful and aggressively won legacy as well as taking active ownership of his own foretold fate. It was an omen of bad things to come for his enemies and of

\textsuperscript{79} Ovid, \textit{The Metamorphosis} (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005), 307-310. This account is related in Book XV.


\textsuperscript{81} Ramsey and Licht, \textit{The Comet of 44 B.C.}, 86.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid, 88.
the rising path he intended to take. It is possible that Cesare and his astrologers believed an actual Renaissance comet to have foretold his climactic fate, the comet in 1500 and a comet seen in Gubbio in September 1499, accounted in Tommasso di Silvesto’s *Diario*, a Diary of Orvieto, could have served as the source.\(^8^3\)

Cesare incorporated the hydra into the military uniforms of his men, worn, for what we believe was the first time, in October 1500 when he made a theatrical entry into Pesaro as their new leader. The 150 men-at-arms were dressed in his personal red and yellow livery but now also wore, on their chest and back, the seven-headed hydra.\(^8^4\) An excerpt from a letter describes additional details in their costume:

> Le cincture military, che sogliono per maggiore comodità, adattandosi sulla spalla destra ed indi attraversando il petto, calare al fianco siniestro, erano molto artificioso perciocché fatte a scaglie di serpenti, variate di colori e d’oro, imitavano l’idra dale cui sette bocche, procedenti da un principio solo, venivano formate le fibbie, le quail pareva che, mordendo, stringessero i foderi degli stocchi, e questi ornatissimi, e co’ puntali ed else dorate.\(^8^5\)

Similar devices were worn by his bodyguards at his entrance in Forlì, described as a bull surrounded by seven viper heads.\(^8^6\) Again in his *Chronicle*, Matarazzo said this:

> He devised and wore many different coats of arms; and at this time he had one which was a seven-headed hydra, as we see it limned, and beneath was his motto in two lines and more giving his titles: Cesare Borgia of France, Gonfaloniere General

---


\(^8^4\) Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 136.

\(^8^5\) Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia*, 412. A letter describes his men’s uniforms: Belts from the right shoulder to the left side, multicolored, they had snake scales in a variety of colors and gold: “fatte a scaglie di serpenti, variate di colorie e d’oro, imitavano l’idra dale cui sette bocche,” imitating a hydra with seven heads, one of which formed a buckle and appeared to be biting into the sheaths for rapiers.

\(^8^6\) Beuf, *Cesare Borgia*, 179-180.
of the Church, Duke of Valentia and Romagna, Lord of Piombino, of Camerino and of Urbino.\textsuperscript{87}

Cesare was known for his interest in conundrums and allusive devices and for designing his own; however they were often obscure and their meanings difficult to determine.\textsuperscript{88} He gave the subject of the hydra to Aquilano, and asked him to write a vocal accompaniment for his playing on the lute. Aquilano came up with this love sonnet, sonnet 67, which compares a woman of poetry and a hydra:

\begin{verbatim}
C'è nel crediria? Fra noi 'hidra dimora
Con sette teste et con so gran veneno
Che n'ha sette altre, poi se una vien meno
Già che fa quello la mia donna anchora.
Ha sette capi, i qual te nomino hora
El sguardo, el riso de dolcezza pieno,
La fronte, i piei, le man', la bocca, el seno,
Et ogn' un morde, ognun strugge e divora.
Tronca una testa, n'ha sette altre fore,
Sdegno, desperation, vivace morte,
Sospetto, gelosia, dubbio, timore.
In questo sol han diferente sorte:
L'hidra col foco (a quel ch'io intendo) more
E questa col mio ardor si fa più forte.\textsuperscript{89}
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{87} Matarazzo, \textit{Chronicles of the City of Perugia}, 244.

\textsuperscript{88} Beuf, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 179-180.

\textsuperscript{89} Alvisi, \textit{Cesare Borgia Duca di Romagna}, 101. Rough translation by the author.

What is the hydra? Between us the hydra rests
With seven heads and with so much venom
Which 'has seven others, then if a \textit{vien} less
Already which made those of my woman still.
It has seven heads, that you named \textit{hora}
A glance, a laugh of sweetness full
The forehead, feet, hands, mouth, and breast,
And \textit{ogn 'a} bite, everyone consumes and devours.
Cut off a head, does not have seven other \textit{fore},
Anger, desperation, lively death
Suspicion, jealousy, doubt, fear.
In this single \textit{han} different fate:
The hydra with fire (to those who I mean) \textit{more}
And this with my passion is made stronger

Cloulas includes a translation of part of what appears to be a similar song on page 186 of \textit{The Borjas}. 
Physical examples of this device do exist, although in scarce number. Cesare modified his coat of arms to include the new classical symbol, and four examples of its use still remain. A seal, held in the Archivio di Stato di Fano, shows the addition of a helmet at the top right from which multiple snake heads emerge. (Figure 4-26) A second is on a letter from Cesare dated July 17, 1503. (Figure 4-27) Another impression of the same seal is located in Rimini and is known through a drawing in Charles Yriarte’s Autour des Borgia. (Figure 4-28) A fourth seal, attached to a letter Cesare wrote to Francesco Gonzaga on December 7, 1506, from Pamplona, Spain, based on a description is the same or a close derivative of the Fano and Rimini design:

The letter has a wafer bearing the combined arms of Cæsar with the inscription Cæsar Borgia de Francia Dux Romandiolæ. One shield has the Borgia arms, with the French lilies, and a helmet from which seven snarling dragons issue; the other the arms of Cæsar’s wife, with the lilies of France, and a winged horse rising from the casque.90

Windsor 12329, a folio by Leonardo da Vinci, displays a sketch that has similar characteristics to the new device on Cesare’s arms. (Figure 4-29) It is clearly a preliminary draft, what the Royal Collection’s website calls “surprisingly crude,” which suggests the possibility of substantial changes and embellishments in any final form that the design took. It is possible that in addition to the monogram Leonardo designed for Cesare during 1500, he also crafted one of the manifestations of Cesare’s hydra. What is referred to as “plume” instead resembles the body of an emerging reptilian figure. Here it is without the seven heads that appear in the coat of

Seven wonderful gifts enthrall the lover:
His lady’s glance, her smile, her brow, her feet and hands,
Her mouth, her bosom
But these are flails and a hydra’s many heads
Which bite and tear the lover and devour him.
Far from destroying them, passion’s fire
Gives life to these charms as to evil things,
And at their fatal thrust, the lover meets his death.

90 Gregorivius, Lucretia Borgia, 319.
arms. The lion’s head that caps the closed helmet is greatly reduced or removed, but the shape of the closed jousting helm remains the same. Although 12329 is currently dated to c. 1517-1519, there is no data that definitively binds the images to this time, and the possibility of Cesare’s association as well as a shift in the period of execution should be considered.

One final reference to Cesare’s use of the hydra could be found in Altobello Melone’s c.1510 portrait. (Fig. 1.1) The medallion on the beret, already discussed as a location commonly used to display imprese, is decorated with a sketchy form that is possibly a reference to the helmet and hydra found on Cesare’s seal. Upon close examination it is difficult to make out any image with certainty, but if this is true it could help to authenticate the sitter as Cesare Borgia.91

Of the visual elements used as propaganda in the Italian Renaissance those that were ubiquitous in nature, medals, seals, banners, mottos, and coats of arms, provided the most powerful expressions of authority and thusly had a more profound impact.92 When Gianpaolo Baglione, gathered with a group of other men at the castle of Magione near Lake Trasimeno in 1502 to discuss their mutual fear of Cesare’s growing power, he warned them of a fate that included being “devoured one by one by the dragon.”93 His vocabulary suggests that he had seen Cesare’s new commanding device and had fallen victim to its influence.

Lucrezia’s Third Marriage – Alfonso d’Este

Cesare was back in Rome by September 15, 1501, to begin preparations for the celebration of Lucrezia’s third wedding. It was once again Cesare’s opportunity to show off his rank, magnificence, and the talent in his employ. Wedding celebrations in the Renaissance world

91 The painting was examined in detail during the Musée Maillol 2014-2015 exhibition Les Borgia et Leur Temps. Although the image on the medallion is hard to distinguish the detailed analysis provided by this primary viewing reinforced the theory that it is an artist’s reference to the hydra device that Cesare used.

92 Welch, Art in Renaissance Italy, 215.

were used as opportunities to display, through various forms of pageantry, the dynastic framework of the two marital families and the future political advantage sought through the union.\(^{94}\) In this case the houses were to be the Borgia and the d’Este; Lucrezia was to marry Alfonso d’Este, eldest son in the established and respected family, and future duke of Ferrara. It was a hard fought arrangement and a coup for the Borgia whose Italian roots were shallow and for Lucrezia who, for all her beauty and esteemed qualities, was an illegitimate daughter. It was earned in no small part by Lucrezia herself who played an active role in the talks.\(^{95}\) As early as July 1501, the merger was in motion; Remolines, one of Cesare’s negotiators, returned from a trip to Ferrara with a portrait of Alfonso so that Lucrezia could see the man to whom she might be betrothed.\(^{96}\)

Once the agreement was made, planning for what etiquette required to be a magnificent affair began. Both Alexander and Cesare wanted to impress the d’Este and were willing to spend extravagantly to do so. Francesco Pepi, a Florentine Orator, said:

> The things that are ordered here for these festivities are unheard of; and for a minor feast the shoes of the Duke’s staff-bearers are made of gold brocade, and the same for the Pope’s grooms: and he and the Duke vie with each other in producing the most magnificent, the latest, and the most expensive things.\(^{97}\)

The competition and co-hosting of the wedding celebrations is exemplified by the first folio of the *Spetacula Lucretiana*, a collection of Latin poems that were written by Giambattista

---

\(^{94}\) Hollingsworth, *Patronage in Renaissance Italy*, 159. Weddings were an essential part of court life and in establishing political relationships that could ensure political power and safety for the family at large.

\(^{95}\) Bradford, *Lucretia Borgia*, 118-119. It was unusual for women to have a great deal of influence in this process particularly when the families involved were of such paramount importance in the political landscape. Lucretia was respected by her father who trusted her with political affairs in his absence so it is no surprise that, although unorthodox, he included her possibly in the selection and definitively in the process of negotiating the agreement.

\(^{96}\) Ibid, 108.

\(^{97}\) Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 167. Little is known about Francesco Pepi (1451-1513). He was elected as a Florentine ambassador to Rome on October 10, 1506. There is a biographical sketch of him in Machiavelli’s notes for *Nature di Uomini Fiorentini* and he is mentioned in the section of that title in volume two of the *Opere di Machiavelli*. Machiavelli viewed him as an important statesman and virtuous citizen.
Cantalicio on the occasion of this marriage in the papal family.98 (Figure 4-30) Although the work is dedicated to Alexander VI, Cesare’s coat of arms appears alongside his father’s at the base of the page.

For their arrival on December 23, 1501, Cesare’s suite met the Ferrarese ambassadors, which included Ippolito, Ferrante, and Sigismondo, Alfonso’s brothers, at the Porta del Popolo with a retinue of so many that the formal reception took over 2 hours.99 His show of martial power, the militarized backdrop to the welcome, consisted of 4,000 figures of war.100 His greeting was also not without the required magnificence. Ferdinand Gregorovius stated: “The entrance of the Ferronese into Rome was the most theatrical event that occurred during the reign of Alexander VI.”101 He then focused his comments on the specific element of the horse in these types of displays: “Processions were the favorite spectacles…and society displayed their wealth and power in magnificent cavalcades. The horse was symbolic of the world’s strength and magnificence.”102 A quote describing Cesare’s horse on this occasion demonstrates his participation in this belief: “The Duke rode a most beautiful strong horse, so fine that it seemed to have wings…and its trappings were estimated at 10,000 ducats because one could see nothing but gold, pearls and other jewels.”103 After bombards saluted the procession at the bridge of the

---


99 Gregorovius, Lucretia Borgia, 210-211.

100 Bradford, Lucretia Borgia, 126.

101 Gregorovius, Lucretia Borgia, 209

102 Ibid.

103 Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 167.
Castel Sant’Angelo, Alexander welcomed the Ferrarese at the Vatican and Cesare led them across the piazza to meet Lucrezia.\textsuperscript{104}

The merriments of carnival began early and were fervent. They were intertwined seamlessly with the elaborately and explicitly orchestrated wedding celebrations. The marriage ceremony took place on December 30, 1501. After the ceremony the wedding party and important figures watched games in the piazza of Saint Peter’s through an upstairs window.\textsuperscript{105} Cesare staged a mock siege, put on by the members of his household. Afterwards they retired to the Sala del Papagallo where there the entertainments were also led by Cesare.\textsuperscript{106} Two eclogues were recited; one more elaborate than the other was staged with “woods, fountains and hills, animals and shepherds and featuring two young men who represented Alfonso and Cesare, each dominating their lands on different sides of the Po.”\textsuperscript{107} Afterwards there was dancing that included a \textit{moresca}.\textsuperscript{108} This took place in the Sala dei Pontifici of the Borgia Apartments where a low stage had been constructed that was “decorated with foliage and illuminated by torches.”\textsuperscript{109} Cesare is said to have participated.\textsuperscript{110}

Other festivities associated with the wedding continued over the following days. Discrepancies exist in the exact dating of the events but the general descriptions are unified. There was a triumphal parade with representations of Caesar, Hercules, and Scipio Africanus. The thirteen carts, symbolizing the thirteen districts of Rome, circled the Piazza San Pietro in

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{105} Gregorovius, \textit{Lucretia Borgia}, 217.

\textsuperscript{106} Bradford, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 170.

\textsuperscript{107} Bradford, \textit{Lucrezia Borgia}, 130.

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{109} Gregorovius, \textit{Lucretia Borgia}, 219.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
order: Hercules, Dioscuri, two bulls, a model of Rome, trophies and spoils, a horse resembling that of Marcus Aurelius, an unknown few, and the last were Caesar on horseback and the graces.\(^{111}\) A race and numachia have also been mentioned.\(^{112}\) It is possible that the races associated with the wedding coincided with some of the many horse races that were held during this carnival season to show off Cesare’s stables. He had over 300 horses which were a point of tremendous pride and competition with Francesco Gonzaga, brother-in-law of Alfonso d’Este, and from whom Cesare had acquired many of them.\(^{113}\)

On January 2, 1502 a bullfight was staged in Piazza San Pietro. That evening the *Menaechmi* of Plautus and other works were performed, honoring Cesare and Ercole d’Este. The four new plays were highly political which did not go un-noticed by the delegation from Ferrara as noted in an ambassador’s report to Duke Ercole. Also noted in the report was that the actors of Plautus’ *Menaechmi* inserted lines into the work, making allusions to Alexander VI, Cesare, and Ercole.

Cantalicio, the author of the *Spetacula Lucretiana*, dedicated poems to the five comedies that were performed the same evening. Each poem was also associated with an element of the wedding celebrations including the arrival and departure of the Ferrarese, public games, and allegorical parades. He labeled four of them as “novae comeodiae” because they were contemporary and written in a new style; the fifth was the older *Menaechmi*.\(^{114}\) In 1486 Ercole d’Este had revived Plautus’s comedies by staging the first production since antiquity.\(^{115}\) The

\(^{111}\) Ghirardo, “Festival Bridal Entries in Renaissance Ferrara,” 61.
\(^{112}\) Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia*, 483.
\(^{113}\) Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 167.
\(^{114}\) Beyer, “Carlo and Marcellino Verardi’s *Fernandus Servatus* and the Poem *Supra Casum Hispani Regis* by Petrus Martyr, 36-38.
\(^{115}\) Ghirardo, “Festival Bridal Entries in Renaissance Ferrara,” 52.
choice was common for wedding celebrations, but it was likely also a tribute to Ercole’s cultural contributions.

A detailed and important description of these events can be found in a letter the Ferrarese ambassadors, Johann Lucas and Gerardus Saracenus wrote to Ercole—reproduced in Gregoriovius’s *Lucretia Borgia*. The themes focused on Ercole and, not Alexander, but Cesare.

The following play was given: first appeared a boy in woman’s clothes who represented Virtue, and another in the character of Fortune. They had began to banter each other as to which was the mightier, whereupon Fame suddenly appeared, standing on a globe which rested on a float, upon which were the words, “Gloria Domus Borgiæ.” Fame, who also called himself Light, awarded Virtue the prize over Fortune, saying that Caesar and Ercole by Virtue had overcome Fortune; thereupon he described a number of the heroic deeds performed by the illustrious Duke of Romagna. Hercules with the lion’s skin and club appeared, and Juno sent Fortune to attack him. Hercules, however, overcame Fortune, seized her and chained her; whereupon Juno begged him to free her, and he, gracious and generous, consented to grant Juno’s request on the condition that she would never do anything which might injure the house of Ercole or that of Cæsar Borgia. To this she agreed, and, in addition, she promised to bless the union of the two houses…All of this was accompanied by descriptions in polished hexameters, which celebrated the alliance of Caesare and Ercole, and predicated that together they would overthrow all the latter’s enemies.116

The elaborate theatrical performances and displays that often took place during larger festival events like weddings were designed as allegorical representations, classical mythology and metaphor used to explore love, conquest, and ideal court life.117 They were commonly held in existing large halls outfitted with lightly constructed temporary works, and decorated with damasks, paintings, three-dimensional sculptures, and candelabra. Everything was removed and customarily destroyed after the evening’s performance.118 (Figures 4-31,4-32) One can imagine the space in the Borgia Apartments with this description.

117 Rinaldi, “Writing at Court,” 68.
118 Blumenthal, *Italian Renaissance Festival Designs*, 44.
The events also included musical interludes [intermezzi] performed before, between, and after the acts of a play. These intermissions involved music accompanied by dancing and singing and some theatrics enlivened by costumes and pastoral or mythological themes.\textsuperscript{119} Exactly these kinds of interludes, previously described, were held on the occasion of Lucrezia’s second wedding.

Music contributed a great deal to the sound of court, not just as a decorative or aural complement to visual events; it helped define and disperse the desired image of the ruler, becoming an emotional form of propaganda.\textsuperscript{120} This manifested most importantly in the context of a wedding or court event as the soundtrack to the performance of dance.

Dance, as practiced by the elite of Italian Renaissance society “had an intellectual and philosophical framework.”\textsuperscript{121} In her book \textit{The Eloquent Body: Dance and Humanist Culture in Fifteenth-Century Italy} Jennifer Nevile examines the development of dance as a humanistic art form that, like other liberal arts, is a mental exercise.\textsuperscript{122} Movements of the body were considered representative of the inner soul.\textsuperscript{123} Corporal eloquence was paramount. Dance was a kinetic language, understood to be a civilizing activity.\textsuperscript{124} It communicated essential information about an individual’s control, fluency, training, and ability to govern.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[119] Ibid, 68.
\item[120] Franco Piperno, “Italian Courts and Music,” in \textit{Courts and Courtly Arts in Renaissance Italy: Arts, Culture and Politics, 1395-1530}, ed. Marco Folin (Suffolk: Antique Collectors Club, 2011), 78. This is part of the idea that Renaissance art was multi-sensory.
\item[121] Jennifer Nevile, \textit{The Eloquent Body: Dance and Humanist Culture in Fifteenth Century Italy} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 2.
\item[122] Ibid, 3.
\item[123] Ibid, 91.
\item[124] Ibid, 9, 17. Baldesar Castiglione, author of \textit{The Book of the Courtier}, discussed the necessity of the skill of dancing. Some nobility, including Ippolita Sforza and Lorenzo de Medici, were known to compose their own dances.
\end{footnotes}
The dance masters, the individuals largely responsible for the choreography and teaching of dances, used symbolism the same way that other artists and craftsmen did—for example Domenico, the dance master of Leonello d’Este, named two of his dances balli Leoncello, associating the marquis with a lion. The same association was used by Pisanello on the reverse of one of Leonello’s medals.\textsuperscript{125} Like Renaissance painters, sculptors, and architects, these dance masters engaged with humanist ideas.\textsuperscript{126} They fought to have their work appreciated as a liberal art and adopted certain vocabulary from painting and rhetoric to further associate their craft with those disciplines.\textsuperscript{127} The most important term was \textit{Misura}, a term that referenced the ideal proportioning in body spacing, movement, and music.\textsuperscript{128} The rules of composition in dance—proportion, variety, and construction from individual elements—were analogous to those of grammar, rhetoric, and painting.\textsuperscript{129} In order for dance to rank alongside the liberal arts, granted access through a connection made through music, it had to be credited as both a physically and intellectually challenging sophistication.\textsuperscript{130}

This intellectual component is evident in Mario Filefo’s praise of the mid 15\textsuperscript{th}-century dancemaster Guglielmo Ebro. He compared Guglielmo with heroes of antiquity like Hector and declared that his gifts were so incredible that they must be divinely inspired. This is telling of the respect that he held in the eyes of his contemporaries and of their view that he derived his talent, like Michelangelo and other masters of the High Renaissance, not from serving under a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{125} Ibid, 26.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Ibid, 3.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Ibid, 77.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Ibid, 78. Through \textit{misura} the proper proportions of dance were associated with the Pythagorean order and Platonic concepts of nature.
\item \textsuperscript{129} Ibid, 81.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Ibid, 3.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
master as an apprentice but from the possession of an inborn gift from god [ingenio].

Like Aristotle, Plato, and Poliziano, dance masters also taught the nobility and intimately interacted with them showing their elevated status. The ultimate performers of the dances when staged in the important court events were nobility; they became the executioners of a dancemaster’s design.

The ritual dances performed during these formal state occasions were used to act out social and court roles as well as for the aggrandizement of the associated parties. This public display of power was considered an element in the exhibition of magnificence that was essential to a 15th-century Italian political entity. They were part of a well choreographed spectacle of power, used to represent relationships and alliances, accentuate authority, and to establish identities—civic, dynastic, and personal. For Cesare those of rulership, individual strength, and masculinity fueled his intentions.

The moresche was a dance that was commonly performed at Borgia events and by other courts of the time accompanying banquets, triumphal entries, tournaments, weddings, and theatrical presentations. By the 15th century, this dance was a standard component of the overall dramatic spectacle of court, “forming part of the mummeries or ‘disguisings’ that were the forerunners of the court masque.” They were richly staged, ornamented by costumes and

---

132 Ibid, 15.
133 Ibid, 22.
135 Ibid, 46.
136 Ibid, 33.
The scenery was part of the performative experience, and it is likely that the producers of the overall events worked closely with the dancemasters to integrate the customized movements into the larger crafted statements. We know major artists like Leonardo da Vinci were examples of these producers. It was not a figured dance and took on numerous forms, varied by the diverse contexts in which it was staged. It could include danced combat or other pantomimic movements, allegorical representation, and mythological characters. Masks or face paint were commonly worn by the performers. It was a “danced drama”, a definitive example of how elite members of society defined themselves to each other and literally performed their public persona through dance.

The *moreschi* at the Borgia/d’Este wedding were no exception. The members and guests of the two powerful families performed the politically charged display that had been designed for the occasion by a respected dancemaster of the time; certainly the Borgia would have settled for nothing less since such events have long been considered one of their favorite art forms. Cesare was given a place of prominence in all of the wedding festivities, showing his important place and status as the future of the Borgia family’s power.

After the wedding celebrations were over, Lucrezia left Rome for Ferrara on January 6, 1502. She left with many Romans, charged with seeing her off, and a personal retinue of 180

---

138 Ibid, 33.
139 Ibid, 39.
140 NuHall, “Dancing, love and the ‘beautiful game’,” 125.
142 Ibid, 47.
people. Additionally Cesare, at his own expense, equipped an escort for his sister comprised of two hundred cavaliers to keep her safe and musicians and buffoons to keep her happy.143

The Ferrarese put on their own celebrations once their future duchess arrived in the city. Bernardino Zambotti, author of Diario ferrarese, describes Lucrezia’s arrival in Ferrara. According to his account the comedy Epidicio, by Plautus, was performed in an indoor theater, staged for the occasion. It was set up with seating on one side and decorated with cloth. There was also singing and a moresche.144 Zambotti also describes living tableaux during a parade.145 A presentation of the Hydra being killed by Hercules took place at one of the temporary triumphal arches.146 Both families’ devices were on display as a form of honor for the union.147 El Prete, a confidant of Isabella d’Este, sent her letters with detailed descriptions of everything involving her new sister-in-law, as he had done during the events in Rome.

After Lucrezia left the eternal city, Alexander VI, Cesare, and a number of cardinals spent the next few weeks touring various fortresses—through February and March they visited Civitavecchia, Corneto, Elba, and Piombino. Their large retinue consisted of 150 people and

---

143 Evidence suggests that Cesare also expected his wife Charlotte to join Lucrezia in Ferrara. His gentlemen waited for Charlotte there for an extended period of time but were eventually forced to leave when Ercole grew tired of being responsible for their care. A dispatch from Venice dated December 18, 1501, describes a package of sweetmeats, wax, and other luxurious items that Cesare sent to his wife in France. Perhaps he was equipping her for an extended journey. Although it is of little bearing to the current research, the fact that Charlotte was expected in Ferrara does discount a commonly held conception that Cesare completely neglected his wife and that he had no intention of bringing her to Italy.


145 Ibid, 323.


147 Crane, The Performance of Self, 23.
took six gallies to transport. Cesare was particularly interested in the new fortification work.

On February 17 they were in Piombino examining the construction that was being carried out under Cesare’s orders. They considered the locations and plans that Cesare had made to build fortifications for the city’s defense. Antonio da Sangallo il Vecchio was on the trip with them consulting on the project.

It is also possible that Leonardo da Vinci was on the trip acting in a military and engineering capacity for Cesare. Although their formal arrangement did not begin until August 1502, the exact beginning of Leonardo’s time with Cesare is unknown, and it is not unlikely that they were in communication as early as this. It is known that Leonardo visited Piombino while he worked for Cesare. In Manuscript L, the notebook he carried during his travels with Cesare, he made geographic sketches of Piombino and the surrounding coastline, from the ancient harbor to the Gulf of Baratta. He also wrote the text: “made at the sea of Piombino, next to a sketch of waves.”

On February 25th the group went to Elba to inspect a fortress that Ivan Cloulas and Rafael Sabatini believed was built under the supervision of Leonardo. During the return from the

---

149 Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia*, 492.
153 Cloulas, *The Borgias*, 210. Sabatini, *The Life of Cesare Borgia*, 305. Very little information is available on the fortress at Elba and there is not universal consenses in regards to its history. It is likely that Leonardo’s involvement, particularly anything more that preliminary design, is purely legend. However the possibility of Leonardo’s involvement in one more, in what we will see is a long list of fortresses that Cesare was responsible for, is worth mentioning.
island, they experienced rough seas. It is possible that it was during this voyage that Leonardo observed the coastline and waves that compelled him to sketch. The connections of Leonardo and Sangallo to Cesare’s patronage only continue to increase from this point forward, manifesting commonly in defensive architecture.

**Forte Sangallo**

The Borgia family held the fortress of Civita Castellana, Forte Sangallo, for most of thirty years; it was given to Pope Alexander in 1484 when he was still a cardinal. (Figure 4-33) It was an important stronghold because of its location on the Via Flamina, a main approach to Rome, so shortly after becoming Pope in 1492, Alexander began a massive reconstruction project to enhance the fortification and decoration of the structure. Antonio da Sangallo il Vecchio was the architect for the construction which began in 1494, supplying an outer enceinte that could serve as a suitable defense against an artillery assault. The pentagonal formation with bastions on all five corners was finished by 1497, but a last phase of defensive architecture dates to 1500-1501.154 The work in 1500 was substantial enough that in April 1500 Alexander complained about the slow progress that was being made towards completion. The people of Civita Castellana had expressed their own frustration and Alexander was under pressure to cease the disruptive construction.155

---

154 Anna Cavallaro, “Un ciclo per i Borgia a Civita Castellana,” in *Il Quattrocento a Viterbo: Viterbo, Museo civico, 11-giugno-10 settembre 1983* (Rome: DeLuca, 1983), 262. These dates are critical to determining the possibility of Cesare’s involvement in the fortress’s decoration.

155 Silvia Maddalo, “La decorazione a fresco della rocca borgiana di Civita Castellana: percorsi iconografici,” in *Le Rocche Alessandrine e la Rocca di Civita Castellana: Atti del convegno (Viterbo 19-20 marzo 2001)*, ed. Myriam Chiabò and Maurizio Gargano (Rome: Ministero per i Beni e la attività culturali direzione generale per gli archivi, 2003), 118. The fact that construction was still going on in 1500 helps to dispel any idea that the frescos were done at an earlier date.
Arnoldo Bruschi has suggested that Bramante’s influence can be decisively seen in Forte Sangallo—in the architectural design of the double storied arcade in the courtyard, in the full entablature, and in the dual banded architrave with a curtain design. He also finds subtle elements of the influence of Francesco di Giorgio’s work in the cornice. The idea of replacing the functional crownwork with an entablature is clearly a reference to classical models and another place that Bruschi finds Bramante’s influence. Paola Zampa suggests that Sangallo and Bramante worked together and that the fortress, in its hybrid combination of advanced military functionality and classical reference, is a result of contributions from both men.\textsuperscript{156}

Because the physical structure was still under construction until 1501, the decoration of the renovated living quarters and interior courtyard dates to 1502-1503. Although Alexander had been responsible for the work in the 1490s, this phase of reconstruction and redecoration was under the primary direction of Cesare.\textsuperscript{157} The decorative elements, existing frescoes, and artists that were involved confirm Cesare’s active voice in the project.

