

Antiquarianism and  
Intellectual Life in  
Europe and China

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The University of Michigan Press

*Ann Arbor*

## The Credulity Problem

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Early modern European antiquarians made plenty of blunders—but they were such *interesting* blunders.<sup>1</sup> In the first third of the fifteenth century, for example, Italian scholars developed a fluid and legible handwriting based on the manuscripts of classical texts that they had found in monastic libraries.<sup>2</sup> They then instructed painters to adorn the initial letters and page borders of their own books with crawling, interlocking growths of vine, curling white stems and shoots, much like those they had seen in the old books. An initial E from a Bolognese manuscript of Suetonius, datable to the middle of the fifteenth century, adorning a text written in a round humanist hand, is a good example (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> But the white vine scroll and the minuscule alphabet were born of a chronological misconception, for the ancient models that scribes and painters looked to were not so ancient. Their models were actually twelfth-century Italian manuscripts which in turn transmitted interlaced forms developed in transalpine monasteries such as St. Gall between the ninth and eleventh centuries; for example an initial C from a Homiliary, an Italian manuscript of the early twelfth century (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup> There can be no mistake about the derivation, for fifteenth-century white vine ornament duplicated even the blue, green, and red color scheme of the intervals between the vines found in the medieval sources.<sup>5</sup> The philologists in their enthusiasm were reviving not an ancient Roman but an early medieval and northern European form.

An art historian might describe such a cross-wiring as a *pseudomorphosis*, following Erwin Panofsky, who used this term to characterize a

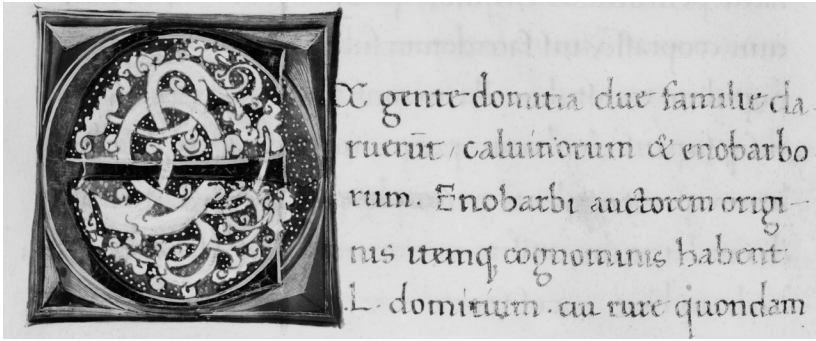


Fig. 1. Suetonius, *De vita Caesarum*. Bologna, mid-fifteenth century. Beinecke Library, Yale University, Marston MS 52, fol. 119r.

historical form invested by Renaissance artists with a meaning that it had not possessed in the past.<sup>6</sup> White vine ornament and other false antiquities were not the fantasms of mere ill-informed artists, however. They were promulgated by scholars, the pioneers of the modern disciplines of philology and archaeology, critical minds who defined themselves as the enemies of all hopeful or blurry thinking about the past. Just as the reform-minded theologians of the day deplored superstition and the cult of relics, so too did new-model historians ridicule the credulities of unlettered clerics, professorial imposters, and the common folk. In his *Bavarian Chronicle* of 1526 the historian Johann Aventinus—to invoke only one distinguished figure—drily mocked the “good, foolish, and ignorant cathedral canon” in Regensburg who on the basis of an inscription mistook the tombstone of Aurelia, a Roman woman, for the tomb of a certain Saint Aurelia, who in fact there was no reason to believe had ever been in Regensburg.<sup>7</sup> The local cleric, untutored in epigraphy and archaeology, had no idea how to date an inscription.

And for all that the humanists, not excepting Aventinus himself, managed to find their own winding path into error. Renaissance scholars often display the same combination of severity and suggestibility that we find two centuries later in Giambattista Vico, who derided the “unclear, frivolous, inept, conceited, and ridiculous” opinions of other scholars on the origins of languages, and then went on to assert that the most ancient peoples had spoken a natural, nonarbitrary language and that this was the language of Atlantis, just as Plato had said; or who dismissed as “groundless, inappropriate, or simply false” the views of other authorities

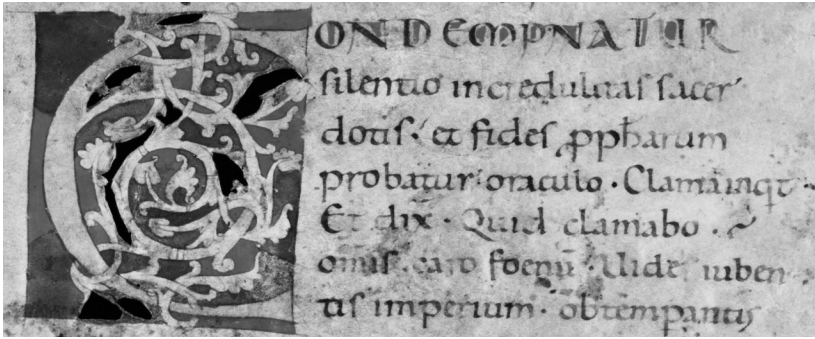


Fig. 2. Homiliary. Italy, early twelfth century. Beinecke Library, Yale University, MS 481.35, fol. 1r.

on the reasons for the monstrous stature of ancient giants, but was himself completely confident of the historical reality of giants.<sup>8</sup> Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century scholars were peculiarly prone to credulity, as if archaeology itself, the epochal turn to material evidence as a supplement to oral and textual authority, only led them to ever more wonderful and lucid errors.

Credulity was the matrix of creativity. Ernst Gombrich, in one of his most ingenious essays, associated Leon Battista Alberti and Filippo Brunelleschi's reform of architecture with Poggio Bracciolini and Coluccio Salutati's invention of the minuscule script.<sup>9</sup> In both cases, the modern-pointing innovations were grounded in what Ingrid Rowland calls an "antiquarianism of false premises."<sup>10</sup> Just as the Florentine scribes had modeled their *antiqua* alphabet on Carolingian precedents, so too did the pioneering architect Filippo Brunelleschi select as his paragons the Baptistery and the basilica of SS. Apostoli, both eleventh-century structures.<sup>11</sup> For his own S. Lorenzo (begun 1421), as Gombrich and others have shown, Brunelleschi borrowed from SS. Apostoli not only the plan but the Romanesque device of arches resting directly on columns. The entablature blocks he interposed between capital and arch, meanwhile, were derived from the exterior of the Baptistery.<sup>12</sup> Alberti styled his façade for S. Maria Novella (begun ca. 1458), with its corner pillars with horizontal incrustations and blind arcades, after the Baptistery and the façade of the twelfth-century basilica of S. Miniato al Monte.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the fifteenth century, the most archaeologically minded and antiquity-oriented architects were as attentive to local pre-

Gothic churches as they were to ancient ruins.<sup>14</sup> The paradox was explained already by Giorgio Vasari, who, following two centuries of commentary, described the Baptistery as a “most ancient temple” and went on to argue that because the architects of medieval buildings like SS. Apostoli had emulated the “good antique order” that they had found in the Baptistery, Brunelleschi was therefore justified in taking SS. Apostoli as his model.<sup>15</sup>

Gombrich’s paradoxical argument stripped the narrative of the re-birth of antiquity of some of its revolutionary grandeur. He showed how a pedantic compulsion to emend could yield serendipitous results. Yet despite Gombrich’s warning, modern scholars have found few ways to describe creative misidentifications of old forms and artifacts other than as errors. Things only get worse when the Renaissance scholars figure not merely as passive gulls, but as active forgers, interventionists within the monumental record. For it is the case that humanist scholars in this period actually fabricated facts. The epigraphers copied many dozens of fascinating but inauthentic texts into their sylloges, or anthologies of classical inscriptions.<sup>16</sup> The early sylloges included the epitaphs of Lucretia, Caesar, and Lucan, and much else of little historical value. Most syllogists knew which texts were “good” and which were not.<sup>17</sup> Still, the ultimate truth content of a given tradition was never quite clear. Scholarship often drifted into a disorienting middle ground where the fabricated supplements to fact could cycle back and become corroborating testimony to their own reality, especially before the era of print (which antiquarians entered alarmingly late).<sup>18</sup> Confusingly, some of the pseudoe-pigraphic texts, as well as inscriptions recorded in classical texts such as Livy, had been carved in stone in modern times. But such stones would have been hard to date on stylistic grounds alone.<sup>19</sup> The last to see the epitaph of Lucan—*M.A. Lucano Cordubensi poete beneficio Neronis Caesaris fama servata*, someone’s outright invention—was the Florentine philologist Pietro Crinito (1475–1507), who reported that it was done in *priscis litteris*, “ancient letters.”<sup>20</sup>

