

Antonio Ghini and Andrea di Francesco Guardi: Two 15th-century Tuscan Artists in the Service of Local Governments

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Although the medieval and renaissance artist dwelled within a rigidly structured society whereby his life and work were strictly related to his affiliation to a guild, a confraternity, a political faction or some other form of corporate association that could grant him identity and protection, his world was far from restricted by the geographical boundaries of his city.¹ Maginnis argued that early Siennese painters enjoyed great fame outside their native city thanks to foreign patrons.² Simone Martini left Siena at the apex of his career as favourite painter of the commune to work for mendicant orders in Pisa, Orvieto and Assisi, and then at the service of the Angevins in Naples before moving to the papal court in Avignon.³ Likewise, the case of the Florentine sculptor Donatello, who worked in the rival city of Siena by request of a petition of the *Balia* in 1457,⁴ demonstrates that the wish to commission art

This paper draws from material researched for my doctoral thesis: *Siena and its contado: Art, Iconography and Patronage in the Diocese of Grosseto from c. 1380 to c. 1480*, University of Aberdeen, PhD, 2011. A specific section in the thesis discusses the work of travelling artists in the diocese of Grosseto, and this first approach to the notion of artists and travel was later developed further and resulted in the session 'Travelling artists in medieval and Renaissance Europe' at the 38th annual conference of the Association of Art Historians, Milton Keynes, 29-31 March 2012. I would like to thank Dr. John Richards (University of Glasgow) and the editor, Prof. Richard Woodfield, for their valuable comments. I wish to dedicate this article to the historian of the Maremma – and particularly of Piombino – Romualdo Cardarelli (1886-1962), *in memoriam*.

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¹ For an overview on artistic practice and the medieval workshop see E. Welch, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 79-101. The structure and endurance of Medieval workshops in Italian cities was the object of a two-day workshop: *Family values: Locating the family in the early modern Italian workshop*, Warwick-in-Venice 6-7 April 2010, sponsored by the Newberry Library Consortium. This was principally concerned with three key issues: transmission of skills and tools from father to son; the importance of marriage for the transmission and proliferation of ideas and skills; the workshop's role in creating and disseminating practice, styles, and form.

² The term 'foreign' refers to any city-state or patrons outside the boundaries of Siennese territories. See H.B.J. Maginnis, *The World of the Early Siennese Painter*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2001, 152.

³ Maginnis, *The World of the Early Siennese Painter*, 152-156. Joanna Cannon's study on Martini and his work for the Dominicans and the Franciscans revealed that his style was adapted to suit his patrons' specifications. See J. Cannon, 'Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the early Siennese polyptych', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 45, 1982, 69-93.

⁴ Gaetano Milanese published a petition of the *Balia* of Siena dated 17 October 1457 where the Siennese propose to do whatever is necessary in order to favour the work of Donatello in Siena 'per lo tempo della vita sua'. G. Milanese, *Documenti per la storia dell'arte senese*, II, Siena: Presso Onorato Porri, 1854, 295-296. Monika Butzek convincingly argued that the relief with the *Madonna del Perdono* that crowned the sculptural frame of the chapel

objects from artists who could convey local values and identity surpassed political rivalry and economic struggles.⁵ This often encompassed the artist's social and professional status, and the success or indeed the viability of a workshop was dependent on the amount, scale and importance of the commissions that patrons could grant them.⁶ It entailed working for a variety of patrons, and adapting style and iconography to suit their requests, social status and background.⁷ Wackernagel's book on Florentine Renaissance artists sheds light on the mechanics of patronage in *Quattrocento* Florence and the complex network of business, economic and cultural exchanges between Florence and the Netherlands that involved families of the Florentine elite such as the Sassetti and the Portinari, and how they influenced art and the art market.⁸

Daniel Bornstein's study on the career of the painter Luca Signorelli highlighted how provincial artists often faced conflicting choices. Signorelli left his native town of Cortona to pursue higher profile commissions in Orvieto, Siena and Rome.⁹ Bornstein noted that:

Only a few major centres, such as Florence or Venice or Rome, were capable of sustaining a steady demand for works of art. For the rest, the emerging distinction between artisan and artist entailed a choice between stability and mobility.¹⁰

of the *Madonna delle Grazie* in the cathedral of Siena, was carved by Donatello in this context. See M. Butzek, 'Donatello e il suo seguito a Siena: La cappella della Madonna delle Grazie. Una ricostruzione', in *Pio II e le arti*, ed. A. Angelini, Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2005, 83-103.

⁵ The notion of community and community identity has recently been addressed in several studies including: *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe*, ed. M. Halvorson, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. Specific studies on Tuscan cities include: A. Figliola, *Space, society and self in Siena: a study of community, identity and social change in a small southern European city*, PhD thesis, University of Massachusetts, 2002; see also my 'The cathedral, the church and the city: celebrating saints in the statutes of southern Tuscan cities', in *Art and Identity: Visual Culture, Politics and Religion in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012, 45-70; and the very recent paper published by Flavio Boggi on the Bolognese *Trecento* painter Lippo di Dalmasio's work and his involvement in the civic institutions of Pistoia, F. Boggi, 'Lippo di Dalmasio, the Madonna of the Humility and painting in Pistoia in the late Trecento' in *Visible Exports/ Imports: New Research on Medieval and Renaissance Art and Culture*, ed. E. J. Anderson, J. Farquhar and J. Richards, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2013, 61-98.

⁶ On the concept of patronage in the Renaissance and its impact on artistic output see J. Burke, *Changing Patrons – Social Identity and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Florence*, University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University 2004, 3-8; chapters 4-5. On the economics of artists in the Renaissance see M. O'Malley, *The Business of Art*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005, 16-20. See also A. Thomas, *The Painter's Practice in Renaissance Tuscany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 27-101.

⁷ There are several studies on artists and the kind of patrons they work for, particularly in *Trecento* Siena. For an overview see J. Steinhoff, *Sienese painting after the Black Death*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006, 29-63. See also above, n. 3.

⁸ M. Wackernagel, *The world of the Florentine Renaissance Artist*, transl. A. Luchs, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981 ed., 265-277.

⁹ D. Bornstein, 'Provincial painters: local artists in *Quattrocento* Cortona and the origins of Luca Signorelli', *Renaissance Studies*, 14:4, 2000, 450-451.

