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Renaissance Made in Naples: Alfonso of Aragon as Role Model to Federico da Montefeltro

This contribution was first drafted as an introduction to a pair of linked sessions held at the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America in Boston in spring 2016. It claims that fifteenth-century Naples remains an undervalued artistic center, especially when it comes to the city's contribution to what art history has defined as "Renaissance Art". Quattrocento Naples's artistic production is often considered "Late Gothic" in style. If a relation to antiquity is undeniable, then this relation tends to be judged as impure or deficient. Such preconceptions hark back to Jacob Burckhardt's moral condemnation of the Aragonese kings of Naples in his famous "Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien" (1860), a book that has long defined our conception of the Renaissance, and continues to do so – both scientifically and on a popular level. Burckhardt's stylization of Federico da Montefeltro as the perfect Renaissance prince emerges in contrast to his negative characterization of the kings of Naples and to that of Alfonso of Aragon in particular. This article deconstructs Burckhardt's narrative opposition and offers instead a more historically accurate account that demonstrates Federico's political and economic dependence on the kings of Naples. I argue that this dependence was nothing but honorable to Federico da Montefeltro and is reflected in an image politics that draws heavily on Neapolitan models. The connection is analyzed by way of a case study that focuses on two medals, one by Cristoforo da Geremia and the second by Clemente da Urbino.*

It is a puzzling fact that the very city where the first post-antique triumphal arch was built and still remains *in situ* – this being only the most obvious and monumental evidence of Naples's fifteenth-century appropriation of antiquity – still does not play a major role in Renaissance art history¹. Naples remains an undervalued place in the artistic geography of the fifteenth century. Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg have defined the characteristics of an artistic center in terms of a parallelism of economic and cultural development, highlighting the importance of art production and its diffusion². As Nicolas Bock has shown, this model – although sensitive to phenomena of resistance and alterity – does not take into account the radical difference of court centers like Naples from city states like Florence or Siena³. It underestimates the role of consumption and attraction, important dynamics in court centers, while it overemphasizes innovation. In relation to Neapolitan tombs Tanja Michalsky has pointed out that reference to tradition could be more important to Neapolitan patrons than artistic novelty and that the import of artists, styles and forms could be a matter of distinction that would become meaningful only within the local system of traditions and typologies⁴. Naples is, of course, an antique city and this conditioned a local antiquarian culture that – as Bianca de Divitiis and Andreas Beyer have demonstrated – produced an *all'antica* architecture independent of Florence or Rome, building on the continuous relation the city had with its classical heritage⁵.

As the only kingdom on Italian soil Naples was both a local and a global power whose splendor rivaled that of courts such as Burgundy⁶. During the reign of Alfonso V of Aragon (1442-1458) the city of Naples was the capital of a vast kingdom that comprised not only Southern Italy, Sicily and Sardinia but also the whole Mediterranean coast of the Iberian peninsula including Catalonia, Valencia, Aragon, and the Balearic islands. Dramatic political shifts precipitated ongoing negotiations of cultural identity that relied heavily on visual media. The pivotal role that Naples played both as center of attraction for cultural capital, and in shaping fifteenth-century taste and style is obscured in part by the loss of material and written records. But more importantly, as Georgia Clarke has demonstrated, art history since Vasari has constructed an ideal type of Renaissance art from the retrospective viewpoint of the dominance of other centers such as Rome and Florence in the sixteenth century and still tends to judge fifteenth-century art from this teleological perspective⁷. In the eye of the art historian searching for stylistic purity Naples falls short. However, any attempt to reconstruct for fifteenth-century Naples what Michael Baxandall called a «period eye» calls for the deconstruction of this expectation of purity, which is but the result of art historical canonization, to be understood as a historical process in itself. Research on fifteenth-century Naples should be encouraged not merely because of the many interesting monuments that this city and South Italy as a whole have to offer for art historical study. To consider Naples as a mayor player is not simply to introduce another dimension to the study of Renaissance art. Rather than just an option, it is essential for any adequate description of fifteenth-century art on the Italian peninsula and beyond. Neglecting Naples results in a distorted image that reflects more the history of the academic discipline of art history than historical reality, as becomes obvious when looking to neighboring fields such as the histories of politics, the economy, literature or music, where scholars seem to be much more aware of the importance of Naples in this period⁸.

