Lorenzo *il Magnifico*’s Façade for the Cathedral of Florence and Michelangelo’s *Apostle* Statues, with an Addendum on the *St. Matthew* in 1515

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For Alessandro

1. The Commission: Reading Between the Lines

Michelangelo received the commission to carve twelve over life-sized *Apostles* for the Cathedral of Florence on April 24th, 1503. The statues were to replace paintings in Santa Maria del Fiore, or to be installed elsewhere according to the judgment of the Consuls of the *Arte della Lana* and the Cathedral *Opera*.¹ The paintings that are so cryptically referred to are the *Apostles with the Crosses of the Consecration* that were painted in 1436 at the bottom of the colossal pilasters covering the eight narrower sides of the four great crossing piers, and in the center of the aisle-walls in the first and third bays (fig.1).² The break down of Michelangelo’s cycle into one group of four statues placed against walls in the aisles and a second group of eight statues placed against pilasters

¹ “Statuas duodecim apostolorum [...] ponendorum in dicta ecclesia in loco picturarum que in presenti sunt in dicta ecclesia, vel alibi ubi videbitur et placebit et [blank] et commodius prefatis Consulibus et Operariis pro tempore existentibus.” For the most recent transcription of Michelangelo’s lengthy contract for twelve Apostle statues, see Bardeschi Ciulich 2005, 18-21, no. VIII. For a discussion of the contract, see Amy 1997, 111-134. For the Cathedral Board of Works and its relationship to the Wool Guild, see Haines 1994, 71-83; Haines 1996, 267-294; and the bibliography cited in Keizer 2008, 664, nt. 6. The ideas that are presented below were first outlined in Amy 1997, and subsequently at the Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America (Los Angeles, CA), in March 1999, and the Twelfth New College Conference on Medieval-Renaissance Studies, at New College of the University of South Florida, in March of 2000. I should like to thank Professors Andrew Morrogh and Marvin Trachtenberg for allowing me to use photographs they own.

² For the pre-existing paintings that are so vaguely referred to in Michelangelo’s contract, see Amy 1998, 176-189.
at the crossing could not be helped, for no twelve identical areas could be found where monumental statuary could be displayed inside the church. The fact that Santa Maria del Fiore has non-classical forms and proportions presented an additional challenge. These are the more obvious reasons why permission to designate an alternative location for the statues was duly recorded in the contract.³ Later documents allude to the problems that were confronted when plans were underway to install the 16th century Apostle statues – not one of which was carved by Michelangelo – in the Trecento interior.⁴

Significantly, the preliminary draft of Michelangelo’s Apostle contract states that the statues were to be installed in the church of Santa Maria del Fiore, or elsewhere, where they can be more appropriately placed.⁵

³ See Amy 2001, 157, nt. 21. The statues were not intended for the twelve radiating side chapels – most of which were dedicated to individual Apostles – for the chapels are not mentioned in the documents or literary sources, and we know that the records of the Opera del Duomo are often quite specific when work was planned for those locations inside the church (when I speak of side chapels, I am referring to the two chapels at either side of the central chapel in each of the three colossal tribunes, fig. 1). Also, statues four and one quarter braccia – or two and a half meters – high would be too wide to be placed with their supporting architecture in front of the twelve merging pilasters at the entrances to the chapels of the east end (fig. 1). For Alberti’s advice on how sculpture should be integrated with architecture, see Alberti 1998, 156, 194, 240-244, 293, 309-310, 312-314; and Amy 1997, 212-230. Significantly, Alberti does not provide guidance for the decoration of pre-existing, non-classicizing edifices.

⁴ Amy 1997, 68-70, and 292-301; and Amy 2001, 156-159.

⁵ “Da porsi in decta chiesa di Santa Maria del Fiore o altrove, dove parrà e piacerà expediente et più comodo a’ prefati Consoli et Operai, per il tempo existente”. This document, first transcribed in Amy 1997, 617-618, no. 1, was recently published in Bardeschi Ciuliich 2005, 22-23, no. IX. It is drawn up in Italian, instead of Latin, and was therefore presumably composed by a Cathedral Operaio. The archivist of the Opera del Duomo Lorenzo Fabbri kindly informed me sixteen years ago that this document is not drawn up in a notarial hand. Wallace tells us that: “Michelangelo always demanded vernacular versions of contracts drawn up in Latin, and he signed and relied upon the former” (Wallace 2010, 41). Frey, who published a reference to this document, called it: “Eine Vulgarisation des Kontraktes”, see Frey 1909, 109. This document was overlooked by later scholars, most likely because it was added at an unknown date in the 19th or 20th century at the back of the Libro di allogiagione covering the years 1438-1475. The draft for Ghiberti’s contract for the Shrine of St. Zenobius that precedes the
No mention is made here of paintings that are to be replaced by sculpture, and elsewhere than inside the church must obviously be on the exterior of the Cathedral. Significantly, a new façade would constitute the only suitable location for the installation of a cycle of twelve statues circa 250 centimeters tall on the exterior of the basilica.⁶ Such a façade, erected in the most up to date style, would replace the two-centuries-old façade that was begun in the Gothic idiom, was left two-thirds unfinished and was condemned by some of the leading citizens of Florence as being ill-proportioned and thus unacceptable.

So, one might ask oneself, why not state outright that Michelangelo’s Apostle statues could be installed alternatively on a new façade for the Cathedral, should one be erected over the coming years to receive such

document that interests us, was found in 1844 at the Uffizi and bound into this Libro di allogazione in 1850, during Cesare Guasti’s administration of the Opera archive, as Guasti’s note prefacing Ghiberti’s document tells us. The fact that no such note precedes the document that interests us may indicate that it was discovered later, during the tenure of a less scrupulous archivist. The later document’s provenance is unknown. It was bound in the present volume because there was no Libro di allogazione for the beginning of the 16th century. The draft of the contract for the Shrine of St. Zenobius, which has far more emendations than the later document, is likewise written in Italian. The reason why I believe that the document of 1503 is a preliminary draft for Michelangelo’s Apostle contract and not a synthesis of it, is that important material contained in the (Latin) contract of April 24th is missing from the document that was composed in Italian. For example, the latter fails to name both the witnesses to the contract and the Capomaestro in charge of building a house for Michelangelo as partial compensation for his work on the cycle of statues. More importantly, no mention is made of the paintings in the Cathedral that could be replaced by the Apostle statues.

⁶ The over life-sized statues could not be properly installed above or next to the entrances and windows of the church. Also, there is no reason to believe that the statues would be placed on top of pedestals or consoles in front of the polychrome, geometric revetment of the Cathedral, or that the precious cladding on the sides of the basilica would be pierced in order to accommodate niches. The size of the statues precludes them from being installed on top of the aisles, or any higher than that, for the Apostles would appear too small in those locations. We may thus also exclude the twelve buttresses of the east end that were previously reserved for colossal statues of Prophets. The niches of the Cathedral’s Campanile, that were already filled with statues of Prophets and Sibyls, were too small to accommodate statues four and one quarter braccia tall.
an important cycle? The answer is that, firstly, two earlier attempts to provide a new façade for Santa Maria del Fiore had failed, and, secondly, that Lorenzo de’ Medici was deeply involved in both of those endeavors, as we shall see. The issue of the façade, which was permeated in the minds of some with memories of Lorenzo, was dealt with obliquely in 1503 because the Medici were still living in exile in Rome and pro-Mediceans were still occupying many important positions in Florence, including at the Wool Guild and at the Cathedral. There was no need to set off flares. Instead, a circuitous route would do the trick. In order to get a truly outstanding façade erected after the setbacks of 1476 and 1491 (see below), a truly superlative set of sculpture needed to be produced that could not possibly be installed anywhere as successfully as upon the brand new façade in question. In other words, the Operai were using the Apostle commission to force future Operai to tackle the issue of the façade once and for all – and without spelling all of this out loud and clear. Earlier cases tell us that previous Operai were perfectly willing to

7 A twelve-year-period was set for the completion of the cycle, and Michelangelo was expected to deliver one marble statue per year. Considering that marble needed to be ordered, excavated at Carrara and delivered to the Opera del Duomo in Florence, and considering that Michelangelo needed to complete work on the colossal David, this timeline is obviously most unrealistic. (The execution of the fifteen marble statuettes about 130 cm. tall, ordered in June 1501 for the Piccolomini Altar in Siena Cathedral, was a less pressing matter as far as the Florentine Operai were concerned, if indeed they were aware of that commission that was to be carried out over a three-year-period).

8 Isabelle Hyman explored in an important paper the difficulties the citizens of Florence so clearly had in providing façades for their churches, as indicated by the fact that many of Florence’s basilicas remained without façades during the Renaissance. She argued persuasively that the Florentines were “unwilling to displace the older conventions of their great Romanesque monuments” and that at the same time they “grappled with the problem of establishing a design strategy for buildings that were to incorporate the new Renaissance language of form.” (Isabelle Hyman, “The Unfinished Facades of Florence”, unpublished lecture delivered on March 6, 1998, New York University Institute of Fine Arts, Silberberg Lecture Series). The Florentines could not decide how to design façades for their basilicas that were both unmistakably Florentine and all’antica. The severe façades that were erected in front of the classical basilicas that served as senates or courts of law in antiquity, simply would not do as models for the sumptuous structures incorporating the classical orders and rich with sculpture that were to be erected in front of churches seeking to evoke the Heavenly Jerusalem.
delegate extraordinarily complex problems to their successors, witness the construction of the huge crossing of the Cathedral which a later generation would have to cover with a dome the size of which had not been matched in Europe since antiquity. We also know that the Opera del Duomo had some experience in transferring sculpture to new locations, witness the Trecento statuettes of Apostles that were moved from their niches inside the main entrance to the Cathedral (fig. 2) to the top of the exterior of the windows of the radiating chapels of the east end, and witness Nanni di Banco’s Isaiah that was moved from the top of one of the buttresses of the east end of the church to the façade of the Duomo.

In January of 1504, approximately eight months after the Apostle contract was signed, a committee of citizens was assembled to discuss where Michelangelo’s colossal marble David – originally intended for the top of one of the buttresses at the east end of the Duomo – should stand. The extraordinary character of Michelangelo’s accomplishment caused his fellow citizens to rethink where the almost completed colossus could best be displayed.

It is worth underscoring that the erection of a façade was, for obvious reasons, far more pressing than the execution of a cycle of over life-sized Apostle statues – witness the two recent attempts to design a façade for Santa Maria del Fiore. Although the language of the preliminary draft did not make it into the Apostle contract, the contract leaves the option of transferring the statues to other locations than in front of the paintings in the church open, and thus, a façade that would be specifically designed to receive the statues remained a viable option. That being said, Michelangelo began carving his first Apostle, the St. Matthew, in 1506 (figs. 3-4) for the bottom of one of the colossal pilasters at the crossing (fig. 1), where an Apostle with the cross of the consecration was painted in 1436.9

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9 See Amy 2001. I argued elsewhere (Amy 1998) that the Apostles with the Crosses of the Consecration painted in 1436 may have been considered temporary images that could be replaced by more precious figures once more time and monies became available. Statuary may have been envisioned for those locations as early as 1436. Two monumental cycles of Apostle statues, namely one for the interior and one for the façade of the basilica, would be acceptable. Work on a cycle of monumental Apostle statues for the interior of Orvieto Cathedral was initiated during the 16th century, while an earlier monumental cycle of marble Apostles remained displayed high upon the façade of the same church, in a single row of niches above the rose window. It is also worth noting that in the late Ottocento, Santa Maria del Fiore received a second cycle of over life-sized Apostle statues – namely
Indeed, the areas where the murals were painted for the consecration of the Cathedral are the only locations that are specified in the contract of April 1503; Michelangelo needed to work with a specific site in mind – even though a new setting could always be established at a later stage. The *St. Matthew* (figs. 3-4) would read splendidly inside a niche on a façade *all’antica* – and probably most effectively on the right side of the façade I am imagining, as the *Apostle*’s head is turned violently towards our left. The fact that Michelangelo did not even finish carving his first *Apostle* would explain why the façade I am proposing was not erected and why we cannot even find a record of it in the documents that have come to light.

The earliest references to Santa Maria del Fiore state that the church was to be covered with sculpture, and the first, unfinished, Arnolfian façade of the Cathedral (fig. 2), called for large quantities of sculpture indeed.\(^\text{10}\) Although large statues of *Prophets, Sibyls, Doctors of the Church* and *Evangelists*, were provided either for the unfinished façade or for the church’s belfry by 1430, a cycle of monumental *Apostle* statues was not commissioned prior to the sixteenth century, despite the marked devotion to Christ’s disciples at Santa Maria del Fiore.\(^\text{11}\) Ordering an *Apostle* cycle was, therefore, perfectly justified. In fact, once Michelangelo abandoned this project, the *Operai* sought out other artists to carve the over life-sized statues. Thus, this cycle of sculptures was not concocted merely to keep Michelangelo at the Cathedral, though that was another important consideration, and it explains why the commission for all twelve statues was allotted to Michelangelo at once while he was still working on the colossal *David* intended for the same church.

Moving sculpture from one site to another brings up, among other things, the question of appropriateness of size. Although the contract of 1503 called for statues four and a quarter *braccia* high (248.2 cm.), Michelangelo’s unfinished *St. Matthew* of 1506 measures 263 cm. or four

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10 Giovanni Villani (ms. 14\(^{\text{th}}\) century) tells us that: “I cittadini s’accordarono di rinnovare la chiesa maggiore di Firenze, la quale era molto di grossa forma e piccola a comparazione di si fatta città, e ordinaro di crescerla e di trarlà addietro, e di farla tutta di marmi e con figure intagliate”; Villani 1845, II, 16; and Guasti 1887, 3, no. 5.

and a half braccia, making this statue significantly taller than the 14th and 15th century statues placed high in the niches of the church’s belfry. As Michelangelo ordered only four blocks of marble from Carrara during the first stage of the commission, larger blocks could still be quarried, should some of the figures need to be placed high up on a façade – for twelve over life-sized statues standing in strong contrapposto (figs. 3-4) could probably not be successfully installed in a single register running across a façade all’antica, even when it is as wide as the west elevation of Santa Maria del Fiore.

2. **Two Earlier Façade Endeavors for Santa Maria del Fiore**

The problem of designing a façade in the newest Renaissance style for Santa Maria del Fiore had intrigued Michelangelo’s first patron, Lorenzo the Magnificent, more than a quarter of a century earlier. A letter dated August 22nd, 1476, reports that Ser Niccolò di Michelozzo Michelozzi – who would witness Michelangelo’s Apostle contract of 1503 – had requested that measurements be taken of “the front façade of the

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12 The height of Donatello’s Prophets for the 14th century niches of the Campanile ranges between 188 and 195 cm. The four late Trecento statues of Doctors of the Church for the old, two-thirds unfinished façade of the Duomo (fig. 2) are between 227 and 238 cm. high. Ghiberti’s bronze statues of St. John the Baptist, St. Matthew and St. Stephen for Orsanmichele, are respectively 255 cm., 270 cm. and 230 cm. tall. Donatello’s St. Mark and St. Louis of Toulouse (with his tall miter) for Orsanmichele are respectively 236 cm. and 266 cm. tall. These statues by Ghiberti and Donatello were installed on the outer faces of the first storey of Orsanmichele. The other standing draped 15th century religious statues at Orsanmichele are noticeably smaller. These measurements are all drawn from secondary sources.

13 For the blocks for the first phase of the Apostle commission, see Amy 2000, 495-496 and 808.

14 The need for a new façade can be traced back to September 1429, when Ghiberti and Brunelleschi were ordered to produce a model for the completion of the Cathedral: “Unum modellum totius corporis ecclesie veteris et novi oratorii opere, cum cappellis de novo edificandis et cum facie de novo edificanda dicte ecclesie” (in Poggi 1988, LV1). The Medici had a longstanding interest in the Cathedral; see Amy 1997, 329-331. For Lorenzo de’ Medici’s involvement at the Cathedral, see Foster 1981; Pacciani 1992, 158; Zangheri 1992; Kent 2001; and Kent 2004.

