

LORENZO DE' MEDICI COLLECTOR AND ANTIQUARIAN

Lorenzo de' Medici was a key figure in creating "The Renaissance." A patron of the arts in fifteenth-century Florence, he dedicated himself even more to collecting objects from the past, documented in 173 unknown letters published here for the first time. This material provides the most ample picture of an early collector. Lorenzo acquired ancient sculptures to embellish his palace, but his predilection was for small objects – coins, hardstone vases, and gems. He collected objects from post-Antique times as well. To build his collection Lorenzo developed contacts that spanned Italy, France, and the Levant. However, his main source was the Roman dealer Giovanni Ciampolini, whose scandalous behavior demonstrates gamesmanship in the art market, true then as now. The book reveals how objects were studied, where they were displayed, the criteria for selecting them, and their monetary worth, and it examines the public and private sides of Lorenzo as a collector. After his death, others were eager to obtain his objects, and information about early collectors highlights where the collector Lorenzo was unique.

Laurie Fusco is a scholar of Italian Renaissance art. Formerly Head of Scholarly Programs and Senior Lecturer at the J. Paul Getty Museum, she is a recipient of grants from the College Art Association, the Fulbright-Hays Foundation, I Tatti, and the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.

Gino Corti is the most noted paleographer in Florence, where he has worked in public and private archives for more than sixty years. He has published many articles and books about his findings in the archives and is cited by innumerable scholars who have written about the Italian Renaissance. He is Professor Emeritus at I Tatti.



LORENZO DE' MEDICI
COLLECTOR AND ANTIQUARIAN

LAURIE FUSCO
GINO CORTI

Cambridge University Press
 0521452457 - Lorenzo de' Medici: Collector and Antiquarian
 Laurie Fusco and Gino Corti
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521452458

© Laurie Fusco and Gino Corti 2006

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2006

Printed in Hong Kong by Golden Cup

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Fusco, Laurie S. (Laurie Smith)
 Lorenzo de' Medici, collector and antiquarian / Laurie Fusco, Gino Corti.
 p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-45245-7 (HB)

1. Medici, Lorenzo de', 1449-1492 - Art collections. 2. Art - Private collections - Italy - Florence. 3. Art - Collectors and collecting - Italy - Florence - History - 15th century. 4. Antiquities - Collection and preservation - History - 15th century. I. Corti, Gino. II. Title.

N5273.2.M43F87 2004
 709'.2 - dc22 2003055506

ISBN-13 978-0-521-45245-8 hardback
 ISBN-10 0-521-45245-7 hardback

Publication of this book has been aided by a grant from the Millard Meiss Publication Fund of the College Art Association.



Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
0521452457 - Lorenzo de' Medici: Collector and Antiquarian
Laurie Fusco and Gino Corti
Frontmatter
[More information](#)



TO RUTH O. RUBINSTEIN
AND NICOLAI RUBINSTEIN



CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	page xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xvii
<i>Prologue: The Documents</i>	xix
INTRODUCTION	1
I THE FIRST PERIOD OF COLLECTING: 1465–1483	5
I. The Adolescent Years	5
II. Access to Paul II's Collection via Sixtus IV	6
III. Continued Efforts	10
2 THE SECOND PERIOD OF COLLECTING AND LORENZO'S SOURCES: 1484–1492	13
I. The Medici Bank	13
II. Diplomatic Gifts and Politics	15
III. Lorenzo's Network	17
Rome and Ostia	17
Tuscany	18
The Northeastern Coast and Northern Italy	19
Naples	19
Beyond Italy	19
Humanists	19
Artists	20
Dealers	21
3 BEHAVIOR IN THE ART MARKET	22
I. Sellers	22
II. Buyers	25
4 THE OBJECTS COLLECTED	29
I. Sculpture: Heads and Busts	29
II. Sculpture: Statues and Reliefs	35

