



**Botticelli**  
**Past**  
**and**  
**Present**

Edited by  
Ana Debenedetti and Caroline Elam

**UCLPRESS**

# Botticelli Past and Present



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 **UCL**PRESS

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# Botticelli Past and Present

## *Introduction*

Ana Debenedetti

### I

This book brings together the proceedings of a two-day international conference held at the Victoria and Albert Museum (13–14 May 2016) to coincide with the exhibition *Botticelli Reimagined* in London.

The recent exhibitions dedicated to Botticelli around the world show, more than ever, the actuality of the debate about this old master.<sup>1</sup> This new ‘Botticelli craze’, no longer particularly English, but now with a global reach, led the curators of the exhibition *Botticelli Reimagined*, staged in 2015–16 at the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin and the V&A in London, to question the use and re-use of Botticelli’s types and formulae, the migration of his images across time and their adaptation in new contexts.

This new methodological approach has been explored in subsequent shows such as *Reflections: Van Eyck and the Pre-Raphaelites* at the National Gallery in London, as well as *Truth and Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelites and the Old Masters* at the Legion of Honour Museum in San Francisco; both are based on similar principles.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Prettejohn, who contributed to the *Botticelli Reimagined* exhibition catalogue, has returned to this central question of artistic legacy in her recent book, *Modern Painters, Old Masters*. In this work she analyses the response of Victorian painters to the artists of the past, with Botticelli prominent among them.<sup>3</sup>

The process of redefining Botticelli’s art is part of a wider modern phenomenon which extracts works of art from historically grounded settings and inserts them into new, ‘contemporary’ narratives. Today the presentation of old master works in art fairs, such as London Frieze Masters and the Paris FIAC, is a good example of this trend. Displayed alongside modern and contemporary works of art, historic objects are further isolated from their primary function and locus. Yet through such display these works gain new audiences and meanings, simultaneously casting new light on the contemporary pieces presented alongside them.

This is only the latest episode of a long history of de-contextualisation. Since the late eighteenth century, early Italian paintings have been removed from their original settings, often dismembered and anachronistically

reframed, then transferred to private collections and museums. In this process their function as objects of devotion for the pious, or of intellectual enjoyment for a cultural elite, was forgotten. However, their rediscovery as objects of interest to artists, of moral and then aesthetic enjoyment to art writers and collectors and of monetary value to the art trade led in turn to new critical approaches, new artistic vocabularies and, finally, to the rise of connoisseurship. The paintings of Botticelli have a central role in this story.<sup>4</sup>

Reacting against the aestheticism of Swinburne and Pater, and the purely visual judgements of Morelli and Berenson, art historians such as Gaetano Milanesi, John Crowe, Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle and Herbert Horne took to the archives to rediscover the original authorship and settings of the works, as well as the ways in which old masters had been appraised in the period. Meanwhile there has been a burgeoning interest in the historiography of the taste for early Italian painting and its study, in which writing on Botticelli plays a pivotal part.

This rediscovery is still an ongoing process today, fuelled by the art-historical turn to social history and the study of material culture. Among the positive results of de-contextualisation is the increasing importance of the scientific and diagnostic examination of paintings in museum conservation departments, where we continue to learn about the original techniques of paintings and their physical histories over time.

The exhibition *Botticelli Reimagined* focused on a visual reassessment of the master and his influence over time. However, it inevitably engaged with a rather abbreviated selection of works, displayed in an enclosed, limited space. The need for a coherent narrative and the decision to draw the visitors backwards in time through the artistic reappraisal of Botticelli did not permit the curators to explore fully other types of reception, by critics and historians. The main question was, of course, what was left to cover in the wake of the show and its accompanying catalogue. We hope to have made some inroads into this monumental task in the present volume. In that daunting gap between Medicean Florence and our day lie both the impossibility of a return and the chance for a new start.

We have asked questions about Botticelli's workshop practices and iconographic innovations, as well as meanings of pictures we have failed to decipher since their rediscovery. What may be perceived as a desperate attempt to reactivate the past is somewhat redeemed when its art is translated into a new mode of artistic expression. Modern literature and poetry had remained the least developed topic, introducing a new category of actors in Botticelli-mania with a new set of psychological motivations. Women as poets and connoisseurs in their own right, even

if hidden behind a masculine pen-name, were able to challenge the white Western male viewpoint, which has dominated art criticism and all its ramifications over centuries.

Questions of gender and canon recur in the pre- and post-First World War era, while figures such as the anarchist Jacques Mesnil attempted to challenge the 'bourgeois' interpretation of the art of the past. Mesnil made a point of living like a Florentine '*contadino*' to experience a life as close as possible to that of the painter whose work he was studying. He tried to understand Botticelli's habits and customs, as well as the emotive response elicited by his art. Another modern route, or rather an ironic take on the serious and respectable interpretation of the past, can be found in Dalí's reinvention of what had become the quintessential representation of love and beauty: Botticelli's figure of Venus. Dalí and the surrealists paved the way to contemporary means of expression such as video art, installations and performances as well as the cinema – a topic only touched on in the exhibition.

Even today Botticelli's ethereal pictures are transformed and adapted into these new media, whose power of universal reach and immediate reception seem to challenge new forms of religious and political expression. Yet this field seems too close to us to be acknowledged fully and understood as a true societal phenomenon. We are still struggling to understand what contemporary interpretations of the Botticellian nymph say about our times. As Aby Warburg foresaw, the fluid quality of Botticelli's art lies in the embryonic phase of ever-morphing forms, always expandable but never fully resolved.

## II

The book comprises four thematic parts, spanning four centuries of Botticelli's artistic fame and reception from the fifteenth century to the present day. Organised chronologically, each part is preceded by a short introduction that contextualises and positions the essays that follow within the wider scholarly literature.

The first part focuses on Botticelli's working practice and his role as the head of an important workshop. Patrizia Zambrano shows the artist's pivotal role in the rise of modern portraiture during the second half of the Quattrocento by exploring the influence of contemporary sculpture as well as the literary tradition that presented portraits as living and speaking memories (*imagines spirantes*). Using both contemporary written sources and recent technical investigation, Nicola Costaras and Clare Richardson investigate Dante Gabriel Rossetti's alleged restoration

of Botticelli's *Portrait of a Lady known as Smeralda Bandinelli* (Victoria and Albert Museum). The analysis reveals earlier alterations, providing an important insight into the master's working practice. Paul Holberton offers a survey of the interpretations of Botticelli's 'mythologies' since Aby Warburg's seminal work in identifying a passage from Ovid's *Fasti* at the origins of the *Primavera's* iconography. Jerzy Miziołek presents an early adaptation of Botticelli's *Primavera* by his contemporary fellow artist Jacopo del Sellaio for a *spalliera* painting depicting the story of Cupid and Psyche.

The second part deals with the progressive rediscovery of Botticelli from the late eighteenth century to the turn of the twentieth. Mark Evans provides a richly illustrated account of Flaxman's recourse to Botticelli's Dante drawings. Francesco Ventrella looks at *fin-de-siècle* connoisseurship and aesthetic theories in the unpublished notes and letters of Mary and Bernard Berenson as well as Vernon Lee (aka Violet Paget) to reveal the psychological motivations behind their understanding of Botticelli as a 'modern' artist. Anna Gruetzner Robins shows how the lovers and collaborators Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper, known as 'Michael Field', challenged male interpretations of Botticelli's art and offered – in their poetry and journal – a unique, subjective response, tempered by their sexuality and gender, to what they regarded as highly desirable paintings.