A large coat of arms on the outside of the fortress bears the arms of both Alexander and Cesare, indicating that they played a shared role in Forte Sangallo. (Figure 4-34) Silvia Maddalo believes the presence of Cesare’s coat of arms suggests the depth of his financial and design contributions, and she used the imprese on Cesare’s stemma to date the work to between May 1499 and 1503.\textsuperscript{158} Although her analysis of the significance of his arms is accurate, the

\textsuperscript{156} Paola Zampa, “Il Forte di Nettuno: Antonio da Sangallo il Vecchio tra Francesco di Giorgio e Bramante,” in \textit{Il Forte di Nettuno Storia, Con\textsuperscript{s}truzione e Restauri}, ed. Maurizio Caperna (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2006), 102-105. The possibility of Bramante’s involvement only further enhances the art historical importance of the fortress and of Cesare’s involvement in its construction and decoration.

\textsuperscript{157} Sarah Bradford suggests on page 161 of \textit{Cesare Borgia} that: “At Civita Castellana…Antonio di Sangallo, was building a fortress on Cesare’s orders.” It is more likely that Cesare had taken control of a project that his father had begun as is suggested by the dates. It will be argued that he is largely or collaboratively responsible for the fresco decoration in the courtyard—the architecture is more difficult to assign patronage.

\textsuperscript{158} Maddalo, “La decorazione a fresco della rocca borgiana di Civita Castellana,” 113.
beginning of the date range should be shifted to March 1500, when Cesare became Gonfaloniere and Captain General of the Church. The insignia of that position can clearly be seen in addition to the lilies of France that Maddalo used to date the stemma.

Cesare’s arms are located on other portals and also join his father’s in the inner courtyard. Upon immediately entering the large inner courtyard one can see the elaborate monochrome on blue background fresco program that decorates the ceiling of the pathway that circumvents the open space. The stemma in the key of the vault of the entrance bay is Cesare’s. The decoration pushes the viewer to follow the west portico, continuing to view the intertwining Borgia iconography; a mixture of ancient and Christian images.159 (Figures 4-35, 4-36, 4-37, 4-38, 4-39, 4-40) The epigraphs that are spaced throughout the entire portico have both Cesare’s and Alexander’s names: “BORGIA CAESAR, VIVA CAESAR, CESAR VIVA, VIVA ALEXADER, VIVA BORGIA, ALEXANDER VI, CAES. BORG. SACRUM.”160 The last one stands out as unique from the others in that it offers a meaningful phrase and that there is no complementary version for Alexander VI. Translating to “sacred to Cesare Borgia,” it hints at the importance of Forte Sangallo to Cesare specifically.

The iconography in the west portal is described as particularly celebratory. It represents Alexander, the Borgia family, Cesare, and Borgia political power. The bull, so pervasive in the family’s symbolism, is reduced to a decorative element more associated with antiquity that the Borgia bull.161 This diminution in prominence could suggest Cesare’s control and his exertion of personal reference over a thoroughly dynastic program.

---

159 Ibid, 114, 239.

160 Cavallaro, “Un ciclo per i Borgia a Civita Castellana,” 269.

The motto “TENTANDA VIA [EST]” (A way must be tried), previously mentioned as a motto of Cesare’s, is also frescoed in the courtyard. The phrase is associated with Alexander VI in Jacobus Typotius’ *Symbola Divina* but was also known to have been used by Cesare.

The artists that have been identified with the work that took place at the fortress between 1500 and 1501 are Piermatteo dei Manfredi, also known as Piermatteo d’Amelia, Jacopo Ripanda, and the Master of Oxford. Piermatteo also worked in the Borgia Apartments, and it is suspected that he worked in the Belvedere of the Vatican as well, responsible for the lunettes in the main loggia. It has been suggested that Amico Aspertini, son of Giovanni Aspertini, the artist who had decorated the organ in St. Peter’s basilica that was refurbished by Alexander in 1495, was also hired to decorate a number of rooms at Forte Sangallo.

Jacopo Ripanda is known for monochromatic backgrounds in larger works which further enforces the idea that he is responsible, at least in part, for the portico ceiling frescoes. Additionally, he is known to have been influenced by the grotteschi in the *Domus aurea* and other ancient Roman frescoes and sarcophagi—all of which can be seen as influences in Forte Sangallo. Collaboration between Ripanda and the Master of Oxford is evident in the personalized narrative created by using traditional classic iconography. The Master of Oxford

---


166 Robb, “To Begin, Continue and Complete,” 54.
worked on fresco cycles in the Palazzo dei Conservatori and the monochrome frescoes in the Palazzo Santoro.167

We know that Piermatteo d’Amelia was painting in Civita Castellana in 1503 because he was paid a three month advance on June 17th of that year. However, the Pope died less than two months later in August so it is unlikely that Piermatteo was allowed to complete his work.168

Cesare very quickly lost money and power, rendering him unable to focus on the expansive holding that had been under his control only a few months earlier. Although Ripanda is known for the monochromatic nature of the backgrounds in his work, there is very little color in the portico frescoes, indicating that perhaps the secondary or tertiary layers were never added as the result of the power shift after Alexander’s death. Even in its current and perhaps unfinished state, one can appreciate the program and read the praise of the Borgia and Cesare in its surface.

Because of Cesare’s close involvement and association with the project of the reconstruction and redecoration, these artists, Sangallo, Piermatteo, Ripanda, and the Master of Oxford, should be placed on the list of those who worked under his direction and on commissions associated with him.

There is a bust of Salvator Mundi at Forte Sangallo that is said to be a portrait of Cesare, further suggesting his active presence. (Figure 4-41) Another Salvator Mundi bust said to be a portrait of Cesare Borgia is today located above a portal in the courtyard of the Palazzo San Luigi dei Francesi. (Figure 4-42) It was found in San Salvatore in Thermis which was a part of the complex of associated buildings surrounding the actual Church of San Luigi dei Francesi.


168 See de Roo, Material for a History of Pope Alexander VI, vol. IV, 488 for documentation on the payment to d’Amelia.
Mario Menotti believed it was commissioned by the French religious group after Cesare married into the French royal court which made him a protector of French interests in Rome.\textsuperscript{169}

**Forte Nettuno**

Forte Nettuno is another important military stronghold associated with the Borgia, located in Nettuno on the Tyrrhenian coast, 37 miles south of Rome. (Figure 4-43) Constructed around 1501-1503, the architect has been historically realized as Antonio da Sangallo il Vecchio.\textsuperscript{170} Sangallo went to Rome in 1492 after the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent, when Alexander VI called him to the eternal city to name him architect of the fortresses of the Apostolic Chamber.\textsuperscript{171} It was under this same title that he worked on Civita Castellana during the previous decade. Interesting however, is the possibility that Sangallo was working in Nettuno not under the patronage of Alexander alone but, like Civita Castellana, under the direction of both the pope and his son, or for Cesare alone.\textsuperscript{172}

Building began in 1501 when Nettuno was transferred to the Duke of Sermoneta Rodrigo Borgia d’Aragon, also called Rodrigo Bisceglie, Cesare’s ward, the two-year-old son of Lucrezia Borgia and her deceased second husband Alfonso Bisceglie.\textsuperscript{173} The maps used in Forte Nettuno to describe the Renaissance layout and use of rooms, indicate that Rodrigo, Lucrezia, and Cesare had living quarters inside—interestingly Alexander VI did not. (Figures 4-44, 4-45) Coats of

\textsuperscript{169} For Menotti’s theory on the sculpture at San Luigi dei Francesi see *I Borgia*, 113. This would date the sculpture to some time after 1498 and likely before 1501 when Cesare’s alliance to the French was waverin.


\textsuperscript{172} Although most scholarship places the role of patron upon the shoulders of Alexander, the comune’s official website cites the construction as beginning at the behest of Cesare. (www.comune.nettuno.roma.it – 5/5/14)

arms and other heraldic emblems on lintels of doors and windows confirm Alexander’s
association, but that could simply be dynastic branding. Although the Venetian Ambassador
Antonio Giustiniani tells us that both Cesare and Alexander went to Nettuno on May 11, 1503, to
inspect the hurried progress there, because of Cesare’s relationship with Rodrigo and the
existence of living quarters for him and not his father, it is likely that Cesare should be credited
with Forte Nettuno’s construction, not Alexander.

Forte Nettuno was much more practical than Civita Castellana which was a hybrid
fortress: functional with an advanced military keep and ramparts, but also a papal/dynastic
residence which required decoration and a certain level of magnificence, evident through the
elaborate fresco program previously mentioned. Nettuno, although equipped with an interior
space of rooms designated for its famous residents, had a primary function of defense.

It was also very important in the evolution of military architecture. Nettuno was the
prototype in the development in the course of the 15th-century progress towards the modern
fortress, a summation of all experimental work and design before, synthesized in this new
defense installation. The system of angular bastions was part of the innovation. The new
interest in external crowning design and the resemblance of the top of ramparts to the entablature
of ancient models suggests the involvement of Bramante here as well.

174 Ibid. The use of Alexander’s coat of arms does not demand his direct influence but could, as stated, simply be a
way to stamp the fortress with the strongest power of the Borgia.

175 Ibid, 60. Faraone references Giustinian’s notation regarding both Borgia men visiting Nettuno. The use of the
relationship between Cesare and Rodrigo and of the living quarters is a new contribution of this research.


177 Repetto, “Il Forte di Nettuno nel quadro dell’architettura militare a cavallo tra XV e XVI secolo,” 87.

178 Maurizio Caperna, preface to Il Forte Nettuno Storia, Construzione e Restauri, ed. Maurizio Caperna (Rome:
Gangemi Editore, 2006), 9. The commune of Nettuno’s official website mentions this association as well.
Although the decoration and need for elaborate environmental staging did not exist at Nettuno, like Civita Castellana, it was a combination of Sangallo’s elevation to a modern military fortress and Bramante’s nuanced classical references, fused into an example of the state of the Italian peninsula at the time. Bramante’s contributions to these structures modify their meaning by instilling in their design a sense of stately monumentality. He offered a syntactic meaning to the constructions through his interpretation of classical methods, particularly those offered by Vitruvius.\(^{179}\)

**Other Fortresses**

There are other fortresses that seem to be of some importance to the Borgia family. One was the Rocca di Papa, although it was destroyed in the mid 16\(^{th}\)-century so any trace of Borgia patronage there would be lost. We know Alexander stayed there in February of 1502.\(^{180}\) Its proximity made it well situated for Alexander VI and Cesare, who both frequently visited the area for hunting trips and political meetings.\(^{181}\) Michael Mallet lists castles in Tivoli, Civitella, and Sermoneta as others fortified or restored under the Borgia.\(^{182}\) If they did have a palace near Tivoli, at present it remains unidentified. Burchard writes that on July 12, 1494, Cesare and Alexander left Rome for Vicovaro. They stayed the night in Tivoli and left the next day for Vicovaro to meet with Alfonso of Naples, a schedule that supports a Borgia stronghold in the Tivoli area.\(^{183}\)

---


\(^{181}\) Burchard talks about one such trip in *Diarium III*, 153,155, 156.


\(^{183}\) Burchard, *Diarium*, II, 689. Vicovaro belonged to the Orsini. This trip is also discussed by Woodward in *Cesare Borgia*, 62-63
Regardless of this potential palace, the Borgia connection to Tivoli remains art historically important because of the number of artists who visited the site during Alexander VI papacy including Pinturicchio, Bramante, and Leonardo da Vinci. Alexander himself had a personal interest in the site and was the first to carry out organized excavations there. The significance of Tivoli will be revisited shortly.

1502 Romagna campaign

In the summer of 1502 Cesare was in Rome preparing for his campaign in the Romagna. Antonio Giustinian, the Venetian envoy to Rome, believed through his observations that Cesare was now in control of the very close relationship that existed between him and Alexander.\footnote{Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 174.} The power shift manifested in the young man as escalating self-confidence and a heightened expectation for his near future. He set out to take over much of Umbria, the Marches, and the Romagna.\footnote{Of his conquest of these areas, one by one, he said that he would “eat the artichoke leaf by leaf.” Beuf, Cesare Borgia, 273.} Even those cities and rulers that were commonly held as immune to Italy’s typical political fluctuations were shortly proven to be fair game in Cesare’s plan of consumption.

On June 9, 1502, he left Rome and on the 21\textsuperscript{st}, Cesare took Urbino in a surprise attack. Urbino was the highly esteemed duchy of Guidobaldo de Montefeltro and Elizabeth Gonzaga; this was a move that shocked other Italian powers. Guidobaldo was well connected to many other reigning families and was a popular ruler. This unprovoked usurpation of power was a strategic acquisition for Cesare. Other political players that had once attributed his military successes to French assistance had to recognize the cunning and skillful way that he had executed the maneuver. His eventual cavalier relinquishment of the city of Urbino implies that it
was not necessarily the city that was important to him but the respect he gained through fear from the other rulers.

**Urbino**

On July 6 Cesare and his army were camped at Fermignano, south of Urbino where he was documented hunting in the hills with a number of servants and with his “leopards”.\(^{186}\) The cheetah, often mistakenly called a leopard, is easy to tame and has been used for thousands of years to hunt alongside man and at times with his dogs.\(^{187}\) Hunting with leopards/cheetah was not unknown in the Italian Renaissance, but it was rare and always remained an elite and exotic addition to a hunting party. During the hunt the cheetahs sat on the horse, behind the rider, and would jump off to give chase.\(^{188}\) An image of this can be seen in Benozzo Gozzoli’s frescos in the Magi Chapel in the Palazzo Medici Ricardi. (Figure 4-46)

Much of Cesare’s time was also dedicated to the month long systematic removal of Montefeltro’s famous possessions. Cesare had an inventory made of Urbino’s works of art, and began shipping them by mule trains to his fortresses in Forlì and Cesena. A local chronicler said:

Il Valentino, while he was at Urbino and afterwards, had all the furniture of Guidobaldo taken from the palace and sent to the Rocca of Forlì: so that during the entire month 180 mules were employed each day; thus that so honoured house was despoiled of silver and rich tapestries, with the magnificent and rare library and all the other hangings, also horses, mules and the perfect stud horses.\(^{189}\)

---

\(^{186}\) Hibbert, *The Borgias*, 227.


\(^{188}\) Zuener, *A History of Domesticated Animals*, 419.

\(^{189}\) Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 184
Giuliano Fantaguzzi, a chronicler in Cesena, remarked that Cesare removed 400 pounds of silver vessels, things from stables, and tapestries of inestimable worth.\textsuperscript{190} Gustavo Sacerdote suggests that both Leonardo and Bramante witnessed the stripping of Urbino.\textsuperscript{191} Bramante’s presence cannot be confirmed, but a phrase in Leonardo’s notebooks “mules carrying rich loads of gold and silver, many treasures of great wealth,” strongly suggests that he was there.

\textbf{Isabella d’Este - Michelangelo’s Sleeping Cupid}

Interestingly, one of the things that Cesare did not take for himself is the lost \textit{Sleeping Cupid} of Michelangelo. Cesare had a history with this particular piece, having previously been its owner. It had originally been purchased by Cardinal Riario Sforza in 1496 from the Roman art dealer Baldassarre del Milanese, but when the Cardinal was subsequently told by Michelangelo that it was a modern work and not the antique that he had been led to believe, Riario Sforza no longer wanted the sculpture. During the summer of 1496 the work was displayed across the street from Cesare’s palace at the Palazzo Sforza-Cesarini, home of Cardinal Asciano Sforza and former home of Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia before his elevation to Pope Alexander VI. Cesare bought it before the end of the year and gave it as a gift to Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino.\textsuperscript{192}

And so it was in Urbino that Cesare found the sculpture in 1502. Like before, as opposed to keeping an object whose beauty he could certainly appreciate, he chose to utilize it instead as a

\textsuperscript{190} Fantaguzzi, \textit{Caos}, 274.

\textsuperscript{191} Sacerdote, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 514.

\textsuperscript{192} www.palazzo-medici.it. Accessed April 5, 2014. The Sleeping Cupid is a figure of a boy, six of seven years of age. The antique model, which probably served as Michelangelo’s inspiration, was a sleeping cupid that Giuliano da Sangallo brought to Lorenzo de’Medici in 1488, now identified as the \textit{Sleeping Eros with the attributes of Heracles}, held today in the Uffizi. Michelangelo’s cupid as described as reclining and resting his head on one arm. The cupid was buried to give it the appearance of being from antiquity.
pawn. He realized the great value of art, apart from its decorative form and as a tool of self-aggrandizement, as a token of diplomatic gift exchange. It was a common exercise in Renaissance Italy. Knowing their power, Lorenzo de Medici sent artists out to cultivate political relationships, including sending Leonardo da Vinci to Milan.\footnote{Alessandro Cecchi, “Florence: The Medici Lords in Pectorre (1434-94),” in \textit{Courts and Courtly Arts in Renaissance Italy: Arts, Culture and Politics, 1395-1530}, ed. Marco Folin (Suffolk: Antique Collectors Club, 2011), 235.} Cesare participated in this tradition, executing exchanges and gifts at the highest level. He spent exorbitant sums to invest in his surroundings so it would be disingenuous and counter to our understanding to say that he didn’t like or want art—he simply recognized that it could at times serve him better in a different capacity.

This time it was Guidobaldo’s sister-in-law, Isabella d’Este, Marchesa of Mantua, who received the \textit{Sleeping Cupid} as a gift. Cesare knew the popularity of the court at Mantua and that his act in Urbino had caused great anxiety in the rulers of the neighboring areas, so he was more than happy to oblige when he received her request. Isabella d’Este wrote to Cardinal Ippolito d’Este, her brother, asking him to arrange for a Venus and Cupid to be procured from Cesare. It is clear from Isabella’s letter to Ippolito that she believed the statues to be antique and remarks that she does not think it will be a problem because “his Excellency does not take much pleasure in antiques,” a notation that does potentially offer scholars insight into Cesare’s collecting tastes. Cesare sent one of his chamberlains to present the statues to Isabella on July 21, 1502 along with a letter explaining to her that the Cupid was not an antique as she believed, but was by the Florentine sculpture Michelangelo.\footnote{Bradford, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 184.} The sculpture remained in Mantua in her \textit{grotto} until 1631.
when it was purchased by Charles I and taken to England. It was likely destroyed in the 1698 fire at Whitehall Palace.\(^\text{195}\)

Although Isabella spoke in her private letters about her great fear of Cesare’s ambitions, she continued a friendly relationship with him and returned his gift in kind. To honor the events at Sinigaglia, one of his most admirable maneuvers against his enemies, Isabella sent him 100 masks with a letter:

> Thinking that you will take some rest and recreation after the fatigues and troubles of this glorious expedition, we are sending you a hundred masks by our servant Giovanni. We are fully aware that such a poor present is unworthy of you, but it is a pledge that if you can find a present more worthy of your greatness in our country we will be happy to send it to you. If these masks are not as fine as they ought to be Your Excellency must not blame the artists of Ferrara, for thanks to the law which forbade the wearing of masks in public – which law has only just been repealed – this branch of the costumer’s art has been almost entirely lost. We beg you to accept them as a pledge of our sincere sympathy and affection…\(^\text{196}\)

Cesare eventually made an alliance with Francesco Gonzaga, Isabella d’Este’s husband, and Cesare’s daughter Louisa was betrothed to Francesco and Isabella’s son Federigo.

A much more complicated network of usage for art existed than inventories and collections suggest—the works are more than showpieces of intelligence and patronial status,

\(^{195}\) Ascanio Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo*, trans. Alice Wohl (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 128. For more on the Sleeping Cupid in the collection of Isabella d’Este see Stephen J. Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d’Este* (New Haven and New York: Yale University Press, 2004). A controversy still remains regarding Michelangelo’s *Sleeping Cupid*. After the death of Charles I, Parliament passed an act for the sale of the goods and personal estate of the late King. Items equaling fifty-thousand pounds were not sold, but were instead given to members of government for their personal use. If Michelangelo’s cupid escaped sale, it is thought to have been destroyed in one of the two fires in Whitehall Palace: the first in 1691 and the second in 1698. There have however been multiple claims of ownership over this missing sculpture. Efforts have been made to identify Michelangelo’s lost work with a Cupid remaining in Mantua, as well as with a Cupid in Turin. Both of these claims have been refuted. A third claim comes from Coursam Court, an estate in Wiltshire, England. Coursam lost its status as a royal estate during the reign of Elizabeth I, and in 1766 came into possession of the Methuen family. The Methuen family, who still own Coursam Court, boast a Sleeping Cupid of Michelangelo’s dated 1494 among their assets.

\(^{196}\) Beuf, *Cesare Borgia*, 293.
they are examples of commodities of favor. The actions of Cesare and other figures like Lorenzo d’Medici are a telling clue to the importance of art and artists as gifts in the game of power politics.

Machiavelli

Urbino was also the location of one of the most important meetings in the life of two of the men present, Machiavelli and Cesare. It is most likely that this was the first time the two men had met although there is a possibility that they had encountered each other when Cesare was at the University of Pisa. Either in Pisa or in Florence, Cesare could have met Machiavelli, but the meeting in Urbino marks their first exchange as adult men in control of their own minds and destinies.

The Florentine Signoria had growing concerns about Cesare’s intended actions, so they quickly acquiesced to his request for representatives by dispatching Francesco Soderini, Bishop of Volterra, and Machiavelli, secretary to the Ten, to discuss the relationship between Cesare and the Republic. A document found in Machiavelli’s personal belongings, originally made for the Signoria, sheds light on how Renaissance powers evaluated one another—it is the previously mentioned Italian description of Cesare’s entry into Chinon in 1499. It is likely that the account was written by a Florentine envoy who observed first-hand the events in France and relayed details of the new duke’s spectacle to the cautious city-state. That the Signoria chose to share it with Machiavelli, perhaps on this occasion, so that he might better understand Cesare, highlights the importance of public display and magnificence in political exchange.

---

197 Paul Strathern suggests that Lorenzo de Medici might have sent Machiavelli to study Law at the University of Pisa and that the timing potentially coincided with Giuliano de’Medici presence, and therefore Cesare’s. Regardless, Machiavelli was a known figure to the Medici and the humanists that surrounded them in Florence; he wrote a pastoral dedicated to Giuliano, which implies at least a small connection. Strathern, The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior, 39.
In 1502 Cesare’s desire to impress others with his power was no different than it had been in 1499. It led him to stage an elaborate and choreographed first encounter with the men, an event that stands as an example of the developing atmosphere of drama, theatricality, and mystery that would surround much of his later career. Judging by their initial dispatch to Florence and Machiavelli’s lifelong impression as manifest, Cesare’s production was a success.

Soderini and Machiavelli rode three days to arrive in Urbino on June 24 around vespers. They were taken to their lodgings in the Episcopal palace and told to wait for Cesare to receive them. A little before midnight Geraldino Agapito da Amalia, Cesare’s confidential secretary, came to get them and take them to the meeting. The palace was dark when the two men were escorted into Guidobaldo’s studiolo in the palace of Urbino where Cesare stood behind the desk, illuminated by candlelight.\(^{198}\) The two men met Cesare alone behind locked and guarded doors. His skill and the strength of his personality were compelling to them despite their knowledge of Florence’s desire for his destruction. A letter dated June 26, 1502, that is signed by Soderini but clearly written by Machiavelli provides insight into the very powerful impression that Cesare made on Machiavelli in that first encounter.

This lord is splendid and magnificent. To acquire fame or increase his power, he never takes any rest and knows neither fatigue nor danger. No sooner has he arrived in a place than word goes out that he has left. He knows how to be respected by his men, and has succeeded in mustering the best troops in Italy. All these things, together with his extraordinary good fortune, bring him victory and make him universally feared. Moreover, he guides argument in such a masterly way that one needs plenty of time to be able to gain any point in a discussion with him. He knows, too, how to use threat to back up his eloquence. ‘Make up your minds fast’ he tells diplomats. ‘I cannot keep my army unoccupied in the

\(^{198}\) This account is a combination of the details offered by Woodward and Beuf. Woodward, *Cesare Borgia*, 240. Beuf, *Cesare Borgia*, 235-236.
mountainous area. There can be no half-measures between you and me: you are either my friends or my enemies.'199

These first impressions of confidence, intelligence, and power are strong enough in Machiavelli that he will retain his admiration of Cesare even during and after his fall from power. The exchanges that took place between the representatives and the Florentine government suggest a level of frustration; Machiavelli and Soderini were in awe of the man with whom they were sent to negotiate, and those safely back in Florence, outside of the reach of Cesare’s charisma and dramatically staged meetings, held a much darker impression.

Machiavelli left Urbino but later returned to Cesare’s court, arriving in Imola on October 7, 1502, to begin a three month diplomatic presence. Over this stay Cesare and Machiavelli developed a relationship outside of their mutually practical political exchange and ultimately gained a genuine respect for one another. Machiavelli’s dispatches show that they saw each other often, and it appears that Machiavelli was impressed by Cesare’s excellence and intellect. Machiavelli watched Cesare train his troops and toured his camp; the Florentine found an extremely disciplined regiment that impressed him with order, efficiency and equipment.200 Machiavelli said of Cesare a few months later: “The Duke is not to be measured like other lords, who have only their titles, in respect, to his state; but one must think of him as a new power in Italy.’”201


200 Beuf, Cesare Borgia, 238. For more information on Machiavelli’s dispatches to Florence from the Cesare’s court see Machiavelli The Chief Works and Others volume 1. The chapter or section titled “The Legations (parts of dispatches dealing with Cesare Borgia)” includes numerous dispatches, although mostly only in part. One can get a sense of the interaction between the two men and the frustrations Machiavelli felt at the undefined position that Florence was taking towards Cesare and the slow pace at which the Ten made decisions regarding that relationship.

201 Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 188. Bradford does not cite the source of this quote.
Court at Cesena

Machiavelli’s time with Cesare included an extended visit to his capital city Cesena, the city that primarily housed Cesare’s court through the winter of 1502. Cesena served as the first court that Cesare constructed free from the influence of his father in Rome; the entertainments, events, and patronage he staged are important insights into his position as a Renaissance patron.

On December 15, 1502, Cesare, with fanfare of banners and trumpets, entered Cesena and settled into the Palazzo Malatesta Novello, which had been refurbished by the town council at his request. (Figure 4-47) Machiavelli arrived shortly after Cesare did, bearing sixteen bracchia (about 10 yards) of black damask that the Signoria had given him to use as a diplomatic gift.202 They knew well Cesare’s participation in the self-fashioning power of the Renaissance costume.

In the winter season of 1500-1501, Cesare had laid the foundation for his reputation with the populace. He had stayed there for three months, participating with the people in the festivities of Christmas and Carnival. He gained great admiration and favor through the magnificence he displayed in his entertainments, processions, masquerades, games, and tournaments, all of which he participated in with earnest. He put on, and joined in, a quintanta, a giostra all’anello, and running races.203 On January 20, 1501, a fête that included a running of the bulls, dancing, hunting, and a bullfight was held in Piazza Maggiore in Cesena, today Piazza

---

202 Strathern, The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior, 189. Cesare’s taste for black clothing and the traits that it implied have been discussed.

203 Hibbert, The Borgias and Their Enemies, 172. Quintanta was jousting game where men attempted to strike a dummy figure of a Turk. Giostra all’anello was a ring game also played on horseback and with a lance.
Vittorio Emanuele. Interacting with the local rulers or elite class was a way of showing respect for their place in the social hierarchy.

He also participated in local Romagnol sports and feats of athleticism. His strength gained a reputation of its own. Many of the epigrams by court poet Francesco Uberti celebrate Cesare’s exploits in Cesena, including his sportsmanship and that he required his men to exercise fair-play and pay proper winnings when they were beaten by the locals of the Romagna. One particular piece, *Ad Victorem Rusticum*, tells a story in which Cesare made one of his men who had lost a wrestling match to a peasant give the embroidered doublet off his back to honor the promised payment. He hung his men for insubordination and inappropriate behavior such as looting. He also demanded that his troops pay for their own provisions as opposed to asking the people of the Romagna to bear that burden. Both actions made him popular and respected.

