



Baccio da Montelupo

Madonna col Bambino

Madonna del Mercato Nuovo
(Virgin and Child)

David Lucidi

Baccio da Montelupo

(b. 1469 in Montelupo, near Florence – d. ca. 1535 in Lucca)

Madonna col Bambino

also known as the Madonna del Mercato Nuovo

(Virgin and Child)

*Terracotta
75 cm high*

Florence, ca. 1511–1512

Provenance

*Florence, collection of Stefano Bardini, until 1912;
Berlin, collection of Walter and Catalina von Pannwitz;
Auctioned in New York in 2012; Blumka, New York,
and Kunsthandlung Julius Böhler, Starnberg.*

With an essay by David Lucidi



“The artist, who was born and began his career in the small town of Montelupo, participated in the most vibrant Florentine artistic circles of his time...”

Foreword and acknowledgements

Baccio da Montelupo, one of the seminal artists of the Italian Renaissance, has only recently gained wider recognition in art history studies. The artist, who was born and began his career in the small town of Montelupo, participated in the most vibrant Florentine artistic circles of his time, befriending patrons and artists such as Domenico Ghirlandaio, Benedetto da Maiano and Michelangelo. Baccio made a weighty mark on Renaissance sculptural production and our terracotta Virgin with Child holds an important place in his substantial body of work. I am delighted to introduce a comprehensive study of this fascinating sculpture by David Lucidi, a prominent Italian scholar and an expert on Baccio da Montelupo's oeuvre. The study highlights the fine properties of the artwork, contextualizes it within Baccio's

practice, and brings to light its very interesting history of being one of the artworks submitted to a design competition for the façade on Piazza del Mercato Nuovo, between 1511 and 1512.

I am deeply thankful to Florian Eitle-Böhler and Julius Böhler Kunsthandlung for our longstanding partnership, as well as to David Lucidi for his insightfulness and dedication to this catalog. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Ane Georgiades (*Mjooler Restoration*) for her exquisite work on the object; Vera Miljkovic for her outstanding photography; Zeljka Himbele, Julia Scheid and Eva Bitzinger for their meticulous editorial work as well as Alta L. Price for her excellent translation from Italian. I hope you will find our Virgin with Child as well as its history as captivating as I have.

Anthony Blumka

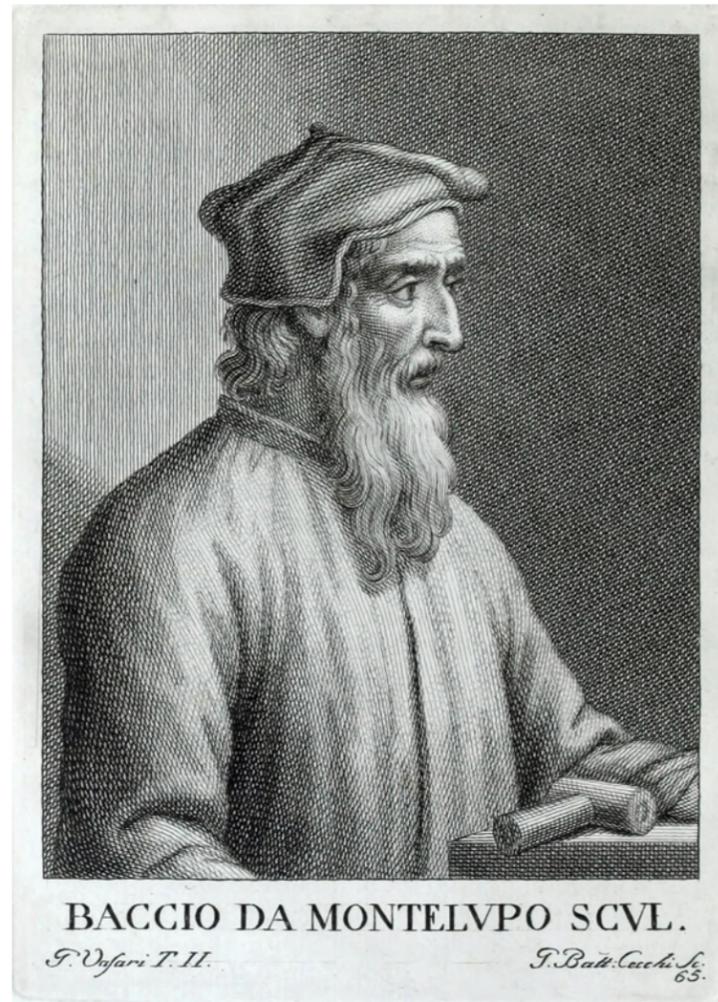


Fig.1) Giovan Battista Cecchi, portrait of Baccio da Montelupo from *Serie degli uomini i più illustri nella pittura, scultura, e architettura* (Florence: Gaetano Cambiagi, 1769–1775), vol. III, 1769.y

The Sculptor

Bartolomeo di Giovanni d’Astore Sinibaldi, more widely known as Baccio da Montelupo, was one of the most enduring and influential masters of the Italian Renaissance (fig. 1).

He was born in 1469 in Montelupo, a small town near Florence that was famous for its ceramics. He began his artistic education in a local workshop and subsequently relocated to Florence, following in the footsteps of his brother Piero, who had joined the Dominican order of St. Mark in 1487 as Fra’ Benedetto (*Brother Benedict*). Baccio started to frequent the city’s main cultural circles, where he met some of the most influential figures of the Florentine art scene. He became particularly close to the painter Bartolomeo di Giovanni di Masino, whose daughter he married, as well as Domenico Ghirlandaio, in whose workshop he furthered his studies of painting technique.¹ Baccio’s aptitude in this field—long overlooked, despite evidence recorded by his close friend Francesco Albertini in his *Memoriale* (1510)²—has been confirmed by recently rediscovered documents proving that he continued painting until at least 1515.³ He likely began frequenting the Giardino di San Marco, an art academy *avant la lettre* founded by Lorenzo the Magnificent, in the late 1480s. There—under the supervision of Bertoldo di Giovanni, one of Donatello’s oldest pupils—all the main sculptors of the day studied from collections of classical art and early Renaissance masters. During his time in the Medici household he befriended Michelangelo, whom he had first met at Ghirlandaio’s workshop; their friendship continued at one of the city’s most prestigious artistic foundries, run by Benedetto da Maiano, whose workshop Baccio steadily frequented in the years prior to launching his solo career.⁴

¹This new detail was first published in the recent monograph by David Lucidi, *Baccio da Montelupo* (Todi: Editrice Darte, 2022). See chapters 2 and 3, pages 9–34, in particular.