The third part is dedicated to the reception of Botticelli's art by scholars and critics from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s. Donata Levi presents new results emerging from Cavalcaselle's and Crowe's approach to Sandro Botticelli, drawing from their unpublished archives. Levi outlines the position of the two art historians in regard to the new evaluations of Botticelli's work within the art criticism of the period, driven by the critics Ruskin and Pater, as well as the connoisseur Giovanni Morelli (1864–94). Claudia Wedepohl goes back to Aby Warburg's doctoral dissertation on Botticelli's mythological paintings to demonstrate how Warburg had first shaped his ideas regarding emotions, physiognomy and body language while studying Filippino Lippi's figures and Masaccio's types in the Brancacci Chapel before deciding to apply them to Botticelli. Jonathan Nelson investigates how 'Japanese' Yukio Yashiro's perception of Botticelli really was, and to what extent he appealed to universal values that grew out of debates in Japan in the early twentieth century. This approach remained understudied by Botticelli scholars, while it provided the foundation for Yashiro's highly influential work on Asian art. Michel Hochmann presents the introspective approach of Jacques Mesnil to Botticelli in his book on the artist published in 1938.

A political activist and an anarchist, Mesnil identified himself with the poorer classes of Florence, challenging the 'bourgeois' interpretations of fellow art historians such as Bernard Berenson and Herbert Horne.

The last part takes the reader into the present day and considers contemporary manifestations of Botticelli's art. Georges Didi-Huberman reconsiders Aby Warburg's key concept of 'imaginary breeze' as a characteristic aspect of Botticelli's painting to propose a new interpretation of the 'fluid' quality of his art which the author extends to film and the new media used in contemporary art. Riccardo Venturi revives Salvador Dalí's provocative use of Botticelli's *Venus* in his pavilion 'Dream of Venus' for the 1939 New York World's Fair. Finally Gabriel Montua explores contemporary artists' use of Botticelli in specific political contexts, chiefly the status of women in the Middle East, allowing for a reappraisal of the migration of Botticelli's motives through cultures and time.

The editors would like to thank the contributors who enthusiastically agreed to provide a written version of their lecture, which made this book possible. We are grateful to the Kress Foundation who sponsored the organisation of the conference and generously contributed to this publication. Special thanks are due to Marco Delogu, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in London, for lending his ongoing support to the organisation of the conference and the publication of its proceedings. I am personally grateful to my co-editor Caroline Elam, whose knowledge and kindness were instrumental in bringing the project to completion, and to Tom Windross, Head of Content, Digital Media and Publishing at the V&A, for believing in this editorial adventure, which may initiate a new partnership with UCL Press. A personal thanks to Kira d'Albuquerque and finally many thanks to Lara Speicher and Jaimee Biggins at UCL Press for their enthusiasm for the project, and for their help and patience in preparing this book for publication.

## Notes

- 1 From Japan to the US: see, for example, *Money and Beauty: Botticelli and the Renaissance in Florence*, Bunkamura Museum of Art, Tokyo (21 March–28 June 2016); *Botticelli and His Time*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (16 January–3 April 2016); jointly organised *The Botticelli Renaissance*, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin (24 September 2015–24 January 2016) and *Botticelli Reimagined*, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London (5 March–3 July 2016); *Botticelli and the Search for the Divine*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (15 April–9 July 2017).
- 2 *Reflections: Van Eyck and the Pre-Raphaelites*, The National Gallery, London (2 October 2017–2 April 2018); *Truth and Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelites and the Old Masters*, Legion of Honour Museum, San Francisco (30 June–30 September 2018).
- 3 Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Modern Painters, Old Masters. The Art of Imitation from the Pre-Raphaelites to the First World War* (London: Yale University Press, 2017).
- 4 See Jeremy Melius, *Art History and the Invention of Botticelli*, PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2010, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/98rtqomq>.

# Part 1

## Botticelli in his own time

### Introduction

Michelle O'Malley

The essays in part 1 largely discuss Alessandro Botticelli's work from the 1470s, the early years of his career. It is notable that from his earliest recorded commission in 1470, Botticelli was hired by patrons with connections to the Medici family or to Lorenzo's government. For example, the commission for the *Fortitude* panel, made to hang in the Audience Hall of the palace of the Merchants' Tribunal on Piazza della Signoria in Florence, was driven by Tommaso Soderini, the uncle and advisor of the young Lorenzo de' Medici. It must have been around this time that Botticelli was hired by the bankers' guild, the prestigious Arte del Cambio to which the Medici belonged, to paint the *Virgin and Child surrounded by Cherubim*, now in the Uffizi, and by the Pucci family, great supporters of the Medici, to paint an image of the *Adoration of the Magi* for their palazzo. Botticelli designed the standard that Giuliano de' Medici, Lorenzo's brother, carried in the joust of 1475, while around 1476 Gaspare di Zanobi del Lama hired him to produce an altarpiece of the *Adoration of the Magi*. This work presented three generations of the Medici family as the kings and members of their courts (see [p.20](#), [fig.1.8](#)).

In about 1477 Botticelli was commissioned, probably by Lorenzo or his wards, to paint the *Primavera*. The following year he was selected by the Florentine government to depict the hanged collaborators of the Pazzi conspiracy, in which Lorenzo's brother Giuliano had been assassinated; either Lorenzo himself or members of his circle asked the painter to produce images of the murdered Giuliano. In 1480 the Vespucci family, of which father and son served as notaries in key government positions, commissioned Botticelli to paint half of the choir screen of their church, the Ognissanti. By this time, when he attracted the attention of the agents of Pope Sixtus IV, who were seeking artists to paint the Sistine Chapel in Rome, Botticelli was probably regarded as one of the Medici family's painters of choice. This undoubtedly enhanced his reputation.

While high-level patrons do not necessarily mean that a painter's work was particularly visible, Botticelli's pictures could often be found in prominent public locations. This means that many people could have



been familiar with his work. For example, the *Fortitude* panel hung in the court that dealt with issues of Florentine commerce, commonly visited by merchants. Gaspare di Zanobi del Lama's *Adoration of the Magi* altarpiece stood just to the side of the central door of Santa Maria Novella. Another of Botticelli's images of this subject was on the stair of the Palazzo della Signoria that led to the Sala dei Gigli, in which government committee meetings were held. The image of St Augustine on the choir screen of the Ognissanti faced the main portal, while Botticelli's huge fresco of the *Annunciation* graced the wall under the loggia that formed the entrance to the hospital of San Martino. The *pitture infamanti* of the Pazzi conspirators, painted quickly in 1478 on the walls of the Customs House alongside the Palazzo della Signoria, remained in this prominent spot for 17 years.

The visibility of Botticelli's work contributed to the image Florentines had of their city; it may also have influenced their sense of the visuality both of recognisable individuals and of holy figures. That, along with the reputation Botticelli gained from the excellence of his art and the status of his patrons, must have contributed to the high level of demand for his work – not only from those who commissioned paintings directly from him, but also from those who bought the many pictures he and his assistants produced speculatively for sale in the *bottega*.

It is evident that Botticelli was a careful image maker, often adjusting and readjusting the design of a work after he had transferred his preparatory drawings to a panel or canvas. His manner of working is clear in Nicola Costaras and Clare Richardson's discussion of the *Portrait of a Lady known as Smeralda Bandinelli* in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (see p.17, fig. 1.5). Their analysis provides a detailed example of the complex approach to picture making that Botticelli practised throughout his career. It demonstrates the many changes the painter made to the design at both the drawing and the painting stages, as he re-thought the figure and its relationship to the window in which 'Smeralda' is framed. This kind of close attention was undoubtedly behind Botticelli's pivotal role in the development of portraiture during the second half of the Quattrocento, explored here by Patrizia Zambrano. She argues that Botticelli was among the pioneers of the modern painted portrait, creating innovative compositions of the figure within the picture space and experimenting with the expressive power of the face. Some of this is likely to have been worked out on the panel itself.

Botticelli brought to the depiction of mythological subjects the same close attention to detail found in the portraits, and the same intelligence directed to conveying of meaning. The mythological pictures were based on written sources and, as there is no evidence that Botticelli read Latin, the

subject matter was presumably conveyed to the painter in the course of the commissioning process. Only after designing *The Birth of Venus* (fig.1.0), for example, did he fully comprehend the visual import of the winds always included in this classical subject, altering during the painting stage the way in which Venus's hair streams out and her garment, held by one of her attendants, flutters. Paul Holberton argues that *The Birth of Venus* was, like the *Primavera*, conceived as a marriage picture. He focuses on Ovid's *Fasti* as the origin of the complex *Primavera* iconography.