¹⁰ Bornstein, *Provincial Painters*, 451. Notwithstanding the value of Bornstein's study, an important element has been neglected in his analysis. Cortona was an independent city under the rule of the Casali family until it was acquired by Florence in 1409. This event must have had a huge impact on several aspects of local life, including the commissioning of artworks from local artists. Repetti recalls that the Medici of Florence donated an altarpiece to the church of S. Domenico in 1440, attributing it to the hand of Fra Angelico. Later literature clarified that the altarpiece had to be credited to another Florentine painter: Lorenzo di Niccolò. It is likely that following Florentine acquisition local artists—including Signorelli—had to compete with their Florentine counterparts to gain work. See E. Repetti, *Dizionario Geografico, Fisico e Storico della Toscana*, vol. I, Florence: Coi Tipi di A. Tofani, 1833, 820. On the work of painters from Florence and Siena in Cortona see M. Israëls, 'Sassetta, Fra Angelico and their patrons at S. Domenico, Cortona' *The Burlington Magazine*, 145:1208, 2003, 760-776.

This statement would deserve a thorough analysis of fifteenth-century historic and historiographical sources that is impossible to develop here.¹¹ However, Bornstein's theory constitutes only one aspect of a far more complex set of reasons that pressed artists to move their activity beyond their native city.¹²

Further to these earlier studies this paper aims to sharpen the focus on the connection between artist, patronage and travel, and re-frames the activity of two fifteenth-century Tuscan sculptors: Antonio Ghini and Andrea di Francesco Guardi. The commissions that they undertook in the course of their careers shall be examined to reveal how these developed further to their moves across the region and beyond. We shall see that documentary evidence and the artworks themselves provide compelling evidence about the artists who conceived and produced them, as well as about their patrons' identity and agenda. This study also contextualizes the work of these two little-studied artists within 15th-century Tuscany, a region where the city-Republics of Florence and Siena contended for supremacy and shows how the political and historical events of the time might have impacted on their careers and on the consolidation of their position in contemporary society.

As far as Antonio Ghini (active 1454-c. 1478) is concerned little has been published on his work, and some sources mistakenly confuse this artist with other members of his family, namely with his son Ghino d'Antonio, a painter active in Siena between 1521 and 1554.¹³ This has led to further misunderstanding of the chronology of Ghini's work.¹⁴ A native of Lucca, Ghini moved to Siena, where Ridolfi records him working as an apprentice in the cathedral of this city from 1454 and as Master from 1463, quoting books of the *Opera*¹⁵ of Siena as his source.¹⁶ Although he belonged to a family of artists, Antonio Ghini (also known as Antonio di Ghino or Antonio di Ser Ghino) was not mentioned by early biographies of artists. The anonymous writer, who preceded Vasari's *Vite* with his biographical notes on the lives of artists, only includes a few graphic points on some key Siennese artists, Vecchietta being the only sculptor cited in the *Codice Magliabechiano* (around 1541).¹⁷ It is only three centuries later that Ettore Romagnoli includes Ghini in his history of Siennese artists, and acknowledges him as the author of the monumental fountain that decorates the main square at Asciano, a town in the *contado* of Siena, in 1429.¹⁸ Romagnoli's dating of the fountain is

¹¹ On the issue of artistic practice and social status of the artist in the Renaissance see Wackernagel, *The world of the Florentine Renaissance Artist*, 338-354. The activity of individual artists outside their native cities can be traced through a number of biographical texts including L. Ghiberti's *Commentari*, vol. 2, London: Courtauld Institute of Art, c. 1950; and G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, 7 Vols. ed. G. Milanesi, Florence: Sansoni, 1881.

¹² The influence of major centres on peripheries had already been addressed by Castelnuovo and Ginzburg. See E. Castelnuovo and C. Ginzburg, 'Centre and periphery', in *History of Italian Art*, ed. P. Burke, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, 29-112.

¹³ On this see: G. Corti, 'Una Compagnia di Pittori a Siena a metà del Cinquecento', *Paragone*, 37: 439, 1986, 57-60. See also E. Romagnoli, *Biografia Cronologica dei Bell'Artisti Senesi*, v, Florence: Edizioni S.P.E.S., 1835, 421-424.

¹⁴ See below and n. 18, for Romagnoli's incorrect dating of Ghini's work in Asciano.

¹⁵ The *Opera* was the institution that superintended over the building and decoration of a cathedral or Parish church. Albeit this was funded by the local Bishop, it became financially and administratively managed by the civic government at the time of the rise of the commune.

¹⁶ E. Ridolfi, *L'arte in Lucca studiata nella sua cattedrale*, Lucca: coi tipi di B. Canovetti, 1882, 369. See also F. Fumi Cambi Gado 'Opere d'arte del XV secolo nella cattedrale di Grosseto', in *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo a Grosseto*, C. Gnani Mavarelli and L. Martini eds, Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1996, 51; 57 n. 20.

¹⁷ Anonimo Fiorentino, *Il Codice Magliabechiano – Notizie sopra l'Arte degli Antichi e quella de' Fiorentini da Cimabue a Michelangelo Buonarroti*, C. Frey ed., Berlin: G. Grote'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1892, 83-86.

¹⁸ Romagnoli, *Biografia Cronologica*, iv, 260.

clearly wrong, as it would have been impossible for Ghini to carry out a commission at this date, as documents record him as an apprentice only much later in 1454.¹⁹ However, the symbols of the local commune, and its *Podestà* carved in the fountain, underscore the *leit-motif* of this artist's career. All his known works were in fact commissioned either by local civic governments or the *Opera* of a church.

John Pope-Hennessy said of Ghini's most renowned work, the lunette with the Annunciation in the cathedral of Grosseto:

[...] if the centre of the lunette illustrated in Figure 72 were in Kansas city or the Louvre, or indeed in London, we might all be throwing stones at it. But it is in Tuscany, at Grosseto, built into an altar for which it was made in 1474 by Antonio di Ser Ghino.²⁰

It has to be noted that Pope-Hennessy's critique focuses on connoisseurship rather than an analytical approach, which is the trend of current art historical scholarship.²¹ The aesthetic value of Ghini's sculpture is not the object of this paper, as it would be necessary to engage the reader on a more in-depth analysis of Pope-Hennessy's considerations. However, it is important to note the evident preference of local civic governments and related institutions for his work. This privileged relationship might have stemmed from Ghini's initial apprenticeship in the *Opera* of the cathedral of Siena, a civic-led institution. The artist's specific ability to convey the values of the government and merging them with the necessities of religious practice might have also played a substantial part in his career. The trajectory and significance of Ghini's appointments throughout his life, calls for a re-assessment of Ghini's role within Siena's cultural and artistic milieu, its satellite territories, and in his native city of Lucca.