²Francesco Albertini, *Memoriale di molte statue et picture sono nella inclyta cipta di Florentia* [1510], Waldemar H. de Boer ed. (Florence: Centro Di, 2010), 92.

³In 1515 Baccio da Montelupo completed six painted predella panels for Raffaello Pucci, nephew of Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci, which were perhaps part of a larger altarpiece. See Carla A. D’Arista, *The Pucci of Florence: Patronage and politics in Renaissance Italy* (London: Harvey Miller, 2020), 222, 308, and note 75.

⁴Lucidi, *Baccio*, 22ff.

Toward the mid-1490s, by the time he had turned twenty-five, Baccio had reached the top of the Florentine art world. As a sculptor, he specialized in modeling terracotta and carving wood crucifixes, competing with the workshops of the Sangallo brothers and Da Maiano brothers. The *Compianto* (*Lamentation*) in terracotta, completed in 1494 for the church of San Domenico in Bologna, and the large *Crocifisso* (*Crucifixion*), originally made for the choir of the church of San Marco in Florence in 1496 (fig. 2), were his first two documented commissions, and established his reputation as the main sculptor defining the Dominican aesthetic tradition.⁵



Fig.2) Baccio da Montelupo, *Crocifisso* (*Crucifixion*), 1496. Museo di San Marco, Sala capitolare, Florence. Courtesy of the Ministero della Cultura, Direzione Regionale Musei della Toscana, Museo di San Marco, Florence ©Claudio Giusti

In 1498, as Savonarola's followers came under persecution, Baccio was forced to flee Florence. We know he spent some time in Bologna, and perhaps also Venice. For more than a decade there is little documentation of his activities; given the circumstances, he was likely working outside Florence. Letters between him and Michelangelo in 1505 place Baccio at the quarries of Carrara; briefly thereafter, Michelangelo delivered four large blocks of marble to Baccio's studio, presumably for a monumental sculpture, although no other documentation survives regarding the resulting body of work. In 1504 he had moved both his home and studio closer to the church of the Santissima Annunziata. That same year, his fourth child, Raffaello was born; fifteen years later, Raffaello would take up his father's artistic mantle.⁶ Thanks to his connections with the Servite Order, in 1506 he received the commission to design sculptural decorations for the Badia di San Godenzo, an abbey in the Tuscan Appennines, completing seventeen works in wood and terracotta, including the emblematic *San Sebastiano* (*Saint Sebastian*) (fig. 3), now the sole surviving work of that cycle.⁷ In 1508 he was in Venice with his friend the painter Fra' Bartolomeo, where he worked on a monumental marble statue of the god Mars, the final sculpture of the *Monumento funebre a Benedetto Pesaro* (*Funereal Monument to Benedetto Pesaro*) in Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, begun five years prior in the workshop of Giovanbattista and Lorenzo Bregno (fig. 4).⁸



Fig. 3) Baccio da Montelupo, *San Sebastiano* (*Saint Sebastian*), ca. 1506–1508. Badia di San Godenzo. ©Claudio Giusti



Fig. 4) Giovanbattista and Lorenzo Bregno, Baccio da Montelupo, and anonymous sculptors, *Monumento funebre di Benedetto Pesaro* (*Funerary Monument to Benedetto Pesaro*), post-1503. Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. Courtesy of the Curia Patriarcale di Venezia, Ufficio Beni Culturali. ©Mauro Magliani

⁵ Lucidi, Baccio, 22ff. .

⁶ Lucidi, 81. .

⁷ Lucidi, 416–417, cat. 16 (with preceding bibliography).

⁸ Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia, città nobilissima et singolare, descritta in XIII libri* (Venice: n.p., 1581), 66r-v. See also Lucidi 428–429, cat. 24 (with preceding bibliography).



Fig. 5) Baccio da Montelupo, *Madonna col Bambino*, also known as the *Madonna del Mercato Nuovo* (*Virgin and Child*), ca. 1511–1512. Blumka, New York and Kunsthandlung Julius Böbler, Starnberg



Fig. 6) Baccio da Montelupo, *San Giovanni Evangelista* (*Saint John the Evangelist*), 1515. Museo di Orsanmichele, Florence. Courtesy of the Ministero della Cultura, Museo Nazionale del Bargello ©Claudio Giusti

On his way back to Florence he stopped in Lucca—which had become one of the Dominican order's main centers following the death of Savonarola—leaving three impressive glazed terracotta statues, now in the church of San Concordio in Contrada, perhaps originally intended for the Dominican church of San Romano.⁹

Beginning in 1512, with the house of Medici returned to power in Florence, Baccio's career continues to rise. He is involved in all the main artistic ventures of the city leaders and affiliated families, and frequents the most exclusive artistic circles, including the workshop of Andrea del Sarto at the Sapienza and the family workshop run by Andrea della Robbia, with his sons Giovanni, Fra' Mattia, Fra' Ambrogio, Luca the Younger, and Girolamo.¹⁰