Jerzy Miziołek's contribution underlines the fact that Botticelli's pictures not only influenced future patrons, but also inspired other artists – even when they were destined for private settings. He discusses an early adaptation of the *Primavera* by Botticelli's fellow painter, Jacopo del Sellaio, who reproduced the characters of the picture in a *cassone* panel depicting the story of Cupid and Psyche (see p.74, fig.1.31). He argues that Sellaio's presentation of the figures in this subject supports a case for Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass* as a source for the *Primavera*, an idea originally put forward by Ernst Gombrich. In the course of this, Miziołek demonstrates that the material that informed the original conception of Botticelli's *Primavera* was accessible to artists decades after its creation. The Sellaio *cassone* appears to be the only example yet found of a direct quotation from the figures in the *Primavera*, but it suggests that Botticelli's work provided exempla to painters and to patrons in fifteenth-century Florence.



**Fig.1.0** Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*, c.1480, tempera on canvas, 172.5 × 278.5 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Inv.1890 no.878. © 2018 Photo Scala – courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali e del Turismo.

# 1. Sandro Botticelli and the birth of modern portraiture

Patrizia Zambrano

Botticelli's fame certainly does not rest on his relatively few portraits – a dozen according to Ronald Lightbown, a few more according to other scholars – though all are of enormous importance.<sup>1</sup> Instead, he is known and appreciated for his mythological works, for his Madonnas and, to a lesser extent, for his magnificent altarpieces. In the course of his career Botticelli painted both group portraits in narrative scenes and autonomous likenesses. None of the latter is signed, dated or securely documented. In 1966 John Pope Hennessy wrote that Sandro emerges, in the Quattrocento context, 'as a giant among portraitists. He can animate the human face, he can apprehend its contours and its planes, he can invest it with a sentient response to the scene when it occurs'.<sup>2</sup> Of course one should add that Botticelli is a giant among other giants – Antonello da Messina, Andrea Mantegna, Giovanni Bellini, Leonardo da Vinci. For this very reason it is important to understand the particular position Sandro occupies in the history of modern autonomous portraiture, and to analyse the works through which he arrived at it.

Group portraits of private citizens within a sacred scene are commonly found in Italy from the 1420s. They appear in a well-known linear development that runs from Masaccio's *Sagra* in the Carmine in Florence to the feats of portraiture in the Sistine Chapel in 1482 to the Vatican Stanze, reaching a climax in the sixteenth century. This trajectory has much to do with the social and political history of Florence, Rome and Venice.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, the autonomous portrait has a much less linear history, still partly obscure. It seems that while private citizens had little hesitation in having themselves depicted in social contexts, they were somewhat more resistant to seeing their individual image fixed in painting.<sup>4</sup> It is also true that, at least in the second half of the Quattrocento, Florentine patrons with the requisite economic and social means favoured the option of a sculpted portrait, as witnessed by the portrait busts in terracotta and marble executed between 1450 and 1500. These seem in many respects to be a more conspicuous phenomenon than painted likenesses.<sup>5</sup> A decisive element in this preference was the influence of the antique, especially Pliny the Elder's account of ancient busts in his *Natural History*. Portrait busts also offered the possibility of using life and death masks, ensuring greater verisimilitude and

producing the quality of 'breathing images' (*imagines spirantes*) – lacking only a voice to seem alive – so highly valued by humanists since the time of Petrarch.<sup>6</sup>

Rather than being the mirror and visual expression of a social group, like the collective and 'civic' portrait, the autonomous likeness at this period often (if not always) has to do with private history and identity; it commemorates a single individual and has a personal, introspective and speculative character. For that reason it requires a profound and explicit psychological characterisation.<sup>7</sup> However, up to and beyond the middle of the fifteenth century the autonomous portrait in Italy remains prisoner to the profile pose-derived either from earlier conventions of donor portraiture or from ancient coins – allowing only limited psychological characterisation and physiognomic accuracy. This restriction hampered the development of the portrait, which in Flanders had already changed in direction from the 1420s following the experiments of Jan van Eyck. Only at the end of the 1460s did the situation in Italy and Florence change, with subjects now 'turning around' into three-quarter poses – partly, but not solely, under the influence of Flemish examples.

Botticelli is among the protagonists in this shift. In Florence, it is he who took the portrait on from the first experiments, in the late 1460s, to the fully modern form the genre assumed in the 1480s. This is why his works of the 1470s, a period when he was working on some of his most radically innovative portraits, are so important. For a decade, in fact, Botticelli continues to experiment in two registers in particular: with different compositional structures of the figure within the picture space, and with the expressive capacities of figure and face. Naturally, for Sandro, the point of departure is the work of his master Filippo Lippi and of Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo, the artists in whose orbit he was formed, but it is of course possible that he also knew portraits by Flemish artists and others from outside Florentine culture. At the beginning of this period Botticelli (born in 1445) was about 25 years old, and the very first portrait securely attributable to him shows that he could paint a figure in three-quarters view and rotated in space. A comparison between the *Portrait of a Young Man with a Mazzocchio* in the Galleria Palatina, Florence (fig. 1.1), which can be dated around 1470,<sup>8</sup> but is unfortunately in poor condition,<sup>9</sup> and the *Male Portrait* now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington (fig. 1.2)<sup>10</sup> reveals how carefully the young Sandro looked at a work such as the latter.

The attribution of the Washington picture to Andrea del Castagno has been questioned by Miklòs Boskovits in favour of Piero del Pollaiuolo, with a date around the middle of the 1460s – shortly before the altarpiece



**Fig.1.1** Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Man with a Mazzocchio*, c.1470, tempera on wood, 51.2 × 35.2 cm, Galleria Palatina, Florence, Inv.1912 no.372. © 2018 Photo Scala – courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali e del Turismo.

with *Saint James between Saint Vincent and Saint Eustace* from the Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal in San Miniato al Monte in Florence, now in the Uffizi.<sup>11</sup> According to Boskovits (with whom I agree), ‘the innovative



**Fig.1.2** Attributed to Piero del Pollaiuolo, *Male Portrait*, c.1465, tempera on wood, 55.5 × 41.2cm, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, Inv.1937.I.17. © Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

composition suggests that the panel postdates Andrea's death' in 1457.<sup>12</sup> The panel would therefore be later than Mantegna's *Portrait of Cardinal Ludovico Trevisan* of 1459 (now in Berlin), in which the sitter's hands are not included in the image, as they are by contrast in Piero del Pollaiuolo's *Portrait of Galeazzo Maria Sforza* in the Uffizi (fig.1.3).



**Fig.1.3** Piero del Pollaiuolo (1443–96), *Portrait of Galeazzo Maria Sforza*, c.1471, tempera on wood, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Inv.1890 no.1492. © 2018 Photo Scala, Florence – courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali e del Turismo.

This latter painting, which was in Lorenzo the Magnificent's ground-floor *camera* ('*Camera grande terrena*') at the time of his death in 1492, was probably executed from life during the Duke of Milan's visit to Florence in March 1471; it shows Galeazzo half-length and in profile, but in a pose

slightly rotated to the left.<sup>13</sup> The two figures (Washington and Palatina) have the same chromatic range of blue, red, black and white and the same rotation of the body in space, against a background of sky. The head is slightly rotated in relation to the bust, and turned to look directly out. The eyes follow the spectator wherever he or she moves, holding the gaze and demanding attention. This point may seem banal, but it is not: in his search for a direct *rapport* with the viewer, Botticelli not only eliminates the foreground hand that distances the figure in the Washington picture, but also reduces the space between the figure and the frame, bringing it closer to us. This abolition of distance through a gaze turned directly towards the spectator is the quality that will characterise all of Sandro's portraits. The same immediacy and the same engagement of the spectator is found in the *Portrait of a Man*, formerly in the Museo Filangieri in Naples (fig.1.4), destroyed in 1943 and known to us only from old reproductions.<sup>14</sup> In this painting, which should probably be dated to the mid-1470s, the figure has an identical pose to that of the boy in the Palatina (fig.1.1). Botticelli places him within an architectural setting, but brings him close to us, making the hand in the foreground seem to enter our space.