Through repetition, circulation, and association with material evidence, such ludic contrivances could take on a specious factual existence. *Huius Nympha Loci* was a modern poem, devised perhaps as early as the 1460s by the humanist Giovanni Antonio Campani, invoking the classical and pastoral topos of a girl sleeping near water. The poem then appeared in the anthology of ancient inscriptions compiled by Michael Fabricius Ferrarinus in the 1470s or 1480s, together with the explana-

tion that the poem had been found *super ripam Danuvii*, above the banks of the Danube, inscribed on a tablet and accompanied by a statue of a sleeping nymph.<sup>21</sup> From that point on the inscription and the statue were handed on from sylloge to sylloge, often accompanied by a drawing of the statue. The Danubian location was remote enough that no one would bother to check—that was part of the joke. In Rome, the pseudo-antique poem and statue fell into a mutually corroborating relation with a family of real statues of recumbent sleeping females, ancient and modern. The most celebrated was the Ariadne, known in the Renaissance as Cleopatra, a Roman copy of a second-century BCE Pergamene original, first recorded in the Maffei collection at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Pope Julius II acquired the work in 1512 and mounted it in the Belvedere as a fountain.<sup>22</sup> The statue and another like it, now lost, served as the basis for modern copies and adaptations.<sup>23</sup> The humanist scholar Angelo Colocci, for example, installed a nude version of the sleeping nymph together with the inscribed poem as a fountain in his garden on the Pincio. Eventually inscription and statue entered into the published sylloges (fig. 3).<sup>24</sup> Print recreated the modern work as a “false antiquity.”<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, the symbiosis of statue and poem was extended in drawings and paintings by Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach, who as Danubians, more or less, claimed a proprietary relationship.<sup>26</sup>

Another example of a humanist scholar’s critical charity toward recent material evidence is the discovery of apparently antique medals by the German poet and antiquarian Conrad Celtis. Petrus Apianus and Bartholomeus Amantius in their anthology of antiquities, *Inscriptiones sacrosanctae vetustatis* (1534), published woodcut illustrations of the artifacts. A circular image represents a nude man seated in a rocky landscape, accompanied by a winged child and a skull (fig. 4). The man holds his head in his hands as if anguished by contemplation of the skull. The caption reads: “Found by Conrad Celtis not long ago on a lead plate [or coin] in Styria, on the hill with the church near St. Andreas, in the year 1500” (*Nuper a Con. Cel. inventum in plumbea lamina in Stiria in Colle: in quo est Ecclesia circa Sanctum Andream. Anno M.D.*).<sup>27</sup> The woodcut in fact reproduces the reverse of a self-portrait by the Venetian medallist Giovanni Boldù (d. before 1477).<sup>28</sup> Bizarrely, the man, the child, and the skull are labelled in the woodcut reproduction Cloto, Lachesis, and Atropos, i.e., the Three Fates.<sup>29</sup> Celtis was apparently not the only one to overestimate the composition’s antiquity. In the 1490s the sculptor Cristoforo Solari transposed the composition to a marble medallion and mounted it on



Fig. 3. Jean Jacques Boissard, *Romanae urbis topographiae*, part VI (Frankfurt, 1602), plate 25. Beinecke Library, Yale University.

the façade of the Certosa di Pavia, alongside other antiquities, including copies of Roman coins as well as the medallion portrait of Emperor Constantine, the famous “remake” of a nonexistent late antique object.<sup>30</sup>

On his travels Celtis was constantly detecting traces of the presence of the Druids, the ancient priestly caste that supposedly brought religion to the Germans from Greece: forest monasteries, pentagrams stamped on Frankish coins, echoes of Greek in the modern German language; identifications that were received with interest and respect by such authorities as Johannes Aventinus, his own pupil.<sup>31</sup> If Celtis’s numismatic discoveries muddle pagan and neopagan iconographies, then his pursuit of the Druids among the Germanic antiquities points to a comparable period confusion surrounding medieval artifacts.

Conrad Celtis was a voyager in that middle territory of semibelief, where scholarship appealed to the power of suggestion and to the charisma of names and associations. His historiographical and icono-

¶ Ibidem.

C· SAMVCONIVS  
 SECTATVS ET AMV·  
 CABVRRANI F· V· E.  
 SIB· ET RESPECTILLE  
 F· DE F· AN, ✕.

¶ Nuper à Con. Cel. inuentum in plum-  
 bea lamina in Stiria in Colle; in quo  
 est Ecclesia circa Sanctum Andream:  
 Anno M. D.

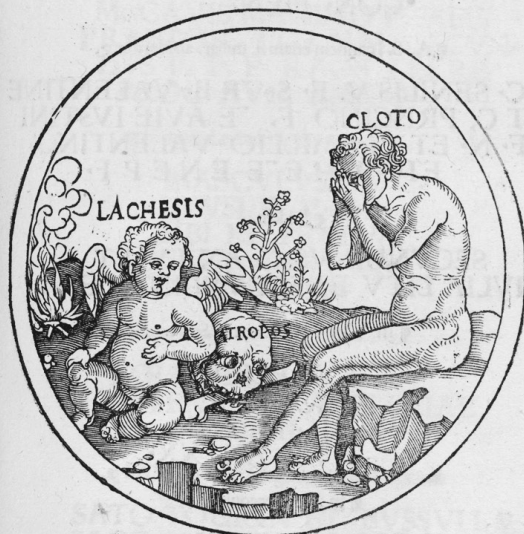


Fig. 4. Petrus Apianus and Bartholomeus Amantius, *Inscriptiones sacrosanctae vetustatis* (Ingolstadt, 1534), 385. Beinecke Library, Yale University.

graphical inquiries were guided by his poetic imagination. Like his contemporary Annius of Viterbo, the Dominican historian, Celtis was also something of a confidence man, a *Hochstapler*. But these are complicated states of mind, not simple ones. Whatever traces of recent fabrication the Italian medal or the Frankish coins might have borne, Celtis believed that the modern artifacts reliably transmitted the essential content of their ancient prototypes. He felt licensed, or even compelled, to assign the works their “correct” iconographic labels. And this is the thesis that will be advanced in this essay: antiquarian error in this period was often just a matter of “looking through” the recentness of the artifact to a referential target far behind it and so to its true meaning.

The turn to material evidence was one of the keys to the development of modern historical consciousness, as Arnaldo Momigliano, Roberto Weiss, Francis Haskell, Alain Schnapp, Ingo Herklotz, and many others have demonstrated.<sup>32</sup> Material relics of the past furnished a powerful rhetorical counterweight to the authority of texts. In a sense, the scholars were only following the lead of the clerics, who had been manipulating relics for centuries in their battles with oblivion.<sup>33</sup> But the imagination is not cooled by relics, it is heated. J. B. Trapp, who wrote perceptively on the bogus tombs of the Roman poets, spoke of “learned credulity,” and with this phrase suggested that the errors of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century antiquarians were not simply missteps, but were in some sense a function of the new erudition.<sup>34</sup> Learned credulity, in this view, was neither a regressive holdover nor a weakness of mind, but a phenomenon catalyzed by antiquarianism itself.

The facile “enlightened” view of the history of scholarship as a progressive illumination of darkness obstructed only by fools or knaves—a view voiced by Edward Gibbon himself when he described his seventeenth-century predecessors as “antiquarians of profound learning and easy confidence,”<sup>35</sup> implying that the true enemy of critical scholarship was a self-serving and superstitious religiosity—has until recently dominated the historical study of the origins of modern scholarship. For if truth be told, neither Roberto Weiss in his *Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* nor Francis Haskell in his *History and Its Images* had anything really interesting to say about antiquarian credulity. In histories of scholarship, iconographic misadventures such as Celtis’s too often figure as incompletenesses or delays in the development of modern archaeological and philological method, no more, no less. Yet one must hesitate before regretting or dismissing the “double think”<sup>36</sup> of the scholars as bad faith or crass opportunism. There is a way to redescribe these episodes in period

terms, and precisely not in the terms of those critical disciplines that were only just emerging in the Renaissance and were not institutionalized and internalized until the nineteenth century.

I would like to review several recent and imaginative approaches to learned credulity that avoid simple condemnation or judgment in modern terms; and then offer my own structural explanation for the credulity of the Renaissance archaeologists. That explanation aims at validity beyond local circumstances and may therefore possibly contribute to a systematic, nontrivial comparison of European antiquarianism with patterns of scholarly inquiry in China and elsewhere.