Between 1511 and 1512 Baccio joined a design competition for the so-called Mercato Nuovo; the call was to create a marble statue of the Virgin and Child for the façade of the Casa del Saggio (*Sage's Home*) (fig. 5). The following year for the church of the Santissima Annunziata he sculpted a wax portrait of Giuliano de' Medici, brother of newly elected Pope Leo X, who was subsequently painted by the young Rosso Fiorentino, and—in collaboration with Andrea Feltrini and Jacopo Pontormo—a coat of arms for the Medici family in pietra serena, which still hangs on the church's outer portico.¹¹ He executed a second coat of arms for the palace of Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci on Via dei Servi, which met with such wide appeal that it became the prototype for Medicean

heraldry and all subsequent coats of arms for aristocratic and civic residences throughout Florence and its territory.¹² In the fall of 1515 he collaborated to create the temporary decorations celebrating Pope Leo X's triumphal entry into the city on November 30.¹³ This period of important commissions reached its peak in 1513, when Baccio defeated Jacopo Sansovino in a competition held by Arte della Seta—the city's powerful silk guild—to create the monumental bronze *San Giovanni Evangelista* (*Saint John the Evangelist*) for an external niche in the church of Orsanmichele: a tribute to the newly appointed pontiff Giovanni de' Medici, it also became the sculptor's most celebrated work (fig. 6).¹⁴

Over the following years he collaborated with Michelangelo on the complex design and sculptural decoration of the facade of the basilica of San Lorenzo. Additionally, thanks to his ties with the upper echelons of the aristocracy supporting the house of Medici, he was commissioned to create a funeral monument in honor of bishop and cardinal Niccolò Pandolfini for the cathedral of Pistoia, which has since been lost. Work on it was interrupted in September 1517 upon the death of the commissioner; the following year, the powerful banker Lorenzo Bini took charge, whereupon work continued until at least 1520 and involved such prestigious artists as Simone Mosca, a famous sculptor known only as *il Cicilia*, and even Baccio's young son, Raffaello.¹⁵

⁹Francesca Petrucci, "Baccio da Montelupo a Lucca," in *Paragone. Arte* 34 (1984), 15; Giancarlo Gentilini, *I Della Robbia. La Scultura invetriata del Rinascimento*, 2 vol. (Florence: Cantini, 1992), vol. II, 481; Francesca Petrucci in *I Della Robbia e l'arte nuova della scultura invetriata*, Giancarlo Gentilini ed. (Florence: Giunti, 1998), 375–376, cat. VII.4 a, b.

¹⁰Lucidi, chapter 8.

¹¹Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de più eccellenti pittori, scultori et architettori* [Firenze 1568], Gactano Milanese ed., 9 vol. (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1878–1885), vol. VI (1881), 250; Lucidi, 197–199.

¹²Louis Alexander Waldman, "The painter as sculptor: A new relief by Andrea di Salvi Barili," in *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 43 (1999–2000), 200–207.

¹³Ilaria Ciseri, *L'Ingresso trionfale di Leone X in Firenze nel 1515* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1990); Lucidi, 201ff.

¹⁴Lucidi, 208–212.

¹⁵Louis Alexander Waldman, "The Patronage of a favourite of Leone X: Card. Niccolò Pandolfini, Ridolfo Ghirlandaio and the unfinished tomb of Baccio da Montelupo," in *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 48 (2004), 105–128; Lucidi, 221ff.

By 1518 Baccio began getting more work from the Republic of Lucca, and he permanently moved to the city of Lucca five years later. The prestigious works executed in these years include: the Tabernacolo eucaristico (*eucharistic tabernacle*) for the church of San Lorenzo in Segromigno Monte, a town in the province of Lucca (1518); the design of the new church of Santi Paolino e Donato (1519), a building under the jurisdiction of Lucca's municipal government whose construction subsequently began in 1522;¹⁶ and the Tomba di Silvestro Gigli, a tomb for the bishop of Worcester in the service of English King Henry VIII.¹⁷ The latter was commissioned for the church of San Michele in Foro in 1520 by the bishop's brother, Giovanni Paolo; today, only the high-relief Madonna col Bambino, executed by Baccio and his son Raffaello in 1523, remains intact.¹⁸ In the mature phase of his career Baccio increasingly focused on architectural and decorative stonework, but he continued to produce a vast output of devotional sculpture in wood and terracotta (crucifixes, high reliefs, and busts). This secured the steady patronage of the city's religious institutions, and allowed him to establish a substantial workshop where his sons Raffaello and Giovanni also worked: the former was a goldsmith and sculptor; the latter, his firstborn, became a sculptor and painter just like his father.¹⁹

The last record of Baccio da Montelupo dates from 1530, after which all trace of him is lost. He presumably died in Lucca around 1535.

The sculpture: collecting, history, style

By the end of the nineteenth century this enthralling statuary group, superb and monumental despite its small size, was part of the collection of Stefano Bardini, prince of the antiquarians; period photographs preserved in the photo library of the Stefano Bardini Historical Archives at the Florentine Civic Museums (*neg. 6080, 247 BR, figs. 7–8*) show its placement in his sumptuous palazzo on Piazza de' Mozzi, which is now the Museo Bardini. The work—which in the photographs evidently bears a layer of polychrome presumably added at a later date—was first brought to scholarly light in the early twentieth century by Cornelius von Fabriczy,²⁰ who attributed it to the so-called Maestro dei bambini turbolenti (“Master of the Unruly Children”), an anonymous artist who has since been identified as the productive Florentine sculptor Sandro di Lorenzo di Smeraldo.²¹ In 1912, still under that attribution, it landed in the Berlin collection of Walter and Catalina von Pannwitz. Subsequently, all traces of it were lost until 2012, when the work reappeared on the international market and in contemporary Renaissance sculpture scholarship.²²

¹⁶Costantino Ceccanti, *Baccio da Montelupo architetto nella Repubblica di Lucca* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2018); Lucidi, chapter 7.

