RENAISSANCE PATRONAGE
OF HERCULES IMAGERY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the patronage and interpretation of Hercules imagery in Italy during the thirteenth through early sixteenth centuries. The impact literature had on contemporary images of the hero, and the significance of Hercules imagery for Italian society is discussed.

Chapter One deals with the history and transmission of mythology in general and the Hercules legend in particular from Greek Antiquity until the thirteenth century. The means of transmission was Greek and Roman literature and its commentaries, and the treatises of early Christian and Medieval authors. The Greeks and Romans primarily viewed Hercules as a beneficial, civilizing figure, noted as an averter of evil, an exemplar of virtus, and as a mortal who was made immortal. Early Christian authors, threatened by the similarities between Hercules and Christ, denied Hercules' immortality and denounced the hero as a libertine, an adulterer and a lecher. Medieval writers, through their use of allegorical interpretation, again perceived Hercules as an exemplar of virtue and an averter of the evils which threaten Mankind.

Chapter Two discusses Hercules imagery in Italian art and literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Thirteenth century images depict Hercules as a virtuous, wise hero who conquers the evils which threaten society. Despite the numerous positive characteristics associated with Hercules in fourteenth century literature, only one was developed in the art: Hercules was portrayed as the wise hero who embodied the virtues of an ideal leader.
Artistic representations of Hercules in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were restricted to either a solitary Hercules or to Hercules and the Nemean Lion, Hercules and Antaeus, and Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna. These images were located primarily in the ambient of Church structures. The only exceptions were portrayals of the hero within "uomini famosi" cycles and on the seal of Florence.

Chapter Three examines the patronage of Hercules imagery by four leading fifteenth century patrons: Lorenzo de'Medici of Florence, Ercole I d'Este of Ferrara, Ludovico Gonzaga of Mantua, and Federigo da Montefeltro of Urbino. The commissions of these individuals indicates the shift of patronage from public institutions to private patrons which occurred in the fifteenth century. Hercules imagery was no longer commissioned for didactic purposes, but rather because the patron wished to be identified with the virtues or political implications associated with the hero.

Chapter Four discusses the patronage of Hercules imagery in Rome and Mantua during the last quarter of the fifteenth century and the first quarter of the sixteenth. Once other mythological themes were portrayed, beginning in 1470, representations of Hercules were no longer restricted to the commonly depicted labours, but enlarged to include all twelve. Expanded programs of Hercules' labours were portrayed in the Sala dei Paramenti, Palazzo Venezia, commissioned by the Venetian cardinal (later Pope Paul II) Pietro Barbo, and in the Sala del Fregio, Villa Farnesina, commissioned by the Sienese Banker, Agostino Chigi. The patronage of Hercules imagery originated by Ludovico Gonzaga in Mantua was continued by Isabella d'Este and her son Federigo Gonzaga. Their commissions of Hercules imagery show the hero as a symbol of virtue and immortality.

Chapter Five contains a summary of the conclusions drawn throughout the thesis.
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CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORY AND TRANSMISSION OF THE HERCULES LEGEND

A. The Survival of Classical Mythology

Knowledge of, and interest in classical mythology continued from Antiquity through the Renaissance. This continuation was fostered by the study of Greek and Latin literature, including commentaries and handbooks, and by the survival of visual representations of mythological figures. Theological treatises and encyclopaedias of early Christian and Medieval writers, while condemning the gods and heroes of classical mythology, provided yet another means for their survival.

i) Greek and Latin Literature

The persistence of classical mythology throughout the ages may be partially attributed to the importance of religion within Greek culture. Legends or myths about the lives and deeds of the gods evolved because these beings were perceived to be anthropomorphic. Originally the legends were transmitted by means of an oral tradition and formed the basis of Greek literature. A written literary tradition was developed between the seventh and fourth centuries, B.C., during the primacy of city-states.

The socio-political stability experienced by the city-states not only fostered the development of a written literary tradition, but also the establishment of an education system. The two foremost subjects, grammar - the ability to read and comprehend written passages - and rhetoric - the ability to speak in public using different oratorical forms and styles - were based on a careful study of literature. In order to
facilitate the understanding of literary texts grammarians wrote mythological handbooks which summarized and classified the events of mythology, as well as commentaries and interpretations of specific works. Four kinds of allegorical interpretations were identified and used to clarify the events recorded in literature. These were:

1) the historical, according to which real persons and events are thought to be represented in a covert manner;

2) the physical, by which gods of popular belief are equated with physical forces in nature;

3) the moral, by which divinities are identified with abstract qualities or by which ethical significances are ascribed to actions and situations not ostensibly ethical;

4) the euhemeristic, by which gods are rationalized as deified heroes, or mythological stories are rationalized as historical occurrences.

The study of Greek literature continued despite the decline of Greek political supremacy after the death of Alexander the Great in 323, B.C. The principal centre for this activity was at the Library in Alexandria. Following the rise of Republican and later Imperial Rome, and its subsequent adoption and emulation of Greek culture, the study of the Greek language and literature was also continued in Rome.

Although the Romans had their own gods and religious cults prior to their absorption of Greek culture, exposure to Greek literature, education and mythology led to the eventual re-identification of Roman gods with those of Greece. As Greek authors had written about the lives and deeds of their gods and heroes, so also did the Roman. Some wrote works which were devoted entirely to the actions of these beings, as is the case with Ovid's Metamorphosis and Vergil's Aeneid; others only refer to the gods and heroes in the course of the text, as may be seen in Cicero's Tusculan Disputations.

In addition to developing their own Latin literature Roman scholars
also translated numerous Greek literary and scientific texts into Latin. The significance of these translations arises not only because of the greater possible circulation and influence, but because they maintained the availability of Greek knowledge following the division of the Roman Empire in 364 A.D. and the subsequent diminution of the study of the Greek language in Western Europe.  

The continued use of the allegorical methods of interpretation, developed by the Greeks and adopted and used by the Romans in their education system, contributed to the survival of classical literature and mythology through to the Renaissance. Early Christian writers, because they had studied in the education system of the Roman Empire, were familiar with classical literature and the methods of allegorical interpretation used to clarify the meaning of this literature. These authors, however, employed the same allegorical methods of interpretation for a different purpose. Instead of using these methods to clarify the meaning of the texts, they used them as a means of denouncing the actions of the pagan gods and heroes described therein. Euhemeristic interpretation was the most influential of the four methods. Its appeal derived from its denial of divinity to any of the pagan gods, and its identification of these figures as mortals on whom worship had wrongfully been bestowed by their descendants. The Divinarum institutionem libri septem, written by Lactantius Firmianus in the fourth century, exemplifies the early Christian use of the euhemeristic method.

The equating of mythological gods and heroes with human beings, as proposed by the euhemeristic theory and its practice by early Christian writers, was important to the treatment which was accorded these figures by later Christian writers. In the seventh century, Isidore of Seville, in his
Etymologiae, attempted to place mythological figures within the historical context of Christianity. The Etymologiae, besides being one of the first historical treatises of an encyclopedic nature, was an important source of information for later authors writing about mythological figures. The reverence accorded the mythological benefactors of humanity in Isidore's work helped to bring about their gradual acceptance.

Early Christian and medieval writers also used moral allegorical interpretation in their writing about the gods and heroes of Antiquity. The Mythologiae Libri III, written by Fulgentius in the late fifth or early sixth century, best exemplifies the use of this method. The value of Fulgentius' work for later ages arises both from the summary and interpretation of legends that it provides, and from its description and interpretation of the dress and appearance of mythological figures.

The adaptation of the figures and legends of classical mythology by means of allegorical interpretations to render both acceptable to a Christian society continued and expanded during the Middle Ages. Thus, by the late eighth century it was commonly believed that classical literature was intended to be read allegorically:

Poets provide false stories,
Philosophers turn these falsehoods into truths.

The study of the writings of Vergil and Ovid, in particular the Aeneid and the Metamorphosis, increased during the eighth through thirteenth centuries. This new prominence was effected by the contemporary production of commentaries which provided allegorical interpretations of these and other classical texts.

Especially the mythology of the ancients had gradually come to be regarded as symbolical, thus admitting the comparison with symbolical tales employed in Christian teaching; and the Metamorphoses, looked upon as an allegory of the mysteries of the true Faith, could be
read in school and convent without prejudice to the regular theological studies. In this way hidden meanings were found in Ovid, giving him, even with the Church, a certain unwarranted and illogical authority, which was to last through the Renaissance. Thus the many gods of the ancients became demons, while the personae of the myths were compared with characters in the Bible or other sacred writings. The moral of each tale, on the other hand, was carefully explained, . . .

During this same period it was proposed that even the earliest Greek authors had been familiar with Old Testament theology and had based their writings on this knowledge. Thus, by the thirteenth century mythological figures were commonly viewed as analogues of Christian figures.

ii) Visual Representations of Mythological Figures

Interest in creating images of the gods and heroes of classical mythology waned in the interim between the proclamation of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire and the Renaissance. For this reason, during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, information about the classical conception of the appearance of mythological figures was derived from surviving imagery and from descriptions found in Greek and Latin literature.

The means by which mythological imagery survived through to the Renaissance include:

1) the appropriation and adaption of pagan religious temples and their furnishings to meet the immediate need for Christian places and accoutrements of worship;

2) continued use or collection of items on which mythological images appeared. These objects included: coins, medals, gems, wall paintings, relief and free-standing sculpture such as fonts, urns, and sarcophagi;

3) lack of recognition;

4) illustrations of astrological and astronomical manuscripts.

Information about the appearance of mythological imagery survived in Greek and Latin literature as well as in the treatises of Church Fathers and early Christian writers. Literary texts in use during the Middle Ages and Renaissance in which descriptions of the gods and their actions are to
be found include: Hyginus' *Fabulae*; Ovid's *Metamorphosis*; Vergil's *Aeneid*; Pliny's *Historiae Naturalis*; Augustine's *Civitas Dei*; Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionem*; Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*; and Fulgentius' *Mitologia Libri III*.

B. The Hercules Legend

Herakles was the offspring of an adulterous relationship between Zeus and Alcmene, the betrothed of Amphitryon (see figure 1). From the time of his birth until his death Herakles was the object of the jealousy and anger of Hera, Zeus' wife. Included in the spiteful acts with which Hera was credited are:

1) the delay of Herakles' birth so that he would not be the ruler of Mycenae, but rather a subject of his kinsman, Eurystheus;

2) the sending of poisonous snakes to Herakles' cradle during his infancy;

3) the madness of Herakles, during which he killed his wife Megara and their three sons.

It was in an effort to purify himself after these murders that Herakles went to the Oracle at Delphi for advice. The priestess there advised him to go to Tiryns and serve under Eurystheus, the King of Mycenae. She also told Herakles that if he completed the *Dodekathlos*, or twelve labours set by Eurystheus, he would be awarded with immortality.

The canonical labours performed by Herakles were: the killing of the Nemean Lion; the killing of the Hydra of Lerna; the capture of the Cerynitian Hind; the capture of the Erymanthian Boar; the cleaning of the Augean Stables; the driving away of the Stymphalian Birds; the capture of the Cretan Bull; the capture of the Mares of Diomedes; the fetching of Hippolyte's Girdle; the capture of the Cattle of Geryon; the fetching of the Apples of the Hesperides; and the capture of Cerberus, the watchdog of Hades. Deeds included in the canonical *parerga* or tasks associated with
the labours are: the slaying of Cacus; the crushing of Antaeus; the Battle with the Centaurs; the killing of the centaur Eurytion; the founding of the Olympic games; the restoration of life to Alcestis; the erection of the Pillars of Hercules; the freeing of Prometheus; and the release of Theseus from Hades.

Following his completion of the twelve labours and their parerga Hercules once more sought marriage. Because of a promise made to the Soul of Meleager, while in Hades fetching Cerberus, Hercules entered a contest to win Deianira, Meleager's sister. After his successful battle against the river-god, Achelous, "who was horned like a bull and had the power of changing himself into different shapes," Hercules and Deianira began the return trip to Tiryns. During this journey the centaur Nessus offered to help Hercules by carrying Deianira across the River Evenus. Once across he attempted to rape her, but was prevented by Hercules who, with his bow, shot the centaur. As Nessus lay dying he instructed Deianira to keep some of his blood to use as a philtre which would prevent Hercules from loving any other woman but herself. Ignorant that Hercules had dipped his arrows in the powerful poison of the Hydra of Lerna, and that this poison was now active in Nessus' blood, Deianira did so.

At some point after his marriage to Deianira, Hercules fell in love with Iole, the daughter of Eurytus, King of Oechalia. Although she was the prize promised the winner of an archery contest, and Hercules that winner, her father refused to give her to Hercules. In a rage at this insult, Hercules killed Iole's brother Iphitus. Once more Hercules needed to undergo purification for murder, so he left Deianira in Trachis under the care of King Ceyx, and returned to the Oracle at Delphi. He was advised that in order to be purified he must serve as a slave for one year. Accord-
ingly he was auctioned, and was bought by Omphale, Queen of the Lydians. Following his year of servitude Hercules determined to seize his wrongfully withheld prize, Iole. Together with an army, Hercules sacked Oechalia, killed Eurytus, and seized Iole. Before making a celebratory sacrifice to Zeus, Hercules sent Iole and other captive women to Deianira at Trachis. Deianira, despairing that she was losing Hercules' love, dipped one of his shirts in Nessus' blood, and sent it to Hercules by messenger. The poison on the shirt, warmed by the flames of the sacrificial fire, burnt Hercules' skin. When the hero attempted to tear the garment off, his flesh tore away with it. He was carried in agony to Trachis, and then on to Mount Oeta where a funeral pyre was built, and his body placed on it. As the pyre was burning, a cloud enveloped Hercules, and carried him up to Olympus, where the hero was granted immortality, was reconciled with Hera, and married Hebe.

Hercules' immortality, attained following his death on the funeral pyre, was first prophesized by the Oracle at Delphi. In classical literature several of the labours are interpreted as representing the hero's conquest of death during his life, prefiguring the immortality he was to gain after his death. These labours include: the capture of the Cerynitian Hind; the restoration of Alcestis to life; the capture of the Cattle of Geryon; the fetching of the apples of the Hesperides; the release of Theseus from Hades; and the fetching of Cerberus, the watchdog of Hades.

i) The Worship of Hercules

Hercules was the object of cult worship in both Greece and Rome. When this worship originated in Greece has not been established, however, it has been suggested that worship may have been initiated during the Mycenaean Age. Widespread worship of Hercules continued from this time throughout the Hellenistic Age and the supremacy of Rome. The dual
nature of Hercules the hero and the god was recognized by his cult.

His cult in Greece was unique in that it was dual: he was worshipped as both a god and a hero... Even if the line between hero and god was not always sharply drawn, especially in Greek literature, the basic distinction between the two was well known. In contrast to the god the hero was originally a man who came to enjoy divine honours after his death. The literary evidence overwhelmingly supports the view that Herakles first was a man, than a hero, and then also became a god.

The cult of Hercules was associated with the site of Rome from very early times.

Long before Romulus laid the foundation of Rome, the everlasting city; Herakles had left his mark on the site. The tradition has it that when he returned from Spain with the Cattle of Geryon, they were stolen from him on the pastures that were to be Rome. Herakles recovered the cattle and punished the culprit. In memory of the event king Evander, a Greek exile, or Herakles himself built what was the greatest altar in those regions at the time. The cult of Hercules at the Ara Maxima in the Cattle Market, the Forum Boarium, continued through the entire pagan history of Rome.

Hercules was identified by two epithets in Greek religion and literature. These were:

Herakles Alexikakos, the averter of evil - war, death, ghosts, sickness and the trials and tribulations of life in general;

and Herakles Kallinikos, the Resplendent Victor. In Roman religion and literature Hercules was identified as the Invictus, the invincible one.

ii) The Image of Hercules in Classical Literature

References to the mythology of Hercules appear throughout Classical literature. As is suggested by his epithets, which were common to both religion and literature, the image of the Hero is generally positive despite the violent nature of his labours.

In Greek literature Hercules is presented as a figure worthy of emulation. Archaic texts reveal him to be a beneficial, civilizing force, an exemplar of aretē - excellence. The most significant development of the literary image of Hercules is seen in writings dating from the fifth century. Poets during this time not only justify Hercules' behaviour prior
to and throughout his performance of the twelve labours, but also present him as an ethical ideal. Through the application of allegorical interpretations his labours and parerga are viewed as moral accomplishments. In his parable, *The Choice of Hercules*, Prodicus, a fifth century teacher and writer, accredits Hercules with both intellectual ability and moral virtue. During the Hellenistic period attempts were made to establish genealogical links between Hercules and some of the prominent families, especially that of Alexander the Great and the Ptolemies. This development may have been a response to the fourth century work, *The Sacred History*, by Euhemerus. In this work it is suggested that the gods are merely mortals who, with the passage of time and embellishment of their lives and deeds, had come to be worshipped. If, as suggested by Euhemerus, the gods were mortals, it was a natural progression for court poets and philosophers to attempt to relate their patron with such venerable beings.

Roman authors continued the treatment of Hercules mythology which originated in Greek literature. Just as Hercules was portrayed as the embodiment of *aretē* by Greek authors, the Romans described him as an exemplar of *virtus*.

There were many possible interpretations of the Roman *virtus*. For Seneca it could mean physical strength, action, strength of mind, strength to suffer and avoid anger, inner strength to control one's emotions, and the ability to control strength. According to Vergil and Ovid *virtus* could mean endurance or fortitude. According to Stoic precepts, as expressed by Cicero in the *Tusculan Disputations*, *virtus* is rewarded with apotheosis.

iii) The Image of Hercules in Early Christian Literature

The image of Hercules exposed in early Christian literature, written between the first and fifth centuries, A.D., differs greatly from that presented in pagan Greek and Roman literature. Hercules is no longer shown
as a figure worthy of veneration, but of denigration. All of the bad aspects of Hercules' life - his excesses in drinking, in anger, and in his sexuality, as well as his frenzied murder of his wife and three sons - are emphasized to the detriment of his previous image as an exemplar of virtue or areté.

The reasons provoking this denigration include:

1) reaction against the everyday excesses of the pagan world;

2) Christian writers were attempting to promote the venerable qualities of Christ by denigrating the characters of the pagan gods;

3) Hercules, because he had been mortal and was made a god, or was granted immortality, was particularly threatening to the Christians for in this he was similar to Christ, who had been man, the Son of God, and then resurrected to Heaven as part of the Trinity.

An example of the kind of denigration mythological figures were subjected to by early Christian writers is to be found in Chapter 9, Book I, of Lactantius' Divinarum institutionem libri septem. There, Hercules is described as a mortal being fit only to be ridiculed or despised.

Lactantius links Herakles less with the devil but is even more explicit about the hero's metaphysical limitations. "All these works," he proclaims, "are those of a strong man (fortis viris) but of a human nevertheless. For the things he overcame were fragile and mortal." Herakles had fortitudo, physical strength, but he forfeits any claim to virtue by his outrageous conduct of life. Lactantius excoriates him as a lecher, libertine and adulterer, thoroughly unfit to share in any Christian notions of divinity.

From the seventh century on the literary image of Hercules was once more that of a figure worthy of reverence. Isidore of Seville, in his Etymologiae, presented Hercules as a benefactor of humanity -

Isidore of Seville held that as a benefactor of humanity, Herakles had every right to be remembered with gratitude. Since he and other ancient heroes were historical figures, he assigned them a place and date in history and thus they acquired a new prestige.

Fulgentius, in his Mythologiae Libri III, portrayed Hercules as a figure of virtue, or moral excellence.
In his *Mythologiae*, Antaeus is lust, Cacus - . . . evil incarnate, while the Hesperides represent the power of learning and study of which man must avail himself. Herakles is *virtus* throughout, but a *virtus* devoid of heavenly aspirations. This entirely mundane *virtus* is very akin to the Homeric *klea andron*; Fulgentius in fact defines Herakles as . . . *virorum fortium* *fama*.