III. Archaeological Objects	65
IV. Architectural Fragments (<i>spoglie</i>)	68
V. Marble Vessels	69
VI. “ <i>Pezzi</i> ”	70
VII. Ancient Ceramics	72
VIII. Medieval and Renaissance Objects	73
The Byzantine Sacred Stone	73
Byzantine Mosaics	74
Renaissance Mosaics	75
The <i>Reliquary of the “Libretto”</i>	77
Ceramics	78
Metalwork	80
Tapestries	82
Medals	83
IX. Coins	83
X. Hardstone Vases	92
XI. Gems	94
Summary	106
5 CONTEMPLATING THE OBJECTS	108
I. Learning	108
II. The Display of Objects	110
III. Criteria for Selecting Objects	114
Novelty and Rarity	114
Condition	115
Carving	117
Complexity of Composition	118
The Play of Light on Hardstones and Gems	118
IV. Materials and Monetary Worth of Objects	120
Low End: Ceramics and Coins	120
Middle Range: Damascene and “ <i>Alla</i> <i>Domaschina</i> ” Metalwork, Byzantine Mosaics, and Ancient Sculpture	121
High End: Hardstone Vases and Gems, the <i>Tazza</i> <i>Farnese</i> , and the <i>Reliquary of the “Libretto”</i>	123
Summary: The Hierarchy of Lorenzo’s Objects	129
6 THE IMAGE OF LORENZO AS A COLLECTOR AND ANTIQUARIAN	131
I. Assessing the Evidence for Lorenzo’s Commitment	131
Texts: A Historiography of the Image of Lorenzo	131
II. Letters	133
III. Lorenzo’s Dual Roles as Patron and Collector	135
Sponsorship of Crafts	136
Artists’ Study of Lorenzo’s Antiquities	141
Arbiter of Artistic Taste	145
Patronage Vis-à-vis Collecting	145

iv. The Function of the Collection	147
Public	147
Shared	148
Private	149
v. Connoisseurship	155
7 THE FATE OF LORENZO'S COLLECTION FOLLOWING THE FRENCH INVASION OF FLORENCE IN 1494	159
i. The Sack of the Properties of the Medici and Their Partisans	159
ii. The Arrival of the French and Charles VIII's Support of Piero de' Medici	162
iii. Confiscation of Property	163
iv. The Signoria's Contract with the Medici Banks in Rome and Florence	165
v. Auctions	166
vi. Objects Rescued by Partisans	167
vii. Business Between the Signoria and the Medici Banks in Florence and Rome	170
viii. Appropriation of Objects for Decorating Palazzo della Signoria	171
ix. Return of the Medici	172
x. Lorenzo's Objects and Later Collectors	174
8 LORENZO IN THE CONTEXT OF COLLECTING	178
i. Lorenzo's Periods of Collecting: 1465–1483 and 1484–1492	178
ii. The Medici Bank and the Financing of Acquisitions by Other Collectors	179
iii. Humanists	180
iv. Artists	182
v. The Behavior of Sellers	184
vi. The Behavior of Buyers	185
vii. Illegal Exportation	187
viii. The Objects Collected	189
ix. The Display of Objects	191
x. Copies and Fakes	195
Casts and Impressions of Gems	195
Casts of Coins	197
Casts of Sculptures	197
Fakes	197
xi. Monetary Worth of Objects	198
Coins	198
Hardstone Vases	199
Gems	200
Sculpture	201
The Unreliability of Documents	202

xii. Function of the Collection	204
xiii. Connoisseurship	207
CONCLUSION	212
<i>Notes</i>	215
<i>Appendix I. Letters (Docs. 1–197)</i>	281
<i>Appendix II. Texts (Docs. 198–286)</i>	334
<i>Appendix III. Inventories (Docs. 287–320)</i>	375
<i>Bibliography</i>	389
<i>Index</i>	401



ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATES

Plates follow page 190.

- I Alexandrian, *Tazza Farnese*, sardonyx-agate, inside of bowl
- II Syrian, *Incense Burner*, beaten brass inlaid with gold and silver
- III Late Antique, *Small Vase*, sardonyx
- IV Roman, *Phaethon Driving the Chariot of Helios*, cornelian intaglio
- V Medieval, *Ark of Noah*, onyx cameo
- VI Sassanian (or Sassanian influence), *Pitcher*, sardonyx
- VII Fatamid, *Vase with a Cover*, jasper
- VIII Late fifteenth century, *Double Cup*, jasper
- IX Roman, possibly Aspasios or his workshop, *Poseidon and Athena Contesting over the Rulership of Attica*, onyx-sardonyx/onyx-agate/sardonyx cameo