One of the reasons for this disregard stems from Jacob Burckhardt's still vastly (if mostly indirectly and implicitly) influential book *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, first published in Basel in 1860⁹, and in particular from his moral condemnation of Neapolitan rulers in the first chapter entitled «The State as a Work of Art». To Burckhardt the great Alfonso is brilliant, fearless, dignified and affable, but guilty of the sin of squandering money at the cost of his people whom he taxes heavily. Ferrante is a bastard, probably not even Alfonso's son at all, clever but cruel, «equalled in ferocity by none among the princes of his time»¹⁰, and Alfonso II, Duke of Calabria, is immoral and above all a coward. Burckhardt's judgment is tainted by explicitly racist and anti-Semitic prejudices when he suggests that

Ferrante and his son were racially and morally degenerate, due to the (disputable) fact that Ferrante was fathered not by Alfonso but by a converted Jew from Valencia¹¹. Burckhardt characterizes the design of the state as backward, and still based on the medieval feudal system, and the economic system as state-controlled and compromised by favoritism¹².

The positive counter-image is offered by Burckhardt's characterization of Federico da Montefeltro: «In the great Federigo (1444-1482), whether he were a genuine Montefeltro or not, Urbino possessed a brilliant representative of the princely order»¹³. Federico taxes lightly, he invests his income as a *condottiere* to boost the local economy, and his subjects love him for it. «But not only the state, but the court too, was a work of art and organization [...]» Federico's court rivals with that of kings, «but nothing is wasted; all had its object, and all was carefully watched and controlled»¹⁴. The same goes for the arts and the appropriation of antique models: For Burckhardt, Alfonso's interest in antiquity is naïve, superstitious and entirely dependent on his court humanists (on which he spends more than he should). Federico's, by contrast, is competent and informed and above all purposeful and practical, as opposed to Alfonso's profligacy¹⁵. *Liberalitas* – to his contemporary biographers one of Alfonso's greatest virtues – was identified by Burckhardt as his greatest fault¹⁶. It is safe to say that Burckhardt's influential characterization of Federico da Montefeltro as the perfect prince, military commander and Renaissance man, is defined in large part at the expense of the Neapolitan kings and in contrast to Alfonso of Aragon in particular.

A closer look at Burckhardt's sources reveals a highly tendentious use of the historical record that borders on deliberate distortion¹⁷. This has to do mainly with the uncritical use of historiographical material produced by the enemies of the Aragonese kings, including Philippe de Comynes's *Mémoires* of the Italian campaign of the French king Charles VIII that led to the conquest of Naples in 1495¹⁸. Burckhardt's characterization of the Aragonese kings is in large part a paraphrase of Comynes's, and often a direct quote¹⁹. The spine-chilling center-piece of Burckhardt's account, according to which Ferrante displayed the embalmed bodies of his murdered enemies as a deterrence measure, is taken from a speech by the ambassador of Ludovico Sforza, Carlo da Balbiano, addressed to King Charles VIII with the intended purpose of inviting him to invade Italy. The speech is to be found in Paolo Giovio's *Historiarium sui temporis*, as correctly indicated by Burckhardt, but what Burckhardt fails to mention is that Giovio himself introduces this speech by questioning its veracity, pointing out the political motivations behind the portrayal of the Aragonese kings as the most haughty and cruel tyrants Italy had ever seen²⁰.

Furthermore, Burckhardt fails to mention that in 1451 Federico da Montefeltro signed a *condotta* with Alfonso of Aragon, to whom he became a counsellor in 1454, and that he maintained this alliance with Naples under Ferrante, to whom Federico remained loyal through the baronial revolt right up to his death in September 1482 which occurred while campaigning for the king²¹. This appointment was an object of pride for Federico, who had it recorded in the inscription of his lavishly decorated *studiolo* in Urbino, which was something like the heart of his self-fashioning²². As Cecil Clough has shown in his study *Federico da Montefeltro and the Kings of Naples: A Study in Fifteenth-Century Survival* the protection of the kings of Naples was a cornerstone of Federico's strategy to defend his territory against the sometimes unpredictable politics of the popes, who in theory could suspend the papal vicariate by which he held Urbino as a papal fief²³. And it was in fact the duke's relationship with the kings of Naples, cultivated over thirty years, «that enabled Federico to become probably the wealthiest prince of the Italian peninsula by the early 1470s»²⁴.