Theodolphus, Bishop of Orleans, Arnulph of Orleans and John of Garland interpreted Hercules as Virtue. Hercules was equated with Samson, and was seen as a parallel to Christ. The labours that Hercules performed were seen as acts which benefitted mankind. His conquest of the Underworld and his apotheosis to Olympus were interpreted as parallels to Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.

As is evident from the above discussion the image of Hercules changed between Antiquity and the thirteenth century. The Greeks and Romans in both literature and religion perceived Hercules as a beneficial, civilizing figure, an exemplar of *virtus*, and as a mortal who became immortal. Early Christian writers denounced Hercules as a lecher, a libertine, and adulterer, as well as proclaiming his mortality. Medieval authors, through their use of allegorical interpretation, again perceive and exploit Hercules as an exemplar of virtue whose actions benefitted Mankind.
NOTES


3 ibid., p. 17-21 and p. 28-29.

4 ibid., p. 41:
"The successful reading of an author depended upon three things: the possession of a correct text, the understanding of the language, and the reader's ability to make sense of mythological and historical references."

5 ibid., p. 38-39:
"Schoolboys were given a good deal of practice in inventing speeches to be uttered by mythological, historical or altogether imaginary characters. . . . The purpose in all cases was to make the language true to type. . . .
Along with the general rules of good narrative and description, the student was given advice on how to ornament his material. . . .
Further sections then deal with such problems as how to praise or blame a person, how to refute or confirm a story. . . ."

6 ibid., p. 19-21; Morford and Lenardon, p. 463-466.


8 Bolgar, p. 20-21; Morford and Lenardon, p. 463.

9 Bolgar, p. 22.

10 Morford and Lenardon, Chapter 4: *Roman Mythology*, p. 431-461.

11 ibid., p. 431-432.


16 Cooke, p. 403.


18 This quote is from the poem by Theodolphus, Bishop of Orleans - De Libris quos legere solebam (On Books I am accustomed to Read). It is quoted in Rudolf Scheville "Ovid and the Renascence in Spain" in University Of California Publications in Modern Philology, Vol. IV (1913), p. 11; and Seznec, p. 90. The translation is from Seznec, p. 90, footnote 29. The original Latin is:
"Falsa poetarum stilus affert, vera sophorum
Falsa horum in verum vertere saepe solent . . ."

"Traube has called the eighth and ninth centuries the aetas Vergiliana, the tenth and eleventh centuries the aetas Horatiana, and the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the aetas Ovidiana. The predominating position of Vergil in the early centuries, which accepted him as a Christian seer, strongly militated against the advance of Ovid. But as we have seen, even by the time of the Carolingian Renaissance, he was making progress, although he did not yet have a place in the school curriculum. From then on, his influence on mediaeval writers is easily distinguishable, and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries he came into his own. In spite of all attempts to prevent the reading of this poet whose works were most to be avoided, he was read and used. . . . Ovid was made a part of legend, and mediaeval vitae were written to show he was a Christian poet, living at Sulmona, and writing with a moral purpose."


21 According to Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, translated from the German by Willard R. Trask. Bollingen Series XXXVI, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, p. 215-216, Albertino Mussato (1261-1329) revived the idea that there was a correspondence
between pagan mythology and the Bible. This idea originated in late Antiquity. For further discussion, see p. 219-220.


27 Herakles is the Greek form of the hero's name. It means "Glory of Hera". Other names by which Herakles was identified include Alcides (descendant of Alcaeus); Amphitryonides (son of Amphitryon) and Hercules - the Latin form of the hero's name.

28 The Greek word for labour is athloi. Dodekathloi simply means twelve labours.

29 Morford and Lenardon, p. 366 and 369.

30 ibid., p. 369.

31 Authors who attribute the victorious conquest of death and apotheosis to Hercules include: Pindar, the Isthmian Ode 4:61-67; Homer the Odyssey; Ovid, the Metamorphoses; Cicero, the Tusulan Disputations; Seneca, Hercules Oetaeus.


33 ibid., "Herakles did not belong to the earliest stratum of Attic religion and mythology and therefore his cult was not localized on the Acropolis, Athens' oldest cult centre. He was, however, ardently worshipped in the suburbs, the Attic countryside, and certainly by the fifth century, throughout the city. . . . In the second half of the sixth century Herakles was officially adopted as an Athenian citizen so he could be initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries."
Michael Simpson in the Notes to Gods and Heroes of the Greeks: The Library of Apollodorus, p. 112-124, lists references to Hercules in Greek and Latin literature. Galinsky, in The Herakles Theme, examines the characterizations of Hercules in literature from the Archaic period through to the Twentieth century.

Galinsky, p. 4.

ibid., p. 9-22.

ibid., p. 56.

ibid., p. 101 ff.

ibid., p. 116 ff.

Cooke, p. 386-410.

Galinsky, p. 128.


Galinsky, p. 135-146.

ibid., p. 159.

Seznec, p. 11.

Galinsky, p. 188-189.

ibid., p. 191.

ibid., p. 190. Klea andron is defined by Galinsky, p. 9, as "glory of his deeds'. By my translation virorum fortium fama means "of the strongest of men by reputation."
54 Seznec, p. 90.


58 ibid.
CHAPTER TWO

HERCULES IN ITALIAN ART AND LITERATURE OF

THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES

A. Introduction

Italian society experienced great economic, political and social changes throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. During this time the Italians were active in the development of industry and of international trade and commerce, as well as in banking and in international finance.\(^1\) Population growth, migration to and expansion of cities, and development of class structures evolved in response to society's experience of prosperity.\(^2\) A gradual economic decline occurred during the first half of the fourteenth century as a result of a Europe-wide recession, outbreaks of plague and famine, and territorial wars between democratic cities and tyrants, Guelfs and Ghibellines.\(^3\)

New models of political life and leadership were sought by Italian society because of the on-going political and economic instabilities experienced during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These models were discovered by the humanists and their medieval predecessors, the dictatores,\(^4\) in their study of classical literature and medieval commentaries. Both the humanists and the dictatores extolled the re-discovered qualities of the vita activa - the active life of the citizen in which the interests and needs of the community or city were placed before the personal needs of the individual\(^5\) - and virtù - excellence, manliness, courage and strength.\(^6\)
It was of great significance that the *Nicomachian Ethics* by Aristotle and the rhetorical writings of Cicero were studied by the *dictatores* for these provided not only rhetorical models but suggested political exemplars as well. Hercules was one of the figures identified by both Aristotle and Cicero as an outstanding model of virtù and the vita activa. Because of his acceptance by the Church and by the dictatores and humanists as a model of moral excellence, strength and leadership, and because of the need for powerful symbols engendered by the economic, political and social instabilities of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Hercules became the object of both literary and artistic prominence.

In this chapter I shall examine the image of Hercules presented in thirteenth and fourteenth century Italian literature and art, to determine the impact literature had on contemporary representations of the hero, and the significance of Hercules imagery for Italian society.

B. The Image of Hercules in the Thirteenth Century

The earliest undisputed images of Hercules in Italy are found on two relief panels located on the West Façade of San Marco in Venice. One of the panels, the one which was regarded as "antique" (see figure 2), shows Hercules carrying the Erymanthian Boar, and includes the figure of Eurystheus, hiding in his jar. The other panel, which is believed to date from about 1230 (see figure 3), shows Hercules carrying the Cerynitian Hind on his shoulders. The figure of the dragon Ladon is shown, trampled under Hercules' feet. These panels, and four others, were set in place on the Façade of San Marco in 1267. The significance of the six relief panels has not yet been determined.

There is some question as to the identity of the Hercules-Fortitude figure on Nicola Pisano's Pisa Baptistry Pulpit, dated c. 1260 (see figures
Although this figure is commonly identified as Hercules - Fortitude, Eloise M. Angiola has recently proposed that this figure represents Daniel in the Lion's Den. The inclusion of the three "living" lions with the figure forms the basis of her argument, for Hercules is more usually shown with two attributes - his club, and a lion skin. There are a number of factors which suggest that Angiola's re-identification may be queried:

1) A precedent for depicting Hercules with a living lion is to be found in the illuminations of an eleventh century Monte Cassino manuscript of Hrabanus Maurus' De Universo.

2) Hercules, like Daniel, was noted as a symbol of Resurrection and triumph over death.

3) Angiola substantiates her re-identification of the female corner figures with quotations from Federigo Visconti's Sermones. She does not provide similar substantiation for the re-identification of the Hercules-Fortitude figure as Daniel, and does not indicate whether Visconti expressed any opinions whatsoever on either Daniel or Hercules.

4) Although the appearance of Hercules with three "living" lions is unusual, this is not the only extant representation to show him thus. The later Pisano Pulpit - the Giovanni Pisano Pulpit for the Cathedral of Pisa, c.1310, (see figures 6, 7 and 8) shows the figure of Hercules with three "living" lions also: one lion is at his feet, one across his shoulders, and a lion cub is supported on his right arm. This Hercules figure also includes the traditional attributes of the club and the lion skin.

It cannot be ignored that the two Pisa Pulpits include figures commonly identified as Hercules, and that these figures are shown with three "living" lions. Whether this reflects a tradition no longer extant, or perhaps the relationship between the two sculptors - father, son; teacher, pupil - needs to be further explored. Angiola does not acknowledge that these similarities exist.

The first, and remarkably early, secular representation of Hercules in Italy, is found on the seal of Florence, c. 1275, known through an eighteenth century woodcut (see figure 9). Hercules is shown there, holding his two attributes, the lion skin and the club, encircled by the inscription -
HERCULEA CLAVA DOMAT FIORENTIA PRAVA - which means "with the club of Hercules, Florence subdues the wicked."  

Why the Commune of Florence chose to portray Hercules on their seal remains unknown. Two of the reasons suggested to date are:

1) a growing interest in mythological imagery; and

2) because the city of Florence was under the ban of the Church at the time, the city may have wished to stress its independence by choosing a pagan hero for an important governmental symbol.

It may be significant that Brunetto Latini (c.1220-1292) was State Chancellor of Florence from 1272 to 1274, the period immediately preceding the appearance of the Hercules seal. The description of Latini's ideal leader given in Le Livres dou Tresor resembles the antique literary characterization of Hercules that Latini would have been familiar with:

He (the ideal leader) must have prudence "the first virtue", which includes foresight, care and knowledge. He must have temperance, which is said to involve honesty, sobriety and continence. He must have fortitude or strength, enabling him to attain "magnificence in war and peace" as well as constancy and patience "in the face of assaults from adversity." And finally, he must have a sense of justice, a highly complex quality which is taken to include liberality, religiousness, pity, innocence, charity, friendship, reverence and the desire for concord.

Although Latini does not refer to Hercules as a leader and a lawgiver in Le Livres dou Tresor, or its Italian counterpart, Il Tesoretto, his training as a dittatore and an arringatore, and his studies undertaken during a six year exile from Florence would have brought him in contact with the relevant antique texts. If Latini was influential in the adoption of the figure of Herculis for the seal of Florence, it is probable that the seal symbolized the qualities of the ideal leader described in Le Livres dou Tresor.
C. The Image of Hercules in the Fourteenth Century

i) Literature

Hercules is frequently mentioned in Italian literature of the fourteenth century. Some references continue the tradition of comparing the pagan hero with Biblical heroes; some compare Hercules and his labours with contemporary figures and events; and others attempt to list all of Hercules' labours, complete with their literary sources and moralizing interpretations.

The earliest references to Hercules are found in the writings of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). These works, written after Dante's exile from Florence in 1301, include a Canzone, the De Monarchia, and L'Inferno, the first book of the Divina Commedia.

Dante primarily presents Hercules as a counterpart or parallel to Christ. In L'Inferno, Dante refers to Hercules' descent into Hell to fetch Cerberus as foretelling and preparing Christ's descent. Hercules is also presented as a figure of justice and as a purifier, both in L'Inferno and in the Canzone.

. . . Dante . . . invoked Herakles to return to earth once more, to do his work of righting all wrongs and purifying the lands . . .

In De Monarchia, a work in which the role of the emperor, the legitimacy of the Roman Empire and its freedom from the authority of the Church are examined and defended. Hercules is again presented as a figure of justice. In the context of his discussion of the statement "... whatever is acquired by duel is acquired by right," Dante uses the victorious conquests of David and Goliath, and Hercules and Antaeus as parallel Christian and pagan examples of the fulfillment, by duel, of God's justice.

The tradition of providing moral allegorical interpretations of
Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was continued in fourteenth century Italy. The earliest version written in Italy, the *Allegorie librorum Ovidii*, was written by a friend of Dante's, Giovanni del Virgilio. This work, of which four Latin and three Italian manuscripts are known, furnished spiritual, moral, physical and euhemeristic interpretations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. An extensive explanation of Hercules' labours was provided in Giovanni's work.

When he arrives at the tenth book, where the labours of Hercules are only alluded to by Ovid, he devotes his whole discussion to the moral evaluation of "the virtuous man" whose stepdame is Juno, or "the active life." Two other Ovid moralisé texts, both originating in France, were influential throughout Europe. The first, a French vernacular version of the *Ovid moralisé*, dates from c. 1316-1328. This work has been variously attributed to Chretien Legouais, Philippe de Vitry and "an anonymous minorite." The second work, the *Ovidius moralizatus*, was written by a friend of Petrarch's, Pierre Bersuire (c.1290-1362). This work, written c.1342, was influenced by Petrarch's description of pagan divinities in the *Africa*.

The image of Hercules presented in Petrarch's writings revives the classical image of the hero as an exemplar of *virtus*. A "Life of Hercules" is included in the *De viris illustribus*, started c. 1338, and expanded in 1351. This work was written by Petrarch for two reasons:

1) to extol virtues and true glory,

2) to show the undisputed greatness of Rome rested basically on the actions of its great men as individuals.

The inclusion of the "Life of Hercules" was inspired by Petrarch's perception of the hero.

Petrarch speaks of Herakles as "famosior philosophus" and defines him further as a prototype of "those who earned equally outstanding fame in martial exploits and natural capacities," the latter perhaps
referring to the talents of the mind. Yet the most significant reason for his achievement and fame remained his corporal strength.  

Petrarch incorporates an enumeration of Hercules' labours in the Africa, (c.1338), a work which glorifies Scipio Africanus, Petrarch's exemplar virtutis par excellence. Hercules is portrayed there as the strong man who subdued wild beasts and brought freedom to the earth, and after freeing mankind from oppression, set forth and conquered death.  

Petrarch wrote about the choice of Hercules in his De vita solitaria, a work written during 1346 and 1347. This parable, originally described by Prodicus, presents Hercules as a youth deciding between virtue and pleasure.

Hercules too attained in solitude that wholesome plan of life which I have mentioned in the preceding book, when hesitating long and much as though at a parting of ways he ultimately spurned the way of pleasure and took possession of the path of virtue, and marching indefatigably along its course, he was raised not only to the apex of human glory but even to a reputation of divinity.  

Boccaccio (1313-1375) also wrote about the choice of Hercules. In his Amorosa Visione, written c.1342-1343, Hercules is shown choosing between his wife Deianira and his concubine, Iole.

Half way through the Amorosa Visione, in canto VVXI, we find the narrator looking at a painting of Hercules serving Iole at her loom, holding her wool and spindle. Deianira, his former and abandoned love, reminds him of his great deeds, killing the serpents, the dragon, the hydra, the bull, Antaeus and binding Cerberus, the dog of hell. All of these feats could be and often were, interpreted as victories over the flesh, over lust, over sin. Hercules choice is clearly not between one woman and another, but between two ways of life, as a servant of the passions or as a heroic victor over the world, the flesh, and the devil.  

Boccaccio also wrote about Hercules in two other works: De casibus virorum et feminarum illustrium, written c. 1358, and Genealogia deorum, started c. 1340 and continued until his death.  

In De casibus virorum et feminarum illustrium, Boccaccio attempts to demonstrate by example that the weaknesses of illustrious men lead to their eventual downfall. In this work Hercules was shown not as the man who attained
divinity because of his deeds, but as a man degraded by lust, the benefits of his accomplishments erased by his weakness.  

The *Genealogia deorum*, a work commissioned by King Hugo of Cyprus, was intended to be a compendium of information about the gods and heroes of classical mythology. In its final form it included autobiographical information as well as information about figures and events of mythology and contemporary life.  

Boccaccio's examination of mythological gods and heroes includes not only the four standard allegorical interpretations of their actions, but also an etymological study of their names. In total he identifies four different Hercules figures, and thirty-one labours performed by the hero. The interpretations assigned to Hercules' labours by Boccaccio are generally based on those of his sources.  

From Fulgentius he derives the allegory of Antaeus, the giant whom Hercules could subdue only by raising him aloft from the ground — a type of earthly lust conquered.  

The impact of the *Genealogia* was widespread. The stories which Boccaccio had collected were read with great avidity. Manuscripts of the *Genealogia Deorum* multiplied even before the invention of printing, and eight editions of the Latin text appeared between 1472 and 1532. Translations were made into Italian, French and Spanish, and although no English translation is extant, the influence of the work can be traced in English poetry from the time of Chaucer.  

Influenced by the *Genealogia deorum*, Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406) also attributed thirty-one labours to Hercules in his *De laboribus Hercules*, started c. 1378. Written in response to a request for an interpretation of Seneca's *Hercules furens*, it remained unfinished at the time of Salutati's death in 1405.  

The original form of the *De laboribus Hercules* was that of a long letter addressed to Giovanni da Siena. Following Giovanni's death in 1383, Salutati commenced on a second enlarged examination of Hercules' labours.
This work had several titles, including: *De laboribus Hercules; Hercules noster; De sensibus allegoricis fabularum Hercules* and *De gestis Hercules.*

The form of the second version of Salutati's work included four books.

The whole first book, . . . is devoted to poetry, its meaning and purpose and importance, . . . Book I . . . consists of thirteen chapters, . . . Even the first two chapters of Book II deal with poetry. The rest of Book II discusses the meaning of Jupiter and Juno and the conception and birth of Hercules. . . . Book III opens with the mention of the many heroes by the name of Hercules and then proceeds to the labours, largely untouched in the first edition. Book IV is divided into two parts: the first deals with the Lower World in general and with the descent of Orpheus, Theseus and Amphiaras; the second with the descent of Hercules. Other topics which Salutati intended to discuss in this book are indicated in one of his letters: the wives of Hercules, Mt. Oeta, and the second capture of Troy.

Salutati continues the tradition of providing allegorical interpretations of the events of mythology in his explanations and categorization of Hercules' labours.

. . . the hero's labours can be understood either *ad litteram,* or *moraliter,* or *naturaliter,* and allegory asserts itself as the dominant mode of interpretation.

As well as providing allegorical interpretations of the labours, Salutati gives an etymological explanation of the name of Hercules and other figures involved in his labours.

The image of Hercules derived by Salutati from his extensive researches is that of a virtuous man.

He is not only *homo virtuosus,* *virtuosissimus* *Hercules,* *homo virtuosus in fortitudine atque constantia,* but he is *virtue itself,* "a higher state of virtue," "reason," and "both virtue and reason!"; he is not only a concrete *vir contemplativus,* but he is the "light of explored truth."

. . . He symbolizes virtue in all its aspects - physical, moral, spiritual and even intellectual - and all this virtue is active, as is indicated by Salutati's etymology for "Hercules": *heris,kleos* in Greek, *gloria litis* in Latin, or "glorious in strife" . . .