FIGURES

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1 Alexandrian, <i>Tazza Farnese</i> , sardonyx-agate, bottom of bowl | <i>page 7</i> |
| 2 Alexandrian, <i>Tazza Farnese</i> , sardonyx-agate, in profile, engraving | 7 |
| 3 Roman, Dioskourides, <i>Diomedes and the Palladium</i> , chalcedony intaglio, recorded in a plaster cast | 8 |
| 4 Roman, <i>Hadrian</i> , marble | 31 |
| 5 Roman, <i>Head of Jupiter</i> , bronze | 32 |
| 6 Bertoldo, <i>Tempesta</i> , stucco frieze | 33 |
| 7 Roman, <i>Augustus</i> , marble | 34 |
| 8 Roman, <i>Agrippa</i> , marble | 34 |
| 9 Giovanni della Robbia, <i>Three Heads in a Garland</i> , polychromed enameled terra-cotta | 34 |
| 10 Ancient, <i>Head of a Horse</i> , bronze, Florence | 36 |
| 11 Ancient or fifteenth century, <i>Head of a Horse</i> , bronze, Naples | 36 |
| 12 Antonio Bulifon, <i>Palazzo Carafa</i> , woodcut | 37 |

xii  LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

13	Hellenistic, <i>Marsyas</i> , marble	40
14	Antonio da Sangallo the Elder, drawing in Codex Geymüller	40
15	Zanobi Lastricati (attrib.), drawing in Codex Resta	41
16	Roman, <i>Sleeping Cupid</i> , marble	42
17	Roman, <i>Sleeping Cupid</i> , marble	42
18	Roman, <i>Sleeping Cupid</i> , marble	42
19	Ancient or sixteenth century, after an ancient prototype, <i>Black Sleeping Cupid</i> , black marble	43
20	Renaissance, <i>Sleeping Cupid</i> , engraving	43
21	Sixteenth century, <i>Sleeping Cupid</i> , marble	43
22	View looking down at <i>Sleeping Cupid</i> in Figure 25	46
23	<i>Sleeping Cupids</i> and a <i>Putto</i> , drawing	47
24	Domenico Fetti, <i>Vertumnus and Pomona</i> , painting	47
25	Ancient or sixteenth century, after an ancient prototype, <i>Sleeping Cupid</i> , marble	50
26	Sixteenth century(?), <i>Sleeping Cupid</i> , marble	50
27	Andrea Solario (attrib.), <i>Sleeping Cupid</i> , drawing	50
28	Greek, <i>Sleeping Cupid</i> , bronze	51
29	Federico Zuccari (c. 1540/42–1609), drawing of Roman <i>Sleeping Cupid</i>	51
30	Francisco de Hollanda, drawing of Roman <i>Sleeping Cupid</i>	51
31	Roman, <i>Three Fauns Struggling with a Serpent</i> , marble	53
32	Detail of Figure 31	54
33	Antonio Pollaiuolo, <i>Battle of the Nudes</i> , engraving	54
34	Details of Figure 31	55
35	Michelangelo, <i>Battle of the Centaurs</i> , marble	55
36	Roman copy of a Greek bronze of the Late Classical period, <i>Apollo Belvedere</i> , marble	57
37	Hellenistic, <i>Cupid Shooting an Arrow</i> , marble	58
38	Hellenistic, <i>Cupid Shooting an Arrow</i> , marble	58
39	Antico, <i>Cupid Shooting an Arrow</i> , bronze, Florence	59
40	Antico, <i>Cupid Shooting an Arrow</i> , bronze, Florence	59
41	Antico, <i>Cupid Shooting an Arrow</i> , bronze, Amsterdam	59
42	Antico, <i>Cupid Shooting an Arrow</i> , bronze, Amsterdam	59
43	Ancient, <i>Head of a Faun</i> , marble	60
44	Bertoldo, <i>Jurgium</i> , stucco frieze	60
45	Florentine artist close to Bertoldo and Michelangelo, <i>Bust of a Satyr</i> , bronze	60
46	Ottavio Vannini, <i>Michelangelo Presenting the “Head of a Faun” to Lorenzo de’ Medici</i> , fresco	61
47	Florentine, <i>Mask of a Faun</i> , marble	61
48	Michelangelo, <i>Tomb of Giuliano de’ Medici</i> , marble	61
49	Giorgio Vasari, <i>Lorenzo de’ Medici</i> , oil on wood	61
50	Roman (with right half restored, possibly by Bertoldo), <i>Antinous</i> , marble	62
51	Bertoldo, <i>Temple of Janus</i> , glazed terra-cotta frieze	63