In the course of the 1470s, Sandro painted three other portraits in which the figure is seen through an opening and is placed within an architectural setting: the so-called *Smeralda Bandinelli* (fig.1.5) and two of the versions of the *Portrait of Giuliano de' Medici*. This type of composition would have been familiar to Sandro because it had been developed to a complex and refined degree by his first master, Filippo Lippi – as we see in the double portrait now in New York and in the single likeness in Berlin.<sup>15</sup> The *Smeralda Bandinelli* represents a turning point in the history of the modern portrait. It is in fact the first known female likeness to be presented to us not in profile but in a three-quarters pose, seen through a window and framed within an architectural space; the setting is more highly articulated than in the Naples painting.<sup>16</sup> In line with his other portraits, Botticelli takes care to establish a strong contact between figure and spectator, by means of the direct gaze. A comparison with the head of St Catherine in the *Sant'Ambrogio altarpiece* in the Uffizi (fig.1.6), datable around 1470, is instructive. St Catherine too turns her head towards the spectator and looks out, but her gaze avoids direct contact and slips away, eluding the viewer. So she remains in her own sacred space, distant, remote and unapproachable.

Scholars date the problematic *Portrait of a Young Man with the Medal of Cosimo de' Medici* (fig.1.7) in the Uffizi to the middle of the 1470s.<sup>17</sup> In reality this is a double portrait, and it is distinct in several respects from the other likenesses that Sandro produced in these years;





**Fig.1.4** Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Man*, c.1475, tempera on wood, 51 × 37 cm, formerly Museo Filangieri, Naples, destroyed in 1943. © Bologna, Fototeca Federico Zeri inv.1259.

Lightbown aptly defines it as essentially an ‘ambitious essay in a manner ultimately Flemish’<sup>18</sup> – a description that would not apply to other paintings of this period, which do not exhibit northern characteristics, either in the landscape or in the treatment of the figure. The portrait is



**Fig.1.5** Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Lady known as Smeralda Bandinelli*, c.1470, tempera on wood, 65.7 × 41 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. CAI.100 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

problematic, primarily because the sitter has not been identified, despite displaying the medal with the profile of Cosimo il Vecchio. For both author and patron, this was probably intended to permit an immediate identification.<sup>19</sup> The medal's presence has led to suggestions that the



**Fig.1.6** Sandro Botticelli, *Sant'Ambrogio altarpiece*, detail of St Catherine, c.1470, tempera on wood, 167 × 195 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Inv.1890 no.8657. © Wikimedia Commons.

young man could be a member of the Medici family, or a goldsmith or a medallist (perhaps the author of this very medal, which was made after 1465 and before 1469) – or perhaps Sandro's brother, Antonio, or even a self-portrait. However, none of these hypotheses is fully convincing.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, unlike Leonardo, Ghirlandaio, Lorenzo di Credi or Luca Signorelli, Botticelli was never again, so far as we know, to paint portraits with landscape backgrounds, nor with the sitter holding objects.

In the two decades following the experiments of the 1470s his portraits have undifferentiated backgrounds, as one sees in the two



**Fig.1.7** Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Man with the Medal of Cosimo de' Medici*, c.1475, tempera on wood, 57.5 × 44 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Inv.1890 no.1488. © Wikimedia / source DirectMedia / public domain.

young men in London (see p.29, fig.1.14) and Washington, in the portraits of the humanist *Michele Marullo Tarchaniota* in Barcelona<sup>21</sup> and of *Lorenzo de' Lorenzi* in Philadelphia.<sup>22</sup> A comparison between the background of the Uffizi *Portrait* and the *St Sebastian* in Berlin, executed in January 1474 for the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Florence,

shows two different visual worlds: in the latter case a typically Florentine landscape, to be placed alongside those of the Pollaiuolo brothers (very familiar to Sandro); in the former a landscape with a blueish tonality of Flemish character, which finds no analogies with other works of these years, beginning with the Uffizi *Adoration of the Magi*, which can be dated around 1475–6 (fig.1.8).



**Fig.1.8** Sandro Botticelli, *Adoration of the Magi*, detail, c.1475–6, tempera on wood, 111 × 134 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Inv.1890 no.882. © 2018 Photo Scala – courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali e del Turismo.

To understand the impact this latter work must have had on Botticelli's contemporaries, even Giorgio Vasari's words are insufficient. In his *Lives*, Vasari testifies to the amazement of mid-sixteenth-century viewers: 'every artist today still marvels at it',<sup>23</sup> describing it in detail and dwelling on the heads – 'le teste' – which 'are turned in various attitudes – some full-face, some in profile, some three-quarter [*mezo occhio*]', and some looking down [...] – with a great diversity of expressions on the faces of young and old alike'.<sup>24</sup> If the impression left on Vasari many years later was so vivid, in the mid-1470s Botticelli's portraits must have had an effect similar to that of Antonello's on a Venetian clientele in the same years. In Peter Humfrey's words, they would have conveyed a 'powerful physical and personal presence that must have been mesmerizing for viewers'.<sup>25</sup>

The *Adoration of the Magi* was painted for Guasparre di Zanobi del Lama. It includes portraits of members of the Medici family and many others, among them Sandro himself and probably the patron.<sup>26</sup> The altarpiece was originally on the interior facade of the church of Santa Maria Novella, where Sandro's formidable powers as a portraitist must have been visible to the largest possible public. Among the likenesses present are those of Giuliano de' Medici and of his friend Angelo Poliziano who, in 1475, had dedicated the *Stanze per la giostra* to him. A few months after Giuliano's assassination, Poliziano recounted in his *Commentary on the Pazzi Conspiracy* the drama in Florence cathedral on 26 April 1478: the death of Giuliano, the flight of Lorenzo, the hunting down of the conspirators, the vendetta against the Pazzi and their accomplices.<sup>27</sup> At least three portraits of *Giuliano de' Medici* by Botticelli (now in Bergamo, Washington and Berlin) are tied to these events and were painted shortly afterwards.<sup>28</sup> The first of these to be realised must have been the one today in the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo (fig.1.9).<sup>29</sup> In this panel Giuliano appears in a three-quarters view, turned to his left, his head slightly inclined and his gaze lowered. His head stands out against a background of sky seen through an open box in a rudimentary architectural setting, barely sketched out. The painting was conserved in 2011 by Carlotta Beccaria and Roberto Buda, after the exhibition at the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan, but discontinuities in the execution had been visible even before the restoration. Both the background and the red hatching on the garment seemed to be unfinished. By contrast, technical analysis has confirmed that the head is highly finished, painted in oil, with an ivory-like surface and an extraordinary mastery and subtlety of execution that reveals the hand of Botticelli himself.<sup>30</sup> The analyses carried out during the conservation campaign have shown that the background was completely



**Fig.1.9** Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of Giuliano de' Medici*, after 1478, tempera on wood, 56.8 × 38.5 cm, Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, 58MR0006. © Courtesy of the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo.

repainted, some time after the original was made, with a uniform blue colour. This was removed before Morelli acquired the picture in 1883, making it similar to the version in Berlin (fig.1.10).<sup>31</sup>

While in the case of the portraits discussed above the identity of the subjects is unknown, and we are not even sure if they were alive or dead – one of the most important questions for the study of portraiture – the case of Giuliano’s portrait is very different. In this work Botticelli had to



**Fig.1.10** Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of Giuliano de' Medici*, after 1478, tempera on wood, 56.8 × 38.5 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, no.106 B. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Gemäldegalerie. Photo: Christoph Schmidt.