It is evident from the fourteenth century Italian literature examined that Hercules was identified with a broad range of positive
characteristics. His virtue was equated with that of Biblical exemplars, in particular that of Christ and David. He was presented as possessing the four cardinal virtues - Justice, Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude. Not only was Hercules' original classical image revived through the fourteenth century studies of classical literature and the current glorification of the gods and great men of Imperial Rome, but he also became a contemporary symbol of virtù and the active life, because of the economic, political and social instabilities being experienced in Italy at this time.

ii) Art

The fourteenth century Italian visual tradition of Hercules imagery did not reflect the broad characterizations of the hero seen in the contemporary literary tradition. Instead, the predominant Hercules image depicted in the art of the fourteenth century emphasizes the identification of the hero as an exemplar of the active life, a virtuous being whose concern was for justice and freedom.

The earliest fourteenth century representation of Hercules, in Italy, is found on the Pulpit by Giovanni Pisano for the Duomo of Pisa. It was commissioned in 1302, and completed by 1310. Hercules is shown here as a nude figure, with his lion skin draped over his left shoulder and the club held in his left hand. Three "living" lions are represented with the hero - one at his feet, another across his shoulders and the third, a cub, is held on his right arm (see figures 6, 7 and 8).

Like the Hercules figure seen on Nicola Pisano's Baptistry Pulpit, which also is depicted with three "living" lions (see figures 4 and 5), the identification of this figure has been questioned. It has been suggested that this is a representation of Samson, not Hercules. However, although Samson, like Hercules, did slay a lion, this is not his usual attribute in artistic representations. He is more commonly shown with a column or
a pillar. Since Samson used his bare hands to slay the lion, the inclusion of the club would be inappropriate for a figure intended to represent the Biblical hero. Hercules, on the other hand, is traditionally shown with the club and lion skin. It seems more likely, for this reason, that the figure included on Giovanni Pisano's Pulpit for the Duomo of Pisa was intended as Hercules.

His significance within the iconographic program of the Pulpit remains uncertain. The Pulpit was dismantled in 1595, following a fire in the Duomo and many of the pieces were stored in the Campo Santo. Some pieces have since been lost, and the original disposition of those that remain is uncertain.

The second fourteenth century image of Hercules in Italy, is the depiction of Hercules' conquest of Cacus, found on the Campanile of Florence Cathedral (see figure 10). This plaque, which is part of an iconographic program designed by Giotto, was completed by 1337.

The representation of this parergon of Hercules', on the Campanile may possibly suggest Dante's reference to it in L'Inferno. Dante alludes to Hercules as a figure of justice, and refers to Cacus as a violent thief in L'Inferno. Accordingly, this scene on the Campanile may symbolize the victorious conquest of evil by justice.

The general acceptance of the figure of Hercules as a virtuous man was attested to by his inclusion in artistic, as well as literary cycles of uomini famosi in fourteenth century Italy. Although this theme was not popularized until the 1340's, with the writings of Petrarch and Boccaccio, two fresco cycles, which included Hercules, appeared during the 1330's. The first was painted for King Robert of Naples, in his Castlenuovo, by Giotto, c. 1332.
The nine exemplars in the program assigned to Giotto included two figures from the Old Testament (Solomon and Samson), two from ancient history (Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar) and five from the legendary pagan past (Achilles, Aeneas, Hector, Hercules and Paris). This particular combination of Biblical and antique worthies constituted a unique grouping that both lacked precedence and was destined to produce no successors.91

The second fresco cycle to include Hercules was painted c.1335 by the same artist for Azzone Visconti in his new palace in Milan. The theme of this cycle was not that of illustrious men, but of Vanagloria.92

In addition to Charlemagne and Azzone Visconti himself, who apparently represented the modern ideals of princely virtue, the fresco portrayed Aeneas, Attila, Hector, and Hercules among the illustrious pagans surrounding Vainglory.

Although the theme of the illustrious men was popular, the image of Hercules is not included again, during the fourteenth century.

The image of Hercules re-appears in Florence at the close of the fourteenth century, c.1391. The hero is represented four times on the right jamb of the Porta della Mandorla.93 The images shown include the nude figure of Hercules, with his two attributes; Hercules rending the Nemean Lion; Hercules crushing Antaeus; and Hercules Killing the Hydra of Lerna (see figures 11, 12 and 13).

The significance of the four representations of Hercules on the Porta della Mandorla has not been determined, however, two interpretations have been suggested:

1) Erwin Panofsky has argued that the sculptural decorations on the jambs of the Porta della Mandorla - single figures or small scenes alternating with angels - are subject to what he aptly called an interpretatio Christiana in classical guise. In fact, he explained the individual figures as representative of the four Cardinal Virtues, among whom Hercules stands for Fortitude, and "the profusion of Hercules scenes . . . can be accounted for not only of the virtue Fortitudo in particular, but of virtus generalis or virtus generaliter sumpta . . ."94

2) L.D. Ettlinger suggests "On the Porta della Mandorla the single figure of Hercules has no obvious counterpart, but the Hercules theme is emphasized by the addition of three of the hero's exploits . . .

Hercules' combat with the Nemean Lion so closely parallels Samson's similar feat that the two heroes and their rendering in this particular
deed became interchangeable. But it is a little more difficult to account for the interest in the Antaeus story. . . Fulgentius, . . . had seen virtus personified in Hercules and libido in Antaeus. . . Dante in De Monarchia had given a new twist to the story which is highly significant in any Florentine context. While discussing ordeal, he observes that the ordeal of single combat may be held to reveal the judgement of God. . . . no firm interpretation of the Hydra episode can be offered, but it might be suggested that the Hydra was perhaps identified with the dragon or snake, signifying evil, in which case the three episodes would form a homogeneous unit. 95

Erwin Panofsky's suggestion that the four scenes on the Porta della Mandorla represent the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance seems very probable. It may be possible to develop this concept further and interpret the three action scenes as symbolizing the successful conquest of the vices by the virtues. The first scene - Hercules fighting the Nemean Lion - was interpreted in Pierre Bersuire's Ovidius Moralizatus as "a good wise priest who fights against the lion of pride and anger." 96 Salutati considered this labour to symbolize the defeat of anger. 97 The second scene - Hercules crushing Antaeus - was interpreted in Dante's De Monarchia as symbolizing Justice's defeat of injustice. 98 Salutati interpreted this deed as the defeat of generic vice. 99 The third scene - Hercules fighting the Hydra of Lerna - may symbolize Prudence and/or Fortitude conquering deception and irascibility, for the Hydra was interpreted in Boccaccio's Genealogia Deorum as a Sophist. 100

Against this background, it is possible to interpret the solitary figure of Hercules on the Porta della Mandorla as standing, in a general way, for the conquest of vice by virtue, a reading which gains support from the inscription on the seal of Florence - HERCULEA CLAVA DOMAT FIORENTIA PRAVA - "With the club of Hercules, Florence subdues the wicked."

Just as the representation of Hercules on the seal of Florence may relate to Brunetto Latini's official position as State Chancellor of Florence and his interest in the hero, so those on the Porta della Mandorla may relate to Coluccio Salutati's position as State Chancellor and his researches on
Hercules. While the former was an extremely early appearance of the hero, occurring within twenty-five years of the first interest shown in the classical exemplars of virtù and political leadership, the latter appeared at the end of a century during which the identification of Hercules as a virtuous leader, committed to justice and freedom, was consolidated in the writings of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. Salutati's De laboribus Hercules provided his contemporaries with a compendium of information about the hero, derived from classical literature, as well as providing interpretations of his labours. That the De laboribus Hercules was actively being written at the time the imagery of the Porta della Mandorla was conceived and executed, strongly suggests a connection between the two.
NOTES


3 *ibid.*, p. 122-127.


"The changes which overtook the study of rhetoric in Italy at this time were based on the idea that the subject should be taught not merely by the inculcation of rules (artes) but also by the study and imitation of suitable classical authors (auctores). Hitherto the curriculum of the *Ars Dictaminis* had generally been conceived . . . as nothing more elevated than a business course. The overwhelming emphasis had been placed on learning the rules of composition; little space had been left for the more "humanist" assumption - in vogue at the same time in the French Cathedral schools - that one should also make a study of the ancient poets and orators as models of the best literary style. . . .

During the second half of the thirteenth century, a number of leading Italian dictatedores were educated in France, imbued this very different approach to the subject, and returned to propagate these new methods of teaching in Italian Universities. . . ."

5 *ibid.*, p. 44

6 *ibid.*, p. 84-101; also *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, 1973 s.v. "Virtù in and since the Renaissance" by Jerrold E. Seigel.

7 Skinner, p. 41-48; p. 87.


9 *ibid.*, p. 127.

Demus, p. 127.

According to the description of this labour in *Gods and Heroes of the Greeks: The Library of Apollodorus* (hereafter *The Library of Apollodorus*) p. 93-94 - "As a third labour Eurystheus ordered him to bring the Cerynian deer alive to Mycenae. It lived at Oenoe, had golden horns, and was sacred to Artemis. Because he wished neither to kill it nor wound it Herakles hunted it for an entire year. When the animal, exhausted from running fled to Mount Artemisius and from there to the Ladon River, Herakles shot an arrow at it as it was about to cross the stream, caught it and, putting it on his shoulders, hurried through Arcadia."

Hercules met and killed the dragon Ladon in his quest for the apples of the Hesperides (Morford and Lenardon, p. 364). The representation of the "Capture of the Cerynian Hind" seen on San Marco conflates the image of Ladon, from Hercules' eleventh labour with the image of the Cerynian Hind to depict the moment of the Hind's capture. The dragon Ladon symbolizes the river Ladon, where the Hind was finally overcome. The placement of the dragon at his feet alludes to Hercules' carrying of the Hind through the River Ladon.

The images on the four other relief panels include the Virgin, in an Orant position, S. George, S. Demetrios, and the Archangel Gabriel.

According to Demus, p. 126, a *terminus ante quem* for the placement of the six relief panels can be proved by their appearance in a mosaic above the Porta Sant'Alippio. The mosaic is mentioned in the early part of Martino da Canale's *Chronique des Veniciens*, started in 1267 and continued through 1275, therefore the reliefs must have been in place by 1267 (see also p. 103-104, Demus).

According to Demus, p. 134-135, the allegory intended in the Hercules reliefs has not been interpreted. "... Heracles was introduced as a parallel to, or as a substitute for, Samson. In some reliefs showing the fight with the lion it is even doubtful which of the two is meant. In some programs of the fourteenth century Heracles, vanquishing Geryones, is equated with the dragon slayer George. How far the mediaeval interpretation had prevailed in thirteenth century Venice, can hardly be ascertained in view of the almost complete lack of statements on spiritual or even religious matters, a lack that is characteristic of Venice in almost every age. Thus it is hardly possible to say whether Saxl and Panofsky were right in believing that the Venetian representation of the hero trampling the hydra under foot and carrying the stag on his shoulders was meant to signify "the Saviour conquering evil and saving the souls of the faithful," that is, a specific allegory of Salvation."


Morford and Lenardon, p. 359.

Panofsky and Saxl, p. 250.

Angiola, p. 15, quotes S. Hippolytus' "Commentary on the Sixth Chapter of the Book of Daniel" and the thirteenth century Bible Moralisée as her authorities for the use of the figure of Daniel as a symbol of Resurrection and triumph over Death.

see above, Chapter 1, p. 8, footnote 31 (p.15)

Angiola, p. 16-19.

This appearance seems unusually early if one considers that the acceptance given Hercules by the Church resulted after several centuries of allegorical interpretations of classical literature. Secular interest in and examination of classical literature for models of political leadership and lifestyles only originated in the second half of the thirteenth century. This interest reflects French influence (see excellent discussion in Skinner, Vol. One, p. 35-48, in particular p. 36-41).


This suggestion is found in Wieruszowski, p. 494, footnote 1.

The full quote is: "The city lay under the ban of the Church at this time. This seal might have been considered as a means of underlining the city's unlimited feeling of power and self-confidence despite the threats of the Church. As Christian and pagan imagery was used side by side to represent abstract ideas, the challenge to the Church - if any - was in this new symbol of strength not in the pagan motif. Together with S. Michael Hercules symbolizes the idea of strength on Pisano's Pulpit in the Pisan Cathedral."

Skinner, p. 47.

Jean Seznec's statement:
"The Book of the Treasure of Brunetto Latini places Hercules side by side with Moses, Solon, Lycurgus, Numa Pomphilius, and the Greek king Phoroneous as among the first legislators, who by instituting codes of law saved the nations of men from the ruin which their own frailty and impurity would have condemned them."

is inaccurate. After checking the cited source - C.V. Langlois, La Connaissance de la nature et du monde au moyen âge, in idem. La Vie en France au moyen âge, Vol. III, Paris, 1927, p. 341-342 - I have ascertained that not only is the page reference incorrect - it should be p. 345-346 - but that Hercules is not even mentioned in this context. The figure identified with the first legislators is Mercury, of the Egyptians. On comparing this section with Latini-Carmody, I have found that the figure identified there - Book I, Chapter 17-2 was Mercurius Trismegistus.

Many of the qualities associated with the hero in Greek and Roman literature resembled those listed in Latini's work. According to Galinsky, p. 148-149:
"Herakles, in many ways, summed up the national experience of that country. His beginnings, like those of primitive Greece, were violent, and there were excesses with the concomitant anxiety to expiate them. Then, at the time of Hesiod, there was growing concern for law; we need only think of lawgivers such as Lycurgus, Dracon and Solon. Herakles came to personify the rudimentary civilizing efforts - he drains swamps, builds cities, and destroys wild beasts and tyrants. He, the supreme champion of justice and civilizer, precedes Greek colonists wherever they go. Herakles then became the supreme symbol of Greek individualism and humanism in the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides. The sophists and philosophers finally accentuated his mental powers. Every age in Greece recast Herakles in its own image, and he thus became the incarnation of her history and aspirations. This is precisely the role which Vergil intended for Aeneas in Italy and Rome, and it is primarily for this reason that Herakles became an inspirational model for Aeneas and, taking his inspirations from the Roman Hercules cult, Vergil doubtless hoped that his Italic readers would regard Aeneas with the same kind of personal intensity with which they worshipped Hercules."


Latini-Holloway, p. xvi-xvii. Discussion of the training involved in the Ars Dictaminis and Ars Arengendi may be found in Skinner, p. 35-41.
Brunetto Latini was exiled in 1260, while on a diplomatic mission to King Alfonso X of Seville, on behalf of the Florentine Guelf faction. During his embassy to Seville, according to Latini-Holloway, p. xii-xiii - "Latini probably learned of the King’s writings in vernacular Castilian and Galician, and of his encyclopedic interests in law, astronomy, music, poetry, hagiography, and of his knowledge of Arabic. . . .

The next six years were spent in exile from Italy. The tradition is that Brunetto Latini went to Paris, and even, it is rumored to Oxford. . . . It was important to Italian literature that Latini steeped himself in Spanish and French letters, reading Alain of Lille, the "Chartrian" Neoplatonists of the previous century, who wrote in Latin, and the great vernacular French dream-vision poem of his own century, the Romance of the Rose. He then translated this new awareness into his native Italian in his Tesoretto."

The importance of Brunetto Latini in the history of Florence is not limited to his political activities, nor to his literary efforts. He was also noted for his rhetorical abilities (Latini-Holloway, p. xi), his vernacular translations of Cicero, including a commentary on the De Inventione (Skinner, p. 37) and for his relationship with Dante, as a friend and teacher (Latini-Holloway, p. xvii).

Although I have not been able to determine whether Latini was personally familiar with the writings of Plutarch, which, according to Galinsky, p. 190, did identify Hercules with qualities considered desirable in both the individual and the community, it is possible that he was acquainted with them through his reading of the "Chartrian" Neoplatonists. It is known that the Library at Chartres did possess some of Plutarch's writings. (See John Westfall Thompson, The Medieval Library, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939, p. 238).

Dante was exiled in 1301 while on a diplomatic mission in Rome. He remained in exile for the remainder of his life.

The canzone was published in Deutsches Dante-Jahrbuch, Vol. 12 n.s. 3 (Weimar, 1930) p. 133 ff. Both Marcel Simon, p. 177-179; and Galinsky, p. 202-203 discuss Dante's treatment of Hercules in this work.

According to Skinner, p. 16-17, the De Monarchia was written c. 1309-1313. References to this work are from Dante Alighieri, Monarchy and Three Political Letters, with an introduction by Donald Nicholl and a note on the Chronology of Dante's Political Works by Colin Hardie, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1972 (Hereafter referred to as Monarchy).


References in *Commedy-Hell* to Hercules as a figure of Justice and a purifier include the slaying of Cacus, Canto XXV:16-33 and the slaying of Nessus and Pholon: Canto XII: 65-72.

Galinsky, p. 203.

Skinner, p. 16-17.


Ibid., p. 53. This analogy is extended in Book Ten, p. 55, to the battle by the Roman people for the foundation of the Roman Empire.

Allen, p. 165, foot note 6: "His allegorization of the Metamorphoses consists of 796 verses, summarizing the work and sometimes briefly indicating the interpretation. The deeper understanding is fully revealed in the accompanying prose commentary, which, as Ghisalberti finds, depends at times on Arnulph of Orleans or John of Garland. The bases of the readings are spiritual, moral, physical and euhemeristic."


Allen, p. 166. THERE IS AN ERROR IN Allen's footnote. The Book in which the Labors of Hercules are examined is Book 9 - see Fausto Ghisalberti "Giovanni del Virgilio espositore delle Metamorfosi" in *Giornale Dantesca*, XXXIV, n.s. iv (1933), p. 83-88.


Galinsky, p. 195.

Bernardo, p. 140-141.

<i>Petrarch's Africa</i>, Book 3, lines 477-509, p. 54-55.


Mommsen, Choice of Hercules, p. 182-183.

Powers Serafini-Sauli, p. 46.

Smarr suggests this interpretation, p. 147-148. She also states that Boccaccio used Matthew 7:13-14, as a basis for the text as well as the Prodicus parable.


Coulter, p. 318-319.

Boccaccio, <i>On Poetry</i>, p. xxv-xxvi.
ibid., p xxvi

Coulter, p. 325-327.

ibid., p. 326.

ibid., p. 340.


ibid., p. 21.

ibid., p. 22-23.


Galinsky, p. 196.


Galinsky, p. 196-197.


Judges 14:5-6.


Ayrton, p. 223-227.

ibid., p. 223.
ibid.

ibid., p. 223-227. Reconstructions have been attempted by both Bacci and Jászai, but both have been subject to criticism.

Trachtenberg, p. 49 and p.86.

Comedy-Hell, XXV: 17-35.

Monarchy, p. 53

A similar interpretation is proposed in Trachtenberg, p. 94, relating the Campanile plaque with the Florentine Seal, and to current events.


ibid., p. 167

ibid., p. 168 and f.n. 18, p. 245.


L.D. Ettlinger, "Hercules Florentinus" in Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz, 16 (1972) p. 126.

ibid., p. 126-127.

Allen, p. 173

Waith, p. 206, foot note 19.

see above, p. 22.


Galinsky, p. 195.
A. Introduction

The identification of Hercules as an exemplary figure, in fourteenth century Italy, originated from the study of classical literature and its commentaries, as well as from the study of early Christian and medieval texts. The impact of these studies, combined with the impact of the writings by Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio and Salutati, all of whom enjoyed widespread reputations, resulted in the general identification and acceptance of Hercules as a rich symbol of both political and moral ideals.

As we saw in Chapter Two, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries commissions of Hercules imagery were largely associated with Church buildings. This imagery, commissioned by the Church, the State - including both the communal and signorial forms of government - and the Guilds, was of a didactic nature, intended for the edification of the public.