Albeit the first records of his activity pertain to the *Opera* of the cathedral of Siena, no signed work from these formative years remains. As mentioned earlier, the monumental fountain was dated by Romagnoli to 1429 and by Fumi Cambi Gado to 1465 ([figure 1](#)).²² The correct dating of the fountain at Asciano is crucial to establish Ghini's rise in the art world and his connection with civic governments. The inscription has been damaged by permanent exposure to the elements, and part of the date has hence been destroyed. However, although the inscription is far too damaged to be read as a whole, the heraldry carved in the fountain, and the setting where this is located, indicate that this should be dated later, around 1471-72. By looking at the space between the left border and the first letter of the Latin date, it becomes evident that the missing part on the right hand side might have included more letters ([figure 2](#)). This suggests that a later date of production is feasible. Further evidence of this comes from the coats of arms carved on the fountain. The first features three small swords and it represents Vieri di Nanni, *Podestà* in 1471 ([figure 3](#)). The second reproduces the head of a wild boar, and belongs to the *Podestà* of Asciano in 1472, Pietro di Fabiano Palmieri ([figure 4](#)). Their names and the dates of their office in Asciano

¹⁹ See above, n. 16.

²⁰ J. Pope-Hennessy, 'The forging of Italian Renaissance Sculpture', *Apollo*, 99, 1974, 262.

²¹ This considers the form, style, iconography and function of the works of art individually and within the context of the artist who conceived and produced them, their patrons, and the audiences they were intended for. See the studies of Machtelt Israëls on Sassetta and Diana Norman on Renaissance Siena for an example.

²² Fumi Cambi Gado, *Opere d'Arte*, 51; *Palazzo Corboli: Museo d'Arte Sacra*, Siena: Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 2002, 84.

appear carved on the façade of the *Palazzo Comunale* in the same square. Thus, the heraldry carved in the fountain and the fact that the inscription appears to lack three digits suggests that the fountain should be dated 1472 (MCCCCLXXII) and not 1465 (MCCCCLXV). Of particular interest is the relief representing a man fighting with two snakes which is likely to represent the battle of mankind against evil.²³ This significantly complements another relief on the opposite face of the fountain, where a tongue is stretched between two rollers and the inscription 'PER MAL DIRE', clearly indicating the destiny of those who dared to speak against the current regime (figure 5).²⁴ If my hypothesis on the date of production of the fountain in Asciano is correct, the baptismal font in the cathedral of Grosseto dated 1470, is the first known work completed by Ghini.

The baptismal font was commissioned from Ghini for the cathedral of Grosseto by the local civic institutions, and more specifically by the *Opera* and the *Operaio*, as is apparent from the presence of their coat of arms prominently carved at its base (figure 6).²⁵ The octagonal form of the pedestal allowed Ghini to display four coats-of arms in a mirror-like fashion. These are the arms of Salvatore di Lemmo di Castellammare, *Operaio* of the cathedral, the *Opera*, the commune of Grosseto, and the *Balzana* of Siena (figure 7).²⁶ The presence of the *balzana* in the font, suggests that the commune of Siena may have contributed financially to this commission, perhaps in order to strengthen the allegiance between Siena and Grosseto.²⁷ The inscription reads:

Questo batesimo fece fare Salvatore di Lemmo da Castello a Mare di Napuli Operaio de l'Opera di Sa[n]c[t]a Maria di Grosseto An[no] D[omini] MCCCCLXX²⁸

This states that the font was commissioned by Salvatore di Lemmo, and thus this is indicative of the *Operaio's* status and influence as a prominent patron within the civic government.

In 1473 Ghini was part of a committee of local sculptors who were called by the Sienese government to find an agreement with a group of stonemasons hired in the Lombard region to work in Siena.²⁹ Shortly after these negotiations were completed in Siena in 1474, Ghini completed another work in the cathedral of Grosseto. We must assume that by that time he had established a relationship of trust with the *Operaio* Salvatore di Lemmo, after the completion of the font four years earlier. This time he carved the marble altar-frame

²³ It seems that Ghini found inspiration for this image in the pulpit of S. Pietro a Gropina (Arezzo), where this image represents evil attacking human reason.

²⁴ 'For ill saying'. The political significance of the fountain and of this particular relief is further strengthened by its proximity to the *Palazzo Comunale*.

²⁵ The commune had direct control of the *Opera* through the election of an ad-hoc builder in chief, the *Operaio*, who was in charge of the financial aspect, as well as of the purchase of materials and the management of the work force. The *Operaio* was also in charge of commissioning artworks and thus hiring artists in order to carry them out.

²⁶ The *Balzana* is the black and white coat of arms of the commune of Siena.

²⁷ The renowned Sienese historian Giovanni Antonio Pecci records that in those years Grosseto could only count on a scanty population in spite of Sienese efforts to attract new settlers in the area. G. A. Pecci (post- 1759), 'Cronistoria di Grosseto città vescovile' in *Guida all'Archivio di Stato di Grosseto*, ed. V. Petroni, Siena: Cantagalli, 1971, 139.

²⁸ 'This Baptism[al font] was commissioned by Salvatore di Lemmo da Castello a Mare of Naples *Operaio* of the *Opera* of Saint Mary of Grosseto in the year of the Lord 1470'.