¹⁷Cinzia Sicca, “Pawns of International Finance and Politics: Florentine Sculptors at the Court of Henry VIII,” in *Renaissance Studies* 20 (2006:1), 1–34; Lucidi, chapter 7.

¹⁸Lucidi, 247ff.

¹⁹Lucidi, 264ff.

²⁰Cornelius von Fabriczy, “Kritisches Verzeichnis toskanischer Holz- und Tonstatuen bis zum Beginn des Cinquecento,” in *Jahrbuch der Preußischen Kunstsammlungen* 30 (1909), 40, cat. 140, 60, fig. 11a.

²¹Lorenzo Principi, *Il Maestro dei Bambini turbolenti. Sandro di Lorenzo scultore in terracotta agli albori della Maniera* (Perugia: Aguaplano, 2020), 397, cat. R.3.

²²Important Old Master Paintings, *auction catalog* (New York: Sotheby's, January 26, 2012), lot 323.



Fig. 7-8) Baccio da Montelupo, Madonna col Bambino, also known as the Madonna del Mercato Nuovo (Virgin and Child) ca. 1511–1512, Late nineteenth-century photograph of the collection of Stefano Bardini, installation view from his palace on Piazza dei Mozzi; Now in the collection of Blumka, New York and Kunsthandlung Julius Böhler, Starnberg



Fig. 9) Jacopo Sansovino, *Madonna col Bambino*,
(*Virgin and Child*)
ca. 1511–1512. Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest.
Courtesy of the Szépművészeti Múzeum Budapest

This *Madonna col Bambino* was first attributed to Baccio da Montelupo in one of my articles on the artist published the following year, wherein I proposed that the work was in fact a model Montelupo submitted to the competition announced by Piero Pitti in the early 1510s to decorate the façade of the Casa del Saggio on Piazza del Mercato Nuovo with a marble statue of the Virgin and Child.²³ This was a prestigious competition, because the statue would effectively be the first emblem of public devotion in a previously secular space. Indeed, the Mercato Nuovo was symbolic on many levels: it was the site of the main exchange banks; housed numerous goldsmiths' workshops; and was the city's lively trade center. The competition therefore guaranteed significant visibility to all artists aspiring to ascend the ranks of the city's hierarchical patronage system under the Medici's return to power in 1512. The iconographic theme of the Virgin and Child was an ideal subject for these artists to compete with one another and rework their approach to the physical traits, postures, and expressions promoted in previous years by Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael, restyling the traditional theme for the dawn of Mannerism. Participants submitted models in terracotta and other sculptural materials; the competition jury included the painter Lorenzo di Credi and a panel of artists and other experts. Baccio da Montelupo competed against Zaccaria Zacchi, who subsequently became his close friend, the young Jacopo Sansovino, an artist

celebrated by the judges for providing the most beautiful model, and Baccio Bandinelli, who ultimately won the competition thanks to the intercession of Averardo da Filicaia, an influential man affiliated with the house of Medici.²⁴

That this Virgin and Child is indeed Baccio da Montelupo's Mercato Nuovo competition prototype is further supported by its affinity to a small gilt sculpture in wax and canvas of the same subject matter at similar scale at the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest, which critics believe is the model Sansovino submitted for the same competition (fig. 9).²⁵ Like Sansovino, Baccio portrays the Virgin with a regal and monumental posture atop an architectural plinth, wrapped in a sumptuous cloak, her right hand holding a restless, precariously perched baby Jesus. The differences between the two masters nevertheless appear clear. The sinuous twists and haughty posture place the work of Sansovino, the younger artist, squarely within the innovative style of Mannerism, while in Baccio's work (fig. 5) the drapery is more detailed, the Christ Child is held in closer, and Mary's posture is more magniloquent, wrapped in a denser, crisper cloth that enhances her monumentality and imbues her with the severe classicism typical of an old master still deeply rooted in the fifteenth-century Florentine tradition.

Baccio's work is sculpted in very high relief, not fully in the round; because the

²³David Lucidi, "Contributi a Baccio da Montelupo scultore in terracotta," in *Nuovi Studi XVIII* (2013–2014), 70–71, 94 note 204, figs. 89 and 91.

See also Lucidi, *Baccio*, 184–189.

²⁴Vasari recalls Jacopo Sansovino as follows: "Ma se bene gli fu perciò allogata questa opera, fu nondimeno indugiato tanto a provedergli e condurgli il marmo per opera et invidia d'Averardo da Filicaia, il quale favoriva grandemente il Bandinello et odiava il Sansovino...". See Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de più eccellenti pittori, scultori et architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, Rosanna Bettarini and Paola Barocchi eds., 9 vol. (Florence: Sansoni, 1966–1997), vol. VI (1987), 179; Bruce Boucher, *The sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*, 2 vol. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), vol. II, 319, cat. 8.

²⁵Boucher, *Sansovino*; Massimo Ferretti, "Maestro dei bambini irrequieti," in *Per la storia della scultura. Materiali inediti e poco noti*, Massimo Ferretti ed. (Turin: Allemandi, 1992), 46.

back is a solid plane, cut with wire when the clay was still wet, it was to be viewed on only three sides. The artist therefore imagined it would be placed against a wall or in an architectural niche, similar to the arrangement seen in the painting made in 1571 by Alessandro Fei for the Studiolo di Francesco I in Palazzo Vecchio (fig. 10). In a probable allusion to Vasari's *Nuovi Uffizi*, built between 1560 and 1565, Fei depicts a late sixteenth-century building with a niche featuring a Virgin and Child. Given the statue's clear similarities to Sansovino's Budapest Madonna, this painting appears to evoke precisely the setting Sansovino—and, by extension, all the artists involved in the competition, including Baccio—envisioned for the Mercato Nuovo.