Christmas 1500 was spent in Cesena. His court remained in the palace of Malatesta Novello which overlooked the main square of the city. On Christmas Eve he invited the leading citizens to dinner. On Christmas Day he opened the palace to the townspeople, who were given access the magnificent interior including his bedchamber. After that games were held in the Piazza of which Cesare’s men took part. During carnival in Cesena, he also partook, alongside the populace, in the traditional mischief.

---

204 Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia*, 434.

205 Frieder, *Chivalry & the Perfect Prince*, 4. The support of the local elite proved to be important for Cesare as he fought to maintain his holdings in the Romagna after the death of his father in 1503.

206 Cloulas, *The Borgias*, 189. Legendarily he broke a horseshoe with one hand

207 Ibid. Yriarte, *Cesare Borgia*, 130. Cloulas describes the event while Yriarte is the scholar that identifies the piece as *Ad Victorem Rusticum*. 
Although this unbridled participation earned him great popularity with the common people, he was critiqued by some for being too casual. One such critique came from the author of the *Diario Cesenate*, a semi-official history of Forlì. This engaging behavior was reduced by 1502 when he once again spent Christmas in the city. He retained the approachable nature of his rule but elevated himself above them by staging different kinds of fêtes and showcasing the magnificence of his court.

On Christmas Day 1502 he attended morning mass in the Church of San Giovanni Evangelista, and in the afternoon he watched games and contests in the piazza, issuing prizes to those who triumphed. That evening the doors of his palace were opened to the public who eagerly made their way through the sumptuous environment, marveling at his possessions. They were able to enter even those areas usually reserved for only the most distinguished guests including the ducal bedchamber where Cesare lay on his bed, heavily canopied in crimson and gold, to greet them. Although he remained accessible to them, the magnificence of his household elevated him above their reach. He no longer participated in the games but watched, still with his people but ever so slightly removed, the one dispensing gifts to the winners of the games instead of winning them himself as before. The town celebrated Christmas day with more jousting, combats, games, and a bullfight.

These entertainments, however, paled in comparison to the display in the piazza that same morning. On the spot where the much beloved, late 16th-century fountain by Francesco Masini now stands, the townspeople found the decapitated body of Ramiro de Lorque, Cesare’s

---


209 Beuf, *Cesare Borgia*, 176.

once trusted military governor of the Romagna, still dressed in his brocade robe, next to the executioners block and his head on a lance. (Figure 4-48) Ramiro had grown to be despised by the people of the Romagna because of his harsh tactics and cruelty, and the move could have been a purely political one on Cesare’s part, killing a loyal officer to show the people that he valued their fair treatment. Machiavelli explained this idea years later in *The Prince*: “The duke judged that such excessive authority was not necessary…he wished to show that if any cruelty had been committed, this had not come from him but from the harsh nature of his minister.”

However, it was also speculated that Cesare had him killed because of some affront to Lucrezia’s honor that probably occurred during her visit to Cesena earlier in the year.

In January 1502, Lucrezia Borgia had come through Cesena on her way to Ferrara, her new home after marrying Alfonso d’Este in December 1501. The city was staged for her arrival, and no expense was spared for her entertainment. At her entrance, the people of the Romagna were dressed in the regional, festive costume and lined along the route to the city from the surrounding hillsides. One hundred children dressed in Lucrezia’s colors of purple and yellow ran in front of her parade, shouting “duca, duca, duchessa, duchessa.” A great entourage of important figures of the town also greeted her and lined the streets. Remiro took her on a tour that included the fortress, then known as the Murata, and other noteworthy buildings. It is likely that on these leisurely visitations, Lucrezia went to the Biblioteca Malatestiana. This conjecture is based on research currently being done by Giampiero Rocchi on a carving in the sill of the 16th

---


212 Fantaguzzi, *Caos*, 294. Since Fantaguzzi was a contemporary writer it can be assumed that he either had first hand knowledge of such an affront or that town gossip was already speculating.


window on the right side of the library that spells out her name.\textsuperscript{215} (Figure 4-49) That evening there was a banquet in the palace of Malatesta Novello where the finest wine and food was served—no doubt Sangiovese wine which the region was, and still is, famous for.\textsuperscript{216} She left the next day. The elaborate entertainments for her stay cost Cesare over 85,000 ducats.\textsuperscript{217}

Of Ramiro’s death, Machiavelli further wrote: “Nobody feels sure of the cause of his death, except that so it has pleased the Prince, who shows that he can make and unmake men as he likes.”\textsuperscript{218} Machiavelli’s response to the dramatic demonstration of power should be read as the desired effect. Cesare succeeded in using visual display to impact profoundly his reputation in a strategically designed way, killing Ramiro such that “the ferocity of this spectacle left the people at once satisfied and stupefied.”\textsuperscript{219}

Cesare was a master at playing to his audience and of \textit{mise-en scène}. His table was lavish and exquisite, on which was served only the best wine and cuisine. Meals were an elaborate display set before the eyes of a vast array of high ranking visiting and local individuals, from both the secular and religious spheres. To furnish such an extravagant lifestyle he employed goldsmiths, jewelers, tailors, and armormers who were forever crafting the ornaments of his court and the gifts necessary to gain the favor of others.\textsuperscript{220} Cesare populated his court and surrounded

\textsuperscript{215} Thank you to Paola Errani, the Vice Director of the Biblioteca Malatestiana who shared this information with me during a conversation, on June 24, 2013, and allowed me to enter the library to view and photograph the window.

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid, 35-37.

\textsuperscript{217} Fantaguzzi, \textit{Caos}, 260.

\textsuperscript{218} Niccolò Machiavelli, \textit{Machiavelli The Chief Works and Others}, vol. I (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 142. This quote is taken from a letter dated December 25, 1502, written from Cesena. The letter gives the time as 4pm and indicates that Ramiro’s body was still in the square.

\textsuperscript{219} Machiavelli, \textit{The Prince}, 30.

\textsuperscript{220} Beuf, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 177. The idea that Cesare set an extravagant table is in direct contrast to Alexander VI who was known to keep such a limited dinner service that others avoided dining with him.
himself with artists and humanists that all lived under his protection. They fashioned his appearance and atmosphere, worked on his fêtes, and wrote verses to honor him. Like his father, he was generous towards his entourage, knowing that their contributions were invaluable to his reputation and legacy. Some of the prominent figures that were attached to his court at this time included Carlo Valgulio, teacher of Poliziano and a friend of Copernicus; Fausto Evangelista, historian and member of the Roman Academy; Francesco Sperulo, a Latin poet; Pierto Justolo, another Latin poet; Francesco Uberti, a local historian; Serafino Cimino “L’Aquilano”; Vincenzo Calmeta; Piero Torrigiani the sculptor who joined Cesare’s army as a soldier; and Pinturicchio. Other poets who received commissions from the Duke were Battista Orfino, Antonio Flaminius, Dario Tiberti, and Barnardino di Serugo di Forlì.

Francesco Sperulo wrote and sang poems about Cesare’s campaigns in the Romagna. The presentation copy of his *Gesta C. Borgiae*, written for Cesare in 1502, is preserved in the Vatican. Francesco Uberti, another poet in Cesare’s service was responsible for the motto on the coat of arms placed over the external wall of the main gate of the Rocca of Cesena:

SUB PATRE QUÆ QVONDAM FUERIT; SUB CÆSARE NATO ARX MODO CÆSENÆ ETS; CAUSA PROBANDA DUCE. (Figure 4-50) The phrase, now removed, was from an epigram that Uberti had written.

---


222 Raimondo Zazzeri, *Storia di Cesena: Dalla sua origine fino ai tempi di Cesare Borgia* (Cesena: Vignuzzi, 1890), 412.

223 Luigi Piccioni, *Di Francesco Uberti, umanista cesenate de’tempi di Malatesta Novello e di Cesare Borgia* (Bologna: 1903), 148. The epigram by Uberti that included the phrase is A.lib.VI.Epigr.115. Uberti also wrote epigrams about the events surrounding Remiro’s death and the joyful response of the people. Remolinus death:

*Remigius: ille Remigius oppida quondam Multa regens nostril sub ditione Duci
Tot quondam et populis cultusi de culmine cummo
Decidit. Exanguis nunc iacet umbra foro*

Francesco Uberti’s, *Opera*, D.I.2, a manuscript held at the Biblioteca Malatestiana, includes honorary coats of arms for his benefactor and for the Pope. (Figure 4-51) Folio 88v, however, invites wild speculation as to purpose behind its images. (Figure 4-52) Of the 338 folios in the work, outside of the dedications, this is the only one to have images. The two elements clearly represent a scene of the annunciation, but why Uberti chose to include them, where he derived the design, and to whose hand they belong are questions that remain to be fully fleshed out in future research. Interestingly they share stylistic features with Pinturicchio’s *Annunciation* in the Baglione chapel in Spello c. 1500-1501, Pinturicchio’s *Annunciation* in the Borgia Apartments, 1492-1495, and Leonardo’s *Annunciation* from 1472-1475. (Figures 4-53, 4-54, 4-55) The body positioning and gesture of the angel Gabriel resembles its counterpart in the Pinturicchio’s paintings, and although her stance is different, the drapery and clothing of the Virgin are similar to Leonardo’s work. Although the Italian Renaissance Annunciation had a common representation which suggests that the individual who drew the sketches on folio 88v could have been influenced by any number of versions, Pinturicchio and Leonardo are two artists that Uberti had a high likelihood of meeting during the time of his service to Cesare which reveals the potential of their direct intervention in the work.

---

(A.Lib.I. Epigr.8) (Piccioni, 156)
Response of joy from people:
*Omnibus exemplo et magno tu maxime Caesar
Ut populos perames instinciamae colas!*

(A.Lib.I.Epigr.9) (Piccioni, 157)

224 For Uberti, Epigram 4 A.Lib.III see Piccioni, *Di Francesco Uberti*, 149. For Evangelista – Vat. Lat.3351 f. 24 v see Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia*, 800.
Although the connection is less direct, another possible font of influence is the
*Annunciation*, now in the Gardner Museum, painted by Piermatteo d’Amelia for the church of
the convent Santissima Annunziata in Amelia around 1475. (Figure 4-56) This painting is
remarkably similar to Uberti’s sketches, but the work itself and the artist fall outside of Uberti’s
direct sphere of access while working in the Romagna. Two opportunities do remain viable: it is
possible that Uberti traveled to Amelia and saw Piermatteo’s painting, or that Piermatteo traveled
to Cesare’s court to discuss the frescos that he was painting for the Borgia in Civita Castellana
and the two artists met on that occasion. However it is impossible to know from current
evidence.

Cesare seems to have had an intimate hand in the productions that were created and
carried out under his command. Some individuals he held as his close *familiars*, while others
were certainly kept at a wider distance, but all participated in the performance of his public
identity both fleeting and, in hopes, eternal. His control over that presentation was so strong that
even in his absence on June 24, 1503, on the occasion of the first session of Cesare’s law court
and of the Feast of Saint John the Baptist, the city staged a triumph in his honor, decorated by the
Rota and the people of Cesena. There were triumphal carts of Cleopatra and Caesar as well as
representations of Love and the Borgia bull. Fantaguzzi also mentions a large gold throne,
which Cesare had created and kept in the Rocca, being used in the parade as a visual symbol of
him and his rule.225 (Figure 4-57)

**Lorenz Beheim**

Lorenz Beheim (1457-1521) was another interesting figure associated with Cesare
throughout his life, but perhaps more intimately during this time. The German humanist from

---

225 Fantaguzzi, *Caos*, 309.
Nuremberg began his association with Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia in 1480 and managed his household for twenty years. He was probably involved or exercised influence over the education of Borgia children and would have known Cesare and his siblings well.\textsuperscript{226} He was an alchemist, astrologer, and military engineer. In a brief from October 27, 1501 he was called Alexander’s Master of Arts and Table. He worked for Alexander and with his artillerymen particularly in the Castel Sant’Angelo, and it has also been suggested that he worked for Alexander on fortifications in Rome and Ostia.\textsuperscript{227}

He was an active part of the scientific and humanist circles in Rome including a membership in the Royal Academy of Pomponius Laetus. Beheim’s presence in the city brought his brother Martin Beheim, Copernicus, and Reuchlin there.\textsuperscript{228} In 1500 Copernicus came to Rome and was appointed as a temporary professor of astronomy at La Sapienza, an institution greatly patronized by Alexander VI. Beheim was also a friend of Albrecht Durer and it is possible that the two men communicated or saw each other during Durer’s first trip to Italy, 1494-1495. It is highly likely that the Borgia met a number of these men during their time in Italy.

Gustavo Sacerdote calls Beheim a familiar of Cesare, indicating that they had a relationship outside of Beheim’s service in his father’s household.\textsuperscript{229} It is known that Beheim constructed at least one horoscope for Cesare. At her birth, Alexander had Lucrezia’s horoscope mapped by the astrologers in the city “according to the constellation which was in the ascendancy” so it is likely that he did the same for his other and more importantly male

\textsuperscript{226} Gregorovius, \textit{Lucretia Borgia}, 32-33.
\textsuperscript{227} Sacerdote, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 309.
\textsuperscript{228} Mallett, \textit{The Borgias}, 248.
\textsuperscript{229} Sacerdote, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 77.
However, Beheim was not yet in Alexander’s service when Cesare was born in 1475 so it would have been a different astrologer. The time that Cesare most likely asked Beheim to take his horoscope was in 1500 or 1502 before one of his departures on campaign. This research has already suggested that one was read in 1500, but it is not unlikely that he did so in 1502 as well.

It was common for the important figures in Renaissance Italy to both employ a personal astrologer and to consult them before important events, decisions, or political maneuvers. Bartlomeo Orsini and Paolo Vitello, men who were both considered to be distinguished captains, sought the council of an astrologer before taking military action. In 1502 Cesare said to Machiavelli “The constellations this year seem unfavorable to rebels,” making evident the attention he paid to astrology, omens, and favorabilities found in the sky.

We know of his request to Beheim for a horoscope through an unlikely well of information, the correspondence between Beheim and his friend Willibald Pirckheimer, another humanist, prominent figure in Nuremberg, and best friend of Albrecht Durer. In one such letter Beheim told Pirckheimer that Cesare had asked him to take his horoscope and that it foretold he would first achieve great power, then would go into exile without honor, and die a brutal death. Beheim had communicated with Pirckheimer about the position of the stars on

---


231 Pierotti-Cei, *Life in Italy During the Renaissance*, 138.


Cesare’s date of birth in September 1475, so it seems he was, in this letter, telling his friend the results of their joint effort. This letter was in fact also written to inform Pirckheimer of Cesare’s death in Spain. The description he offers implies that Beheim believed Pirckheimer would care about Cesare’s fate.

Another letter from Beheim to Pirckheimer is the most spectacularly shocking document that we have related to Cesare. It is a list of questions made by Cesare Borgia that Beheim sent to Pirckheimer, we can assume to seek his assistance in answering. No known answers exists, but much of the correspondences between the two men are one sided, preserved only in the letters that Pirckheimer received. Some scholars have questioned its authenticity, but there is currently no reason to doubt its legitimacy. The relationship between the two men and the weight of the other correspondences lends gravity to the probability, as do the subjects discussed. Still, perhaps for this reason, it has been ignored by many scholars and was largely overlooked until Sacerdote published a photograph of it and gave a general description of its contents in his work Cesare Borgia la sua vita, la sua familia, I suoi tempi. He cited the document as useful for understanding Cesare’s motivations and habits. Cesare asks, among other things, about making artificial memories, asks for recipes of slow and long acting poisons, and how to throw poisons into a fortress under siege.234 (Figure 4-58)

*Questiones factae e duce Valentino filio Alexadri papae ad Laurentium Beheim*


Una memoria arteficiale.
A fare cornioli.
A fare camey.
Lavorare et polire una gioia.
A fare letere bianchi in piano in una corniola in piano.
A fare un’aquila in uno zaffiro.
A fare uno zaffiro biancho.
De cristallo ni fare zaffiro.
De uno materiale oy metallo como piumbo, farni smaragdi, topatii, rubini.
A fare in una marmora un cosa che serrà judicato naturale tamen miraculose.
A tagliare un bechiero ad modo de una citura et tyrarlo.
A fare un giardino in uno cristallo in incollare gioge.

In machini bellici:
Una cintura per non potere negare.
Una lanza per muntare in una fenestra.
Un ponte.
Tirare cum una bombarda.
A fare pulvere.
A fare crepare la artigliaria.
La tempera.
Andare sulla acqua.
A zippare lo chibuo vecchio.
A spezare traversi.
A spezare un muro senza ferro.
Sonniferi.
Scale de corde.
Fermatura. Fermatura de p.
Parlare di lontano de un castello al’altro.

De venenis:
In una taza.
In sale.
In odore.
In camera.
In sella.
In staffi.
In suchare.
In trabucci per gectare in uno castello.
In fonti, in fiumi, in puzi.
A tempo de [giorni?] mesi.
A fare cadere uno malato.
A farelo sano ad libitum meum.
A fare venire la febre ad uno.

In cose galante:
La cruce.
La candela.
Li fiori.
El ferretto.
El pomo.
El ovo.
La galina.
La prophezia.
La figura.
El zoppicare de cavallo.
Che non mangia.
Che appare difforme.
Aceto in pulvere.
[...]

*In cose pertinenti a cancellere:*
Contrafare ogni mani.
Contrafare ogni sigilli.
Aprire ogni letere.
A reserrarelri.
Scrivere in carne humana.
Scrivere in una camisa.
Scrivere in ferro.
Scrivere in picta.
Scrivere a tempo.
Scrivere che in 15 di torna biancha.
Inziffari di multi sorti.
Che no nsi pozano legir eccetto per el focho.
In aqua.
In uno specchialo.
In puncti questo modo
....................................
....................................
....................................

In figuri questo modo
(a series of symbols that appear to be dice of specific numbers: 2,1,3,4,2,1,3,
2?,2?,3)
La rota.
In biancho.
A tempo.
A levare le letere.
Scrivere cum aqua de puzo et torna nigra.
Mangiare le letere.
L’aqua de scrivere l’oro.
Leteria antiqua.
In cose mechanici:
El scaciero.
La testa de morte parlare.
Dorare el piombo.
Traversare li animale
la terra.
La figura girare li occhi.
In agricultura alcuni cose.
In ornamenti de donne.235

235 Maria Toldrà, ed., Cèsar Borja, cinc-cents anys després (1507-2007) Tres estudis i una antologia (Valencia: Tres I Quatre, S.I., 2009), 218-222. Translation by the author and Ilaria Niccolini. This translation is the first instance known to the author that this document as been presented in English.

Questions have been made by Duke Valentino son of Pope Alexander to Lorenz Beheim
An artificial memory
To make a cornelian
To make a cameo
To work and polish a jewel
To make white letters in a layer of a cornelian
To make an eagle in a sapphire
To make a white sapphire
Make a sapphire from crystal
From a material or metal like lead make emeralds, topaz, rubies
To make a marble thing that will be judged as natural yet miraculous
To cut a belt
To make a garden in a crystal in paste

On war machines:
A belt for not being able to deny
A lance for climbing in a window
A bridge
To pull as a bombard
To make dust
To make snuff out the artillery
Tempra
To walk on water
A lighter of old chibuo
To break the travi [strong wooden supports used for construction]
To break a wall without iron
Sleeping pills
Rope ladder
Clasp, clasp de p.
To speak over a long distance from one castle to another

Of poison:
In a cup
In salt
In an odor
In a room
In a saddle
In stirrups
In sugar
In a trebouchet to throw in a castle
In fountains [or sources], in rivers, in puddles
In the time of [days?] months
To make fall a sickness
To make healthy at my pleasure
To make one get a fever

In gallant things:
The cross
The candle
Flowers
Wire [Garrote was the favored method of assassination of one of Cesare’s men]
An apple
An egg
A chicken
A prophecy
A figure
A lame horse
Which does not eat
Which looks deformed/dissimilar
Vinegar in power form

Things pertaining to the court:
Counterfeit each hand [handwriting]
Counterfeit seals
Open each letter
Reseal it
To write on human skin
To write on a shirt
To write on iron
To write in images
To write on time
Writing that in 15 days returns to white
Which is not possible to read except by fire
In water
In one mirror
Punctured in this way
 ............
 ............
 ............

Represented this way
The Rota (The name of Cesar’s law court)
On time
To remove the letters
To write as water of the well and turns black
To eat the letter
Water to write in gold
Antique letter

In mechanical things
*El scaciero*
The head of the dead to speak
To gild in lead
Crossing the animal
The earth
The illustration to turn their eyes
Some agricultural things
The letter is undated but the title *Questiones factae e duce Valentino filio Alexadri papae ad Laurentium Beheim* refers to Cesare as Duc which means that it must have been written after he received that title in 1499. Additionally the questions Beheim asked on behalf of his patron suggest that Cesare was in mode of active military engagement which further narrows the dates to 1500-1503, after which Cesare was struggling for power and no longer had the luxury of occupying his mind and time with such avant-garde, forward-thinking but unnecessary topics such as the creation of devices to walk on water, disappearing/reappearing ink, and other material transformations.

In addition to its remarkable historical and curious value, this document provides an extraordinary link to the most important Renaissance figure to work for Cesare, Leonardo da Vinci, who served as his military architect and engineer from 1502-1503. Although this possibility has been overlooked by scholars of both Cesare and Leonardo, if one reads through the list it is clear that some of these questions are probably coming from Leonardo and are related to conversations between Cesare and Leonardo and to the problems that Cesare had asked Leonardo to resolve.

Most literally is a sketch of a man walking on water with skis in *Codex Atlanticus* relating to Beheim’s “Andare sulla aqua.” (Figures 4-59, 4-60) Another significant connection is poison. Leonardo discussed poison and its use in warfare, and possibly experimented with manipulating potency through bioaccumulation.²³⁶ An anecdote provides another possible connection,

²³⁶ For Leonardo’s discussion of the use of chemical weapons in naval warefare see page 845 of Edward Maccurdy’s *Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci Arranged Rendered into English and Introduced*, Vol. II (New York: George Braziller, 1958). He lists a number of poisons including arsenic, which we know he was familiar through its use in the preparation of panals for painting. It is of particular interest because *Cantarella*, the infamous poison said to be used by the Borgia, is thought to have been arsenic and phosphorus enhanced by “passage” through an animal. This “passage” implies that the animal ingests the poison and that the poison is eventually harvested from the animal,
specifically to the phrase “Un ponte”. An account given in Luca Pacioli’s De viribus quantitatis references a bridge constructed as “In machini bellici” as indicated in Beheim’s document:

One day Cesare Valentino, Duke of Romagna and present Lord of Piombino, found himself and his army at a river which was 24 paces wide, and could find no bridge, nor any material to make one except for a stack of wood all cut to a length of 16 paces. And from this wood, using neither iron nor rope nor any other construction, his noble engineer made a bridge sufficiently strong for the army to pass over.237

Many of the other curiosities are also conundrums that would have intrigued Leonardo’s mind. The following discussion of Leonardo’s time of service with Cesare and the folios in his notebooks that are dated to this period, further illuminate the artists proposed connection with this list of questions.

Leonardo da Vinci - Military Architect and Engineer

Ladislao Reti, an eminent Leonardo scholar, acknowledged that historians of the past have struggled with how to reconcile their exalted reputation of Leonardo and the fact that he worked for Cesare Borgia. This is true for both past and contemporary writers. Paolo Giovio (1483-1552), bishop of Nocera, wrote Life of Leonardo da Vinci and intentionally excluded Cesare entirely from the work, to rid Leonardo of an association that Giovio saw as a tarnish on the artist’s reputation. Vasari also redacts any mention of Cesare Borgia from his Vita di Leonardo. The writings on Leonardo’s life by Gian Paolo Lomazzo, a friend of Francesco Melzi who was Leonardo’s student and the individual to whom he bequeathed his notebooks, also offer

---

237 Nicholl, Leonardo da Vinci Flights of the Mind, 347-348. This ‘noble engineer’ is commonly held to be Leonardo da Vinci.
no reference to the artist’s time with Borgia. Even Martin Kemp and Kenneth Clark, both well respected leading minds in the circle of Leonardo studies, minimize the association, customarily dedicating only a surface analysis to the intensive, complicated, and formative period in Leonardo’s life.

The perpetual disassociation is a disservice to both the artist and his patron—the historical importance of each individual only heightens the value in understanding their relationship and its outcomes. Building on the important work of scholars like Reti, Carlo Pedretti, and Nando Di Toni, who have sought to highlight the significance of the association between Borgia and Leonardo in the discipline of history, this project seeks to solidify it through compiling their invaluable discoveries, association, and theories to view through an art historical lens as well as offer new ones to consider.

Leonardo and Cesare probably met for the first time when Borgia entered Milan with the French army in 1499. Leonardo arrived in Milan around 1482 and quickly began his association with the court of Ludovico Sforza and in 1489-90 he began earning an official salary. Although Leonardo did create frescoes and other works for Ludovico, he was mainly employed for producing court entertainments, for which he would provide the designs and during which he would often participate. He played the lute, sang, wrote riddles, told stories, and

---

238 Reti, “Leonardo da Vinci and Cesare Borgia,” 334-335. This topic has been discussed in additional detail in the Chapter 1, in both body content and footnotes. For a translation of Paolo Giovio’s Vita di Leonardo see Ludwig Goldscheider, Leonardo da Vinci: Life and Work Paintings and Drawings (London: Phaidon Press, 1964). Goldscheider also includes a biography written by Anonimo Gaddiano which was written in the mid 16th-century. Gaddiano states in a brief phrase that Leonardo did work for Cesaer Borgia, but that is the extent of his description of their relationship and this time in Leonardo’s life.

239 Ibid, 366.

produced elaborate performances, designing the scenery and costume for large scale theatrical entertainments.  

The most famous of these events is known as the *Festa del Paradiso*, commissioned by Ludovico and staged for the 1490 marriage of Gian Galeazzo Maria and Isabella of Aragon. Leonardo was responsible for lighting, the moving sets, and overall staging of the event. We should consider him to have been in control of both the design and production. Ambrogio da Rosata, Ludovico’s astrologer, worked on designs with Leonardo and under his direction. Despite the countless hours and association with an esteemed artist of the day, the elaborate sets and scenery for *Festa* were most likely disposed of the following day, as occurred after the wedding ceremonies of Lucrezia Borgia. Leonardo was also involved in numerous other ephemeral displays, including the entertainments that accompanied the wedding of Beatrice d’Este and Ludovico in Pavia in January 1491, and the entry of Louis XII into Milan and Francis I into Pavia, which he designed.  

Ludovico gave Leonardo his protection, like Cesare later would, but he also celebrated the artist as a possession, an emblem of his court’s prestige and refinement. Ludovico desired for Leonardo’s talents to stand for the talents and prestige of the Sforza as rulers, that Leonardo’s

---

241 Ibid, 34.


publically utilized gifts and creations were seen as reflections of Ludovico’s elevated status as a patron, not as possessions of the artist’s own. Because Ludovico relied heavily on Leonardo for the construction of a critically important visual rhetoric, he exercised tremendous control over the artist’s work. The idea that Ludovico gave Leonardo room to be his own creative force is, and should be, up for debate.\(^\text{247}\)

Leonardo’s employment in the court of Milan was very different from the time he spent with Cesare. It would be narrow to assume that Leonardo never executed for Cesare the duties traditionally held by court artists like the entertainments staged in Milan. It will in fact be argued that he did, but Cesare’s treatment and utilization of Leonardo was different from Ludovico’s. The Borgia ruler valued Leonardo for divergent reasons and gave him extraordinary latitude in his work. Cesare treated him as an equal, not as a possession but an asset to honor, as someone for whom he had great respect, and as a familiar. With Cesare Leonardo was given freedom, and although he was given projects, they were self-propelled and stimulating to his curiosity which had struggled to thrive in Milan. He was given the title of military or ducal engineer, one of the most sought after court positions for which an artist could earn a salary.\(^\text{248}\) We know from his letter of introduction to Ludovico Sforza in 1489/90 that Leonardo wanted this position. In the description of his abilities, Leonardo lists his military and engineering skills first, only secondarily mentioning that “in times of peace” he was also capable of executions in architecture, sculpture, and painting.\(^\text{249}\) With Borgia he finally held the position that he desired.


\(^{248}\) Welch, Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan, 241.

Leonardo’s Travels

Manuscript L, a small 109mm x 72mm leather bound book, is the notebook that we know Leonardo carried tied to his belt during his travels with Cesare. Manuscript L was among the manuscripts given to the Ambrosian Library in Milan by Count Arconati, but in 1796 it was taken to Paris by the Napoleonic Army and is held today in the Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France.\(^{250}\) The manuscript stands as an incredible resource for this time, but various folios in other compilations, the Codex Atlanticus, Codex Arundel, Codex Madrid II, the Windsor collection, and perhaps Manuscript B, are also born from this relationship. The notebooks can be used as a blueprint to trace Leonardo’s movements and projects while he worked for and knew Cesare, and when combined, create an extraordinary image of prolific innovation and curiosity. There are only three direct references to Cesare in Leonardo’s notebooks.