52	Roman, "Hunter with a Dog," end of a <i>Meleager</i> sarcophagus, marble	63
53	Roman, <i>Two Heroes in Colloquy</i> , marble	64
54	Bertoldo, <i>Magnanimitas</i> , stucco frieze	65
55	Roman, "Hunter with a Dog," end of a <i>Meleager</i> sarcophagus, marble	65
56	Roman, <i>Putti Carrying the Thunderbolt</i> (now missing one figure), from the <i>Throne of Jupiter</i> , marble	66
57	Fifteenth century after the antique, <i>Kairòs</i> , marble	67
58	Roman, <i>Consul</i> , marble	69
59	Bertoldo, <i>Quies</i> , stucco frieze	70
60	Antico, <i>Hercules Resting After Slaying the Nemean Lion</i> , bronze plaquette	70
61	North Italian (circle of Antico), <i>Hercules</i> , bronze	70
62	Artist in Florence and Rome, <i>Hercules</i> , recto of drawing	71
63	Artist in Florence and Rome, the <i>Ignudo della Paura</i> , verso of drawing	71
64	Byzantine (probably Venetian), <i>Portable Altar</i> (the "Sacred Stone"), red jasper with panels of mother-of-pearl and colored jaspers, some painted	72
65	Byzantine, <i>Christ</i> , mosaic	75
66	French, <i>Reliquary of the "Libretto"</i> , enameled gold polyptych with illuminations	76
67	Chinese, <i>Basin</i> , celadon	79
68	Eastern Italy, <i>Fragment of a Plate or Shallow Bowl</i> , maiolica	80
69	Renaissance artist in Padua, <i>Wine Cooler with a Frieze of Marine Creatures</i> , bronze	81
70	Syrian, <i>Incense Burner</i> , beaten brass with silver inlay	81
71	Andrea Guacialoti (attrib.), <i>Pope Pius II</i> , bronze medal	84
72	Emiliano Orfini and Andrea da Viterbo (attrib.), <i>Pope Paul II</i> , bronze medal	84
73	Bertoldo, <i>Filippo de' Medici</i> , bronze medal, obverse	85
74	<i>Last Judgment</i> , reverse of Figure 73	85
75	Roman Renaissance artist, <i>Pope Paul II in Public Consistory</i> , bronze medal, obverse	85
76	<i>Last Judgment</i> , reverse of Figure 75	85
77	Roman, <i>Antoninus Pius</i> , bronze coin, obverse	86
78	<i>Inhabitants of the Aventine Thanking Hercules for Slaying Cacus</i> , reverse of Figure 77	86
79	Roman, <i>Faustina Augustus</i> , gold coin, obverse	88
80	<i>Concordia</i> , reverse of Figure 79	88
81	Roman, <i>Brutus</i> , silver coin, obverse	88
82	<i>The Cap of Liberty Between Two Daggers</i> , reverse of Figure 81	88
83	Roman, <i>Quirinus</i> , silver coin, obverse	89
84	<i>Ceres</i> , reverse of Figure 83	89
85	Roman, <i>Domitian</i> , silver coin, obverse	89