²⁹ Milanese, *Documenti*, I, 126-129.

that was meant to accommodate the Assumption painted by Matteo di Giovanni (c. 1470-1475) and popularly known as *Madonna delle Grazie* (figure 8).³⁰

The arms of the commune of Grosseto and the *Opera* of the cathedral are carved in the spandrels that flank the arch, whereas the arms of the *Operaio*, Salvatore di Lemmo appear at the base of the external pillars of the marble frame. A Latin inscription runs along the frieze of the altar and functions as a bold statement of its civic patronage:

Hoc Opus Antonius Ghini de Senis Tempore Sp[ectabilis] Viri Salvatoris Lemmi
Operarii MCCCCLXXIII³¹

Both the ecclesiastical visitation of Bishop Francesco Bossi to Grosseto and the surviving records of the *Opera* mention the right of *Ius Patronatus* of the altar as belonging to the *Operaio* of the cathedral. This required that the *Operaio* was responsible for its maintenance and for the appointment of the chaplain who officiated mass in the altar-chapel three times a week.³²

The red and white marble slabs that currently occupy the niche were inserted at the time of the last significant restoration of the cathedral in 1860, and this seemed to strengthen the theory that the *Madonna delle Grazie* altarpiece that is displayed there was originally larger in size.³³ A document that I unearthed in the course of the research for my PhD shows that part of the marble that originally covered the niche had to be replaced in 1644, due to the humid conditions in which the altar-chapel was located.³⁴

Madonna delle Grazie ritoccata da M[agistro] Francesco Pericciuoli pittore, fu fatta fare la Stella d'argento che tiene in petto, e rimutati alcuni pezzi di marmo nella fodera della cappellina perchè l'acqua vi faceva danno. Rincontro dell'Operaio. f. 11, 1644³⁵

³⁰ Scholarship has often questioned whether Matteo di Giovanni's painting was indeed commissioned for Grosseto and specifically for this altar. It is beyond the scope of this article to explore this aspect in depth, but I wish to refer readers to my article 'Matteo di Giovanni and the Civic Patrons of Southern Tuscany' in *Visible exports/ imports: new research on medieval and Renaissance visual culture*, eds. E. J. Anderson, J. Farquhar and J. Richards, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2013. Readers of Italian can consult 'Matteo di Giovanni nella diocesi di Grosseto: Nuove ipotesi e spunti di riflessione' in *Contributi per l'arte in Maremma: Arte e storia nella Maremma antica*, ed. O. Bruschettoni, Arcidosso, 2009. See also my PhD thesis: *Siena and its contado: art, iconography and patronage in the diocese of Grosseto from c. 1380 to c. 1480*, University of Aberdeen PhD, 2011.

³¹ 'Antonio di Ghino of Siena [made] this work at the time of the *Operaio*, the notable man Salvatore di Lemmo 1474'.

³² Archivio Segreto Vaticano, *Congr., Vescovi e Regolari, Visita Apostolica 60* [Henceforth ASV, F. Bossi, 1576], f. 16r: '[...] Quod altare licet scripturis non constet, ut dixit operarius, esse dotatum per antiquam tamen consuetudinem operarii omnes retinent in eo cappellanum amovibilem, qui missas celebret, et lampadem ardere continuo curet. Cappellanus in dicto altari est dominus Paulus Pauli filius, canonicus, a domino Benedetto operario electus iam fere per septennium, cum onere celebrandi ter in hebdomada et omnibus festi diebus solemnibus, soluta illi annua mercede scutorum decem auri.'

³³ The altar niche measures h. 339.5 x w. 213 cm. From L. Paardekooper, 'Matteo di Giovanni e la tavola centinata', in *Matteo di Giovanni e la pala d'altare nel senese e nell'aretino 1450-1500*, ed. D. Gasparotto and S. Magnani, Siena: Le Balze, 2002, Appendix, n. 11.

³⁴ Archivio Vescovile Grosseto ms., F. Anichini, *Storia Ecclesiastica*, I, 1751, f. 55r. [Henceforth AVG, Anichini, SE]

³⁵ Biblioteca Chelliana Grosseto, F. Anichini, *Indice generale dei libri e carte esistenti nell'Archivio Comunale di Grosseto*, 1750, f. 37r [Henceforth BCG, Anichini IGACG]: '[1644] The Madonna delle Grazie was re-touched by Master Francesco Pericciuoli painter; the silver star [that the Virgin] bears on her chest was made, and some pieces of marble in the niche of the chapel were replaced because the water damaged them. Notes of the Operaio,

Unfortunately, it has been hitherto impossible to establish the original appearance of the niche, as no drawing or description seems to have survived, but some considerations will be made later in this article in light of a document that is of particular importance in reconstructing the chronology of Antonio Ghini.

In order to follow the timeline of this artist it is necessary to note that in parallel with his work in Grosseto, Ghini established a workshop in partnership with the sculptor Giovanni di Stefano in the convent of San Domenico in Siena between 1470 and 1475.³⁶ The two artists knew each other at least from 1466, when Giovanni di Stefano was commissioned to make a silver head of St. Caterina in San Domenico *Magistro Matteo Joannis, pictore, and Antonio Ghini magistro lapidis* were witnesses to the contract.³⁷ The reciprocal influences between the two sculptors is evident in the comparison between Ghini's altar of the *Madonna delle Grazie* and the tabernacle that Giovanni di Stefano carved for Palazzo Bianchi in Siena in 1477.³⁸ Another artist might have been crucial in the development of Ghini's style. Francesca Fumi Cambi Gado hypothesized that Ghini could have trained with the sculptor Antonio Federighi in Siena.³⁹ Similarities with Federighi's work can be observed in the rich border carved in the basin of Ghini's baptismal font in Grosseto, which features seraphim heads and festoons of foliage and acorns. Federighi had used similar decorations in the font of the cathedral of Siena, as evocative of the ornaments used in Roman antiquity. Although a direct link between the two artists remains speculative, it is feasible that Ghini was acquainted with Federighi and that this artist was a source of inspiration for his work in Grosseto.

Following his activity in this city, Ghini was employed by the *Opera* of the cathedral of his native city of Lucca to complete the marble engraving with the *Judgement of Solomon* for the floor of the cathedral between 1475 and 1477.⁴⁰ This commitment must have interrupted Ghini's works in the cathedral of Grosseto, possibly also due to the fact that the *Operaio* Salvatore di Lemmo might have died around that time, or had left his position vacant. Evidence of this appears in a document of the General Council of the commune of Grosseto that in 1476 acted on behalf of the *Operaio* prior to the appointment of a new civic official. Ghini was recalled to Grosseto by the General Council of the commune on 3 May, and I suggest that Ghini was recalled to finish his work on the altar-chapel of the *Madonna delle Grazie*.⁴¹ The brief extract from the 17th-century document, describing the chapel as "lined" with marble panels, further strengthens this possibility.

f. 11.' The *stella maris* appears in early 20th century photos, but not in more recent pictures. It was probably stolen together with the Virgin's crown in the 1970s and was never replaced.