1. Cod. Atl., folio 349v:

Archimedes is its entirety is at the home of the brother of Monsignor di Sant’Augusta in Rome; he affirms that he has given it to his brother who lives in Sardinia. The works were before in the library of Duke Valentino.\(^{251}\)

There is a related comment on MS L, 2r, “Borges will obtain for you the works of Arcimedes of the bishop of Padua and Vitellozzo the one at Borgo a San Sepolcro,” discussing how Leonardo


\(^{251}\) Ibid, 342. Edoardo Villata discusses this passage in Edoardo Villata, Codex Atlanticus 02: La Biblioteca, Il Tempo e Gli Amici de Leonardo Disegni de Leonardo dal Codice Atlantico (Novara: DeAgostini, 2009), 138-139. He suggests that Leonardo was not given an Archimedes text by Cesare but was at the time of this note in 1513-1516 still searching for a copy. His translation suggests that the text under discussion was taken from the library at Urbino by Duke Valentino, but that it had found its way into the possession of the brother of “Monsignor of Santa Giusta” who was Gaspare Torella, Cesare’s friend and physician. Whether or not this copy of Archimedes is related to Vatican, Urb.lat.261 is unknown.
acquired the copy.\textsuperscript{252} The actual Archimedes manuscript that Cesare gave to Leonardo is now in the Vatican, Urb.lat.261.\textsuperscript{253} (Figure 4-61)

2. **Cod. Arundel, folio 202v:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where is Valentino?</th>
<th>Send back the satchel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boots</td>
<td>Frame of the spectacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases in the Custom-house</td>
<td>The nude of Sangallo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felleri</td>
<td>The cape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monk of the Carmino</td>
<td>Porphyr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Square</td>
<td>Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piero Marielli</td>
<td>Squares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvi Borgerini</td>
<td>Pandolfino\textsuperscript{254}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Cod. Madrid II. Folio 4v:**

- In a crate at the monastery
- One gown made of taffeta
- One velvet lining, like a gown
- One Catalan gown, rose-colored
- One cap, dark purple, with wide lapels and velvet hood
- One gown of Salai, laced in French style

**One cape in French style, which belonged to the Duke Valentino, of Salai**

- One gown of gray Flemish cloth, of Salai
- One heavy coat, of dark purple satin
- One heavy coat of crimson satin
- Another heavy coat of Salai, with black velvet cuffs
- One dark purple heavy coat of camel-hair
- One pair of dark purple hoses
- One pair of dusty-rose hose
- One pair of black hoses
- Two pink caps
- One hat, grain-colored
- One shirt of Reims linen, worked in French style
- And one door tapestry\textsuperscript{255}


\textsuperscript{254} Reti, “Leonardo da Vinci and Cesare Borgia,” 342. It is not known when Leonardo made this comment, but it has been suggested that it was when Cesare unexpectedly left his court, in disguise, on July 25, 1502 to arrive in Milan on August 5\textsuperscript{th} for a meeting with Louis XII.

\textsuperscript{255} Ibid. The text “of Salai” is in a different handwriting than the original text. This suggests that the cape was originally Leonardo’s and that at some later date was given or was inherited by Salai. It is highly likely that Salai was with Leonardo during some of the artist’s time working for Cesare. This is suggested by the wording in the
It appears from this list that Leonardo received a cape as a gift from Cesare. It is a touching and personal insight into a connection between the two men who shared a mutual love for fine clothing. It is a gift that suggests respect and understanding, deeper than the distant and cursory patron/client exchange described by some scholars. That Leonardo notes the origins of the article implies that it holds sentimental value, further hinting at the long-term and close relationship that will be explored over the following pages.

As early as March 1501 there were indications that the men could have been in contact with one another, when Leonardo made a now undisputed trip to Rome. A folio in the Codex Atlanticus dated March 10, 1501, contains a sketch of a circular fortress next to a river that is spanned by a four-pier bridge—certainly the Castel Sant’Angelo. The idea that Leonardo was in and around Rome is further enforced by a note that reads, “A roma attivoli vecchio casa adriano,” and informs the reader that Leonardo also made a visit to Hadrian’s Villa in Tivoli.

Interestingly, and perhaps the reason for Leonardo’s visit to the ancient ruins, March 1501 marks the date of an important excavation from the site, eight life size seated muses from the south theater, now housed in the Prado Museum. (Figure 4-62) Although visitors had come to Hadrian’s Villa for centuries, Alexander VI was the first to carry out organized excavations of the complex and the south theater is where he began. The muses were among the first products of that effort. Leonardo undoubtedly saw them revealed, if not in the process of being unearthed; the powerful figures, draped in cascades of thick, deeply carved cloth, possibly served

---

patent issued by Cesare Borgia to Leonardo in August 1502 that states “to himself and his company,” which indicates that he was traveling with companions.


as inspiration for the “The Burlington House Cartoon” of *The Virgin and Child with Satin Anne and the infant Saint John the Baptist.* (Figure 4-63) It is in fact because some scholars feel the stylistic renderings are so directly related to Leonardo’s exposure to the Tivoli muses that uncertainty exists in dating the cartoon to the early 1490s.  

Alexander would have been in control over who visited the site and it is known that artists had visited the location with his blessing in the past. Vasari tells us that Morto da Feltre (1474-1512), a follower of Pinturicchio and an artist who specialized in stucco decoration “spent many months in Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli, drawing all the pavements and grottoes that are there, both above ground and below.” In all likelihood da Feltre was making studies for work in the Borgia Apartments and had been directed by Alexander himself to make the journey. If Leonardo wanted to visit the active site, he likely would have needed permission or an invitation, both of which would have required intervention from the Borgia. He likely also did not make the trip alone but with his long-time friend and fellow Borgia employee, Bramante.

Bramante arrived in Rome in 1499 and executed numerous projects for Alexander, also gaining favor with Alexander’s associates including Cardinals Oliviero Carafa and Fraffaele Riario. For Alexander, Bramante painted the papal arms over the entrance of S. Giovanni in Laterano, an image of the Borgia emblem being supported by Angels. He also worked on two fountains in 1500-1501, one in the piazza of Saint Peters and the other in the piazza of S. Maria

---


261 Robb, “To Begin, Continue and Complete,” 59-60.

in Trastevere. It is of course also probable that Alexander had a hand in the selection of Bramante for the Spanish King and Queen’s commission of the Tempietto.

Leonardo and Bramante were friends during their time in Milan. They worked together in Santa Maria della Grazie and in 1489 on wedding festivities and the occasion’s associated pageantry. Vasari tells us that Bramante did go to Tivoli, and it was likely during this time. The fruits of this joint excursion can be found in the work of both Bramante and Leonardo. Already mentioned was the influence on Leonardo of the seated muses, but he made drawings of other areas in the villa as well. He put together a series of designs of antique buildings and sculptures in a “book” which is now lost, but was seen by an anonymous Milanese artist who copied some of its drawings and annotated a view of the Teatro Maritimo at Hadrian’s villa. (Figure 4-64) The annotation reads: “This is a temple which was in a book of Maestro Leonardo’s which was done at Rome.” Bramantino saw the same Leonardo drawing and copied it as well. For Bramante, the pumpkin vaults of the Canapo were the source of his derivations. (Figure 4-65) Of the three ancient vaults of this style that could have inspired Bramante, only the one at Hadrian’s Villa was known to be visible in the 15th-century. Richard

---


264 Robb, “To Begin, Continue and Compete,” 59-60.


Schofield and others believe this vault was the inspiration for Bramante’s pumpkin vault at the Duomo di Pavia.269

Shortly after this trip to Tivoli, both Ivan Cloulas and Charles Yriarte believe that Leonardo met Cesare’s camp at Faenza, where his army had once again laid siege in April 1501.270 On Codex L 15 v there is a drawing of the duomo of Faenza.271 Yriarte furthers this idea, suggesting that the artist returned to Rome with Cesare in May of that same year.272 Little is known about Leonardo’s exact whereabouts for the next year. He is sporadically documented in Florence, but Fra Pietro Novellara, vicar-general of the Carmelites in Florence, informs an urgently interested Isabella d’Este that: “Leonardo’s life is extremely irregular and haphazard, and he seems to live from day to day.”273 It is possible that he was occasionally in Rome and perhaps even a part of other Borgia events. In the spring of 1502 he officially entered Cesare’s service. His general charge was inspecting the fortifications and civic architecture of Cesare’s territories, noting their state of disrepair, and outlining needed improvements.

In May 1502 Leonardo was documented in Piombino planning how to drain the marches. His possible presence there in February and March of 1502, during which he drew the coastline and commented on the waves of the sea, has already been discussed, but it is feasible that these sketches were also executed in May. In June he was in Arezzo with Vitellozzo, Cesare’s


271 Comune de Faenza, Leonardo a Faenza (Faenza: Pinacoteca di Faenza, 2003), 4.

272 Yriarte, Cesare Borgia, 126.

273 Nicholl, Leonardo da Vinci Flights of the Mind, 336)
condottieri, for whom he drew a map of the region. After Arezzo he went into the Apennines and made studies of the landscape including the Ponte Buriano, the arched bridge that later appears in the background of the Mona Lisa. (Figure 4-66)

The invaluable MS L proves that Leonardo was in Urbino at the end of July 1502; on folio 6r he recorded his location on July 30, 1502 there. Numerous folios hint at his activities and interests while in the city. Nando di Toni determined MS L folios 37v, 38r, 74v and 75r to be surveys for a map of the city. (Figures 4-67, 4-68, 4-69, 4-70) MS L 78v and 79r reference the fortress and citadel of Urbino. (Figures 4-71, 4-72) MS L 75r is a sketch of the walls, 40r is of a set of stairs, and 73v, 74r, 19v, and 20r are additional sketches made by Leonardo in Urbino. (Figures 4-70, 4-73, 4-74, 4-75, 4-76, 4-77) He visited Montefeltro’s famous library as it was being dismantled and expressed particular interest in a volume by Archimedes. This is the volume previously discussed and noted on Codex Atlanticus 349v.

On August 1st he visited the library in Pesaro, on August 8th he was in Rimini, from August 10-15 he was in Cesena, and on September 6th he was documented in Porto Cesenatico. MS L 19v and 33v indicate that, at some point, he stopped in Siena, to measure and sketch a bell. (Figure 4-76, 4-78) It is likely that Pinturicchio and Raphael were working in Siena at the time and it is possible that the artists met—making the period of Leonardo’s influence on

---

274 Strathern suggests that he drew a map of the region specifically for Vitellozzo. Strathern, The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior, 110.

275 Nicholl, Leonardo da Vinci Flight of the Mind, 345. This connection to the Mona Lisa is interesting, showing one more occasion that the time Leonardo spent in Cesare’s service had an important impact on his future work.


278 Beuf, Cesare Borgia, 257.

279 Pedretti, Il lasciapassare di Cesare Borgia a Vaprio d’Adda e il viaggio di Leonardo in Romagna, 25.
Raphael begin earlier than previously considered. During these months and after, Leonardo moved fluidly throughout the same cities that he had previously visited and the central cities of Cesare’s duchy Cesena and Imola.

The official document that informs us of the formal relationship between Cesare and Leonardo is a patent that was issued from Pavia on August 18, 1502. The fact that Leonardo had been working for months before this was issued hints that the artist might have had trouble gaining access or passage, an issue that Cesare sought to rectify swiftly and unmistakably. The language that Cesare used was designed to notify those who read it of the depth of his sincerity, but phrases such as “most beloved familiar” are more than required for descriptions of association and do suggest a genuine personal friendship between the two men.

To all our Lieutenants, Castellains, Captains, Condottieri, Officers, Soldiers and Subjects, to whom these presents may we known, we commit and command that our Most Excellent and Most Beloved familiar Architect and General Engineer Leonardo da Vinci, bearer of the same, has our commission to survey the holds and fortresses of our States, in order that according to their necessities and his judgment we may provide for them. They are to give free passage, exempt from all public toll to himself and his company, and friendly reception, and to allow him to see, measure and estimate all he may wish. And to this effect they shall order men on his requisition and lend him all the help, assistance and favors he may request, it being our wish that for all works to be done in our dominions any engineer be compelled to consult him and to conform to his opinion; and to this may none presume to act in opposition if it be his pleasure not to incur our indignation.  

Cesena

Cesena was the capital of Cesare’s duchy and many of the numerous projects he envisioned for its improvement were entrusted to his architect and engineer. Leonardo was asked to plan a new quarter of the city of Cesena with wider streets, sidewalks, parks, and

---

280 This translation of the patent is taken from Reti’s “Leonardo da Vinci and Cesare Borgia”, 336-337 who took the translation from Luca Beltrami’s The Book of Italy. The original document is held today in the Archivio Melzi d’Eril in Vaprio d’Adda, Italy.
functioning sewage system, a palace, studio, piazza in the fortress, and fountain in the piazza.\footnote{The new quarter, wider streets, sidewalks, parks and sewage system are mentioned on Beuf, Cesare Borgia, 302. The palace, studio, piazza, and fountain are mentioned on Fantaguzzi, Caos, 280.}

Although he was issued papers from the city’s headquarters for the construction in Cesena of new university building, a palace to house the Rota, the judicial high court that Cesare had established, and for works in Porto Cesenatico and defenses on the road that connected Cesena to the harbor there, his central focus was the city’s rocca and fortification system.\footnote{Woodward, Cesare Borgia, 255.}

Cesena’s rocca, the Rocca Malatestiana, was transformed under Borgia’s rule, modernized to accommodate and withstand the new style of warfare which utilized extraordinary firepower.\footnote{Sacerdote, Cesare Borgia, 312.} Cesena’s rocca became a transitional fortress, a shift from the murlatura, which was a passive defense system, into a structure designed for aggressive protection. The walls of the rocca were altered for defense from and by various fire-works. He strengthened certain areas and changed battlements.\footnote{Pino Montalti, “Il rinnovamento della cinta muraria di Cesena,” in Leonardo da Vinci e Cesena, ed. Pino Montalti (Florence: Giunti Gruppo Editoriale, 2002), 40.} The turrets were removed to accommodate the installation of canons, housed on the ramparts in unique niches designed by Leonardo, sketched in MS L 41r and 45r, and still visible today.\footnote{Thank you to Giacomo Cicognani who took me up onto the battlements which are closed to the public and discussed Leonardo’s alterations on-site.} (Figures 4-79, 4-80, 4-81, 4-82) MS L folios 15v and 46r are also related to Cesena and its fortifications.\footnote{Reti, “Leonardo da Vinci and Cesare Borgia,” 350.} (Figures 4-83, 4-84) The drawings on MS L 51v and 50v propose tunnels and protected paths that Pino Montalti suggests relate to Leonardo’s work in Cesena, as well as the folios’ other sketches of sloped roofs and wall projections to
cushion the impact of bombardment.\textsuperscript{287} (Figures 4-85, 4-86) MS L 15v shows the entrance ramp to the fortress which particularly enamored Leonardo and is still used today as a meandering approach for tourists. (Figures 4-83, 4-87)

Cesena’s rocca, as well as others under construction by the Borgia at this time in Civita Castellana and Forte Nettuno, should be viewed as among the first to address the new artillery of early modern European warfare. Cesare ultimately razed many of the fortifications in his duchy that could not withstand these new weapons, and for others, Leonardo proposed rounding the corner forts or rounding sharply cornered walls to lessen the impact of artillery fire.\textsuperscript{288}

There are numerous other sketches and written passages in MS L that relate to military fortifications but lack specific identification. Additional folios that outline elaborate constructions and are closely related to those in MS L can be found in the \textit{Codex Atlanticus}. Although Carlo Pedretti suggests many of them are from Leonardo’s work in Piombino in 1504, Ignacio Calvi dates most of these unknown projects to the Borgia period, 1502-1503. Reti agrees with Calvi and assigns them to Borgia’s patronage because of the modernity, scope, nature, and expense of the projects revealed by the \textit{Codex Atlanticus} and MS L drawings.\textsuperscript{289} Pietro Marani also dates specific Piombino related folios in the \textit{Codex Atlanticus} to Leonardo’s time with Cesare, 115v, 125v, 779v, and 942v.\textsuperscript{290} (Figures 4-88, 4-89, 4-90, 4-91) Folio 117r of the \textit{Codex Atlanticus}, a design for a quadrilateral rocca should be viewed as the maturation of the

\textsuperscript{287} Montalti, “Il rinnovamento della cinta muraria di Cesena,” 40.

\textsuperscript{288} Strathern, \textit{The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior}, 138.

\textsuperscript{289} Reti, “Leonardo da Vinci and Cesare Borgia,” 350-351. The suggestion is that Cesare was better funded and capable of executing some of the designs due to the resources at his disposal than other individuals with an interest in Piomboino, Jacopo d’Appiano the ruler who Cesare seized Pimobino from but who later returned in 1503.

\textsuperscript{290} Pietro C. Marani, \textit{Fortezze, Bastioni e Cannoni : Disegni di Leonardo dal Codice Atlantico = Fortresses, Bastions and Cannons: Drawings by Leonardo from the Codex Atlanticus} (Novara: De Agostini, 2009),78,80,84,86. Marani discusses the differing opinions of multiple scholars, but ultimately settles on attributions to the Borgia period. See his entries for more detailed information or Amelio Fara, \textit{Leonardo a Piombino e l’idea della città moderna tra Quattro e Cinquecento} (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1999).
lessons that Leonardo learned by studying and designing improvements for the rocca of the Romagna.291 (Figure 4-92)

During the intense military preparations that took place during September 1502, at the suggestion of Leonardo and probably of Vitellozzo, an expert on artillery, Cesare sought to acquire his own heavy artillery, placing an order for guns in the latest French style to be made at the foundry at Brescia in northern Italy.292 Brescia was one of the only places in Italy capable of forging such weapons, and Leonardo had toured this workshop during his preparations to cast the gran cavallo in Milan.293 It is likely that Brescia was his suggestion.

Both men had an intrinsic interest in the mechanics of war, and their exchange of ideas was symbiotic. Leonardo designed for Cesare the things he wanted to help build and keep his duchy; Cesare played a role in Leonardo’s work on archery, firearms, systems of siege warfare, instruments of defense, and trajectories of projectiles by giving him an opportunity to study from nature and to put his ideas into use.294

Some additional examples of this can be found in Leonardo’s notebooks. MS L 36v and 37r show the design of artillery slits with spaces from the perspective of someone inside, a design that is still visible today.295 (Figure 4-93, 4-67, 4-94) Martin Kemp assigns MS L 45v, lines of fire from gun placements, to the Borgia period as does Montalti.296 (Figure 4-95)

293 Strathern, *The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior*, 135.
Montalti dates MS L folios 44v, a study of archery assaults, to Leonardo’s time in Cesena as well.²⁹⁷ (Figure 4-96)

For all his work thinking about fortification and warfare, Leonardo’s mind did find other wonders to observe and projects in which to engage. Nando de Toni identified the detailed survey notes on MS L folios 9r, 9v, and 10r as preparation for a map of the city of Cesena.²⁹⁸ (Figures 4-97, 4-98, 4-99) It could have been the artist’s intent to make a map of Cesena similar to the acclaimed Windsor map of Imola that will be discussed shortly.

There are few other novelties that Leonardo remarked on during his time in Cesena. MS L 72r is a sketch of a wheelbarrow, MS K 2r is an image of a horn, and MS L 82r is a sketch of a wagon, all of styles that were used in the region.²⁹⁹ (Figures 4-100, 4-101, 4-102) The pulley on MS L 36v is a study of the well in the great cloisters of the Basilica Santa Maria del Monte in Cesena.³⁰⁰ (Figures 4-93, 4-103) MS L 77r has a sketch of a grape hook, unique to Cesena, the mechanics of which Leonardo found particularly fascinating.³⁰¹ (Figure 4-104) August 10th is the Feast of San Lorenzo and the day of the local grape harvest, likely the day that Leonardo encountered the device.³⁰²

While in Cesena, Leonardo also designed a mechanical system for closing doors, seen on MSL 46v, more complex than those in common use and likely known at the time. (Figure 4-105)

²⁹⁷ Montalti, “L’architettura militare,” 47.
²⁹⁹ Pedretti, Il lasciapassare di Cesare Borgia a Vaprio d’Adda e il viaggio di Leonardo in Romagna, 52-53.
³⁰¹ Pedretti, Il lasciapassare di Cesare Borgia a Vaprio d’Adda e il viaggio di Leonardo in Romagna, 52-53. Cesena still proudly uses Leonardo’s drawing to mark the wine route through the region.
³⁰² Strathern, The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior, 129.
He first addressed this problem in the late 1480s, but must have revisited the idea for Cesare who was undoubtedly interested in the higher level of security that the new mechanism and lock would provide.\hspace{1em}^{303} A note on the folio references the Feast of San Lorenzo. Perhaps this is the same date of the design, or it is also possible that the sketch was inspired by something he saw there. MS L 47r and 86v show Leonardo’s study of a window and shutters in Cesena. (Figures 4-106, 4-107) Another, particularly beautiful, folio from Leonardo’s time in Cesena is MS L 81v, a singular sketch of a group of poplar trees.\hspace{1em}^{304} (Figure 4-108)

Images on MS L 36v and 71v have been identified as drawings of the river Savio, near Cesena.\hspace{1em}^{305} (Figures 4-93, 4-109) In 1502 the area was suffering from bank erosion, and although Leonardo was not mentioned by name, it was noted that the ducal engineer took a group of men to try and deal with the situation.\hspace{1em}^{306} The subsequent project to straighten the river and address the problem resulted in a landslide that killed six men.\hspace{1em}^{307} Notations on MS L 71v indicate the possible route for changing the river’s course and stand as a precursor to Leonardo and Machiavelli’s failed attempt to re-route the Arno river in 1503.

There are many drawings in the *Codex Atlanticus* and MS L that relate to numerous aquatic projects throughout Leonardo’s life. Those projects included canals in Lombardy, the Porto Cesenatico, the aforementioned re-routing of the Arno river, a canal from Florence to the sea, fortifications at Piombino, and canals on the Adda river. We cannot be exactly sure to which

\hspace{1em}\hspace{1em}\hspace{1em}303 Pino Montalti, “Un meccanismo,” in *Leonardo da Vinci e Cesena*, ed. Pino Montalti (Florence: Giunti Gruppo Editoriale, 2002), 71-72. Leonardo’s early studies of this issue are on MS B 23v.

\hspace{1em}\hspace{1em}\hspace{1em}304 Pedretti, *Il lasciapassare di Cesare Borgia a Vaprio d’Adda e il viaggio di Leonardo in Romagna*, 54.

\hspace{1em}\hspace{1em}\hspace{1em}305 Ibid, 30-31.


project each drawing belongs, but Roberto Maracolongo, a mid 20th-century scholar on Leonardo, and many subsequent scholars like Ladislao Reti have attributed a number of them to the Borgia period and Leonardo’s project of the port-canal of Cesenatico. Folios that Reti dates specifically to the Borgia period, excluding those that have a date range that include other projects, those that could be associated with Cesare are as follows: *Codex Atlanticus* - 1va, 1vb, 164ra, 213rb, 331ra, 331rb, 331 va, 331 vb, 344ra, 368re_d, 368vc_d, 370rb, 388ra; *Codex Arundel* - 127r, 207r. Most important of these folios is *Codex Atlanticus* folio 1va and 1vb, which have two complete canal digging systems. They are finished drawings with color wash as if they are complete for presentation. Reti proposes that folio 1va is a Leonardo drawing of a design made by a rival, the “man of Pesaro”. Folio 1 vb is Leonardo’s remedy for his rival’s mistakes. These two works together offer us insight into the dynamic between competitors for engineering projects and into Leonardo’s work for Cesare, and they are possibly designed for the expansion of the porto-canal of Cesenatico. MS L 67r, 66v, and 68r are also related to Port Cesenatico. (Figures 4-125, 4-126, 4-127) MS L 47v includes a sketch of a sailboat that Leonardo saw, likely while working there. (Figure 4-128)

It is known that Leonardo was in Porto Cesenatico on September 6, 1502. Although he certainly traveled between his various work locations in the region, he was likely there again on
January 4, 1503, when Cesare Borgia paid the site a visit. It is proposed that Cesare was there inspecting what Leonardo had designed or was actively working on.

**Imola**

Imola is another important site for the relationship between Cesare and Leonardo—more tangible evidence remaining from their time here than any other city. During Leonardo’s tenure in Imola between September and December 1502, numerous sketches and an altarpiece were made as well as the beginning of other architectural work.

Leonardo’s revolutionary defense systems detailed in folios 132r and 133r of *Codex Atlanticus*, can be dated to the Borgia period through a sketch of the Rocca of Imola, the Rocca Sforzesca, in the upper middle quadrant, a discovery made by Franco Schettini and published in his work “Novità sulla rocca di Imola”. (Figures 4-129, 4-130, 4-131) Schettini believes that Leonardo’s designs for a round fortress were intended as enhancements to the fortifications of the Rocca in Imola. Other related sketches on MS L 29r and 88v show the Rocca in Imola as does Windsor 12686r. (Figures 4-132, 4-133, 4-134) Windsor 12686r reveals that Leonardo considered moving the southern exterior tower to a more central location and, in the lower sketch, the possibility of moving the tower outside of the city perimeters to provide better defense. Folios *Codex Atlanticus* 132r and 133r and MS L 63r, 64r, 51v, and 52r deal with Leonardo’s continued development of what Reti calls “concentric perimeters with elliptic section.” (Figures 4-129, 4-130, 4-135, 4-136, 4-85, 4-137)

---


The dating of these folios to Leonardo’s time with Cesare is further solidified by a note on *Codex Atlanticus* 121v that mentions Fossombrone, another Borgia territory: “Che ‘l socorso non vadi nella roca del castellano, acciò non sia più potente di lui, come fu in Fossombrone.”³¹⁵ (Figure 4-138) The Fortress of San Leo near Fossombrone was improved by Leonardo’s design if not under his supervision.³¹⁶ The Rocca of Fossombrone was taken by Cesare’s captains Michele Corella and Ugo Moncada on October 12, 1502, through an act of trickery. Leonardo noted the flaw in the rocca’s design that allowed Cesare’s men to succeed, heeding the original architect’s failure to ensure that his designs did not fall to the same oversights: “See that the escape passage does not lead straight into the inner fortress, otherwise the commander will be overpowered, as happened at Fossombrone.”³¹⁷

This research suggests that MS L 7v should also be added to the list of folios that date to Leonardo’s time in Imola. (Figure 4-139) When compared to the exterior of the Rocca Sforzesca, the similarities in the overhanging walkway punctuated by what at the time would have been turrets and circular holes for artillery are evident. (Figure 4-140) A reconstruction drawing and modern photographs of the structure allow one to visualize the rocca without the roof which would not have been there during Leonardo’s time. (Figure 4-141)

The rocca can also be seen as it was in the early sixteenth century in the bottom left of Windsor 12284, Leonardo’s well known map of Imola. (Figures 4-142, 4-143) It is the only surviving map that Reti believes would have been one of several city maps that Leonardo executed for Cesare.³¹⁸ Leonardo’s measurements for a map of Cesena have already been

---
³¹⁶ Stathern, *The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior*, 150.
mentioned. They are similar to the preliminary sketches for the Imola map found on Windsor 12686. (Figure 4-134) Martin Kemp calls the map: “The most magnificent surviving product of the Renaissance revolution in cartographic techniques.”

Leonardo took extensive measurements of the city, walking the streets, noting the distance between each landmark and thoroughfare. He mapped the major coordinates then filled in the spaces with buildings, piazzas, walls, and other city features, using colors to further clarify what each element was. It is a modern map, true to the city’s layout—it is and was usable. Pedretti likens the map to a living organism, made dynamic by Leonardo’s efforts. Reti’s comments on the map are that “it is not only a monument in the history of cartography, but also shows Leonardo’s thoroughness in fulfilling his professional duties towards Cesare.”

Other Maps
Leonardo executed other maps during his time with Cesare. Windsor 12277 is a colored map of an area in northern Italy that was made when Leonardo was on campaign with Cesare in 1502. (Figure 4-144) Windsor 12278 is a bird’s eye view map of the Val di Chiana that focuses on the towns and civic inclusions in the broader landscape. (Figure 4-145) The text is not in Leonardo’s mirror writing, which suggests that these maps were intended for use by others. Windsor 12682 is a more focused view of the Val di Chiana, looking closely at the area surrounding Arezzo—similar to Codex Atlanticus 336r. (Figures 4-146, 4-147) Again the text is in regular alignment.