grapple with the image of a public figure only recently deceased, still very much present in the Florentine collective imagination – a man whom very many contemporaries had seen or indeed known. It is more than likely that in order to execute the portrait Botticelli may have had to hand the medal (fig.1.11) that Lorenzo de' Medici commissioned from Bertoldo di Giovanni as a *memento* of the conspiracy, with his brother's portrait and his own.<sup>32</sup> It is also probable that the artist used a death mask of Giuliano (something analogous to the extant death mask of Lorenzo, taken in 1492).<sup>33</sup> Karla Langedijk claims that no such mask was made of Giuliano, on the grounds that his head was too disfigured to permit a cast, but the sources give contradictory information on the location of the wounds.<sup>34</sup> Francesco Caglioti has proposed that both Bertoldo and Botticelli used such a mask, which allowed them 'the less exploited option of a three-



**Fig.1.11** Bertoldo di Giovanni (1420–91), *Bronze Medal of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici*, 1478, bronze, diam. 6.35 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Inv. 7139-1860. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

quarters view, as though the three-dimensional object took the place of a model in flesh and blood'.<sup>35</sup> Confirmation of the existence of such a relic comes from the marble *Bust of Giuliano* in the Bargello which Caglioti attributes to a Florentine sculptor working in the 1480s–90s, perhaps Michele Marini da Fiesole (fig.1.12). Here the features reveal the use of a death mask – for example, the lifeless, half-closed eyes and the hollow cheeks, the same traits evident in the Bergamo portrait.<sup>36</sup>



**Fig.1.12** Florentine sculptor (Michele Marini da Fiesole?), *Marble Bust of Giuliano de' Medici*, detail, 1480–90, height 64 cm, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, inv.Sculture 360. © 2018 DeAgostini Picture Library/Scala, Florence.

That Botticelli was entrusted, after April 1478, with the task of making an effigy of Giuliano shows that his experience as a portraitist must have been sufficient to justify a commission at the highest level. We can imagine that to research and recompose the image of Lorenzo's young brother, he proceeded on the basis of his own memory. He knew Giuliano, having designed the standard for his Giostra of 1475 showing Pallas Athena dressed in gold and white, and had already portrayed him in the Del Lama *Adoration*. In addition, he would have had access to important visual testimony such as Verrocchio's terracotta bust, now in Washington DC, and probably, as already mentioned, Bertoldo's medal.<sup>37</sup> However, the mask was in my view probably the point of departure and the decisive model – just as it is equally decisive to contrast the face in the Bergamo portrait with that of the version in the National Gallery of Art, Washington (fig. 1.13), from which Botticelli tried to erase the traces of death, in an operation akin to plastic surgery.<sup>38</sup>

The Bergamo head should be considered as a first study, 'photographing' and adapting to the painted panel what was visible in the death mask. In the second version Botticelli eliminated the deep hollow of the eyebrows, the black marks under the eyes and the bridge of the nose, the long furrows across the lower part of the face around the mouth, which was made to project more prominently. He gave more volume to the cheeks, sunken by the inevitable collapse of tissues in death. He also turned the head slightly, changing the inclination, lifting it from the chest and raising the chin, so that the jaw line fell less heavily. In so doing the artist sought to make Giuliano more of a living, 'breathing' likeness in a painting which, this time, had to be a finished work, bound up with memory, commemoration, celebration of the young Medici butchered in the cathedral. In the Washington panel, in fact, Giuliano de' Medici (fig. 1.13) is shown in a more elaborate composition, framed between two openings. In front of him are a turtle dove (which may be a symbol of eternal love, conjugal fidelity or affliction) and a dry, broken twig – a sombre reference to a life cut short. Behind the young man is a window with one shutter open and one closed, to signify the transition from life to death or the hope for immortality – which Botticelli's image had certainly given him.<sup>39</sup> It is probable that the third version of the portrait (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin; fig. 1.10),<sup>40</sup> in which Giuliano is presented in the same pose but against a uniform blue background, is the culmination of the process of elaboration Botticelli went through to retrieve Giuliano's lost image. This seems to be indicated by the freer treatment of the clothing, the softer modelling in the face and the vibrant handling of the thick, full hair. In addition, the figure is liberated from any architectural background, as was to be the case in all Botticelli's subsequent portraits.



**Fig.1.13** Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of Giuliano de' Medici*, after 1478, tempera on wood, 75.6 × 52.6 cm, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, inv.1952.5.56. © Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

If we look at these paintings as a series, not as individual pieces, and try to grasp the relationships between them, it seems clear that the three (or perhaps more)<sup>41</sup> versions of the subject testify to the various

phases in the elaboration of the image, starting from what Botticelli knew and what he was able to see. They make visible to us the difficult passage from the three-dimensional values of mask and sculpture to the two-dimensional ones of painted portraiture – or, in a different sense, the difficulty of translating sculpture into painting. Furthermore, the reciprocal ties between these paintings show us something about the birth of this genre, and throw light on the development of Botticelli's portraiture at the end of the 1470s – a time when, as should not be forgotten, he was still taking, as the basis for his portrait of Giuliano, the model of Piero Pollaiuolo's *Portrait of Galeazzo Maria Sforza* (fig.1.3). Even if it has not yet been possible to identify who commissioned the portrait of Giuliano de' Medici, in its various versions, I believe it to be a complex image requiring multiple readings linked to the history and culture of Florence, at the end of the 1470s. Nonetheless I see it, above all, as the expression of a humanistic idea – the ability of the image to preserve the memory of the dead. The portrait of Giuliano has to do with the political life of Florence, with the Medici family, with Lorenzo the Magnificent, with the public and private dimension of mourning, with power, with sorrow, with remembrance.<sup>42</sup>

It is hard to establish with certainty or to delineate with precision what provoked the transformation so apparent in Botticelli's portraiture between the end of the 1470s and the early years of the next decade. The two male portraits, the one in London (fig.1.14),<sup>43</sup> datable to the mid-1480s, and the one in Washington<sup>44</sup> from some years later, demonstrate a decisive and evident change from the previous work. The narrative dimension that had been supplied by setting, architecture, background and atmospheric movement has been abandoned in favour of a dark background against which only the figure stands out, fully frontal. The panels are smaller, around 40 by 30 cm and the light comes from the left; space is compressed around the subject, who is thereby brought closer to and looks at the viewer. This is a compositional and expressive choice that marks a new phase in Botticelli's portraiture. It is accompanied by a drastic reduction in chromatic range in favour of a greater concentration on the expressive and plastic characterisation of the painted subject, which, by this means, attains greater relief. These are works which make one suspect that Sandro had in some way come into contact with a portrait by Antonello da Messina, not just with northern European importations.<sup>45</sup> The frontal pose, specific and peculiar to these two works, the use of light to modulate the tones of the few colours employed, the use of a dark but not opaque background and the choice of a close-cropped format all indicate a new direction apparently without correspondence or parallel in Florence in the 1480s.



**Fig.1.14** Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Man*, c.1485, tempera and oil on panel, 37.5 × 28.3 cm, The National Gallery, London, NG 626.  
© 2018 The National Gallery, London/Scala, Florence.

A useful key to understanding the direction on which Botticelli was embarking in this phase of his portraiture is provided by a passage in *Della pittura* in which Leon Battista Alberti discusses lighting, the treatment of light and shade, the use of white and black, 'because light and shade make things appear in relief'. He continues: 'I shall praise those faces which seem to come out of the picture as though sculpted and I shall criticise those faces in which no other skill is visible than perhaps

that of drawing'.<sup>46</sup> Without referring directly to portraiture, Alberti gives painters a very important direction, not towards an imitative *paragone* with sculpture, but towards 'relief' in painting. This is what Botticelli achieves in these portraits, responding to Alberti's powerful exhortation.

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References for Botticelli's works are to Ronald Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli. Life and Work. Complete Catalogue*, 2 vols (London: Paul Elek, 1978); Caterina Caneva, *Botticelli. Catalogo completo* (Florence: Cantini, 1990); *The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini*, exh. cat. (Berlin 2011–New York 2012), ed. Keith Christiansen and Stefan Weppelmann (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2011).