Fig. 10) Alessandro Fei, *La fucina dell'orafo* (The Goldsmith's Forge), detail, 1571. Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

We cannot be absolutely certain that this work is the exact same one Baccio submitted for the competition. In all likelihood he was well aware of the attention the public lavished on the submitted sculptures, and subsequently made it the centerpiece of a series of devotional works created to satisfy local market demand. This piece was probably intended for veneration on a private altar or within a church chapel, so would have left the artist's workshop embellished with an evocative, lifelike polychromy it has since lost, and would likely have been placed within a painted and finely gilt wooden tabernacle. Because Baccio's large workshop was multifaceted, with several assistants specialized in wood carving and painting, all such additional work would have been done in-house. Given this sculpture's degree of finesse, we can reasonably deduce that this subject matter enjoyed special attention from the master himself: note the extraordinarily delicate sensitivity of the Virgin's face, crowned by an aristocratic coiffure held in place by a



Fig. 11) Baccio da Montelupo, *Madonna col Bambino*, also known as the *Madonna del Mercato Nuovo* (Virgin and Child), Detail, ca. 1511–1512.



Fig. 12) Baccio da Montelupo, *San Sebastiano* (Saint Sebastian), ca. 1506–1508. Badia di San Godenzo. ©Claudio Giusti

narrow band and solid concentric braid in the rear (fig. 11). The figure of the Christ Child is equally natural, his facial expression curious and lively, his innocent body plump and charming. The artist's meticulous attention to such details is equally matched by his thoughtful execution of the work as a whole. The statue was carefully hollowed out on the reverse—behind the chest, where the clay would have been thickest—so as to make the piece more lightweight, reduce potential fractures, and ensure the piece was evenly fired. Indeed, when Baccio went up against Sansovino yet again, during the competition to create a sculpture of Saint John the Evangelist for Orsanmichele, Baccio beat his young rival precisely because of the technical perfection with which he made the clay model submitted to the jury.²⁶

Regarding its attribution, the fact that Baccio's hand created this work is confirmed by its extraordinary similarity to other works of his datable to the years surrounding the Mercato Nuovo competition. This Virgin and Child is a continuation of the artistic path of development Baccio began with his sculpture of Saint Sebastian for the Abbey of San Godenzo (1506) (fig. 12), wherein the anatomical listlessness and Savonarolaesque poignance of his early Florentine production appear to shift toward a more balanced classicism, with accentuation of the figures' volume in space and more abstract, linear physical features. This becomes especially clear in comparison with several other works: the marble Mars

²⁶Vasari, *Le Vite*, 1878–1885 ed., vol. IV (1879), 540–541.



Fig. 13) Baccio da Montelupo, *Marte (Mars)*, detail from the funerary monument to Benedetto Pesaro, ca. 1506–1508. Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. Courtesy of the Curia Patriarcale di Venezia, Ufficio Beni Culturali ©Mauro Magliani



Baccio sculpted in mid-1508 for the monument to Benedetto Pesaro in Venice's Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari (fig. 13); the old-style bust now in a private collection, which has also been dated to the end of the first or beginning of the second decade of the sixteenth century and is perhaps an apostle or ancient philosopher (figs. 19, 23); and the glazed terracotta statues completed in Lucca over those same years (figs. 14, 16, 24–26).

All these works have very expanded, extremely round shapes, elastic-looking, finely smoothed skin, and sharp, minimalist physical features set amid uniformly soft-looking flesh (figs. 14–16). This gives the figures their archetypal dreamy gaze, which exudes the high moral purity and sacredness so characteristic of all the works of this historical juncture and returns again in the later works from Baccio's time in Lucca, such as the bust of Christ in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (fig. 20), the Christ from the tabernacle of Segromigno Monte (fig. 21), and the Virgin and Child now at the Bargello Museum.²⁷ Moreover, comparing the Virgin and Child of San Concordio (figs. 16, 24) with both the current work (fig. 5) and the glazed terracotta version in the church of Santi Biagio e Donato in the Carraia neighborhood of Capannori (figs. 14, 27), a very recent addition to Baccio's oeuvre datable to the late 1520s,²⁸ it becomes clear that the figure of the Christ Child—with his distinctively huddled, toddling posture, his

rigidly raised torso, his head firmly facing forward, and his awkward propped-up position—is modeled on the same anatomical prototype the artist carefully replicated, with only slight variations, over the course of a decade (figs. 14, 16, 24). These details later became a hallmark of the work made by Baccio's son Raffaello da Montelupo, as can be seen in the figure of the Virgin and Child in the Adoration of the Magi on the south elevation of the Holy House of Loreto and in the terracotta statuary group of Pieve Santo Stefano in the province of Arezzo.²⁹

Even the drapery, fashioned in broad swaths with indented surfaces and sharp borders, exhibits obvious similarities with other, slightly later works by Baccio. The most telling comparison is with his Saint John the Evangelist in Orsanmichele, his most famous work executed between 1513 and 1515 (figs. 6, 18). In this Virgin and Child, Mary's mantle features a similar swirling, which anticipates the uniquely dynamic look of Saint John's tunic in the later work. Although when viewed frontally the sharp, well-paced ductus of the latter's robes resemble an almost neo-Ghibertian approach, when viewed from the side they instead hint at the solemn classicism of this sculpture, especially in the drapery's jutting, crisp, geometric ridges and broad valleys (figs. 17, 18).

²⁷Lucidi, Baccio, chapter 7.

²⁸Lucidi, Baccio, 443–444, cat. 37.

²⁹See Stefano Casciu's contribution to *Mater Christi. Altissime testimonianze del culto della Vergine nel territorio aretino nel secondo centenario della Madonna del Conforto*, Anna Maria Maetzke et al. eds. (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 1996), 81–82, cat. 83.