319 Kemp, Leonardo da Vinci, 228. For its creation, Leonardo adopted a method from Alberti that was described in Descriptio Romae and Ludi Matematici


All of the Val di Chiana maps are accepted to have been made after the revolt of Arezzo in June 1502, when Edmondo Solmi suggests Leonardo was in the suite of Vitellozzo Vitelli, Cesare’s condottieri. Solmi further hypothesized that the maps were made for a military maneuver against the Republic of Florence, which Vitellozzo Vitelli, a captain in the army of Cesare Borgia, began on June 4, 1502. Many of the labeled cities, Arezzo, Quaranta, Cesa, Marciano, Ponte a Vagliare, Foiano and Castiglion Fiorentino, were important to Cesare’s military campaigns in 1501-1503. MS L 94v lists measured distances of the same areas and towns.

*Codex Atlanticus* 919r is another topographical sketch of the region of Italy north of Rome. (Figure 4-148) Unlike the Windsor maps, this is not a finished map carefully refined with watercolor, but it does not include mirror writing suggesting that, however unfinished its appearance might be it, was intended for viewing and use by others. What sets this map apart from the others in interest is an itinerary indicated by a line connecting towns along a route, beginning in Acquapendente and terminating in Rome. The towns are listed by Reti (in their modern spellings): “Acquapendente, San Lorenzo, Bolsena, Montefiascone, Viterbo, Hostaria (possibly an inn), San Vito, Ronciglione, Sutri, Monterosi, Baccano, Isola Farnese, La Storta, Borghetto, Monte Mario, Roma.” With a small deviation between Ronciglione and Sutri, the path follows the ancient Via Cassia. It models very closely the path that Cesare took during January and February 1503 while he marched his army towards Rome: “Cesare…on 28 January

---

323 Ibid, 345. This is likely the same map that Strathern suggested was made for Vitellozzo.


1503…he started his march. On the first of February he was at Acquapendente…the fourth of February Cesare was at Montefiascone, then at Viterbo where he remained until the eighteenth, then at Sutri…Only Bracciano and Ceri, Pitigliano and Vicovaro resisted.”

There are symbols, circles, square, and triangles, which Leonardo used to mark locations along the route that suggest a logistic or military significance. Evidently, Leonardo traveled either with Cesare or slightly ahead of him, marking an intentional and perhaps symbolic path towards Rome.

To fully understand the significance, one must understand the importance of the location of Cesare’s capital Cesena. The city was not the obvious choice as the capital of a new-born duchy; well-established courts and citadels in neighboring city-states like Imola and Forli would have been more ideally suited alternatives. This unexpected selection could have been motivated by the surrounding topography. In a detail of the Flamina map in the Gallery of Maps painted in the Vatican between 1580 and 1583, one can see the city of Cesena and the elaborate illustration of Caesar’s army crossing the Rubicon. (Figures 4-149, 4-150) The phrase IACTA EST ALEA, the same as on Cesare’s sword, is depicted. Also visible is the river labeled the Rubicon.

Indeed, in 1476 a monument had been erected on what they believed was the exact location of Julius Caesar’s crossing, only 12 miles from Cesena. The stone, called the Decretum Rubiconis, is today located in Cesena’s Museo archeologico. (Figure 4-151) It is possible that Cesare picked the city because of its association with the ancient crossing, choosing to stage his own takeover of the peninsula in the same location where Caesar began his.

When Cesare left Cesena on December 26 to begin the trip that would end following Leonardo’s map, he crossed what he believed was the Rubicon river and made his way to

---

327 Ibid, 345-349.

328 For more information on the Decretum Rubiconis see Maria Bollini, Augusto Campana, Angela Donati, Valeria Righini, Gian Carlo Susini, Antonio Veghiani, Cesena: Il Museo Storico dell’Antichità (Faenza: Fratelli Lega – Editori, 1969), 87.
A conspiracy of revolt had developed amongst his condottiere during the year, and although his enemies believed their secret safe, Cesare knew of their betrayal. He said to Machiavelli when the envoy arrived with assurance of Florence’s support:

Believe me that this thing is to my advantage, and they cannot reveal themselves at an hour that will damage me less, nor can I, to strengthen my states, wish for a thing that will be more useful to me; because I shall know this time against whom I have to protect myself, and I shall recognize my friends.  

Cesare enacted his revenge in Sinigallia on December 31, 1502, where they were either killed or taken prisoner. He had discovered their plot months before and crafted their dramatic demise in such a way as to solidify the strength of his rule and to inspire awe in others. Much of Italy rushed to congratulate him. It was considered to be a justifiable act, the proper response to their treachery and treason. His ability to execute such a maneuver undetected and without any hint of what was to come was considered masterful military planning. All of Italy was in awe and infused with a new anxiety over Cesare’s ability and plans.

Cesare left Sinigallia on January 1, 1503 and began a systematic conquest that took him west to Siena and then, following Leonardo’s map, south to Rome. This becomes interesting when we return to Suetonius, the source of the Rubicon image on Cesare’s sword. Suetonius writes of Julius Caesar’s movements after he crossed the Rubicon: “His subsequent actions may be summed up in order as follows. He occupied Picenum, Umbria, and Etruria.” If a map of ancient Rome is observed alongside one of Renaissance Italy, those areas correspond in a general

---

329 Strathern, *The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior*, 190.
331 Ibid, 207. Machiavelli called it “an admirable deed.” Louis XII of France called it “an act worthy of a Roman hero.”
332 Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 17. It is unknown whether Cesare knew this fact, but Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon on January 10/11.
way to the route that Cesare took, and to the map that Leonardo created for him at this time. (Figures 4-152, 4-153) It is possible that Cesare was symbolically following what Suetonius said were Caesare’s footsteps, signaling to his fellow rulers that they were subject to his ultimate and coming authority.

**Imprese and Devices**

Like many of Leonardo’s drawings, there are other devices and imprese whose dates remain to be conclusively determined, but evidentiary details align some of them to his time working for Cesare. Windsor 12700, 12282, 12701, and 12496 are the most important of this group. (Figures 4-154, 4-155, 4-156, 4-157, 4-158) Kenneth Clark dates Windsor 12700, 12282, and 12701 to circa 1498 because of their connection to MS M and the knowledge that Leonardo did execute these types of tasks for Ludovico Sforza; despite this however, Clark still expressed an inclination to date them later than 1499. Reti, knowing that Leonardo also likely performed these tasks for Cesare, dated them to 1502-1503.333

As politically charged imprese, the drawings on the Windsor folios are intended to express concepts of devotion and fidelity. Although no representations are currently known, Reti believes that it is unlikely that these imprese and Windsor drawings were not realized, stating that it is likely scholars have not recognized them in finished form because they were amended at the request of the patron.334

Windsor 12701 shows three devices in a refined presentation format. Sketches, versions, and related thoughts are scattered throughout the others. Windsor 12700 includes notes that provide information on Leonardo’s thoughts and symbolic intentions during the time of the

---


334 Ibid, 42, 45, 10
creation of 12701. These notes are accompanied by drawings not directly related to the three
imprese on 12701, but relevant to the text—discussions of masks, truth, lies, and deception.
They are also apropos to events in Cesare’s life during 1502, most specifically the betrayal by his
condottiere and the events at Sinigallia. The focal elements of Leonardo’s notes are all
possessed within this episode. It is likely that Leonardo, as an extended witness to the
environment of Cesare’s court and to this affair, was designing relevant images. The sketches of
armor could also certainly be designs for Cesare. Codex Atlanticus 20 v-b, associated with the
Windsor folios through the sketches of a clepsydra, is the previously mentioned folio in the
center of which can be seen intertwined letters enclosed in a circle, very much like the
monogram on Cesare’s sword that this research proposes was designed by Leonardo. (Figures 4-
159, 4-3, 4-1)

A sonnet by Bernardino Gaspari Pesarese in December of 1502 is cited as corroborative
evidence that 12701 is associated with Cesare and that it is dated to this time. The poem is in the

---

Ibid, 43. The notes are as follows:
Verità: il Sole.
Bugio: maschera.
Innocenza – malignità
Il foco distrugge la bugia, cioè il sofistico, e rende la verità, scacciando le tenebre.
Il foco è da esser messo per consumatore d’ogni sofistico e scopritore e dimostratore di verità, perchè lui è luce,
scacciatore delle tenebre occultatrici d’ogni essenza.
Verità. Il foco distrugge ogni sofistico, cioè lo inganno, e sol mantiene la verità, cioè l’oro.
La verità al fine non si cela; non val simulazione. Simulazione è frustrata avanti a tanto giudice.
La bugia mette maschera.
Nulla occulta sotto il Sole.
Il foco è messo per la verità, perchè distrugge ogni sofistico e bugia, e la maschera per la falsità e bugia, occultatrice
del vero.
Prima privato di moto che stanco di giovare.
Mancherà prima il moto che ’l giovamento.
Prima morte che stanchezza.
Non mi sazio di servire – Sine lassitudine.
Non mi stanco nel giovare. E’motto da carnovale.
Tutte le opere non son per istancarmi.
Prima stanco che sazio di servire.
Insaziabili servizio – Sine labore.
Mani nelle quali floccan ducati e pietre preziose, queste mai si stancano di servire; ma tal servizio è sol per sua
utilità e non è al nostro proposito.
Naturalmente. Natura così mi dispone.
guise of a one-sided conversation Cesare has with his captain Michelotto and includes a reference to a fixed star which is particularly important, visually recalling the compass with its heading fixed on a star in the sky.  

This compass image seems to also be related to Windsor 12496, an allegorical drawing of an eagle and a wolf on a barge that has been dated by Reti to 1502-1503. Numerous and divergent theories have been offered by various scholars on the unknown meaning of the image, a mystery only exacerbated by the lack of a confirmed date or patron/project. To support his assertion that Windsor 12496 is associated with Cesare, Reti cites a likeness to something Machiavelli wrote about Cesare:

\[ \begin{align*}
El & \ duca Valentin le vele sua \\
Ridette a' venti e verso 'l mar di sopra \\
De la sua nave rivoltò la prua
\end{align*} \]

---

336 Ibid, 43-44.
Su, su temp'è, che ognun l'armi ripiglia,  
Montate hormai commilitoni in sella,  
E tu, mio capitan fido Corella,  
A che non prendi in man l'usata briglia?

Lassa ad altrui haver turbate ciglia:  
Dal fato non curar, ch'è in ciel mia stella  
Sta ferma e fissa, e sol per me con ella  
Fortuna se conferma e se consiglia.

Cresce in me la virtù, cresce el valore  
E a lo inimico ognhor la forza mancha,  
Che già son l'arme sue fuga e timore.

Vien dunque presto alla militia Francha  
Et in omne impresa alfin fla vincitore  
Quel anchor seguirà mia Croce bianca.

337 Ibid, 50.
Rough translation by the author:  
The Duke Valentin sails his  
Retold in the winds and to the seas above  
Turned the prow of his ship
Machiavelli stayed with Cesare’s court for the three months in 1502; his time overlapped entirely with the months that Leonardo was present and working in the area.\textsuperscript{338} It is possible that Leonardo read what Machiavelli had written and was converting the idea behind the words into an image—perhaps at the behest of their mutual friend.

Reti, alongside others, has associated the eagle with the French crown and assigns the representation to Louis XII. The wolf is an old symbol of the church which has led many to see it as a representation of the papacy. However, it is also a symbol of the Gonfalonier, the Captain General of the Church, a position that Cesare held during 1502-1503. Reti sees the wolf as not an elder/Papal wolf but a young son/Gonfalonier directing the ship, his compass fixed upon the rays that come from the heart of the eagle. Reti suggests Cesare had Leonardo design this to illustrate his devotion to the French King.

The sail is an allegory of Fortune, used in the 1400s and 1500s as a symbol of the perils of the sea and of life in general.\textsuperscript{339} A common use of the representation was on medals. Pisanello’s medals for Lionello d’Este offer multiple examples, as does the verso side of a medal of Cesare Borgia. (Figure 4-160) On Cesare’s medal the figure of Fortune stands holding a sail that is blown full with the wind, very much like the Allegory of Fortune floor mosaic in the Cathedral in Siena. (Figure 4-161) Anny E. Poss suggests that the tree Leonardo uses as the mast of the sail alludes to the perpetually lush power of the Church which grounded all of Cesare’s movements.\textsuperscript{340}

Building on Reti’s dating and allegorical association with Cesare, a different interpretation can also be established that is more in keeping with Cesare’s political policy and

\textsuperscript{338} Nicholl, \textit{Leonardo da Vinci Flights of the Mind}, 349.

\textsuperscript{339} Reti, “Non si volta chi a stella e fisso,” 49-51.

\textsuperscript{340} Ibid, 51.
use of symbolism at this time. Although Cesare had relied on Louis XII for troops and initial support, during this time he sought to establish himself as an independent ruler and military force. He hired his own troops and muddled the once clear alliance he had with the French; he began to see himself as a solitary force.

This is also the time period that his personal association with Julius Caesar was heightened and took on new forms in his public and diplomatic display. It is likely that the compass in the Windsor 12496 and its related manifestation in 12701 is a part of this program. This research proposes that in 12496 the eagle is not the French King but is a symbol of the Roman Empire and specifically of Caesar, recalling the Pax Romana image on Cesare’s sword. (Figure 4-22) The conflation of the “star,” or apotheosis comet, and the eagle in 12496 and 12701 is an integration of this same idea. Cesare, as the wolf, is looking to the divine Julius Caesar as his guiding force.

**Piratello**

Although much of what Leonardo did at the behest of Cesare exists only as sketches in his notebook or often altered architectural enhancements, there is one now lost work that if found could leave Leonardo scholars little choice but to fully acknowledge the relationship between the two men—an altarpiece that Cesare commissioned at the Santuario della Beata Vergine del Piratello, outside of Imola, said to be painted by Leonardo. Regional history tells us that in the very least Leonardo began the painting. After Cesare’s fall from power in 1503 and the loss of his territories, work on the Chapel of the Immaculate which held the altarpiece was suspended until 1515 when it was once again revived and lasted through 1536-40. The painting remained
in the sanctuary until 1797 when it was removed by Napoleon’s agents and taken to France.341 Eventually it was sent back to Italy through the restoration negotiated by Antonio Canova, but after its return, the trail of the painting is lost.342

On November 25, 1500, Cesare Borgia and his army were camped outside of Imola near the shrine in Piratello.343 (Figure 4-162) Cesare is said to have entered the church, prostrated himself before the enshrined icon, and made a vow that if he was able to take the city of Imola without bloodshed, he would complete the unfinished church and erect a chapel in honor of the Immaculate Conception. Two days later, on November 27th, the city signed an agreement of surrender and Cesare entered Imola in triumph without a drop of blood shed on either side—a success that was considered to have been won under the grace and protection of the Virgin.344

The Church was two-thirds finished when Cesare arrived, begun by Caterina Sforza in the late 1480s and 1490s.345 Cesare continued work on the structure and constructed a chapel to the left side of the altar. In gratitude, the friars had Matteo da Piancoldoli, a stonecutter, carve and install two coats of arms of Cesare’s, one of which is still visible on the exterior wall of the

---


342 G.F. Cortini, *La Madonna del Piratello* (Imola: P. Galeati, 1939), 88. The artist had been sent to Paris in 1815 to negotiate the return of artworks that the French had taken from Italian churches during Napoleon’s reign. The majority of the works were returned to Rome, Italy in January of 1816. For more information on Canova’s involvement see Christopher M.S. Johns, *Antonio Canova and the Politics of Patronage in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1998).

343 Ibid, 79.

344 Morresi, *La Madonna del Piratello nella Storica degli Imolesi 1483-1983*, 35-36. Although many scholars doubt the depth and sincerity of Cesare’s religiosity a handful of examples do exist that suggest a genuine belief. While he was a student in Perugia he witnessed the ecstacies of Sister Colomba, a young local nun, and would later attest to the authenticity of her experience to his father, in 1495. The episode at Piratello and the fact that he followed through on the vow that he made also hints at the possibility that he was at least in some form a religious believer.

345 Cortini, *La Madonna del Piratello*, 87.
church.\textsuperscript{346} (Figure 4-163) The other was on a column near the altar and has now been moved to an exterior porch, crowing the door.\textsuperscript{347} (Figure 4-164) The Duke chose to decorate his promised altar with a painting on canvas depicting him kneeling, imploring the Virgin for her protection and for his victory. The painting has been attributed by some to Dosso Dossi of Ferrara and by others to Leonardo da Vinci.\textsuperscript{348}

Dosso Dossi is an understandable artist for scholars to associate with the Borgia; he was a court painter to the d’Este in Ferrara, into which Lucrezia Borgia married. Additionally, there is a Dossi portrait now in Stockholm that was first documented in 1662 in the collection of Christina of Sweden as a portrait of Cesare Borgia. (Figure 4-165) It was at that time credited to Correggio but was included in the catalogue as a possible Dossi painting for the 1998/99 exhibition \textit{Dosso Dossi: Court Painter in Renaissance Ferrara} held in Ferrara and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is dated 1517-19, so it can be discounted as a from-life portrait of Cesare, but perhaps the court artist painted it posthumously for Lucrezia. Interestingly, the buildings in the background above the portrait right shoulder of the sitter resemble Le Motte-Feuilly, Cesare’s wife and daughter’s chateau in France. (Figure 4-166) This can perhaps be better seen through a later engraving of what the painting might have originally looked like before overpainting in the late eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{349} (Figure 4-167) It is possible that someone in the entourage of Lucrezia’s husband, Alfonso d’Este, if not Dossi himself, recorded the architecture of the chateau during Alfonso’s trip to France in 1518.

\textsuperscript{346} Morresi, \textit{La Madonna del Piratello nella Storica degli Imolesi 1483-1983}, 23, 37.

\textsuperscript{347} Cortini, \textit{La Madonna del Piratello}, 89.

\textsuperscript{348} Morresi, \textit{La Madonna del Piratello nella Storica degli Imolesi 1483-1983}, 36.

\textsuperscript{349} For information on the engraving see Mauro Lucco, catalogue entry 44, in \textit{Dosso Dossi: Court Painter in Renaissance Ferrara}, ed. Peter Humfrey and Mauro Lucco (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 231-232. The idea that the buildings could represent Le Motte-Feuilly is original to this research.
However interesting Dossi and Cesare’s possible relationship with this portrait is, the artist’s association with the altarpiece in Piratello is unlikely. Dossi was born in 1486/87 and did not begin his career as a painter until around 1510. Those dates make him too young to be the primary artist of the Piratello altarpiece or an artist Cesare would have had known. For these reasons Dossi can be quickly dismissed as the artist of the Piratello altarpiece. That leaves us with Leonardo as the recipient of Cesare’s commission.

The portrait of Cesare in the altarpiece is described as depicting him in armor, possibly as a half-figure, and as having sideburns [basette], which is more likely a reference to the beard that Cesare was known to have at this time. Unfortunately the historical documents of the sanctuary were lost, leaving us no better description of the composition or more direct information on the work. More evidence, however, might be hiding in plain sight and simply never connected to the Piratello commission. There is a red chalk/sanguine drawing by Leonardo commonly called *Three views of a bearded head* first identified as Cesare Borgia by Valentiner in 1930, an attribution now generally accepted. (Figure 4-168) Kenneth Clark connected the drawing to Leonardo’s time in Imola but failed to connect the drawing to the altarpiece. It is highly probable that these sketches are Leonardo’s preparation for Cesare’s portrait in the Piratello painting.

---


351 Cortini, *La Madonna del Piratello*, 88.

352 Morresi, *La Madonna del Piratello nella Storica degli Imolesi 1483-1983*, 40-41. Guido Vaini, was at some point in time the mayor of the convent Piratello, and kept for himself the historical documents of the Sanctuary. Unfortunately those documents were all lost with the unforeseen destruction of his house.


MS L 2r, 3v, 4r, and possibly 3r, could hold additional insight into the painting’s composition, although that connection is more tenuous. (Figures 4-169, 4-170, 4-171, 4-172) The figures seen do wear armor and are kneeling, and MS L is the notebook that Leonardo used during his time with Borgia, but the faces are clean shaven. Perhaps they are sketches focused on body posture and costume, made with a supplementary model, that when combined with the face detailed in the three views drawing, would have offered the complete portrait. One can imagine what might have been a similar composition to the two main figures in Andrea Mantegna’s 1496 *Madonna della Vittoria*. (Figure 4-173)

It is difficult to determine the size of the original altarpiece. In 1814 the church was redecorated, a project that involved the reconstruction and redecoration of the ceiling, floor, and walls. The altars, of which there were five, were also redone. The principal altar which held the icon of Our Lady of Piratello remained, but the other four were reduced to two, one on each side of the high altar. The one on the left side which had formerly held Cesare Borgia’s painting was at this time rededicated to S. Andrea Avellino and decorated according to this new distinction.355 Additionally, it is not possible to know what the current state of the image is, if it is intact or has been separated. “Restoration(s)” and “conservation(s)” were carried out by the French when the Italian works were there—interventions that often included the cutting down of size. The alterations were often so extreme that when the works returned to Italy, many individuals mourned them as damaged or ruined.356 Giulio Cesare Cerchiri noted specifically of Leonardo’s Piratello altarpiece that it was cut while in the possession of the French.357

355 Cortini, *La Madonna del Piratello*, 188.
356 Johns, *Antonio Canova and the Politics of Patronage in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe*, 4-5.
357 Cortini, *La Madonna del Piratello*, 88. Although the damage was likely, Cortini did disagree with the idea that the painting was damaged nonetheless it cannot be determined with any certainty.
Although no paintings exist that can currently be matched to the Piratello altarpiece, and the uncertainties over its size and current condition linger, the fact remains that Cesare Borgia did commission a painting for the Shrine of Piratello. This should compel us to reconsider his reputation as a non-religious man and, more importantly to this project, consider that Cesare commissioned a large scale altarpiece from Leonardo, placing him alongside the artist’s other patrons as important players of Renaissance patronage.

Leonardo’s association with Piratello extends one step further to some related physical structures, one in particular on a 35-acre tract of land owned by Cesare.\textsuperscript{358} In exchange for two masses a year, Borgia left to the shrine, as a dowry for his chapel, the possession of \textit{Valentina}, a parcel of land in Trentola, a hamlet nearby.\textsuperscript{359} One can see clearly its location in the Catasto of Imola.\textsuperscript{360} (Figure 4-174) Gustavo Sacerdote believed that as late as 1950 some remains of Cesare’s \textit{Valentina} were still standing and states, as others have, that some of the structures were designed by Leonardo.\textsuperscript{361} Charles Yriarte also discussed \textit{Valentina} in \textit{Autour des Borgia}, published in 1891, and stated that a small structure dating to Cesare’s time did still exist on the property. He noted the use of local materials and specifically of terracotta in the working of the capitals. He also indicated the state of disrepair, describing the structure as defaced by restorations and so damaged by time that its historical significance remained unnoticed.\textsuperscript{362}

Unfortunately the building seen in Sacerdote’s and Yriarte’s photographs, when compared with

\textsuperscript{358} The conversion of the size of the land to the modern acre was provided by Sergio Spada in an email exchanged with the author on December 7, 2013. In \textit{La Madonna del Piratello Nella Storia Degli Imolese 1483-1983} Giovanni Morresi states that \textit{Valentina} is associated with "146 tornature" which Spade determined to be the size of a piece of land.

\textsuperscript{359} Cortini, \textit{La Madonna del Piratello}, 85, 87.

\textsuperscript{360} Comune di Imola, RUE Tome III, 219-220.

\textsuperscript{361} Sacerdote, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 435.

\textsuperscript{362} Yriarte, \textit{Autour des Borgia}, 22-23.
additional communal records, does not appear to resemble any standing on the land today, which suggests that any chance to study the work and confirm Leonardo’s hand has been lost.\textsuperscript{363}

(Figures 4-175, 4-176, 4-177) However, the art historical significance of Leonardo’s probable involvement in the architecture of Piratello and its holdings enhance Cesare’s patronage \textit{oeuvre}.

The campanile in Piratello dates from the late 15\textsuperscript{th} to early 16\textsuperscript{th}-century. Leonardo has been proposed as the architect, and perhaps it does carry his influence, but more likely it was designed by his friend Bramante, who Edoardo Alvisi suggested worked in the Romagna at the same time.\textsuperscript{364} While Leonardo’s association has fallen out of favor, Bramante’s relationship with the tower has withstood scrutiny. Documentation does not provide clear evidence as to the patron, but Bramante’s existing association and contemporaneous working relationship with the Borgia supports the idea that it was under Cesare’s direction.\textsuperscript{365} It has also already been established that Bramante traveled with Leonardo in 1501, re-affirming their Milanese friendship and association; it is not a far projection to suggest that Bramante visited Leonardo during his three month tenure in Imola and/or that he sent a design for Piratello’s bell tower to the city.

\textbf{Rome and Leonardo’s Departure}

The details of Leonardo’s departure from Cesare’s service are unknown. Evidence suggests that he worked for Cesare until early to mid 1503, whereafter he returned to Florence.

\textsuperscript{363} A tremendous thank you to Sergio Spada for assisting me with this part of the project and for looking through the city records to find this information. His assistance was invaluable in continuing my examination of Cesare and Leonardo’s association with Piratello after I had returned home from the region. Future research includes a visit to the site to further evaluate the possibility that some remains might still exist and are simply not included in the RUE photographs.

\textsuperscript{364} Alvisi, \textit{Cesare Borgia Duca di Romagna}, 394-396.

\textsuperscript{365} Luigi Orsini, \textit{Imola e la Valle del Santerno} (Bergamo: Istituto Italiano d’arti Grafiche – Editore, 1907), 64. Because documentation can not definitively assign patronage to Cesare, it is possible that the campanile was part of Caterina Sforza’s original construction, or that it dates to 1507 when Julius II had taken control of Imola, but both of these are less likely. During the late 1480s and 1490s when Caterina Sforza began construction in Piratello, Bramante was a part of the court of Milan, and in 1507 Bramante was working on St. Peter’s Basilica.
There is a bank entry that indicates he withdrew money in Florence on Saturday March 5, 1503, so he was certainly back in the city by that date.\textsuperscript{366} Text on MS L 94v outlines the distances between locations, a list that includes Perugia, a city no employee of the Borgia would have been able to visit until the Baglioni lost power to Cesare on January 3, 1503.\textsuperscript{367} (Figure 4-178) It is likely that Leonardo was with Borgia when he took the city.\textsuperscript{368} Yriarte offers an intriguing suggestion that the people of Perugia invited Leonardo to create an equestrian statue of Cesare to be erected in the cathedral square.\textsuperscript{369} He does not cite his evidence for this statement, so at this time it cannot be confirmed, but the variations in Leonardo’s drawings of equestrian models become interesting and ripe for further research.\textsuperscript{370}

Martin Kemp suggests that Leonardo again traveled to Siena and further to Rome before he finally returned to Florence.\textsuperscript{371} The project that Leonardo executed in Rome, and likely his last work for Cesare, was a siege device used at Ceri in March 1503. For this assault, Cesare employed a number of new weapons that were designed by Leonardo, the most important of which was a moveable tower or sloping platform that allowed up to 300 men to climb up the

\textsuperscript{366} Strathern, The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior, 234.

\textsuperscript{367} Text is taken from the Biblioteca Leonardina’s e-Leo project which has digitized and made available all of Leonardo’s notebooks.
\textit{Da Bonconvento alla Casanova, miglia 10.}
\textit{Dalla Casanova e Chiusi, miglia 9.}
\textit{Da Chiusi a Perugia, miglia 12.}
\textit{Da Perugia a S. Maria degli Angeli, e poi a Fuligno.}

\textsuperscript{368} Nicholl, Leonardo da Vinci Flights of the Mind, 353.

\textsuperscript{369} Yriate, Cesare Borgia, 127.

\textsuperscript{370} There are numerous drawings by Leonardo that relate to what appear to be equestrian monuments. It is known that he executed designs for the Sforza monument and the Trivulzio monument and that he likely designed or finished smaller scale sculptures for King Francis I that were diminutive versions of the equestrian monument style. A large study of the entire body of drawings, paying particular attention to those who dating is tentative or unknown, could be conducted to determine if any drawings remain that could be assigned to the proposed work in Perugia. Leonardo da Vinci Master Draftsman would be an excellent starting point for such an examination.

\textsuperscript{371} Kemp, Leonardo da Vinci, 230-231.
unusually high walls and attack the ramparts of a castle, all while shielded by the structure itself. 372 A letter dated April 29, 1503, preserved in Andrea Bernardi’s *Cronache Forlivesi*, says that Cesare also played a role in the design. 373 Giustinian mentions that Leonardo was working in Rome supervising the initial stages of construction. 374 Cesare paid a craftsman named Albert of Placentia 398 florins and 51 bolognese for work on the siege weapon’s construction which had taken place on the grounds of the Vatican. 375

While Leonardo was in Rome in February 1503, Alexander VI shared with him a letter from Sultan Beyazid II, detailing an incredible project. The letter had been sent in 1502 in the hands of the ambassador charged with negotiating peace between the Venice and the Ottoman Empire; it requested the Pope’s help in finding an engineer who was capable of designing a bridge to span the Golden Horn. 376 Alexander believed that man to be Leonardo.