## Notes

- 1 Ronald Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli. Life and Work. Complete Catalogue*, 2 vols (London: Paul Elek, 1978), 137–8, 'eight or so portraits by him survive', five of them 'early works'. In Caterina Caneva, *Botticelli. Catalogo completo* (Florence: Cantini, 1990) 11 portraits are catalogued (including the one formerly in Naples, destroyed in the Second World War, p.150). More optimistically, Frank Zöllner assigns to Botticelli 'presque deux douzaines de portraits'; Frank Zöllner, 'Botticelli Portraitiste. Réflexion sur l'histoire du portrait en tant que genre artistique', in *Le Portrait individuel. Réflexions autour d'une forme de représentation, XIIIe–XVe siècles*, ed. Dominic Olariu (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 249.
- 2 John Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance* (London and New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1966, repr. 1989), 23.
- 3 Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait*, 11–23. The ample bibliography on group portraits need not be listed here.
- 4 On the birth of the autonomous portrait and its connections with medieval conventions, see the crucial study by Marco Collareta, 'Modi di presentarsi: taglio e visuale nella ritrattistica autonoma', in *Visuelle Topoi*, ed. Ulrich Pfisterer and Max Seidel (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2003), 131–45. In contrast with Jacob Burckhardt's theory that the affirmation of the portrait corresponded with the affirmation of the individual in the fifteenth century, Andrew Butterfield has written: 'in 15th-century Florence, portraits regularly celebrated individuals as the exemplary representatives of groups, most especially of the patrician family'; Andrew Butterfield, 'The rebirth of sculpted portrait in 15th-century Florence', in *The Springtime of the Renaissance: sculpture and the arts in Florence 1400–1460*, ed. Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi and Marc Bormand (Florence: Mandragora, 2013), 212–21, esp. 214. On the theme of the 'individualisation' of sculpted figures in the first two decades of the Quattrocento, a phenomenon, which anticipates painted portraiture, see Aldo Galli, 'Almost like living people, and no longer figures of stone', in *The Springtime*, 88–95. Opportunities for studying autonomous portraiture were provided by two exhibitions: *Renaissance Faces. Van Eyck to Titian* (London, The National Gallery, 2008–9), ed. Lorne Campbell, Miguel Falomir, Jennifer Fletcher and Luke Syson (London: National Gallery Publishing, 2008) and *The Renaissance Portrait: from Donatello to Bellini* (Berlin, Bode Museum and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011–12), ed. Keith Christiansen and Stefan Weppelmann (New Haven and London: Yale University Press: 2011) – see in particular the essay by Patricia Rubin, 'Understanding Renaissance Portraiture', 2–25. Among the many contributions of the last 25 years see Alison Wright, 'The Memory of Faces: Representational Choices in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Portraiture', in *Art, memory, and family in Renaissance Florence*, ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 86–113; Janette Kohl, 'Casting Renaissance Florence: the bust of Giovanni de' Medici and indexical portraiture' in *Carvings, Casts & Collectors. The Art of Renaissance Sculpture*, ed. Peta Motture, Emma Jones and Dimitri Zikos (London: V&A Publishing, 2013), 58–71. On functions and meanings, the fundamental text is John Shearman, 'Portraits and Poets', in *Only connect [...] Art and the spectator in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 108–48.
- 5 Irving Lavin, 'On the Sources and Meaning of the Renaissance Portrait Bust', *The Art Quarterly* XXXIII (1970): 207–26, reprinted in *Looking at Italian Renaissance Sculpture*, ed. Sarah Blake McHam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 60–78; Anthony Radcliffe, 'Portrait-busts in Renaissance Florence: Patterns and Meanings', in *Pollaiuolo e Verrocchio? Due ritratti fiorentini del Quattrocento*, exh. cat. (Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 2001), ed. Maria Grazia Vaccari (Florence: S.P.E.S., 2001), 15–34; Butterfield, 'The rebirth', 212–21, 221). Interesting reflections on the 'feeling' of Florentine portrait busts compared with Venetian examples are in Alison Luchs, 'Grounds for an absence', in *Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture in Renaissance Venice, 1490–1530* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 17–20.
- 6 A brief listing of the information on the theme of the portrait provided by Pliny may be found in Massimo Bernabò, 'Ritratti di autori: dall'antichità ai classicisti, a Bisanzio', in *Immaginare l'autore. Il ritratto del letterato nella cultura umanistica*, ed. Giovanna Lazzi and Paolo Viti (Florence: Edizioni Polistampa, 2000), 17. On the reception of Pliny in Florentine art-historical writings see Eliana Carrara, 'Plinio e l'arte degli antichi e dei moderni. Ricezione e fortuna dei libri XXXIV–XXXVI della Naturalis Historia nella Firenze del XVI secolo (dall'Anonimo Magliabechiano a Vasari)', *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences*



- 61, 166–7 (2011): 367–81. On Petrarch and portraiture see Maurizio Bettini, 'Tra Plinio e sant'Agostino: Francesco Petrarca sulle arti figurative', in *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana (l'uso dei classici)*, ed. Salvatore Settis, 3 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1984), vol.1, 219–67 (enlarged and revised ed., Livorno: Sillabe, 2002); Nicholas Mann, 'Petrarch and Portraits', in *The Image of the Individual. Portraits in the Renaissance*, ed. Nicholas Mann and Luke Syson (London: British Museum Press, 1998), 15–21; Patrizia Castelli, 'Imagines spirantes', in Lazzi and Viti ed., *Immaginare l'autore*, 35–62.
- 7 Regarding Venetian portraiture of the Quattrocento, however, Peter Humfrey has noted that its development 'was often constrained by a political and social ethos that placed a higher value on the collective interest of the Venetian state than on individual self-expression. Before about 1500, autonomous Venetian portraits – including those of the greatest exponent, Giovanni Bellini – tended to be simple in pose, objective in treatment, and impassive in mood'. Peter Humfrey, 'The Portrait in Fifteenth-Century Venice', in *The Renaissance Portrait*, 63.
- 8 Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Man*, Florence, Galleria Palatina, Inv.1912, n.372, panel, 51.2 × 35.2 cm; Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 1, 38; 2, 26, B12, (with date: 'c.1475'); Caneva, *Botticelli*, 38, cat. no.17; Nicoletta Baldini, entry on 'Sandro Botticelli 33 *Ritratto di giovane uomo*', in *I dipinti della Galleria Palatina e degli Appartamenti Reali. Le scuole dell'Italia Centrale 1450–1530, I cataloghi di Palazzo Pitti*. 3, ed. Serena Padovani (Florence: Giunti, 2014), 153–6 (with bibliography and notes on conservation).
- 9 On the state of conservation and restoration of the work see Ciro Castelli, Marco Ciatti, Carlo Lalli and Alessandra Ramat, 'Il Restauro del Ritratto di *Giovane con mazzocchio* di Sandro Botticelli', *ODP Restauro* 23 (2011): 141–54.
- 10 *Male Portrait*, Washington, The National Gallery of Art, Andrew W. Mellon Collection, 1937.I.17, tempera on wood, 55.5 × 41.2 cm.
- 11 Miklós Boskovits, 'Studi sul ritratto fiorentino quattrocentesco – II', *Arte Cristiana*, 85, 782 (1997): 336–9, 341–2; Miklós Boskovits, entry 'Attributed to Piero del Pollaiuolo *Portrait of a Man*', in Miklós Boskovits and David Alan Brown, *National Gallery of Art. Italian Paintings of the Fifteenth Century* (The Collections of The National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalogue) (Washington DC: The National Gallery of Art, 2003), 588–95. The panel is attributed to Andrea del Castagno by Keith Christiansen, entry 'Andrea del Castagno, 21. *Portrait of a Man*', in *The Renaissance Portrait*, 123–5, cat. no.21. Alison Wright, *The Pollaiuolo Brothers. The Arts of Florence and Rome* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 133, writes that the painting 'has been unconvincingly attributed to one or other of the Pollaiuolo brothers at various moments', 454, note 94.
- 12 Boskovits in Boskovits and Brown, *National Gallery of Art. Italian Paintings of the Fifteenth Century*, 589.
- 13 Piero del Pollaiuolo, *Galeazzo Maria Sforza*, 1471, tempera on wood, 65 × 42 cm, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, Inv.1890 no.1492; Wright, *The Pollaiuolo Brothers*, 131–6, 521, cat. no.50; Andrea Bayer, entry 'Piero del Pollaiuolo. 48. *Galeazzo Maria Sforza*', in *The Renaissance Portrait*, 169–71, cat. no.48; Aldo Galli, *La sorte dei Pollaiuolo*, in *Antonio e Piero del Pollaiuolo. 'Nell'argento e nell'oro, in pittura e nel bronzo [...]'*, exh. cat. (Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, 2014–15), ed. Andrea Di Lorenzo and Aldo Galli (Milan: Skira editore, 2014), 68–9.
- 14 Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Man*, 1470s, panel, 51 × 37 cm, formerly Naples, Museo Gaetano Filangeri (destroyed in 1943, during the Second World War); Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 1, 38; 2, 37, no.B24, with a date 'c.1478'; Caneva, *Botticelli*, 150.
- 15 Filippo Lippi, *Portrait of a Woman and a Man at a Casement*, c.1440, tempera on wood, 64.1 × 41.9 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Marquand Collection, 89.15.19 and *Portrait of a Lady*, c.1440, tempera on poplar, 49.5 × 32.9 cm, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, 1700.
- 16 Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Lady known as Smeralda Bandinelli*, tempera on panel, 65.7 × 41 cm, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, CAI.100. Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 1, 38–9; 2, 28–9, n.B15; Caneva, *Botticelli*, 43, cat. no.20; entry online: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O17317/portrait-of-a-lady-known-painting-botticelli-sandro/>, with up-to-date bibliography. For the proposal to identify the subject as Simonetta Vespucci and a connection between Smeralda Bandinelli with the *Lady with a Bunch of Flowers* in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence (Inv. Sculture no.115), see: Alison Luchs, 'Verrocchio and the Bust of Albiera degli Albizzi: Portraits, Poetry and Commemoration', *Artibus et Historiae*, 33, 66 (2012): 87–90, 91. See also in this volume Nicola Costaras and Clare Richardson, 'Botticelli's *Portrait of a Lady known as Smeralda Bandinelli*: a technical study'.