Fig. 14) Baccio da Montelupo and the workshop of Andrea della Robbia, *Madonna col Bambino* (*Virgin and Child*) detail, 1515–1518. Santi Donato e Biagio in Carraia, Capannori Lucca. Courtesy of the Arcidiocesi di Lucca, Ufficio per l'Arte Sacra e i Beni Culturali



Left Fig. 15) Baccio da Montelupo, *Madonna col Bambino*, also known as the *Madonna del Mercato Nuovo* (*Virgin and Child*) detail, ca. 1511–1512. Right Fig. 16) Baccio da Montelupo, *Madonna col Bambino*, (*Virgin and Child*) detail, 1515–1518. San Concordio in Contrada, Lucca. Courtesy of the Arcidiocesi di Lucca, Ufficio per l'Arte Sacra e i Beni Culturali

Fig. 17) Baccio da Montelupo, *Madonna col Bambino*, also known as the *Madonna del Mercato Nuovo* (*Virgin and Child*), ca. 1511–1512. Blumka, New York and Kunsthandlung Julius Böhler, Starnberg



Fig. 18) Baccio da Montelupo, *San Giovanni Evangelista* (*Saint John the Evangelist*), 1515. Museo di Orsanmichele, Florence. Courtesy of the Ministero della Cultura, Museo Nazionale del Bargello ©Claudio Giusti

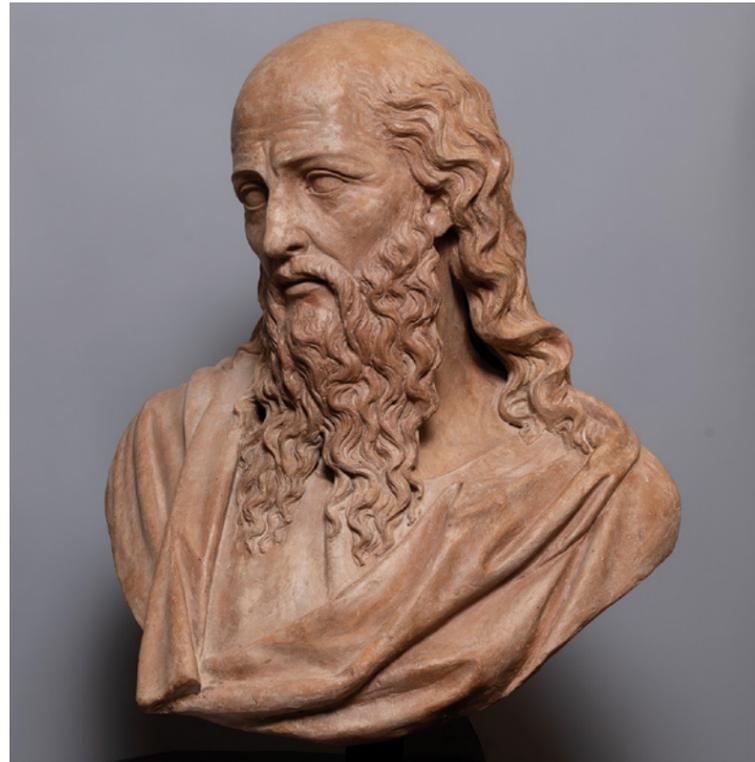


Fig. 19) Baccio da Montelupo, *Busto di Apostolo o Filosofo antico* (Bust of an Apostle or Ancient Philosopher) 1508–1510. Private collection, Milan. ©Claudio Giusti

The Sculptures of Baccio da Montelupo

Our understanding of who Baccio da Montelupo was began taking shape in the early nineteenth century, with the first organized studies of Italian Renaissance sculpture.³⁰ Three centuries earlier, Giorgio Vasari had included a brief biography of Baccio in his two editions of *Lives of the Artists* (1550 and 1568), which became the starting point for reconstructing the artist's career.³¹ Although Vasari's book provided rich anecdotal details, it addressed only limited periods of the artist's career; it focused on events that were chronologically closest to Vasari's own life, or that had the strongest resonance in the city's oral tradition, while leaving out several fundamental periods of Baccio's artistic career. Many other scholars subsequently researched Baccio's life and work, including: Gaetano Milanesi, who greatly enriched the biography with additional documents;³² Adolfo Venturi, who devoted a significant chapter to Baccio in his *Storia dell'Arte italiana*; and early twentieth-century historians from Del Vita to Fabriczy, Poggi, and Filippini,³³ whose discoveries led to the recovery and reattribution of valuable sculptures including a *Compianto* in Bologna, a *Crocifisso* in Arezzo, and a *San Sebastiano* in San Godenzo. But even after all their research, our portrait of Baccio da Montelupo remained incomplete. Until just

a few years ago, the only well-known aspect of Baccio's life and work was his career as a devout artist, strongly linked to Savonarolian spirituality, in service of the city's religious institutions.³⁴

All that has changed with research conducted over the past twenty-five years,³⁵ recently collected in a monograph offering an entirely new portrait of the artist.³⁶ More than any other sculptor of his day, Baccio both embodied and re-envisioned the fifteenth-century artistic tradition by placing himself at the head of an industrious, multifaceted workshop specialized in terracotta modeling, marble and stone statuary, wax working, wood carving, bronze casting, decorative stonework, and architecture. Compared to his peers, over the course of his long career he charted a unique course—continually renewing his skills, coming into dialogue with younger artists, and competing with new generations—which in turn secured him a leading role in all the major artistic movements in Florence between 1490 and 1520.³⁷

The first phase of his career, devoted to Savonarola's beliefs, featured magniloquent works of great emotional intensity, such as the *Compianto* in the church of San Domenico in Bologna, as well as highly dramatic works, such as the sumptuous wooden *Crocifisso* in the church of San Mar-

³⁰ Leopoldo Cicognara, *Storia della scultura dal suo risorgimento in Italia fino al secolo di Canova per servire di continuazione alle opere di Winckelmann e di D'Agincourt*, 8 vol. (Prato: Giachetti, 1823–1825), vol. V (1825), 194–195.

³¹ Vasari, *Le Vite*, 1966–1997 ed., vol. IV (1976).