It is not untypical in the study of Renaissance art to ignore historical facts such as these or to rebut such obvious political dependencies with the more or less explicit counter argument of cultural superiority, which seems to be modeled on the simplistic and outdated narrative, according to which the Romans were militarily superior to but culturally dependent on the conquered Greeks²⁵. This kind of reasoning tends to detach the sphere of art from the domain of politics and social reality, thus implying an autonomous development of artistic forms and styles. Furthermore, research on Neapolitan art is confronted with powerful commonplaces and truisms well established in the discipline, such as that of Neapolitan art's belatedness. As a result, art connected to Naples is judged as derivative and dependent on the art of other centers with a stronger and more established tradition of art historical scholarship.

The comparison of such an iconic image as Piero della Francesca's portrait of Federico da Montefeltro (fig. 2)²⁶ with the panel depicting Alfonso as «RE DI RAGONA», as is indicated by the inscription on the balustrade (fig. 1)²⁷, illustrates this pattern. We may be inclined to give precedence to the former, due to its superior artistic quality, its inclusion of a superb panoramic landscape and a ubiquity on today's book covers that reflects its iconic status as a Renaissance image *par excellence*²⁸. Alfonso's panel portrait is based on Pisanello's famous medals series of 1449, which must have had a tremendous impact on trade in the currency of fame, social status and friendship (fig. 6)²⁹. The medal shaped Alfonso's image with the aquiline nose subsequently mentioned by Pope Pius II in 1452³⁰, and the haircut *à l'écuelle* following Burgundian fashion³¹. The importance of medals, as

the only medium at this time that allowed serial production and wide dissemination of one's own image, can hardly be overrated³². Medals were not only a status symbol of some exclusivity, but also a gift of friendship that one could present to or receive from one's peers. Medals have the distinct quality of combining a portrait on the obverse with an allegorical and often erudite image (*Denkbild*) on the reverse, thus presenting a person by means both of visual likeness and intellectual qualities or moral virtues³³. This quality, together with the format's mobility and durability, makes medals a privileged medium to function as the proxy of a person, travelling through space and time. The medium's inherent claim of antiquity stylized its user as a successor to the antique emperors. This point is emphasized in Alfonso's 1449 medal by the inclusion of the word «DIVVS» in the circumscription, a title bestowed upon deified Roman emperors. It should be noted, however, that Roman emperors, were only deified after their deaths, whereas Alfonso's medal was cast in his lifetime³⁴. Thus an original way of making use of the anachronistic potential of the medal becomes apparent: the medal historicizes the present of the ruler in anticipation of his future posthumous fame, claimed already for the here and now³⁵.

Ferdinando Bologna has argued that the Parisian portrait of Alfonso (fig. 1) was painted by a Neapolitan follower of Piero della Francesca, comparing it with another portrait by Piero, that of Sigismondo Malatesta (fig. 3)³⁶. Bologna highlights the sharply drawn profile line, the volumetric conception of the bust, the head and the facial features, as well as their sculptural rendering through clearly defined zones of light and shadow, all characteristics applicable to the portrait of Federico as well (fig. 2). Bologna also suggested that the Parisian panel could be a copy of a lost portrait by Piero himself, explaining the somewhat awkward inclusion of the hand with the mace by the lesser accomplishment of the follower. This hypothesis gains some plausibility when we consider that Piero's workshop reused portrait cartoons, as was the case with both Sigismondo Malatesta's and Federico da Montefeltro's portraits (fig. 4 and 5)³⁷. It also allows us to consider the addition of the hand and the beautifully executed internal frame and inscription, as requisites of a new kind of function and context, possibly a gallery of famous men commissioned by an allied court³⁸.