xiv  LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

86	<i>Stele</i> , reverse of Figure 85	89
87	Attavante, Herodian's <i>Historiae</i> , manuscript	90
88	Roman, <i>Trajan</i> , bronze coin, obverse	91
89	<i>Triumphal Trajan</i> , reverse of Figure 88	91
90	Fifteenth-century Florentine, <i>Lorenzo de' Medici</i> , bronze medal, obverse	91
91	<i>Triumphal Figure</i> , reverse of Figure 90	91
92	Fifteenth century, <i>Cup</i> , jasper	94
93	Fifteenth century, <i>Cup</i> , jasper	94
94	Fifteenth century, <i>Cup</i> , jasper	94
95	Fifteenth century, <i>Lower Cup</i> of a <i>Double Cup</i> , missing its <i>Upper Cup</i> , jasper	95
96	Sixteenth-century drawing showing the <i>Lower Cup</i> and <i>Upper Cup</i> of Figure 95	95
97	Fifteenth century, <i>Double Cup</i> , jasper, drawing	95
98	Fifteenth century, <i>Double Cup</i> , jasper, drawing	95
99	Gori, <i>Gemmae antiquae</i> , engraving, detail of <i>Nymph Hippa</i>	98
100	Renaissance, <i>Martelli Mirror</i> , bronze with gold and silver	98
101	Alexandrian, <i>Tazza Farnese</i> , sardonyx-agate	99
102	Gems of <i>Phaethon</i> , engravings	100
103	First half of the fifteenth century, mount on the reverse of the <i>Ark of Noah</i> cameo illustrated in Plate V	101
104	Fifteenth-century Florentine, <i>Caracalla</i> , bronze plaquette	101
105	Attavante or Boccardino il Vecchio, Ptolemy's <i>Geografia</i> , manuscript	101
106	Hellenistic or Early Augustan, <i>Bust of Athena</i> , onyx on a crystal ground/chalcedony cameo	102
107	Renaissance, <i>Bust of Athena</i> , bronze plaquette	103
108	Attavante or Boccardino il Vecchio, Ptolemy's <i>Geografia</i> , manuscript	103
109	Attavante, <i>Missal of Thomas James</i> , manuscript	103
110	Fifteenth century, Florentine(?), <i>Achilles and Troilus</i> , bronze plaquette	104
111	Gherardo del Fora, Iacopo di Poggio Bracciolini's <i>Commento sopra il Trionfo della Fama</i> , manuscript	104
112	Francesco Granacci (attrib.), <i>Achilles and Troilus</i> , drawing	104
113	Bertoldo, <i>Praedium</i> , stucco frieze	104
114	Fifteenth-century Florentine, <i>Aesculapius</i> , bronze plaquette	105
115	Gherardo or Monte del Fora, Pliny's <i>Historia naturalis</i> , manuscript	105
116	Gherardo and Monte del Fora or Attavante, St. Gregorio Magno's <i>Dialoghi de vita et miraculis patrum italicorum</i> , manuscript	105
117	Gherardo and Monte del Fora, Petrarch's <i>Trionfi</i> , manuscript	105
118	Palazzo Medici, courtyard with its loggia in the background	111
119	Palazzo Medici, garden seen from the door of the courtyard loggia	111

120	Palazzo Medici, garden seen from the side and showing the loggia at the back	111
121	Ground floor, Palazzo Medici	112
122	First floor, Palazzo Medici	113
123	Imperial Roman or Renaissance copy of an ancient gem, <i>Bust of Aesculapius</i> , cast after the red jasper of Cyprus intaglio	116
124	Roman, <i>Vase with Two Handles</i> , sardonyx/agate	119
125	Fifteenth-century Venetian or Parisian, <i>Vase in the Form of a Glass</i> , rock crystal	122
126	Roman, Workshop of Solon, <i>Satyr with the Infant Dionysus</i> , onyx-sardonyx/agate-sardonyx cameo	125
127	Alexandrian, Sostrates, <i>Dionysus on a Chariot Led by Psychai</i> , onyx-sardonyx/agate-sardonyx cameo	125
128	Roman, probably Dioskourides, <i>Marsyas with Apollo and Olympos</i> , cornelian intaglio	126
129	Plaster cast of Figure 128	126
130	Bertoldo, <i>Quies</i> , stucco frieze	127
131	Mariano del Buono (attrib.), Domizio Calderini's <i>Commentarii in M. Valerium Martialem</i> , manuscript	152
132	Roman or Neapolitan, Aurelio Lippi Brandolini's <i>De comparatione reipublicae et regni</i> , manuscript	153
133	Outside of a letter from Luigi da Barberino to Niccolò Michelozzi, detail with an impression of an intaglio	196
134	Monte del Fora, <i>Pentecost</i> , manuscript	209



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project is due to the encouragement of the late Ruth and Nicolai Rubinstein, who sustained and advised us during the course of nineteen years.