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church”, on behalf of his master Lorenzo de’ Medici.\(^ {15}\) Although the church is not named, a contemporary diary entry tells us that on August 28\(^ {\text{th}}\), the Opera del Duomo announced a competition to design a façade for Santa Maria del Fiore.\(^ {16}\)

Lorenzo’s initiative may have prompted this official announcement. Oddly, designs for the façade were to be submitted the following month, which is terribly rushed indeed. This narrow window for the submission of designs suggests either that Lorenzo and his architect had begun working on a model for the façade before August 22\(^ {\text{nd}}\) and requested measurements of the Duomo’s west elevation in order to get things just right – the tight deadline would thus serve to keep all serious competition at bay – or, that the Opera del Duomo really had no desire to tackle the issue of the façade at this stage – thus setting a deadline no one could possibly meet – and just went through the moves, because it felt obliged to show that it was finally ready to take on this project.\(^ {17}\) The fact that Lorenzo’s secretary Ser Niccolò Michelozzi served as Chancellor of the Wool Guild since July 9\(^ {\text{th}}\), 1475 – which guild oversaw the Opera del Duomo – certainly adds an interesting twist to this story.\(^ {18}\) Unfortunately, this is the last we

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\(^{15}\) “La faccia dinanzi della chiesa”. A second letter to Lorenzo dated August 26\(^ {\text{th}}\) reports that errors were made when the measurements were taken and includes corrections. For these two letters and a third letter dated August 31\(^ {\text{st}}\) and also mentioning measurements of the façade of the church, see Foster 1981, 496 and 499-500, nos. 1-2; Draper 1992, 5-6 and 269-270, nos. 2a-2c; and Zuraw 2001, 81. Michelozzi’s letter was sent to Giovanni di Francesco Zati, who was recorded as proveditore of the Opera del Duomo in 1474; see Foster 1981, 496. For the documents that are missing from the archive of the Opera del Duomo, see Waldman 1996, 3, who notes that the partiti of the Arte della Lana fail to allude to the 1476 façade project.

\(^{16}\) For Giusto di Giovanni Giusti’s diary entry, see Waldman 1996, 1-6. See also Kent 2001, 359-360; Zuraw 2001, 81-83; Kent 2004, 6, and 67-68; and Wright 2005, 294.

\(^{17}\) See the alternative reading of the surviving evidence offered by Waldman 1996, 3-4. I am however in complete agreement about the prohibitive cost involved in erecting a fine façade at a time when such an expenditure was particularly difficult to handle, as much other work was ongoing at the Cathedral.

\(^{18}\) Niccolò may have alerted Lorenzo to the Opera’s intentions before the façade competition was officially announced, or, Lorenzo may have asked Niccolò to call for an open competition once the design he championed was almost completed. Although Lorenzo and Ser Niccolò may have argued for the erection of a (Laurentian) façade, the Opera may have pushed back by setting an impossible deadline for the submission of models. For Ser Niccolò Michelozzi, please see below.
hear of the endeavor of 1476. The surviving evidence suggests that the architect who was favored by Lorenzo had better chances of winning the prestigious commission by disposing over accurate measurements, more time to prepare his design, Medicean backing and having Lorenzo’s secretary serve as Chancellor of the *Arte della Lana*. The endeavor of 1476 was aborted for unknown reasons.\(^{19}\)

Associating oneself with the completion of the façade of a major church clearly was an important political move.\(^20\) Giovanni Rucellai had demonstrated as much through his patronage of Alberti’s façade for Santa Maria Novella (circa 1458-1470, though not all work was completed by that date), the Dominican mother church of Florence, which was undoubtedly seen by Lorenzo, his father Piero (died 1469), and his grandfather Cosimo (died 1464), as a feat that needed to be surpassed.\(^21\)

Lorenzo had recently managed to have his brother-in-law Rinaldo of the aristocratic Orsini line, elected Archbishop of Florence to succeed the young Cardinal-Archbishop Pietro Riario who had died in January of 1474. Orsini’s nomination ratified Lorenzo’s status as *Signore* of Florence. Rinaldo rapidly entrusted Lorenzo with the direction over the administration of his diocese and was for more than thirty years one of the principal mediators in Rome between the Medici and the Curia.\(^22\) By

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\(^{19}\) Was the project countered because Lorenzo initiated it or became too deeply involved in the process? For resistance to Lorenzo during this period, see Rubinstein 1977/1992, 54-58; Brown 1994; and Martines 2003. The episode of 1476 may have prompted Lorenzo to matriculate in the *Arte della Lana* the following year (see below) in order to be able to guide future *Duomo*-related projects towards completion, but in 1478, an attempt was made against the life of Lorenzo, thereby leading to the postponement of plans he may have had for the Cathedral of Florence. In 1484, Mino da Fiesole bequeathed both a three-dimensional model and drawing on panel for the façade of the Cathedral of Florence to the *Opera del Duomo*: “Dictus testator construxit modellum faciei ecclesie Sancte Marie del Fiore de Florentia, et seu designum in quadam tabula lignea” (see de Fabriczy, 43-45; Foster 1981, 497; Waldman 1996, 3; and Zuraw 2001). These two works may have sprung from the façade competition of 1476.

\(^{20}\) For classical *magnificenza*, see Fraser Jenkins 1970. See also Kent 2000, 213-214 and 224; and Howard 2008.

\(^{21}\) For the patronage of Giovanni Rucellai, see Kent 2000, 357-366, and for the funding of the façade of Santa Maria Novella, Hatfield 2004.

\(^{22}\) See Bizzocchi 1987, 213-216; Rolfi 1992, 55 and 60; and Kent 2001, 354. As Polizzotto 1994, 335, notes: “Control over the Florentine church was a vital element of the Medicean dynastic plan”.

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promoting the erection of the façade of the Cathedral of Florence, Lorenzo could underline his growing power in ecclesiastical matters as well as his love for God, the Church and the city of Florence.

Fourteen years later, on February 12th, 1490, the Consuls of the Wool Guild gave the Opera del Duomo the authority to regulate expenditures and arrange everything in order to arrive at some conclusion with regard to the unfinished façade of the Duomo. The Consuls’ deliberation tells us that some of the chief citizens of Florence had observed what a great dishonor it was that the façade remained unfinished, and that the parts that were already executed did not agree with the rules of architecture.23 The Cathedral Opera eventually announced a competition and ten people submitted proposals which were evaluated almost eleven months later on January 5th, 1491, by a committee consisting of two Lana Consuls, a Cathedral Canon, eighteen Florentine citizens – including Lorenzo de’ Medici – and thirty-four artists. The first speaker, Canon Carolus Bencius, recommended that the jury follow the advice of Lorenzo de’ Medici, since he was most expert in architectural matters.24 The chancellor of the Republic Bartolomeo Scala, and the third, fourth and fifth speakers, advised postponing all decision-making, for the matter required further consideration. Lorenzo the Magnificent, a longstanding member of the Arte della Lana who understood how the Opera del Duomo


24 Through his interest in architecture, Lorenzo could be seen as emulating his grandfather Cosimo de’ Medici, whose knowledge in architectural matters was praised by Vespasiano da Bisticci (da Bisticci 1997, 219-224, especially 224). For Cosimo de’ Medici’s patronage, see Kent 2000; and Kent 2001, 342-343. For the patronage of Lorenzo’s father Piero the Gouty, see Beyer and Boucher 1993. It is well known that Lorenzo treasured his copy of Alberti’s De re aedificatoria. The literature on Lorenzo’s architectural expertise is growing steadily: see Gombrich 1960/1985; Martelli 1966, 107-111; Kent 1979, 254-257; Bruschi 1983, 1009-1012; Hollingsworth 1984, 397 and 403-406; Tafuri 1992, 90-97; Brown 1993; Carl 1993, 239-240; Elam 1996b; Pacciani 1992a; Pacciani 1992b; Pacciani 1998; Pacciani 2002; Kent 2001; Zuraw 2001; and Kent 2004. Lorenzo did not submit his own design for the façade of the Cathedral in January of 1491, contrary to what some scholars (including Gombrich and Bruschi) have maintained.
operated, likewise recommended deferring all decisions, as did the last two speakers.25

Nine months later, in September of 1491, Luca Fancelli was chosen to succeed Lorenzo’s protégé, the late Giuliano da Maiano, as Capomastro of Florence Cathedral. Fancelli’s letter of November 10th to his patron the Marquis of Mantua Francesco Gonzaga states that certain Florentine lords – and Lorenzo de’ Medici most of all – were responsible for his election. Fancelli justifies his delay in returning to Mantua by declaring that he is engaged with work upon a model for the façade of Florence Cathedral.26 This evidence suggests that Lorenzo de’ Medici ordered

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25 Document published by Milanesi in Vasari 1568/1906, IV, 304-309, no. 2; Foster 1981, 497; Vasic Vatovec 1991, 330; Farneti 1992, 156; and Zangheri 1992. The episode of 1476 is nowhere alluded to. For an interesting discussion of the committee of 1491, see Hollingsworth 1984, 391-393, 399 and 402. See more recently Kent 2001, 362-363 and 367; Zuraw 2001; Kent 2004, 102; and Wright 2005, 294-295. The committee members’ reactions suggest that the problem of raising a Renaissance façade in front of the Gothic basilica was unsatisfactorily resolved. Surprisingly, the schemes that were submitted apparently failed to give rise to critical commentary. Not one design was preferred over another and no one suggested that new models be submitted or that corrections be made to one or more of the schemes that were already introduced. We hear nothing more about models for the façade of the Duomo for the next ten months. According to Hegarty 1996, 280: “The result of the meeting had been determined before it was convened [...] and the appearance of [...] consultation was totally illusory”. Kent 2001, 346, reports that “Lorenzo only matriculated in the Arte della Lana in 1477 (much later than he joined the three other guilds of which he was a member), but was influential in its affairs some six years earlier. Never to be a consul or on the cathedral Opera, he held office for some 20 years, nevertheless, as one of the six Provveditori, a somewhat mysterious body with significant supervisory powers over both the guild and the Opera del Duomo”. Kent 2004, 6, adds that: “It had not previously been known that [Lorenzo’s] beloved secretary and friend, Niccolò Michelozzi (see below), was chancellor of the [Wool] guild without interruption from 1475 onwards. By such means, it emerged, at the cathedral Lorenzo could influence everything from clerical appointments to what today would be called artistic policy”. See also Kent 2001, 349, 353-354, 357, 360-361, and 367; and Kent 2004, 21-23, 49 and 106. Zuraw 2001, 81, states that “Lorenzo’s preference for the work of Luca Fancelli caused him to suggest deferring a final decision [in January of 1491] until a later date”. However, Fancelli only appears on the scene in September (see below). There is no evidence that Lorenzo had his eye on Fancelli as early as January of 1491.

26 “Ora sono ogupato en fare un modelo per la faciata di Santa Maria Liperata, el quale stimo spedire in termine d’un mese: et fornito serà, vero da Vostra Excellentia
Luca Fancelli, who had longstanding ties to the Medici family,\textsuperscript{27} to prepare a new model for the façade of the basilica. It is even possible that Lorenzo made a sketch for the façade and asked Luca to build a model inspired by his design,\textsuperscript{28} for Lorenzo appears to have had this type of working relationship with several of the architects he endorsed.\textsuperscript{29} However, all we know for certain is that Fancelli was handpicked by Lorenzo to become the \textit{Capomaestro} of the Cathedral, and was rapidly entrusted with the task of making a model for the façade. Lorenzo’s expertise in architectural matters is confirmed by his choice of Fancelli, for Fancelli mastered the language of Alberti and it was that idiom that could offer a solution to the problem raised by the west elevation of

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perché questi Signori fiorentini, et maxime el Magnifico Lorenzo, m’anno electo sopra questa fabbrica e senza mia domanda […] Et io ò fatto intendere che io non ò a far se non quanto piatierà a Vostra Signoria: e m’àn risposto che, fatto questo modelo, io potrò andar dove a me pare pur che due volte o tre l’anno io vedo quello sì fà, et che mi correrà la mia provigione. Non dì mancho se bene io sono bisognioso, io stimo anche più l’onorè: però che questo è il più stimato uficio d’Italia per architetura, et anche a Vostra Signoria è onore che un vostro architetto sia eletto in questa città sopra questa fabbrica, che si tira dietro le altre, et qui dond’è tanti valenti homeni in questa facultà”; Braghirolli 1876, 634-635; Vasic Vatovec 1979, 65-66; Foster 1981, 498; and Kent 2001, 363-364. Interestingly, Lorenzo de’ Medici had recommended Luca Fancelli to Alfonso of Naples following the death in Naples in October 1490 of Lorenzo’s protégé Giuliano da Maiano: see the letter in Gaye 1839, I, 303-304, cited by Kent 2004, 91. Kent 2004, 102, rightly notes that at that time, Lorenzo’s favorite architect Giuliano da Sangallo was engaged with work on a variety of Laurentian projects.
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\textsuperscript{27} Foster 1981, 497-498, who refers to Braghirolli 1876, 626-627, no. V-VI and 630-632, no. XII. On Fancelli and Lorenzo Magnifico, see also Hollingsworth 1984, 403; Vasic Vatovec 1991, 329; Pacciani 1992b, 164, 166 and 169; and Kent 2004, 36-37.


\textsuperscript{29} See Martelli 1966, 107-111; Brown 1993, 6-11; Carl 1993, 239; and Pacciani 1992b, 169-170. Brown reminds us that Cristoforo Landino referred to Lorenzo de’ Medici as \textit{bonus architectus}, and Kent 2004, 3, quotes Filippo Redditi, who states that Lorenzo: “Has adorned and perfected the theory of architecture with the highest reasons of geometry”. Pacciani 1992b, 170; and Kent 2004, 88-89, adduce a couple of contemporary Italian rulers who were involved in designing architecture. Vasari (1568) tells us that Jacopo Sansovino’s ephemeral façade of 1515 for the Cathedral of Florence was invented by Lorenzo, thereby implying that the latter had produced some sort of design (see below). However, Fancelli does not suggest in his letter that the model he is making is after someone else’s design.
Santa Maria del Fiore. Indeed, Santa Maria Novella is the only church in Florence that received a façade in the new Renaissance style during the entire Quattrocento, and it is Alberti who designed it. However, this new façade initiative for Florence Cathedral once again came to nothing, presumably as a result of Lorenzo’s death in April of 1492 and the expulsion of the Medici two and a half years later. We sadly lack drawings or models we can securely connect to the late Quattrocento façade competition.