I cannot prove and I will not even claim that Piero della Francesca's portrait of Federico was in fact modeled after Alfonso's. I do, however, want to make a case for this possibility not being excluded prematurely on the grounds of the artistic superiority of the former, since this circumstance might be due only to the haphazardness of historical tradition. Artistic superiority is not a strong argument for historical primacy. With this corrective in mind, it becomes clear that Federico

da Montefeltro's patronage and image politics were closely based on the model provided by Alfonso. We do not even have to turn to Alfonso's own biographers Antonio Beccadelli (called Il Panormita) or Bartolomeo Fazio: it suffices to consult Vespasiano da Bisticci's well known collection of biographies of famous men that he composed in Italian from the mid-1480s onwards and concluded before 1493³⁹. Bisticci was a Florentine book dealer and his most important buyer was Federico da Montefeltro, to whom he dedicated a long biography. Already the first anecdote establishes Federico as the dutiful and selfless general of the troops of the King of Naples and points out his incomparable loyalty, explicitly mentioning that he served the Neapolitan kings Alfonso and Ferrante for thirty-two years⁴⁰. If we compare this biography to that of Alfonso of Aragon, also included in the collection, it becomes obvious that the virtues that characterize Federico are exactly modeled on Alfonso's, namely piety⁴¹, clemency⁴², generosity⁴³, justice⁴⁴, and affability⁴⁵, as well as the keen interest in learning and the patronage of scholars⁴⁶. At the end of Alfonso's *vita* Bisticci judges his deeds as worthy of imitation («degno d'imitatione»)⁴⁷. In return, in Federico's *vita* Alfonso and Pope Nicholas V are identified as Federico da Montefeltro's immediate models for his patronage of the arts⁴⁸. It is hard to see how Burckhardt could have missed this, and his reasons for the omission merit its own investigation⁴⁹.

The assertion that Alfonso of Aragon was indeed a role model for Federico da Montefeltro is further substantiated by the fact that Federico adopted the above mentioned designation «DIVVS»⁵⁰, which Alfonso used for the first time in 1449 in his medal by Pisanello (fig. 6), but which in Naples had appeared already on the tomb of Ladislaus of Anjou (d. 1414) in San Giovanni a Carbonara, completed not before 1431⁵¹. The epigraphic reference to antiquity is reinforced iconographically in a marble medallion from the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 7), which «shows the King deified as DIVVS ALPHONSVS REX and wearing antique military dress and *paludamentum* as well as the crown of Sol»⁵². This object, which resembles an enlarged medal, was probably part of a series of ruler portraits, possibly conceived as independent pieces. By contrast, the considerably larger marble *tondo* from Madrid (fig. 8)⁵³, closely modeled on Pisanello's medal, was probably a decorative part of a larger architectural structure. The *basamento* of the facade of the Certosa di Pavia, ornamented with roundels showing rulers from antiquity, is a famous example of this kind of decoration⁵⁴. So too are the two marble *tondi* from the destroyed *portico* of the façade of San Francesco in Mercatello sul Metauro near Urbino (dated 1474, fig. 9), which bear images of Federico da Montefeltro and Ottaviano Ubaldini⁵⁵. This is the first instance in which the Duke is designated as «DIVI FEDERICI VRBINI DVCIS». Federico appears here as an older man with

longer hair and in harness. The profile line is still based on Piero della Francesca's portrait, but the omission of the *berretta* gives the famous broken nose even more prominence and aligns it even more closely with Alfonso's aquiline nose, reminiscent of Caesar. Federico's adaptation of the designation «DIVVS» was no singular occurrence, as is evidenced by Sperandio's medal dating after 1474⁵⁶ and by a marble panel from Pesaro with the inscription «DIVVS FE VRBINAT DUX» (fig. 10)⁵⁷. The medium of the marble relief slab representing a framed portrait bust in profile was first used for cycles of Roman emperors and likewise was adapted quite early by Alfonso of Aragon for his own portrait, as in the marble relief by Mino da Fiesole in Paris (fig. 11)⁵⁸.