In 1952 Franz Babinger, a German scholar of Ottoman history, discovered a letter in the State Archives at the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul. It is a Turkish translation of the original

__372__ The description of this device is a combination of the information given on Cloulas, *The Borgias*, 239, and Beuf, *Cesare Borgia*, 290. It is accepted that Leonardo designed and initially supervised the building of this device but there is some disagreement as to whether or not the tower was actually used the the siege of Ceri or not. See the various biographies outlined in Chapter 1 for varying opinions.

__373__ Woodward, *Cesare Borgia*, 300. For the letter see *Cronache Forlivesi dal 1476 al 1517*, vol. II. Andrea Bernardi (1450-1522) was a historian and chronicler of Italy and particulary Forli. He is also called Novacula.

__374__ Strathern, *The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior*, 162, 234. Strathern says that Burchard also mentions Leonardo’s presence.

__375__ de Roo, *Material for a History of Pope Alexander VI*, vol. IV, 424. De Roo cites Archiv. Vatic., Introitus et Exitus, vol. 533 as the source of this information. The payment was made on May 4, 1503. Giustinian’s discussion of the machine is on page 431 in *Dispacci di Antonio Giustinian*. March 13, 1503 “Il Duca è mandato dal Papa a por fine alla ormai lunga impresa di Ceri. Egli conduce colà maestri e ingegneri e altri periti. «Tutta la speranza de aver per battagia questo loco è una zerta machina che un inzegner tuttavia lavora qui in Roma, in la qual staranno circa 300 omeni combattenti, e sarà tanto alta che equiparà le mura della terra, alle qual la se porrà accostar, se la cosa li riesse; benchè molti pratici di inzegno e guerra iudicano l'opera vana e la spesa persa. E se pur deliberaranno darli battagia, non se li darà, se prima quest' opera non se compie; alla qual se attende con ogni diligenza, et ogni zorno el Pontefice la va a vaghizzar per un pezzo, perchè la fa lavorar dritto al Palazzo verso Belveder.» La difesa di quei di Ceri è ottima.” Buonaccorsi also mentions the seige in his *Diario* but does not discuss Leonardo’s involvmnt in the weapons.

__376__ Strathern, *The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior*, 224.
letter in which Leonardo offered his services to Sultan Beyazid II, on July 3, 1503. The letter reads:

I, your servant, have heard about your intention to build a bridge from Stamboul to Galata, and that you have not done it because no man can be found capable of it. I, your servant, know how. I would raise it to the height of a building, so that no one can pass over it because it is so high…I will make it so that a ship can pass under it even with it’s sails hoisted…I would have a drawbridge so that when one wants one can pass on to the Anatolian coast…May God make you believe these words, and consider this servant of yours always at your service.377

Although the letter itself has not been authenticated, drawings in Leonardo’s notebooks confirm that he was involved in this and other allied projects. MS L 66r shows the drawing directly related to the Sultan’s task. (Figure 4-179) Leonardo’s design was inspired by the Alidosi bridge at Castel del Rio, 12 miles SW of Imola, a bridge begun in 1499 and one that Leonardo almost certainly saw during his time with Borgia. Next to the sketch is the note: “The bridge at Pera: 40 braccia wide, 70 braccia above the water, 600 braccia long; that is to say, 400 over the sea and 200 on the land, thus making its own supports.”378 The fact that Leonardo was privy to the exact measurements is evidence that he saw the Sultan’s actual letter and was not blindly submitting designs for an unsolicited task. Another comment in his notebooks, “Ask Bartolomeo the Turk about the flow and ebb of tide in the Black Sea,” could also be related to the bridge’s design.379

Leonardo ultimately offered his services to the Sultan for four projects: the Golden Horn bridge, a special windmill, a device for pumping out a ship’s hull, and a drawbridge to the

379 Strathern, The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior, 227. Bartolomeo Turco was a traveler who published a book of sonnets about the Aegean Islands in 1502.
Anatolian coast. The additional associated manuscript folios are MS L 34v, 35r, 35v, and 25v.\textsuperscript{380}

(Figures 4-180, 4-181, 4-182, 4-183)

By the time Leonardo’s letter was sent in July of 1503 he had departed Cesare’s company and had returned to Florence. The Sultan never accepted Leonardo’s proposal but instead sought out another famous Italian artist, Michelangelo, who also never made it as far as Istanbul, but whose drawing for the bridge is preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris.\textsuperscript{381}

Michelangelo

Cesare’s association with Michelangelo, through the purchase of the now lost *Sleeping Cupid*, has been well documented although it is often omitted in accounts of the sculpture’s famous creation and purchase. Other evidence does exist, however, that hints at a continued and longer term relationship between the two men. Michelangelo’s work in Sant’Agostino in Rome and the National Gallery *Entombment* are among the potential products of it. (Figure 4-184)

It is commonly believed that in the late 1400s, the chapel in Sant’Agostino, which now houses Caravaggio’s *Madonna di Loretto*, the first chapel on the left side of the nave, was endowed by Bishop Giovanni Ebu’s estate after his death.\textsuperscript{382} Records show that Michelangelo worked on a panel intended for this space and scholars have speculated that the National Gallery’s *Entombment* is the chapel’s unfinished commission. The legal ties to the chapel’s

\textsuperscript{380} Reti, “The Engineer,” 126, 128. Franz Babinger and Ludwig H Heydenreich, “Vier Bauvorschläge Lionardo da Vinci’s an Sultan Bajezid II. (1502/3),” Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen 1 (1952): 1-20. This article by Babinger and Heydenreich is referenced here because it was used to find out the specific manuscript pages that were associated with this project. It is also a key resource for anyone searching for more information on Leonardo’s involvement in the Sultan’s project.

\textsuperscript{381} Freely, *Jem Sultan*, 300. A scaled down version of Leonardo’s bridge was built out of wood and steel as a footbridge in Aas, near Oslo Norway, in 2001, 1,500 miles north of its original intended location.

decoration are almost non-existent and certainly very unclear, leaving room for the possibility that Michelangelo’s work, and the decoration as a whole, was paid for by another patron.

Although the bishop died on November 25, 1496, there was a legal dispute over his affairs, which were not settled until March 20th, 1499, protracting any progress on the decorative program. Ultimately no liturgical obligations on behalf of Bishop Ebu were ever entered into the church’s log books, suggesting that the agreement between the two parties was never formalized. The only notation we have for the Bishop’s 500 ducat endowment at all is a simple marginal note that does not mention any connection to a specific chapel, simply that an endowment was made. Even if the Bishop intended the first chapel on the left to facilitate his extra-terrestrial wishes, there is no indication that it ever did. Alexander Nagel concluded that the Bishop’s chapel and the intention to decorate it was either “abortive or had in some way been co-opted.”

Her first known association with the tomb was on October 23, 1506 when a payment was made: “per officio cantata ne la cappela dela Pietà per l’anima [de la madre] de la Fiammetta.” Because the payment was made for singing and not for the decoration of a chapel already fully named and dedicated, it is possible that the paintings and other elements had been completed earlier, paid for on her behalf by someone with the necessary power and connections to take over that kind of space, specifically Cesare. If this is true, then we must consider the possibility that it was Cesare Borgia and not the estate of Bishop Ebu that paid Michelangelo for the work.

383 Ibid, 166.
384 Ibid, 164.
In an entry for July 30, 1500, in the ledger of Balducci, a bookkeeper of Michelangelo’s accounts, it is stated that: “on September 2, sixty ducats gold-in-gold of the papal treasury paid to Michelangelo the Sculptor for one painted panel he is doing in Sant’Agostino.” He was paid that amount by “the brothers of S. Agostino;” it does not mention any specific patron. There are additional entries associated with the Sant’Agostino painting as late as June 1502. It seems that Michelangelo himself chose not to finish the commission and began to pay two other artists to complete the panel for him.

On May 19, 1501, payments were made from Michelangelo to Maestro Andrea for “part of the handwork on the panel he chose to do in S. Agostino.” Another payment was made on November 13, 1501. On December 11, 1501, Maestro Ciniori was paid “for expenses for the panel done in S. Agostino.” The final payments were to Maestro Andrea made on January 4 and June 18, 1502. Eventually, after June 1502, Maestro Andrea took over the commission entirely, choosing to create a new panel instead of completing Michelangelo’s.

Thus Michelangelo’s piece remained unfinished and, as previously mentioned, has been identified as the Entombment in the National Gallery in London. Harold R. Mancusi-Ungaro

---

385 Harold R. Mancusi-Ungaro, Michelangelo: The Burges Madonna and the Piccolomini Altar (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 153. The fact that the payment was made in “gold of the papal treasury” is interesting, but its true relevance cannot be determined. It is unknown whether this supports Cesare’s involvement because of his relationship with the papacy, or if Piccolomini would have had access to and used that resource as well. Additionally it is not clear if this is a description of a kind of coin or the patron’s funding source. Future research could help clarify this point.

386 Ibid, 153.

387 Ibid, 158-159.


389 Ibid, 7.

390 Ibid, 159.

391 Ibid, 7.

was the first to suggest this pairing which is now widely accepted. The painting itself shows different styles and hands which closely match the payment records and history of the Sant’Agostino commission.³⁹³

Looking further into the image for clues to its patronage, Alexander Nagel offered an interesting insight, suggesting that the composition of Michelangelo’s work, through its placement of the viewer amongst the female mourners, is directed at a female patron/audience, i.e. Fiammetta. Although he does not ultimately confirm this idea, neither does he reject it entirely, instead simply concluding that when before October 1506 the chapel and/or commission passed to Fiammetta cannot be determined with the current evidence.³⁹⁴ The possibility that Nagel himself hinted at does remain—that the endowment was co-opted. The assertion here is that Michelangelo’s panel was the result of the usurpation of the chapel by Fiammetta or by Cesare on her behalf.

The shift in artistic involvement with the panel as indicated by the payments can also be explained by considering Cesare’s involvement. Cesare was preoccupied in the Romagna and had moved on to a new mistress by 1502, both reasons for a lack of interest and/or funding. But more important are Cesare’s known use of artists and art in political gift exchange and the possibility of his involvement in Michelangelo’s departure in 1500/1501.

Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini was the procurator for the estate of Bishop Ebu. Interestingly Piccolomini had also been the executor of the will of Cardinal Jean de Bilhères-Lagraulas, Michelangelo’s patron of the Pietà, and it was Piccolomini’s project that eventually pulled Michelangelo away from the panel in Sant’Agostino.³⁹⁵

³⁹³ Mancusi, Michelangelo, 7-8.
³⁹⁵ Ibid.
In 1483 Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini, Cardinal of Siena, commissioned an altarpiece, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, to be built in the left side aisle of the Siena Cathedral. Andrea Bregno received the original commission and executed the expansive architectural backdrop that would house individual works by different artists. In 1500 or early 1501 Piccolomini hired Pietro Torrigiano to sculpt the singular figures, but after completing only a portion of the statue of St. Frances, the artist quit to join the army of Cesare Borgia. If Cesare was taking Piccolomini’s sculptor on campaign, perhaps he offered the Cardinal Michelangelo in exchange.

In May 1501 Piccolomini hired Michelangelo to work on the sculptures. He began work on May 22, 1501, and signed the official contract to sculpt the fifteen marble figures on June 5, 1501. Of the fifteen, he finished the piece that Torrigiano had begun and carved only an additional four. It is probable that Michelangelo’s Bruges Madonna was intended for the Piccolomini altar, and therefore one of the sculptures executed at this time. (Figure 4-185) In 1500 or early 1501 Piccolomini hired Pietro Torrigiano to sculpt the singular figures, but after completing only a portion of the statue of St. Frances, the artist quit to join the army of Cesare Borgia. If Cesare was taking Piccolomini’s sculptor on campaign, perhaps he offered the Cardinal Michelangelo in exchange.

In May 1501 Piccolomini hired Michelangelo to work on the sculptures. He began work on May 22, 1501, and signed the official contract to sculpt the fifteen marble figures on June 5, 1501. Of the fifteen, he finished the piece that Torrigiano had begun and carved only an additional four. It is probable that Michelangelo’s Bruges Madonna was intended for the Piccolomini altar, and therefore one of the sculptures executed at this time. (Figure 4-185) In 1500 or early 1501 Piccolomini hired Pietro Torrigiano to sculpt the singular figures, but after completing only a portion of the statue of St. Frances, the artist quit to join the army of Cesare Borgia. If Cesare was taking Piccolomini’s sculptor on campaign, perhaps he offered the Cardinal Michelangelo in exchange.

In May 1501 Piccolomini hired Michelangelo to work on the sculptures. He began work on May 22, 1501, and signed the official contract to sculpt the fifteen marble figures on June 5, 1501. Of the fifteen, he finished the piece that Torrigiano had begun and carved only an additional four. It is probable that Michelangelo’s Bruges Madonna was intended for the Piccolomini altar, and therefore one of the sculptures executed at this time. (Figure 4-185) In 1500 or early 1501 Piccolomini hired Pietro Torrigiano to sculpt the singular figures, but after completing only a portion of the statue of St. Frances, the artist quit to join the army of Cesare Borgia. If Cesare was taking Piccolomini’s sculptor on campaign, perhaps he offered the Cardinal Michelangelo in exchange.

In May 1501 Piccolomini hired Michelangelo to work on the sculptures. He began work on May 22, 1501, and signed the official contract to sculpt the fifteen marble figures on June 5, 1501. Of the fifteen, he finished the piece that Torrigiano had begun and carved only an additional four. It is probable that Michelangelo’s Bruges Madonna was intended for the Piccolomini altar, and therefore one of the sculptures executed at this time. (Figure 4-185) In 1500 or early 1501 Piccolomini hired Pietro Torrigiano to sculpt the singular figures, but after completing only a portion of the statue of St. Frances, the artist quit to join the army of Cesare Borgia. If Cesare was taking Piccolomini’s sculptor on campaign, perhaps he offered the Cardinal Michelangelo in exchange.

In May 1501 Piccolomini hired Michelangelo to work on the sculptures. He began work on May 22, 1501, and signed the official contract to sculpt the fifteen marble figures on June 5, 1501. Of the fifteen, he finished the piece that Torrigiano had begun and carved only an additional four. It is probable that Michelangelo’s Bruges Madonna was intended for the Piccolomini altar, and therefore one of the sculptures executed at this time. (Figure 4-185) In 1500 or early 1501 Piccolomini hired Pietro Torrigiano to sculpt the singular figures, but after completing only a portion of the statue of St. Frances, the artist quit to join the army of Cesare Borgia. If Cesare was taking Piccolomini’s sculptor on campaign, perhaps he offered the Cardinal Michelangelo in exchange.
group in the Cattedrale di San Giovanni Battista in Cesena.\textsuperscript{401} (Figures 4-187, 4-188, 4-189, 4-190) Although he does not specify which group, it is likely Giovanni Battista Bregno’s \textit{Corpus Domini} altarpiece of 1494-1505. (Figure 4-191)

To further support the idea that Michelangelo went to Cesena, Burnett Streeler informs us that the library lecterns, designed by Michelangelo for the Laurentian Library in Florence: “Reproduced, without substantial modification, the Cesena model.”\textsuperscript{402} He is of course referring to the Biblioteca Malatestiana, the famous library in Cesena built by Malatesta Novello around 1450. It is likely that Michelangelo was introduced to the library in the early 1500s, during the same visit in which he made the sketches in the Cathedral, and at the time of Cesare Borgia’s dominance in the city. This in no way guarantees that the two men interacted with each other in Cesena, but could serve as one more fact of support for the supposition that Cesare and Michelangelo had a longer term and more friendly relationship than art historians have previously acknowledged.

The reasons behind Michelangelo’s movements are unknown. It could simply be that the lure of a commission from a prestigious patron like Cardinal Piccolomini was too much to resist so he left his work in Sant’Agostino to other artists, but the network of men involved in aspects of each arena leaves another possibility. If Michelangelo’s panel in Sant’Agostino had been for Bishop Ebu, then it would be quite derelict, although not unheard of, for Piccolomini, as the procurator, to bring him to Siena, knowing that he was abandoning the panel. Perhaps, however, Michelangelo was not working on behalf of the Bishop’s estate, and was, as suggested, working

\textsuperscript{401} Ibid, 34.

for Cesare Borgia who came to an agreement with Piccolomini—an agreement that over the next few years involved Michelangelo, Torriginai, Pinturicchio, and Raphael.

It is well established that Cardinal Piccolomini had a long and high standing relationship in the papal court and with the Borgia family. A little over three years after these artistic commissions, Cesare Borgia would use all of his influence to have Cardinal Piccolomini elected as Pope Pius III. This close network of men would likely have resulted in the type of verbal exchange and arrangement that provides posterity with no tangible evidence, leaving only the circumstantial clues. In addition to Michelangelo’s seemingly rapid and fluid transition to the work in Siena, Pinturicchio’s frescos in the Piccolomini Library, attached to the Siena Cathedral, and directly adjacent to the Piccolomini altar are another hint that Cesare Borgia and Cardinal Piccolomini were trading artists and favors.

**Pinturicchio**

For the argument of Piccolomini and Borgia’s grand exchange, it is important to understand that in the early 1500s Pinturicchio was in the service of Cesare Borgia, but left in 1502, specifically to paint the Sienese cycle. It is implicit in this departure that Cesare let him go, that perhaps Cesare had something to do with arranging the commission in Siena. It also reveals the importance of Renaissance patronage networks. Art historians have long acknowledged the influence of access provided by patrons for artists like Caravaggio, and Cesare Borgia should be afforded the same credit for many of the artists whose biographies he effected.

Pinturicchio had been an artist to the Borgia family since early in Alexander’s papacy. In 1495, Alexander paid Pinturicchio for his work in the Borgia Apartments, in part with gifts,
including two parcels of land and associated favors of tax relief.\textsuperscript{404} The two pieces of land were in Chiusi, a city in the Province of Siena but near Perugia.\textsuperscript{405} In 1498, Alexander confirmed the land to the artist and to his descendents, as well as forgave the annual wax donation.\textsuperscript{406} It can be safely inferred that this favor was associated with his work in the Castel Sant’Angelo.

In October 1500 Pinturicchio wrote to Cesare Borgia asking for the grant of a well to put on this same piece of property.\textsuperscript{407} He went to see Cesare personally, in Diruta, where his army was camped, to ask Cesare’s help in securing the necessary permission. Cesare promptly issued a letter to Alfano Alfani, Vice-Treasurer of Perugia, making the request and stating: “that he had again taken to his service Bernardino Pinturicchio of Perosa, whom he always loved because his talent and gifts; and he desires that in all things he should be considered as ‘one of ours’.”\textsuperscript{408} The revelation that he had again taken Pinturicchio into his service informs us that Pinturicchio had worked for Cesare earlier, most likely in Rome.

\textsuperscript{404} Anna Cavallaro, “La Decorazioni Perdute del Pinturicchio,” \textit{Roma moderna e contemporanea}, (1998), 121. For details on this property see de Roo, \textit{Material for a History of Pope Alexader VI}, IV, 461. The pontiff leased to the artist for a term of 29 years, two tracts of land for a reduced annual rate of 30 bushels of grain. On July 28\textsuperscript{th}, 1497, the rate was further reduced at the request of Pinturicchio, who found the cost to be burdensome, and he was consequently required to remit two pounds of white wax on the Feast of the Assumption.

\textsuperscript{405} Evelyn March Phillipps, \textit{Pinturicchio} (London: George Bell & Sons, 1901), 163.


\textsuperscript{407} Yriarte, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 125.

\textsuperscript{408} Crowe and Cavalcaselle, \textit{A History of Painting in Italy}, 391. Diruta is present day Deruta. Cesare’s initial request to Alfani was not honored so he wrote a second letter on October 20, 1500 reinforcing his desire for the wish to be granted within the year. For the original letter see Reumont, A. von. “Urkundliche Bieträge zur italienischen Kunstgeschichte 2: Schreiben Cesare Borgia’s in Betreff des Bernardino Pinturicchio.” \textit{Deutsches Kunstblatt}. Berlin: Friedrich Eggers, 1850.
It is clear that Cesare continued to recognize Pinturicchio as his courtier and *familiar*.\(^{409}\) In 1501, Pinturicchio was granted an annual payment as Cesare’s personal painter, although it is unknown what came of this tenure.\(^{410}\) Curiously, during this same timeframe, Pinturicchio executed the Baglione Chapel frescos in Santa Maria Maggiore in Spello. The fresco cycle was commissioned by Troilo Baglioni, the papal protonotary who in 1501 was elevated to the Bishop of Perugia. No information is known regarding the circumstances of the commission, but with the close nature of Troilo’s position to the pope and Pinturicchio’s active association with Cesare, it is possible that the Borgia were influential in Baglione’s choice. Lucrezia Borgia has been identified as the figure of the Madonna in both the *Annunciation* and *Adoration*.\(^{411}\) (Figures 4-53, 4-192)

In 1502 Cesare released Pinturicchio from his role as court painter, and on June 29, 1502, the artist signed the contract with Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini, now Archbishop of Siena, for the frescoes in the library.\(^{412}\) Cesare released Pinturicchio so that he could take this commission. With Pinturicchio, when he accepted the job in Siena, came a young but burgeoning artist, Raphael Sanzio.

\(^{409}\) Gregorovius, *History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages*, vo. VII, part 2, 726. Gregorovius says, “Pinturiccho appears to have also worked for Caesar in Rome, and in 1500, after he left he city, he met the pope’s son in Umbria, in another character – as conqueror of the Romagna.”

\(^{410}\) Yriarte, *Cesare Borgia*, 125.

\(^{411}\) Menotti, *I Borgia*, 165.

Raphael

We still know very little about Raphael’s early life. It is generally assumed that he received some of his early training in Perugia, often placed under the tutelage of Perugino, but concrete facts continue to remain elusive. Pinturicchio has also been noted as an importance influence in these formative years; his style is seen in Raphael’s earliest works.

Raphael’s first known painting is the *Saint Nicholas of Tolentino Altarpiece* in Città di Castello, 1500-1501. Vasari wrote that in 1500 Raphael left Perugia to go to Città di Castello to paint an altarpiece, so certainly they are one and the same. Roberto Longhi noted Pinturicchio’s influence already manifested in the altarpiece’s ornament and color. Konrad Oberhuber championed the idea as early as 1977:

Pinturicchio must have been a secondary teacher or mentor to the young Raphael in the years shortly before and after 1500. While all Raphael’s work was even then based on strong Perugino prototypes, and while there can be no doubt that Perugino had given him his basic training, many of the more superficial details and surface treatment come from Pinturicchio.

It is likely that in 1500, Raphael was already a rising star in Pinturicchio’s artistic sphere. Pinturicchio was working in Perugia as well, known by the payment he received in April 1500 for a processional banner for the Confraternità of S. Agostino at Perugia. In October 14, 1500, Cesare spent a few days in Perugia and it is possible that he met both Pinturicchio and Raphael while there.

---


415 Oberhuber, “Raphael and Pinturicchio,” 156.

416 Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *A History of Painting in Italy*, 392. The banner is now in the Communal Gallery at Perugia, the banner shows St. Augustine with three members of the Confraternità.
Raphael’s *Oddi Altarpiece*, intended for the Church of San Francesco al Prato in Perugia, is another early example of Pinturicchio’s strong influence on Raphael’s style. (Figure 4-193) Konrad Oberhuber here likens the predella panel of the *Adoration of the Magi* to Pinturicchio’s Borgia Apartments: “In the decorative richness of the grouping of the figures and in the spatial design.” 417 (Figure 4-194) It has been suggested by Fabrizio Manicelli and Pierluigi De Vecchi that the *Coronation of the Virgin*, the main body panel in the altarpiece, was painted in two distinct phases: the upper in 1501/1502 and the lower in 1503/1504. 418

The reason for the hiatus is not explicitly known but the time frame does correspond to Raphael’s work in Siena, and an Oddi family member’s involvement in the Piccolomini commission suggests that the family willingly let Raphael participate, causing the delay. This is: “Confirmed by documents of June and August 1502…which show that a Francesco degli Oddi, eminent citizen, presented himself on those occasions to a Perugian notary public as a guarantor of Pinturicchio in the negotiations with Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini for the decoration of the library of the Duomo in Siena.” 419 The Oddi family was also a known ally of Cesare Borgia which only increases the depth of the patronage alliance. 420

The Piccolomini Library contract was made specifically with Pinturicchio and stated explicitly that the paintings could be executed exclusively by Pinturicchio and his assistants.


420 Ibid.
From this it can be inferred that Raphael was working for Pinturicchio. Raphael’s contributions to the frescoes can be determined through his beautifully designed *modelli*, housed today in the Uffizi, Oxford, Louvre, and in private collections. (Figures 4-195, 4-196) The contracts also stipulated that the cartoons had to be created by Pinturicchio, so the level of trust and collaborative effort must have been high. Oberhuber calls the library an “intimate collaboration.”

The experience that Raphael had working on the library frescoes was critical to his development and offered him something for which there was no prototype or model in Perugino’s studio. It greatly influenced his later work and designs, particularly the Sistine Tapestries. It was also in Siena that Raphael saw the antique marble sculpture of the Three Graces, installed by Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini in the library before his election on September 22, 1503, that the artist used as the model for his painting *Three Graces*. (Figures 4-197, 4-198) Interestingly, Michelangelo also sketched the Three Graces group. (Figure 4-199)

Although the contract for the altarpiece in the Cathedral of Siena allowed for Michelangelo to work from Florence, it also stipulated that he must go to Siena to see the chapel and to take measurements. It is conceivable that Michelangelo, Raphael, and Pinturicchio were all working in the Cathedral at the same time, and if so, they certainly would have met.

---


423 Ibid, 169.

424 Ibid, 168.


Pinturicchio probably knew Michelangelo from their time in Rome in the 1490s, which makes communication between the artists all the more likely.

Leonardo da Vinci is another artist that Raphael seems to have met or been influenced by during this time. In the lower section of the Oddi Coronation of the Virgin, the section stylistically dated to 1503/1504, the use of chiaroscuro and the introduction of an interest in anatomy, facial expressions, and hand gestures “presuppose an acquaintance with Leonardo.” Raphael also seems to have learned from the way that Leonardo used drawing. John Shearman suggests that Raphael went to Rome in 1502, the year that Pinturicchio signed his contract for the library, and it is possible that he encountered Leonardo during this trip. Raphael might also have met Cesare Borgia in Rome since before Pinturicchio was released in 1502 he was a paid member of Cesare’s court.

In Perugia, Raphael could also have come into contact with Leonardo, whom we know from his notebooks traveled there. Leonardo was working for Cesare when he passed through Perugia, so if either supposition is true, that Raphael met Leonardo in Rome or in Perugia, Cesare is instrumental in Raphael’s having that encounter and internalizing Leonardo’s stylistic influence.

There is a painting that at one time was both attributed to Raphael and titled as a portrait of Cesare Borgia. (Figure 4-200) In 1809 the work was attributed to Raphael on a list of possessions going to Paris alongside their owner Camillo Borghese on the occasion of his marriage to Paulina Bonaparte. When the painting returned to the Galleria Borghese in 1816, it

429 Shepherd, “Raphael’s “Space-Composition,”” 289. This would have been the trip to Rome on which Leonardo sketched the Castel Sant’Angelo and went to Tivoli.
was titled as a portrait of Cesare Borgia. Charles Yriarte has dismissed the identification of the sitter because of the late date of the costume, but retained the authorship. Few scholars today associate either man with the work.

Another painting of an unverifiable attribution, and one of which no other reference or image could be found, is mentioned by Menotti in his book *I Borgia* as having a likeness of Cesare in the face of the main figure. (Figure 4-201) It appears to be a painting of St. Eustace which Menotti labels as by an artist in either Siena or Orvieto, most likely the school or hand of Perugino or Pinturicchio. Both artists worked for the Borgia so the connection any of the three men to the painting is possible. The value of a connection between Cesare and either of these two artists would be important, but the suggestion of Orvieto opens up another possibility; of Signorelli as the painting’s author.