The initial draft was read by Caroline Elam and Salvatore Settis. The final version was read by Clifford M. Brown, Melissa M. Bullard, Richard A. Goldthwaite, and F. William Kent, and Francesco Caglioti read large sections of the manuscript. We thank them for their suggestions and for sharing their own material prepublication (listed in the Bibliography: Brown, 2002; Bullard, forthcoming; Kent, forthcoming; and Caglioti, 2000). Clifford Brown followed the project throughout, ending with reading the galley proofs. Curators gave us access to collections and provided information: Cristina Aschengreen Piacenti, Piera Bocci Pacini, Andrew Burnett, John Cherry, Kurt Gschwantler, Manfred Leithe-Jasper, John Mallet, Anna Mura Sommella, Ulrico Pannuti, and Luigi Tondo. Scholars lent their expertise and shared their publications: Cristina Acidini Luchinat, Giovanni Agosti, Ann H. Allison, Francis Ames-Lewis, Rolf Bagemihl, Fabio Benzi, Andreas Beyer, Patricia F. Brown, Jean Cadogan, Pietro Cannata, David S. Chambers, Rita Maria Comanducci, John Cunnally, Nicole Dacos-Crifò, James D. Draper, Sabina Eiche, Giancarlo Gentilini, Antonio Giuliano, Hubertus Günther, Detlef Heikamp, Sally Hickson, Charles Hope, Dale V. Kent, Michael Koortbojian, the late Paul O. Kristeller, Michael Mallett, Anna Maria Massinelli, Martha McCrory, Stephen J. Milner, Charles Morscheck, Jacqueline M. Musacchio, John T. Paoletti, Marilyn Perry, Sheryl E. Reiss, Patricia L. Rubin, Vincenzo Saladino, Timothy Schroder, Erkinger Schwarzenberg and Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi, Lorenz Seelig, the late Wendy Stedman Sheard, Erika Simon, Marco Spallanzani, Laurie Taylor-Mitchell, and William E. Wallace.

I am grateful for a six-month study leave in 1983 from my job at the J. Paul Getty Museum so that I could be a Fellow at Villa I Tatti (The Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies). A grant from the Lila Wallace–Reader’s Digest Publications Subsidy administered by I Tatti allowed me to ask James Hankins to correct Latin translations; along the way he also corrected some Italian translations and added useful information. The Samuel H. Kress Foundation gave a grant to Cambridge University Press that was used to buy photographs and pay students

to photocopy publications. The reproduction of color transparencies was made possible by the Millard Meiss Foundation for Publications administered by the College Art Association.

Gino Corti and I worked together to find the documents and translate them. The transcriptions are his, my role limited to maintaining their stylistic consistency. I am responsible for the text of the book.

Publications cited herein include those published through the end of 2003.

Final thanks go to friends who helped in a variety of ways: Denise Allen, Mari-Tere Alvarez and Javier Iribarre, Enzo Costantini, James Holderbaum, Cyril Humphris, Socorro Miramontes, Lynda and Stewart Resnick, the Fratelli Romano (Alessandro, Paolo, and Simone), and Scott Schaefer. The last person I want to thank is Peter Fusco, who spent years discussing the material with me and helped edit the manuscript, saying it gave him a headache.

Laurie Fusco
2003



PROLOGUE: THE DOCUMENTS

I. THE APPENDIXES

Letters from Lorenzo's correspondence are in the first section of Appendix I. They are mostly in the Archivio di Stato and the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence. Many of these were from members of the Tornabuoni family working at the Medici bank branch in Rome – Giovanni, Antonio, and Nofri, assisted by Luigi da Barberino (we call them “the bank group”).¹ In addition, some letters were sent to Lorenzo's various representatives, including his secretaries Niccolò Michelozzi and Piero Dovizi da Bibbiena.² Only ten letters were written by Lorenzo himself (and one by his brother Giuliano); however, joining these are twenty-nine summaries of letters Lorenzo dictated, as recorded in the registers (the *protocolli*).³ In the second section of Appendix I are “other” letters about Lorenzo, his objects, or his interest in antiquities. They are primarily located in archives outside Florence.

Renaissance texts are in Appendix II, the first section with notices about Lorenzo's objects when they were in the hands of previous owners, and the second with texts describing him as a collector, his interest in antiquities, or his objects. Following are two sections with information about the fate of Lorenzo's objects after his death, that is, what happened to them following the French invasion of Florence in 1494.

The Medici inventories are in Appendix III. The first section has entries from Lorenzo's inventory of 1492 and also entries from the inventories of his forebears; the latter are important because they list some objects that were not in Lorenzo's inventory but which he obviously inherited.⁴ The second section has entries from the sixteenth century, mostly grand-ducal inventories, which provide further information about Lorenzo's objects.

II. PEOPLE MENTIONED IN THE DOCUMENTS

In the Index an asterisk (*) indicates that there is additional information about various people in the documentation. Because this book is addressed primarily

to art historians, notes about artists (except for little-known ones) are brief, and those about bankers, humanists, political appointees, rulers, secretaries, and the like are more ample. Notes about owners of antiquities are sometimes extensive so that Lorenzo can be better seen in a context of collecting.