The first of the recent approaches I wish to identify might be called the “poetic” or “romantic” model, following the lead of Charles Mitchell, who in a well-known essay of 1960 brought out the fanciful, enthusiastic dimension of Quattrocento erudition, showing for example how readily Cyriac of Ancona fell into a fervent, “goliardic”—that is, ludic and festive—worship of Mercury; or with what ingenuity Felice Feliciano invented monumental frames for the inscriptions he discovered.<sup>37</sup> Scholarship, Mitchell showed, flowed smoothly into ornamentalizing play. Indeed, one is struck by how readily a suggestive sequence of carved letters triggered the supplementing imaginations of the scholars. The Venetian scholar Marin Sanudo (in the account of Roberto Weiss), “on being shown by the local humanist Giusto dei Giusti the inscription with the name L. VITRUVIVS on the arch of the Gavi, which was locally believed to have been part of the Arena [of Verona], jumped to the conclusion that this Vitruvius, whom he felt certain was the great architect, had also been responsible for the building of it.”<sup>38</sup> Scholarship was a matter of filling out the bare skeleton of antique remains. To charge scholars like Celtis with credulity, Mitchell taught, is to misunderstand that imagination was inextricable from scholarship. Mitchell pointed out that later antiquarians appreciated this: the sixteenth-century antiquarian Antonio Agustin despised clumsy forgeries, but admired clever practitioners like Annius of Viterbo and Pirro Ligorio.<sup>39</sup>

Mitchell’s approach unfolds into the more recent, and still more sophisticated, analyses of Leonard Barkan, who in his book *Unearthing the Past* shows how Renaissance archaeology became a framework for poetic storytelling about objects and origins, dovetailing in the first decades of the sixteenth century with the emergence of a culture of art.<sup>40</sup> From this point of view, the errors of the antiquaries were not errors at all, but rather friction produced by the interference between scholarly culture and aesthetic culture at the very moment when the modern boundar-

ies between the two realms were first established. The “poetic” model of antiquarian credulity in the Renaissance indeed always emerges in close proximity to works of art, whether poems, pictures, effigies, or temples. The poem is fundamentally a time-bending machine, as Thomas Greene’s profound study of Renaissance intertextuality showed, and for that very reason is seldom mistaken for a document.<sup>41</sup> The poets knew to work with and not against anachronism—learned to make a virtue out of the condition of intertextuality, in other words. The work of visual art, however, was frequently expected, in late medieval and Renaissance culture, to double as a historical document. The confusions we have been detecting around artifacts were generated by the interference between the documentary and aesthetic identities of the artifact.

Until those identities had been sorted out—if they ever have been—poetry occupied a special niche within the archaeological imagination. Frequent were the reports of discoveries of the tombs of the ancient poet. A stone inscribed T. LIVIVS was unearthed in Padua around 1320 and immediately hailed as the tomb of the historian, a native son. A century later his bones were found in a sarcophagus very near the find-site of the inscription.<sup>42</sup> In 1508 a cleric of Bratislava, Leonhard Creutzer, reported the excavation of the tomb of Ovid in Szombathely, outfitted with six stone lamps and two plates engraved with verses, though Creutzer could not remember what they said.<sup>43</sup> The tomb of the poet was the point of intersection of archaeological and aesthetic cultures.

A second model that attempts to contextualize antiquarian misdatings and mischief might be designated the “forgers as critics” model, following the lead of Anthony Grafton, who wrote an influential short book with a similar title. Grafton argued that forgers like Anniius of Viterbo were manipulating the same sets of skills that honest scholars were developing to work with ancient texts. The passive and active approaches to the past, in other words, were symmetrical. Anniius helped establish the binding rules for the choice and evaluation of sources. “A forger emerges,” Grafton wrote, “as the first really modern theorist of critical reading of historians—a paradox that only a reader with a heart of stone could reject.”<sup>44</sup>

This paradigm applies not only to Anniius’s philological work, but also to his archaeological projects. Anniius announced around 1492 the “discovery” of a cache of “vases, bronzes, and marbles incised with old letters” near Viterbo.<sup>45</sup> The faked finds became the archaeological basis for Anniius’s extravagant theses, which he published only a few years later—in the form of counterfeited texts attributed to the Chaldean

sage Berosus—on the earliest history of Europe, involving the postdiluvian movements of Noah, his progeny, and the Egyptian gods. The most puzzling of Anniius’s archaeological fabrications is the so-called *marmo osiriano*, an ornamental lunette in a frame—not a forgery, in fact, but a found object (fig. 5).<sup>46</sup> This object was not part of the staged “excavation”; rather, it could be seen by anyone, Anniius reported, in the Cathedral, which naturally was once a Temple of Hercules: “Our forefathers . . . in order to keep the eternal memory of the antiquity of this city before our eyes, placed before the *rostra a columnula*, that is, an alabaster tablet, monument to the triumph of Osiris.”<sup>47</sup> The lunette, with vines, birds, and a lizard, sits in a rectangular frame with two classical-looking profile heads in the corners. Anniius interpreted the monument as a fragment of a triumphal column left in Viterbo by Osiris, the Egyptian god. He argued that the profile heads in the spandrel represented Osiris and his cousin Sais Xantho, a muse. This was proof that Osiris really had been to Italy. The birds and other objects in the vines in the lunette were sacred Egyptian letters symbolizing the historical encounter between the Italians, the Giants, and the Egyptians.<sup>48</sup>

Annius can be forgiven for mistaking the lunette with its twisted vines and animal symbols for an antiquity, for modern scholarship judged it a late Roman artifact until 1927, when Pietro Toesca dated it to the twelfth century. The frame with the profile heads, meanwhile, belongs to more modern times, though it is not clear which times.<sup>49</sup> It was by no means unreasonable for Anniius to mistake the frame, even if less than a hundred years old, for an antiquity. The whole ensemble was strange-looking and hard to assimilate to any contemporary iconography or function. And as with the Celtis finds, there is no evidence of any doubt on the part of contemporaries. Even Giorgio Vasari two generations later adduced “the statues found at Viterbo” as evidence of the high quality of Etruscan sculpture.<sup>50</sup>

Grafton’s point was that Anniius was in many ways an exemplary textual editor. By the same token, he was a gifted archaeologist. Anniius believed in inscriptions, artifacts, and names rather than authorities: things, rather than what people said about them.<sup>51</sup> He resented the prestigious textual authorities, among them the ancient Roman historians, who contradicted his version of things, mistrusting their literariness, their rhetoric.<sup>52</sup> Anniius struck back by inventing a purer ancient source to confirm what he knew was true, and preempted skepticism by planting solid archaeological evidence in the ground.

“Retroactive” monuments like Anniius’s *marmo osiriano* are best un-



Fig. 1. Suetonius, *De vita Caesarum*. Bologna, mid-fifteenth century. Beinecke Library, Yale University, Marston MS 52, fol. 119r.

derstood in the context of medieval document forgery, a well-researched and well-understood phenomenon.<sup>53</sup> Medieval historians and clerks generated an enormous quantity of forged documents that came to carry real legal force. Forgery flourished in proximity to power. A famous case in point is the fantastical genealogical tree dreamt up by the Habsburg Emperor Maximilian's court historians Ladislaus Suntheim and Jakob

Mennel.<sup>54</sup> The scholar Johannes Trithemius invented an entire source, Hunibald, to prove the genealogical connection between the Trojans and the Franks.<sup>55</sup> To be sure, many document forgers were simply cynical opportunists. Medieval scholars and jurists were quite capable of applying rationalist criteria in accepting or rejecting evidence.<sup>56</sup> But it has also been argued that concepts of the authenticity of a document are historically relative and that medieval forgers were simply playing by the rules of their own time. It is argued, for example, that the overriding framework of salvational justification provided a legitimating context for document forgery, that the deceit was a “pious fraud” (*pia fraus*); or it is argued that such deceptions were justified by a traditional, popular sense of fairness (*aequitas*) which transcended any simply binary opposition between the true and the false document.<sup>57</sup> With documents, the intent to deceive outright is difficult to disentangle from the desire to establish and publicize historical or legal precedents that were simply *known* to have been real even if the original material indexes of those precedents had gone astray. The forger, rational and irrational at once, thought “doubly.” The forger offered the fabricated documents as a legitimate substitute for an absent document that must have existed. To fabricate a document was just to complete a paper record that was incomplete only by accident, unfairly. If a tradition was old enough—custom beyond memory—then there was an almost irresistible tendency to believe it.<sup>58</sup> The fabrication of a corroborating charter or artifact would have appeared to many a routine bureaucratic procedure. The mosaic of sources had a number of author-sized gaps in it; why not fill them with characters like Berosus or Hunibald?