No doubt remains if we confront Alfonso's medal by Cristoforo da Geremia (fig. 12)⁵⁹ with the one that Federico commissioned from Clemente da Urbino in 1468 (fig. 13)⁶⁰. Cristoforo da Geremia's medal is commonly dated towards the end of Alfonso's life (d. 1458)⁶¹. More than seventeen examples survive, suggesting that it was distributed widely⁶². As Joanna Woods-Marsden points out in her seminal article *Art and Political Identity in Fifteenth-Century Naples*, the medal depicts for the first time an actual Roman portrait bust⁶³. Unlike the Renaissance bust, which is a section of the body from just above the elbows upward, this bust consists of a cuirass with shoulders but without the upper arms and hollowed out at the back⁶⁴. This tour de force in the creation of a true *all'antica* medal – and Cristoforo da Geremia was certainly one of the most qualified and competent artists at the time to do this⁶⁵ – is further pursued on the reverse, which shows Alfonso wearing the Roman military dress of a commander, holding orb and sword, while being crowned by Mars and Bellona, the gods of war and strife. This iconographical invention is directly inspired by antique Roman coins⁶⁶, as is also suggested by the use of the pearled border and the exergue line that serves as a base for the scene and as a convenient place for the artist's signature «CHRISTOPHORVS HIERIMIA»⁶⁷. According to Panormita, Alfonso of Aragon was an enthusiastic collector of antique coins and one can well imagine that the artist made use of this collection when designing his medal⁶⁸. Rather than directly quoting one single model, Cristoforo da Geremia has extracted the visual vocabulary from a variety of antique coins, freely combining and recomposing at least three distinct types: the "Mars Victor", nude except for a helmet and a cloak flying around his waist, carrying spear and trophy (fig. 17)⁶⁹; the advancing "Victoria", holding palm and laurel wreath (fig. 18)⁷⁰; and the particular iconography in which the emperor sits on a *sedia curulis* and is crowned by Victory standing behind him, while a second figure, such as *Pax* or *Virtus* is standing before him (fig. 19)⁷¹. Other elements enrich the medal's engagement with antiquity, such as the throne with armrests

supported by sphinxes, an antique motif that might refer to Pausanias's description of the throne of Zeus at Olympia (Pausanias V, 10-12)⁷², or the crown, which is the likewise explicitly antique crown of Sol. However, the inclusion of orb and sword as regal symbols, as well as the crown of lilies shown on the obverse of Alfonso's medal, establish a link to a more contemporary iconography of rulership such as that exemplified by the sculpted tomb of his famous Angevin predecessor Robert the Wise (c. 1343/1346, fig. 21)⁷³. Cristoforo has managed to integrate all of these elements into a successful composition that represents a powerful dynamization of a theme that is by nature rather static, namely that of the enthroned ruler. This is achieved by a visual alignment of each of the sitter's legs with those of the moving gods, thereby creating a tension that is increased in the two gods' juxtaposition as two alternative versions of a dynamic figure. These alternatives are described in terms of gender: the male figure, Mars, expresses dynamism by means of the naked body and its display of muscular tension in a forward movement, underlined by the subtle but nevertheless prominent iconographical element of the erect penis. Bellona's dynamism is more restrained, concentrated in the torsion of her upright figure, but it is exuberantly visualized in the rich flow of her garment's drapery. One is tempted to read the figures as representation of the two constitutive elements of bodily motion: tension and release.

In Federico's medal (fig. 13) the reverse shows a complex allegory that is devoid of human figures and displays the symbols of Mars and Venus as well as a cannonball or orb held in balance by the eagle of Jupiter⁷⁴. But the obverse is directly modelled on Alfonso's medal: from the arrangement of the circumscription and the bust in the round to the details in the cuirass – we can identify two winged *putti* holding an *imago clipeata*, a circular scrolled frame with Hercules slaying the centaur Nessus (cf. fig. 20)⁷⁵ and the Gorgon's head – everything has been copied, mirror inverted⁷⁶, in order to make a visual argument. The crown, not appropriate for a duke, has been omitted, of course, and the bust has been reduced to fit the *berretta* on Federico's head, the overall size of the medal therefore slightly enlarged⁷⁷. These necessary alterations apart, the visual analogy is striking and would have struck anyone who knew or even owned Alfonso's medal. One should imagine these objects handled, compared and discussed in a courtly context to envision their role in an elite "who's who"⁷⁸.