III. TRANSCRIPTIONS AND TRANSLATIONS OF DOCUMENTS AND EARLY PRINTED BOOKS

Documents are transcribed with the original spelling of words, for example, “verittà”; when a letter is missing from a word whose meaning might not be clear without it, the letter is added in brackets, for example, “ce[r]te.” If the spelling of the word or the grammar is odd, this is indicated by “[sic]” and an explanation might be given, for example, “prede [sic=pietre].” Modern punctuation is used, and accents and apostrophes are added. Where the writer crossed out words, it is indicated by “[canceled],” and the words are preserved, for example, “Questa è molta più bella e più [canceled: sottile] gie[n]tile.” If there is a repetition, it is indicated by “[repeated],” and the words are kept, for example, “M’aveva detto che a Mantova [repeated: che a Mantova] era rimasto non so che vasi belli.” When a space is left because the writer neglected to put in the words, it is indicated by “[blank].” If the paper is torn so that letters or words are missing, this is indicated by “[paper torn here],” and if a spot on the paper obscures the words or the handwriting is unclear, it is indicated by “[illegible].” For titles of people, the uppercase is used only when the person is being addressed (“Vostra Magnificentia mi harà per excusato se non la ha così come voleva”); the lowercase is used if the person is being referred to (“Intendo el magnifico Lorenzo havere havuto quella bella corniola”). Exceptions are for elevated titles, such as a Pope (“Nostro Signore”) or a King (“Re di Francia”), a person not identified by a name (“el Cardinale della Colonna”), and governmental bodies (“Signori Priori di Libertà e ’l Gonfalonieri di Giustitia”).

Unlike a document, a passage in an early printed book, which is a kind of public record, is, for the most part, copied as it appears (punctuation, capitalization, etc.). However, to make the reading easier, abbreviations are expanded: “&” is changed to “et”; “u” is changed to “v”; and “j” is changed to “i.”

In the translations of both documents and printed books, the proper names are sometimes clarified. For example, “Guillaume d’Estouteville” replaces “Jeronimo Tutavilla” because this Cardinal was French, and “Giuliano della Rovere” replaces his appellation by the Cardinal’s titular church “San Piero a Vinchola.” Titles are anglicized except for marchese, messer, ser, signore, madonna, madama, and monsignore. In the translations, “detto,” “decto,” and “dicto” are included, for example, “And to the said Carlo.” To simplify the variants “predetto,” “sopradetto,” “soprascritto,” “prefatto,” and “preditto,” they are all translated as “aforesaid.”

The Florentine calendar year began on 25 March instead of our 1 January. Although we have used the modern style, we put the Florentine year in brackets, indicated by “s.f.” for “stile fiorentino.”

The abbreviations used for the location of archives and libraries are given at the beginning of the bibliography.

In citing a document, the word “filza” or “busta” (both meaning “box”) is excluded, as is the word “folio” or “carta” (both meaning “page”). For example, “MAP, filza 52, folio 14” is abbreviated to MAP 52, 14. Documents separated into folders in the box are indicated by “ins.” for “inserto” (“folder”). All numbering of boxes and their folios are the currently used numbers. When the reader finds a different citation in the literature, it is because either there is a mistake or the numbering has been changed.

IV. CURRENCIES AND MEASUREMENTS

For currencies, see R. A. Goldthwaite, in Goldthwaite and G. Mandich, *Studi sulla moneta fiorentina (secoli XIII–XVI)*, Florence, 1994. For measurements, see M. Spallanzani, *Libro and Inventari*.

The currencies were primarily the Venetian gold ducat (*ducato*) and the Florentine gold florin (*fiorino*), of equal weight and with approximately the same value. The currency of Rome was the cameral florin (*fiorino di camera*) and weighed somewhat less.

The florin was divided into soldi and denari:

1 florin = 20 soldi = 240 denari
 1 soldo = 12 denari

The following abbreviations are used in a ledger or inventory: f. = florin, s. = soldo, d. = denaro, duc. = ducat.

Two currencies appear in Francesco Cegia’s *I ricordi* (Doc. 233): the *fiorino largo d’oro/fiorino largo d’oro in oro* and the *fiorino largo di grossi*, and Goldthwaite is cited in a note.

The standard linear measurements were the braccio (literally meaning the “arm”) and the soldo. One Florentine braccio equals 58.36 centimeters. There were 20 soldi in a braccio, and therefore each soldo is about 2.92 centimeters.