³⁶ Archivio di Stato di Siena, [Henceforth ASS], *Patrimonio Resti* 2157, c. 439r. In Corti, *Una compagnia di pittori a Siena*, 58 n 1.

³⁷ Milanesi, *Documenti*, II, 332-334. This document also highlights that by 1466 Ghini was also acquainted with Matteo di Giovanni, the painter of the *Madonna delle Grazie* in Grosseto, and it is a possibility that Matteo might have gained the commission in Grosseto thanks to his relationship with Ghini.

³⁸ See above, n. 36.

³⁹ See Fumi Cambi Gado, *Opere d'Arte*, 51. Federighi was the most renowned sculptor in *Quattrocento* Siena, and his work acquired particular prominence as a chief master of the *Opera* of the cathedral, and favourite architect and sculptor in Pienza, at the time of Pope Pius II. For a recent overview of his career see F. Caglioti, 'Novità di Vecchietta, di Antonio Federighi a di Matteo di Giovanni', in *Da Jacopo della Quercia a Donatello*, exh. cat. Milan: Motta, 2010, 298-303.

⁴⁰ Ridolfi, *L'arte in Lucca*, 369.

⁴¹ ASS, Notarile ante-cosimiano, 726: '[f. 22r] [Die iii Maii 1476] Item quod scribatur magistro Antonio Ghini scarpellino quod debeat venire ad fiendum eius laborerium.'

We are not able to establish whether Ghini ever returned to Grosseto to complete his unfinished work, or whether the engraving in Lucca cathedral can be considered as his last known commission. Ridolfi maintained that Ghini had died by 1478 quoting a document where his wife is mentioned as “widow of Master Antonio di Ghino”, whereas Milanese postpones his death until 1482, although without any supporting evidence.⁴²

It must be noted that an altar-frame that has been ascribed to the hand of Ghini and dated around the 1480-1490s, is located in the town of Montepescali, not far from Grosseto (figure 9).⁴³ Although the dating is later than the supposed death of Ghini, the fact that this altar originally housed an altarpiece painted by Matteo di Giovanni, and that both the altar in Grosseto and that in Montepescali were sponsored by the local commune sparks some questions about this attribution. On this issue an important point should be made: Ghini and Matteo di Giovanni knew each other well before they carried out their respective commissions in the cathedral of Grosseto. It is therefore entirely possible that the commissions in Grosseto and Montepescali became available thanks to this friendship.

The second artist whose activity is explored here is the Florentine sculptor Andrea di Francesco Guardi (c. 1415-1478).⁴⁴ Contrary to Ghini, this artist did not work exclusively for a specific category of patrons, but political connections between the governments he worked for might have been one of the reasons that compelled him to relocate his workshop to Pisa and subsequently to Piombino, with significant spells in Naples and Massa Carrara. Castelnovo and Ginzburg observed that travelling artists could move when forced by newly established artists who pushed them to the edge of the artistic market in their city. Moreover, the quest for new patrons for their work was a constant necessity for many.⁴⁵ In the case of Guardi's career his moves were often in response to the requests of new patrons, at least until his final move to Piombino, where he finally established himself in an apparently less competitive market. His activity in the Principality of Piombino is of particular importance, as the establishment and flourishing of his workshop in this area is inextricably tied to the history of the family that ruled there: the Appiani.⁴⁶

Margherita Lenzini Moriondo remarked that Guardi was greatly influenced by contemporary Florentine renaissance sculpture, as can be observed in his reference to the

⁴² Ridolfi, *L'arte in Lucca*, 369; Milanese, *Documenti*, I, 53 n.1.

⁴³ Attribution made by the Soprintendenza per i Beni Storici e Artistici di Siena and Grosseto [BSAE, Catalogo Generale n. 09/00314930 entry compiled by Marco Ciampolini]. On this altar see L. Paardekooper, 'Matteo di Giovanni e la tavola centinata', in Gasparotto and Magnani, 28.

⁴⁴ There is a wider bibliography on this artist. For an overview see P. Schubring, *Andrea Guardi – Ein florentiner Plastiker des Quattrocento in Pisa*, Strassburg: Heitz, 1903; P. Bacci, 'Opere sconosciute di A. Guardi a Piombino', *Rassegna d'Arte*, 19.1919, 1-8; R. P. Ciardi, *Le sculture dei secoli XV-XVII: da Andrea Guardi a Giovan Battista Riminaldi*, Pisa: Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, 1986, 109-114; M. Lenzini Moriondo, 'Ricostruzione di due opere di Andrea Guardi', *Belle Arti*, 5-6, 1946 (1948), 325-338; M. Marangoni, 'Opere sconosciute di Andrea Guardi', *Miscellanea di storia dell'arte in onore di Igino Benvenuto Supino*, Florence: Olschki, 1933, 429-433. See also notes below for specific commissions.

⁴⁵ Castelnovo and Ginzburg, *Centre and Periphery*, 66.

⁴⁶ For a historiography of Piombino see D. Abulafia, 'Piombino between the great powers in the late fifteenth century', in *Europa e Italia, Studi in onore di Giorgio Chittolini*, e-book for Reti Medievali, Florence: Firenze University Press, 2011, 3-15. See also P. Meli and S. Tognetti, *Il Principe e il mercante nella Toscana del Quattrocento: Il Magnifico Signore di Piombino Jacopo III Appiani e le aziende Maschiani di Pisa*, Florence: Olschki, 2008. It should be noted that neither of these sources make reference to a pivotal first account of the history of Piombino, Agostino Dati's *Plumbinensis Historia* (first published in 1503). Romualdo Cardarelli edited a critical review and translation with comments. See 'Storia di Piombino' *Bollettino Storico Livornese*, a. III, 1939, n. 1, 3-40; n. 2, 143-180. The *Historia* was recently re-edited by Marina Ricucci (Florence: SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2010).