**Signorelli**

During the quattrocento, Orvieto had suffered a decline in population and economic power. However, in the early years of Alexander’s pontificate, Orvieto was loyal to him, and he rewarded them with renovations to the city and increased attention. Part of Alexander’s close interest came in the form of naming Cesare Borgia as protector of Orvieto in 1494 and as Governor and Castellor of the City in 1495. Cesare’s subsequent actions imply that he took his role seriously, punishing the city’s enemies harshly in 1497 and 1500. In gratitude, Orvieto

---

430 Sacerdote, *Cesare Borgia*, 559.


432 Menotti, *I Borgia*, 114. Menotti says that he saw the painting while it was in the possession of Professor Elia Volpi in Florence. This is the only known reference to this work.
remained loyal to the Borgias until their fall. This relationship is manifested in a holy water font given in 1497 to the Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Servi in Orvieto. (Figure 4-202) The work was a joint commission from both Cesare and Alexander, as is evident by depictions of both of their coats of arms.

The connection between the Borgia and Orvieto can also be found in the Duomo di Orvieto. In Alexander’s early communications with Orvieto, while reaffirming his dedication to the reconstruction of the city, he also expressed his specific interest in the Cathedral, eventually having his coat of arms painted on its exterior. It is possible that this specific gesture of affiliation was in consolation for the pope bringing the artist Pinturicchio to Rome, forcing him to abandon his work on Orvieto’s Duomo.

In 1492 Pinturicchio received 50 ducats for work in Orvieto’s Duomo on a now lost fresco cycle. We know that painting had already begun because the cathedral authorities complained about the lavish use of gold and ultramarine. In December of that year he signed an agreement saying that he was not obligated to finish during the time frame stipulated by the original contract; Alexander VI had summoned him to Rome to paint the Borgia Apartments. It seems that the artist must have split his time between the two cities since progress commenced quickly in Rome, but in March of 1493 and March of 1494, Alexander had to write briefs to

433 Riess, *The Renaissance Antichrist*, 11. In another work, Riess suggests that Orvieto’s traditionally strong alliance with the Papacy was strained during the reign of Pope Alexander VI. He does acknowledge that the city remained loyal despite any difficulties. It could be argued that Alexander and Cesare’s significant attention to the city suggests otherwise. Jonathan B. Riess, *Luca Signorelli The San Brizio Chapel, Orvieto* (New York: George Braziller, 1995), 17.


Orvieto asking that Pinturicchio be allowed to come again to the Vatican until his work there was complete.436 Pinturicchio eventually returned to Orvieto in 1496.

As part of Cesare Borgia’s role in Orvieto, he directed the chapter of the cathedral administration in 1495. Of importance here is the fact that the chapter had the right to determine the decoration of the cathedral.437 Cesare likely had a say in Pinturicchio’s continued work and in the long unfinished project in the Duomo’s Chapel of San Brizio. The Chapel of San Brizio (also called the Cappella Nuova) is housed in the right transept arm of the Cathedral and is decorated with frescos on both the ceiling vaults and walls. Although the two areas are distinct in their style, crafted by the hands of different artists, the program is a uniform treatment of eschatology, all things concerned with the end of the mankind and of the world. It is one of the most compelling visualizations of these events painting in the Italian Renaissance. The wall frescos, painted by Luca Signorelli, are the most famous in the space.

Decorations for the Chapel were initiated in 1447. In 1447 Fra Angelico began the project but only worked for a matter of months. In 1449 Benozzo Gozzoli, who had been Angelico’s assistant, worked on the vault, but he too would not see the work finished. In 1482 Piermatteo d’Amelia was given the contract and was documented in Rome buying materials in the early 1490s, but no evidence exists that he ever physically worked in the space. It is possible that he was called to work for the Borgia; he is documented working in the Borgia Apartments, in Cesare Borgia’s apartments in the Apostolic Palace, as well as on the Borgia frescoes in the rocca of Civita Castellana. Cathedral authorities never gave up trying to complete the chapel’s decoration; multiple artists, including Perugino, were considered and eventually Signorelli was

436 Phillips, Pinturicchio, 163.

appointed in 1499. When he recovered the commission, all of the other artist’s paintings on the
vaults of the ceiling were left intact and he began the execution of the wall frescoes.\textsuperscript{438}

Planning for Signorelli’s frescoes is dated to 1499-1501. Antonio degli Albèri was the
archdeacon of the Duomo from 1497-1503 and was directly involved, likely advising the artist’s
content. Albèri was connected to the humanist court in Rome, a circle patronized by Alexander
VI, and was also friends with Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini; Albèri had been Piccolomini’s
mentor at the University of Perugia in 1456. Piccolomini, as previously mentioned, also carried
favor at Alexander’s court, and we know the relationship between him and Cesare was important
enough that Cesare influenced the College of Cardinals to elect him as Pope Pius III in 1503.\textsuperscript{439}
Alexander was certainly already familiar with Signorelli’s work from the artist’s time in the
Sistine Chapel, and his \textit{Madonna della Misericordia tra San Sebastiano e San Bernardino},
painted for the Church of San Francesco in Pienza in 1490.\textsuperscript{440} This series of Borgia alliances
bolsters the idea that Cesare had an influential hand in Signorelli’s selection.

To advance this belief one need look no further than the frescoes themselves, where
portraits of Cesare and some of his lieutenants are painted.\textsuperscript{441} (Figure 4-203) Cesare and
Vitellozzo Vittelli are depicted in the central, foreground group of the \textit{Predicazione e fatti
dell’Anticristo}. (Figure 4-204) Cesare is the figure on the left haloed by a red hat; Vitellozzo is

\textsuperscript{438} Ibid, 3.

\textsuperscript{439} Ibid, 20-22. On page 18 of \textit{Luca Signorelli The San Brizio Chapel, Oriveto} Riess suggests that the Monaldeschi
family, a leading pro-papal family in Orvieto, financed the decoration of the Cappella Nuova and might have also
exercised some influence over the decorative program.

\textsuperscript{440} Signorelli’s only surviving painting in the Sistine Chapel is the \textit{Testament and Death of Moses}. Remember also
that Pienza is the city near Perugia where Alexander VI had built a palace while still a cardinal.

\textsuperscript{441} Riess, \textit{The Renaissance Antichrist}, 70.
the figure in black standing next to him.  Signorelli had already worked for Vitellozzo in Città di Castello in 1492-1496, painting a diptych portrait of him and his father. Andrè Chastel proposed that the Orvieto antichrist was a portrait of Savonarola, perhaps signaling the city’s and artist’s continued allegiance to the Borgia. In another Signorelli painting of 1500, he painted a portrait of himself and in an associated inscription spoke highly of Alexander, so a pattern of positive relationships between them did exist.

The Cappella Nuova is a fresco cycle of marked importance, held as art historically significant as Raphael’s work in the Stanzas and Michelangelo’s in the Sistine Chapel. The association with the Borgia, and specifically of Cesare Borgia, as part of the chapter of the cathedral with such an important piece of Italian Renaissance art has been overlooked. Signorelli was second only to Perugino in importance as a painter in central Italy. Vasari considered his work to be the paramount example in the second period of the development of

---

442 Ibid, 73. Although it can not be confirmed by credible sources, other contemporary figures of importance to the Borgia circle, including Pinturicchio and Francesco Piccolomini, have been suggested as additional portraits in the crowd. The figure in front is said to be a portrait of a young Raphael who was at the time or would shortly begin working with Pinturicchio in Siena. This supports the idea that Raphael was traveling in this group of patrons and artists already. Vasari says that: “Luca drew his own portrait and those of many of his friends: Niccolò, Paolo, and Vitellozzo Vitelli; Giovan Paolo and Orazio Baglioni; and many others whose names are not known.” Lives of the Artists, (1998), 271.

443 Riess, The Renaissance Antichrist, 5. Alexander VI had been one of Savanarola’s main targets for critique during the 1490s, the period of his dominance in Florence. Alexander eventually excommunicated the Dominican friar, clearing the way for the city to hang and burn him on May 23, 1498. In his work The Life and Art of Luca Signorelli (New Haven and New York: Yale University Press, 2012), 181, Tom Henry disagrees with this idea.

444 Ibid, 19.

445 Riess, Luca Signorelli The San Brizio Chapel, Orvieto, 8. Reiss says, “The Cappella Nuova should be seen as no less an achievement than Raphael’s contemporaneous celebration of the sphere of human wisdom pictured in the Vatican Palace (1509-11), and should be seen as pointing toward the heroic ambition of Michelangelo’s only slightly later rendering of the Old Testament in the Sistene Chapel (1508-12).” Vasari’s life of Luca is in keeping with the idea of this cycle and of Signorelli’s importance in art history.
Italian art. Vasari and subsequent art historians have also considered Signorelli’s work in Orvieto to have influenced Michelangelo. If Cesare played a role in the selection of Signorelli, which he likely did, that contribution to the development of renaissance style deserves recognition.

1503 – The Calm Before The Storm

By 1503 not only had Cesare worked with and influenced the lives of some of the most important and revered artists and architects of the Renaissance, he had reached a level of dominance in Italy that seems unrivaled too many of his contemporaries. Machiavelli wrote: “Duke Valentino…exhibits a fortune unheard of, a courage and confidence more than human, believing himself capable of accomplishing whatever he undertakes.” Matarazzo agreed, writing:

He had wonderful good luck; and he had amassed so great treasure and such store of precious goods that all the rest of Italy could not match it; nor yet was there in all Italy a like number of soldiers so well accoutered with horses and cloth of gold; and their number was infinite. And because the Duke was Captain and Gonfaloniere of the Church every lord looked up to him…astrologers and necromancers described him as Filius Fortuna…, the “Son of Fortune.”

---

446 Keith Christiansen, “Liberale da Verona,” in *Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420-1500*, Keith Christiansen, Laurence B. Kanter, Carl Brandon Strehlke (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1988), 340. Vasari said: “Luca Signorelli, an excellent painter…was more famous in his day, and his works were held in higher esteem, than any other previous artist no matter the period…Thus with the end of this man’s life…we bring to an end the second part of these lives, concluding, with Luca as the man who, by means of the fundamentals of design, especially those of his nudes, and by means of his graceful invention and the composition of his scenes, opened the way to the ultimate perfection of art.” Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, (1998), 268, 273.

447 Riess, *The Renaissance Antichrist*, 5. Vasari said, “I am not amazed that Luca’s works were always highly praised by Michelangelo, who, in his own Last Judgement for the [Sistine] chapel, kindly borrowed some of Luca’s inventions, such as angels, demons, the order of the heavens, and other details in which Michelangelo imitated Luca’s approachas, as everyone can see.” *Lives of the Artists*, (1998), 271.

448 Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 212.

449 Matarazzo, *Chronicles of the City of Perugia*, 244-245.
He exhibited a marked break from Alexander’s influence and behaved in increasingly self-serving and self-aggrandizing ways. He spent most of the late winter through summer in Rome preparing for what appears to be another military surge. In February 12, 1503, an order was published stating that the papal cities surrounding Rome were required to contribute a number of men “to assist in the operations of artillery.”450 Large and small cannons were being cast in Cesena and Fermo, presumably preparing for both defense of his holdings and the same impending maneuver. He ordered armor for his soldiers from Brescia including arm and leg pieces of his own design.451 Each man in his service also had a back and breast plate as well as a headpiece, all made of steel.452 Over the plates they continued to wear short jackets in the red and yellow of his livery, elaborated with his devices.453 He staged reviews of his troops in clear view of the populace, riding himself at the head of the parade in full armor, always present in the managed production of spectacle.454

While his forces grew throughout his duchy, Cesare passed time hunting near Rome. He wrote to Isabella d’Este and asked her to send more dogs for his leisure activities.455 Uncharacteristically, in 1503 Cesare also gave to Santa Maria della Consolazione, a hospital in Rome, and the only charitable institution known to have received his support.456 (Figure 4-205) He is given various levels of charitable credit from having founded the hospital itself, to being

---

454 Woodward, *Cesare Borgia*, 323.
455 Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 224. In July and August of 1503 Cesare also tried to get Charlotte, his wife, to come to Italy. Jacopo d’Atri, the Mantuan envoy to the French Court, reported that numerous efforts were made. (293)
456 The hospital of Santa Maria della Consolazione now houses the municipal police, Il Comando del Corpo della P.M.
involved with the merger of three hospitals, and to the construction of a specific area that was
dedicated to women.\footnote{Pietro Pericoli, \textit{L’Ospedale di S. Maria della Consolazione di Rome} (Imola: D’Ignazio Galeati e Figlio, 1879), 56. Pericoli suggests that the hospital existed in a different form prior to Cesare’s involvement. Sacerdote credited Cesare with the founding. (Sacerdote, \textit{Cesare Borgia}, 820-821.)} A plaque placed in 1735 reiterated his involvement and remarked that he
founded the institution to help cure the wounds of sick women.\footnote{Pericoili, \textit{L’Ospedale di S. Maria della Consolazione di Rome}, 57.} In 1795 another inscription
was carved that links Cesare to the room and building dedicated to the care of sick women.\footnote{Ibid, 80.} Pietro Pericoli suggests that Cesare may have constructed a structure near the main building and
converted a space to one specifically for women.\footnote{Ibid, 77.} Because of these discrepancies and the
changes to the building, which now serves the municipal police, the breadth of his physical
contribution is still unknown. Requests to access the interior of the building were not answered,
and no progress has been made towards discovering if anything remains inside that could be of
Cesare’s patronage. Considering the architects who were known to work for him, any discovery
could have important implications outside of understanding Cesare’s art historical significance.
His mother Vannozza has been remembered as a benefactor of this hospital as well.\footnote{Ibid, 56.} In
addition to her economic support, she gave a silver bust of Cesare to Santa Maria della
Consolazione, presumably to commemorate his contributions. Unfortunately it has since
disappeared, likely destroyed in the Sack of Rome in 1527.\footnote{Bradford, \textit{Lucrezia Borgia}, 353.}

All of these calculated preparations for even greater heights, however, came to a dramatic
end in August. On August 5\textsuperscript{th} Alexander VI and Cesare went to a farewell dinner at the country
villa of Adriano da Corneto, celebrating Cesare’s impending departure. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of August both men became gravely ill, most likely from virulent malaria. On August 17<sup>th</sup> the pope died. Unable to control the immediate aftermath of the death of his closest political and economic ally, and because of the dangerous state of his own health, Cesare lost the sure footing on which he had stood for most of his life. Indeed his dramatic fall began as he was carried out of the Vatican on a crimson curtained litter, too weak to move under his own power, an event dramatically visualized in Giuseppe Lorenzo Gatteri’s 1877 painting *Cesare Borgia leaving the Vatican*. (Figure 4-206) As he left Rome he was followed by his personal bodyguards, his favorite charger draped in black velvet embroidered with gold, a show of military force through cavalry and artillery, and a baggage train with hundreds of wagons carrying his belongings.  

Sumptuousness aside, which is no small thing to ignore, the time it would have taken for this parade to pass would impress upon any viewer the extent of his importance, power, and wealth. Within a matter of months however, the perilous reality of his future was evident to Machiavelli, who noted after observing Cesare that: “This Duke little by little is slipping into his grave.”  

This moment marks the transition of Cesare’s position from one of true power to one which would exist in varying stages of strength and desperation. The years before, between 1500 and 1503, saw Cesare’s pinnacle of artistic patronage. His use of spectacular ephemeral events was immense, and his implementation of highly crafted personal imagery and devices was refined. He was involved in the critically important evolution of transitional military fortifications, demonstrated through his association with Forte Sangallo and Forte Nettuno. The artists who were involved or associated with him included many of the most significant working

463 Beuf, *Cesare Borgia*, 324.

at the time, Michelangelo, Leonardo, Pinturicchio, Raphael, Signorelli, and others. This era forms the heart of Cesare’s canonical art historical contributions. What follows is an accounting of the final bread crumbs left by history through which we can further glimpse his artistic patronage and consumption.
Despite his continued critical health, Cesare eventually returned to Rome and controlled the election of his father’s successor, Pope Pius III. Pius, however, survived only a few weeks, and once again Cesare was plunged into a realm of uncertainty. He made a deal with Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, the man who had been his host in Avignon and was an old enemy of the Borgia, that he would use his control in the College of Cardinals to have him elected, in exchange for the retention of his remaining holdings in the Romagna and title as the Captain General of the Papal Army. Cardinal della Rovere agreed and was elected, taking the name Julius II. Machiavelli said that trusting Julius II to be a man of his word was the only mistake he ever saw Cesare make, commenting how far Cesare had strayed from his own guiding principles in believing “that the words of another man are going to be surer than his own have been.”

Cesare suffered the consequences of that mistake when Julius II had him arrested on November 26, 1503, and returned to the Vatican under guard.

Throughout the papacies of Pius III and Julius II, Cesare periodically occupied his apartments in the Vatican. This is an astounding testament to the power that he had and to the fear possessed by both Pius III and Julius II of soliciting his displeasure. He returned to the apartments after Pius III’s election and occupied them until he was asked to leave, due to Pius’s

---

death and to the conclave procedure. After the election of Julius II, Cesare once again took up residence in his suite of rooms, while Julius II lived downstairs in the Borgia Apartments. Shortly after his arrest in early December, on December 20th Cesare’s movements were restricted to the rooms in the Torre Borgia. Although we now associate these rooms with Julius II, the new Pope did not move out of Alexander’s suite downstairs until 1507, when he decided to renovate the rooms, by then long since unoccupied by Cesare.

Although much of what Julius changed in the apartments has obscured and obliterated traces of Cesare, a request that the Pope made during that redecoration project provides us with another important object that had once belonged to Cesare. On December 3, 1507, Julius II wrote a letter to Agapito Geraldini, Cesare’s long time secretary and confidant, asking for a map that was then in Agapito’s possession.

To our dear son and notary Agapito Geraldini: Dear Son, Greetings…We have learned that you have among your possessions a painting [tabella] in which the region of Italy is described; our dear son and architect Bramante, who lays great store by this description, desires to see it so that he might be able to have Italy described in a similar manner in a certain room [cubiculum] of ours. On which account we urge you willingly to send us the painting itself, to be retained for our use, just until Bramante will have made a copy of it. Issued for dispatch at Rome, 3 December 1507, in the fourth year of [our] pontificate.

It was a valuable painted map of Italy that Julius II believed to be important for its singular ability to provide scientific truth and beauty. The map had belonged to Cesare, and B.

---

3 Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 258.
4 Woodward, *Cesare Borgia*, 357.
Feliciangeli speculates that Bramante knew of it from the time he worked for Cesare in the Romagna. Feliciangeli believed that Julius wanted the map so that it could be painted on a wall in his apartments or in the Terza Loggia, but the lack of specifics in the letter makes it impossible to determine with certainty. This does not mean that Bramante was the intended artist; the request came through him because he was in charge of the project to redecorate the rooms that became Julius’s new suite.  

An interesting possibility stems from the fact that the map was likely composed by the cosmographers-miniaturists of the d’Este court in Ferrara. It is possible that Julius was mistaken in the parameters of the map and that it was instead a copy of the highly coveted Cantino Map, a world map that included the new discoveries in the Americas, created for the Duke of Ferrara in November 1502. (Figure 5-1) This map was a closely guarded item, but Cesare’s ties to the court through Lucrezia’s marriage could have given him the necessary access to acquire his own copy. Either way, if it was a map of Italy or a copy of the Cantino map, Cesare was in possession of an important cartographical artwork that future patrons were eager to acquire.

Julius II, along with many others, was actually impatient to get his hands on much of Cesare’s property, and in response Cesare took pains to protect the extraordinary wealth that he possessed. The notations that follow are important because they offer another glimpse into the exceptional wealth of possessions that Cesare had and in what forms he chose to hold that wealth.

---

8 Menotti, I Boriga, 136.
at this stage in his life. Much as it had been his whole life, the most coveted items of his time, objects in precious metals, tapestries, other rich textiles, and furniture were the most abundant.

Cesare sent large amounts of silverware and other objects of virtue to Civita Castellana immediately following his father’s death and his exodus from the Vatican.9 Other baggage trains left for Nepi in September, and things returned to Rome with Cesare in October.10 On October 15th Cesare fled the Vatican for the Castel Sant’Angelo, and many of his enemies, mainly the Orsini, took the opportunity to steal many of his personal possessions.11 Eventually Julius II confiscated most of what remained of Cesare’s belongings in Rome.12

Some of the items that escaped this initial looting were entrusted to Cardinal Remoliens who kept them at his house in Rome. It is known through a letter written by Costabili to Ercole d’Este on May 6, 1507, that when Remoliens died in May 1507, Julius II finally took possession of the twelve chests and over 84 bales which contained rich stuffs, tapestries, carpets, furniture, and statues that had all belonged to Cesare.13

Cesare also commended a number of his belongings to Cardinal Ippolito d’Este of Ferrara, Lucrezia’s brother-in-law. In a letter to Ippolito, Cesare asked about the fate of his belongings, which included weapons, precious stones, and various art works from his residences. Unfortunately, when the treasures were being moved to Ferrara, the Florentines seized them, agreeing to give them back that summer, but only in return for a large ransom.14 The Pope

---

10 Beuf, *Cesare Borgia*, 324, 329.
ordered the Signory to return Cesare’s property to him but they refused.\textsuperscript{15} What eventually happened to it is unknown.

It appears that there was a second shipment headed for Ferrara as well. On December 31, 1503, Duke Ercole d’Este, no doubt working at the behest of his daughter-in-law, wrote to his ambassador in Rome and asked that he take control of a number of chests that belonged to Cesare and to send them to Ferrara marked as the property of Cardinal Ippolito d’Este.\textsuperscript{16} These goods were confiscated on January 2, 1504 in Bologna by Giovanni Bentivoglio, as noted by Bernardino Zambotti in his chronicle of Ferrara, \textit{Diario Ferrarese}.\textsuperscript{17} The baggage was being inspected by customs men for taxable goods when it was opened and Cesare’s belongings were discovered inside. An account given in Fileno dalla Tuata’s chronicle \textit{Istoria di Bologna: orgini – 1521} details the contents.

\begin{quote}
A dì 2 de zenaro 1504 vene nela ghabella de Bologna parichi chariazi con robe del ducha Valentino soto nome del chardenale de Ferara, le quale tute robe funo aperte e portate in chaza de m. Zoane di Bentivoglio, robe tute tolta ala Chiezia, de gran valore, che v’era le infraschrite chose, e prima:

el manto de san Pietro con gran zoglie intorno,
falde fanchali ghorzerino d’oro fino con zoglie asai,
una anchona de Nostra Dona per dare la paxe con zoglie de valore de diezemilia duchati,
uno chamaino grande da portare dinanci al mantelo del papa,
una choraza d’oro tuta fodra de veluto chremezin del papa charicha de zoglie,
one ghato d’oro con li ogni de duo nobilissimi diamanti,
one oficiolo de Nostra Dona con le aleve d’oro chariche de zoglie, //1504//
one tabernacholo d’oro chon li piè de smeraldo,
trenta taçe d’oro fino,
quaranta taçe d’arioento dorato,
ottanta perle de charati 16 in 18 l’una,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15} Gregorivius, \textit{Lucretia Borgia}, 299.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{17} Zambotti, \textit{Diario ferrarese dal 1476 al 1504}, 356.
Clearly a number of the objects are for high religious order and are assumed to be the precious objects stripped from Alexander’s apartments on Cesare’s command, immediately following the Pope’s death. They were ultimately brought to Cesare’s room and mixed with his belongings as we see them packed here.\(^19\) Julius II did ultimately acquire the contents of this find.

When the Rocca di Forlì, Cesare’s last possession in the Romagna, was finally surrendered to Julius II on August 11 1504, Guidobaldo de Montefeltro took the contents of his plundered library back to Urbino and Julius’s agents seized much of the rest.\(^20\) With the total eradication of his duchy, wealth, and splendid household, Cesare’s fall was complete. He was sent to Spain in exile on August 20, 1504, never to return to Italy. He died on March 12, 1507, charging alone onto the field of battle during a regional skirmish in Spain. Lucrezia suspected

---

On January 2, 1504, *vene nela ghabella de Beologna parichi chariazi* with stuffs of the Duc Valentino (Cesare Borgia) under the name of the Cardinal of Ferrara, which all stuffs *funo* opened and brought to the house of M. Zoane di Bentivoglio, stuffs all removed from the Church, of great value, that was *le infraschrite chose*, and first:
*The mantle of Saint Peters with heavy *zoglie* inside
Layers/tails/brim *fianchali ghorzerino* of gold finished with *zoglie asai*,
Una anchona of Our Lady of Peace with *zoglie* worth 10,000
A large *chamaino* to carry in front of the mantle of the pope
A *choraza* of all gold a hat of crimson velvet of the Pope *charicha de zoglie*,
A cat of gold with eyes of two small noble diamonds
An oficiolo of Our Lady with *le aleve* of gold *chariche de zoglie*, //1504//
A tabernacle of gold with feet of emerald
Thirty *taçe* of gold finish,
Founty *taçe* of silver gilt,
Eghty pearls of *charati* 16 and one 18?
A basin of bronze and gold finished de pexo libre 35, which was estimated at 3,000 ducats,
And also many noble tapestries. No one spoke anything at all of a brief which arrived from the Pope and a list of everything which he believes *li fuseno* returned to the Pope.

\(^{19}\) Beuf, *Cesare Borgia*, 312.

\(^{20}\) Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 270.
that he chose to end his life this way—performing his death the way that he had lived life:
magnificently, dressed in armor, and fighting for the acquisition and retention of power.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Here in a little earth
Lies one whom all men feared
One who peace and war
Were held in his hands
Oh, you that goes in search
Of things deserving praise
If you would praise the worthiest
Here let your wanderings end here
Do not trouble to go further

Cesare lived up to Paolo Pompilio’s label as an “ornament”, tirelessly presenting himself as a showpiece for Borgia dominance and eminence. He performed that life through aesthetic display making strong statements about his wealth, power, education, culture, tastes, and physical prowess. The elements that he used in this self-fashioning have been coalesced to establish a general patronage oeuvre, to construct a broad reconsideration of his art historical impact, and to assert the idea that he was an important figure. The great wealth of historical information about him has been viewed in a new context and through new lenses, bringing new perspectives and information to the discourse. The result is an outline of the artists, objects, structures, and events, all products of his patronage or influenced by his far reaching effect. He employed and impacted the careers of some of the most important artists of the time including Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Pinturicchio, Antonio da Sangallo il Vecchio, Signorelli, and Bramante. He was also responsible for an important introduction between

---

1 Translation modified from one given in Sabatini, Cesare Borgia, 448. This was the epitaph carved on Cesare’s monument in Santa Maria Viana that was destroyed some years later. It is documented in Andrè Favyn’s Historie de Navarre.

Aqui yace en poca tierra
Al que toda la temia
El que la paz y la Guerra
En la sua mano tenia
Oh tu que vas a buscar
Cosas dignas de loar
Si tu loas lo mas digno
Aquí pare, tu camino
No cures de mas andar
Leonardo and Machiavelli and possibly for early contact between Pinturicchio, Raphael, and Leonardo. It has been suggested here that Cesare’s influence contributed to important commissions for Pinturicchio (Siena), Michelangelo, (Sant’Agostino, Siena), and Signorelli (Orvieto) as well. This research does not seek to claim that Cesare was a preeminent patron, only that he was an important Renaissance patron who deserves a place in the dialogue.

In addition to the overall folding of Cesare into art historical discourse, new information has also come to light. There are some that bear a broader significance than others. The detection of the star/comet image in the Pax Romana scene on Cesare’s sword brings fresh information to the analysis of the sword and its accompanying scabbard for the first time in decades. When combined with the introduction of the possibility of the hydra playing an important role in Cesare’s use of Julius Caesar’s apotheosis comet as a self-fashioning tool, a completely new avenue through which to approach Cesare’s patronage opens. This analytical perspective also includes a reconsideration of the meaning behind some of Leonardo da Vinci’s devices and Windsor 12492, the image of the wolf and eagle. Leonardo’s altarpiece for the Sanctuary in Piratello has also been re-introduced as an important commission. Although it is currently lost, through this revived recognition, a hope that scholars will bear it in mind while examining existing painting fragments is sparked, and it will perhaps result in a resurrection from obscurity.

The resuscitation of the inventory of Charlotte d’Albret, last published by Bonnaffé in 1878, and last discussed in depth by Miron in 1912, has the promise to enrich the discipline as a whole. It is a critical document for studying Cesare and Charlotte, but even if the interest in them personally is minimal, the value for understanding the Renaissance household is far reaching. Inventories have an important function in helping scholars establish how individuals spent and held their wealth and how the domestic interior was staged. The kinds of objects
listed: paintings, sculpture, decorative textiles, clothing, furniture, functional and collected objects, were very important self-fashioning devices and much can be learned about individual and familial patronage by studying them. The recent publication of the complete 1492 inventory of Lorenzo the Magnificent by Marco Spallanzani and Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà in 1992, and its subsequent translation and publication in English by Richard Stapleford, offers an example of how interesting these kinds of documents can be, providing insight into how objects and art functioned and were placed in the household, helping to illuminate all Renaissance art, particularly pieces whose domestic provenance is known.