3. The Ephemeral Façade of Florence Cathedral of 1515

A quarter of a century later, in the fall of 1515, a temporary façade was erected in front of the Cathedral to celebrate the return to Florence of Lorenzo the Magnificent’s son Giovanni de’ Medici as Pope Leo X. Vasari states that this ephemeral façade was designed by Lorenzo de’

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30 See also Foster 1981, 499.
31 See Wittkower 1971, 41-47. At Santa Maria Novella, the bottom section of the façade that was erected in the early Trecento was splendidly integrated into Alberti’s Renaissance design; see the comment and bibliography provided by Zuraw 2001, 85, nt. 22. Arnolfo’s unfinished façade for Florence Cathedral (fig. 2) was so strongly condemned in certain quarters that probably not one of the architects involved in the 1491 phase of the competition chose to absorb the early Trecento fabric into his late Quattrocento design. Fancelli did not appropriate Arnolfo’s unfinished elevation, although he embraced the idea of a façade rich with sculpture (see below) – and thus, Fancelli embraced a look and range of meanings that are very different from those that were achieved by Alberti at Santa Maria Novella.
32 See Bruschi 1983, 1015-1016; Morolli 1990, 12-13; Bruschi 1994, 164; and Zuraw 2001, 84-85 and 92, nt. 50 (for a brief discussion of the façade elevation on Uffizi 2170A, which is connected by some scholars to Santa Maria del Fiore, unconvincingly in my view, for the relationship of the height of the side aisles to the height of the central aisle is entirely different in the drawing). When the inventory of the villa at Careggi was drawn up after Lorenzo’s passing, the following was recorded: “Una ghabbia grande di legno et filo di ferro ritratta chome Santa Maria del Fiore”; see Vasic Vatovec 1991, 330; and Farneti 1992, 158, who refer to the typewritten copy of the Inventario nel palazzo di Careggi (Archivio di Stato di Firenze) at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence (II, 195, c.67r), a source I was not able to consult. A “gabbia” is a cage or a frame; the reference should probably be understood as a model of the entire church, and not solely a representation of the façade of Santa Maria del Fiore. Luca Fancelli died sometime after 1494.
Lorenzo’s Façade for the Cathedral of Florence and Michelangelo’s *Apostle* Statues

Medici and erected of wood by Jacopo Sansovino. His account is based upon intermediary sources, for Vasari (born in 1511) was a child when the temporary construction was dismantled. The accuracy of this author’s description and attribution of the ephemeral façade need to be tested, for Vasari was a master of propaganda, who served his patron Duke Cosimo de’ Medici exceedingly well. It is therefore worth noting that Francesco Albertini states in his *Memoriale* that Lorenzo de’ Medici wanted to replace the old façade of the *Duomo* by a *perfect* façade. Significantly, the *Memoriale* was printed in Florence in 1510, during the exile of the Medici family. In addition, Vasari’s attribution is supported by Piaciatichi’s account of 1515. More importantly perhaps, the

33 “Quello che fu più di tutto stimato [than the other decorations that were provided for Pope Leo’s Florentine entry] fu la facciata di Santa Maria del Fiore fatta di legname e lavorata in diverse storie di chiaro scuro dal nostro Andrea, tanto bene che più non si sarebbe potuto desiderare; e perché l’architettura di questa opera fu di Iacopo Sansovino, e similmente alcune storie di basso rilievo, e di scultura molte figure tonde, fu giudicato dal Papa che non sarebbe potuto essere quell’edificio più bello quando fusse stato di marmo: e ciò fu invenzione di Lorenzo de’ Medici, padre di quel Papa, quando viveva” (*Life of Andrea del Sarto*, 1568). However, Lorenzo *il Magnifico* is not mentioned in this context in the *Life of Andrea del Sarto* of 1550: “Ma quel che valse più di tutti fu la facciata di Santa Maria del Fiore di legname e d’istorie lavorate di mano d’Andrea di chiaro e scuro, che oltre alle comendazioni ch’egli ebbero della architettura, fatta da Iacopo Sansovino, con alcune istorie di basso rilievo, di scultura e figure tonde, fu giudicato dal Papa non dover essere altrimenti di marmo tal edifizio, né le storie che a far vi si avevano d’altro disegno”. See Vasari / Bettarini 1550/1568/1976, IV, 362, for both editions of the life of Sarto.


35 Piaciatichi refers to the ephemeral façade as follows: “Grandissima gloria delle sue vigilie in questa consumpe haverbbe lo opifice riportato se la felice memoria del magnifico genitore del triumphante Giovanni non fussi stata di quella iustissima occupatrice: Perche da huomini di fede degni chiaramente sintese. Quel divino spirito avanti che dal florido al celeste chiostrò si transferissi con ferma intensione quella imperpetuall opera porte: El modulo di questa haverbe egregiamente compostò”; Piaciatichi, Gualtieri (1515): *Copia di una epistola di Gualtieri Piaciatichi ciptadino fiorentino nella entrata di Papa Leone nella cità di Firenze. A di xiii di Novembre. M.D.XV*., Florence; cited by Shearman 1965, II, 318. I was not able to consult this 16th century source. Several decades later, Borghini would state: “Alla porta di Santa Maria del Fiore un ornamento magnifico il quale si dice essere stata inventione
surviving descriptions of the façade of 1515 suggest that the west elevation may be interpreted as a conflation and transformation of two Albertian church façades, something Lorenzo il Magnifico and his protégé Luca Fancelli were capable of producing.

Vasari tells us that:

Sansovino […] undertook in company with Andrea del Sarto to construct the façade of S. Maria del Fiore all of wood, with statues, scenes, and architectural orders, exactly in the manner wherein it would be well for it to be in order to remove all that there is in it of the German order of composition. Having therefore set his hand to this, […] beneath that awning (which was stretched on solemn occasions between the Baptistery and the Cathedral, just beneath the oculi above the side entrances), I say, Sansovino constructed the said façade in the Corinthian order, making it in the manner of a triumphal arch, and placing upon an immense base double columns on each side, and between them certain great niches filled with figures in the round that represented the Apostles. Above these were some large scenes in half-relief, made in the likeness of bronze, with stories from the Old Testament, and over them followed architraves, friezes, and cornices, projecting outwards, and then frontispieces of great beauty and variety; and in the angles of the arches, both in the wide parts and below, were stories painted in chiaroscuro by the hand of Andrea del Sarto and very beautiful. In short, this work of Sansovino’s was such that Pope Leo, seeing it, said that it was a pity that the real façade of that temple was not so built, which was begun by the German Arnolfo.36

ferma già dal Magnifico Lorenzo de’ Medici’; Borghini, Vincenzo, Taccuino di appunti, quoted by Ciseri 1990, 296, no. XLIII. I was not able to consult this 16th century source.

36 Vasari / de Vere 1568/1915, IX, 193-194. “Il Sansovino […] tolse in compagnia Andrea del Sarto a fare egli stesso la facciata di Santa Maria del Fiore, tutta di legno, con statue e con istorie et ordine d’architettura, nel modo apunto che sarebbe ben fatto ch’ella stesse, per torna via quello che vi è di componimento et ordine tedesco. Per che messovii mano […] dico che sotto queste tende [stretched horizontally between the Baptistery and the Cathedral, on solemn occasions] aveva ordinato il Sansovino la detta facciata di lavoro corinto, e che, fattala a guisa d’arco trionfale, aveva messo sopra un grandissimo imbasamento da ogni banda le colonne doppie, con certi nicchioni fra loro pieni di figure tutte tonde che figuravano gli’Apostoli, e sopra erano alcune storie grandi di mezzo rilievo, finte di bronzo, di cose del Vecchio Testamento […]. Sopra seguivano gl’architravi, fregi e cornicioni che risaltavano, et appresso variì e bellissimi frontespizii. Negli’angoli poi degl’archi, nelle grossezze e sotto, erano storie dipinte di chiaro secco di mano d’Andrea del Sarto, e bellissime. E insomma questa opera del Sansovino fu tale, che, veggendola papa Leone, disse che era un peccato che così fatta non fusse la vera facciata di quel tempio, che fu cominciata da Arnolfo tedesco” (Life of Jacopo Sansovino, 1568; Vasari
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Lorenzo il Magnifico’s invenzione all’antica for the Cathedral of Florence included a cycle of over life-sized Apostle statues. Was Michelangelo’s commission of 1503 an offshoot of the Laurentian façade project of 1491? The contemporary chronicler Luca Landucci says that the temporary façade comprised twelve marble columns larger than those of nearby San Lorenzo.\textsuperscript{37} He saw: “Magnificent triumphal arches at the doors, and several large cornices above the columns” almost reaching up to the lowest oculi.\textsuperscript{38} The compartmentalization and sculptural richness of

/ Bettarini 1550/1568/1987, VI, 182). In his Life of Giован Francesco Rustici (1568), Vasari states that Rustici made some statues for the papal entry at the request of his friend Andrea del Sarto; Vasari / Bettarini 1550/1568/1984, V, 476. These were most likely intended for the temporary façade for Florence Cathedral, since Sarto was deeply involved with that project and Sansovino cannot possibly have produced all twelve over life-sized Apostle statues by himself. According to Shearman 1965, II, 317, all the Apostle statues were modeled by Jacopo Sansovino and Rustici was charged with the execution of additional statues. However, there is no evidence that statues other than Apostle statues were provided for the ephemeral façade. Unfortunately, all the stucco statues disappeared once the mock façade was torn down and no depictions of the lost over-life-sized sculptures are known. As a result, we cannot examine the impact Michelangelo’s ideas for his Apostle series had upon the ephemeral cycle. (For a reconstruction of some of Michelangelo’s ideas for his cycle, see Amy 2006). The evidence provided by Sansovino’s St. James (ordered in 1511 and appraised in 1518) – that was carved from a block that was excavated according to Michelangelo’s specifications for the cycle ordered in 1503 – suggests that their impact may have been important, though translated into the idiom of Sansovino, whose more delicate and ornate manner was almost certainly more to the liking of Pope Leo X. Indeed, Leo’s taste appears to have gravitated towards sculpture conceived in an Albertian sense, namely as ornament, which type did not allow for the expressive urgency of a statue like Michelangelo’s St. Matthew (1506) for Florence Cathedral (figs. 3-4). For reconstructions of Leo’s ideas on sculpture integrated in architecture see Bruschi 1983; and Weil-Garris Brandt 1984. The fact that the stucco Apostles of 1515 were not recuperated and installed inside the Cathedral while work was ongoing on the marble Apostle cycle, could support my hypothesis that the sculptures that were commissioned from Michelangelo in 1503 were intended to kick-start the building of a new façade for the Cathedral, designed to receive the marble statues.

\textsuperscript{37} Parenti speaks of half-columns.

\textsuperscript{38} Landucci 1927, 282-283. “[...] co’ magni archi trionfali alle porte, con tanti grandi cornicioni sopra alle colonne” (Landucci 1883, 356). Additionally: “Facevano stupire ognuno con tanti quadri e ornamenti; e disessi che gli era fatto per modello a fare detta faccia, perche piaceva a ognuno, tanto pareva superba e signorile: s’aveva dispiacere a vederlo disfare”. Although Landucci tells us that
the temporary façade was in keeping with the tradition established by Arnolfo di Cambio with the old façade of the Duomo (fig. 2).39 Was the façade erected by Sansovino inspired by Fancelli’s model?

Precedents for the design of the ephemeral construction have been found in the work of Bramante and Giuliano da Sangallo, and reflections of the lost scheme have been identified in designs that were submitted in 1516-1517 for the façade of the Medicean church of San Lorenzo (Florence).40 We know that the lost façade included twelve over life-sized (presumably stucco) Apostle statues – for Vasari cannot possibly have made such a statement if it were not true. We conclude that these statues were displayed in more than one row, for twelve monumental columns and three large entrances occupied much of the width of the west elevation.41 However, since relief-sculpture, chiaroscuro paintings, architraves, friezes, cornices and pediments, were arranged above the large columns (raised on top of tall bases) and the statues in their niches, and beneath the oculi, it is safe to assume that the ephemeral façade comprised no more than two rows of Apostle statuary.

Vasari tells us that the façade had the appearance of a triumphal arch. If we imagine paired columns framing the great entrance arches to the Cathedral, all twelve columns mentioned by Landucci are accounted for.

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39 See also Bruschi 1983, 1016 and 1024.
40 On the temporary façade of the Duomo, see also Landucci 1883, 356; Lotz 1963, 3-7; Shearman 1965, II, 317-318; Garrard 1970, 329-336; Shearman 1975, 136-137, 139 and 147; Söding 1980, 156-164; Bruschi 1983, 1023-1024; Boucher 1991, I, 22-23, and II, 358-359, no. 74; Ciseri 1990, 110-116; and Morresi 2000, 16-17. Shearman and Ciseri provide many primary sources. For the entrata, see also Polizzotto 1992, 360-363. Most scholars who have considered the problem of Sansovino’s ephemeral façade have ignored Vasari’s attribution of the scheme to Lorenzo il Magnifico. However, in his interesting article on the question of a Medicean architectural language, Bruschi 1983, 1015-1024, correctly underlines the continuity between the 1491 façade scheme and Sansovino’s project of 1515.
41 Three rows of monumental statuary were arranged beneath the oculi on the Trecento façade of the Duomo (fig. 2). Many scholars – including Shearman, Bruschi, Boucher, Tafuri, Morresi and Elam – accept Vasari’s assertion that there were twelve monumental Apostle statues on Sansovino’s mock façade. No one, to my knowledge, has rejected this statement.
Vasari tells us that *nicchioni* were placed between the columns. If we insert one niche raised above another between the columns, we obtain the twelve niches that are required to accommodate all twelve *Apostle* statues (fig. 4). A section consisting of an entranceway framed by paired columns from the bottom register of Giuliano da Sangallo’s façade elevation on Uffizi 278A (fig. 6) – that was submitted in 1516 for the façade of San Lorenzo – provides a rough idea of what a corresponding section of the temporary façade of Florence Cathedral may have looked like. This arrangement may have been interpreted by Landucci as the: “Magnificent triumphal arches at the doors”. The idea for monumental arches flanked by paired columns harkens back to Brunelleschi’s *tribuna morte*, with their great niches flanked by paired (and shared) Corinthian half-columns (fig. 7). The decorum of Santa Maria del Fiore would thereby be preserved. As Sangallo was an architect who was favored by Lorenzo, Uffizi 278A may reflect Lorenzo de’ Medici’s and/or Luca Fancelli’s unrealized idea of 1491 for the façade of Santa Maria del Fiore.43

42 I arrived independently at the same reconstruction of paired columns with their two superimposed niches flanking the entrances to the Cathedral as did Bruschi, by studying the literary evidence adduced above. Bruschi suggests placing large blind arches – echoing the shape and size of the lateral entrance arches – between the paired columns of the side entrances and the paired columns of the main entrance (fig. 5); Bruschi 1983, 1023-1024, nt. 45 and fig. 8 (he proposes alternative designs, in the left and right half of his reconstruction drawing). However, the space that remains between the entrance arches seems too small to be able to accommodate large blind arches on the scale envisioned by Bruschi, witness the drawing attributed to Bernardino Poccetti (fig. 2). A decorative panel on a different scale may need to be imagined. The reconstructions that were proposed earlier by Garrard and Söding are incorrect; see Garrard 1970, 333-334 and figs. 205-206; and Söding 1980, I, 158-160, and II, figs. 30-31. Bruschi’s reconstruction is accepted by Tafuri 1992, plate 35; Morresi 2000, 15-16; and Elam 2002, 212.

43 Lotz connects Uffizi 278A (fig. 6) to the project for a façade for the Chiesa della Santa Casa at Loreto, whose dome Giuliano da Sangallo constructed in 1500. He concludes this on the basis of the drawn façade’s Marian iconography and the della Rovere coat of arms that appears on a shield in the drawing, which suggests to Lotz that the sheet dates to the pontificate of Pope Julius II, who was deeply interested in the Santa Casa project. Now Vasari tells us that Jacopo Sansovino was apprenticed to Andrea Sansovino, whose surname he took, and we know that Andrea Sansovino – who was an important architect in his own right, ac-
According to Vasari – and Giuliano da Sangallo had established professional ties, as they worked together at Santo Spirito in Florence. Andrea Sansovino and Bramante worked in the choir of Santa Maria del Popolo (Rome, the choir was completed in 1509) and on the Santa Casa at Loreto (for which Bramante designed the encasement in 1508, and where Andrea Sansovino took over the direction of works in June 1513). Additionally, Vasari tells us that Giuliano da Sangallo called Jacopo Sansovino to Rome and introduced him to Pope Julius II, and that Bramante asked the young artist to produce a copy of the recently discovered Lanoïn. All of this is noted by Lotz. There were consequently different channels through which Jacopo Sansovino could become aware of either Uffizi 278A (fig. 6) or a similar drawing echoing Lorenzo’s and/or Fancelli’s invention of 1491, prior to erecting the ephemeral façade for Santa Maria del Fiore. Lotz also notes that Bramante used engaged paired columns of the Doric order to articulate the piano nobile at Palazzo Caprini (Rome, circa 1510, also known as the House of Raphael, who bought it in 1517; no longer extant) and that the motif of two superimposed niches appearing between Corinthian columns can be found in Bramante’s encasement for the Santa Casa. Thus, in Lotz’s view: “The pattern of Bramante’s Santa Casa appears to be the ultimate source of Giuliano da Sangallo’s as well as of Jacopo Sansovino’s façades with their double columns arranged ‘sopra un grande imbasamento’, as Vasari puts it”. See Lotz 1963, 3-7. For Bramante, see Davies/Hemsoll 1996 (with recent bibliography). I suggest instead that the roots of this influential motif stem from Lorenzo de’ Medici’s and/or Fancelli’s creative interpretation of select works by Brunelleschi and Alberti. Interestingly, the triumphal arch motif appears in Andrea Sansovino’s tombs for Cardinals Ascanio Sforza and Girolamo Basso della Rovere (commissioned in 1505 and 1507 respectively), erected in Bramante’s newly extended choir at Santa Maria del Popolo (Rome). Bramante may have had something to do with the design of the architecture of these tombs. Significantly however, the triumphal arch scheme appears already in Andrea Sansovino’s Corbinelli Altar (Santo Spirito, Florence) of circa 1490. At Santo Spirito, we see a niche placed between pilasters on either side of the large central arch, and at Santa Maria del Popolo, we see a roughly comparable scheme with engaged columns instead of pilasters and one seated figure appearing in the storey above each niche. The paired pilasters of the Corbinelli Altar rise as high as the arch they frame; the same is not true of the engaged columns on the tombs in Rome, which rise up to the level of the springing of the arches’ barrel vaults. If we blow up the arch of the Corbinelli Altar, place one niche in the place of each of the two roundels above the two existing niches – placed between the pilasters now matching the height of the blown up arch – and replace the pilasters on the Corbinelli Altar with columns, we arrive at a section of the Laurentian scheme of 1491 consisting of a large arch framed by double columns with two superimposed niches between the columns. Significantly, Andrea Bregno’s Piccolomini Altar (1481-1485) in Siena Cathedral features two superimposed niches placed between two sets of superimposed pilasters, on either
4. The Albertian Model