In the fifteenth century, images of Hercules continued to be displayed within the ambient of ecclesiastical buildings. Although commissions which included Hercules imagery were predominantly administered by private patrons at this time, there are two projects which may have resulted from civic or guild commissions. These are the Leonardo Bruni Tomb, located in Santa Croce, Florence, dating from c.1451 (see figure 14 and 15), and the Antonio Federighi Baptismal Font in the Capella di San Giovanni, the Cathedral, Siena, dating from c.1482 (see figures 16 and 17).
Tomb monuments containing Hercules imagery were also commissioned by private individuals. Two examples are Venetian ducal tombs. One, the Tomb of Doge Pietro Mocenigo, finished in 1481, incorporated two Hercules images—Hercules and the Nemean Lion, and Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna (see figures 18, 19 and 20). The other, the Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin, finished c. 1493, included one Hercules image—Hercules, Nessus and Deianira (see figure 21). Both tombs are located in the Church of San Giovanni e Paolo. The decoration of the Colleoni Chapel façade, Bergamo, contains four images of Hercules, three of which are Hercules and Antaeus; Hercules and the Nemean Lion, and Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna (see figures 22, 23, 24 and 25). This chapel, intended to house the tombs of the Colleoni family, was commissioned by the noted condottiere, Bartolomeo Colleoni in c. 1470.

Three Hercules images resulted from the private commissions for the foundation, building and decoration of two Carmelite Monasteries. One of the monasteries, the Certosa of Pavia, was commissioned by Gian Galeazzo Visconti in c. 1393. Like the Colleoni Chapel, this structure was intended to serve as the family mausoleum. Two Hercules images are included in the depiction of illustrious men of the Bible, mythology, and history, found on sixty-one medallions set into the low socle of the façade (see figure 26). These images are a profile portrait of the adult Hercules, complete with an identifying inscription, on the obverse of a medallion, and an image of the infant Hercules strangling the snakes, again with an identifying inscription, on the reverse of the medallion. The other Carmelite monastery, the Certosa of Ferrara was commissioned by Borso d'Este in 1452. Following Borso's death in 1471, his half-brother, Ercole d'Este assumed responsibility for the Certosa. This is reflected by the image of Hercules found on the roof of a twelve columned pavilion, found in the centre of the ducal garden of the Certosa.
As indicated in Chapter Two, private commissions of Hercules imagery, intended for the decoration of private residences in fourteenth century Italy, were restricted to the inclusion of the hero in representations of illustrious men cycles. The depiction of these cycles in private residences continued during the fifteenth century, although their popularity declined somewhat during the second half of the century. The current study of classical literature and the fourteenth century writings of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio and Salutati resulted in the acceptance and pre-eminence of Hercules as an exemplar of virtù, justice, wisdom and immortality. This, combined with the cult of antiquity, intensified by the spread of humanist learning, stimulated interest in owning representations of figures from the classical past. Thus the popularity of Hercules imagery, first evidenced in the commissions of the public sector, was continued by the commissions of the private patron. The image of Hercules was now commissioned more as a symbol of qualities with which the patron wished to be identified than as an edifying image, the purpose of which was didactic.

In this chapter I shall deal with commissions made by four leading fifteenth century patrons in Italy: Lorenzo de'Medici of Florence, Ercole I d'Este of Ferrara, Ludovico Gonzaga of Mantua, and Federico da Montefeltro of Urbino. In conjunction with the examination of their commissions and acquisitions of Hercules imagery, I shall attempt to determine the personal significance of this imagery for its patron or owner.

B. The Patrons

i) Lorenzo de'Medici

Patronage was an important aspect of Medicean activity in Florence during the fifteenth century. Cosimo, perhaps in an attempt to atone for his participation in usurious business practices, commissioned the repair and construction of large architectural projects. Piero, Cosimo's successor,
was interested in and responsible for the patronage of painters and decorators. Lorenzo, although knowledgeable about architecture, and acquainted with different artists active in Florence, appears to have preferred to devote his energies and finances to the enlargement of the Medici collection of gems, intaglios, antiquities and small art objects, including small bronze sculpture.

Numerous representations of Hercules have been associated with the patronage of the Medici family. Some, it is believed, were commissioned by the Medici for the decoration of the new Palazzo Medici on the Via Largo. Others were created by artists who worked in the ambient of the Medici, and, as a result of their commendations, received commissions from other patrons. Many Hercules images created by artists known to have worked for the Medici remain extant, although much of the documentation about their provenance has been lost. It is possible to identify some of the images of Hercules owned or commissioned by the Medici through reference to the Medici Inventory of 1492, and to contemporary writings and descriptions. Unfortunately the available documents do not always provide adequate information about the appearance of Medicean Hercules imagery. This, combined with the dispersal of Medici belongings during their exile from Florence between 1494 and 1512, makes it very difficult to determine which images were commissioned by the Medici, for either their personal use and enjoyment, or to be used as presents to friends and to other rulers.

Hercules imagery mentioned in the Medici Inventory of 1492 and therefore known to have belonged to the Medici includes:

- three canvases by Antonio Pollaiuolo depicting Hercules and Antaeus, Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna, and Hercules and the Nemean Lion.
- one bronze statuette of Hercules and Antaeus by Antonio Pollaiuolo (see figures 30 and 31)
- a portrait of Hercules and many of his deeds
There are several Hercules images created by Antonio Pollaiuolo for which the documentation regarding the commission and provenance has been lost. Because Pollaiuolo is known to have created Hercules imagery for the family it is possible that these works were commissioned by the Medici, in particular, by Lorenzo. This imagery includes:

- Three paintings representing Hercules, Nessus and Deianira (see figure 32), Hercules and Antaeus (see figure 33) and Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna (see figure 34).
- Hercules statuette with foot of hero resting on lion's head (see figures 35 and 36).
- Hercules statuette with foot of hero resting on head of an ox (see figures 37 and 38).
- Presentation helmet for Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino.

Two other artists associated with the Medici, and in particular with Lorenzo, are also known to have created Hercules imagery. These two were Bertoldo di Giovanni and Michelangelo. The Hercules imagery produced by Bertoldo includes:

- Hercules on Horseback (see figure 41).
- Resting Hercules holding the Hesperidean Apples (see figure 43).
- Hercules and the Nemean Lion (see figure 44).
- Hercules resting (see figure 45).

Hercules imagery by Michelangelo includes:

- Hercules statue.
- The Battle of Hercules and the Centaurs (see figure 46).

There is one other bronze statuette, known to have belonged to the Medici, which includes a representation of Hercules. This is the statuette of Marcus Aurelius, with accompanying helmet on which Hercules, Nessus and Deianira are portrayed. This sculpture was given by its creator, Antonio Averlino called Filarete, to Piero de'Medici in 1465, according to an inscription on its base (see figure 47).
Although this is an incomplete listing of the Hercules imagery owned by the Medici, it illustrates their interest in the genre. From the above list it appears that the most commonly depicted scenes of Hercules, in the Medici collections, were the Hercules and Antaeus, Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna, and Hercules and the Nemean Lion. Another theme which was repeated was the Hercules resting, of which there are three surviving representations.

The personal significance of Hercules imagery for the Medici family has not been conclusively determined. Their predilection for the Hercules and Antaeus, Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna and Hercules and the Nemean Lion may reflect an attempt by the Medici to identify visually with the political ideals of Florence, for these three scenes were also depicted on the Porta della Mandorla in c.1391.

Cristoforo Landino, in his *Disputationes Camaldulenses* (c.1475) and *De vera nobilitate* (c.1470), provided interpretations of Hercules' labours which were influenced by Neoplatonic thought. In both of these works Hercules was presented as a symbol of the *vita activa*.

Lorenzo de'Medici, the proponent of the active life, replying to Leon Battista Alberti's praise of the contemplative life, (in the dialogue *De vita activa et contemplativa* of the *Disputationes Camaldulenses*) is made to say: "Hercules was wise. But not wise for himself: rather, his wisdom served almost all men. For in his wanderings over the greater part of the world, he destroyed horrendous wild beasts, vanquished pernicious and savage monsters, chastised the most cruel tyrants." Lorenzo's comment on Hercules comes between his praise of Frederick of Urbino (to whom Landino's dialogue is dedicated) and of St. Paul - a contemporary and a Biblical example of such active wisdom.

Landino interpreted Hercules' labours not only as battles against injustice and other evils which threaten mankind, but as moral conquests or psychomachia. Accordingly the Hydra of Lerna symbolized "sophistic deceit". The slaying of the Hydra, which was only accomplished by means of fire, symbolized the defeat of ignorance or sophistry through the application of the eager or
burning mind. The slaying of the Nemean Lion was interpreted by Landino as the overcoming of anger, which so perturbs the mind that it totally extinguishes the light of reason." The slaying of Antaeus symbolized the conquering of the irrational appetite:

We name that appetite which is opposed to reason Antaeus. Moreover, it is called Antaeus, that is in Greek 'opposite' because the irrational appetite is always opposed to reason; he is the son of the earth, because earthly and corruptible things summon him in our bodies. Therefore Hercules, the wise man, cannot destroy him so long as he (Antaeus) clings to the earth: that is, so long as we desire earthly and corruptible things; but only if he is lifted to the divine. Then, after our souls have been snatched away from love of these things, all passion for them perishes.

These three labours, as interpreted by Landino, continued and expanded certain of the interpretations suggested by Boccaccio and Salutati.

The three representations of Hercules Resting which may have been owned by the Medici, showed the hero after his completion of three distinct labours. The Hercules Resting after the slaying of the Nemean Lion (see figures 35 and 36) may further illustrate the defeat of anger, possibly alluding to the defeat of short-lived anger. The Hercules Resting holding the Apples of the Hesperides (see figure 43) may suggest the state of contemplation necessary to accomplish the learning and ability symbolized by the Hesperidean Apples. According to Fulgentius:

Hercules took golden apples from the Garden of the Hesperides: there are said to be four Hesperides; namely, Aegle, Hespera, Medusa, and Arethusa, whom in Latin we call study, intellect, memory and eloquence, for the first task is to study; the second to understand; the third to remember what you have understood, and the final one, to adorn with eloquence what you have remembered. It is therefore in this fashion that manliness seizes the golden jewel of learning.

The third representation, Hercules Resting with his foot on the head of an Ox (see figures 37 and 38) may allude to Hercules' successful return with the Cattle of Geryon, or may even have a more personal significance for Lorenzo.

In April, 1478, Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano were attacked by
would-be assassins, members of the Pazzi family, and their supporters. This attempt was only partly successful; Lorenzo survived and was able to avenge his brother's murder. There are numerous reasons why this Hercules statuette may commemorate the Pazzi conspiracy and Lorenzo's conquest of the Pazzi family:

1) The ox head may suggest an identification of the Pazzi family, for, at Easter, they were driven in a cart pulled by white oxen.

The Pazzi were an old and proud family who had made for themselves a name in Florentine history long before there is any mention of the Medici. A Pazzi returned from the First Crusade bringing with him fire from the altar of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. His descendants became guardians of the ancient flints from which each year the new fire is kindled in the Cathedral of Florence, and his exploit is still commemorated in the ceremony known as the Scoppio del Carro. On Easter Eve the chariot of the Pazzi is drawn by milk-white oxen to the Piazza del Duomo, and a mechanical dove flies out of the west door to light the fireworks with which the carro is decorated.

2) The attack on Lorenzo and Giuliano took place in April, in the Florentine Duomo.

3) The suggested date for this statuette is c.1475-1480.

4) This statuette is unique in its depiction of an ox's head in conjunction with Hercules.

5) The labour, the fetching of the Cattle of Geryon, was viewed as a conquest of death in Antiquity. The statuette may therefore allegorically symbolize Lorenzo's own conquest of death by surviving the Pazzi conspiracy.

6) A precedence for the depiction of Hercules triumphant over foes of both Florence and Lorenzo was shown in the image of Hercules cresting the Pollaiuolo Presentation helmet awarded to Federigo da Montefeltro following his victory in Volterra.

7) A comparison of the facial features of the Hercules statue with portraits of Lorenzo reveals some similarities (see figure 48, 49, 50 and 51).

From the above arguments it seems possible that this statuette may represent an idealized Lorenzo-Hercules, Triumphant over Death, and over the Pazzi Family.
Hercules imagery, although it almost certainly appears to have had personal significance for the Medici, seems primarily to confirm their identification with the ideals of Florentine politics. This is emphasized by the replication of the three labours of Hercules shown on the Porta della Mandorla. That Hercules was considered an exemplar of the active life, of virtù, and the conquest of evil, provided even greater reason for the Medici to establish publically their veneration of such a paradigm.

ii) Ludovico Gonzaga

The Gonzaga family were the acknowledged leaders of Mantua from 1328 through to the seventeenth century. Originally wealthy landowners, they established themselves as one of the foremost families in Italy after seizing power in the fourteenth century. This was accomplished through their patronage of the arts, architecture and education, through marriages into other aristocratic families of Italy and Northern Europe, and through the hospitality they extended to Papal and political leaders. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Gonzaga prestige was further enhanced by their employment as military leaders.

In the years following his accession to the Marquisate of Mantua, Ludovico Gonzaga was recognized as an important patron of architecture and the arts. He is noted for his revival of the all'antica style of architecture, in Mantua, with the help of Luca Fancelli and Leon Battista Alberti. Inspired by the humanist education he had received under Vittorino da Feltre, Ludovico was an avid reader and collector of Latin, Greek and Italian manuscripts. His interest extended to the artistic decoration of his villas and palazzi. He is noted for his patronage of Pisanello, Donatello and Andrea Mantegna.

Hercules imagery associated with Ludovico Gonzaga's patronage was
painted or designed by Andrea Mantegna. This imagery was located in two rooms: one was located in the Castle of Cavriana,\textsuperscript{64} the other was the Camera degli Sposi in the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua.\textsuperscript{65} Unfortunately the Hercules' labours painted in Cavriana have been lost, so hypotheses about the use of Hercules imagery during Ludovico's rule can only be derived from that surviving in the Camera degli Sposi.

The walls and ceiling of the Camera degli Sposi were frescoed by Mantegna between 1465 and 1474.\textsuperscript{66} All four walls were decorated with illusionistic curtains, however, on two of the walls these curtains are pulled back to reveal the following scenes: Ludovico and Barbara of Brandenburg with their court; and Ludovico Meeting his son, Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga (see figure 52). The ceiling decoration includes a simulated open oculus encircled by a marble balustrade on which ten winged putti play. Ladies of the Court and a slave appear to be looking through the oculus into the room below (see figures 53 and 54). The remainder of the ceiling is divided by stucco framing elements\textsuperscript{67} which define the ceiling as a series of eight caisons, twelve triangular cells and twelve lunettes (see figure 55). Portraits of the first eight Caesars, each identified by inscriptions and encased in garlanded roundels held by putti, are depicted in the eight caisons. Mythological scenes of Hercules, Arion and Orpheus are shown in the twelve triangular cells. Heraldic imagery and festoons of fruit and leaves against a blue sky background are shown in the eight lunettes.\textsuperscript{68}

The Hercules imagery in the Camera degli Sposi is confined to six of the twelve triangular cells in the ceiling area, and to a statue of Hercules shown in the background of the fresco of Ludovico meeting his son Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga. The labours and parerga depicted are: Hercules saving Deianira from Nessus; Hercules and the Nemean Lion; Hercules and the
Hydra of Lerna, Hercules and Antaeus; and Hercules capturing Cerberus (see figures 56, 57, 58, 59 and 60). The background statue in the "Meeting" fresco is a representation of Hercules resting (see figure 61).

The significance of the ceiling decoration of the Camera degli Sposi has not yet been determined. The tendency, to date, has been to view the three areas of the ceiling: the caisons, the triangular cells and the lunettes (which actually are part of the upper walls of the Camera degli Sposi) as independent images. In accordance with this way of examining the imagery, the portraits of the Caesars, located in the caisons, may be intended to remind us that Mantua owed its allegiance to his Caesarian Majesty, the Holy Roman Emperor, whose portrait appears below.

the mythological imagery, could be said to show the power of the liberal arts to overcome evil, compared with that of heroic physical force.

the heraldic emblems found in the lunettes represent devices important to the Gonzaga.

It is possible, however, that the imagery of the ceiling was intended to be viewed as an integral unity rather than as independent components. This is suggested by the use of the fictive gold mosaic field against which the images of the Caesars, Orpheus, Arion and Hercules appear. The placement of the portraits of the Caesars and the mythological imagery against this Dome of Heaven may be an allusion to their immortality caused by their lives and deeds. The Caesars, because of their exalted positions as Emperors, were deified following their deaths by the Roman Senate. Orpheus, because of his outstanding musical ability, was able to descend and return from the Underworld in his quest for Euridicé, his deceased wife. Although Orpheus was slain following his return to the World, his Lyre was immortalized as the constellation Lyra. Arion, a noted Greek poet and bard, challenged death when, on his return from Sicily, the sailors of the
boat on which he sailed determined to kill him for his wealth. Before casting him overboard they permitted him to sing. Arion's singing so charmed the dolphins that, after he was thrown into the waters they carried him safely to shore. Thus, by means of his music, Arion was able to vanquish Death. Accordingly Arion and the dolphin were immortalized by their placement amongst the stars.\(^7\) Hercules, as well as defeating the evil forces of nature which threaten mankind, successfully conquered death by his descent to the Underworld and return with Cerberus, the Watchdog of Hades. Following his death, Hercules was received by the gods on Mount Olympus, thus ensuring his immortality. Hercules also was reputed to have been immortalized as a constellation, \textit{Engonasin}, the Kneeler.\(^7\)

The ceiling of the Camera degli Sposi may have alluded to the Gonzaga aspirations for immortality. The Caesars were noted military leaders who became political leaders or Emperors because of their prowess. They were deified following their deaths. The Gonzaga family were also noted military leaders who became the political leaders of Mantua because of their ability.\(^7\) The figures of Arion and Orpheus, who conquered death through their abilities as poets and musicians, may suggest the immortality possible through the creation of music and poetry.\(^7\) The image of Hercules slaying Nessus, the Nemean Lion, the Hydra of Lerna, and Antaeus; and of the hero conquering Cerberus, may refer to the conquest of evil forces including savagery or bestiality,\(^7\) anger,\(^7\) sophistry,\(^8\) injustice, generic vice or irrational appetite,\(^8\) and "bodily needs which interfere with the acquisition of knowledge."\(^8\) Thus both the portraits of the Caesars and the mythological scenes may allude to the availability of immortality to those who emulate the rulers and the musical and poetic arts of antiquity, through the suppression of conquering of human weaknesses. That Ludovico aspired to immortality is suggested by the placement of the Gonzaga heraldic imagery
in relation to the ceiling frescoes. The wall frescoes of the Camera degli Sposi: the "Court scene" and the "Meeting scene" may further develop the concept of Gonzaga aspirations for immortality. The "Court scene" shows Ludovico, surrounded by his family and courtiers, dealing with serious affairs of state. This is suggested by Ludovico's reading of a letter, and his turning to the secretary to give directions in response to the letter (see figure 63). The "Meeting scene" shows Ludovico, the Marquis of Mantua, his son, Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, members of the Gonzaga family who will in the future be either the Marquis of Mantua or Church officials, in the company of noted contemporary leaders. The placement of the Hercules statue in the background above the heads of current and future Gonzaga leaders, active both in politics or in the Church, suggests that Hercules symbolizes admirable qualities of leadership which should be emulated if immortal fame is to be attained (see figures 64 and 65).

The use of Hercules imagery in the Camera degli Sposi appears slightly different from its use by the Medici in Florence. Once again the hero is shown conquering evil forces. This time, however, he is shown in relation to the Caesars, or deified political leaders from Antiquity; and to both Orpheus and Arion, two poets and musicians immortalized by their creative and performance abilities. As in the Medici Palace on the Via Largo, Florence, the Hercules imagery is shown in a reception room.