- 17 Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Man with the Medal of Cosimo de' Medici*, c.1475, tempera on wood, 57.5 × 44cm, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, Inv.1890 n.1488. Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 1, 38; 2, 33–5, n.B22; Caneva, *Botticelli*, 51, cat. n.25.
- 18 Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 1, 38.
- 19 The inscription on the medal of Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464) reads: 'Magnus Cosmus Medices PPP'. The title of 'Primus Pater Patriae' was assigned to Cosimo in 1465 and a representation of the medal already appears in a manuscript of 1469 in the Biblioteca Laurenziana. See Francesco Caglioti, entry 46, 'Cosimo de' Medici', in *The Renaissance Portrait*, 164–6, cat. no.46.
- 20 For the principal attempts to identify the sitter see Ilaria Ciseri, entry 18, 'Ritratto di giovane con la medaglia di Cosimo il Vecchio', in *Gli Uffizi. Studi e ricerche. 10. Itinerario laurenziano* (Florence: Centro Di, 1992), 46–7; Nicoletta Pons, entry 34, 'Sandro Botticelli, Ritratto d'uomo con medaglia di Cosimo il Vecchio', in *Botticelli e Filippino Lippi. L'inquietudine e la grazia nella pittura fiorentina del Quattrocento*, exh. cat. (Paris, Musée du Luxembourg–Florence, Palazzo Strozzi, 2004), ed. Daniel Arasse, Pierluigi De Vecchi and Jonathan K. Nelson (Milan: Skira, 2004), 220–3.
- 21 Sandro Botticelli, *Michele Marullo Tarchaniota*, tempera on panel, transferred from wood to canvas, 49 × 35 cm, The Guardans Cambò Family, Barcelona; Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 1, 141; 2, 81–2, no.B72; Caneva, *Botticelli*, 111, cat. no.55; Stefan Weppelmann, 'Sandro Botticelli, *Michele Marullo Tarchaniota*'. in *The Renaissance Portrait*, 150–1, cat. no.38.
- 22 Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of Lorenzo de' Lorenzi*, oil on panel, 50.8 × 36.5 cm, Philadelphia, John G. Johnson Collection, 1917, cat.48; Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 1, 141; 2, 96–7, no.B86; Caneva, *Botticelli*, 125, cat. no.66.
- 23 'Ogni artefice ne resta oggi meravigliato'; Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, 'Vita di Sandro Botticello', vol.3, ed. Rosanna Bettarini and Paola Barocchi, 1971 (Florence: Sansoni Editore, 1966–87), 516.
- 24 'Le quali con diverse attitudini son girate, quale in faccia, quale in profilo, quale in mez[z]o occhio e qual chinata, et in più altre maniere, e diversità d'arie di giovani, di vecchi'; Vasari, *Le Vite*, 3, 515.
- 25 Peter Humfrey, 'The Portrait in Fifteenth-Century Venice', in *The Renaissance Portrait*, 51.
- 26 Sandro Botticelli, *Adoration of the Magi*, tempera on panel, 111 × 134 cm, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, Inv.1890 no.882. For the identification of the portraits in the picture see Rab Hatfield, *Botticelli's Uffizi Adoration: a Study in Pictorial Content* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 66; Nicoletta Pons, *Botticelli* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1989), 61; Ciseri in *Itinerario laurenziano*, 44.
- 27 Angelo Poliziano, *Della Congiura dei Pazzi (Coniurationis Commentarium)*, ed. Alessandro Perosa (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1958).
- 28 Patrizia Zambrano, entry 1, 'Sandro Botticelli, *Ritratto di Giuliano de' Medici*', in *Sandro Botticelli nelle collezioni lombarde*, exh. cat. (Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, 2010–11), ed. Andrea Di Lorenzo (Milan: Silvana editoriale, 2010), 54–7, where the other known versions of the portrait of Giuliano are also examined. The three portraits were exhibited and catalogued by Stefan Weppelmann in *The Renaissance Portrait*, nos.50 (Bergamo), 51 (Washington), 52 (Berlin), 174–7. For the Bergamo portrait see also Andrea Di Lorenzo, 'Ritratto di Giuliano de' Medici', in *Sandro Botticelli 'Persona sofisticata'. I dipinti dell'Accademia Carrarra*, exh. cat. (Bergamo, Palazzo della Ragione, 2012), ed. Maria Cristina Rodeschini (Bergamo: Lubrina, 2012), 20–5, Andrea Di Lorenzo, entry I.1, 'Sandro Filipepi detto Botticelli, *Ritratto di Giuliano de' Medici*', in *Le storie di Botticelli. Tra Boston e Bergamo*, exh. Cat. (Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, 2018–19), ed. M. Cristina Rodeschini and Patrizia Zambrano (Milan: Officina Libreria, 2018), 72–75, and publications cited in the following notes. The present author discussed the problems of the three portraits in a lecture entitled *Il ritratto di Giuliano de' Medici di Sandro Botticelli. Tra storia, filologia e connoisseurship*, Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, *Lecture morelliane*, 23 September 2016.
- 29 Sandro Botticelli, *Giuliano de' Medici*, tempera and oil on panel, 59.5 × 39.5 cm, Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, inv. no.58 MR 00006.
- 30 The restoration was carried out in 2011 by Carlotta Beccaria and Roberto Buda (for the wooden support); see Roberto Buda and Carlotta Beccaria, 'Sandro Botticelli, *Ritratto di Giuliano de' Medici*', in *Sandro Botticelli 'Persona sofisticata'*, 59–73 and also Maria Cristina Rodeschini, 'I Botticelli dell'Accademia Carrara di Bergamo: i risultati dei recenti restauri e nuovi esisti di studio', in *Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510). Artist and Entrepreneur in Renaissance Florence*, ed. Gert Jan der Sman and Irene Mariani (Florence: Centro Di, 2015), 63–73.