Conveniently, one of the most important written sources on the social use of medals that has come down to us is from the court of Naples. It is to be found in a letter from the Milanese ambassador Antonio da Trezzo to his lord, duke Francesco Sforza, and dates from 25 October 1456⁷⁹. It informs us that while listening to a laudatory speech about Francesco Sforza, King Alfonso held the duke's medal

in his hand, and the object became an agent in the ensuing conversation. The king asks the ambassador to identify the person portrayed on the medal, which he does, and when asked to confirm that it resembles the duke, he states that it is very true to nature («molto naturale»). Then the king happily goes on to emphasize that the duke has an attractive or convincing appearance («una buona presentia»). The medal's function as a proxy for the duke by means of visual likeness is further discussed in a humorous and rather witty way when the seneschal calls just this function into question by stating that he failed to recognize the duke, who had become fat – probably as a consequence of the excellent local cuisine of Lombardy, the king adds mischievously. At this point the ambassador tries to bridge the widening gap between the duke's likeness in the medal and his actual appearance by stating that the duke is not fat («grasso») but shapely («formoso»). The situation is finally resolved by the Patriarch of Alexandria with a joke at his own expense. The letter ends with the Milanese ambassador informing the duke that both the Patriarch of Alexandria and the Prince of Salerno would like to have a copy of his medal⁸⁰. The passage illustrates that medals were an effective means for a ruler to be virtually present at another court – in this case as the subject of friendly mockery – thereby reinforcing and complementing the ambassador's representative capacity. It also shows how medals functioned as tokens in a network of social relations and made these relations materially tangible and corporeal.

A few years later, Ludovico Gonzaga (d. 1478) commissioned from Bartolomeo Melioli a medal (1475, fig. 14) that still refers to Cristoforo da Geremia's prototype. The reference by visual resemblance is more loose here, but it extends to the reverse of Alfonso's medal as well as to Federico's copy of it⁸¹. It seems that by this time the type had become well known and rather fashionable, especially in Mantua⁸². When Christian I of Denmark stayed twice in Mantua on his way to Rome and back in 1474, he took home a medal that Melioli made for him (fig. 15) and that relies directly on Cristoforo da Geremia's model, depicting the crown in the exact same place as it appears in Alfonso's medal, but also resembles Ludovico Gonzaga's medal. Another instance is a medal of Pirro Malvezzi (1477, fig. 16), commander of the Bolognese troops, that closely copies Alfonso's antique cuirass⁸³. But it seems that nobody dared to emulate Alfonso's medal before Federico did, and nobody ever copied it as accurately – this was certainly to be taken as a demonstration of allegiance within the system of social currency⁸⁴.

The kind of image politics discussed above made loyalty visually evident and materially manifest. It reproduced and propagandized the factual loyalty of the duke of Urbino to the king of Naples, but it also projected this loyalty into the

interest-free space of courtly friendship. It would be worthwhile to follow the development of these visual strategies under king Ferrante, to whom Federico was just as loyal (or even more so) as he had proven to be to Alfonso⁸⁵. Ferrante was in large part the architect of his father's fame. He did not continue his father's use of medals as a means of image politics, however, but focused instead on coinage and was the first Renaissance ruler in Italy to strike his own portrait on coins⁸⁶. Nevertheless, Federico da Montefeltro's own image politics were closely associated with Ferrante's and the connection became even more reciprocal: when Ferrante founded the Order of the Ermine in 1465 he chose as the order's symbol an animal that Federico had adopted as a personal device probably in 1450⁸⁷. Clearly, one understands little of Federico da Montefeltro's self-fashioning and image politics if one does not take into account his relations with the kings of Naples. And by analogy, I would argue, one understands little of the Renaissance if one does not take into account Naples.