The wall frescoes of the Camera degli Sposi, with their depictions of Ludovico ably dealing with affairs of state within the Court; and meeting with other leaders, both secular and Church, stress Ludovico's importance as a progenitor of future leaders; and as an equal to other contemporary leaders. The other leaders depicted are Ludovico's superiors. One is the Holy Roman Emperor, the other is the King of Denmark. This suggests that
Ludovico aspired to equality with them in his current life and in history, through his veneration and emulation of the illustrious military and political leaders of antiquity, through his study and veneration of the arts of antiquity, and through his veneration and emulation of Hercules, the immortal classical exemplar of virtù.

iii) Federigo da Montefeltro

Federigo da Montefeltro was installed as Count of Urbino in 1444. Although the natural son of Guidantonio, legitimized in 1424 during the papacy of Martin V, the townspeople of Urbino considered him more desirable as their leader than his half brother Oddantonio, whom they assassinated because of excesses and injustices endured during his short rule. The selection of Federigo was probably influenced both by the affection with which his father, Guidantonio, was remembered, and by the reputation Federigo was earning because of his military activities.

Throughout his rule, Federigo was able to augment his wealth by income earned from his labours as a condottiere. During his life he was employed by the papacy, the Kingdom of Naples, the Republics of Florence and Milan, and the Este of Ferrara. It was in recognition of his valuable military services and his loyalty that Pope Sixtus IV raised Federigo to Duke of Urbino in 1474. At the same time he also invested Federigo as a Knight of Saint Peter.

Federigo's activities as a patron began in about 1450, with the building of his new palace. In total, three distinct building campaigns were undertaken in the construction and decoration of the Ducal Palace.

The first was begun in about 1450, probably under the supervision of Maso di Bartolommeo (d.1456). It consisted of renovations and additions to older buildings.

The larger part of the palace dates from two later campaigns. The second, begun about 1465, followed a model made by Luciano Laurana that established the palace's character. The third continued the work and added decorative and other elements apparently within
Laurana's fabric. Begun in 1472 when Laurana transferred to Naples, construction was directed by Francesco di Giorgio Martini. Both private and public rooms of the new Ducal Palace were decorated with Hercules imagery. Most representations of the hero, however, are to be found in the public rooms. The Sala della Iole, which possibly was used as a council room, featured a decorated chimney piece by Michele di Giovanni di Giesole. The elements of this chimney piece included two caryatid figures - Hercules and Iole - which appear to support a lintel decorated with festoon-carrying putti, bacchante and satyrs (see figures 66 and 67).

The other images of Hercules which would have been exposed to the public eye were two intarsia panels. One, Hercules slaying the Nemean Lion, (see figure 68), was included in the panelling of the door opening into the Sala della Iole from the Grand Staircase (see figures 69 and 70). The second panel, identified by Pasquale Rotondi as a Hercules, is a companion to a representation of Mars. These two panels are located on the door entering into Federigo's so-called Bedroom from the Sala degli Angeli (see figures 71, 72 and 73). This image of Hercules does not conform with the usual depiction of the hero for the youthful figure is shown holding a quiver, arrows and a bow, and is dressed in a cloak and boots. It is possible that this image may represent Apollo, the God of Youth, Music, Prophecy, Archery and Healing. Considering Federigo's educational background and his activities as a condottiere this identification seems equally plausible.

Only one image of Hercules is known to have been included in the decoration of a private room - Federigo's Studiolo - in the Urbino Palace. This is the small caryatid figure of Hercules incorporated in the illusionistic framing elements of Justus van Ghent's illustrations of the illustrious men of Antiquity and the Renaissance (see figures 74, 75, 76, and 77). There, Hercules, accompanied by Cerberus, was shown in relation to two classical authors, Cicero and Seneca, both of whom had written of his labours.
and exemplary qualities, and two Biblical exemplars, Moses the lawgiver and Solomon, who was noted for his wisdom. In both classical and contemporary literature Hercules was identified as a lawgiver, and as an exemplar of wisdom. The representation of Hercules was a minor motif within the depictions of illustrious men in the Studiolo. However, the placement of the hero in relation to distinguished men who had written about him, or exemplars whose qualities he shared, emphasized his importance.

Federigo da Montefeltro owned two personal representations of Hercules, independent of those included in the decoration of his palace. These were the medal by Clement of Urbino, and the presentation helmet by Antonio Pollaiuolo.

Clement of Urbino made a medal for Federigo in 1468. The obverse (see figures 78 and 79) shows a profile of Federigo, wearing a "mortier, cuirass and mantle." On the breastplate of the cuirass is a representation which I identify as Hercules fighting a Centaur. The inscription encircling the medal is - ALTER ADEST CESAR SCIPIO ROMAN(US) ET ALTER SEV PACEM POPULIS SEV FERA BELLA DEDIT - which means "The elder General Scipio was at hand, as was the younger, whether they gave to the people peace or savage war." The reverse of the medal (see figure 85) shows:

An eagle on a fulmen, supporting with spread wings a plate on which are cuirass, shield, sword, globe, brush, and olive-branch, above the stars of Jupiter, Mars and Venus. Around and in the field MARS FERUS ET SUMHUM TANGENS CYHEREA TONANTE DANT TIBI REGINA PARES ET TUA FATA MOUENT; INVICTUS FEDERICUS C(OMES) U(R)BINI ANNO (DOMINI) MCCCCLXVIII OPUS CLEMENTIS U(R)BINATIS (Tameless Mars and his companion Venus, touching the heart of highest Jove the Thunderer, give kingdoms to you and actuate your destiny. Frederick the Invincible, Count of Urbino. The work of Clement of Urbino.)

The significance of this medal is unknown. However, it is possible that this medal commemorated the Battle of La Mollinella which took place in July, 1468. This was the first battle in which "flying artillery" was used. According to Dennistoun:
The new weapons called spingards and invented by Colleoni were long swivels measuring three cubits, mounted upon carriages, and discharging balls somewhat larger than a walnut or plum. . . .

Thus, the globe in the centre of the plate, carried on the back of the eagle, may allude to the cannon balls used in this battle.

The other imagery on the medal - the eagle, the brush, and the olive-branch, were all emblems used by the Montefeltro. The cuirass, the shield and the sword represent the Mars spoken of in the inscription. The olive branch and the brush, while having personal significance for Federigo, may also refer to the prosperity enjoyed in peace, symbolized by the similar mention of Venus (Cytherea) in the inscription. The Eagle, perhaps, is a reference to Federigo's "cautious policy", for the war in which the Battle of La Mollinella occurred was not concluded until winter.

The juxtaposition of the two symbols of War and Peace, balanced by the effects of Federigo's cautious policy (as symbolized by the widespread wings of the eagle) neutralizes the new method of warfare symbolized by the cannonball. This imagery in conjunction with the inscriptions suggests that Federigo is the Invincible because he is counselled in both war and peace by the two Scipios, exemplars of Roman military leadership and statesmanship; and because the two gods, Mars and Venus touching Jupiter, give him kingdoms (victories) and control his destiny.

The presentation helmet by Antonio Pollaiuolo was given to Federigo by Florence and Lorenzo de'Medici, in appreciation for his service in the War on Volterra in 1472. A figure of Hercules triumphant over the Griffin of Volterra crested the helmet.

The use of Hercules imagery in the Palazzo Ducale suggests that the image did have personal meaning for Federigo. Although the image is seen primarily in the public rooms of the palace, its appearance in the Studiolo, surrounded by Cicero, Seneca, Moses and Solomon, implies not only how
Federigo learned of Hercules, but which particular Herculean virtues he glorified and wished to emulate.

The public representations of the hero found in the Sala della Iole, and on the door which opens into this room seem appropriate for a room which may have served among other things, as a council room. The figure of Hercules slaying the Nemean Lion, interpreted as the defeat of anger by Landino and Salutati, is shown on an intarsia panel included in the door which opens into the council room. This image suggests, perhaps, that the discussions held in this room should not be influenced by anger.

The figures of Hercules and Iole on either side of the Sala della Iole's fireplace may have provided a visual reminder that Hercules died by fire, as a result of his love for Iole. This image may have suggested to Federigo and his councillors the personal control and self discipline necessary to prevent their own demise.  

If the figure portrayed with Mars on the intarsia panels of the door opening into Federigo's Bedroom is a Hercules, then this conjunction of imagery may suggest that Federigo is guarded by the God of War and the Resplendent Victor and that no harm will come to Federigo in his personal domain. The Hercules, however, may also symbolize Herakles Alexikakos, the Averter of Evil, which included injustice and war. Thus the Hercules could represent the Guardian of Peace. Federigo would then be guarded or guided by the God of War and the Guardian of Peace, a juxtaposition of concepts already illustrated on the Clement of Urbino Medal of 1468.

iv) Ercole I d'Este

Ercole I d'Este, the third son of Niccolo III, was installed as the Duke of Ferrara in August, 1471. He had been prepared for his position of Duke both by a "thorough military and chivalric education"
provided at the Aragonese Court in Naples, and by "serving as governor of Modena; the second city of the realm" during Borso's rule. Ercole gained further leadership experience through his employment as a condottiere. Despite a serious foot wound, received in the Battle of La Molinella in 1467, which affected him for the rest of his life, Ercole continued to work as a condottiere and attained a reputation "comparable even to that of Federigo da Montefeltro."

Ercole's rule of Ferrara, from 1471 -1505, was noted for its administrative stability. It was also distinguished by Ercole's ambitious and diverse patronage. Each of his brothers had been active patrons, however, their interests were not as broad as Ercole's. Leonello was known for his literary patronage, and Borso for his architectural and artistic patronage. Ercole's patronage extended further to music, drama, the arts and architecture. As might be expected of a patron named Ercole, the legends of Hercules provided thematic inspiration for sculptural and painted imagery, as well as for literary and dramatic works associated with the Este court.

The first image of Hercules associated with Ercole's rule of Ferrara was a lead statue of the hero placed on the top of a garden pavilion located in the Ducal Gardens at the Certosa of Ferrara. The placement of the Hercules statue on a Borsian foundation reflects the change of sponsorship occasioned by Borso's death.

It may be presumed that this figure was originally intended to be a unicorn, the most common of Borso's imprese and the subject of the figure which Domenico had executed for the top of the well in the main cloister of the monastery. The figure for the pavilion, however, was not completed by the time Borso died, and instead of a unicorn, Domenico cast a Hercules to occupy the place of honour. This modification represents an interesting instance of the superposition of Ercole I's iconography on Borso's foundation, and symbolized the change of sponsorship.

Sabadino degli Arienti's treatise, De triumphis religionis
identifies two other Hercules images owned by Ercole. One was a statue of Hercules, this time gilded and holding a heraldic shield. This statue was sheltered in a pavilion located in the elaborate garden of the Castel Vecchio. The other Hercules was a painted image, again located in the Castel Vecchio. This image was included in a "room painted with (portraits of) wise men, with brief and singular moral sentences, and with the image of the ancient Hercules on a green field." Ercole I owned numerous small representations of his namesake. The Bertoldo di Giovanni bronze statuettes (see figures 41, 42, 43 and 44) may be examples of diplomatic presents from Lorenzo de' Medici to Ercole I. The medal by Lodovico Coradino (see figures 86 and 87) may have resulted from a personal commission. This medal includes a profile portrait of Ercole on the obverse, and on the reverse, an image of Hercules standing, resting on spear, holding shield charged with Este device of a ring and a flower; on left, three columns in sea. Above: GADES HERCULIS; below: OPUS CORADINI M(UTINENSIS).

Throughout his life Ercole was honoured by the dedication to him of numerous treatises. The earliest, an illuminated manuscript called Le fatiche d'Ercole, was composed by Pietro Andrea di Bassi before 1435. This treatise was probably commissioned to celebrate Ercole's birth. Each of Hercules' labours related by di Bassi opens with an appropriate illumination (see figures 88 through 101). Other treatises dedicated to Ercole which contain either literal or figural Hercules imagery include Cristoforo Landino's De vera nobilitate; Giovanni Trotti's translation of Matteo Maria Boiardo's De immortalitate anime; and the Vita B. Ioannes a Tauxignano Episcopi Ferrariae (see illustration 102), by an anonymous author.
NOTES

1 The references to Hercules on the Bruni Tomb are restricted to the supports of the sarcophagus chest. These supports are lions' skins - one of the traditional attributes of Hercules. (See illustrations 14 and 15). According to Ann Markham Schulz, The Sculpture of Bernardo Rossellino and his Workshop, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 35 - "The lion skin is the traditional attribute of Hercules which, according to Coluccio Salutati, enabled Hercules to oppose luxuria. The inference, therefore, is that Bruni possessed the virtue of Hercules, and that, like Hercules who was apotheosized as a reward for his virtue, Bruni would be resurrected to eternal life in heaven. In this respect the iconography of the Bruni Tomb approaches that of Roman sarcophagi where the deceased was often represented with the attributes of Hercules to signify that he would partake of the immortality of the hero. . . ."

The civic bodies responsible for the Bruni Tomb included the Signoria of Arezzo and of Florence. The Guild involved in the commission was the Calimala, a guild to which Bruni belonged. (see Lauro Martines, The Social World of the Florentine Humanists, 1390 - 1460, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 255-256 and p. 247. See also Schulz, p. 33).

2 The octagonal Baptismal Font by Antonio Federighi has two Hercules images - Hercules and the Nemean Lion, and Hercules and Nessus (see figures 16 and 17). The remaining panels are devoted to scenes from Genesis. Information about this font and Federighi himself is scarce - he is mentioned in John Pope-Hennessy's Italian Renaissance Sculpture, 2nd ed. London, Phaidon, 1971, p. 60, where Pope-Hennessy states: "Federighi's slow assimilation of antiquity may be followed through two holy water basins at the entrance to the Duomo and a baptismal font carved for the Capella di San Giovanni after 1482, where scenes from Genesis and from mythology are depicted in a hybrid style based in part on Quercia and in part on the antique."

More information about Federighi and this Font may be found in Benjamin Rowland, Jr. The Classical Tradition in Western Art, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 176-178. Neither author gives any information about the commission or the availability of documentation. I have assumed that this work is the result of a commission by a public body.

3 According to Wendy Stedman Sheard, The Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin in Venice by Tullio Lombardo, Ann Arbor, Mich: University Microfilms, 1971, p. 19 states - "... the expenses of most of the special ceremonies and rituals surrounding the office, including the elaborate funeral, had to be borne by the doge's family. Ducal funerary monuments, too, were a private expense."
4. I have been unable to locate or ascertain the identification of the fourth Hercules image.


8. According to Robert Louis Mode, The Monte Giordano Famous Men Cycle of Cardinal Giordano Orsini and the 'Uomini Famosi' Tradition in Fifteenth Century Italian Art, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1970, p. 1 - "The Italian famous men or uomini famosi cycle apparently reached the zenith of its popularity during the second quarter of the fifteenth century, and then underwent a slow decline which lasted until the start of the High Renaissance."

9. E.H. Gombrich, "The Early Medici as Patrons of Art" in Italian Renaissance Studies, ed. E.F. Jacob, London: Faber and Faber, 1960, p. 280 states - "... patronage was indeed one of the chief instruments of Medici policy during the century when they had no legal title of authority."


14. ibid., p. 56.
ibid., p. 58 -
"To the patronage of architecture and painting, Lorenzo preferred an activity which was more private, more scholarly and, indeed, far more expensive: the collection of ancient gems, cameos and objets d'art."

"The collections assembled by Lorenzo included all sort of treasures. There were bronze and marble statues, cups and vases in semi-precious stones, and countless specimens of the glyptic art of the ancient world... ."

and E.H. Gombrich, p. 309-310 -
"It was Wilhelm von Bode who first suggested that the oeuvre of this master (Bertoldo di Giovanni) of small bronzes reflected what he called Lorenzo's "artistic policy" . . ."

These include the three canvases painted by Antonio Pollaiuolo which are no longer extant.

J.R. Hale, p. 56-59. Two artists who created Hercules images for both the Medici and other patrons are Antonio Pollaiuolo and Bertoldo di Giovanni.

The Medici Inventory was published by E. Münstz, Les Collections des Medicis au XVe siècle, Tours: Jules Rouan, 1888.

Descriptions of Hercules imagery owned or commissioned by the Medici were given by Giovanni Santi in his Chronicle, and by Giorgio Vasari, in his discussion of the lives of artists, in particular those of Antonio Pollaiuolo and Michelangelo.


According to Ettlinger, Pollaiuolo, p. 164-165, these canvases were "Tempera (?) on canvas, 6 braccia square". Extant documents which provide information about the canvases include: a letter from Antonio Pollaiuolo to Genil Virgino Orsini, dated 13 July, 1494: the Medici Inventory of 1492; information about the transfer of the canvases from the Palazzo Medici to the Palazzo Vecchio (1495); Albertini, in the Memoriale, 1510; and Vasari, Lives of Painters, Sculptors and Architects.

It has not been ascertained which of the Medici commissioned these pictures. From the date established in the Pollaiuolo letter of 1494, it would appear that the paintings were done in 1460, possibly during the decoration of Cosimo's new Palazzo on the Via Largo. According to J.R. Hale, p. 29 - "As far as is known, he (Cosimo) personally commissioned no paintings."
E.H. Gombrich, on p. 297, states:
"From the outset there seems to have been a clear division of labour between Cosimo and his two sons in matters of patronage. The royal art of architecture was Cosimo's preserve, and so, perhaps, was contact with a master of bronze foundry if he was of Donatello's fame and excellence. Painters stood lower in the estimates of the time and Cosimo seems to have left negotiations with painters and decorators to Piero and Giovanni."

Lorenzo is the one Medici with whom Hercules was identified. It is unlikely that he was responsible for the commission of the Pollaiuolo canvases because, from the date established in Pollaiuolo's letter to Orsini, Lorenzo would have been eleven years old when they were created. Lorenzo did not assume a role of responsibility within the family until 1464, after the death of Cosimo. (J.R. Hale, p. 49).

If the paintings were created in 1460, it may be that Piero commissioned them in response to Lorenzo's studies of Latin literature, in particular Ovid. Certainly Lorenzo would have been familiar with the Labours of Hercules at this time. (Cecilia M. Ady, Lorenzo dei Medici and Renaissance Italy, London: The English Universities Press, 1960 imp., p. 17). The drawing of Hercules and the Hydra (see illustration 27) by Pollaiuolo is believed to relate to the large canvas of this theme (Ettlinger, Pollaiuolo, p. 160).

22 According to Ettlinger, Pollaiuolo, p. 147, the Hercules and Antaeus statuette, which is 45 cm - 18" high, is located in the Bargello, Florence. According to the Medici Inventory of 1492, this statuette was in Giulian's room.

23 According to Filarete, Treatise on Architecture, translated with Introduction and Notes by John R. Spencer, 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965, Vol. I Translation, Book XXV, Folio 191r (p. 327) there was "a portrait of Hercules and many of his labours" in the garden loggia of the house given to Cosimo de'Medici by Francesco Sforza. Filarete does not identify the artist or the labours portrayed.

24 This painting, which unfortunately has been poorly restored, is now located in the Yale University Art Gallery. Its size is 54.6x 80.8 c.m., or 21.8 x 32.3". Originally the painting was on a fruitwood panel which suggests that it may have been incorporated into a piece of furniture or a chest. It was transferred to canvas in 1867 by J.J. Jarves. Information about the restoration of this work and a bibliography may be found in C. Seymour, Jr. Early Italian Paintings in the Yale University Art Gallery, 1970, p. 169-173.

25 This oil on panel painting is located in the Uffizi, Florence. Because of its small size, 16 x 10.5 c.m. or 6.4 x 4.2", Ettlinger, Pollaiuolo suggests on p. 141, that this work, perhaps with the other panel - Hercules and the Hydra, may have been used to decorate a piece of furniture.
26. The Hercules and the Hydra panel, again oil on a panel which measures 17.5 x 12 c.m. - 7 x 4.8", is possibly a companion painting to the above mentioned Hercules panel. Ettlinger, Pollaiuolo, p. 141, suggests that if a third panel existed: Hercules and the Nemean Lion, this second panel may have comprised the larger central panel of a piece of furniture decorated with three Hercules images.