A third recent approach treats scholarly error in the context of mythic thought. Credulity, in this paradigm, is an effect generated by a mismatch between scholarly and mythical thinking. Myth is a narrative coding of a culture’s cosmology and first principles. The ancient historian Paul Veyne in his brilliant book *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?* sketched out an ancient intellectual world of “plural truths,” an open competition of myths that made perfect sense according to its own internal rules and even made room for what Veyne called the scholarly practice of “critical credulity.”<sup>59</sup> Veyne’s model is adaptable to Renaissance culture. As Frank Borchardt demonstrated in his book *German Antiquity in Renaissance Myth*, the critical historiography of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was often just a matter of one myth replacing another. Although Renaissance scholars were quick to condemn the errors of their predecessors, they were apt to replace those errors with more

errors. Borchardt called this process the “topos of critical rejection,” or, to give it its period name, *anasceva*, or “dismantling.” Borchardt argued that scholars were reluctant to dismantle a tradition and leave nothing in its place.<sup>60</sup> That is, they were neither satisfied with Veyne’s “plural truths” nor willing to face a past completely unstructured by myth.<sup>61</sup>

Because myth and written history share the same narrative structure, they are easily knitted together into a common fabric. Cosmogonies or myths of national origins were frequently retained, in this period, as a prelude to more recent and better documented histories. The initiated could easily detect the seam between myth and history, perhaps tacitly sanctioning the mythic prologue through a euhemeristic assumption, that is, the theory that heroic or fabulous narratives were rooted in real but forgotten events. Other readers allowed myth and history to flow into one another. “Credulity” was a way of reading.

In modernity, the concept of myth names a flight from the rule of fact. Myth narrates poetically and so becomes the recourse of those who are unconvinced that linear sequences of documents or artifacts can tell the whole story; or of those unwilling to adapt human existence to a historical narrative “fenced in by the cardinal mysteries” of beginnings and endings, as Wolfgang Iser has put it.<sup>62</sup> For cultures deprived of the framework of meaning provided by, at one end, etiological myths and, at the other, prophecy—i.e., devices that unlock those cardinal mysteries—must be prepared to take seriously the mere events of human history. Iser argues that such cultures develop literature and art, fictional reenactments of life, as compensations for the loss of its cosmogonies and eschatologies. The credulous early modern scholar, then, is that seeker of origins who is already beyond myth but not yet ready to surrender to art. Giambattista Vico, who grasped the power of “poetic wisdom,” found himself in just that predicament, still protesting deep into the eighteenth century the dogma of fact established by the Renaissance scholars. But this also made him the first to anticipate the modern rebellion, initiated by Nietzsche, against historical reason.

Each of these three accounts of learned credulity in the Renaissance identifies a mixing of categories that in modernity are notionally kept distinct: historical scholarship is compromised, in the first instance, by the poetical or aesthetic imagination; in the second by propagandistic or doctrinal ends; and in the third by mythic thinking.

I would like to offer still another account of early modern scholarly credulity, here too attempting to overcome what Grafton calls the “dis-

treasingly rectilinear” rationalist accounts.<sup>63</sup> In this account, the temporal instability of historical artifacts follows from their *mutual substitutability* in the imagination of the antiquarian. The basic premise behind any pre-modern use of artifacts as documents was the membership of the artifact within a typological class.<sup>64</sup> These classes were structured as chains of artifacts connected to a common source and succeeding and substituting for one another across time. In general, premodern culture coped with deficits of authority by inventing chains that ran backward to a remote, identity-granting origin. If the true meaning of a word was desired, etymology would yield the answer; if a family required a new basis for its hold on power, the genealogist built a chain.<sup>65</sup> The chain of substitutions stretching out behind any given artifact was, in practice, invisible and unreconstructible. The argument is not that production (of paintings, sculptures, or buildings) was in reality guided by constant reference to a stable origin-point. Substitution was rather the theory of production that guided the perception, interpretation, and use of artifacts.<sup>66</sup>

Substitution was a theory about the production and transmission of artifacts that allowed people to work with evidence under the tacit awareness that material vehicles did sometimes need to be replaced or repaired, that messages on material vehicles did sometimes need to be reinscribed or redrawn, and that messages could even be copied to a new vehicle altogether, just as texts were copied from manuscript to manuscript. Archaeological thinking is in principle the opposite of substitutional thinking, in that archaeology has decided not to accept passively the written text’s claim to be the endpoint of an invisible but reliable process of transmission and therefore a trustworthy source of information. But in its eagerness to improve upon the poor evidence of texts, early archaeology accepted bad material evidence, and so ended up, paradoxically, repeating patterns of reception proper to the substitutional model. Lorenzo Valla, for instance, pointed out in his treatise on the Donation of Constantine that the evidence produced by the Papacy in favor of the Donation’s authenticity was all textual. Why there was no corresponding, clinching material evidence, he wondered, challenging the papal advocates: “I should have expected you to show gold seals, marble inscriptions, a thousand authors,” he wrote. “This Donation of Constantine,” he went on, “so magnificent and astounding, can be proved by no document at all, whether on gold or on silver, or on bronze or on marble or, finally, in books, but only, if we believe that man, on paper or parchment.”<sup>67</sup> Valla’s statements imply that he would have been convinced of

the Donation's reality if such a material copy could be found—as if that copy, untested by any science of historical epigraphy, would have proven anything.

Valla's protests were partly ironic. He did not really consider the absence of material evidence decisive proof of the Donation's falsity. Nevertheless his remarks reveal his assumption that evidence transmitted by metal or stone was superior to evidence transmitted by paper. Scholars in Valla's time, presented with a material artifact, tended to underrate the possibility of an unreliable or wandering transmission and instead to presume a strong connection between the artifact and its referent. That underrating of the vagaries of material transmission was the very basis in Valla's century for the evidentiary force of artifacts. Archaeology is thought of as the discipline that overcomes the layers of mediation that separate us from the past. But early archaeology, to the extent that its preference for the material depended on an optimistic faith in transmission, was actually working *with* mediation.

The substitutable artifact par excellence was the painted icon, the portrait of a holy personage claiming a direct link back to ancient times.<sup>68</sup> Valla, while dismissing the spurious Lentulus letter, an eyewitness account of the appearance of Christ, came to discuss a famous Roman painting: "Similarly, although there are ten thousand instances of this kind at Rome, among the sacred objects are displayed the portraits of Peter and Paul on a panel which Sylvester put on show, when those apostles had appeared to Constantine in a dream, as a confirmation of the vision." Valla's point was to cast doubt on the legend that the panel was miraculously produced as a confirmation of a vision by Emperor Constantine. But, significantly, Valla does not doubt the portraits themselves: "I do not say this because I deny those portraits of the apostles exist. I wish that Lentulus's letters about the image of Christ were as authentic. . . . But I say what I say because that panel was not shown by Sylvester to Constantine. In this matter I cannot restrain my astonishment."<sup>69</sup> When it came to painted icons, in other words, Valla dropped his critical guard. He was ready to believe that the icons were substitutionally linked to their referents. The portrait of god, saint, or king, the relief sculpture, the tomb, and the round temple all succeeded in concretizing a past that was otherwise ghostly and obscure. Reference, once recognized, appeared ancient, inevitable, incontrovertible. A monumental shaping of the past, no matter how spurious, had a powerful *placebo* effect on the imagination of the beholder.

Earlier we noted that artifacts generate their own temporalities that

disable any easy coupling with histories of texts. The substitutional model is still another way of explaining why archaeology was out of sync with philology in this period, and why antiquarianism retained its systematic and nonnarrative character for so long.<sup>70</sup>

The hypothesis of mutually substitutable links in a referential chain explains how white vine scroll and the minuscule alphabet, no matter how recent the manuscripts that transmitted them, were held to have preserved the ancient ways of bookmaking; or how the strange iconographies of the medals found by Conrad Celtis could have been understood as antique. The hypothesis of substitutability shows how Brunelleschi was able to look through the eleventh- and twelfth-century buildings of Florence to the true meanings hiding behind them, the good form of ancient Roman building. Brunelleschi understood the meaning of SS. Apostoli or the Baptistery to be a referential quantum preserved across a chain of artifacts, some prior and now lost sequence of intermediary buildings leading from antiquity to the eleventh century. Any knowledge that one happened to possess about the particular or local circumstances of the building's absolute position within a chain of imitations was not allowed to interfere with the referential linkage and the presumption of substitutability. Brunelleschi probably knew that his models were in an important sense "medieval."<sup>71</sup> But they substituted for the missing ancient models that he really wanted. Neither architects nor scholars were capable of a philology of architecture that might have distinguished building fabrics and served as the basis for a reconstruction of building histories. The identity of the building was for them its *meaning*, not its physical being, which distended complexly across time and was for any practical purpose unreconstructible.

The chronicler Filippo Villani reported in 1330 that the Florentine Baptistery had once been a temple of Mars and that Christianization had brought only minor changes.<sup>72</sup> It is not clear whether Villani meant that the present Baptistery replaced an ancient temple, or whether his culture had forgotten after two and a half centuries when the present Baptistery was actually built and believed that it was in fact the ancient temple itself, reconsecrated and refurbished. But that ambiguity is typical. The distinction between "being" an old building and "replacing" an earlier building is never quite drawn. It may therefore simply be unhelpful to ask whether Brunelleschi or for that matter Vasari *really* thought that the Baptistery was executed in pre-Christian times. They believed that it stood in a reliable substitutional relationship to some original pagan building on that site, and that was enough.