Alberti first used the triumphant arch scheme for the façade of a Renaissance church at the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini\textsuperscript{44} (designed circa 1450, and constructed from circa 1453 to 1461, and left unfinished, fig. 8). The entrance arch to the Tempio is flanked on either side by a large blind arch (see the reconstruction of Sansovino’s ephemeral façade for the Cathedral of Florence, fig. 5), with – however – single half-columns placed between the arches and at each end of the façade. When we turn to Alberti’s façade for Sant’Andrea in Mantua (designed in 1470, with the construction of the façade running from 1472 to circa 1488, fig. 9), we see the huge central entrance arch flanked by colossal paired pilasters that are placed on top of their individual tall bases, with a door, a niche and a window raised one above the other between the pilasters. If we replace the pilasters by columns, eliminate the doors, and substitute two niches for the niche and window sequence, we obtain a segment of the

\textsuperscript{44} As Bruschi 1983, 1023-1024, nt. 45, likewise observes.
façade elevation of 1515, as I imagine it to have been. I believe that Luca Fancelli’s model for Santa Maria del Fiore consisted of just such a conflation and transformation of Albertian ideas *all’antica*, fraught with aristocratic connotations.\(^{45}\) With time, the Albertian origins of the scheme and Fancelli’s share in it were overshadowed by Lorenzo de’ Medici’s fame. If Sansovino’s façade had been erected out of stone, the 16th century cycle of over life-sized marble *Apostle* statues would have been installed upon it. I believe that the idea for a façade *all’antica* for the Cathedral that includes a cycle of over life-sized *Apostle* statues goes back at least to Lorenzo’s endeavor of 1491. In other words, the *Apostles* were not added in 1515 to an earlier Laurentian scheme, to underscore Pope Leo X’s connection to Peter – for adding twelve monumental statues with their niches onto an earlier façade design would transform the latter radically, thereby making its attribution to Lorenzo questionable.

As is well known, Sansovino’s temporary façade for the Cathedral of Florence inspired Pope Leo X to organize a competition for a façade for San Lorenzo, the original Cathedral of Florence, which contest was won by Michelangelo. The contract of January 19th, 1518, for the façade for San Lorenzo called for twelve standing marble figures, in addition to six seated bronze figures at the mezzanine level.\(^{46}\) Although, this document

\(^{45}\) The triumphal arch motif appears much earlier in the context of church façades, for example at the Romanesque church of St. Trophimes at Arles (12th century). At Santa Maria del Fiore, the triumphal arch scheme alluded to the triumph of the Medici, Florence and the Church – the three had become intimately linked when Giovanni de’ Medici was elected Cardinal, and even more closely so once the Medici returned to Florence in September of 1512 and Cardinal Giovanni was elevated to the papacy in the following year.

\(^{46}\) Millon 1988, 12. For the contract see Milanesi 1875, 671-672, no. XXXIII. The six standing figures on the first level were to be five *braccia* tall (292 cm.) and the six on the upper level five and a half *braccia* tall (321 cm.). The six seated figures at the mezzanine level were to be four and a half *braccia* tall (262.8 cm.). However, Domenico Buonisegni had notified Michelangelo earlier that Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici was expecting a façade with four standing figures in the lower register (from left to right *Sts. Paul, Peter, John the Baptist and Lawrence*), four seated Evangelists in the middle register (from left to right *Mark, Matthew, John and Luke*) and two Medici *Saints* in the top register (on the left *Damiano*, and on the right *Cosimo*); see the letter of 2 February 1517 in Poggi (1965), *Carteggio*, I, 246, no. CXCV; referred to by Contardi in his entry in Argan / Contardi 1990, 163, no. 7. See also the entry on the San Lorenzo façade in Argan / Contardi 1990, 81-85 (Argan) and 161-171 (Contardi). Great attention was paid to the exact location of each *Saint* on this
Lorenzo’s Façade for the Cathedral of Florence and Michelangelo’s _Apostle_ Statues
does not list the subject of the statues, the number of standing figures suggests that an _Apostle_ cycle was envisioned, in response to the series on the ephemeral façade of the Cathedral.

In his _Life of Michelangelo_, Vasari tells us that Lorenzo the Magnificent’s intention in establishing a school in the garden at (Piazza) San Marco, was to create a place of study for sculptors, for in Florence, sculpture was no longer on a par with painting.\(^{47}\) One way of reviving the allegedly waning art would be by erecting a façade for the principal church of Florence that could accommodate large quantities of sculpture – for Santa Maria del Fiore was, after all, the cradle of the Florentine school of sculpture. It is possible that the designs that were submitted in January of 1491 for the façade of Florence Cathedral were shelved because they failed to include significant amounts of sculpture. Luca Fancelli was, in my view, ordered later that year to design a church façade fraught with allusions to Roman triumph that would welcome a rich sculptural program – unlike Alberti’s great façades at Rimini and Mantua, and for Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Had Lorenzo seen such a façade to completion, he would have triumphed over Giovanni Rucellai in Giovanni’s role as patron of the façade of Santa Maria Novella, and he would have reinforced the Florence-Rome connection.

In the eighth book of _On the Art of Building in Ten Books_, on the ornament of public secular buildings, Alberti writes: “With sacred works, especially public ones, every art and industry must be employed to render them as ornate as possible: sacred works must be furnished for the façade. For San Lorenzo, see the forthcoming book on this church edited by Robert Gaston and Louis A. Waldman for Villa I Tatti, Florence (The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies).

\(^{47}\) See Vasari / Barocchi 1550/1568/1962, I, 9-12, especially 10 (_Life of Michelangelo, 1550 and 1568_); and Vasari / Bettarini 1550/1568/1976, IV, 124-126 (_Life of Tornigiano, 1550 and 1568_; Lorenzo’s garden is discussed at much greater length in the 1568 version of this “life”). Caroline Elam proved the existence of Lorenzo’s sculpture garden, presided over by Bertoldo di Giovanni – who is undoubtedly the “Bertoldo” who took measurements of the façade of Florence Cathedral back in 1476 on Lorenzo’s behalf: see Elam 1992; Draper 1992, 64-75; Kent 2004, 8, 156-157, nt. 35, and 158, nt. 43; Sénéchal 2007, 28-29, nt. 283; and Wallace 2010, 349, nt. 4 (for additional bibliography). For a statement from Lorenzo on the state of sculpture in Florence, see Kent 2004, 23-24.
gods, secular ones only for man”.

In the seventh book, on the ornament to sacred buildings, Alberti states: “Unless I am mistaken, the greatest ornament of all is the statue. It may serve as ornament in sacred and profane buildings, public and private, and makes a wonderful memorial to man or deed”. He tells us, additionally, that “The statue is thought to have originated along with religion”, thereby making statuary the ideally suited medium for representations of the Twelve who spread the new faith throughout the world.

5. The Witnesses to Michelangelo’s Apostle Contract

In April of 1503, Lorenzo de’ Medici’s protégé Michelangelo was entrusted with the entire cycle of Apostle statues for the Cathedral of Florence. The allocation of such a large number of statues to one artist

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48 “Nam sacra quidem opera, praesertim publica, ut reddas ornatissima, omni arte atque industria est elaborandum: superis ea enim parantur, profana vero nonnisi hominibus” (Bk. VIII, 1); Alberti 1988, 244; and Alberti / Orlandi 1966, II, 665. For Lorenzo il Magnifico and Alberti, see Kent 2004.

49 “Sed omnium, ni fallor, egregius fuit usus statuarum. Ornamento enim veniunt et sacris et prophanis et publicis et privatis acificiis, mirificamque praestant memoriam cum hominum tum et rerum” (Bk. VII, 16); Alberti 1988, 240; Alberti / Orlandi 1966, II, 655. Alberti’s ideas on the sculptural decoration of a church are presented in book VI,3.

50 William Wallace reconstructs the family ties between Lorenzo and Michelangelo. Michelangelo’s mother was the daughter of Neri del Sera and Bonda Rucellai, a cousin of Bernardo Rucellai. In 1466, Bernardo married Nannina (Lucrezia) de’ Medici, the daughter of Piero de’ Medici (the Gouty) and the sister of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Such links were more meaningful in 15th and 16th century Florence than they are today: see Wallace 1992, 152; and Wallace 2010, 33-34 and 346-347, nt. 16. Kent 2004, 8-9 and 158, nt. 43, is highly skeptical of the importance of the ties adduced by Wallace. For Lorenzo and Michelangelo, see Vasari / Barocchi 1962, I, 9-13 (with Barocchi’s important annotations); Conditi 1998, 10-16; and Hatfield 2002, 145-151. For Lorenzo’s role in nurturing Michelangelo’s genius as a sculptor, as reconstructed by Vasari, see Weil-Garris Brandt 1992, 25-27. For Lorenzo de’ Medici’s Garden at Piazza San Marco, see above. We note that the house that was to be built by Cronaca for Michelangelo on Borgo Pinti, opposite the convent of Cestello (which subsequently became Santa Maria Maddalena de’ Pazzi), in partial payment for Michelangelo’s work on the Apostle statues, was to be erected in the area east of Piazza SS. Annunziata that was selected by Lorenzo for urban renewal; for the latter see Elam 1978; Elam, 1994; Elam 1996b; and Kent 2004, 93-96.
without organizing a competition is unusual, and unlike the traditional practice of striving for as large a consensus as possible at the *Opera del Duomo*. These circumstances smack of autocracy and could hence point

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51 On the civic reasons for organizing competitions at the *Opera del Duomo*, see Haines 1994a, 44. Being somewhat familiar with Michelangelo’s character and temperament, we cannot exclude the possibility that the sculptor challenged the *Opera* to allot him the commission for all twelve statues in one sweep, instead of ordering them piecemeal or dividing the blocks amongst several artists. In fact, Pliny reminds us that: “In the case of certain masterpieces, the very number of the collaborators is an obstacle to their individual fame, since neither can one man take to himself the whole glory, nor have a number so great a claim to honour” (“Nec deinde multo plurium fama est, quorumdam claritati in operibus eximis obstante numero artificum, quoniam nec unus occupat gloriam nec plures pariter nuncupari possunt”; Pliny 1896/1968, 208-209). In 1517, Michelangelo would resist sharing the commission for sculpture for the new façade of San Lorenzo with Jacopo Sansovino: see Poggi 1965, *Carteggio*, I, 291, no. CCXXXI (letter of 30 June 1517 from Jacopo Sansovino in Florence to Michelangelo in Carrara); referred to by Millon 1988, 5. The allocation of all the statues to one sculptor guaranteed a unity of conception, style and execution to the cycle. The *Opera del Duomo* also strove for homogeneity when it allotted all but two of the sixteen statuettes for the niches inside the main portal of the *Duomo* to Francesco Sellaio in 1363-67 and 1376-77; see Kreytenberg 1981, 3. As with Michelangelo’s commission, work on that Trecento cycle would have progressed more rapidly had the project been divided among different sculptors. In 1387-90, Piero di Giovanni Tedesco (and his workshop) carved at least fourteen new statuettes for the same location; however, these statues were designed by the painters Lorenzo di Bicci, Agnolo Gaddi and Spinello Aretino; see Kreytenberg 1981, 7. *Varietà* was obviously desired, as the drawings could easily have been obtained from a single painter. Michelangelo, on the other hand, could supply the required amount of *varietà* through his mastery of *contrapposto*. It is also interesting to observe the notion of stylistic unity on the Campanile of Florence Cathedral: the Trecento *Prophets* and *Sibyls* executed by Andrea Pisano and his workshop were kept together on two faces of the bell-tower, separate from the Quattrocento statues. On the other hand, monumental *Prophets* were ordered piecemeal from different sculptors during the first half of the 15th century for the façade and belfry of the *Duomo* (though most orders went to Donatello), and the four early 15th century over life-sized seated *Evangelists* for the façade were ordered from four sculptors in order to get these competing artists to deliver the best work possible. There was no need to push the author of the colossal *David* in this way. At Orsanmichele, where competing guilds commissioned competing artists to provide statues for the niches in their care over a much longer period of time, there is obviously great stylistic diversity on each face of the building. Cycles of *Apostle* statues were often commissioned from one workshop, witness the Trecento group for Siena.
to Medicean behind the scenes involvement. In fact, three of the men who witnessed Michelangelo’s *Apostle* contract were perfectly cognizant of Lorenzo’s *politique culturelle*. The first was Lorenzo’s favorite architect, Giuliano da Sangallo, who was well aware of his late patron’s wish to provide a façade for Santa Maria del Fiore (although Giuliano was absent from the deliberation of January 1491). Sangallo’s involvement with the Cathedral Board of Works goes back many years (though Giuliano had no ties to the Cathedral in 1503). How important was Sangallo, both as

Cathedral, the statuettes at the top of Orcagna’s tabernacle at Orsanmichele, the delle Masegne group for the basilica of San Marco in Venice, the (lost) group ascribed to Dello Delli in San Egidio in Florence, the group planned by Francesco di Giorgio Martini for Siena Cathedral, and Ammannati’s over life-sized stucco group for the Baptistery of Florence.

However, we should note that the Republican Signoria did not announce a competition in 1504 before allotting to Michelangelo the commission for the mural depicting the *Battle of Cassina* for the Hall of the Great Council in the Palazzo della Signoria (Florence).

On December 24th, 1485, Giuliano da Sangallo was paid for a wood ornament for the high-altar: see Fabriczy 1902, 3 and 16, no. 9; Poggi 1909/1988, I, 243, no. 1207; Vasie Vatovec 1994, 76, nt. 30; Elam 1996b and Pagliara 2000. In May of 1488, Giuliano was offered but eventually refused the prestigious position of *Capomastro* of the *Opera del Duomo*. He was asked to replace Giuliano da Maiano, another Laurentian protégé, who had inflicted major damage (*detrimento maximo*) to the Cathedral’s Board of Works – of which Maiano was *Capomastro* since April of 1477 – as a result of Maiano’s many absences; Fabriczy 1902, 4 and 17, no. 11; Fabriczy 1903, 146 and 153, no. 25; Vasie Vatovec 1994, 66; and Kent 2004, 90. Past service to the Medici did not prevent Sangallo from working for the Florentine Republic, as he became its directing engineer of fortifications in November of 1497 and *Capomastro* of the Palazzo della Signoria in June of 1503, shortly after the *Apostle* contract was signed; see Fabriczy 1902, 7, 9 and 41, no. 10. For Sangallo see also Borsi 1985; Günther 1988, 104-138; Pacciani 1998, 347-357; Pagliara 2000; and the literature cited above on Lorenzo de’ Medici’s expertise in architectural matters. Caroline Elam notes that: “Artists were above or outside the political mêlée, acceptable to and prepared to work for patrons of any persuasion or status, provided that the terms and opportunities were right. Indeed, Alberti himself, in his *Treatise on Architecture*, pragmatically gives advice to the architect on how to build for tyrants, princes and citizens of republics with apparent impartiality. And the career of Michelangelo, who lived through and produced painting, sculpture and architecture for all the changing political regimes in Renaissance Florence, both Medicean and republican, […] shows that even the personal political loyalties of artists could easily be overlooked by those who appreciated their talents”; Elam 1988, 813. Sangallo’s work on Palazzo Strozzi (initiated in 1489), a
sculptor and as *inventor* of sculpture, for Michelangelo? Additionally, to what degree did Giuliano’s thoughts concerning the integration of sculpture in architecture inform the younger artist’s ideas for the *Apostle* statues? Giuliano, or the second witness to the contract, the *Capomaestro* of Florence Cathedral Simone del Pollaiuolo, known as *il Cronaca* (who was present at the deliberation of January 1491), were perfectly equipped to provide a façade *all’antica* for Santa Maria del Fiore that could accommodate Michelangelo’s cycle of statues. Or, Sangallo and Cronaca project that competed with Medicean – and in particular Laurentian – achievements in the area of architecture, did not loosen the bonds tying Lorenzo to this outstanding architect.