Weights for precious metals in Florence were measured by the pound (*libbra*), which equals 339.54 grams. The subdivisions were as follows:

1 pound = 12 ounces (*once*), and therefore each ounce is 28.29 grams
 1 ounce = 24 denari, and therefore each denaro (sometimes spelled danaro) is 1.17 grams

V. WORDS FOR OBJECTS

ANCIENT COINS AND RENAISSANCE MEDALS

The word “medals” (*medaglie* in Italian and *nomismae* in Latin) can mean ancient coins or Renaissance medals. In most cases, the meaning is clear because of

the context or because the writer qualified the objects, for example, “medaglie antichi.” When the meaning is unclear, we use “medallions,” thereby indicating coins and/or medals. Sometimes coins were described as being “carved” (see Objects Made in Metal in this section).

TABLET

The word *tavola*, normally meaning “table,” which appears in a few documents, was also used for a “tablet,” for example, an ancient inscribed tablet in marble, bronze, or lead. Also, “tavole” or “tavolette” could be the plaques on which cameos or coins were placed. Additionally, “tavola” was used for a small slice of a precious or semiprecious stone, such as “una tavoletta” of jasper.

HARDSTONE VASES

Today scholars sometimes call all hardstone objects hardstone “vases,” no matter what their shape (a cup, dish, pitcher, plate, wine cooler, etc.), and this is followed here. However, when the shape is given, it is specified, for example, “cup” for *coppa*.

GEMS

Usually the words are straightforward (*gemme* in Italian and *gemmae* in Latin). However, other words were sometimes used (*pietre* and *pietre fine* in Italian and *lapilli* in Latin). A “cameo” (*cammeo*) is carved up in relief, and an “intaglio” (*intaglio*) is carved into the stone, but when they are used in the plural, they can mean gems in general, which we indicate in the translations. Also when used in the plural, “cornelians” (*corniuole*) sometimes means “intaglios” made of any kind of stone.

GEMS VERSUS JEWELS VERSUS PRECIOUS OBJECTS

The word “gems” means not only ancient gems but also jewels (like diamonds and sapphires), and it can be used collectively to mean both ancient gems and jewels. When the meaning is unclear, alternative translations are given and the word is put in brackets, for example, “gems/jewels [*gemmae*].”

The words *gioie* in Italian and *iocalia* in Latin are particularly difficult because it can mean ancient gems or jewels or a combination of various precious objects (gems, jewels, jewelry, hardstones vases, and/or coins). When a precise meaning is clear from the context, it is put in brackets, for example, “*gioie* [i.e., gems].” When the meaning is unclear, a suggested translation is given, with the word in brackets, for example, “gems/jewels [*gioie*].”

OBJECTS MADE IN METAL

For bronze objects the word is usually straightforward (*bronzo* in Italian and *aere* in Latin). However, bronze coins were sometimes described as being in “metal”

(*metallo*) to distinguish them from coins made in more precious gold and silver; furthermore, since bronze is an alloy of various metals, other words were used, such as “copper” (*rame*). In the translations the original word is kept, but bronze is put in brackets, for example, “coins in gold, silver or metal [i.e., bronze].”

Sometimes a coin or piece of metalwork was said to be “carved” (*scolpita* or *intagliata* in Italian and *caelata* or *toreumata* in Latin). It means “cast.”

MATERIALS OF HARDSTONE VASES AND GEMS

It is not surprising that the materials were given various terms in the Renaissance since even today specialists disagree about the terminology. In Renaissance documents, the hardstone vase called the *Tazza Farnese* (Plate I) was said to be made of “onyx,” “chalcedony,” “chalcedony and sardonyx,” “agate,” and “sardonyx, chalcedony, and agate.” Within one modern catalog, the material of the *Poseidon and Athena* gem (Plate IX) was described as “onyx-sardonyx,” “onyx-agate,” and “sardonyx.” For a discussion of materials, see G. M. A. Richter, *The Engraved Gems of the Greeks, Etruscans and Romans*, London, 1968, vol. 1, 8–13; M. Bauer, *Precious Stones*, 2 vols., trans. with additions by L. J. Spencer, New York, 1968; R. Callus, *L'écriture des pierres*, Geneva and Paris, 1970; *Faszination Edelstein*, Exhibit., Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt, Darmstadt, 1992; “Hardstones,” in *The Grove Dictionary of Art*, ed. J. Turner, 34 vols., New York, 1996, vol. 14, 167–68 (henceforth *DOA*).