A few period voices actually spelled out the principle of substitution. Annius of Viterbo, justifying his own faith in the *marmo osiriano*, admitted the possibility that it was only a replacement of a lost original: “Whether this is truly the tablet,” he wrote in his *Commentaries*, “or a substitute for it—the original having collapsed through age—we cannot yet be certain. Either way, we consider the tablet to have survived.” (*An vero haec illa sit, an ei vetustate labenti, ad eius exemplar suffecta, nondum compertum habemus. Existimamus tamen eandem permanere.*<sup>73</sup>) Walter Stephens calls this a “doctrine of congruence”: any inscription, no matter when fabricated, could be defended as a substituted copy of a lost original. Equally revealing are the arguments that the scholar Vincenzo Borghini in 1565–67 assembled in defence of the tradition of Florence’s antiquity.<sup>74</sup> Borghini adduced the Baptistery as evidence, but acknowledged that many experts considered the building’s polychrome marble revetment to have been applied in the middle ages. To meet this objection Borghini explicitly introduced a substitutional model of architectural history: he argued that the revetment imitated an earlier decorative scheme on the same building and thus reliably reflected antiquity.<sup>75</sup>

Substitutional thinking is compatible with—may even encourage—a normative approach to the achievements of the past. Gombrich showed that scribes and architects alike were more interested in reforming what they saw to be a corrupted traditions than in seeking out what might be today considered the historical identity of their models. They wanted *good* models, not necessarily old models; and they took their models where they could find them.<sup>76</sup> The strictly historical study of architecture was overwhelmed by the normative imperative.

Virtual or desired transmission chains were generated through triages of essential and accidental features. The Florentine architects saw only those features of the Romanesque basilicas they wished to see and ignored the rest. Only the essential, the supposed links to Rome, “made it through,” while all the rest was dismissed as merely accidental. What looks like error to modern eyes is just the drawing of a different internal frontier between the constitutive and the contingent. The fantastical frame drawn around a real inscription in a fifteenth-century sylloge is ignored by the modern epigrapher as a useless and misleading supplement. But that is precisely because the modern scholar considers the material support of the inscription to be good evidence about the past, potentially as important as the content of the text. The Renaissance antiquarian was slow to arrive at this idea.

Renaissance antiquarian credulity was therefore the result of a clash

between two models of the production of artifacts: on the one hand, the substitutional model, that underrates the transmission process; and on the other hand, the archaeological, that reads every artifact as an inalienable trace of its originary point and therefore as a powerful threat to textual authority. They are two competitive models of artifact production, two incompatible conceptions of the origins of artifacts, each with its own internal truth. The nefarious or farcical aspects of Annius's *Viterbo* "excavation," take your pick, are only a dramatic projection of the deep-structural interference between the substitutional and archaeological paradigms; as if all the latent contradictions of late fifteenth-century antiquarianism were exposed in one scholar's project. The archaeological preference for material relics over texts and the mystical confidence in the mutual substitutability of artifacts across time collided, but held their ground, in Annius's mind.

Archaeology made Celtis and Annius possible by tempting them into an overzealous imposition of the substitution model onto recent objects, into the imagining or fabricating of links in nonexistent chains. The power of the artifact translated the scholar back into the very frame of mind, confused and credulous, that scholarship was trying to overcome. Celtis and Annius were accidental artists, in the sense that they fell upon the truth of the anachronism of the artifact, its capacity to bend time. But they exercised their creativity within the wrong paradigm, scholarship instead of art, and so it came to resemble either folly or crime. For archaeology over the course of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries found its identity in the struggle to cancel out the noise and distortion of transmission. Error, in that same period, was tamed and caged within the institution of art. Only artists were allowed to make error their project. The scholars, meanwhile, found themselves liberated into an unending dialectic of critique. Modern scholarship has defined itself precisely against such doubled thinking. The empiricist algorithm locates its own origins in an overcoming of the participatory and divided consciousness. Empiricism is so fundamentally invested in a primal self-differentiation from forgery that when it doubles back on itself and tries to perceive its own historical origins, it loses its capacity for objectivity.

Before long the *rinascimento dell'antichità* was itself receding into the past, its achievements especially in scholarship and in the visual arts benchmarks for later generations, then as now. From the perspective of the later sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, that first and most creative Renaissance, the Renaissance of the humanists, took on a prestigious



Fig. 6. Spinello Benci, *Storia della città di Montepulciano* (Florence, 1641), frontispiece. Harvard University, Houghton Library.

threshold character, at once facing backward to the deep past and forward to the modern era. In this way, some archaeological fictions of the Renaissance entered into a strange second career, retaining their referential, documentary force, their rapport with antiquity, even as they were fully grasped as fabrications of the moderns.

An example of such an illogical retrospective appeal to a Renaissance “document” appears in the discussion of the origins of Montepulciano

by Spinello Benci, a seventeenth-century historian. The Renaissance sculptor Andrea Sansovino had modelled in terracotta a colossal portrait of Lars Porsenna, the semilegendary king of the sixth century BCE; according to Vasari the work was commissioned by the citizens of Montepulciano.<sup>77</sup> The portrait participated in the interurban Tuscan rivalry that for some decades had hinged on claims to Etruscan origins. The so-called “sepulchre of Lars Porsenna” at Chiusi, in fact the ruins of an ancient hydraulic engineering system, was investigated by Alberti, Filarete, Peruzzi, and Antonio da Sangallo. The Florentine cleric Lorenzo Dati composed a fanciful chronicle, the *Historia Porsennae*, posing as a translation of an Etruscan text by one Caio Vibenna.<sup>78</sup> In 1492 the Siense presented the funerary urn of Lars Porsenna, inscribed conveniently in Latin, to Lorenzo de’ Medici. The fifteenth century knew Etruscan civilization mainly through the textual accounts of the Romans, and everyone wanted more.<sup>79</sup> The Montepulcian colossus intervened in this story, filling a portrait-sized gap in the monumental record. Sansovino did not conceal his authorship, nor was it forgotten; still, the artist chose a prestigious and rare format, the colossus, and an unconventional medium for such a colossus, terracotta, lending the figure an archaic flavor. A terracotta bust, 46 cm. in height, only recently resurfaced in a private collection, seems to match the accounts by Vasari and others.<sup>80</sup> It would be difficult to attribute it to Sansovino without those notices; indeed it was still judged an antiquity by Luigi Lanzi in the late eighteenth century. Sansovino’s colossus had evidently already been reduced to a bust when Spinello Benci, secretary to the Medici, cited and reproduced it in woodcut as the frontispiece to his history of Montepulciano of 1641 (fig. 6).<sup>81</sup> Benci knew that Sansovino was the author of the statue; he describes it as a “memorial” erected by the town to its founder. And yet the work figures in his account almost as if it were contributing to the claim, dear to him, of an ancient Etruscan presence in Montepulciano. It was as if the fact that the citizens of Montepulciano had commissioned a memorial in the early sixteenth century rendered the myth of Etruscan origins a little more probable. The folk of the sixteenth century, after all, were just that much closer to antiquity, or so Benci implies; the old traditions were perhaps still intact then, the invisible lines of communication to the deepest past still open. Modernity, by contrast, our own mid-seventeenth century, Benci seems to be saying, is forever cut off from the living past and has to make do with mere scholarship. It is worth wondering why a three-dimensional “forgery” like Sansovino’s was—perhaps still is—more

effective than Lorenzo Dati's obviously fictitious chronicle. The sculpted document activates the magic of figuration. The history of archaeology is also a history of works, and for that reason can never quite be assimilated to the rest of the history of scholarship.