- 31 Carlotta Beccaria, 'Sandro Botticelli, *Ritratto di Giuliano de' Medici*', 2012, 'Ipotesi sulla stesura del fondo', 66–8. According to the restorer, the composition would have been originally as we see it today, but in a subsequent moment, difficult to date, the original paint layers were 'ricoperte da uno strato bianco steso su tutte le parti cromatiche del fondo. Questo strato potrebbe avere avuto funzione di imprimitura al fine di uniformare l'intera area di fondo e rendere possibile la successiva stesura di colore azzurro, evitando l'interferenza cromatica delle stesure originali sottostanti. La coloritura soprastante era costituita di azzurrite[...]. Altrettanto difficile è immaginare per quanto tempo il dipinto abbia mantenuto questa ridipintura del fondo. Sicuramente, in un momento precedente o concomitante all'acquisto dell'opera da parte di Giovanni Morelli, la ridipintura è stata rimossa, altrimenti se ne avrebbe notizia nelle carte d'archivio conservate in Accademia'.
- 32 Some scholars have proposed that it was the Botticelli portrait that furnished the model for Bertoldo's representation. See James David Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni. Sculptor of the Medici Household. Critical Reappraisal and Catalogue Raisonné* (Columbia, MO and London: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 86–95, cat. no.3 (with earlier bibliography).
- 33 Lorenzo il Magnifico's funeral mask is in the Museo degli Argenti, Florence.
- 34 Karla Langedijk, *The Portraits of the Medici. 15th to 18th Century*, 3 vols (Florence: S.P.E.S., 1981–7), I, 1981, 33.
- 35 Francesco Caglioti, entry 26, 'Maestro degli Apostoli sistini' (Matteo del Pollaiuolo?), *Busto di Giuliano di Piero de' Medici*, in *Eredità del Magnifico 1492–1992*, exh. cat. (Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 1992), ed. Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà, Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi and Marco Spallanzani (Florence: S.P.E.S., 1992), 58.
- 36 Florentine sculptor working in the 1480s–90s, Michele Marini da Fiesole?, *Busto di Giuliano di Piero de' Medici*, ht. c.63, cm Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Inv. Sculture 360; Caglioti, 'entry 26', 56–9; Francesco Caglioti, 'Da una costola di Desiderio: due marmi giovanili del Verrocchio', in *Desiderio da Settignano*, atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Florence, Kunsthistorisches Institut – Settignano, Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, 9–12 May 2007), ed. Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi, Joseph Connors, Alessandro Nova and Gerhard Wolf (Venice: Marsilio, 2011), 123–150; Francesco Caglioti, entry I.3, 'Scultore fiorentino (Michele Marini da Fiesole?)', *Giuliano de' Medici*, in *Le storie di Botticelli. Tra Boston e Bergamo*, exh. cat. (Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, 2018–19), ed. M. Cristina Rodeschini and Patrizia Zambrano (Milan: Officina Libraria, 2018), 78–83.
- 37 Andrea del Verrocchio, *Giuliano de' Medici*, terracotta, ht. 61 cm, National Gallery of Art, Andrew W. Mellon Collection, 1937.1.127. A list of the numerous existing and lost images of Giuliano de' Medici can be found in Langedijk, *The Portraits*, 2, 1983, 1062–76 and in Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 2, 31.
- 38 Sandro Botticelli, *Giuliano de' Medici*, 75.6 × 52.6 cm, Washington DC, National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1952.2.56. Miklós Boskovits, 'Sandro Botticelli, *Giuliano de' Medici*', in Boskovits and Brown, *National Gallery of Art*, 170–5 (with earlier bibliography).
- 39 Patricia Lee Rubin, entry 1, 'Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of Giuliano de' Medici*', in *Renaissance Florence, The Art of the 1470s*, exh. cat. (London, The National Gallery, 1999), ed. Patricia Lee Rubin and Alison Wright (London: National Gallery Publications, 1999), 126–7.
- 40 Sandro Botticelli, *Giuliano de' Medici*, tempera on wood, 56.8 × 38.5 cm, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 106 B.
- 41 A fourth portrait of Giuliano, with a darkish white background, transferred from panel to canvas, was once in the Otto H. Kahn collection, New York, then in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection, Lugano, then with Mario Crespi, Milan. Roger Fry ('Note on a Portrait of Giuliano de' Medici by Sandro Botticelli', *The Burlington Magazine* 25 (1914): 2–3), indicated this panel as the prime example in the series. Luisa Vertova ('*Botticelli tra falsificazioni e reinvenzioni*', *Antichità Viva* 30, 6 (1991): 24–9) concluded that this version was a fake, followed by Hans Körner, *Botticelli* (Köln: DuMont, 2006), 93. See also Miklós Boskovits, entry in Boskovits and Brown, *The National Gallery of Art*, 175, note 17, who observes that Giuliano seems younger in this version; he considers it to be a work independent of the three in Washington, Bergamo and Berlin, to be connected instead with the Washington bust of Giuliano (1937.1.127), 'in which Giuliano appears as a young man of about twenty years'. Caneva, *Botticelli*, 56, no.28, believes this to be the only portrait made while Giuliano de' Medici was still alive (whereas the others were done after his death).
- 42 On the presence of Giuliano de' Medici in the panel with the *Story of Nastagio degli Onesti's Wedding Feast* (private collection), see Patricia Lee Rubin, *Images and Identity in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 262–5.

- 43 Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Man*, tempera and oil on panel, 37.5 × 28.3 cm, London, The National Gallery, NG 626. Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 1, 114; 2, 65, no. B47; Caneva, *Botticelli*, 94, cat. no.44. For an analysis of the construction of this image see Lorne Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits. European Portrait-Painting in the 14th, 15th and 16th Centuries* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 12; for the poem that Herbert P. Horne dedicated to it, see Antonella Francini, 'Herbert Horne and an English "Fable"', in *Sandro Botticelli and Herbert Horne: New Research*, ed. Rab Hatfield (Florence: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 227–50.
- 44 Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Youth*, tempera on poplar, 41.7 × 30.9 cm, Washington DC, The National Gallery of Art, Andrew Mellon Collection, 1937.I.19. Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 1, 114; 2, 78–9, no. B67; Caneva, *Botticelli*, 105, cat. no.50; Miklòs Boskovits, 'Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Youth*', in Boskovits and Brown, *The National Gallery of Art*, 176–80.
- 45 Simona di Nepi, entry 14, 'Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Man*', in *Renaissance faces. Van Eyck to Titian*, 106–7, holds that some of the distinctive characteristics of the painting are due – as in Antonello da Messina's portrait in the National Gallery, London (NG1141) – to the influence of 'Netherlandish models'. She points in particular to the unified dark backgrounds in portraits such as those of Tommaso and Maria Portinari (New York, The Metropolitan Museum, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.6267).
- 46 'Però che il lume e l'ombra fanno parere le cose rilevate, così il bianco e 'l nero fa le cose dipinte parere rilevate[...]'; Leon Battista Alberti, *De Pictura*, in Leon Battista Alberti, *Opere Volgari*, ed. Cecil Grayson (1960–73), vol.3, *De Pictura*; reprint *De Pictura*, ed. Cecil Grayson (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1975), vol.2, 46, 1–2, 82; 'Io, coi dotti e non dotti, loderò quelli visi quali come scolpiti parranno uscire fuori della tavola, e biasimerò quelli visi in quali vegga arte niuna altra che solo forse nel disegno'; Alberti, *De Pictura*, vol.2, 46, 7–10, 82.



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The recent exhibitions dedicated to Botticelli around the world show, more than ever, the significant and continued debate about the artist. *Botticelli Past and Present* engages with this debate. The book comprises four thematic parts, spanning four centuries of Botticelli's artistic fame and reception from the fifteenth century. Each part comprises a number of essays and includes a short introduction which positions them within the wider scholarly literature on Botticelli. The parts are organised chronologically beginning with discussion of the artist and his working practice in his own time, moving onto the progressive rediscovery of his work from the late eighteenth to the turn of the twentieth century, through to his enduring impact on contemporary art and design. Expertly written by researchers and eminent art historians and richly illustrated throughout, the broad range of essays in this book make a valuable contribution to Botticelli studies.

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