³² Gaetano Milanesi in Vasari, *Le Vite*, 1878–1885 ed., vol. IV (1879), 539–549.

³³ Adolfo Venturi, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, 25 vol. (Milan: Hoepli, 1901–1940), vol. X (1935), 87–92. Alessandro Del Vita, "Di un *Crocifisso* di Baccio da Montelupo ritrovato nella chiesa di Santa Fiora e Lucilla in Arezzo," in *Rivista d'Arte* VII (1910), 90–92; Cornelius von Fabriczy, "Sculpture in legno di Baccio da Montelupo," in *Miscellanea d'arte* IV (1903), 67–68; Giovanni Poggi, "Opere d'arte ignote o poco note. Un S. Sebastiano di Baccio da Montelupo nella Badia di S. Godenzo," in *Rivista d'Arte* 6 (1909), 133–135; Francesco Filippini, "Baccio da Montelupo," in *Dedalo* VIII (1927–1928), 527–542.

³⁴ Riccardo Gatteschi, *Baccio da Montelupo, scultore e architetto del Cinquecento* (Florence: Tosca, 1993).

³⁵ J. D. Turner, *The sculpture of Baccio da Montelupo* (Providence: Brown University PhD Thesis, 1997); Lucidi, "Contributi," 51–101; Ceccanti, *Baccio*.

³⁶ Lucidi, *Baccio*.

³⁷ Lucidi, *Baccio*.

³⁸ Lucidi, *Baccio*, 398–402, cat. 2, 4.

co in Florence.³⁸ These works, peppered with erudite references to classical statuary and contemporary masters, attest to the main crucibles of Baccio's artistic formation: the Giardino di San Marco and the workshop of Benedetto da Maiano. He produced many statuary groups in this early phase of his career, both small-scale as well as monumental: the former tended to depict hermit saints set in highly realistic yet extraordinarily inventive natural settings; the latter included many Pietà and Compianto scenes.³⁹ Such subject matter was intended for use in important places of worship, both in Florence and throughout its surrounding countryside, and formed the leitmotif of Baccio's work even in his later years.⁴⁰ Throughout his career, Baccio brought terracotta to life, creating a vast oeuvre of statues, high-relief sculptures,



Fig. 20) Baccio da Montelupo, *Busto di Cristo* (Bust of Christ), 1515–1520. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

and busts decorating altars, chapels, and roadside tabernacles. The portrait bust in the Museum of Palazzo Venezia in Rome, which was perhaps part of the San Godenzo cycle, and the extraordinary bust of Christ at the Victoria and Albert in London attest to the fact that even his sculptures which might appear entirely secular found use in spiritual settings (fig. 20).

But Baccio was not an exclusively religious sculptor, either. His training in classical statuary provided a solid foundation for the creation of new secular pieces as well, as can be seen in numerous works, including: the composed, monumental classicism of the marble Mars he created for the Pesaro tomb in Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari (fig. 13);

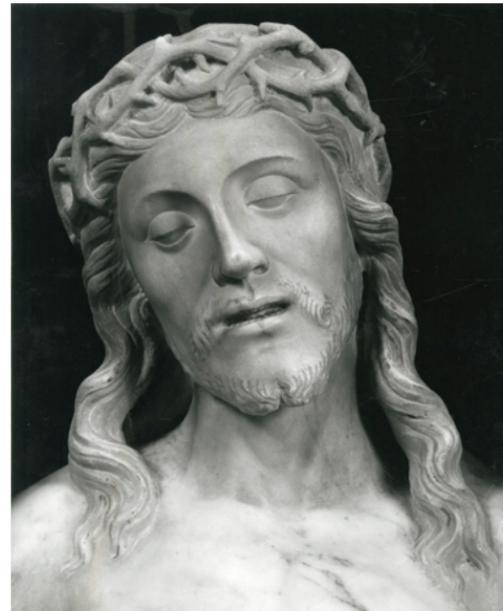


Fig. 21) Baccio da Montelupo, *Cristo redentore* (Christ the Savior), detail from the *Tabernacolo eucaristico* (Eucharistic Tabernacle), 1518–1519. San Lorenzo, Segromigno Monte Lucca. Courtesy of the Arcidiocesi di Lucca, Ufficio per l'Arte Sacra e i Beni Culturali

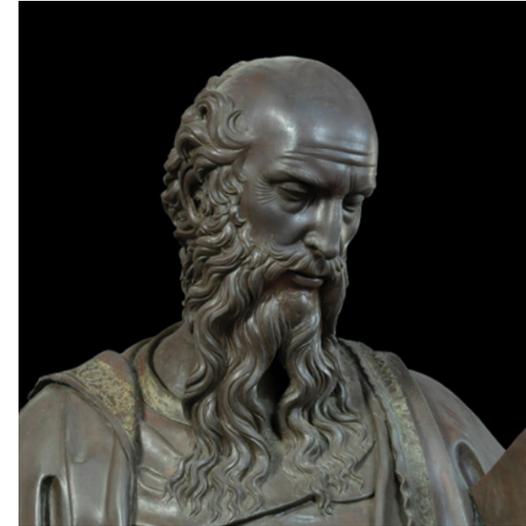


Fig. 22) Baccio da Montelupo, *San Giovanni Evangelista* (Saint John the Evangelist), 1515. Museo di Orsanmichele, Florence. Courtesy of the Ministero della Cultura, Museo Nazionale del Bargello ©Claudio Giusti

the Hercules commissioned by Pierfrancesco de' Medici, probably around 1513; the face of his Saint John the Evangelist in Orsanmichele (fig. 22), whose lifelike skin and deeply psychological characteristics are explicitly reminiscent of his portrait of an ancient philosopher (fig. 23); and the old-style bust we can reasonably consider a kind of preliminary draft for his later Orsanmichele sculpture (fig. 22). Baccio also designed a number of imposing funerary monuments in marble, including two tombs for the Pandolfini-Bini and Gigli families, as well as sculptural embellishments for architecture, including the as-yet-unidentified project for which Michelangelo gave him the four aforementioned marble blocks. Baccio's monuments, now for the most part either lost or extremely fragmentary, would have

shown us the vast repertoire of classical motifs he drew upon and allowed us to more fully understand his evocative artistic sensibilities.