## NOTES

1. This paper is closely tied to a long-term collaborative project with Alexander Nagel. See our paper "Toward a New Model of Renaissance Anachronism," *Art Bulletin* 87 (2005): 403–32, and our book *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: ZONE Books, 2010), as well as my own book *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). The present paper was written in 2004 and was meant to appear before these publications. I am grateful to the critical comments of several anonymous readers.
2. B. L. Ullmann, *The Origin and Development of Humanistic Script* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1960); James Wardrop, *The Script of Humanism: Some Aspects of Humanistic Script, 1460–1560* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); Stanley Morison, *Politics and Script* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), chap. 6; Martin Steinmann, "Die humanistische Schrift und die Anfänge des Humanismus in Basel," *Archiv für Diplomatik* 22 (1976): 376–437.
3. Barbara A. Shailor, *Catalogue of the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University*, vol. 3, Marston MSS (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992), Marston MS 52, 101–2. On humanist white-vine decoration generally, see Otto Pächt, "Notes and Observations on the Origin of Humanistic Book Decoration," in *Festschrift Fritz Saxl*, ed. D. J. Gordon (London and Edinburgh: Nelson, 1957), 184–94; Pächt, *Italian Illuminated Manuscripts*, exhibition catalog (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1948); and J. J. G. Alexander and A. C. de la Mare, *The Italian Manuscripts in the Library of Major J. R. Abbey* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), xxxiii–xxxiv. For still finer distinctions among different types of white-vine scroll, see Melania Ceccanti, "Proposte per la storia dei primi codici umanistici a bianchi girari," *Miniatura* 5/6 (1993/96): 11–16, whose researches suggest that the imitations of medieval white-vine ornament improved in accuracy between 1400 and 1425; and Fabrizio Crivello, "'Vetustioris literae maiestas': un manoscritto di Sant'Agostino del Petrarca, gli umanisti e qualche osservazione sulle iniziali 'bianchi girari,'" *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 44 (2003): 227–34.
4. Robert G. Babcock et al., *Catalogue of the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University*, vol. 4, MSS 481–85 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), MS 481.35, 61–62, pl. 23.
5. Pächt, "Notes and Observations," 189.
6. Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), 70–71. Panofsky borrowed the

- term *pseudomorphosis* from Oswald Spengler, although without naming him. Spengler in turn had adapted the term from mineralogy. See Spengler, *Decline of the West* (1918, 1922; New York: Knopf, 1957), 1:209; see also 2:189–90. Only two years earlier, Panofsky's teacher Adolph Goldschmidt had argued, under the rubric *Formenspaltung* or "formal disintegration," that the history of medieval art had been driven by a series of profitable misunderstandings of earlier artistic formulas. Goldschmidt, "Die Bedeutung der Formenspaltung in der Kunstentwicklung," in *Independence, Convergence, and Borrowing in Institutions, Thought, and Art*, Harvard Tercentenary Publications (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), 167–77.
7. Johann Aventinus, *Bayerische Chronik* 1, 2 (= *Sämtliche Werke*, 4, 2) (Munich, 1883), chap. 49, 699.
  8. Giambattista Vico, *Scienza Nuova* (1725), pars. 430–31, 170; *New Science*, trans. David Marsh (London: Penguin, 1999), 171–72, 86.
  9. E. H. Gombrich, "From the Revival of Letters to the Reform of the Arts: Niccolò Niccoli and Filippo Brunelleschi" (1967), in Gombrich, *The Heritage of Apelles: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1976), 93–110.
  10. Ingrid D. Rowland, "Antiquarianism as Battle Cry," in *The Italian Renaissance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Allen J. Grieco et al., Acts of an International Conference, Florence, Villa I Tatti, 1999 (Florence: Olschki, 2002), 407.
  11. See the general discussion in Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (New York: Harper, 1969), 20–23. There is a vast literature on Brunelleschi's and Alberti's reception of ancient and medieval architecture; see the recent survey of Giuseppe Rocchi Coopmans de Yoldi, "Riflessioni sulla storiografia delle origini dell'architettura fiorentina e sullo svolgimento della fabbrica del Battistero," and "Il Brunelleschi e il Battistero," in *Santa Maria del Fiore*, vol. 2, ed. Coopmans de Yoldi, *Piazza, Battistero, Campanile* (Florence: "Il Torchio," 1996), 27–34; 64–65.
  12. Gombrich, "From the Revival of Letters to the Reform of the Arts," 106.
  13. Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (1949; New York: Norton, 1971), 43–44, described S. Maria Novella as a "posthumous member of the twelfth-century family of Proto-Renaissance buildings."
  14. Simone del Pollaiuolo, called Il Cronaca, active in the 1480s, combined in a single model book drawings of ancient buildings in Rome with the Baptistery and SS. Apostoli in Florence. Giuliano da Sangallo was also interested in the Baptistery. Hubertus Günther, *Das Studium der antiken Architektur in den Zeichnungen der Hochrenaissance* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1988), 70–71, 94, 42. An incisive and paradoxical analysis of this general phenomenon is Maria Fabricius Hansen, "Representing the Past: The Concept and Study of Antique Architecture in 15th-Century Italy," in *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici*, vol. 23 (1996), 83–116.
  15. In the preface to Book One of his *Lives*, Vasari says that the architects of S. Miniato were able to "recognize" and emulate "l'ordine buono antico" they found "nell'antichissimo tempio di S. Giovanni [the Baptistery] nella città loro"; Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori ed architettori*, 9 vols., ed. Gaetano Milanesi (Florence: Sansoni, 1906), 1:236–37. In the "Life of Andrea Tafi" he refers again to the Baptistery as "quel tempio antico . . .

la quale è dagli architetti moderni come cosa singolare lodata, e meritamente: perciocchè ella ha mostrato il buono che già aveva in sè quell'arte," and confirms that Brunelleschi, Donatello, and other masters used both the Baptistery and SS. Apostoli as models for their own work; *Le vite*, 1:332.

16. Fritz Saxl, "The Classical Inscription in Renaissance Art and Politics," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 4 (1940/1941): 19–46. Ida Calabi Limentani, "Primi orientamenti per una storia dell' epigrafia latina classica," *Acme* 19 (1966): 155–219, esp. 162–63 and section 3, 2, "Falsificazioni." See also the Appendix on medieval and Renaissance pseudo-antique texts and inscriptions in Wolfgang Speyer, *Die literarischen Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum* (Munich: Beck, 1971), 315–20.
17. In some cases, the syllogists surely suspected inauthenticity but copied the texts anyway; after all, they sometimes included openly modern texts, including their own inventions, alongside the ancient ones. Therefore one cannot always assume maximum credulity every time a scholar copies a spurious text.
18. On this point see my article "Notation of Visual Information in the Earliest Archeological Scholarship," *Word and Image* 17 (2001): 94–118.
19. Calabi Limentani, "Primi orientamenti," 162.
20. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1862 ff.), no. VI.5.6\*, II. 200\*. Ida Calabi Limentani, "Sul non sapere leggere le epigrafi classiche nei secoli XII e XIII; sulla scoperta graduale delle abbreviazioni epigrafiche," *Acme* 23 (1970): 261.
21. The history of the epigram is complicated; see Elizabeth MacDougall, "The Sleeping Nymph: Origins of a Humanist Fountain," *Art Bulletin* 57 (1975): 357–65, esp. 358–59.
22. Vatican Museums, inv. no. 548. See Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture* (London: Harvey Miller; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 97 and n. 79; Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 184–87; and Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, 233–47. See Robert W. Gaston's comments on the intertwining of the literary and archaeological traditions of the sleeping nymph, "Ligorio on Rivers and Fountains: Prolegomena to a Study of Naples XIII. B. 9," in *Pirro Ligorio: Artist and Antiquarian*, ed. Gaston (Milan: Silvana, 1988), 176–77.
23. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, n. 62. See most recently Gunter Schweikhart, "Nymphen in Statuengarten: Zu einer Zeichnung des Dresdener Kupferstichkabinetts," in *Ars naturam adiuvans, Festschrift Matthias Winner*, ed. Victoria V. Fleming and Sebastian Schütze (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1996), 244–51.
24. Jean Jacques Boissard, *Romanae urbis topographiae*, pt. 6 (Frankfurt, 1602), pl. 25, based on Boissard's researches in Rome half a century earlier, and reproducing the fountain in Colocci's garden. Jacopo Mazzocchi published the inscription in his *Epigrammata antiquae urbis* (Rome, 1521), 158, giving a location in Trastevere. On Colocci's installation, see MacDougall, "The Sleeping Nymph," 361–62, and Ingrid D. Rowland, *The Culture of the High*