55 Neither Sangallo nor Cronaca participated in the 1490-1491 façade competition, but Cronaca was a member of the jury in January of 1491. The designs Giuliano da Sangallo (died on October 20th, 1516) submitted in 1516 for the façade for San Lorenzo are particularly rich with sculpture. For the six drawings in the Uffizi (Florence) that are attributed to Giuliano da Sangallo and are connected to the façade competition for San Lorenzo, see Marchini, 1942, 69-77 and 100-101; Borsi 1985, 468-491; Millon, 1988, 6 and 79-83, figs. 8-12; Bruschi 1994, 164; Elam 1996b; Elam 2002, 215-216; and Pagliara 2000. Three of these drawings were recycled from earlier projects tied to Giuliano della Rovere (Uffizi 277A, 278A and 279A) and three were freshly composed for the San Lorenzo project (Uffizi 276A, 280A and 281A). This was established more than half a century ago by Richard Pommer, *Drawings for the façade of San Lorenzo by Giuliano da Sangallo, and related drawings*, New York University: Master of Arts thesis, 1957; I was not able to consult this thesis. Many scholars have correctly noted that Michelangelo used these drawings as the springboard for his first ideas for the façade of San Lorenzo. In fact, both Sangallo and Cronaca had a profound impact upon Michelangelo’s early architecture. Additionally, Cronaca was, like Sangallo, knowledgeable in matters pertaining to sculpture. He is referred to in his will of September 1508 as: “Architector ac Sculptor excellentissimus” (Fabriczy 1906, 68-69, no. 12). See also Pacciani 1994, 13 and 17. Interestingly, Luca Fancelli – who built the model for the façade of Florence Cathedral in late 1491 that in my view inspired the sculptor Jacopo Sansovino’s temporary façade elevation of 1515 – was also active as a sculptor. Giuliano da Sangallo occupies an ambiguous position in the history of the *Apostle* project. According to Vasari, when Michelangelo was called to Rome in early 1505 by Pope Julius II to begin work on the *Julius Tomb*, to Bologna in November of 1506 to produce the colossal bronze *Julius II*, and to Rome in early 1508 to paint the *Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel*, it was on the recommendation
could jointly design a new façade for Santa Maria del Fiore, perhaps inspired by Luca Fancelli’s model of 1491.\textsuperscript{56} It is worth noting that Cronaca had almost certainly enjoyed the support of Lorenzo \textit{il Magnifico}.\textsuperscript{57}

of his friend Giuliano da Sangallo. Although these papal assignments strongly interfered with Michelangelo’s commission for twelve \textit{Apostle} statues, Giuliano’s interventions need not exclude the possibility that the \textit{Apostle} project was a Medicean endeavor. Giuliano wanted to serve the Pope as well as he possibly could – despite the recent setbacks he had suffered at court as a result of the stylistic revolution implemented by Bramante. He did so by recommending whom he thought was best qualified to carry out these papal projects.

\textsuperscript{56} Giuliano da Sangallo and Simone del Pollaiuolo knew each other well over a decade before the \textit{Apostle} contract was drawn up. In 1489, Sangallo was asked to produce a wooden model for Filippo Strozzi’s new palace in Florence, for which building Cronaca was engaged by Strozzi as \textit{maestro degli scarpelli} (chief stonecutter) in February of 1490 and – eventually – as \textit{Capomaestro} (possibly as early as February of 1490, and certainly from 1497; work on the first phase of the building came to a halt in October of 1504): see Fabriczy 1902, 5; Fabriczy 1906, 45; Goldthwaite 1973, 123-135; Lillie 1994; Pacciani 1994, 13, 16-18 and 31-34; Elam 1996a; and Elam 1996b. Additionally, in 1493, Sangallo collaborated with Cronaca in designing the vestibule – with its powerful, coffered barrel-vault supported by freestanding Corinthian columns – to the Sacristy of Santo Spirito (Florence). After the Medici were ousted in November of 1494, Sangallo entered the service of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere (the future Pope Julius II) and Cronaca became the leading designer of architecture in Florence. Cronaca was \textit{Capomaestro} of the Palazzo della Signoria during the construction of the Hall of the Great Council in the early years of the Florentine Republic (July 1495 to December 1496), and from June 1495 until his death in September of 1508, Cronaca was \textit{Capomaestro} at Florence Cathedral: see Fabriczy 1902, 6; Fabriczy 1906, 45-46 and 65-66, no. 7; Hollingsworth 1984, 387-390 and 400-401; Günther 1988, 104-138; Pacciani 1994, 13; Elam 1996a; and Pacciani 1998, 357-364. Cronaca’s and/or Sangallo’s close personal relations to members of the Strozzi family may have benefitted Michelangelo. Hirst 1994, 17, notes that: “It is probable that Michelangelo’s earliest large marble statue, a Hercules over two metres high, was commissioned by Piero [di Lorenzo de’ Medici] and, after his fall from power in 1494, remained in the artist’s possession, only later passing to members of the Strozzi family”. Hirst 1994, 72, nt. 1 observes that a letter of: “Lorenzo Strozzi’s to Buonarrotto Buonarroti of 20 June 1506 […] suggests that the Strozzi owned the \textit{Hercules} by 1506”. See also Kent 2004, 9.

\textsuperscript{57} Lorenzo de’ Medici served from 1487 until his death in 1492 as \textit{Operaio} of the fabric of San Salvatore al Monte (Florence). This Franciscan observant church erected from circa 1490 to 1504 is attributed to Cronaca by Vasari, an attribution that is now widely accepted; see Pacciani 1992a; Pacciani 1992b, 158-159, 164
The third witness to Michelangelo’s contract was Niccolò Michelozzi (December 1444 – January 1526) in his role as Chancellor of the Arte della Lana, the guild that oversaw – through its Operai – the erection, maintenance and decoration of Florence Cathedral. We note that it is highly unusual to have the Chancellor of the Wool Guild be present at the signing of a contract for work that is to be done at the Cathedral of Florence, and that it was likewise unusual to have Lana Consuls be present on such an occasion. Niccolo had served as Chancellor of the Wool Guild since July 9th, 1475, and obtained this position through the intervention of his master Lorenzo the Magnificent. He was the son of Michelozzo di Bartolomeo Michelozzi, the favorite architect of Lorenzo’s grandfather Cosimo de’ Medici. In light of his father’s outstanding achievements in the fields of sculpture and architecture and his exposure to the Medici and their circle, it is possible that Niccolò had an interest in art and architecture. After serving first as secretary to Piero de’ Medici (the Gouty), and then as private secretary to Piero’s son Lorenzo il Magnifico from July of 1471 until Lorenzo’s death in April of 1492, Niccolò Michelozzi became the private secretary of Lorenzo’s eldest son Piero. Michelozzi was imprisoned for a short period following the expulsion of the Medici from Florence in November of 1494, because of his pro-Medicean stance. In 1496 however, he was firmly back in the saddle, serving as Proconsul in the Guild of Judges and Notaries – the guild Niccolò had matriculated in as a youth. After the return of the Medici to Florence in September of 1512, Niccolò Michelozzi succeeded Niccolò Machiavelli in November as Chancellor of Florence, a position he would occupy until 1520. He obtained tax concessions and kept the ruler of Florence, Lorenzo il Magnifico’s son Giuliano de’ Medici, informed of the activities of the Signoria and the Dieci di Balia. When Giuliano left for Rome following the election of his brother Giovanni as Pope, he sent instructions to Niccolò regarding appointments to office and matters of public policy. When Lorenzo de’ Medici – future Duke of Urbino – succeeded his uncle Giuliano at the

and 168; Elam 1996a; and Kent 2004, 63-64, and 184, nt. 104. If correct, Lorenzo certainly played an important role in Cronaca’s appointment as architect of San Salvatore al Monte, considering il Magnifico’s profound interest in architectural matters.

58 He would serve again as Proconsul of the Guild of Judges and Notaries in 1501, 1513, and 1520.
head of Florence in August of 1513, Pope Leo X suggested that Lorenzo rely upon Niccolò’s services, in order to remain informed of the various undercurrents of public opinion. Leo assured his nephew that he could trust the judgment and discretion of their loyal friend in all matters. However, Lorenzo soon had Ser Niccolò replaced as secretary for secret government business and the handling of petitions.59

The evidence proves that Ser Niccolò Michelozzi – who owed his family’s rise to patrician status to the patronage of the Medici – remained loyal to the Medici during their eighteen-year exile from Florence (November 1494 to September 1512). The fact that Niccolò and his brother the Cathedral Canon Bernardo Michelozzi were amply rewarded once the Medici regained power in 1512, strongly suggests that the Michelozzi were conducting pro-Medicean policies during the Florentine Republic.60 Although the Michelozzi brothers were in positions to endorse a pro-Medicean commission for the principal church of Florence, it is unlikely that they acted alone in 1503. Rather, I suggest that Cardinal Giovanni de’ Medici, then living in exile in Rome, launched the Apostolic project in order to kick-start the building of a Laurentian façade for the Cathedral of Florence.

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59 As Lorenzo il Magnifico’s private secretary, Ser Niccolò had asked Giovanni di Francesco Zati in 1476 to send the measurements of a church façade (which we now know to be the façade of Florence Cathedral) to Lorenzo (see above). Following the death of his father Lorenzo, Piero de’ Medici ordered Ser Niccolò to accompany his brother, the young Cardinal Giovanni de’ Medici, to the conclave in July of 1492. Niccolò, who had acquired strong diplomatic skills under Lorenzo, had recently served as ambassador in Rome from November of 1489 to March of 1490. For Niccolò Michelozzi, see Torre 1902, 716-717 and 719; Richards 1932, 32, 34-35, 90 and 240-241; Cosenza 1962, V, 1177-1178; Borsook 1973, 151; Fubini 1977, I, 108-109; Isenberg 1982; Viti 1986 (who offers a sharp critique of Isenberg); Butters 1985, 203, 208-209, 220-222 and 231; Kent 2001, 346 and 349; and Kent 2004, 6, 11, 17, 50, 68, 82, 85-86, 105, 127, 133-134, and 139.

60 Ser Bernardo Michelozzi had been the tutor of Lorenzo de’ Medici’s sons Piero and Giovanni. Lorenzo almost certainly had something to do with Bernardo’s elevation to the rank of Canon of Santa Maria del Fiore in 1489, the year in which Giovanni de’ Medici was raised to the purple. Bernardo became Giovanni’s cameriere segreto and referendario apostolico when the latter was elected Pope in 1513. He was made Bishop of Forlì in 1516, and died in March of 1519. For his life and interest in classical studies, see Salvini 1782, 62, no. 439; Torre 1902, 774; Picotti 1928, 12-16; Cosenza 1962, V, 1177; Borsook 1973, 145-197; and Kent 2001, 354.
6. Giovanni de’ Medici’s and Lorenzo the Magnificent’s Ties to the Cathedral of Florence

Giovanni’s career began, more or less, at Santa Maria del Fiore. Lorenzo de Medici’s second son became a Canon of Florence Cathedral in November of 1483, and renounced his title in March of 1487, since it offered him few advantages.\(^\text{61}\) Two years later – on March 9\(^{\text{th}}\), 1489 – Giovanni was raised to the purple by Pope Innocent VIII, an advance in dignity that Lorenzo considered: “The greatest achievement of our house”\(^\text{,62}\). This election, which offered Florence both important political and economic advantages, greatly increased the power and prestige of the Medici family. Although Giovanni’s election was to be kept secret, as he was only thirteen years of age, news of the event spread through Florence on the following day. On that day, March 10\(^{\text{th}}\), the Canons of Florence Cathedral designated the young Cardinal as their protector. Significantly, Lorenzo il Magnifico obtained a copy of the bull raising Giovanni to the cardinalate on March 25\(^{\text{th}}\), 1489 – the first day of the Florentine New Year and the feast-day of Santa Maria del Fiore (as March 25\(^{\text{th}}\) marks the Feast of the Annunciation). Giovanni was finally officially raised to the purple on March 9\(^{\text{th}}\), 1492, and became – once again – a Canon of Santa Maria del Fiore on May 27\(^{\text{th}}\). He eventually relinquished his title and claimed a new one on May 7\(^{\text{th}}\), 1506, during his Florentine exile.

Lorenzo de’ Medici’s growing interest in guiding the construction and embellishment of Santa Maria del Fiore coincided with his son’s elevation to the cardinalate in March of 1489, which accomplishment amounted to a confirmation of Lorenzo’s tightening grip in matters both political and ecclesiastical in Florence, Tuscany and Rome. In fact, Florence Cathedral itself occupies an important place in the ascendancy of Lorenzo. On Easter Sunday, April 26\(^{\text{th}}\), 1478, Lorenzo was wounded in an attempt that was made upon his life during high mass inside

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\(^{61}\) For this and the following information concerning the young Giovanni de’ Medici, see Picotti 1928. See also Salvini 1782, 59-60, no. 430; Bizzocchi 1984, 281; Bizzocchi 1987, 161-163, 178, and 343-347; Bullard 1994, 125-140; and Polizzotto 1994, 339-340.

\(^{62}\) Letter of 11 March 1489 from Lorenzo to his envoy Giovanni Lanfredini in Rome; in Medici 1977, 663; cited by Kent 1994, 44, nt. 4; and Kent 2004, 72. This letter is also mentioned by Roscoe 1808, I, 21.
Florence Cathedral, and his younger brother Giuliano who accompanied him was murdered. The church that almost became the site of Lorenzo’s martyrdom offered him his salvation, as he managed to lock himself up in the north sacristy, the Sagrestia delle Messe, to protect himself from his aggressors. The enthroned St. Zenobius, the other Patron Saint of Florence (besides St. John the Baptist), whose image is so splendidly rendered inside the sacristy with intarsia in the panel opposite the entrance, offered the wounded Lorenzo his blessing as he watched over him.\(^63\) The response to the assassination attempt on the part of Lorenzo and his followers was severe. It enabled Lorenzo to rid himself of some of his fiercest enemies and thereby consolidate his power both in and outside of Florence.\(^64\)

Significantly, Lorenzo was spoken of in certain circles as a Christ-like figure.\(^65\) By symbolically restoring the Church by providing a façade for the Cathedral of Florence, Lorenzo – to carry on the Christ-like parallel – would be fulfilling his divine mission.\(^66\) Lorenzo also aimed to please his in-law, Pope Innocent VIII (died July 25\(^{th}\), 1492), who, through his recently established family ties to Lorenzo, had raised the latter’s status appreciably and went on to elevate the young Giovanni de’ Medici to the purple.\(^67\)

The evidence suggests that – aside from the façade project of 1491, which constituted the second attempt we know of on the part of

\(^{63}\) Haines 1994a, 44; Kent 2001, 365; and Kent 2004, 103. The Apostile commission was awarded to Michelangelo two days before the 25\(^{th}\) anniversary of the attempt that was made upon Lorenzo’s life inside the Cathedral of Florence.

\(^{64}\) For a discussion of the conspiracy against Lorenzo and Giuliano, and its aftermath, see Martines 2003; and Najemy 2006, 352-361.

\(^{65}\) For the holiness of Lorenzo, see Kent 1994, 55-57; and Kent 2004, 62-65, and 67.