The elevated association of Cesare Borgia to both Forte Sangallo and Forte Nettuno is important in acknowledging their place in his patronage but also to our understanding of the two edifices and how they functioned. The English speaking scholastic world has contributed little to our understanding of them, and Cesare’s connection is only briefly mentioned by the important Italian scholars researching these monumentally significant structures. A hope is that the strengthening of this connection will lead to curiosity from scholars who otherwise would have been only peripherally interested or new perspectives for those already engaged.

Some of the main points of new analysis or information that arose out of this investigation will also lead into future research projects. As to the reanimation of the objects listed in Charlotte’s inventory as well as the property confiscated by Pope Julius II and the Bentivoglio, that remains a long-term goal. The digital collections of many major museums have been reviewed, but a deeper examination of the inventories of museums for these objects is the next step. Institutions in France, particularly those related to the royal collection or the disbursement of works taken from Italy after the large scale repatriation in 1816, and in Italy, specifically the Uffizi, possess the most promise. The opportunity to examine objects held by
the Vatican that are not on display in the museum or are otherwise inaccessible could very likely lead to the discovery of property once belonging to Cesare since much was confiscated by the reigning pope. The reclamation of association with an important figure would add significant cultural value to the piece as well as bring a great deal to the small group of extant objects directly related to Cesare.

An examination of the seals still attached to Cesare’s correspondence or held independently could lead to a visualization of the signet ring in the possession of the Hartshorne family in the early 20th century. A concurrent undertaking will certainly be to try and track down the ring itself. Recent attempts to locate living descendents have been unsuccessful, but perhaps additional help from the Royal Society could eventually lead to contact.

Although it is not a direct commission by Cesare, Charlotte d’Albret’s tomb is another area of interest. Miron stated that the tomb at La Motte-Feuilly, commissioned by Louise for her mother, used some of the same symbols as Cesare’s sword. The tomb at La Motte-Feuilly has been photographed and considered without definitive success at identifying any one particular association. The figures of the cardinal virtues that circumvent the base were badly damaged but don’t appear to have any substantial relationship to the images on the sword, nor does the alabaster statue of the Notre Dame of Loretto that stands in a shrine on the wall of the chapel. It is possible that it was instead the tomb in Bourges, which has been completely destroyed, that had Cesare’s iconographic elements. The contract between Louise and Martin Claustre, the sculptor, is housed in the Bibliothèque national de France and its consultation, and perhaps the locating of an old print or drawing that was made before its destruction in 1793 during the French Revolution, could shed some light on this connection. Louise, and her parents’ possible

---

2 Miron, The Derelict Duchess, 330.
association with Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Unicorn Tapestries is a proposition worth exploring further, and the opportunity to delve deeper into the theory, looking to their staff for guidance, would be welcomed.

On a much smaller scale, a return to the sketches on 88v of Uberti’s *Opera D.I.2.*, could lead to an exciting association with an artist like those proposed: Leonardo da Vinci, Pinturicchio, Piermatteo d’Amelia, or another yet unidentified artist. This and many of the other future projects would undoubtedly benefit from a collaborative analysis by other scholars who specialize in some of these artists and have a much greater depth of knowledge than what was able to be examined during the course of this research. Carlo Pedretti is at the forefront of that list, knowing that his invaluable command of material on Leonardo could help to support or disprove some of the assertions put forth here. Anna Cavallo, a scholar at the Sapienza at the Università di Roma, who works on the architecture of the Borgia and the Palazzo dei Penitenzieri, would be helpful for any continued research on Civita Castellana and Forte Nettuno, as well as the examination of the interior of the Penitenzieri for the improbable possibility that there are remains of Cesare’s patronage and tenure there.

Daniele Diotallevi offered a tantalizing possibility when he opened a 2003 conference presentation with an apology for not being able to provide details or images of an *archibugio*, a type of firearm, which tradition and iconographic comparison suggests was once owned by Cesare. Daniele had seen it and described it simply as being decorated by two ivory medallions, one on each side, which held portraits of Cesare and Lucrezia. The collector who owned the piece wished for it to remain private, so Diotallevi was not able to provide anything more.³ This is perhaps the most promising lead for a collaboration that could lead to new discoveries. The

---
³ Diotallevi, “Arte e Armi per Cesare,” 427.
choice to personalize his weapons with the two portraits is revealing of the very close place Cesare held for his sister, and any additional decoration could be connected to larger patronage goals.

Through the specific analysis of Cesare Borgia and how he used visual manifestations, both tangible and ephemeral, our overall understanding of how the Renaissance patron worked within the framework of the time period is enriched. It reminds us of the performative nature of their lives and how that performance itself, as well as its individual self-fashioning elements of paintings, sculpture, architecture, costumes and other textiles, spectacle, and objects of virtue was crafted. Those objects (again ephemeral events included in the term), discussed extensively in the introduction, and whose presence in the discipline is embryonic, enrich our understanding of the canonical triad as well as possess their own art historical value. All of the elements should be viewed together when examining a patron’s purpose and the artist’s way of addressing that objective. When art is properly viewed as a communicative medium, the interpretive possibilities of individual pieces are expanded, and the collaborative nature of some commissions can be fully appreciated. Cesare was at times the patron, possibly the co-designer/artist, and the performer. The way that he interacted with the artists that worked for and with him helps us to understand the dynamic at play between the Renaissance artist and patron, softening the hard categorical edges between these roles.

Paolo Giovio, the 15th century biographer and historian, wrote of Cesare that “he regarded his public honour more than his private interest.”4 That consideration was made manifest in the art that Cesare commissioned and used to ensure that his public reputation was intact. Art was never made for self alone, but was also used as a tool to project a powerful and convincing

---

presentation to others. Speaking in reference to the swift and calculated murder of his condottiere in Sinigallia, Giovio wrote another phrase no less fitting of Cesare’s adeptness at display, calling it “a most beautiful deception.”

---

5Ibid, 207.
FIGURES

Figure 1-1. Altobello Melone. *Portrait of a Gentleman* (Possibly Cesare Borgia), c.1513. Oil on panel. Accademia Carrara, Bergamo. Artstor.


Figure 1-6. Agostino Carracci. Third Intermezzo for La Pellegrina, 1589. Engraving. Artstor.

Figure 2-1. Sandro Botticelli. *Punishment of Korah*, 1481-82. Fresco. Sistine Chapel, Vatican. Artstor.

Figure 2-2. Sandro Botticelli. *Punishment of Korah*, detail, 1481-82. Fresco. Sistine Chapel, Vatican City. Artstor.

Figure 2-3. Adalbert Gerson. Nicolas Copernicus explaining his planetary system to Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia) and the artists of the Papal court. Photomechanical reproduction of a wood engraving by [W.G.] after A. Gerson. Wellcome Library, London. (Key reads: Castiglione, Perugino, Bembo, Domenico Maria, Micholozzi, Alessandro VI, M.A. Buonarotti, Cesare Borgia, Leonardo da Vinci, Copernico, Fracastoro, Bramante).

Figure 2-4. Pinturicchio. *Disputation*, 1492-94. Fresco. Borgia Apartments, Vatican City. Author’s photo.

Figure 2-5. Cappella Sistina Ms. 41, fol. 39r, detail, late 15th century. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City. Image taken from “Josequen Desprez and a Possible Portrait of the Ottoman Prince Jem in Cappella Sistina Ms. 41” by Dawson Kiang.

Figure 2-6. Map of the Borgia Apartments, Lower floor of Apostolic Palace, Vatican City.

Figure 2-7. Map of the Raphael Rooms, Upper floor of the Apostolic Palace, Vatican City. 1. Sala Sobieski, 2. Sala dell’Immacolata.
Figure 2-8. Giulio Romano. Stairwell of Clement VII, c.1525. Castel Sant’Angelo, Rome. Author’s photo.

Figure 2-9. Sala dei Misteri. Borgia Apartments, Apostolic Palace, Vatican City. Artstor.

Figure 2-10. Sala dei Santi. Borgia Apartments, Apostolic Palace, Vatican City. Artstor.

Figure 2-11. Pinturicchio. Disputation, detail, 1492-1495. Fresco. Sala dei Santi, Borgia Apartments, Vatican City. Artstor.

Figure 2-12. Pinturicchio. Disputation, detail, 1492-1495. Fresco. Sala dei Santi, Borgia Apartments, Vatican City. Artstor.

Figure 2-13. Pinturicchio. Altarpiece of Santa Maria dei Fossi, detail, 1496. Oil on wood and canvas. Galleria nazionale dell’Umbria, Perugia.


Figure 2-15. Ceiling of the Stanza della Segnatura. Fresco. Apostolic Palace, Vatican City. Author’s photo.

Figure 2-16. Ceiling of the Stanza di Eliodoro. Fresco. Apostolic Palace, Vatican City. Author’s photo.

Figure 2-17. Santa Francesca Romana, begun 10th-century, restored 1615. Rome. Artstor.

Figure 2-18. Liberale da Verona or Girolamo da Cermona. Madonna con Bambino in trono tra san Benedetto e santa Francesca Romana, late 15th century. Painting on panel. Santa Francesca Romana, Rome. For image see Olevetani, Basilica di Santa Maria Nova: Santa Francesca Romana al Foro Romano.

Figure 2-19. Joseph Grünpeck. Tractatus de Pestilentiali Scorra Siva Mala de Francos, title page, 1496.

Figure 3-1. Jean Perréal. Louis XII, detail, c.1514. Royal Library, Windsor Castle. Artstor.

Figure 3-2. Italian, Cassone, c.1425-1450. Pinewood and poplar, gesso, partly gilded, form molded, and painted. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection.

Figure 3-3. Italian, Pomander, c.1350. Partially gilded silver, niello. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Figure 3-4. Martin Claustre. Tomb of Charlotte d’Albret, c.1521. Marble and alabaster. La Motte-Feuilly, France. Author’s photo.

Figure 3-5. South Netherlandish, The Unicorn is Found, from the Unicorn Tapestries, 1495-1505. Wool warp, wool, silk, silver, and gilt wefts. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Artstor.


Figure 3-8. Family tree tracing the genealogy from Marguerite de La Rochefoucauld to Françoise VI de La Rochefoucauld. Created by the author and David Newell.

Figure 4-1. Monogram from the sword of Cesare Borgia, c.1500. Fondazione Camillo Caetani, Rome. Image taken from Sarah Bradford, *Cesare Borgia*, 78.

Figure 4-2. Leonardo da Vinci. Windsor 12351, detail, c.1492-4. Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Figure 4-3. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus 20 v_b, detail. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-4. Image of Cesare Borgia. Image taken from *The Heroicall Devises of M. Claudius Paradin* (1591), the English translation of *Symbola heroic*. 

Figure 4-5. Andrea Mantegna. *Triumphs of Caesar*, Bearers of Trophies, c.1486-92. Artstor.

Figure 4-6. Andrea Mantagna. *Triumphs of Caesar*, Elephants and Sacrificial Animals, c.1486-92. Artstor.

Figure 4-7. Andrea Mantegna. *Triumphs of Caesar*, Triumphator, Caesar, Chariot, c.1486-92. Artstor.

Figure 4-8. Andrea Mantegna. *Triumphs of Caesar*, Trumpeters, Bearers of Standards and Banners, c.1486-92. Artstor.


Figure 4-10. Bartolomeo Campi. Roman-style armor of Guidobaldo II della Rovere, 1546. Real Armario, Madrid. For image see Marina Belozerskaya, *Luxury Arts of the Renaissance*, 160.

Figure 4-11. The sword of Cesare Borgia, c.1500. Fondazione Camillo Caetani, Rome. Image taken from *Argentieri Gemmari e Orafi d’Italia*.

Figure 4-12. The sword of Cesare Borgia, detail, c.1500. Fondazione Camillo Caetani. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-13. The sword of Cesare Borgia, detail, c.1500. Fondazione Camillo Caetani. Author’s photo.
Figure 4-14. The sword of Cesare Borgia, detail, c. 1500. Fondazione Camillo Caetani. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-15. Drawing of a decorative band made from the sword of Cesare Borgia. Image taken from Sarah Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 79.

Figure 4-16. Drawing of the scene of the Worship of the Bull made from the sword of Cesare Borgia. Image taken from Sarah Bradford, Cesare Borgia, 78.

Figure 4-17. Drawing of the scene of The Crossing of the Rubicon made from the sword of Cesare Borgia. Image taken from Charles Yriarte, Autour des Borgia, 172.

Figure 4-18. Jean Fouquet. Caesar Crossing the Rubicon, c. 1470. Louvre, France.

Figure 4-19. Drawing of the scene of the Worship of Love made from the sword of Cesare Borgia. Image taken from Charles Yriarte, “Les Graveur d’Epees de Cesar Borgia,” 166.

Figure 4-20. Drawing of the scene of the Triumph of Caesar taken from the sword of Cesare Borgia. Image taken from Charles Yriarte, Autour des Borgia, 176.


Figure 4-22. Drawing of the Pax Romana made from the sword of Cesare Borgia. Image taken from Charles Yriarte, “Les Graveur d’Epees de Cesar Borgia,” 169.

Figure 4-23. Scabbard to the sword of Cesare Borgia, c. 1498. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Image taken from I Borgia, 193.

Figure 4-24. Photo of the Pax Romana scene on the sword of Cesare Borgia, detail, c. 1500. Fondazione Camillo Caetani, Rome. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-25. Path of Julius Caesar’s Apotheosis comet. Chart taken from John T. Ramsey and A. Lewis Licht, The Comet of 44 B.C. and Caesar’s Funeral Games, 88.

Figure 4-26. Heraldic seal of Cesare Borgia. Archivio di Stato di Fano, Archivio Storico Comunale. Image taken from Falcioni, “Il Domino di Cesare Borgia a Fano,” 207.

Figure 4-27. Heraldic seal of Cesare Borgia, from a letter dated July 17, 1503. Private collection. Image taken from Cat. 23, Les Borgia et leur Temps, 98.

Figure 4-28. Heraldic seal of Cesare Borgia, Rimini. Image taken from Charles Yriarte, Autour des Borgia, 13.

Figure 4-29. Leonardo da Vinci, Windsor 12329, detail. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.
Figure 4-30. Giambattista Cantalicio, *Spetacula Lucretiana*, fol. 2r, 1502. Biblioteca Valenciana, Valencia.

Figure 4-31. Il Romanino. Fresco from Castello di Malpaga, c.1535. Image taken from Polli, *Il Castello del Colleoni a Malpaga e i suoi affreschi*.

Figure 4-32. Il Romanino. Fresco from Castello di Malpaga, detail, c.1535. Image taken from Polli, *Il Castello del Colleoni a Malpaga e i suoi affreschi*.

Figure 4-33. Antonio da Sangallo il Vecchio. Forte Sangallo. Civita Castellana, Italy. Artstor.

Figure 4-34. Coat of arms, Forte Sangallo, c.1500-1503. Civita Castellana. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-35. Portico fresco, Forte Sangallo, detail, 1500-1503. Civita Castellana. Artstor.

Figure 4-36. Portico fresco, Forte Sangallo, detail, 1500-1503. Civita Castellana. Artstor.

Figure 4-37. Portico fresco, Forte Sangallo, detail, 1500-1503. Civita Castellana. Artstor.

Figure 4-38. Portico fresco, Forte Sangallo, detail, 1500-1503. Civita Castellana. Artstor.

Figure 4-39. Portico fresco, Forte Sangallo, detail, 1500-1503. Civita Castellana. Artstor.

Figure 4-40. Portico, Forte Sangallo, detail, 1500-1503. Civita Castellana. Artstor.

Figure 4-41. Bust of Salvator Mundi, beginning of the 16th-century. Forte Sangallo, Civita Castellana. Image taken from Mario Menotti, *I Borgia: Storia e Iconografia*, 110.

Figure 4-42. Bust of Salvator Mundi, end of the 15th-century. Palazzo San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-43. Forte Nettuno. Nettuno, Italy. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-44. Official signage inside Forte Nettuno. Nettuno. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-45. Official signage inside Forte Nettuno. Nettuno. Author’s photo.


Figure 4-47. Palazzo Malatesta Novello, Cesena, Italy. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-48. Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, Cesena, Italy. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-49. Biblioteca Malatestiana, 16th window sill on the right. Cesena, Italy. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-50. Main gate of Rocca Malatestiana, Cesena, Italy. Author’s photo.
Figure 4-51. Francesco Uberti, *Opera*, D.I.2, fol. 61v. Biblioteca Malatestiana, Cesena.

Figure 4-52. Francesco Uberti, *Opera*, D.I.2., fol. 88v. Biblioteca Malatestiana, Cesena.

Figure 4-53. Pinturicchio. *Annunciation*, c.1500-1501. Santa Maria Maggiore, Baglione Chapel, Spello. Artstor.

Figure 4-54. Pinturicchio. *Annunciation*, detail, c.1492-1495. Sala dei Misteri, Borgia Apartments, Apostolic Palace, Vatican City. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-55. Leonardo da Vinci. *Annunciation*, c.1472-1475. Artstor.

Figure 4-56. Piermatteo d’Amelia. *Annunciation*, c.1475. Isabella Steward Gardner Museum, Boston. © Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA, USA / Bridgeman Images.

Figure 4-57. Former throne room, Rocca Malatestiana, Cesena. Author’s photo.


Figure 4-59. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 36r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-60. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 36r, detail. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-61. Michael Foresius (scribe) and Giulinao Amadei (illuminator). *Archimedes*, Urb.lat.261. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Image taken from Saint Louis University Library.

Figures 4-62. Muses from the South Theater (Odeum), Hadrian’s Villa, Tivoli. Images taken from the Digital Hadrian’s Villa Project.

Figure 4-63. Leonardo da Vinci. *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and the Infant Saint John the Baptist* (‘The Burlington House Cartoon’), c.1499-1500. Artstor.

Figure 4-64. Bramantino. Drawing of Teatro Maritimo at Hadrian’s Villa, copied from Leonardo da Vinci. Image taken from Giuseppe Mongeri, *Le Rovine di Roma al Principio del secolo xvi. Studi del Bramantino*, 57.

Figure 4-65. Pumpkin vault in the Canopus at Hadrian’s Villa, Tivoli. 120-130 AD. Artstor.


Figure 4-68. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 38r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.
Figure 4-69. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 74v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-70. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 75r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-71. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 78v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-72. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 79r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-73. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 40r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-74. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 73v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-75. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 74r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-76. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 19v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-77. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 20r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-78. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 33v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-79. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 41r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-80. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 45r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-81. Bombard design, Rocca Malatestiana, Cesena. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-82. Bombard design, Rocca Malatestiana, Cesena. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-83. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 15v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-84. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 46r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-85. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 51v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.
Figure 4-86. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 50v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-87. Ramp to Rocca Malatestiana, Cesena. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-88. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 115v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-89. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 125v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-90. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 779v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-91. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 942v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-92. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 117r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-93. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 36v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-94. Photographs of inside wall of Rocca Malatestiana, Cesena. Image taken from Pino Montalti, “Feritoie, balestriere, cannoniere”, 63.

Figure 4-95. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 45v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-96. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 44v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-97. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 9r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-98. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 9v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-99. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 10r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-100. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 72r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-101. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript K, fol. 2r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-102. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 82r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.
Figure 4-103. Manuscript image of the cloisters of the Basilica Santa Maria del Monte, Cesena, detail. Image taken from Anna Maria Baratelli, “Le Girelle”, 91.

Figure 4-104. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 77r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-105. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 46v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-106. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 47r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-107. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 86v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-108. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 81v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-109. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 71v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-110. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 1 v a. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-111. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 1 v b. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-112. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 164r a. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-113. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 213r b. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-114. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 331r a. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-115. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 331r b. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-116. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 331v a. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-117. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 331v b. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-118. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 344r a. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.
Figure 4-119. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 368r c. d. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-120. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 368v c. d. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-121. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 370r b. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-122. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 388r a. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-123. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Arundel, fol. 127r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-124. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Arundel, fol. 207r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-125. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 67r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-126. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 66v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-127. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 68r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-128. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 47v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-129. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 132r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-130. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 133r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-131. Rocca Sforzesca, Imola. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-132. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 29r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-133. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 88v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-134. Leonardo da Vinci. Windsor 12686r. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Figure 4-135. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 63r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.
Figure 4-136. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 64r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-137. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 52r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-138. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 121v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-139. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 7v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-140. Rocca Sforzesca, Imola, detail. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-141. The Rocca of Imola in 1499. Image taken from La Rocca 2: Architettura e storia dell’edificio, 154.

Figure 4-142. Leonardo da Vinci. Map of Imola, Windsor 12284. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Figure 4-143. Leonardo da Vinci. Map of Imola, Windsor 12284, detail of the Rocca Sforzesca. Image taken from La Rocca 2: Architettura e storia dell’edificio, 85.

Figure 4-144. Leonardo da Vinci. Val di Chiana, Windsor 12277. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Figure 4-145. Leonardo da Vinci. Windsor 12278. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Figure 4-146. Leonardo da Vinci. Windsor 12682. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Figure 4-147. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 336r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.


Figure 4-149. Map of Flaminia. Gallery of Maps, Apostolic Palace, Vatican City. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-150. Map of Flaminia, detail. Gallery of Maps, Apostolic Palace, Vatican City. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-151. Decretum Rubiconis, Museo Archeologica, Cesena. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-152. Map of Cesare Borgia’s route to Rome from Sinigallia. See Bradford, Cesare Borgia for the original map.
Figure 4-153. Map of Ancient Rome.

Figure 4-154. Leonardo da Vinci. Windsor 12700. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Figure 4-155. Leonardo da Vinci. Windsor 12282r. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Figure 4-156. Leonardo da Vinci. Windsor 12282v. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Figure 4-157. Leonardo da Vinci. Windsor 12701. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Figure 4-158. Leonardo da Vinci. Windsor 12496. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Figure 4-159. Leonardo da Vinci. Codex Atlanticus, fol. 20 v_b. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-160. Medal of Cesare Borgia. Image taken from Gustavo Sacerdote, Cesare Borgia, 831.

Figure 4-161. Pinturicchio. Allegory of Fortune, 1503. Floor mosaic, Siena Cathedral, Siena.

Figure 4-162. Shrine of Our Lady of Piratello, Piratello. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-163. Coat of arms of Cesare Borgia on the exterior wall of the Shrine of Our Lady of Piratello, Piratello. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-164. Coat of arms of Cesare Borgia on exterior porch, Shrine of Our Lady of Piratello, Piratello. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-165. Dosso Dossi. Portrait of a Man, c.1517-19. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm. Image taken from Dosso Dossi: Court Painter in Renaissance Ferrara, 233.

Figure 4-166. Chateau, La Motte-Feuilly. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-167. E-J Dequevauviller. Le Duc Valentin, by Antonio Corregio. Image taken from Dosso Dossi: Court Painter in Renaissance Ferrara, 232.

Figure 4-168. Leonardo da Vinci. Three Views of a Bearded Man, 1502. Biblioteca Reale, Turin.

Figure 4-169. Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript L, fol. 2r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.
Figure 4-170.  Leonardo da Vinci.  Manuscript L, fol. 3v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-171.  Leonardo da Vinci.  Manuscript L, fol. 4r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-172. Leonardo da Vinci.  Manuscript L, fol. 3r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-173.  Andrea Mantegna.  Madonna della Vittoria, 1496. Louvre, Paris.  Artstor.

Figure 4-174.  Information about Valentina, Comune di Imola RUE, Tomo III – Allegato 4/1, 219.

Figure 4-175.  Information about Valentina, Comune di Imola RUE, Tomo III – Allegato 4/1, 220.

Figure 4-176. Photograph of ruins of Valentina.  Piratello.  Image taken from Gustavo Sacerdote, Cesare Borgia, 822.

Figure 4-177.  Photograph of ruins of Valentina.  Piratello.  Image taken from Charles Yriarte, Autour des Borgia, 23.

Figure 4-178.  Leonardo da Vinci.  Manuscript L, fol. 94v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-179.  Leonardo da Vinci.  Manuscript L, fol. 66r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-180.  Leonardo da Vinci.  Manuscript L, fol. 34v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-181.  Leonardo da Vinci.  Manuscript L, fol. 35r. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-182.  Leonardo da Vinci.  Manuscript L, fol. 35v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.

Figure 4-183.  Leonardo da Vinci.  Manuscript L, fol. 25v. Image taken from the Biblioteca Leonardiana History of Science and Technology Digital Archive.


Figure 4-185.  Andrea Bregno.  Piccolomini Altar, 1503. Siena Cathedral, Siena.  Artstor.

Figure 4-186.  Michelangelo.  Bruges Madonna, c.1501. Church of Our Lady, Bruges.  Artstor.


Figure 4-191. Giovanni Battista Bregno. Corpus Domini Altarpiece, 1494-1505. Cattedrale di San Giovanni Battista, Cesena. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-192. Pinturicchio. *Adoration of the Magi*, 1501. Baglione Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Spello. Artstor.


Figure 4-196 Raphael. Modello for *Enea Silvio on the Way to the Council of Basel*, c.1502-1503. Uffizi, Florence.

Figure 4-197. Ancient Roman copy of a Greek original, *Three Graces*. Piccolomini Library, Siena Cathedral, Siena.


Figure 4-200. Unknown. *Portrait of a Young Man*, date unknown. Castello di Miramare, Trieste. © The Art Archive/Alamy.
Figure 4-201. Umbrian School. *Saint Eustace* (Presumed portrait of Cesare Borgia), date unknown. Image taken from Mario Menotti, *I Borgia*, 113.

Figure 4-202. Holy water Font, Santa Maria dei Servi, Oriveto, c.1497. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-203. Luca Signorelli. *Preaching of the Anti-Christ*, San Brizio Chapel, Cathedral of Orvieto, 1499-1502.

Figure 4-204. Luca Signorelli. *Preaching of the Anti-Christ*, detail, San Brizio Chapel, Cathedral of Orvieto, 1499-1502.

Figure 4-205. Headquarters of Il Comando del Corpo della P.M, Formerly L’Ospedale Santa Maria della Consolazione. Author’s photo.

Figure 4-206. Giuseppe Lorenzo Gatteri. *Cesare Borgia Leaving the Vatican*, 1877.

Figure 5-1. Alberto Cantino. The “Cantino” World Map, 1502. Biblioteca Estense, Modena. Artstor.
LIST OF REFERENCES


Grazia Blasio, Maria. “Retorica della scena: l’elezione di Alessandro VI nel resoconto di
Michele Ferno.” In Principato ecclesiastico e riuso dei classici Gli umanisti e Alessandro
VI, Atti del convegno di Bari-Monte S. Angelo (22-24 maggio 2000), edited by D. Canfora,

Greenblatt, Stephen. Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare. Chicago and

Gregorovius, Ferdinand. History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages. Translated by Annie

———. Lucreta Borgia, according to original documents and correspondence of her day.


Guicciardini, Francesco. The History of Italy. Translated by Sidney Alexander. Princeton:

Magazine For Collectors, Notes and Queries 18 (May-August 1907), 59.


Hayes, Antoinette N. and Stephen G. Gilbert. “Historical milestones and discoveries that shaped
the toxicology sciences.” In Molecular, Clinical and Environmental Toxicology Volume 1:
Molecular Toxicology, edited by Andreas Luch, 1-36. Berlin: Die Deutsche Bibliotheek,
2009.

Hayward, John F. “The Revival of Roman Armour in the Renaissance: The Endeavours at Re-
Creating the Pomp of the Caesars for the Princes of the Cinquecento.” In Art, Arms, and
Armour: An International Anthology. Edited by Robert Held, 144-163 Chiasso:

Brill NV, 2013.

Henry, Tom. The Life and Art of Luca Signorelli. New Haven and New York: Yale University


Hibbert, Christopher. The Borgias and Their Enemies 1431-1519. Orlando: Harcourt, Inc.,
2008.

270


Menotti, Mario. Documenti Inediti sulla Famiglia e la Corte di Alessandro VI. Roma: Tipografia dell’Unione Editrice, 1917.


Tomasi, Tomaso. La vita del duca Valentino. Monte Chiaro: Gio Bapt Lucio Vero, 1655.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Elizabeth Bemis received her BA in art history from Oglethorpe University and her MA in art history from the University of Florida, where she worked under Dr. Elizabeth Ross. She was a Visiting Instructor at Flagler College before returning to the University of Florida to begin the Ph.D. program. While at the University she was a Grinter Fellow and received the James J. Rizzi Scholarship. Additionally, Ms. Bemis was awarded numerous travel awards and grants to support her research. Her research interests include Italian Renaissance art; the material culture of the Italian Renaissance courts; self-fashioning; and the importance of performance and spectacle in Renaissance visual culture. She received his Ph.D. from the University of Florida in the spring of 2015. Her work has been acknowledged by the Fondazione Camillo Caetani in Rome and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.