stiacciato Donatelliano and the bas-reliefs of Agostino di Duccio.⁴⁷ Stylistic vicinity to the work of Donatello and Michelozzo has been observed in his early production, and particularly in the tentative attribution to Guardi of the Orlandini Madonna in the Staatliche Museen of Berlin, an influence that possibly also derived from knowledge of the reliefs of the monumental tombs that Donatello and Michelozzo had carved for Baldassarre Coscia—the antipope Giovanni XXIII—in Florence, and Cardinal Rinaldo Brancacci in Naples.⁴⁸ In spite of his early Florentine models however, he quickly developed his own style, and at the time of his commissions in Piombino, Guardi had already consolidated his fame through the commission for a monumental tomb for Archbishop Pietro Ricci (1455) in the cathedral of Pisa. Moreover, he had also completed the spectacular main altar for the cathedral of Massa Carrara (dismembered in the 17th century), commissioned by the lord of the city, Spinetta da Campofregoso (before 1467).⁴⁹ These earlier commissions bring together different influences, but also allowed the artist to develop the personal, distinctive style that was to bring him a stable career in Piombino later in life. Lenzini Moriondo's study shows that although Guardi referred to Florentine models he was in contact with artists from Lombardy and was greatly influenced by them.⁵⁰

As noted earlier, Guardi worked in Naples where he completed the tomb of Ruggero Sanseverino in the chapel of St Monica (church of Ss Giacomo and Filippo) around 1441.⁵¹ Soon afterwards, in 1442-43, he is recorded in Pisa, renting a workshop together with Guardi di Nofri da Settignano, a sculptor from Florence.⁵² Several years later, in 1451, Guardi is employed by the *Opera* of the cathedral of Pisa that granted him the commission for the decoration of the altar of St. Ranieri, and in the same year he married a widow, Maddalena di Gregorio di Antonio.⁵³ In 1455 he was employed by the *Camerario* of the commune for a work on the altar of St. Anastasia, in the church of S. Paolo a Ripa d'Arno.⁵⁴ Before he left Pisa, Guardi completed the tomb for Bishop Pietro Ricci in the cathedral, and the main altar for the cathedral of Carrara (before 1466) for the lord of the city Spinetta da Campofregoso.⁵⁵ Even in the 1470s, and thus at the time of his tenure in Piombino, records show that he maintained properties in Pisa.⁵⁶

⁴⁷ M. Lenzini Moriondo, *Andrea Guardi di Francesco, scultore fiorentino del '400*, Tesi di Laurea, Università degli Studi di Firenze, a.a. 1944-45, 8.

⁴⁸ C. Avery, *Studies in Italian Sculpture*, London: Pindar Press, 2001, 25-26. See also H. W. Grohn and K. E. Maison, 'Report of the return of works of art from the Soviet Union to Germany', *The Burlington Magazine*, 671 (1959), 61.

⁴⁹ M. Lenzini Moriondo, 'Ricostruzione di due opere sconosciute di Andrea Guardi', in *Belle Arti*, 5-6 (1948), 325-338. On this artist see also: M. Marangoni, *Opere sconosciute di Andrea Guardi*, in *Miscellanea di storia dell'arte in onore di Igino Benvenuto Supino*, (Florence, 1933), 429-433; M. Lenzini Moriondo, *Andrea Guardi di Francesco, scultore fiorentino del '400*, Tesi di Laurea, Università degli Studi di Firenze, (1944-45); and more recently: R. P. Ciardi, 'Le sculture dei secoli XV-XVII: da Andrea Guardi a Giovan Battista Riminaldi', in *Il Museo dell'Opera del Duomo di Pisa*, (Pisa, 1986), 109-114.

⁵⁰ Lenzini Moriondo, *Ricostruzione*, 335-38.

⁵¹ This is signed OPUS ANDREA DE FLORENTIA. For a detailed account of Andrea Guardi's work in Naples see F. Abbate, 'Problemi della Scultura Napoletana del '400', in *Storia di Napoli*, iv/1, Napoli: E.S.I, 1974, 455-456.

⁵² R. P. Ciardi, 'Il Quattrocento', in *Scultura a Pisa tra Quattrocento e Seicento*, R. P. Ciardi, C. Casini and L. Tomasi Tongiorgi eds, Pisa: Cassa di Risparmio, 1987, 23; 78-85.

⁵³ Ciardi, *Il Quattrocento*, 25; 102 n. 54.

⁵⁴ M. Fanucci-Lovitch, *Artisti attivi a Pisa fra xiii e xvii secolo*, I, Pisa: Biblioteca del Bollettino Storico Pisano, 1991, 13.

⁵⁵ Lenzini Moriondo, *Ricostruzione*, 327.

⁵⁶ Fanucci-Lovitch, *Artisti attivi a Pisa*, I, 12-13; II, 1995, 16.

Roberto Paolo Ciardi observed that Guardi, incapable of carving his own space in the Florentine artistic milieu that was divided between the International Gothic and the revival of the classical, was thus compelled to move to Naples and later to Pisa.⁵⁷ If this initial deployment of Guardi's workshop can be ascribed to changes in stylistic trends in the art market, his subsequent moves across Tuscany might have had a multiplicity of reasons. It may not be of secondary importance for example, that Battistina, the niece of the Lord of Carrara, Spinetta Campofregoso, had become the wife of Jacopo III Appiani around 1453.⁵⁸ It is likely that Guardi's connections with the Campofregoso at the time of his commission in the cathedral of Carrara might have played a role in his employment at the Appiani court several years later. Furthermore, it has been highlighted that the *Opera* of the cathedral of S. Maria del Fiore in Florence held wide economic and trading interests in Pisa thanks to the latter city's strategic position close to the marble quarries of Carrara and the Versilia areas. The *Opera* of Florence also possessed properties in those areas and an ad-hoc taxing system provided considerable revenue for its coffers. The privileged relationship between Florence and Pisa enabled *de facto* the free exchange of artists, craftsmen, and materials between the two cities also before the inclusion of Pisa in the Florentine Republic in 1406.⁵⁹ Guardi's enduring connections⁶⁰ with both cities might have benefitted from the current cultural, political and economic situation, and thus reasons of political convenience might have played a role in his move as well as his inability to comply with the stylistic trends that were being established in Florence at the time.⁶¹ Evidence of this comes from a document of the *Opera* of the cathedral of Pisa that records him as "magister Andrea quondam Francisci Guardi de Florentia sculptor marmorum habitator pisarum", thus suggesting that he maintained his status as Florentine citizen while residing in Pisa.⁶² This document also highlights that Guardi already enjoyed substantial recognition of his status as "Master" well before moving to the south of the region, and this might have played in the development of his career and that of his sons.