- Renaissance: Ancients and Moderns in Sixteenth-Century Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 182–84.
25. See the ingenious argument by Madeleine Viljoen, “Prints and False Antiquities in the Age of Raphael,” *Print Quarterly* 21 (2004): 235–47.
  26. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* VI.5.3\*e. Otto Kurz, “Huius Nympha Loci: A Pseudo-classical Inscription and a Drawing by Dürer,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16 (1953): 171–77. See also Millard Meiss, “Sleep in Venice: Ancient Myths and Renaissance Proclivities,” *Papers of the American Philosophical Society* 110 (1966): 348–82. Edgar Bierende connects Cranach’s painting of the nymph to local interest in a miraculous spring associated with the prehistoric foundation of the city of Meissen; and more generally to Tacitus’s account of the early Germans’ cult of nature and attentiveness to prophetesses; *Lucas Cranach d. Ä. und der deutsche Humanismus: Tafelmalerei im Kontext von Rhetorik, Chroniken und Fürstenspiegeln* (Munich and Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2002), 227–34.
  27. Petrus Apianus and Bartholomeus Amantius, *Inscriptiones sacrosanctae vetustatis* (Ingolstadt, 1534), 385.
  28. G. F. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals of the Renaissance* (London: British Museum, 1930), nn. 421, 423. Stephen K. Scher, ed., *The Currency of Fame: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance* (Washington: National Gallery of Art; New York: Frick Collection, 1994), n. 27, 102–3. On the self-portrait medal, the reverse with the allegory is inscribed OPVS IOANIS BOLDV PICTORIS VENETVS XOGRAFI (= *zographos*, painter from life) and dated 1458. A version by another artist replaces Boldù’s image with a portrait of Caracalla but preserves the allegory on the reverse, though with a different inscription: IO SON FINE and the date 1466. Neither of these inscriptions or dates appears in the woodcut in Apianus; nor does the obverse, obviously. For the reception of the image, see William R. Levin, ed., *Images of Love and Death in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, exhibition catalog (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1975), n. 84; Wendy Steadman Sheard, ed., *Antiquity in the Renaissance*, exhibition catalog (Northampton, MA: Smith College Museum of Art, 1978), n. 80; and Horst W. Janson, “The Putto with the Death’s Head,” *Art Bulletin* 19 (1937): 423–49.
  29. The connection Celtis made to the Three Fates may have derived from a passage in Apuleius; see Peter Luh, *Kaiser Maximilian gewidmet: Die unvollendete Werkausgabe des Conrad Celtis und ihre Holzschnitte* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2001), 331, n. 25.
  30. Charles R. Morscheck, Jr., *Relief Sculpture for the Façade of the Certosa of Pavia, 1473–1499* (New York and London: Garland, 1978), 245 and fig. 61. The medallion is on the north side of the socle. For the medal portraits of Constantine and Heraclius, contrivances of a Burgundian court artist of around 1400 which were understood as antiquities by many scholars throughout the sixteenth century, see Scher, ed., *The Currency of Fame*, 32–37.
  31. Conrad Celtis, *Norimberga*, ed. Albert Werminghoff (Freiburg: Boltze, 1921), 123–25; Celtis, *Quatuor libri amorum* (Nuremberg, 1502), 1:12; 2:9; 3:13; Celtis, *Liber odarum* (Strasbourg, 1513), 3:28. For Aventinus’s reception of

- Celtis's reports, see his *Bayerische Chronik*, vol. 4, chap. 26, 106, and *Germania illustrata* (1531), *Sämmtliche Werke* (Munich: Kaiser, 1908), 6:156–57.
32. Arnaldo Momigliano, "Ancient History and the Antiquarian," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 285–315; reprinted in Momigliano, *Studies in Historiography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 1–39; Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969); Francis Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Alain Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997); Ingo Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Hirmer, 1999). See also the volumes edited by Salvatore Settis, *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, 3 vols. (Torino: Einaudi, 1984–86).
  33. On credulity and criticism in the church context, see esp. Klaus Schreiner, "Discrimen veri ac falsi: Ansätze und Formen der Kritik in der Heiligen- und Reliquienverehrung des Mittelalters," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 48 (1966): 1–53, and František Graus, "Fälschungen im Gewand der Frömmigkeit," in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, vol. 5, *Fingierte Briefe; Frömmigkeit und Fälschung; Realienfälschungen* (Hannover: Hahn, 1988), 261–82.
  34. Trapp, preface to *Essays on the Renaissance and the Classical Tradition* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990).
  35. Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (New York: Modern Library, [1932]), 1:189.
  36. For this concept, see Richard Krautheimer's "Postscript" to his seminal article of 1942, "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Medieval Architecture,'" in Krautheimer, *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval, and Renaissance Art* (New York: New York University Press; London: University of London Press, 1969), 149–50.
  37. Charles Mitchell, "Archaeology and Romance in Renaissance Italy," in *Italian Renaissance Studies*, ed. E. F. Jacob (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 455–83. On invented frames, see Mitchell, "Felice Feliciano Antiquarius," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 47 (1961), 197–221, esp. 216–17; Annegrit Schmitt, "Antikenkopien und künstlerische Selbstverwirklichung in der Frührenaissance," in *Antikenzeichnung und Antikenstudien in Renaissance und Frühbarock*, ed. Richard Harprath and Henning Wrede (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1989), 1–20 (on the interplay of accuracy and freedom in the antiquarian drawings of Jacopo Bellini and Marco Zoppo); and Wood, "Notation of Visual Information in the Earliest Archaeological Scholarship," 96–100.
  38. Weiss, *Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*, 117–18.
  39. On Anniius, see below, pp. 000–. On Pirro Ligorio, whose attitude toward truth is only now emerging in all its complexity, see the volume of essays edited by Robert W. Gaston, *Pirro Ligorio: Artist and Antiquarian*, and Gaston, "Merely Antiquarian: Pirro Ligorio and the Critical Tradition of Antiquarian Scholarship," in *The Italian Renaissance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Allen J. Grieco (Florence: Olschki, 2002), 355–73.
  40. Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

41. Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). On the self-emancipation of Renaissance poetry from referential responsibility toward origins, see David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).
42. J. B. Trapp, "The Image of Livy in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance," *Lecturas de historia del arte* 2 (1992): 211–38; or "The Poet and the Monumental Impulse," *Society for Renaissance Studies, Occasional Papers* 6 (1980), 12–14. Julius von Schlosser, "Vom modernen Denkmalkultus," *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1926–27* (1930): 8–9.
43. Trapp, "Ovid's Tomb," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 36 (1973): 47.
44. Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 104. See also Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), chap. 3 on Anniius.
45. Anniius, *De marmoreis Volturrhenis tabulis*, discussed by Roberto Weiss, "An Unknown Epigraphic Tract by Anniius of Viterbo," in *Italian Studies Presented to E. R. Vincent*, ed. C. P. Brand (Cambridge: Heffer, 1962), 101–20. Walter Stephens, "Berosus Chaldaeus: Counterfeit and Fictive Editors of the Early Sixteenth Century" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1979), 157–74.
46. Italo Faldi, Museo Civico di Viterbo, Dipinti e sculture (Viterbo, 1955), no. 38. Weiss, "An Unknown Epigraphic Tract by Anniius of Viterbo," 119, n. 53. Brian Curran, "The *Hyperotomachia Poliphili* and Renaissance Egyptology," *Word and Image* 14 (1998): 165–69, fig. 17.
47. Anniius, *Antiquitatum variarum volumina XVII* (Paris, 1512), f. 26r; see also his *Auctores vetustissimi* (Rome, 1498), f. f i recto–f iii verso.
48. Paola Mattiangeli, "Annio da Viterbo ispiratore di cicli pittorici," *Annio da Viterbo: Documenti e ricerche* (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1981), 1:257–339, esp. 297–301. The oak itself was the letter of Osiris. The lizard or crocodile symbolized evil, that is, the Giants. The birds, finally, were the Italians who appealed to Osiris for help; and so forth. Anniius also believed he saw an eye among the vines. A tablet with an explanatory inscription was appended to the object in 1587.
49. Curran rightly compares them to the profile heads on the pulpit at Ravello in Campania, "The *Hyperotomachia Poliphili* and Renaissance Egyptology," n. 76. That pulpit dates from about 1270 and has been attributed to Niccolò di Bartolommeo da Foggia, an artist not far from Niccolò Pisano; John Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture* (London: Phaidon, 1996), p. 12; Lucilla de Lachenal, *Spolia: Uso e rimpiego dell'antico dall'III al XIV secolo* (Milan: Longanesi, 1995), tav. XXXV.
50. Vasari, preface to the Lives, *Le Vite*, 1:220.
51. See the remarks by Riccardo Fubini, "Annio da Viterbo nella tradizione erudita toscana" (1981) in Fubini, *Storiografia dell'Umanesimo in Italia da Leonardo Bruni ad Annio da Viterbo* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003), 335–42, esp. 337–38 comparing Anniius's forged Viterban inscriptions to the

etymological “nuclei” that linked the distant traditions and confirmed his historical theories.