\(^{66}\) He would also be honoring the memory of his mother Lucrezia Tornabuoni, who was especially devoted to Our Lady, and his late brother Giuliano, who was murdered inside the Cathedral – a martyr for Florence, in the view of pro-Mediceans. For Lorenzo and Lucrezia Tornabuoni, see Kent 1997. Lorenzo had lost his mother on 25 March 1482, the feast of the Annunciation, which day was the feast day of the Cathedral of Florence and marked the beginning of the Florentine new year. The date of Lucrezia’s death is pregnant with symbolic meaning. Kent 1997, 27; and Kent 2001, 343, notes that an ex-voto of Lucrezia stood inside Santa Maria del Fiore by early 1472, which is unusual, as few were displayed inside the Duomo.

Lorenzo to participate in providing a façade for the Cathedral of Florence – the Magnifico sponsored the carved memorials of 1490-1491 honoring the painter, and architect of the Cathedral’s Campanile, Giotto, and the Cathedral’s organist Antonio Squarcellari, in the first bay of the north and south aisles of Santa Maria del Fiore (fig. 1). It appears that

68 We do not have the contracts for these memorials. However, we have payments for both monuments from the Opera del Duomo to Benedetto da Maiano: see Carl 2006, 478 and 480. Vasari, who does not mention the monument to Squarcellari, states that Lorenzo de’ Medici allotted the commission for Giotto’s memorial in Santa Maria del Fiore to Benedetto da Maiano (Life of Benedetto da Maiano, 1550 and 1568; Vasari / Bettarini 1971, III, 526). In the Life of Giotto (1550 and 1568), Vasari says that the monument to Giotto was placed in Santa Maria del Fiore “by public decree and by the effort and particular affection” of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and that its accompanying epitaph was composed by Angelo Poliziano (Vasari / Bettarini 1967, II, 122). The inscription on the horizontal panel beneath the roundel holding the bust of Giotto is indeed by the poet and humanist Poliziano, another protégé of Lorenzo’s, while the one underneath the Squarcellari bust was composed by Lorenzo il Magnifico himself. Significantly, if these two memorials were sponsored by Lorenzo, as is almost certain, then he was following the lead of the Florentine Republic which in February 1447 granted the Operai permission to erect a sepulchral monument to Brunelleschi in the Cathedral including: “Testam et bustum Filippi ser Brunelleschi et eius ephytattium et alia ornamenta […] ad eius perpetuam famam providere”, in Poggi 1988, II, 130-131, nos. 2076-2078. As Haines 1994b, 71, notes, Brunelleschi’s epitaph, which was composed by the Chancellor of the Republic Carlo Marsuppini, states that the monument to Brunelleschi was ordered by the thankful fatherland. Significantly, the Squarcellari monument was removed from the Cathedral in August of 1495 on the orders of the Wool Guild, following the expulsion of the Medici in November of 1494; Brown 1994, 84; and Kent 2001, 344 and 367. The marble slab marking the spot where Giuliano de’ Medici had fallen in 1478, was also taken away; see the document of December 1495, in Poggi 1988, II, 168, no. 2272. Lorenzo de’ Medici was clearly interested in commemorating outstanding Florentine artists, witness the monument to the painter Filippo Lippi commissioned in 1488 from Filippo’s son Filippino for the Cathedral of Spoleto. Filippo Lippi’s monument consists of a horizontal panel with an inscription in Latin composed by Poliziano, topped by a roundel containing a bust, and Lorenzo de’ Medici is named in the dedication as its patron. For the monuments to Squarcellari, Giotto and Lippi, and for Lorenzo’s involvement in these projects, see Kent 2001, 364-365; and Carl 2006, 145-150; and for some additional bibliography, Sénéchal 2007, 40, nt. 352, and 43, nt. 353. The three aforementioned monuments in Florence were part of a program honoring famous men inside Santa Maria del Fiore; see the interesting article by Carl 2001, with much additional bibliography, and important observations on the monument to Lippi,
Lorenzo was also behind the initiative to cover with mosaic the vault of the central chapel of the central tribune of the Duomo. Indeed, Lorenzo was the principal citizen on the committee of May 18th, 1491, which ordered mosaic for the Chapel of St. Zenobius – a Saint who may have had special meaning to the Magnifico – and Vasari ascribes the interruption of this project to the death of Lorenzo. If this project was a Laurentian endeavor, its revival in 1504 could support my hypothesis that the Apostle project was likewise linked to Lorenzo (as an integral part of the plans for a new façade for the Cathedral) and revived by pro-Mediceans in 1503, during the Florentine Republic.69 One way of proclaiming around 1491 that Giovanni de’ Medici had risen to almost the highest echelon of ecclesiastical power, was by guiding the

whose remains Lorenzo wanted to bring to Florence so that Lippi could be included among the uomini famosi in Florence Cathedral (Lorenzo had earlier sought to obtain the remains of Dante, witness a letter of 1476 cited by Carl 2001, 130-131, nt. 6). See also Kent 2004, 40.

Lorenzo was one of three provveditori of the Arte della Lana who sat on May 18th, 1491 with the Operai; see Poggi 1909/1988, I, 193, no. 967. In his Life of Domenico Ghirlandaio (1550 and 1568), Vasari ascribes the interruption of work on the chapel of St. Zenobius to the death of Lorenzo de’ Medici; Vasari / Bettarini 1971, III, 494. In his Life of Gherardo (di Giovanni) (1550 and 1568), Vasari states that Lorenzo de’ Medici championed Gherardo and, after having Gherardo form a partnership with Domenico Ghirlandaio, he had the Cathedral Operai commission both artists to decorate the chapels around the crossing with mosaic, beginning with the Chapel of St. Zenobius. According to that Life, this project was interrupted when Gherardo died (in 1497, Vasari / Bettarini 1971, III, 471). On the commission for mosaics for the chapel of St. Zenobius, see Poggi 1909/1988, I, CII-CV; Vasic Vatovec 1991, 331; Haines 1994a, 38-54, especially 43-45; and Kent 2001, 365-366, for Lorenzo il Magnifico’s involvement. See Haines 1983, 147; and Haines 1994a, 38-42, both for the dedication of the main chapel of the east tribune and for additional literature on Florence’s first archbishop, St. Zenobius, to whom that chapel is dedicated. On the cult of the Saint, see also Benvenuti Papi, 1994, 257-290. As someone who was put in charge by his brother-in-law Rinaldo Orsini of the administration of the diocese of Florence, Lorenzo may have had an additional reason to identify with St. Zenobius and attach such importance to the Cathedral. Significantly, Lorenzo il Magnifico sought to have another former archbishop of Florence, namely Archbishop Antoninus (Antonino Pierozzi, 1446-1459), canonized in 1488 and 1489, during the papacy of Innocent VIII. Pierozzi was an extremely distinguished Observant Dominican theologian and a major reformer within the diocese, who was not a Medici stooge or even a member of the oligarchy; see Polizzotto 1992, 355-360; Kent 2004, 40; and Najemy 2006, 290.
completion and embellishment of the Cathedral. A new, Medicean façade including a monumental Apostle cycle would suggest elliptically, for reasons having to do with decorum, that Cardinal Giovanni was destined to become the successor of Peter. Thus, I propose that Cardinal Giovanni de’ Medici launched the Apostle project from Rome and that by doing so he was pursuing his father’s lead, thereby presenting himself as the medicus who would cure the ills of both the Church and Florence. That message would have been of particular relevance at the beginning of the new century.\footnote{On millenarianism in Florence, see Weinstein 1970, especially 159-184. As Bizzocchi 1987, 177, underlines, the possibility of influencing events in Florence and Rome turned ecclesiastical patronage into an essential component of Medici power. The Apostle commission was allotted to Michelangelo during the highly controversial reign of Pope Alexander VI Borgia (died August 1503) and in the wake of great political, social and religious tensions in Florence.}

As the most high ranking Florentine clergyman of his time and protector of the Chapter of Santa Maria del Fiore, Cardinal Giovanni had what it took to order a cycle of Apostle statues in 1503, through Ser Niccolò Michelozzi, for the Cathedral of Florence.\footnote{On Cardinal Giovanni’s (and his brother Giuliano’s) popularity among Florentines both in Rome and Florence around 1504, see Butters 1985, 76-78; Bizzocchi, 1987, 352-353; and Najemy 2006, 415-416. It is worth remembering that Cardinal Giovanni de’ Medici’s uncle Rinaldo Orsini served as Archbishop of Florence from 1474 to 1508, although we know that the Archbishop of Florence traditionally had little to say about the decoration of his church. Rinaldo was absent from Florence from 1474 onwards, and in January 1503, he and other members of the Orsini family were thrown in prison in Rome on the orders of Pope Alexander VI, following the conspiracy at Magione (October 1502) against the life of Alexander’s son Cesare Borgia; see Pastor 1902, VI, 122-125. On Rinaldo Orsini, see also Butters 1985, 127-128; Bizzocchi 1987, 215-216; and Rolfi 1992, 54-55.} The Arte della Lana, the Opera del Duomo and the Chapter of Florence Cathedral were still stacked with members of the oligarchy, which had ruled during the period of Medici ascendancy.\footnote{Bizzocchi 1987, 91-94 and 176, observes that the chapter of Florence Cathedral included a cross-section of the city’s ruling class with special ties to the Medici. From 1417 up to the end of the century, four fifths of the 172 Canons of the Cathedral chapter belonged to the Florentine aristocracy, and almost all the other Canons were their clients. See also Kent 2001, 354-355, who notes that: “The Florentine canons, […] were increasingly Medicean, indeed Laurentian, figures”. On the chapter’s self-identification with the Curia, see Bizzocchi 1987, 176-177. The following men served as Opere of Florence Cathedral when the Apostle contract was}
ongoing construction and embellishment of Santa Maria del Fiore, could be interpreted as a symbolic victory over the Republican government of Florence. Giovanni’s prestige during these years of exile should not be underestimated, as the election in 1508 of his cousin Cosimo de’ Pazzi as the new Archbishop of Florence – despite resistance on the part of the Soderini government – reminds us.\(^73\)

7. Timing is Everything

The moment to launch the Apostle project was well chosen, as Michelangelo was already in the employ of the Opera del Duomo, distinguishing himself as the author of the colossal David. The fact that all twelve statues were assigned to a sculptor who did not have a bottega, is proof both of the unusual confidence the Operai had in Michelangelo and of their desire to keep him in their employ for many years to come.

\(^73\) For Cosimo de’ Pazzi’s election, see Bullard 1980, 58; Butters 1985, 127-129 and 138; and Lowe 1993, 177; and Najemy 2006, 416-418. Cosimo de’ Pazzi (1466-1513), Bishop of Arezzo until 1508, was the son of Lorenzo il Magnifico’s sister Bianca de’ Medici and thus the cousin of Cardinal Giovanni de’ Medici. Pazzi was close to Bernardo Rucellai, who strongly opposed the Soderini government. Both Rucellai and Pazzi favored Filippo Strozzi the Younger’s marriage to Clarice de’ Medici, the daughter of Piero di Lorenzo de’ Medici and consequently the niece of Cardinal Giovanni. The marriage of Filippo and Clarice and Pazzi’s election as Archbishop of Florence constituted significant triumphs for Cardinal Giovanni de’ Medici.
Additionally, the Dominican friar from Ferrara and later Medici adversary Girolamo Savonarola (who was executed in May of 1498) had proclaimed Christ King of Florence – for with Christ as King, no mortal could rule Florence autocratically – thereby making a cycle of the Witnesses of Christ for the principal church of Florence particularly desirable during this period in the life of the Republic. The Medici were very good at recycling Republican themes and images, witness their embrace of the heroes David and Hercules.

Significantly, plans were underway in nearby rival Siena to replace the 14th century over life-sized marble Apostles on the Cathedral’s nave piers with a series of bronze Apostle statues. The Sienese project could always be used by the Operai of the Cathedral of Florence to argue in favor of launching the Apostle commission for Santa Maria del Fiore, for competition between the Operai at these two fabrics was fierce. It is worth recalling that a document of April 1st, 1300, states that the new

74 For Savonarola, see Weinstein 1970; Polizzotto 1994; Martines 2006; and Najemy 2006. Polizzotto states that Savonarola’s attacks on the Medici began in 1495.

75 A document dated July 24th, 1505, states that Francesco di Giorgio Martini left a design for bronze Apostle statues that were to be placed on the columns of Siena Cathedral. The latter are almost certainly the piers of the nave, where the Trecento cycle of marble Apostle statues stood. On October 11th, 1505, Francesco’s former collaborator Giacomo Cozzarelli was commissioned to execute the statues after Francesco’s design. These documents are published by Milanesi 1854-1856/1969, III, 27-29, no. 7; Weller 1943, 396, nos. CXLIV-CXLV; and Bellosi 1993, 535. Although we do not know when Francesco produced his scheme, its existence proves that plans to execute a new series of Apostle statues for the Cathedral of Siena were underway by November of 1501, as Francesco died that month. Rumors concerning this new cycle could have easily reached the Operai in Florence, especially since Michelangelo was engaged with work on a series of statues for the Piccolomini Altar in Siena Cathedral, commissioned on June 5th, 1501. In fact, it is possible that Michelangelo met Francesco di Giorgio, the Capomaestro of Siena Cathedral, if the younger artist went to Siena to measure the niches of the Piccolomini Altar, as he was ordered to do: see Mancusi-Ungaro 1971, 67, no. 4. Significantly, Siena provided an important precedent for the placement of over life-sized Apostle statuary inside a church. The bronze Apostles ordered from Cozzarelli were never executed. Instead, Giuseppe Mazzuoli the Elder carved a cycle of marble Apostle statues for the nave piers between 1679 and 1695 (they are now in Brompton Oratory, London); see Weller 1943, 42-43; Carli 1980, 46 and 49; and Bellosi 1993, 517. For the Trecento cycle of Apostle statues that still stood inside Siena Cathedral at the beginning of the 16th century, see Carli 1968, 3-20; and Middeldorf-Kosegarten 1984, 135 and 354, no. XX.
Cathedral of Florence was to become the most beautiful and honorable church of all of Tuscany.\textsuperscript{76}

Competition with the rival Calimala guild may have also helped to launch the sculptural program for Santa Maria del Fiore, for the Calimala had recently ordered monumental statuary for the south façade of the Baptistery, which building stood magnificently finished opposite the two thirds unfinished façade of the Cathedral of Florence. Orders for new statuary for the remaining two façades of bel San Giovanni, as the Baptistery was fondly called, were likely to follow.\textsuperscript{77}

The timing of the Apostle project was also politically sound,\textsuperscript{78} for the political fortunes of the ottimati – the rich upper crust of Florentine society – were on the rise since the beginning of 1502, after almost a decade of stagnation.\textsuperscript{79} Many optimates expected their political and fiscal powers to increase over the ensuing years. The revival of the sculptural program for Santa Maria del Fiore could be interpreted as an expression of these hopes. The magnificence of the Cathedral could be seen as reflecting the power of the Arte della Lana – one of the seven major guilds in hands of the patricians – and of Florence, at a time when the prestige of the Wool Guild was in fact dwindling. The stature of the Arte della Lana would be enhanced by having some of its members supervise

\textsuperscript{76} “Comune et populus Florentie ex magnifico et visibili principio dicti operis ecclesiiam dicat et honorabilis templum alio quo sit in partibus Tuscie”; Gaye 1839, I, 446; Guasti 1887, no. 24; the latter cited by Haines 1996, 270, nt. 8.

\textsuperscript{77} The Romanesque Baptistery, then considered an ancient temple of Mars converted to Christianity, profoundly marked the appearance of Florence Cathedral. By appropriating the bulk, octagonal form (in the crossing), marble surface incrustation and lantern of the Baptistery, Santa Maria del Fiore assumed a Tuscan version of classical magnificenza and linked itself to the Church of the Patron Saint of Florence, St. John the Baptist. For the project for Cinquecento statuary for the façades of the Baptistery, see Pope-Hennessy 1963/1996, 448-449, 452 and 484-485.

\textsuperscript{78} The same observation is made by Spini 1964, 573. For the following, see Amy 1997, 315-318.