- * Il seguente saggio è stato originariamente preparato come contributo a due sessioni collegate della Renaissance Society of America tenutasi a Boston nella primavera del 2016. La tesi che propone è che la Napoli nel Quattrocento sia stata largamente sottovalutata come centro artistico, specialmente qualora si consideri il contributo della città a quella che si definisce "arte del Rinascimento". La produzione artistica del Quattrocento napoletano è infatti spesso considerata di stile "tardo-gotico"; e sebbene sia innegabile una relazione diretta con l'antico, questa relazione tende ad essere considerate spuria o comunque deficitaria. Questi preconcetti rimontano alla condanna dei sovrani aragonesi di Napoli formulata da Jacob Burckhardt nel suo celebre "Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien" (1860), un libro che ha segnato la nostra concezione del Rinascimento e continua a farlo, sia a livello di ricerca scientifica che a livello di più ampia divulgazione. Nell'opera di Burckhardt, il perfetto modello di principe rinascimentale, incarnato da Federico da Montefeltro, appare in posizione dialettica rispetto ad Alfonso d'Aragona, sullo sfondo della caratterizzazione negativa dei re di Napoli. Questo articolo prova quindi a confutare questa dicotomia burckhardtiana e al contempo a dimostrare, tramite la ricostruzione storica, la dipendenza di Federico da Montefeltro dai monarchi di Napoli. Partendo dal caso studio di due medaglie, una fonte preziosa per lo studio delle dinamiche politiche nel Rinascimento, una realizzata da Cristoforo da Geremia e l'altra da Clemente da Urbino, si dimostra come questa dipendenza fosse scientemente ricercata da Federico da Montefeltro e come tale avesse avuto riflessi nella costruzione di un'immagine politica che si rifà in maniera assai evidente ai modelli napoletani.
- 1 Even a recent overview of Italian Renaissance art co-written by a scholar as sensitive to and informed about fifteenth-century court art as Stephen J. Campbell dedicates but a few summary pages to Aragonese Naples (in conjunction with the Malatesta in Rimini) in the chapter *Rome and other Romes*. Cf. S. J. Campbell and M. W. Cole, *A New History of Italian Renaissance Art*, London, 2012, pp. 183-186. Cole and Campbell's only other longer passage on Naples discusses the tomb of King Ladislaus in San Giovanni a Carbonara as dependent

on and somewhat inferior to tomb architecture in Florence, cf. pp. 90-92. However, there are remarkable exceptions that do give more weight to Naples in fifteenth-century art, especially in a courtly context, such as Alison Cole's *Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts: Virtue and Magnificence*, London, 1995, recently republished in a revised edition as *Italian Renaissance Courts: Art, Pleasure and Power*, London, 2016, a book mostly overlooked by scholars, perhaps because it dispenses with footnotes and attempts to address a more general audience.