Guardi moved to Piombino in 1466,⁶³ where he worked extensively for the Appiani, particularly in the cathedral of S. Antimo, an Augustinian church. The Principality of Piombino itself held strong ties with Pisa as Gherardo d'Appiano was son and heir of Jacopo di Ser Vanni, ruler of Pisa until his death in 1398.⁶⁴ Guardi became a favourite architect and

⁵⁷ Ciardi, *Il Quattrocento*, 22.

⁵⁸ P. Meli, 'L'Ascesa degli Appiani', in Meli and Tognetti, 15.

⁵⁹ See L. Fabbri, 'Dal Recupero dei Crediti a quello della Memoria Storica: Il Fondo Maschiani di Pisa all'Archivio dell'Opera di S. Maria del Fiore', in Meli and Tognetti, 149-152.

⁶⁰ There are records of payments to Guardi and his son Bernardino to work on the windows of the Baptistery of Pisa between 1472-1474, thus at the time of Guardi's employment at the Appiani court. See L. Tanfani, *Notizie di artisti tratte dai documenti Pisani*, Pisa: Spoerri, 1897, 23-24; Ciardi, *Il Quattrocento*, 107 n. 143.

⁶¹ The first two decades of the second half of the *Quattrocento* in Florence was still dominated by Donatello, and Verrocchio established himself as one of the most influential sculptors in the city thanks to the patronage of the ruling family, the Medici, for whom he completed the tomb for Piero and Giovanni in the church of San Lorenzo (1469-72) and the statue of the Young David for Palazzo Vecchio in the early 1470s.

⁶² 'Master Andrea of Francesco Guardi sculptor of marbles from Florence inhabitant of Pisa'. Archivio di Stato di Pisa, *Opera del Duomo* 137, cc. 94 ff., in Ciardi, *Il Quattrocento*, 102 n. 54. See also above, n. 51.

⁶³ Here he established a workshop with his brother and then with his sons. In C. Bernazzi, 'Arti, committenze e maestranze nella chiesa di San Donato a Scarlino', in *Scarlino: Arte, Storia e Territorio*, ed. M. Campolongo, Follonica, 2003, 80-83 (1985), 80-81.

⁶⁴ See Repetti, *Dizionario*, 272, and more recently M. Riccucci's Introduction to Dati's *Plumbinensis Historia*, 28-31 and 118 n. 22. Repetti reports that Gherardo d'Appiano was the heir of Jacopo di Ser Vanni, ruler of Pisa. On his father's death however, he was incapable of maintaining power in that city, and after some negotiations he

sculptor there, and his employment at the Appiani court meant that he completed a number of commissions to decorate their palace and other major commissions in the city ([figures 10-11](#)). He was responsible for the completion of the cloister of the cathedral (c. 1470), and a number of sculptures meant as part of the decorative programme of the church and now in the adjacent Museo Diocesano, such as the marble lunette with the Madonna and Child flanked by angels (c. 1468-70) ([figure 12](#)). This was originally positioned on the façade, above the main entrance. The archaizing treatment of the drapery, the serpentine rendering of the Virgin's and angels' hair, and the pierced eyes, are all characteristic of the development of his style in this period.

The artist had moved to Piombino and established a workshop alongside his brother, his sons Bernardino and Salvi, and his step-son Giovanni. Giovanni was involved in civic offices in Piombino in the late 1470s and later, having moved to Pisa in 1481, became *Operaio* in the cathedral of this city.⁶⁵ Salvi was later identified with the master builder that was active in the church of S. Spirito in Florence around 1470-80, thus further strengthening the hypothesis that Guardi had maintained a connection with his native city throughout this time.⁶⁶

In 1471 Andrea had completed the monumental tomb of Vanni and Emanuele Appiani in the church of S. Donato in Scarlino, another town that was under the rule of this family ([figure 13](#)).⁶⁷ He also completed another monumental tomb for Emanuele and Fiammetta Appiani in the cathedral of Piombino.⁶⁸ In both cases, the sarcophagus rests on a similar balustrade and neither of the two features the portraits of the Appiani, contrary to most monumental *Quattrocento* tombs.⁶⁹ Moreover, whereas in Piombino the arms of the Appiani appear carved in the monumental sepulchre, in Scarlino these are not present, and two coats of arms of the city, with the multi-pointed star, are carved beneath the sarcophagus.

The inscription engraved on the tomb suggests that it was not the family who was responsible for the patronage of the tomb, but the local population. This reads:

HOC TEGITUR VANES APIANA EXTIRPE SEPULCHRO
EMANUEL QUE SIMUL FRATER IN ORBE SUUS
CERTÉ SED NIMIUM HIS FATA INVIDERE NEPHANDA
QUE FILA HANTE SUOS DIRIPERE DIES

handed Pisa to the Duke of Milan in exchange for signorial rights over Piombino, Scarlino, Suvereto, and Buriano, once part of the former Republic of Pisa.

⁶⁵ Bernazzi, *Arti, committenze e maestranze*, 80-83.

⁶⁶ R. P. Ciardi, *Il Quattrocento*, 12-85, 103.

⁶⁷ The position of these two brothers within the Appiani family tree is not clarified neither by Riccucci, in her notes to the *Plumbinensis Historia*, 157 n. 121, nor by Patrizia Meli, 'Jacopo III nell'Italia degli Stati Regionali' in Meli and Tognetti, 19, n. 12. Romualdo Cardarelli indicates them as the infant sons of Jacopo III Appiani. See R. Cardarelli, 'Arte e vita del passato in Piombino e nell'agro piombinese', *Bollettino Storico Livornese*, 1, 1937, 9.

⁶⁸ The inscription does not indicate the date in which the tomb was made, but it states that this housed the bodily remains of yet another two offspring of Jacopo III, and this might suggest that it was carved around the same years as the tomb in Scarlino.