27. This Hercules statuette, which measures 40.5 c.m. - 16.2", is located in the Bode Museum, East Berlin. According to John Pope-Hennessy, assisted by Anthony F. Radcliffe, The Frick Collection, An Illustrated Catalogue, Vol. III, Italian Sculpture, 1970, p. 26 (hereafter Pope-Hennessy, Frick Collection) suggests the possibility that this statue and the statue in the Frick Collection predates the Hercules and Antaeus mentioned in the Medici Inventory of 1492 which "has been conjecturally dated about 1475-80".

28. This bronze statuette, which measures 44.1c.m. - 17.6", has been in the Frick Collection since 1916. Its subject matter has not been determined.

It appears that the left foot of the Hercules is resting on an ox head. This image may thus possibly be a reference to Hercules' labour - the fetching of the cattle of Geryon. The associated parergon was one which had a special meaning for Florence - the theft of the cattle by Cacus and his subsequent slaying by Hercules. The scene of Hercules triumphant over Cacus was depicted on a plaque on the Florentine Campanile (see figure 10).

Hercules' association with cattle is further confirmed by the Cult of Hercules which was established either by the hero or by King Evander, after the slaying of Cacus. The Ara Maxima in the Cattle Market or Forum Boarium in Rome, was the altar erected to celebrate Hercules' victory over Cacus. (Galinsky, p. 126).

29. The Presentation helmet was given to Federigo da Montefeltro in appreciation for his services in the War against Volterra in 1472. According to the description by Giovanni Santi (Ettlinger, Pollaiuolo, p. 168) it was "a decorated helmet on which was the victorious Hercules, who, gnashing his teeth, holds under his feet a chained giffin, that rebellious beast, the ancient arms of Volterra." This description was confirmed in a letter written by the Mantuan ambassador in Urbino, who located the Hercules figure on the crest of the Helmet (Ettlinger, Pollaiuolo, p. 168). It is possible that Vasari's representation of Marc Anthony's helmet, also crested with a Hercules figure, in the Foundation of Florence fresco, located in the Salone dei Cinquecento, Palazzo Vecchio (see figures 37 and 38) was inspired by this presentation helmet.

Although Ettlinger, Pollaiuolo, p. 168, provides documentary proof of the payment to Pollaiuolo by the Balia, it seems probable that Lorenzo was involved in the commission of this helmet.
1) According to Ady, p. 53, Lorenzo hired Federigo - "... Lorenzo made the fatal decision to suppress the (Volterran) rising by force of arms. He was both angry and afraid. His friends had been assassinated, and Florentine exiles had invited the rebels to make a common cause with them for the overthrow of the Medici. The Bishop of Volterra pleaded with him on behalf of many peaceful and well-disposed citizens, urging that order could be restored without recourse to arms; and cooler heads in Florence took the same view. Lorenzo, however, could not be moved from his purpose. He engaged Federico, Duke of Urbino, to bring 5,000 men to the attack, instructing him to finish the business as quickly as possible. . . ."

2) Hercules imagery was common to both Lorenzo and Florence. Its appearance on the helmet might allude to the participation of both parties. Any suggestion of ostentation on Lorenzo's part would therefore be suppressed by the openly shared associated with the hero of both Lorenzo and Florence.

E.H. Gombrich, p. 310 states that Bertoldo di Giovanni (c1420-1491) "Lived in the Medici palace, perhaps as a kind of valet de chambre; ... His art is concentrated on collectors' pieces;" J.R. Hale, p. 59, talks of Lorenzo's patronage of Bertoldo:

"But the sculptor he most favoured was Bertoldo, whom he retained to look after the collection of antiquities begun by Cosimo and to produce bronzes, classical in style and subject matter, which ministered to his taste for the thumbable and the evocative. . . ."


This bronze statuette, 27.5 c.m. - 11" high, was "probably part of a decorative complex, perhaps on a piece of furniture, which also included the Hercules in the Liechtenstein Collection in Vienna and its counterpart, which is known through a version in the Frick Collection, New York. The representation symbolizes the house of Este, and particularly Ercole I, 1471-1505." Italian Bronze Statuettes, Victoria and Albert Museum Catalogue, entry 15, 1961.

Although I have been unable to locate documentation on this statuette and its companion pieces, I believe they may have been commissioned by Lorenzo as a present, perhaps of a diplomatic nature, to Ercole. According to Kurt W. Forster, "Metaphors of Rule" in Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institut, Vol. XV, (1971), p. 65 f.n. 1 - "Lorenzo realized the value of art and artists for diplomatic and propagandistic purposes; he strengthened ties with other princes and states by giving advice, art objects, and by recommending artists."

The possibility likewise exists that Ercole I, because of Lorenzo's commendation of Bertoldo, may have commissioned these works himself. Figure 42 is a picture of one of the heraldic wild men believed to be interdependent with the Hercules on Horseback (see Pope-Hennessy, Frick Collection, p. 37-42, for further information on this complex).
According to Anthony Radcliffe, *European Bronze Statuettes*, London: The Connoisseur and Michael Joseph, 1966, p. 27 the triangular base of this statuette is not original, and it "gives the figure a wrong frontal view. Without the base the Hercules figure is 33 cm. or 13.2" high. According to G.F. Hill, "The Salting Collection - I The Italian Bronze Statuettes" in *Burlington Magazine* XVI (1910) p. 312, there are two versions of this statuette, the one in the Salting Collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the other in the collection of Mr. Otto Beit.

This work was also part of the Salting Collection, now in the Victoria and Albert, London. The entry, #17, in the Arts Council of Great Britain catalogue of an exhibition held 27th July to 1st October, 1961, entitled *Italian Bronze Statuettes*, 1961, suggests that this bronze may have been the cover of an inkstand or other receptacle, made for Ercole d'Este.

According to Pope-Hennessy, *Frick Collection*, p. 43 The ascription of this statuette is generally accepted, though with some reserve . . on the part of Bode and Maclagan. Pope-Hennessy suggests that this work may have been realized by a member of Bertoldo's studio, from a design by Bertoldo (p. 44).

This Hercules statue was carved by Michelangelo from a block of marble, four braccia high, according to Vasari (George Bull translation, second edition, p. 332) -

. . he obtained a large block of marble from which he carved a Hercules eight feet high, which stood for many years in the Palazzo Strozzi. This work, which was very highly regarded, was later (when Florence was under siege) sent to King Francis in France by Giovanbattista della Palla . . This statue has since been lost. (see discussion in Ettlinger, "Hercules Florentinus" in the *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorisches Institutes in Florenz*. Vol. 15 (1971) p. 138).

According to Vasari, ibid., p. 331 It was at this time that, with advice from Politian, a distinguished man of letters, Michelangelo carved from a piece of marble given to him by Lorenzo the Battle of Hercules with the Centaurs. This relief dates from 1492. It is more commonly identified now as a Battle of the Centaurs or the Battle of the Lapiths and the Centaurs. It is very difficult to determine a Hercules image in this scene. (see illustration 44).


This is necessitated by the lack of any documentary information about their possession of more Hercules imagery. It seems very likely that the Medici would have owned more of this imagery.

One shows Hercules resting with his foot on the Lion's head. Another shows his foot resting on the ox head. The third shows the hero resting, holding the apples of the Hesperides.
Ettlinger, "Hercules Florentinus", p. 136-137.


This interpretation was developed in both Landino's Commentary on Virgil's Aeneid, The Disputationes Camaldulenses (Don Cameron Allen, Mysteriously Meant, p. 153) and the De vera nobilitate, a selection of which is published in E. Garin, Testi inediti e rari di Cristoforo Landino e Francesco Filelfo, Florence, 1949 p. 25.

Similar interpretations had already been developed in Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, translated with introduction and notes by Richard Green, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1962, p. 91-92 Book IV, Prose 6 -

This problem is such that when one doubt is cleared up many more arise like the heads of the Hydra, and continue to spring up unless they are checked by the most active fire of the mind.

and in Bernardus Silvestris, Commentary on the First Six Books of Vergil's Aeneid, Translated with introduction and notes, by Earl G. Schreiber and Thomas E. Maresca. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979 (Hereafter, Bernardus). On p. xii, the translators state that they believe Landino was familiar with this work. The interpretation of the Hydra is given on p.69:

The Hydra is a multiheaded monster. Whenever one head is cut off, more grow in its place. People say that literally and historically this monster was the many arms of the sea: . . . But we interpret the Hydra allegorically to be ignorance containing many ambiguities, which the infinite heads signify. . . . We interpret Hercules as wisdom . . . Hercules cuts off one of the Hydra's heads when he determines one ambiguity of a problem, and then others grow in its place. Indeed, Hercules, seeing his useless labours, burns up the Hydra; a wise man, seeing his study insufficiently useful, burns up ignorance with the most vigorous fire of the mind when he investigates ignorance with the fervour of inquiry and illuminates it with the splendor of knowledge. . .

Waith, p. 44. Waith continues, stating:

However, he makes much of the fact that Hercules keeps and wears the skin of the lion in later encounters, for this is a sort of derivative of anger which the brave man uses in fighting injustice. Landino reminds us that there is a kind of anger which is approved of by the Peripatetics and also by Christians, and he quotes from S. Paul (Ephesians, IV, 26): "Be ye not angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath." He explains that the meaning is that wrath must be kept within bounds but that righteous indignation is praiseworthy. Instead of extinguishing the light of reason, it serves to put an edge to fortitude as flint sharpens a sword.

In the footnote, #19, p. 206, Waith continues:

Landino's interpretation has a great deal in common with Salutati's interpretation of this same labour. Both of them speak of two lions, one representing hasty and short-lived anger, the other lasting anger. Both interpret the lion skin as righteous anger.

Waith, p. 206, footnote 19.


see above, this chapter, footnote #31.

Ady, p. 68

ibid., p. 64

Pope-Hennessy, Frick Collection, p. 26

I have been unable to locate any other representations of Hercules with an ox head.


ibid., p.xvii. The first marquisate was awarded to Gianfrancesco Gonzaga in 1433 by Emperor Sigismund. Ludovico was the second Marquis of Mantua.


Chambers, p. xvii - xviii.

ibid., p. xx.

the distinguished visitors they entertained: Pope Pius II in 1459-60, Emperor Charles V in 1530 and 1532, the King of Denmark in 1474, the King of France in 1574.

ibid., p. xix.

Information about the Gonzaga Library and Ludovico's contributions to it is to be found in Dorothy M. Robathan "Libraries of the Italian Renaissance" in *The Medieval Library* by James Westfall Thompson, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939, p. 534-535; and in "Humanist education at the Mantuan Court and Gonzaga Book Collecting" in *Splendours of the Gonzaga*, p. 110-116, which mentions specific titles owned by the Gonzaga. Julia Cartwright (Mrs. Ady) in *Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua, 1474-1539*, 2 vols., London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1915, Vol. 1, p. 25-26 discusses some of the works owned by Ludovico, and mentions, p. 26, that "Under his patronage a printing press was set up in Mantua, and Boccaccio's *Decameron* was the first book published there in 1473."


"... a certain Samuele had the commission to decorate the castle of Cavriana on the basis of cartoons by Mantegna; it was a work of some importance since we hear, amongst other things of a Hercules room and a room of Sol, ... ."

E. Tietze-Conrat, in Mantegna, London: Phaidon Press, 1955, p. 13, states that these frescoes were done in 1464. (Hereafter Tietze-Conrat).

This room was also identified as a "camera depincta"; "camera magna picta" and "camera picta" according to documents quoted in Andrew Martindale and Niny Garavaglia, *The Complete Paintings of Mantegna*, New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., 1967 (hereafter Martindale and Garavaglia).


Martindale and Garavaglia, p. 100.


According to Martindale and Garavaglia, p. 104, the image of Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna has almost completely disappeared.

Elam, p. 18.

Elam, Catalogue Entry #29, p. 120.

The use of gold in the ceiling may allude to the Dome of Heaven, which was symbolized by the use of gold *tesserae* in Byzantine mosaics.
Ludovico's interest in music and poetry was inspired during his youth, while a student of Vittorino da Feltre (Woodward, Studies in Education, p. 11-21, discusses Vittorino's incorporation of music into the studies at "La Casa Giocosa" as well as the studies of poetry that were undertaken by his students.

Allen, p. 153 - according to Landino, "The Centaurs, offspring of Ixion, were first imbued with humanity but finally descended to savagery."

The Nemean Lion was interpreted by Bersuire as the Lion of Pride and Anger. Salutati and Landino both interpreted the Nemean Lion as anger, and identified two types of anger - the short-lived and lasting anger.

Both Boccaccio and Landino identified the Hydra as sophistic deceit (Galinsky, p. 195) and Allen, p. 153. Boethius and Bernardus Silvestris recognized the Hydra as ignorance (see above, note 63).

Dante (De Monarchia, p. 51-53) interpreted Antaeus as injustice; Salutati explained Antaeus as generic vice (Jacobsen, p. 16-17) and Landino explained Antaeus as irrational appetite (Jacobsen, p. 17).

Allen, p. 161 -
The barking represents a desire for food, drink, and sleep, desires without which meditation is impossible, hence, the demands of the body need to be met moderately.

It is interesting to note the location of the Gonzaga emblems in relation to the mythological scenes and the emperors (see figure 62). According to the numbering used in Martindale and Garavaglia the imagery related thus:

47A Julius Caesar 48A Spell Cast by Orpheus' music 49A Dove and log (vrai amour ne se change)
47B Augustus 48C Death of Orpheus 49B the Sun (par un desir)
47C Tiberius 48D Arion and the Pirates 49C Bider Craft - Hind
47D Caligula 48F Periander & sailors 49D Tower
47E Claudius  48G Hercules Shooting  49E Mt Olympus
47F Nero  48I Hercules & Nemean Lion  49F Wolfhound
47G Galba  48J Hercules & Hydra  49G Winged Talons
47H Otto  48L Hercules & Cerberus  49H Hydra or Salamander

According to Catalogue Entry #29, Splendours of the Gonzaga, p. 119, the members of the court include: Marquis Ludovico Gonzaga; Barabara of Brandenberg; either Gianfrancesco or Federigo Gonzaga; either Rodolfo or Gianfrancesco Gonzaga; Protonotary Ludovico Gonzaga, later Bishop of Mantua; Paola Gonzaga; Barbar (Barbarina) Gonzaga; and Rubino, the dog.

This scene includes Marquis Ludovico Gonzaga; Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga; Frederick III, Holy Roman Emperor; Christian I, King of Denmark; Federigo Gonzaga, future Marquis, Francesco Gonzaga, future Marquis; Sigismondo Gonzaga, future Cardinal; Ludovico Gonzaga, Protonotary, future Bishop of Mantua.

According to Clifford M. Brown, "New Documents for Andrea Mantegna's Camera degli Sposi" in Burlington Magazine Vol. 114 (1972), Addenda, p. 862-863, the Camera degli Sposi was used both as a bedroom and as an audience hall. Martin Wackernagel, The World of the Florentine Renaissance Artist, trans. by Alison Luchs, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 167, identifies the Sala Grande of Lorenzo de'Medici as a private living room. One can argue that Lorenzo conducted political meetings in this room because as well as the Hercules imagery the room was decorated with "several painted shields with arms of the city and the Medici." This room also held "three antique Hercules figures" which were seized in 1495.


ibid., p. 47 states there is a discrepancy in the death date of Guidantonio given in the Chronicle of Gubbio and that which appears on his tomb. If the dating on the tomb is correct, then Oddantonio ruled from 1443, if the chronicle is correct he ruled from 1442. Because Oddantonio was created Duke by Eugenius IV on April, 1443, it seems probable that Guidantonio died that year. If this is true then Oddantonio only ruled for about fourteen months. On p. 53-54, Dennistoun mentions some of the incidents which led to Oddantonio's assassination, as well as a description of the assassination itself.

ibid., p. 85

Dennistoun, p. 220-224. Federigo was also recognized by King Alfonso of Naples, who made him one of the first knights of the Collare dell'Ermellino, and he was knighted by the Order of the Garter, a British honour.


ibid., p. 31 - "Last was the largest room in the older wing, the Sala della Iole, a council room."

Rotondi, p. 20-21, suggests this identification.

ibid., p. 20.

The Grand Staircase was probably completed before 1474 (according to Rotondi, p. 55-58).

Rotondi, p. 77.

Tripp, s.v. Apollo, p. 61.

Originally the portraits of the twenty-eight illustrious men were on a continuous panel. According to Rotondi, p. 82, the panel was divided in 1631 on the orders of Cardinal Antonio Barberini.

Galinsky, p. 148-149.


This image is identified by Hill as a Lapith fighting a Centaur. I believe this identification is incorrect for a number of reasons.

1) Although the Hercules is shown without his lion skin, this does not preclude an identification of the hero because Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, translated by Richard Green, p. 100, lists Hercules first labour as the taming of the centaurs, and the second as the slaying of the Nemean Lion. Thus, Hercules could be shown without the lionskin, especially when shown fighting a Centaur.

2) In the detail (see figure 79) the figure fighting the Centaur appears to be using a club. This is held in his right hand, and his over his shoulder, in anticipation of the action of hitting the Centaur. The Centaur's hair is grasped by the hero's left hand, so he is unable to move away.

3) The stance of the figure fighting the Centaur is typical of that shown in representations of Hercules performing his labours. Examples may be found on Roman sarcophagi, as well as in contemporary sculptures (see figures 80, 81, 82, 83, 84 and 44).


5) In consultation with Dr. Timothy McNiven, Classics Department, U.B.C., about this image, he stated that "representations of Lapiths and the Centaurs fighting would not have been known at this time." I have not been able to locate any fifteenth century representations of this theme, prior to that of Michelangelo which dates from 1492. Dr. McNiven also concurred with my identification of the figure as a Hercules on the basis of the stance and the inscription.

6) Another factor to be considered is that Hercules imagery was used in the decoration of the Palace in both public and private rooms. Therefore there was a precedence for relating Hercules imagery to Federigo, but none for a battle of a Lapith and a Centaur.

Federigo was frequently compared to Scipio Africanus by his contemporaries:

1) Cristoforo Landino, *Disputations Camaldulenses*, Book IV (as quoted in Rice, p. 69-70)

"The really wise man is not solitary and egoistic but puts his learning at the service of the state, like Camillus, Cato and the Scipios in antiquity, or, in contemporary times, like Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, a man both wise, learned, cultivated in letters, and a great soldier and statesman.

(the continuation of this discussion by Lorenzo turns to a discussion of Hercules' wisdom and his services for the benefit of mankind).

2) Vespasiano, *Life of Federigo da Montefeltro* - "Like Scipio Africanus he took arms early and served first under Nicolo Piccino, ..."
The two Scipios, the Elder and the Younger, were known for their virtue and ability both as statesmen and as military leaders, from the writings of Cicero, Macrobius and from Petrarch's Lives of Illustrious Men, the Africa, and the Secretum. Petrarch's treatment of Scipio is discussed by Aldo S. Bernardo in Petrarch, Scipio and the "Africa", Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962.

107 Hill, p. 23. Translations of the latin inscriptions on this medal were very kindly provided by a friend and former music colleague, Stephen Powell.

108 Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, rev. and enl., New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968, p. 95-96 says of this medal: "The wise Federigo da Montefeltro, who, as a successful condottiere, delighted in cultivating the arts of peace, expressed his faith in harmonious balance through the discordant symbol of a cannon-ball, which he placed under the protection of the thundering Jupiter. On his medal the three stars in the sky form a constellation of Jupiter between Mars and Venus, and their symmetry is repeated in the group of emblems below; the sword and cuirass belonging to Mars, the whisk-broom and myrtle to Venus, while the ball in the centre is dedicated to Jupiter tonans, whose flying eagle carries the unusual still-life on its wings. Although the balance looks safe, it is not solid: for the slightest dip of the eagle's wings would set the cannon ball rolling. The inscription says, however, that Venus "touches" the threatening Jupiter, who enables her to counterbalance Mars. Yet contrary to other triumphs of Venus, the design suggests that her complete dominion over Mars might also set the cannon-ball rolling. The supreme god alone is the guardian of equity, the source and arbiter of the discordia concors, of which Mars and Venus are component parts.