\textsuperscript{79} The role of these patricians in government was greatly reduced when the Great Council was established on December 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 1494. The ottimati resented having lost the right to determine Florentine policy, especially since they were expected to continue financing the government and fulfilling ambassadorial duties in foreign states; see Gilbert 1957, 187; Pesman Cooper 1967, 149; Gilbert 1968, 478; Butters 1985, 41-44; and Najemy 2006, 381-413.
the production of a fine cycle of statuary which could lead to the building of a great façade *all’antica* for the Cathedral – a point Cardinal Giovanni de’ Medici may have decided to exploit. The replacement of the 14th century statues above the doors of the Baptistery in the care of the Calimala guild would likewise constitute an expression of *ottimati* pride. Public commissions of this magnitude would proclaim that – after all the political, religious, social and economic turmoil of the past decade – all was once more well in Florence. The image of a vigorous Republic would thereby be presented to the Florentine people and the outside world. In fact, Michelangelo’s *Apostle* contract states that his statues would contribute to the: “Fame of the whole city”. Florence was anxious to demonstrate that it was in control of its political destiny, for less than two years earlier, foreign leaders had exerted pressure on the Republic to reform its government.\(^{80}\)

8. External interferences

If Cardinal Giovanni, Niccolò Michelozzi, and their accomplices, were indeed behind the *Apostle cum façade* project, they could expect little outright opposition from the Republican *Signoria* – in light of the conditions mentioned above and particularly in light of the fact that the west elevation of Santa Maria del Fiore remained in such a forlorn state. There was, however, a disturbing pattern of interference at the Cathedral on the part of the *Signoria*, and it began prior to the commission of April of 1503. Indeed, while Michelangelo was working on the colossal *David* that was ordered by the *Opera del Duomo* in August of 1501, the *Signoria* charged him in August of 1502 to produce an almost life-size bronze *David*, to be offered as a diplomatic gift to the Maréchal de Gié.\(^{81}\)

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80 Pesman Cooper 1978, 99; and Najemy 2006, 405.

81 The Maréchal Pierre de Rohan wanted to obtain a copy of Donatello’s bronze *David* (Museo Nazionale, Florence; then in the courtyard of the Palazzo della Signoria) by an artist otherwise unnamed. His request was transmitted by the Florentine Ambassadors in Lyon (France) to the Signoria on June 22nd, 1501. The Signoria allocated the commission to Michelangelo on August 12th, 1502, despite the fact that the artist had already taken on two other commissions (namely to carve fifteen under life-sized statues for the *Picolomini Altar* in Siena Cathedral, and the colossal *David* for the Cathedral of Florence) and was untried in the bronze medium. For recent literature on the bronze *David* ordered from Michelangelo, see Keizer 2008,
Additionally, once the colossus was completed, it was placed in front of
the Palazzo della Signoria, admittedly after a committee was formed in
January of 1504 to decide where the statue would best be installed –
however, we all know that committees can be manipulated. Also, several
months before the first block for an Apostle statue arrived in Florence in
December of 1504, Michelangelo was ordered to paint the Battle of
Cascina in the Hall of the Great Council of the Palazzo della Signoria. 82 The
persons overseeing the latter commission expected Michelangelo to
execute the mural with unprecedented sprezzatura, considering the
astounding progress he had made in carving the colossus. Finally, while
Michelangelo was at work on his first Apostle statue during the summer
of 1506, a large block of marble was discovered in Carrara that the
Gonfaloniere of Justice Piero Soderini intended to allot to Michelangelo. 83
By that time, however, the artist’s immediate future lay in the hands of
Pope Julius II, who had torn Michelangelo away from Florence in early
1505, and would do so a second time in late November 1506, following
Michelangelo’s flight from Rome in April. 84 How do we explain such
behavior? Did the Signoria have such an urgent need for work by this
truly outstanding artist that Michelangelo could repeatedly be pulled
away from his commissions for the Cathedral of Florence? Or were
these interventions on the part of the Republican Signoria politically
motivated?

Should the façade project fail to materialize, then the statues would be
installed inside the Cathedral, as they eventually were. Interestingly, the
major Florentine precedent for a cycle of over life-sized standing draped
statuary placed in niches inside a church was at the Medicean church of
San Lorenzo, the former Cathedral of Florence, which the Operai and
Canons of Santa Maria del Fiore could not afford to ignore. 85 By placing

668; and Wallace 2010, 351, nt. 30. For recent literature on the colossal marble
David, see Keizer 2008; and Wallace 2010, 350, nt. 13.
82 For recent literature on the commission for the battle scene, see Wallace 2010, 350,
nt. 15.
83 For my discussion of the evidence, which I brought to light in 1994, see Amy
1997, 148 and 155-156. This material is also discussed in Hirst 2000.
84 Amy 2000.
85 Saalman 1993, 175, believes that the niches the statues were placed in were
Michelozzo’s contribution to Brunelleschi’s interior. These niches are situated on
the end walls of the transept arms, near the corners, in the zone above the side
portals, and overlap the archivolts of the adjoining chapels. Cosimo de’ Medici
statuary in niches inside the Cathedral, a discreet Medicean imprimatur could still be established at Santa Maria del Fiore. The (lost) cycle of Evangelists at San Lorenzo was attributed to the Medicean protégé Donatello. By 1503, Lorenzo’s protégé Michelangelo was considered Donatello’s true heir.\footnote{86}{On Donatello’s presumed authorship of the program in the east end of San Lorenzo, centering on the tomb of Cosimo de’ Medici, see Lavin 1989/1993, 1-27. A number of Michelangelo’s ideas for the Apostle statues are indebted to Donatello; see Amy 1997, 468-473; and Amy 2006, 490-491 and 494-497.}

A twelve-year period was established for the realization of the Apostle project, at the rate of one completed statue per year. However, due to repeated interventions on the part of Pope Julius II, Michelangelo was only able to produce preparatory drawings for the Apostles and the unfinished statue of St. Matthew (figs. 3-4).\footnote{87}{Amy 2000.} This sad state of affairs could explain why not a single mention of plans for a new façade for the Cathedral of Florence has come to light for the first decade of the 16th century. The Apostle project remained in limbo for several years once Michelangelo left for Rome in early 1508 to start painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, until Jacopo Sansovino, newly arrived from Rome, was awarded the commission for his name saint St. James in June of 1511.\footnote{88}{Documents pertaining to the second stage of the Apostle project running from 1511 to 1518, are transcribed in Poggi 1988, II, 147-152, docs. 2159-2176 and 2178-2181; and in Poggi 1965, Carteggio, I, 200, doc. CLVIII.} Although the endeavor was by then undoubtedly envisioned as a group enterprise, Andrea Sansovino was only invited one year later, namely in June of 1512, to carve two Apostle statues for the Cathedral from the two remaining blocks that were ordered years earlier by Michelangelo (Andrea did not take on this assignment). There obviously was a need for a cycle of monumental Apostle statues at the Cathedral of Florence.

Significantly, the Medici were quick to pick up the project, following the collapse of the Republican government and their return from exile in September of 1512. This is noteworthy in light of the fact that the project initiated in 1502 for monumental statues for the top of the doors

acquired patronage rights over the transept of San Lorenzo in 1442. For the (lost) statues that were displayed in the transept arms of San Lorenzo, see Amy 1997, 470-472. The Medici exploited the competition between both institutions to get things passed both at the Cathedral and at San Lorenzo.
of the Baptistry, would remain interrupted for almost six decades, from 1511 onwards. The *Apostle* project proceeded when, one month later, Andrea Ferrucci was entrusted with the statue of his patron *Saint Andrew* in October of 1512. Following Giovanni de’ Medici’s elevation to the papacy in March of 1513, his name-saint *John the Evangelist* was commissioned from Benedetto da Rovezzano in September of 1513, to be carved from the last available block that was excavated for Michelangelo, and the first Pope, *St. Peter*, was ordered from Ferrucci in May of 1514. Interestingly, the commission for the *St. Peter* was subsequently awarded in January of 1515 to the young Medicean protégé Baccio Bandinelli, at the request of Pope Leo X’s brother Giuliano de’ Medici. In 1515, the *Apostle* cycle is finally well underway. 1515 is also the year when Sansovino’s ephemeral Laurentian façade incorporating twelve niches with over life-sized stucco *Apostle* statues is erected for the entry of Lorenzo *il Magnifico’s* son Pope Leo X, as a potential model – true to scale, and submitted for approval to all the citizens of Florence – for the bottom half of a façade all of marble.

Significantly, 1515 is also the year when Michelangelo’s unfinished *St. Matthew* comes back into the picture. A document dated December 5th, 1515 and recording costs that were incurred by the *Opera del Duomo* on the occasion of the celebration of Pope Leo X’s Florentine *entrata*, states that Piero del Lombardazzo and his companion carters were to be paid 47 lire *piccoli* for having transported spruce from the *Opera del Duomo* to the Cathedral, for having removed spruce from the hospitals of the *Amorbati* (the tainted), and for having hauled a large piece of marble (“*una bozza di marmo grande*”) blocked out (*abozzata*) some time ago by Michelangelo, from the courtyard of the *Sala del Papa* to the *Opera del Duomo* (appendix 1). Considering that there was no other large piece of

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89 Andrea Sansovino, who was given the commission for a marble *Baptism of Christ* in April of 1502, left for Rome after May 1505 to work on the tomb of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza (Santa Maria del Popolo); see Fabriczy 1906a, 98. Rustici was given the commission for a bronze group of *St. John the Baptist Preaching to a Levite and a Pharisee* in December of 1506. That group was installed on the north façade of the Baptistry in June of 1511. For these commissions, see Pope-Hennessy 1963/1996, 447-449 and 451-453; and Sénéchal 2007, 45-68, especially 45-47.

90 Settesoldi 1994, 126, no. 61.XXX and 132, no. XXX. I thank Lorenzo Fabbi of the Archivio dell’Opera del Duomo, Florence, for correcting and completing the transcription of this document and for checking the cross-references with me (appendix 2-4), seventeen years ago, and Rudolf de Smet of the Vrije Universiteit
marble in Florence at that time that was blocked out by Michelangelo, and considering the link to the *Opera del Duomo*, the document of December 1515 must refer to the unfinished *St. Matthew*. These conclusions are confirmed by a recently discovered document recording the same payment made to Piero del Lombardazzo for the transportation of the same amounts of spruce and for carting a roughed out marble *Apostle* (“unius Apostoli et seu boze marmoree”) from the *Sala del Papa* to the *Opera del Duomo* (appendix 2). The *Opera del Duomo* is the place where Michelangelo was ordered to carve the twelve *Apostle* statues, as per his contract of April 1503. That is where three blocks of marble for *Apostle* statues, including the block that was used for the *St. Matthew*, were delivered in March of 1506.91

9. The *Sala del Papa* and the Unfinished Statue of St. Matthew

The *Sala del Papa* was the apartment complex that was erected from 1418 to 1420 in the convent of Santa Maria Novella, the Dominican mother church of Florence, during the Florentine exile of Pope Martin V. As these apartments served as lodgings for the town’s most prominent guests, they were radically transformed over the years.92 The courtyard referred to in the document of 1515 was off the Via della Scala and at the foot of the staircase leading up to the papal apartments. Landucci tells us that it was the site of important interventions on the occasion of Pope Leo X’s Florentine entry in November of 1515.93 The Via della

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91 Amy 2000.
92 Paatz / Paatz 1952, III, 676; and Ciseri 1990, 130-131.
93 “A Santa Maria Novella e in più luoghi, disfeceo quella bellissima scala ch’andava in sulla Sala del Papa, e feciono di nuovo un’altra, che andava insino in sala l’uomo a cavallo, come si può vedere: e non bastò questo, che gittorno in terra le mura della
Scala was decorated for the papal *entrata* with columns, pilasters, triumphal arches and paintings (Landucci), conceived in large part by Baccio Bandinelli and carried out by many artists (Vasari).\(^{94}\)

It is certainly intriguing to find the *St. Matthew* in 1515 in the courtyard of the Sala del Papa, in light of what I have said about Giovanni de’ Medici’s possible behind the scenes involvement with the *Apostle* commission. However, we cannot be certain that the unfinished statue was seen there by the Pope, as the document of December 1515 is dated only two days after Leo X’s departure from Florence and refers to work that was by then completed. Unfortunately, we do not know when or why the block was brought to Santa Maria Novella, or exactly when it was removed. In fact, the last record we have concerning the block which would be used for the *St. Matthew* is dated March 27\(^{th}\), 1506; it states that three blocks for *Apostle* statues were transported from the Port of Signa to the *Opera del Duomo* in Florence.\(^{95}\) However, we have no absolute

corte e le porte; a molti dispiacque; e più rivoltorono drento molte stanze con molta grande spesa”: Landucci 1883, 359; Landucci 1927, 285. Payments for these works are published by Ciseri 1990. I find no mention of the roughed out block of marble in either the documents or the literary sources assembled by Ciseri. The roughed out block of marble is also not alluded to in Buonarroti Buonarroti’s letter of late December 1515 to his brother Michelangelo in Rome, describing the Pope’s *entrata*; see Poggi 1965, *Carteggio*, I, 184-185, no. CXLIV.

\(^{94}\) Vasari / Bettarini 1550/1568/1976, IV, 362-363 (*Life of Andrea del Sarto*, 1568). See also the fairly detailed description of the decorative apparatus in Landucci 1927, 283-284. Vasari’s attribution of the work on the Via della Scala to Bandinelli is supported by a document of December 8\(^{th}\), 1515; see Ciseri 1990, 272, no. XXXVII.

\(^{95}\) Amy 2000, 495-496 and 808. Lynn Catterson rejects my conclusion that the *St. Matthew* was carved from one of the three blocks of marble that arrived in Florence in March of 1506. Catterson argues that the first block for an *Apostle* statue, which arrived at the *Opera del Duomo* in December 1504 and was moved in January 1505 from the *Opera* to “Michelangelo’s house”, was not delivered to the house on the Borgo Pinti – near the Cistercian monastery of Cestello – that was built for the artist as partial compensation for his work on the *Apostle* statues, but was delivered instead to the place where Michelangelo lived when the *Apostle* contract was signed. Catterson claims that the block that arrived in Florence in December 1504 was used for the *St. Matthew*, for that block cannot – in her view – be the one that is referred to in a document of October 1512 as being near Cestello and needing to be transported to the nearby house of the sculptor Andrea Ferrucci, who was commissioned to carve an *Apostle* statue from it, for “most of the property originally intended for Michelangelo” on Borgo Pinti was bought on
proof that the *St. Matthew* was indeed carved at the *Opera del Duomo*, although the contract of 1503 specifies that the statues were to be produced there. (Since one block was delivered in January of 1505 to “Michelangelo’s house”, this clause in the contract was not adhered to). In other words, as Lynn Catterson recently observed, we cannot exclude the possibility that the *St. Matthew* was carved in the courtyard of the *Sala del Papa*. However, if Michelangelo did not carve the sculpture at Santa Maria Novella in 1506, there would be no reason to move it to that location, unless the plan was to show the *St. Matthew* to Pope Leo X. The

30 June 1512 by Ferrucci and thus “there would be no need to transport a block of marble anywhere” in 1512, for the “property in *Cestello* and Andrea’s house were one and the same place”. Catterson’s argument makes no sense; for how could a block intended for an *Apostle* statue be recorded near Cestello in 1512, if the block that was delivered in January 1505 to “Michelangelo’s house” was transported to another house than the one standing opposite Cestello? Since we know that Ferrucci carved his *St. Andrew* from the block mentioned in October 1512, Michelangelo – according to my reasoning – cannot possibly have used the block that arrived in Florence in December 1504 for his unfinished statue of *St. Matthew*. Lynn Catterson misinterprets the documentary evidence because she would like to date the unfinished statue of *St. Matthew* before the discovery of the *Laocoön* in January 1506, so that she can state that the *Matthew* “anticipates the *Laocoön* before its first public presentation”, instead of being influenced by it, as several scholars believe it was. By moving the carving of the *St. Matthew* to 1505, Catterson can argue that Michelangelo was able to arrive at a level of expression similar to the one we find in the *Laocoön* (that was officially discovered the following year), and thus, in Catterson’s view, Michelangelo may have carved the *Laocoön* as an antique forgery – which conclusion Catterson arrives at through a series of observations that shall not concern us at this time. However, for reasons of composition and style – to limit myself to these aspects of the sculpture group, which Catterson barely touches upon – the *Laocoön* cannot possibly have been produced by Michelangelo, and for reasons of time constraints, Michelangelo cannot possibly have carved such a highly intricate work in the late 1490’s, which is the period when Catterson believes the great marble group was created by Michelangelo. See Catterson 2005, 36-40. For some responses to Catterson’s hypothesis, see Shattuck 2005.