As already mentioned, he also participated in highly prestigious, public competitions that had a significant impact on the art of his time.

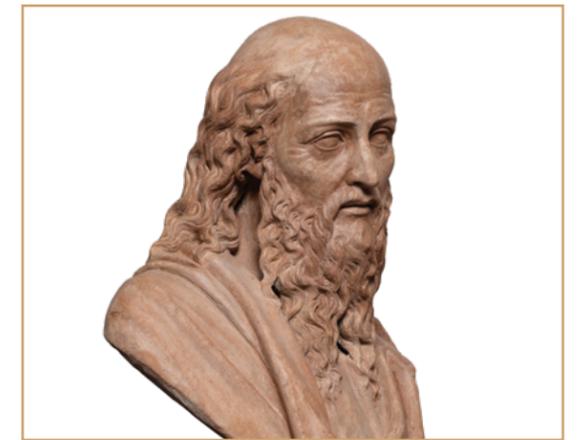


Fig. 23) Baccio da Montelupo, *Busto di Apostolo o Filosofo antico* (Bust of an Apostle or Ancient Philosopher) 1508–1510. Private collection, Milan. ©Claudio Giusti

The innovation first seen in this particular Virgin and Child (fig. 5)—which you will recall was his submission to the Mercato Nuovo competition—is essential to understanding the artist's evolution, especially in the field of monumental statuary. It allows us to understand the shift in his style around 1505, as he began to abandon the anatomical listlessness and overly dramatic simplicity of his Savonarolaesque period in favor of a calm, monumental, sober classicism. The present work is one of his highest achievements from the latter phase: it marks an evolution with respect to his Mars in Venice (fig. 13); is a precursor of his Saint John the Evangelist

³⁹Lucidi, Baccio, chapter 3.

⁴⁰See also the *Compianti* in the churches of San Francesco a Greve in Chianti and San Salvatore in Florence, from ca. 1505–1510 and ca. 1515–1520, respectively: Lucidi, Baccio, 424–426, cat. 21; 438–439, cat. 33.



Fig. 24)
Baccio da
Montelupo, *Madonna
col Bambino*
(*Virgin and Child*)
1508–1510.
San Concordio in
Contrada, Lucca.
Courtesy of the Arcidiocesi
di Lucca, Ufficio per l'Arte
Sacra e i Beni Culturali



Fig. 25)
Baccio da
Montelupo,
San Pellegrino
(*Saint Peregrin*)
1508–1510.
San Concordio in
Contrada, Lucca.
Courtesy of the
Arcidiocesi di Lucca,
Ufficio per l'Arte
Sacra e i
Beni Culturali

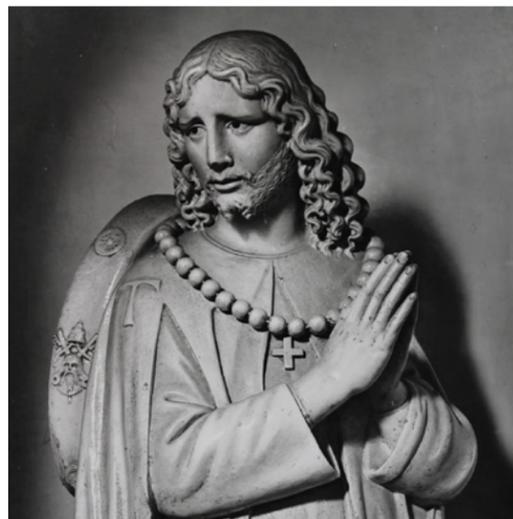


Fig. 26)
Baccio da
Montelupo,
San Romano
(*Saint Roman*)
1508–1510.
San Concordio in
Contrada, Lucca.
Courtesy of the
Arcidiocesi di Lucca,
Ufficio per l'Arte
Sacra e i
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Fig. 27) *Madonna col Bambino*
(*Virgin and Child*)
1515–1518. Santi Donato e Biagio
in Carrara, Capannori Lucca.
Courtesy of the Arcidiocesi di Lucca,
Ufficio per l'Arte Sacra e i Beni Culturali

(figs. 6, 18, 22); and is a key piece in confirming the attribution of the exquisite glazed Virgin and Child of Capannori (figs. 14, 27).

Works such as this one—also known as the *Madonna del Mercato Nuovo*, the conventional name by which it will henceforth be known—were also essential to the development of Mannerism. It influenced both the painting and sculpture of the time, especially through the work of artists such as Fra' Bartolomeo and Mariotto Albertinelli, who were in close contact with Baccio. Like Baccio, both were champions of the sober, balanced, monumental classicism fostered within the school of thought that had sprung up in the Giardino di San Marco; and because both often received commissions requiring that they measure up to the most illustrious standards of works in clay and terracotta, Baccio served as a perfect interlocutor.

Baccio's history would be incomplete without mention of his long collaboration with Andrea della Robbia's workshop. Beginning in the late fifteenth century at the Giardino di San Marco, when Baccio met two of Andrea's sons—Fra' Mattia and Fra' Ambrogio—their collaboration continued into his later years, as evidenced by the statues for the church of San Concordio in Lucca (figs. 24–26) and the *Virgin and Child of Capannori* (fig. 27).

Lastly, we cannot definitively rule out the possibility that this particular *Virgin and Child*, now devoid of its original coloration, may have initially been conceived of as a glazed terracotta sculpture, much like its sister version in Lucca.

-David Lucidi

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