110 ibid., p. 189.


112 ibid., p. 189.

113 see above, foot note 32 and figures 39 and 40.

114 The personal significance of this image for Federigo may have been derived from the assassination of his brother Oddantonio. The townspeople of Urbino killed Oddantonio because of his, and his counsellors' seduction of their wives and daughters (Dennistoun, p. 53-55). Thus Oddantonio's lack of personal discipline led to his downfall. A similar interpretation of Hercules and Iole is suggested by Boccaccio in The Fates of Illustrious Men, translated and abridged by Louis Brewer Hall, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1965, p. 43-45.
Ercole I succeeded to the Dukedom following the death of his half-brother Borso. Prior to Borso's rule, another half-brother, Leonello was Duke.


Gundersheimer, *Ferrara*, p. 207.

The stability of Ercole's rule was influenced by the continuity of administrative policies which had been established by Niccolo III, his father. These policies were continued and adapted by Ercole's two half-brothers during their rules. Another factor which influenced the political stability of Ferrara was Ercole's age, maturity and experience when he succeeded to the Dukedom. The prosperity of Ferrara evolved as a result of the internal political stability as well as from the development of its natural resources, especially agriculture. This prosperity was undermined, however, by the effects of war (i.e. the War of Ferrara, 1482-1484 and the Wars of Italy initiated by Charles VII's invasion of Italy). The later years of Ercole's rule were marked by economic and social problems. (Gundersheimer, *Ferrara*, p. 173-174; 273-278; 218-220).


ibid., p. 5-18.

Gundersheimer, *Ferrara*, p. 211 states:
"By the end of Ercole's reign, most of the major plays of Terence had made their appearance, the labors of Hercules had been presented in pantomime, and the Passion of Christ had also received due attraction."

The Carthusian monastery was sponsored by Borso d'Este. The construction of its buildings commenced in 1452 and were completed by 1461. A small palace with garden was incorporated in the monastery for Borso's personal use. Further information about the Certosa may be found in Rosenberg, p. 90-118.

ibid., p. 95.

Werner Gundersheimer published this treatise in 1972 as:
*Art and Life at the Court of Ercole I d'Este: The De triumphis religionis of Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti*, edited with an Introduction and notes by
Sabadino, p. 52.

Con facilità nel mezo di questo zardino uno paviglione de conveniente altecia, de forte ligni elaborati, egregiamente de piombo duperto, havendo nella superficie uno Hercule, posto ad auro fine, tenente uno clypeo ala insenbia tua ducale.

A description of the pavilion is given on p. 53.

Sabadino does not provide any information about the sculptor who created this statue, or the date of its creation. It would have been commissioned sometime after Ercole's succession in 1471 and before Sabadino's treatise, which dates from 1497.

This translation was taken from Gundersheimer, Ferrara, p.256. The original is located in Sabadino, p. 59.

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See above, this chapter, footnotes 35, 36 and 37.

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Hill, p. 13-14, #38. This parergon is mentioned by Petrarch in the Africa, Book 1:1. 175-177; Book 3:1.496-504; and Book 5:1.673-676 (edition translated and annotated by Thomas G. Bergin and Alice S. Wilson).

The reference in Book 3 identifies the Pillars as the limits of human journeys. The inscription Gades Hercules, refers to the Spanish town where one of the Pillars was erected. Thus Ercole, in using this image, suggests that he, like Hercules, will go to the farthest borders - be they the borders of physical endurance, or geography.


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The dedicatory frontispiece of this work is illustrated in Gundersheimer, Ferrara, illustration 11.
CHAPTER FOUR

PATRONAGE OF HERCULES' IMAGERY IN ITALY

DURING THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

A. Introduction

The popularity of artistic representations of mythological imagery increased during the sixteenth century in Italy. There were two sources for this development. First, the humanist education developed in the fifteenth century introduced a greater volume of classical literature to a large audience of wealthy or princely individuals and their families. When these individuals became patrons they were responsible for commissions of both religious and mythological imagery - the religious, to indicate their piety, and the mythological to show their erudition and veneration of the classical past, as well as to illustrate moral or philosophical qualities with which they wished to be recognized. Concomitant with the change in attitude towards wealth, there was a change of attitude about the suitability of thematic material for artistic representation. In his Della Pittura, written about 1435, Alberti suggests that artists should study classical literature to find new stories suitable for artistic representation.¹

Despite the eminence accorded mythological themes in literature throughout the fifteenth century, it was not until about 1470 that illustrations of these themes attained prominence. The three Labours of Hercules painted for the Medici family in c.1460 by Antonio Pollaiuolo
herald this innovation. Although the Pollaiuolo canvases depicted the mythological scenes usually depicted during the first half of the fifteenth century, they were significant for both their monumental size and their independence from a Christian context of a 'uomini famosi' cycle.² Within about twenty years of the Pollaiuolo canvases Botticelli created the first large scale representations of mythological themes other than Hercules.³ These were the Primavera and the Birth of Venus painted for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de'Medici, and the Pallas and the Centaur painted for Lorenzo the Magnificent.⁴

Once mythological imagery was freely accepted, more of the labours of Hercules were depicted, culminating with the twelve labours of Hercules included in the mythological frieze of the Sala del Fregio of the Villa Farnesina in Rome in ca. 1510. During the first half of the fifteenth century, representations of the labours of Hercules had been restricted to those of the Slaying of the Nemean Lion, the Hydra of Lerna, and Antaeus. During the second half of the fifteenth century, more of his labours were included in the decoration of the Sala della Iole, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino and the Camera degli Sposi, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua.⁵ More fully developed programs of the labours and parerga of Hercules may have been shown in the Medici Villa in Milan,⁶ and in the decoration of a room in the Gonzaga Palace at Cavriana.⁷

In this chapter I shall discuss the Hercules imagery found in the Sala dei Paramenti, Palazzo Venezia, and the Sala del Fregio, Villa Farnesina, in Rome, as well as that found in Isabella d'Este's collection in Mantua. I shall also mention some of the Hercules imagery commissioned by Federigo Gonzaga for the decoration of the Palazzo del Te. Where possible I shall attempt to determine the significance of the Hercules imagery for its patron.
B. Hercules Imagery in Roman Palazzi and Villas

An expanded program of Hercules' labours is known to have been used in the decoration of two rooms in Rome. One of these was the Sala dei Paramenti in the Palazzo Venezia, which dates from about 1471. The other was the Sala del Fregio in the Villa Farnesina, decorated in about 1510.

i) The Sala dei Paramenti

The construction and decoration of the Palazzo Venezia was commissioned by Pietro Barbo, a wealthy Venetian Cardinal, 1455. Following his election as Pope Paul II in 1464 the plans for the palace were enlarged. Much of the responsibility for the completion of the Palazzo Venezia was assumed by Cardinal Marco Barbo, Paul II's nephew, by 1468. Only the southeastern section of the palace, an area which included the Sala dei Paramenti and the Sala del Pappagalló, was completed in 1471 when Paul II died.

The decoration of the Sala dei Paramenti was confined to the upper regions of the wall surface, and to the ceiling. The wall area is divided into three distinct areas by illusionistic niches, a division which is reinforced by decorated ceiling beams (see figure 103).

The central opening of each wall enframes a free-standing fountain, in each case of different type, cylix or polygonal around which several putti frolic; and it is flanked by scenes of the Labours of Hercules, which are depicted on a nearly life-size scale and painted with bright, transparent tints.

The fresco decoration of the Sala dei Paramenti was started in the late 1460's, and was completed after c.1471.

The Labours of Hercules depicted in the Sala dei Paramenti include: Hercules and the Nemean Lion and Hercules slaying Antaeus on the west wall (see figures 104 and 105); Hercules and the Bull and Hercules and Geryon on the north wall (see figures 106, 107 and 108); Hercules and Ladon and
Hercules and the Cerynian Hind\textsuperscript{16} on the east wall (see figures 109 and 110); and Hercules and a Harpy\textsuperscript{17} and Hercules and a Centaur on the south wall (see figures 111 and 112).

The author of the program of Hercules' Labours shown in the Sala dei Paramenti has not been determined. It has been suggested that either Paul II or Marco Barbo may have been responsible.\textsuperscript{19} This identification seems plausible when the representations of Hercules and Ladon and the Hercules and the Cerynian Hind are considered. The juxtaposition of those two images on the same wall strongly suggests that the author was familiar with Venetian Hercules iconography, as in the Façade of San Marco where the image of Hercules and Ladon and the Cerynian Hind appear conflated. The person who designed this program must have also been familiar with classical literature, available commentaries on this literature, and current interpretations of the various labours.

A conclusive interpretation of the fresco decoration of the Sala dei Paramenti has not yet been undertaken. It has been suggested that the popular theme of the Labours of Hercules delineated in the Sala dei Paramenti appears to celebrate both the victory of heroic virtue and the municipal pride of the prelate who commissioned the frescoes.\textsuperscript{23}

An examination of the Hercules imagery of the Sala dei Paramenti, in conjunction with an examination of contemporary literature which interprets Hercules' labours philosophically suggests a possible interpretation of a Triumph of Life and the defeat of vices which destroy Life. Extra emphasis is given to the labours of Fetching the Cattle of Geryon and the Fetching of the Cerynian Hind by expanding their representation over two distinct scenes. Both of these labours, especially the Slaying of Ladon which relates specifically with the fetching of the Apples of the Hesperides, were interpreted in literature as symbolizing the conquest of death.\textsuperscript{21}
juxtaposition of Hercules slaying Ladon with Hercules fetching the Cernnian Hind suggests a personal symbolism for Paul II, for these two images appear together on one of the relief panels located on the Façade of San Marco (see figure 3).

The four individual labours probably symbolized the defeat of specific vices. The defeat of the Nemean Lion was recognized as the defeat of anger. The slaying of Antaeus was interpreted as the defeat of lust, injustice and the irrational appetite. The slaying of the Harpie symbolized the conquest of Greed. The slaying of the Centaur was interpreted as the suppression of bestiality.

The Sala dei Paramenti was decorated with festoon bearing putti, and four illusionistic water fountains around and on which putti were playing. These fountains were depicted in the central illusionistic niches separating the representations of Hercules' labours (see figure 103). Both the festoon bearing putti and the water fountains may have been allusions to life and prosperity.

There are two possible interpretations suggested by the imagery decorating the Sala dei Paramenti. The first, a general interpretation, is a Triumph of Life and Prosperity caused by Virtue's defeat of the evils or vices which threaten mankind - a psychomachia of Virtue's conquest of vice. A more personal interpretation may be that these images symbolize the immortality to be enjoyed by Paul II because of his life long labour, within the Church, attempting to suppress Curial excesses (the vices symbolized by the individual Herculean labours) and attempting to re-establish the glory and the Supremacy of the Church (Virtue?) on earth.

ii) The Sala del Fregio, Villa Farnesina

The design, construction and decoration of the Villa of the Chigi,
now known as the Villa Farnesina, was commissioned by Agostino Chigi in about 1505. With the exception of the gardens the Villa was completed by 1511. Baldassare Peruzzi, a Sienese painter and architect working in Rome from about 1503, was responsible for the completion of this commission.

Although Agostino Chigi did have a collection of antique statuary, frescoes were the principal decoration of his villa. Peruzzi began the decoration of one of the reception rooms on the ground floor of the Villa, the Sala del Fregio, in 1510. The frescoes of this room are confined to a continuous frieze of mythological scenes on the walls immediately below the wooden ceiling. The twelve labours of Hercules are included in the frieze.

The Hercules labours depicted in the Sala del Fregio conform to the canon of labours cited in Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy. These include: The Battle of the Centaurs; the Nemean Lion (see figure 113); the Stymphalian Birds; the Dragon of the Hesperides; Cerberus (see figure 114); the horses of Diomedes and throwing Diomedes to his horses; the Hydra of Lerna (see figure 115); Achelous; Antaeus; Cacus (see figure 116); the globe of Atlas; and the Erymanthian Boar (see figure 117).

The labours of Hercules included in the mythological frieze of the Sala del Fregio may constitute the first major representation of the twelve since antiquity. Certainly it was not until the 1470's that more than the usual Hercules and the Nemean Lion; Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna and Hercules and Antaeus were shown. The two rooms in which an expanded program of Hercules labours were shown previous to the Sala del Fregio were the Camera degli Sposi, Ducal Palace, Mantua, c.1465-1474, and the Sala dei Paramenti, Palazzo Venezia, Rome, c. 1471. It is possible that the decoration of both of these rooms may have influenced the depiction of the Labours of Hercules in the Sala del Fregio.
The influence of the imagery of the Sala dei Paramenti on that of the Sala del Fregio is most evident in the representation of Hercules' third labour - the vanquishing of the Stymphalian Birds (see figures 111 and 114). Because of the appearance of the "birds" - birdlike creatures with female heads - it is possible that these images do not represent the Stymphalian Birds, but Harpies.

Late Classical writers described the two (or three) Harpies as either birds with faces of women or women with wings, heads and talons of birds. 40 Boethius, himself, did not specifically identify the birds of the third labour as those of Stymphalia, but simply as birds. 41 The Commentary on Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy, written by the Pseudo-St. Thomas Aquinas, "printed in the early editions of Boethius, specifically describes in the third Labor the Harpies at the table of King Phineus." 42 Thus, both a literal and figural identification of the third Labour as Hercules vanquishing the Harpies did exist, and may possibly have influenced the representation seen in the Sala del Fregio.

The suggestion that the Camera degli Sposi may have influenced the representation of the mythological frieze in the Sala del Fregio arises for three reasons. First, the decoration of both rooms includes not only representations of Hercules' labours, but also representations of Orpheus and Arion. 42 In fact, the images of Orpheus in the Sala del Fregio allude to, or show the same scenes as those depicted in the Camera degli Sposi - Orpheus playing his music and charming the animals; Orpheus and Eurydice (a reference to his trip to the underworld which is shown in the Camera degli Sposi by the depiction of Orpheus with Cerberu, the watchdog of the underworld); and Orpheus being slain by the Maenads. Second, although it has not been pointed out previously, it appears that this iconography is unique to the Camera degli Sposi and the Sala del Fregio. Third, negotiations
were undertaken, possibly early in 1510, for a marriage between Agostino Chigi and Margarita Gonzaga, an illegitimate daughter of Francesco Gonzaga, the Marquis of Mantua. These negotiations were terminated in 1512. It seems possible, however, in view of the correspondence in timing for both the marriage negotiations and the decoration of the Sala del Fregio, that Chigi may have referred, covertly, to his marital aspirations in the decoration of this room. It is interesting to note that during this same time period Federigo Gonzaga, held hostage in Rome by Pope Julius II, was frequently entertained at the Villa Farnesina.

It has been suggested that the mythological frieze in the Sala del Fregio reflects Neoplatonic influences. In view of the dependence of the imagery, in particular the scenes of Hercules' Labours and of Orpheus, on Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, this appears to be likely. Also, Chigi is known to have associated with Neoplatonist members of the Roman Academy, and to have hosted some meetings of the Roman Academy at his Villa. Accordingly, the imagery of the Sala del Fregio probably expresses the Neoplatonic concern for the immortality of the soul. That Chigi was concerned with personally attaining immortality, is suggested by both his attempts to marry into nobility, who themselves enjoy a certain immortality, and by his possible imitation of the decorative program of the Camera degli Sposi.

C. Gonzaga Patronage of Hercules Imagery in the early Sixteenth Century

The Gonzaga patronage of Hercules imagery initiated during the rule of Ludovico, as has been discussed in Chapter Three, was continued in the last decade of the fifteenth century and throughout the first three decades of the sixteenth century by Marquis Francesco Gonzaga, his wife, Isabella d'Este, and their son, Federigo.
Although not much has been written about Francesco's commissions of Hercules imagery, his ownership of Hercules statuettes is attested to by the 1496 Inventory of Francesco's assets.\textsuperscript{51} According to this document Francesco owned four bronze Hercules figures: Hercules; Hercules with a club; Seated Hercules;\textsuperscript{52} and a small Hercules with the lion skin, turning on one leg. The commissioning of Hercules imagery during Francesco's rule appears primarily to have been associated with his wife, for, from the early years of her residence in Mantua Isabella evinced strong interest in the collection of both antique and modern art—paintings, sculpture, and objet d'art.\textsuperscript{53} These objects were largely used for the decoration of Isabella's private apartments in the Castello di San giorgio, in particular her Studiolo.\textsuperscript{54} The contents of this first Studiolo included allegorical paintings by Mantegna, Perugino and Costa; as well as "antique and modern gems and bronzes, in addition to several classical reliefs and statues": (see figure 119).\textsuperscript{55} The Grotta, a "barrel-vaulted, cavernous space" (see figure 120)\textsuperscript{56} was not used to house some of her collection until 1508.\textsuperscript{57}

Following the death of Francesco in 1519, and the subsequent ascendency of Federigo, Isabella initiated a move to a new apartment in the Corte Vecchia. By 1522 she had re-established her Studiolo and Grotta, now side by side, with the Studiolo serving as an antichamber to the Grotta.\textsuperscript{58} The Studiolo was decorated with the allegorical pictures, commissioned originally for the Studiolo in the Castello, and expanded now by the addition of two allegories by Correggio,\textsuperscript{59} while the rest of Isabella's collection was housed in the Grotta.

In this room a total of some 1600 engraved gems, gold, silver and bronze medallions, pietre dure vases, small scale bronze and marble statuettes were located along the moldings in the cabinets of the wainscot and on the benches and the table.\textsuperscript{60}
Three images of Hercules were included in the bronze statuettes displayed on the ledge of the wainscot of the South East wall (see figure 121). These were two representations of Hercules with a club, and a Hercules and Antaeus (see figures 122 and 123).

Numerous representations of Hercules have been associated with Isabella's patronage. Besides the images known to have been displayed in her Grotta, she is known to have commissioned "a marble door with circular reliefs of the labours of Hercules ... in honour of her father Ercole I d'Este." It is possible that these reliefs are related to a series of circular bronze reliefs of Hercules labours created by Antico. The images of Hercules represented on these reliefs include: The infant Hercules Strangling the Serpents (see figure 124); Hercules and the Erymanthian Boar (see figure 125); Hercules and the Nemean Lion (see figure 126); Hercules and the Lernaean Hydra (see figure 127); and Hercules and the Cerynthian Hind (see figure 128). It is possible that three separate castings were made of these reliefs - one honouring Ercole I, one for Gianfrancesco Gonzaga di Ródigo, and one for Isabella herself.

Isabella's interest in Hercules imagery, while it certainly may reflect her veneration of her father Ercole I, probably also reflects her interest in learning and in the classical world. The two images of Hercules with a club, displayed in the Grotta, possibly identical to the extant images of Hercules Pomarius by Antico, may have symbolized the four aspects of learning associated with the apples of the Hesperides - study, intellect, memory and eloquence. The symbolism associated with representation of Hercules and Antaeus, also displayed in the Grotta, was the suppression of generic vice or lust, or the conquering of the irrational appetite.

The images of Hercules displayed in the Grotta actually repeat or emphasize the theme associated with the Studiolo - Study as the remedy to
There is probably no overall meaning with regard to the Hercules imagery collected within the Grotta. Certainly Isabella was familiar with the meanings associated with Hercules, the exemplar of virtù, from her early education at her father's court and from his personal use of Hercules imagery. It seems probable that her placement of two Hercules images possibly identified with learning close to a representation of Hercules interpreted as the suppression of vice, continues the allegorical statement made in the Studiolo.