96 Jacopo Sansovino’s *St. James* was carved in part at the Hospital of Sant’Onofrio, and we know that the block for Andrea Ferrucci’s *St. Andrew* was delivered to Ferrucci’s house. However, if we assume that the *Saint Matthew* was carved at Santa Maria Novella, why was the unfinished statue left there until 1515 once it became perfectly clear in 1508, with the allotment of the papal project to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, that Michelangelo could no longer work on the *Apostle* project?
energy and expense that would be involved in transporting the
unfinished statue to Santa Maria Novella would pale in comparison with
the efforts and costs that went into the many other preparations for the
papal entry. The reason why the statue that remained two-thirds
unfinished may have been deemed worth showing to the Pope is that it
was considered an extraordinary work of art, as Raphael’s pen and ink
study of 1507 after the St. Matthew (British Museum, London), Rustici’s
Baptist Preaching to the Levite and the Pharisee that was installed on the north
façade of the Baptistery of Florence in 1511, and subsequent 16th century
works inspired by Michelangelo’s unfinished sculpture prove. 97 If
Giovanni de’ Medici was behind the Apostle commission, then he would
have had especially good reasons to wish to see the sculpture which he
had not had the opportunity to admire before. Pope Leo X could not
possibly go to the Opera del Duomo to see the St. Matthew and – because of
its unfinished state – the Apostle could not be exhibited at the Cathedral
or on one of the apparati that were temporarily erected for the papal
celebrations in the streets and squares of the city. As Vasari later noted,
unfinished work was reserved for the discerning eye of cognoscenti. 98 There
were few more appropriate places for an orderly examination of Michel-
angelo’s unfinished St. Matthew than in the cortile of the Sala del Papa. 99
However, it is possible that the St. Matthew was brought to the cortile at
Santa Maria Novella on the orders of the Opera del Duomo, in the hope
that Pope Leo would either command Michelangelo – then living in
Rome, and working on the Julius Tomb – to resume work on the Apostle
cycle, or direct other artists to bring the project – that was plagued by

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97 Raphael may have praised Michelangelo’s unfinished work at the papal court and
the Pope may have asked to see the St. Matthew. Although scholars occasionally
state that Raphael accompanied Pope Leo X on his trip, we have no evidence that
the artist traveled to Florence for the papal entrata; see Shearman 2003, 215. For
Raphael’s drawing, see Amy 1997, 479-484; Amy 2001, 149; and Chapman 2004,
214-215. For Rustici’s Baptist group, see above. For other works that were
influenced by Michelangelo’s St. Matthew, see Amy 1997, 484-497.

98 For interpretations of the St. Matthew’s state of non-finito, see Amy 1997, 551-608.

99 The apparato in Via della Scala included representations of the nine beatitudes;
Landucci 1927, 284. These are listed in Matthew 5.3-12; see Ciseri 1990, 128.
Michelangelo’s unfinished statue may have been intended as the climax following
one’s passage through the Via della Scala. After viewing the St. Matthew and
pondering the beatitudes listed by the Evangelist, the Pope could finally retreat to
his private quarters.
major setbacks, and in which the Medici were now explicitly involved – to conclusion.\textsuperscript{100} The cycle of over life-sized stucco Apostles on Sansovino’s ephemeral façade for Santa Maria del Fiore, may have been part of the same message, suggesting that the marble statues should be transferred to a new marble façade all’antica. It is worth noting, in light of this observation, that the two finished Apostle statues, by Benedetto da Rovezzano and Andrea Ferrucci respectively, were not installed inside the church or on the ephemeral façade for the papal visit.\textsuperscript{101} Once seen by the Pope, Michelangelo’s unfinished statue may have been carted away that same day, or somewhat later – the documents of December 1515 leave that possibility open.

10. After 1515

Ultimately however, the festive decorations had an outcome unforeseen by the Cathedral Operaì. Michelangelo would be awarded a commission for a façade with over life-sized statuary, but for the church of San Lorenzo. Once the attention of the Medici and part of the resources of the Opera del Duomo were directed towards the erection of the façade of San Lorenzo and – subsequently – towards the construction of the New

\textsuperscript{100} Thus, the Matthew would become – in a sense – a speaking sculpture, a Florentine Pasquino. Interestingly, another unfinished work will beg – through an intermediary – to be completed on the occasion of the Florentine entrata. As is well known, a wood statue of St. Lawrence, grande al naturale, was placed over the main door on the unfinished façade of San Lorenzo on the occasion of the papal visit. The (lost) figure was shown holding a plaque with an inscription exhorting the Pope to complete the façade of the Medicean church: see Shearman 1975, 153, nt. 60; Elam 1978, 66, nt. 91; Ciseri 1990, 138; and Kent 2004, 150. Did the Operaì believe that Pope Leo would send Michelangelo back to Florence to complete the Apostle cycle for Florence Cathedral?

\textsuperscript{101} However, a document dated May 18\textsuperscript{th}, 1514, alludes to models – clearly for niches – in which the two completed statues could be installed inside the church, and mentions experts who were to be called in to examine the statues and reach a consensus regarding their placement in the Cathedral; see Poggi 1988, II, 149, no. 2169. The formation of such a committee indicates that problems needed to be resolved. See Amy 2001, 158-159. Later documents and literary sources tell us that Rovezzano’s and Ferrucci’s statues were considered less than successful (all modern critics agree): see Amy 1997, 652-657, and 661-662. This may explain why these statues were not installed in the church or on the ephemeral façade on the occasion of the papal entry.
Sacrists (the Medici Chapel) and Laurentian Library also at San Lorenzo, both the *Apostle* project and all attempts to provide a new façade for the Cathedral of Florence were shelved. The fact that the four *Apostle* statues that were carved by Benedetto da Rovezzano, Andrea Ferrucci, Baccio Bandinelli and Jacopo Sansovino during the second decade of the 16th century were installed inside the Cathedral only half a century later, may support my contention that the *Apostle* project was originally linked to plans for a new façade for the Cathedral.102

The *Apostle* statues remained in limbo until the Cathedral *Opera* asked Duke Cosimo de’ Medici in September of 1563 to make the decisions that were required with regard to the installation of the four completed statues in the church, and the execution of the eight missing figures. Interestingly, Cosimo immediately referred the matter to his newly founded *Accademia del Disegno* and this assignment became one of its earliest important institutional ventures. Bandinelli’s and Sansovino’s *Apostle* statues were installed inside the Cathedral in December of 1565 in temporary, painted wooden aediculae – designed by the academician and court artist Bartolommeo Ammannati – on the last piers of the nave, in time for Francesco de’ Medici’s dynastic marriage to Joanna of Austria. Significantly, the drawings and three-dimensional models that were submitted in the late 16th century for a new façade for the Cathedral, do not include space for twelve *Apostle* statues, although the majority of these designs do call for statuary.103 By that time, however, most of the statues for the *Apostle* cycle were installed inside Ammannati’s mixed marble aediculae inside the Cathedral of Florence (fig. 1).

It is undoubtedly significant that Vasari fails to tell us that Michelangelo was originally allotted the commission for all twelve *Apostle* statues – something no scholar has previously noted. Instead, in the *Life of Michelangelo*, Vasari mentions the *St. Matthew* for Florence Cathedral in singular isolation. In his *Life of Andrea Ferrucci* (1550 and 1568), Vasari states that Michelangelo was allotted a statue to be carved in competition with other sculptors providing *Apostles* for the interior of the Cathedral: “At the time that Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici governed Florence”.104

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102 For the later history of the *Apostle* project, see Amy 1997, 66-75; and Amy 2001, 149-151 and 156-159 (with additional bibliography).

103 See Morrogh 1994.

104 For Vasari’s account of this phase of the endeavor, see Vasari / Bettarini 1550/1568/1976, IV, 257-258 (*Life of Andrea (Ferrucci) da Fiesole* 1550 and 1568,
However, Michelangelo had nothing to do with the second, group phase of the *Apostle* project, which Vasari introduces (in Ferrucci’s “Life”, which precedes the *Life of Michelangelo*) as the first stage of the commission and a Medicean endeavor from the start. Were the Medici behind the first phase of the *Apostle* project? If so, why not simply state this? Assuming an oversight in 1550, such a hypothesis becomes more difficult to accept when we consult the *Lives* of 1568, knowing that Vasari relied heavily upon Condivi’s *Life of Michelangelo* of 1553, in which Condivi states that Michelangelo’s twelve *Apostle* statues were to be installed inside twelve *pilastri* of the Cathedral. The brevity of Condivi’s observation, placed out of chronological sequence towards the end of his *Life of Michelangelo*, suggests that the sculptor wished that little be known about the original endeavor, which Michelangelo was forced to abandon shortly after he began carving his first statue. In fact, Michelangelo himself has surprisingly little to say about the commission in his surviving correspondence.

both versions contain the reference to the period when Giulio de’ Medici governed Florence) and 286-287 (*Life of Benedetto da Rovezzano*, 1550 and 1568), 1984, V, 243 and 263 (*Life of Baccio Bandinelli*, 1568), and 1987, VI, 179-180 (*Life of Jacopo Sansovino*, 1568).

Volendo far dodici Apostoli, quali dovevano andare dentro a dodici pilastri del duomo”; Condivi / Nencioni 1998, 52. This ambiguous statement made by an author who was unfamiliar with the Cathedral of Florence almost certainly alludes to the eight colossal pilasters attached to the shorter sides of the great crossing piers (fig. 1). See Amy 2001, 158, nt. 22.

If the *Apostle* commission was indeed a pro-Medicean endeavor, perhaps Michelangelo sought to hide his involvement in this project. It is worth remembering that Michelangelo made little objection to serving the Medici during the early years of the Florentine Republic. In a letter of August 19th, 1497 from Rome to his father Lodovico in Florence, Michelangelo mentions recently abandoned plans to carve a figure for Piero de’ Medici, the *capo* of the exiled Medici family: “Io tolsi affare una figura da Piero de’ Medici e comperai il marmo: poi noll’ò mai cominciata, perché non mi affatto quello mi promesse; per la qual cosa io mi sto da me e.ffe una figura per mio piaciere”; see Poggi 1965, *Carteggio*, I, 4, no. III. Michelangelo’s account at the Balducci bank was debited in March of 1498 with a sum of 50 ducats to be paid back to Piero; see Hirst 1994, 35. As Hirst 1994, 75, nt. 30, observes, this repayment may have been for money that was advanced for a statue that was not carved. If that is not the case, Michelangelo may have simply paid back a loan. On Michelangelo’s changing political alliances, see Spini 1964.
The following reasons for Vasari’s silence come to mind. To suggest that the Medici were sponsoring work at the Cathedral, during their exile, and obviously for political reasons, would be less than flattering. In addition, the second, interrupted, indisputably Medicean phase of the Apostle project, would be overshadowed by the extraordinary potential of the original endeavor. Vasari couldn’t possibly admit that another Medicean initiative had gone so hopelessly awry. However, additional evidence is needed to corroborate my hypothesis concerning Medicean involvement in Michelangelo’s commission for twelve Apostle statues, from the moment of its inception.

Post Scriptum

I should like to draw attention to: Tacconi, Marica S. (2003): “Appropriating the Instruments of Worship: The 1512 Medici Restoration and the Florentine Cathedral Choirbooks”, in Renaissance Quarterly, LVI, 2, summer 2003, 333-376. Drawing upon Salvino Salvini’s Catalogo cronologico of 1782, Tacconi provides an easily accessible list of the canons of Santa Maria del Fiore with close associations to the Medici, who would go on to occupy positions at the court of Pope Leo X (p. 337).
Appendix

1. 5 December 1515

“MDXV.
Per il Papa.
Spese fatte per conto dell’onoranza di papa Lione decimo, che venne in
Firenze e in duomo nostro, deono dare addi V di diciembre 1515 lire
quaranzette piccioli per loro a Piero del Lombardazzo e compagnia
trainatore. Sono per cagione d’avere trainato CCCL traina d’abeto
dell’opera a Sta Maria del Fiore e chosì chavagli di detta chiesa et
condurgli all’opera e più traina ciento d’abeti cavati dagli spedali degli
Amorbati e rimessoveggi e più per avere tirato una bozza di marmo
grande che era abozzata di mano di Michelagnolo Buonaroti ischultore
più fa, levata dalla corte della sala del Papa e condotta nella nostra Opera
in tutto d’achordo si fè lire 47 piccoli pagho Giovanni Federighi
camarlingo a uscita 26 e a numero 187 posto Giovanni Federighi
camarlingo avere in questo ___ 226.
   fiorini___ lire 47 soldi___ denari___”.

(Archivio dell’Opera del Duomo, Florence, VII-1-51, Debitori e creditorì,
1515-1517, 112).

Bibliography: Settesoldi 1994, 132, no. XXX (incomplete transcription);
and Amy 1997, 648, no. 57.

2. 1515

“187. Sumptibus opere lire 47 piccoli pro tantis solutis Piero
Lombardazi et socis trahinatoribus ex eo quod trahinaverunt traina 350
abietorum ad ecclesiam Sante Marie Floris [ex hospital S. honofrii
(crossed out)] ex (...) et traina 100 ex hospitale Sancti honofrii ad
dictam ecclesiam et pro carradura unius Apostoli et seu boze
marmoree conducte a Sala pape ad operam.
   Lire 47”.

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(Archivio dell’Opera del Duomo, II-4-24, Stanziamenti, 1514-1522, 21v).


3. (December 1515)

“Conto del Camerlingo. Per il papa spese d’opera per conto dell’onoranza del papa lire xlviipiccoli a uscita c.26 posto dare 112.

fiorini___ lire 47 soldi___”.

(Archivio dell’Opera del Duomo, VII-1-51, Debitori e creditori, 1515-1517, 226 left).


4. 1515

“Numero 187. A spese d’opera per conto del onoranza del papa lione lire quaranzete piccoli per loro a Piero de Lombardazo compagnia trainatori. Sono per cagone d’aveire tirato traina 350 d’abeti in chiesa e traina 100 a lospedale degli’amorbari e altro per poliza di numero 187.

___a 112 lire 47___”.

(Archivio dell’Opera del Duomo, VIII-3-71, Entrata e uscita, 1515-1517, 26v).

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Lorenzo’s Façade for the Cathedral of Florence and Michelangelo’s *Apostle* Statues


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Fig. 2: Attributed to Bernardino Poccetti, The façade of Santa Maria del Fiore, pen and ink drawing, Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Florence (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by Marvin Trachtenberg).

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Fig. 8: Leon Battista Alberti, Façade of the Tempio Malatestiano, Rimini (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Marvin Trachtenberg).

Fig. 9: Leon Battista Alberti, Façade of Sant’ Andrea, Mantua (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Marvin Trachtenberg).

![Ground plan of Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence. Numbers 1 through 12 show the locations where the Apostles with the Crosses of the Consecration were painted in 1436. These mural paintings were replaced in the second half of the Cinquecento by eight 16th century statues of Apostles in the crossing and four 15th century statues of Prophets in the aisles. The statues of Prophets were removed from the façade of the Cathedral (just before the latter was dismantled in 1587) and placed inside the church in aediculae designed by Bartolommeo Ammannati, as were the Cinquecento statues, to complete the 16th century cycle of Apostle statuary.](image-url)

*The location of the XVI-century Apostle statues:
1. Jacopo Sansovino, St. James Major
2. Vincenzo de’ Rossi, St. Thomas
3. Andrea Ferrucci, St. Andrew
4. Baccio Bandinelli, St. Peter
5. Benedetto da Rovezzano, St. John the Evangelist
6. Giovanni Bandini, St. James Minor
7. Giovanni Bandini, St. Philip
8. Vincenzo de’ Rossi, St. Matthew

*The location of the XV-century Prophets:
9. Bernardo Ciuffagni, Prophet
10. Bernardo Ciuffagni, King David
11. Nanni di Banco, Isaiah
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Fig. 2: Attributed to Bernardino Poccetti, The façade of Santa Maria del Fiore, pen and ink drawing, Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Florence

Figs. 3-4: Michelangelo, St. Matthew, marble, Galleria dell’Accademia, Florence
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Fig. 7: Filippo Brunelleschi, Tribuna morta, Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence

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