52. C. R. Ligota, “Annius of Viterbo and Historical Method,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987): 44–56. Ligota pointed out that Annius frequently noted problems in the texts he had forged. Either this was all part of the ruse or the texts had taken on some measure of authenticity in his eyes.
53. See above all the symposium proceedings *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, 5 vols. (Monumenta Germanica Historica, *Schriften*, vol. 33) (Hannover: Hahn, 1988); the exhibition catalog *Fälschungen und Fiktionen* (Munich: Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, 1986); and P. Herde and A. Gawlik, “Fälschungen,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 4 (Munich and Zurich: Artemis, 1988), col. 246ff. An excellent recent survey and analysis of the problem is Alfred Hiatt, *The Making of Medieval Forgeries: False Documents in Fifteenth-Century England* (London: British Library; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), esp. 1–21. Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 59–62, argues interestingly that the “high art” of forgery was created by literacy, as property claims increasingly came to be understood as relationships between words and things rather than between people.
54. On Maximilian’s genealogical projects, see Laschitzer, Simon. “Die Genealogie des Kaisers Maximilian I.,” *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen* 7 (1888): 1–200; Alphons Lhotsky, “Apis Colonna: Fabeln und Theorien über die Abkunft der Habsburger,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Geschichtsforschung in Wien* 55 (1944): 171–245; and Marie Tanner, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas: The Hapsburgs and the Mythic Image of the Emperor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 100–109. See also Christopher S. Wood, “Maximilian I as Archaeologist,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 58 (2005): 1128–74.
55. Klaus Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516)*, 2nd ed. (Würzburg: Schöningh, 1991), 167–79; Nikolaus Staubach, “Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Zeit: Die historiographischen Fiktionen des Johannes Trithemius im Lichte seines wissenschaftlichen Selbstverständnisses,” *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, 1:263–316.
56. For such a “non-relativist” position in the debate about the historicity of rationalist skepticism, see the reply to Horst Fuhrmann by H. Patze in *Historische Zeitschrift* 197 (1963); and Elizabeth A. R. Brown, “‘Falsitas pia sive reprehensibilis’: Medieval Forgers and Their Intentions,” in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, 1:101–19.
57. For “relativist” positions in the debate, see Giles Constable, “Forgery and Plagiarism in the Middle Ages,” *Archiv für Diplomatik* 29 (1983): 1–41; Horst Fuhrmann, “Die Fälschungen im Mittelalter,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 197 (1963): 529–54; and Fuhrmann, “Mundus vult decipi,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 241 (1985): 529–42.
58. See the remarks by Umberto Eco, “Tipologia della falsificazione,” in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter* (Monumenta Germanica Historica, *Schriften*, vol. 33) (Hannover: Hahn, 1988), 1:69–82.

59. Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths? An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 54.
60. Frank L. Borchartd, *German Antiquity in Renaissance Myth* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971); see also his “The Topos of Critical Rejection in the Renaissance,” *Modern Language Notes* 81 (1966): 476–88.
61. Riccardo Fubini, even while warning against a vogueish modern “complaisance” or even “connivance” with myth, argues that Annio da Viterbo was an authentic myth-maker, capable of expressing cultural crisis and malaise by symbolic means; “Annio da Viterbo nella tradizione erudita toscana,” 341.
62. Wolfgang Iser, *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (original German edition, 1991) (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 298.
63. Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*, 103.
64. Richard Krautheimer made a similar point about medieval buildings in his article, “Introduction to an ‘Iconography of Medieval Architecture,’” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 1–33. The model outlined here is basically an extension of Krautheimer’s thesis beyond its original chronological and medial bounds.
65. See R. Howard Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies: A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Marian Rothstein, “Etymology, Genealogy, and the Immutability of Origins,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990): 332–47.
66. On the dynamic role of the substitutional model within the self-understanding and self-theorization of Renaissance art, see Wood and Nagel, “Toward a New Model of Renaissance Anachronism” and *Anachronic Renaissance* (as in n. 1).
67. Lorenzo Valla, *On the Donation of Constantine*, trans. G. W. Bowersock, I Tatti Renaissance Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 59 and 63; see also 69 on the value of numismatic and epigraphic evidence; Valla, *Discourse on the Forgery of the Alleged Donation of Constantine*, trans. Christopher B. Coleman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), 74–75, 80–81, and 86–87.
68. For the new historiography of the medieval icon, permitting a total reconceptualization of its relationship to the art of the Renaissance, see Gerhard Wolf, “*Salus Populi Romani*”: *Die Geschichte römischer Kultbilder im Mittelalter* (Weinheim: Acta Humaniora, 1990); Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Wolf, *Schleier und Spiegel: Traditionen des Christusbildes und die Bildkonzepte der Renaissance* (Munich: Fink, 2002).
69. Valla, *On the Donation of Constantine*, 120–21; *Discourse on the Forgery of the Alleged Donation of Constantine*, 142–43.
70. See also Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian.”
71. John Onians argued that Brunelleschi knew perfectly well that the Baptistery was not an ancient building; rather he was attempting to reanimate and perfect a medieval Tuscan tradition of building; *Bearers of Meaning: The*

- Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 130–36.
72. Villani, *Chroniche*, 1:42. Charles Davis, “Topographical and Historical Propaganda in Early Florentine Chronicles and in Villani,” *Medievo e Rinascimento* (1988): 33–51.
73. Annius, *Antiquitatum variarum*, f. 28v. Stephens, *Berosus Chaldeus: Counterfeit and Fictive Editors of the Early Sixteenth Century*, 174.
74. Robert Williams, “Vincenzo Borghini and Vasari’s *Lives*” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1988), 96–99. On the reconstruction of the supposed temple of Mars Ultor in Vasari’s fresco of ancient Florence, see Nicolai Rubinstein, “Vasari’s Painting of ‘The Foundation of Florence’ in the Palazzo Vecchio,” *Essays in the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolf Wittkower* (London: Phaidon, 1967), 69–70.
75. To prove that ancient buildings had been polychromed, Borghini cited a passage from Gregory of Tours on late antique churches. There is evidence that other authorities agreed with him that colored marble was an ancient custom, and that the decoration of the new Cappella Sistina in S. Maria Maggiore was imitating prototypes understood to be not merely early Christian but ancient. Stefan Kummer, “Antiker Buntmarmor als Dekorationselement römischer Kirchen im 16. Jahrhundert,” in *Antike Spolien in der Architektur des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, ed. Poeschke, 329–39; also Thomas Weigel, “Spolien und Buntmarmor im Urteil mittelalterlicher Autoren,” in *Antike Spolien in der Architektur des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, ed. Poeschke, 117–51. See also Steven F. Ostrow, “Marble Revetment in Late Sixteenth-Century Roman Chapels,” in *IL 60*, Festschrift Irving Lavin, ed. Marilyn Aronberg Lavin (New York: Italica, 1990), 253–76; and the informative appendix on medieval and early Renaissance marble revetment in Ostrow’s dissertation, “The Sistine Chapel at S. Maria Maggiore: Sixtus V and the Art of the Counter-Reformation” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1987).
76. See also Hubertus Günther, “Die Vorstellung vom griechischen Tempel und der Beginn der Renaissance in der venezianischen Architektur,” in *Imitatio: Von der Produktivität künstlerischer Anspielungen und Missverständnisse*, ed. Paul Naredi Rainer (Berlin: Reimer, 2001), 104–43, on S. Marco in Venice and other “Greek” churches as transmitters of ancient forms, and 138–39 generally on the importance of pre-Gothic architecture to the revival of antiquity. Vasari mentioned S. Marco together with SS. Apostoli (in Florence), *Le vite*, 1:235–36.
77. Vasari, *Le vite*, 4:522.
78. Ingrid D. Rowland, “L’ *Historia Porsennae* e la conoscenza degli Etruschi nel Rinascimento,” *Res publica litterarum* 12 (1989): 185–93.
79. On fifteenth-century interest in Etruscan antiquities, see C. C. van Essen, “Elementi etruschi nel Rinascimento toscana,” *Studi etruschi* 13 (1939): 497–99; André Chastel, *Art et humanisme a? Florence au temps de Laurent le Magnifique: études sur la Renaissance et l’humanisme platonicien* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), 63–71; Cristina Frulli, “Caratteri etruschi nella scultura fiorentina al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico”; and Franco Borsi, “Architettura” (on reconstructions of Etruscan buildings by Antonio

da Sangallo and others), in *Fortuna degli Etruschi*, ed. Borsi (Milan: Electa, 1985), 102–8 and 36–43 respectively; and Giovanni Cipriani, *Il mito etrusco nel rinascimento fiorentino* (Florence: Olschki, 1980), 1–36; on the Etruscanizing imagination of the Biblical scholar, theologian, and cardinal Egidio da Viterbo, see Rowland, *Culture of the High Renaissance: Ancients and Moderns in Sixteenth-Century Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 148–50.

80. See the exhibition catalogs *Il Giardino di San Marco: Maestri e compagni del giovane Michelangelo* (Florence: Silvana, 1992), n. 26; and *L'Officina della maniera: varietà? e fierezza nell'arte fiorentina del Cinquecento fra le due repubbliche (1494–1530)* (Venice: Marsilio, 1996), n. 46. The surface of the head is painted, perhaps to resemble bronze. Vasari, *Le vite*, 4:510, also mentioned a pair of terracotta heads by Sansovino representing the emperors Nero and Galba and “ritratte da medaglie antiche.”
81. Spinello Benci, *Storia della città di Montepulciano* (Florence, 1641), frontispiece and 7.