Federigo Gonzaga, whose learning and cultural interests were fostered by Isabella, was also responsible for commissions of Hercules imagery. This imagery is primarily located in the Sala dei Cavalli, in the Palazzo del Te, decorated between 1527-1528. There images of Hercules' labours are shown above images of the Gonzaga horses (see figure 130). The labours depicted include: Hercules and the Nemean Lion; Hercules saving Deianira from Nessus (see figures 131 and 132); Hercules and Antaeus; Hercules and Achelous; Hercules and the Hydra; and Hercules and Cerberus. The other imagery of this room includes: statues of the gods - Jupiter and Juno; Mars and Venus; and Vulcan; busts of soldiers and women - "obviously references to the exempla virtutis, which any ruler should follow" and images of the Gonzaga horses.

The meaning of the Sala dei Cavalli remains unclear. The images of Jupiter and Juno, possibly represent the male and female "ruler of the world:" These figures appear opposite those of Mars and Venus, who symbolize War and Peace, or War and Love. The image of Vulcan appears over the fireplace. A suggested interpretation of Vulcan is

The forger of Achilles' weapons, . . . Vulcan is also the Blacksmith par excellence. A son of Jupiter and Juno and the lawful husband of Venus, who however, preferred Mars - these are the four other gods represented - he probably was chosen to symbolize the peace and
happiness which mankind enjoys through the arts and crafts taught by Vulcan.\textsuperscript{78}

The images of the \textit{exempla virtutis}, the busts of soldiers and women, may allude to the exemplary figures Federigo is modelling his own rule after. Hercules, another exemplar of virtue, this time a mortal who attained immortality as a result of his virtuous labours, may refer to any personal aspirations to immortality that Federigo had.

The horses bred by the Gonzaga were noted racehorses. In 1512 Francesco Gonzaga, then Marquis, commissioned "an illustrated record of his racehorses and list of the prizes they had taken."\textsuperscript{79} Federigo, like his father, was noted for his love for the Gonzaga horses - by the time of his death there were 514 in his stables.\textsuperscript{80} The images of horses shown in the Sala dei Cavalli are those of some of Federigo's favourites. While these were understandably portraits of his favourite horses it is also possible that they symbolized one of the means by which Federigo believed his immortality was to be gained. Thus the imagery of the Sala dei Cavalli may symbolize the prosperity enjoyed during the reign of Federigo, whether in times of peace or war. Like Hercules, Federigo would attain immortality because of his labours, both as a ruler and as a military leader. This immortality was not dependent on these labours alone, however, but was enhanced by his breeding of an illustrious line of racehorses, which also enjoyed widespread renown.
NOTES


2 Most of the early representations of Hercules showed the hero either with other Christian imagery - within Churches or Church related buildings, or as a typological parallel for Christian exemplars. The seal of Florence was an exceptional use of the Hercules motif.


4 According to E.H. Gombrich "Botticelli's Mythologies: A Study in the Neo-Platonic Symbolism of His Circle" in Symbolic Images, 2nd ed., Oxford: Phaidon Press, Ltd., 1978, p. 32 - "At the time when they were painted Botticelli's Mythologies belonged to no established category. It is true that mythological themes were frequently represented in secular art, on marriage chests, caskets or on tapestries, but as far as we know Botticelli was the first to paint mythological paintings of such a monumental kind, which in their size and in their seriousness vied with the religious art of the period. What became a commonplace in the sixteenth century in the art of Correggio and Titian was certainly a novelty in the late 1470's, when the Primavera, the earliest of Botticelli's Mythologies was painted. . ." The three Hercules labours painted by Pollaiuolo not only predate the Botticelli canvases by about twenty years, but also were larger. The Pollaiuolo canvases were each 6 braccia square or today's equivalent of 9 feet square. The Botticelli canvases measured:

- Birth of Venus: 3.8 x 6.1 braccia = 5'9" x 9'2"
- Pallas and the Centaur: 4.53 x 3.24 braccia = 6'11.5" x 4'10.25"
- Primavera: 4.4 x 6.9 braccia = 6'8" x 10'4"

5 A representation of Hercules and Iole was shown in the Sala della Iole, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino in c.1450-1465. The images of Hercules shown in the Camera degli Sposi showed Hercules saving Deianira from Nessus and Hercules and Cerberus as well as the usually shown Hercules labours.

6 see above, Chapter 3, f.n. 42.

7 see above, Chapter 3, f.n. 83.

"After ascending to the throne in 1464 as Paul II, he decided to transform the modest suite of small rooms, which he had occupied as a cardinal and which lay in the corner of the present southeast quarter of the palace, into a grandiose papal residence which would boast its location at the very heart of the city.

ibid., f.n. 1

ibid., p. 80-81.

ibid., p. 82-84 describes the decoration of the walls in the Sala dei Paramenti. According to Yuen, p. 84, the lower walls were probably covered "with either suspended arazzi, . . . or with a rich non-figural fabric."

ibid., p. 83.

According to Yuen, ibid., by 1471 only the southeastern section of the palace was constructed. In f.n. 1, p. 81 Yuen mentions

"An entry in the papal accounts for July 1471 mentions both rooms for the first time in a contract. . . . The painted strips of festoon bearing putti on the sides of those beams, which are identical to those of the wall friezes, must have been painted simultaneously or very soon after the decorations of the ceiling was completed in 1471, since the ceilings were ordinarily embellished before the walls.

There are three possible identifications for this image:

i) the Cretan Bull

ii) the river god Achelous

iii) a bull from the cattle of Geryon

The first possible identification, the fetching of the Cretan Bull, was Hercules' seventh labour. According to Morford and Lenardon, p. 361:

"This bull was either the one that had brought Europa to Crete or the one that Minos had refused to sacrifice to Poseidon; Herakles caught it and brought it back alive to Eurystheus. It was then turned loose and eventually came to Marathon, where in time Theseus caught and sacrificed it.

The second possible identification is the Battle between Hercules and the river god Achelous. According to Apollodorus, p. 103:

"Herakles then went to Calydon where, seeking to marry Deianira, daughter of Oeneus, he wrestled with Achelous in order to win her. Achelous changed himself into a bull and Herakles broke off one of his horns. Herakles married Deianira and Achelous received back his horn, giving in return for it the horn of Almalthea, the daughter of Haemonius. For she possessed the horn of a bull, which Phercydes says, could provide food or drink in abundance as one asked for them."
The third possible identification is, that this bull was one from the herd of cattle taken from Geryon. According to Apollodorus, p. 97-98.

"The tenth labor assigned to him was to bring the Cattle of Geryon from Erythia, an island near the ocean now called Gadira, where Geryon, son of Chrysaor and of Callirrhoe, daughter of Ocean, lived. Geryon had three human bodies from the waist down. . . . Geryon met Herakles leading off the cattle beside the Anthemus River and attacked him, but Herakles shot him with an arrow and killed him. Herakles put the cattle into the golden cup and after sailing across to Tartessus, gave it back to the Sun. . . . At Rregium a bull broke away, leaped into the Sea and swam across to Sicily. The bull going through the country nearby (called Italy from that time on because the Tyrrhenian word of bull is italus), came to the plain of Eryx who was the king of the Elymi. Eryx, a son of Poseidon, bred the bull with his herds. Herakles left the cattle with Hephaestus and hurried to look for it. He found it among the herds of Eryx who refused to give it back to him unless he defeated him at wrestling. Herakles wrestled with him and defeated him three times, killing him in the final match. He then took the bull and drove it and the rest of the cattle to the Ionian Sea. . . ."

The representation of Hercules and the Bull (see figure 106) does not show Hercules struggling or wrestling with the creature. Instead, he appears to be leading the animal by means of his hold on the horn. For this reason it seems unlikely that the scene represents Hercules and Achelous. The proximity of Hercules fighting with Geryon, depicted on the same wall, suggests that this may be Hercules with one of the cattle of Geryon, presumably the bull which escaped and was recaptured.

15 Geryon is identified in Morford and Lenardon, p. 362 as "a three-bodied monster." (see figures 107 and 108).

16 The two scenes Hercules and Ladon and Hercules and the Cerynitian Hind (see figures 109 and 110), shown on the East wall of the Sala dei Paramenti, repeat the two images seen combined in the Hercules relief on the Façade of San Marco (see figure 3). The representations seen in the Palazzo Venezia have separated the two images, so they appear as two distinct labours. See above, Chapter Two, foot note 12, p. 33.

17 The characteristics of the creature shown with Hercules, a winged creature with a female head, are synonymous with the description of Harpies according to that given in Morford and Lenardon, p. 97 -

"the Harpies, . . . are depicted in literature and in art as birdlike creatures with the faces of women, often terrifying and a pestilence to mankind."

Bernardus Silvestris, in his Commentary on the First Six Books of Virgil's Aeneid (translated with introduction and notes by Earl G. Schreiber and Thomas E. Maresca) p. 70-71 describes the Harpies and Hercules' battle with them, as well as providing a philosophical interpretation for this act.

"(289) Arpie: the three Harpies are maidens who are covered with feathers of birds, have sharp claws and feel hunger in their bellies; . . . They defiled Phineus's table and snatched his food after he had
blinded his sons and had then received the same punishment from the gods. But Hercules, received by Phineus, together with Zetes and Calais, . . . killed those birds with arrows. . . . Arpia in Greek is *rapacitas* "greed", in Latin: for *Arpo* is *rapio*, "seizure" in Latin . . . They are birds because they are quick to attack others. The claws are usuary and interest, which are the instruments of seizure; the feathers are the instruments of concealment such as purses and satchels; the hungry belly is the ravenous greed for money. They contaminate Phineus's table when they befoul his way of life by urging filth. . . . They seize his food because they think it is necessary to ruin the victim. For a greedy man "searches, and the wretch abstains from what is found and fears to use it." Phineus welcomes Hercules when a greedy man receives a wise man. Hercules kills the Harpies with arrows when the wise man argues against greed with sharp rebukes. . . ."

19 Yuen, p. 92.

20 *ibid.*, p. 96 Yuen also states, on p. 94 - "The focus upon the Labours of Hercules without the company of either Christian or pagan personages in a room intended to serve as part of the papal apartment in Palazzo Venezia strongly suggests that the Hercules myth was translated into didactic allegory and interlaced with other, political and ethical allusions reflective of the ideals of the period and of the Venetian patron who dictated the program."

and on p. 95 - "The Herculean struggles could be interpreted by humanists and ambitious princes either as the Christian victory, of good over evil or as the pursuit of personal achievement and valor. But to Paul II and Marco Barbo, Hercules must also have represented a civic personage as well as the champion of virtue, for he had long held the role of tutelary saint and protector of their native Venice in much the same fashion as another military saint, Saint George. The interjection of the graceful fountains, about which various *putti* caper, may perhaps symbolize various aspirations of man such as life, love or youth.

21 Morford and Lenardon, p. 362 and 364.

22 Waith, p. 44.

23 Jacobsen, p. 16-17.


26 Yuen, p. 95.

David R. Coffin, The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 90 states that Cardinal Alessandro Farnese began negotiations for the purchase of the Chigi Villa and grounds in the late 1570's. The sale was completed by 1584. The Villa was renamed the Farnesina sometime following the sale.

"The date of commencement of the new building must have been sometime between 1505 and 1508 since its existence is briefly noted in Albertini's guide to Rome, which was completed in 1509.

According to Coffin, ibid., p. 98, both the interior and the exterior of the Villa was embellished with frescoes.


"Hercules is famous for his hard labors. He tamed the proud Centaurs; won the spoils of the fierce Nemean Lion; set down the Stymphalian Birds with his sure arrows; stole the golden apples from the watchful dragon, and shackled Cerberus with a triple chain. He conquered Diomedes and fed the savage mares their cruel master's flesh. He burned the Hydra's poisoned heads, shamed the river Achelous by ... breaking his horns and made him bury his face in his banks. He killed Antaeus on the Libyan Beach, and slew Cacus to slake the wrath of Evander. The boar marked with foam those shoulders which were to bear the weight of heaven. For his last labor he bore heaven on his strong neck, and for this he won again the prize of heaven."


"Herculem duri celebrant labores:
Ille Centauros domuit superbos,
Abstulit saevo spolium leoni,
Fixit et certis volucres sagittis:
Poma cernenti rapuit draconi,
Aureo laeva gravior metallo:
Cerberum traxit triplici catena:
Victor immitem posuisse fertur
Pabulum saevis dominum quadrigis:
Hydra combusto perii veneno:
Fronte turpatus Achelous amnis,
Ora demersit pudibunda ripis:
Stravit Antaeum Libycis arenis
Cacus Evandri satiavit iras
Quosque pressurus foret altus orbis,
Setiger spumis humeros notavit:
Ultimus coelum labor irreflexo
Sustuilit collo, pretium que rursus
Ultimi coelum mervit laboris.

36 The representation of Hercules and the Stymphalian Birds (see figure 103) more closely resembles the story of Hercules freeing King Phineus of the Harpies (see above, this chapter, foot note 17). According to Coffin, p. 98, footnote 70 - "In the third Labor Boethius speaks only of the killing of the "birds" (volucres), presumably the Stymphalian Birds, but Peruzzi depicts the Birds as Harpies at the table of King Phineus. The Pseudo-St. Thomas Acquinas commentary, however, which was printed in the early editions of Boethius specifically describes in the third Labor the Harpies at the table of King Phineus.

37 Other mythological imagery depicted in the frieze includes: Mercury driving the cattle to the sea; the rape of Europa; the rape of Danae; Juno and Semele; Death of Semele; Diana and Actaeon and the Death of Actaeon; Apollo punishing Midas; Contest of Apollo and Pan; Midas washing; Midas instructed by Bacchus and Triumph of Neptune; Sleeping Ariadne; Bacchus; Marsyas; Playing of Marsyas; Caledonian Boar Hunt; Meleager slaying his uncles; Three fates and Althaëa and dying Meleager; Orpheus slaying; Orpheus and Eurydice; and the Slaying of Orpheus. (Identifications taken from Coffin, foot note 70, p. 98-99).

38 Jensen, p. 21, foot note 13.


40 Coffin, p. 98, f.n.70.

41 ibid., p. 98.

42 ibid., p. 98-99.

43 ibid., p. 100.

44 ibid., p. 100

45 ibid., p. 107.
Francesco Gonzaga is identified in literature both as Gianfrancesco and Francesco. He will be identified here as Francesco.


This image may resemble a Hercules Shooting at the Stymphalian Birds (see figure 118) shown in Wendy Stedman Sheard, Antiquity in the Renaissance, Exhibition Catalogue, Northampton, Mass: Smith College Museum of Art, 1979, entry 57.


J.M. Fletcher, "Isabella d'Este, Patron and Collector" in Splendours of the Gonzaga, p. 52.

Brown, Grotta, II, p. 73-74.

Fletcher, p. 52.

Brown, Grotta, II, p. 73.


Fletcher, p. 53


ibid., p. 162.

ibid., p. 162 figure 8 identifies these figures as Hercules with the Mace. It seems probable that these actually show Hercules with his club and the Apples of the Hesperides. Antico created three such
images - one for Francesco Gonzaga (mentioned in the Inventory of 1496), one for Ludovico Gonzaga, Bishop of Mantua, and one for Isabella in c.1519. See also discussion in Splendours of the Gonzaga, entry 53, p. 134.


64 ibid.

65 There are seven extant roundels - two replicate the Hercules and the Nemean Lion and the Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna. All of them measure 32.7 c.m. and appear to be of the same general facture (see catalogue entry 58, 59, 60, 61 - in Splendours of the Gonzaga, p. 139). The provenance of the rectangular plaque (see figure 129) by Antico, of Hercules Resting, is unknown. It may have been commissioned by either Gianfrancesco Gonzaga di Róvido or Isabella.

66 ibid., p. 139.

67 see above, Chapter 3, p. 44-45, quote 69.

68 see above, Chapter 3, p. 44 text and quote 67.

69 Brown, Grotta I, p. 158.

70 ibid., p. 164-165.


73 The imagery of the Sala dei Cavalli is portrayed within illusionistic architecture. This is perhaps reminiscent of the decoration of the Sala del Fregio, Villa Farnesina which Federigo visited while held hostage in Rome.

74 Verheyen, p. 30.

75 ibid., p. 29.

76 This is the identification suggested by the Medal of Federigo da Montefeltro of Urbino, discussed above, Chapter 3, p. 57-58.
Verheyen, p. 29.

ibid., p. 30

Splendours of the Gonzaga, catalogue entry 75, p. 147.

ibid., entry 165, p. 189.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Just as the use of Hercules imagery changed during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, so also did the interpretations associated with his labours. Although the same methods of allegorical interpretations were used by Greek, Roman, early Christian, Medieval and Renaissance authors, their perceptions of the hero differed. The Greeks and Romans primarily viewed Hercules as a beneficial, civilizing figure, noted as an averter of evil, an exemplar of virtus, and as a mortal who was made immortal. Early Christian writers, in response both to the excesses of Roman society, and the threat of pagan religious cults, denounced Hercules as a libertine, an adulterer and a lecher. Writers active in later centuries were to once again perceive and exploit Hercules as a figure of moral excellence whose actions benefitted mankind.

Artistic representations of Hercules created in Italy during the thirteenth century, including those on the Façade of San Marco, the Florentine seal and the Pisano Pulpits for the Baptistry and the Duomo of Pisa, depict Hercules as a virtuous, wise hero who conquered evils which threaten mankind. These depictions continue the image of Hercules developed by writers active in the seventh through thirteenth centuries.

Hercules was associated with a broad range of positive characteristics in fourteenth century Italian literature. His virtue was equated with that of Biblical exemplars, he was credited with Justice, Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude, and he was viewed as a contemporary symbol of virtù and the active
life. Only one of these characteristics was developed in the art of the period; Hercules was portrayed as the wise hero who embodied the virtues ideal for a public figure or leader. He was shown in this role on the Campanile and the Porta della Mandorla in Florence.

During the fifteenth century the use of Hercules imagery changed. Where the primary role of the image during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was didactic, with the rise of private patronage, the patron commissioned Hercules imagery to identify personal ideals and political affiliations.

Ludovico Gonzaga, Federigo da Montefeltro, and Ercole d'Este adopted the Hercules image because of their positions as hereditary rulers and as condottiere. Each wished to be recognized as embodying the virtuous characteristics and leadership abilities of the hero. These, combined with the hereditary nature of their positions as political rulers, intimated the immortality to be enjoyed by all three.

Lorenzo de'Medici's commissions of Hercules imagery, instead of indicating his virtue and leadership abilities, suggested a personal identification with Florentine Republican ideals. Hercules was the acknowledged symbol of the Commune of Florence's freedom from tyranny. Because of the Medici wealth, Lorenzo was extremely powerful in Florence. It was important for him, therefore, to visually reassure his fellow citizens that his political beliefs were in accordance with the established form of government. Thus Hercules, in fifteenth century Italy, was used to emphasize either the patron's position as a ruler and leader, or as a fellow citizen.

Mythological themes other than Hercules were accorded increased prominence from the 1470's. This greatly influenced the representations of
the labours of Hercules in sixteenth century Italy. Where, in the fourteenth and most of the fifteenth century, only Hercules and the Nemean Lion, Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna, and Hercules and Antaeus were portrayed, by about 1510 all twelve of the hero's labours were depicted. Once a wider range of mythological themes was common, the use of Hercules imagery to symbolize personal ideals and character diminished. Hercules once more assumed his classical role as an abstract symbol of virtus and aretē.
Figure 1
Figure 19
Figure 21
Figure 32
Figure 35

Figure 36
Figure 65
Figure 76

Figure 77
Figure 86

Figure 87
Figure 92

Figure 93
Figure 132
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