⁶⁹ For an overview of monumental *Quattrocento* tombs in Tuscany and Rome see R. Munmann, *Sieneese Renaissance Tombs Monuments*, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1993; S. E. Zuraw, 'The Public Commemorative Monument: Mino da Fiesole's Tombs in the Florentine Badia' *The Art Bulletin*, 80:3, September 1998, 452-477; C. Richardson, 'Ruined, untended and derelict': fifteenth-century papal tombs in St Peter's', in J. Burke and M. Bury eds, in *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008, 191-207.

IACOBUS HIS GENITOR PLUMBINI TERTIUS HEROS
ORANTI POPULO TRADIDIT OSSA LIBENS".⁷⁰

On the border below the frieze runs the following:

HANC IGITUR POPULUS SCARLINI CONDIDIT ARCHAM GERMANIS DICTIS
PRINCIPE DANTE SUO A[NNO] D[OMINI] M.CCCC.LXXI.⁷¹

Bishop Bossi's ecclesiastical visitation to Scarlino records that according to an act drafted by the notary Ser Antonio⁷² on 13th July 1470 three *Operaii* were elected by the local *anziani* and a commissioner representative of the city.⁷³ Their duty entailed looking after the maintenance of the church and the annexed cemetery.⁷⁴ This entry suggests that the tomb was commissioned by the ruling elite of the city through the *Operaii* of the church, as a tribute to their lord.

The case studies of Antonio Ghini and Andrea Guardi show that the two artists worked predominantly for civic institutions and local governments. It has become evident, that even after the two artists settled in Siena and Piombino respectively, this did not prevent them from maintaining connections and gaining commissions elsewhere. On the contrary, the nature of their work suggests that these artists might have gained further commissions in other cities due to the support of their patrons. Their skills and professional background allowed them to reproduce designs and styles created by prominent masters and modify them according to local needs and requirements. However, other considerations should also be made.

Siena suffered from a chronic lack of skilled stonemasons and had to import them from the north of the Italian Peninsula. The Sienese artistic environment would therefore have offered a thriving opportunity to a skilled master like Ghini, and his choice to move to other cities to work for civic institutions thus might have had a dual purpose: on the one hand to reach a higher social and artistic status than what would be readily available in Siena, on the other, his moves—particularly in the *contado* of Siena—could have been agreed with the Sienese authorities either to foster a better relationship with these communes, or to fulfil specific tasks on behalf of the Sienese government. His work outside Siena might have been facilitated by the Sienese authorities that sought to reinforce their relationship with local civic governments, and a question on whether the artist might have been used for political scopes by the commune of Siena, deserves further investigation. The *Balzana* of Siena carved in the pedestal of the font in Grosseto suggests Sienese financial involvement in that commission, and Ghini's candidature to fulfil this task in the cathedral might have been initially promoted by the civic authorities of Siena. The fact that at least the two following

⁷⁰ Vanni Appiani is enclosed in this sepulchre/ together with Emanuele, his brother in the world/ But without doubt destiny cast an evil eye upon them/ That severed the threads [of life] before their time/ Iacopo his father, third Lord [*lit. hero*] of Piombino/ Gladly entrusted the bones to the praying people.

⁷¹ In this place the people of Scarlino built the tomb to the named brothers/The prince giving his consent/ Year of the Lord 1471.

⁷² Bossi does not provide the full name. It is likely that he was a notary from Pisa.

⁷³ The *anziani* (senators) were representatives of the population in the government of the town, following the example of Pisa.

⁷⁴ ASV, F. Bossi, 1576, ff. 108v-109r.

generations of his family continued artistic practice in Siena, also suggest that his reputation in this city was sound and survived the passage of time.

Guardi was already an established artist in Pisa when he decided to move to Piombino and re-located his workshop there. His career seems to be played out between the two cities since then and this underscores a link between the Appiani, and thus Piombino, and the Pisan government.

Although Ghini and Guardi's political and diplomatic roles can only be hypothesized at this stage, current evidence show that both artists' careers were influenced by their relationships with local governments and that these dictated the prestige, length and type of commissions they were involved in. In the case of Ghini, this meant that he was obliged to move from place to place in order to make his workshop viable, in the case of Guardi, he was required to relocate his workshop and family to Piombino in order to comply with the requirements of the local Lords.

While the case studies discussed here cannot be considered representative of an established pattern in the paradigm of travelling artists, they are revealing of the complex interactions between art, business and politics and how the latter influenced the work of artists in Tuscany in the fifteenth century.

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Figure 1. Antonio Ghini, Monumental fountain, Piazza del Grano, Asciano (Siena).



Figure 2. Antonio Ghini, Monumental fountain, detail of the inscription with the artist's name, date, and the coat of arms of the commune of Asciano.



Figure 3. Antonio Ghini, Monumental fountain, detail of the coat of arms of Vieri di Nanni, Podestà of Asciano in 1471.



Figure 4. Antonio Ghini, Monumental fountain, detail of the coat of arms of Pietro di Fabiano Palmieri, Podestà of Asciano in 1472.



Figure 5. Antonio Ghini, Monumental fountain, detail of the bass-relief with a tongue stretched between two rollers.



Figure 6. Antonio Ghini, Baptismal font, 1470, marble, Grosseto, cathedral.



Figure 7. Baptismal font, detail of the base with the *Balzana* of Siena (left), the arms of the commune of Grosseto and the *Operaio* Salvatore di Lemmo.



Figure 8. Antonio Ghini, Altar of the *Madonna delle Grazie*, 1474, marble, Grosseto, cathedral.



Figure 9. Antonio Ghini? Altar of St Sebastian, Montepescali, church of Sts Stefano and Lorenzo.



Figure 10. Andrea di Francesco Guardi, Baptismal font, 1470, marble, Piombino, cathedral.



Figure 11. Baptismal font. Detail of the coat of arms of the Appiani.



Figure 12. Andrea di Francesco Guardi, Madonna and Child with Angels, 1468-70, marble, Piombino, Museo Diocesano (formerly above the main door of the cathedral).



Figure 13. Andrea di Francesco Guardi, Monumental tomb of Vanni and Emanuele Appiani, 1471, marble, Scarlino, church of S. Donato.