- 2 E. Castelnuovo and C. Ginzburg, *Symbolic Domination and Artistic Geography in Italian Art History*, in «Art in Translation», 1, 2009, 1, pp. 5-48, first published as E. Castelnuovo and C. Ginzburg, *Centro e periferia*, in *Storia dell'arte italiana*, ed. by G. Bollati, P. Fossati, G. Previtali and F. Zeri, Torino, 1979-1983, vol. 1, pp. 283-352.
- 3 N. Bock, *Patronage, Standards and "transfert culturel". Naples between Art History and Social Science Theory*, in *Import/Export. Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in the Kingdom of Naples, 1266-1713*, ed. by C. Warr and J. Elliott, Oxford, 2008 (special issue of «Art History», 31, 2008, 4), pp. 574-597.
- 4 T. Michalsky, *The Local Eye. Formal and Social Distinctions in Late Quattrocento Neapolitan Tombs*, in *Import/Export*, cit., pp. 484-504.
- 5 B. de Divitiis, *Building in Local "all'antica" Style. The Palace of Diomedea Carafa in Naples*, in *Import/Export*, cit., pp. 505-522, and A. Beyer, *Parthenope. Neapel und der Süden der Renaissance*, München-Berlin, 2000. Cf. *Remembering Parthenope. The Reception of Classical Naples from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. by C. Buongiovanni and J. Hughes, Oxford, 2015, on Naples's reception of its own classical antiquity.
- 6 W. Paravicini, *The Court of the Dukes of Burgundy. A Model for Europe?*, in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility. The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450-1650*, ed. by R. G. Asch and A. M. Birke, Oxford, 1991, pp. 69-102.
- 7 G. Clarke, *Architecture, Languages and Style in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, in «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», 71, 2008, pp. 169-189.
- 8 Cf. D. Abulafia, *The Diffusion of Italian Renaissance. Southern Italy and Beyond*, in *Palgrave Advances in Renaissance Historiography*, ed. by J. Woolfson, London, 2005, pp. 27-51, for a critical revision of historiography on Renaissance Naples and South Italy. For political and economic history see A. Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous. The Making of a Modern State*, Oxford, 1976; Idem, *Alfonso the Magnanimous. King of Aragon, Naples, and Sicily, 1396-1458*, Oxford, 1990; P. M. Dover, *Royal Diplomacy in Renaissance Italy: Ferrante d'Aragona (1458-1494) and his Ambassadors*, in «Mediterranean studies», 14, 2005, pp. 57-94; and D. Abulafia, *The Crown and the Economy under Ferrante I of Naples (1458-94)*, in *City and Countryside in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy. Essays Presented to Philip Jones*, ed. by T. Dean and C. Wickham, London and Ronceverte, 1990, pp. 125-146; as well as the fundamental studies by E. Pontieri, *Per la storia del regno di Ferrante I d'Aragona re di Napoli. Studi e ricerche*, Napoli, 1969, and Idem, *Alfonso il Magnanimo, re di Napoli, 1435-1458*, Napoli, 1975. On humanism and literature see J. H. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples*, Princeton (N.J.), 1987, including the review by J. A. Marino, in «Speculum», 66, 1991, 2, pp. 375-377, and M. Santoro, *Humanism in Naples*, in *Renaissance Humanism. Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, ed. by A. Rabil, Philadelphia, 1988, pp. 296-331. On historiography see F. Tateo, *La storiografia umanistica nel mezzogiorno d'Italia*, in *La storiografia umanistica*, acts of a conference (Messina, 1987), ed. by A. Di Stefano and G. Faraone, Messina, 1992, pp. 501-548, and on poetry and prose T. R. Toscano, *La letteratura a Napoli in età aragonese*, in

La Biblioteca Reale di Napoli al tempo della dinastia Aragonesa, exhibition catalogue (Napoli, 1998), ed. by G. Toscano, Valencia, 1998, pp. 139-167, with further bibliographic references. On music see M. Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance. Burgundian Arts Across Europe*, New York, 2002, pp. 130-135 and 187-193, and the seminal study by A. W. Atlas, *Music at the Aragonesa Court of Naples*, Cambridge and New York, 1985, and its review by R. Woodley in «Early Music History», 7, 1987, pp. 248-254. More ample summaries of politics and culture in Quattrocento Naples are to be found in *Storia di Napoli*, ed. by E. Pontieri, Napoli, 1967-1978, vol. 4 (1974).

- 9 J. Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien – Ein Versuch*, Basel, 1860. The English quotations are from the authorized translation by S.G.C. Middlemore, first published in two volumes (1878). The edition used here is J. Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, London and New York, 1890.
- 10 Burckhardt, *The Civilisation* [1890], cit., p. 36.
- 11 The German first edition reads: «Ferrante, der auf ihn kam, galt als sein Bastard von einer spanischen Dame, war aber vielleicht von einem valencianischen Marranen erzeugt.» And, with regard to Alfonso of Calabria: «Schon die echten Spanier treten in Italien fast immer nur entartet auf, vollends aber zeigt der Ausgang dieses Marranenhauses (1494 und 1503) einen augenscheinlichen Mangel an Race.» Burckhardt, *Die Cultur* [1860], cit., pp. 35, 37. In Early Modern Spain, Jews who – mostly under pressure – had converted to Christianity were called “conversos” or “marranos”. The use of this historical term is now highly contested, due to its roots in anti-Semitic vernacular language. Its precise etymology is not clear. Cf. C. Roth, *A History of the Marranos*, Philadelphia, 1941, pp. 27-28, who believes it derives from the word for “swine”, but D. Gonzálo Maeso, *Sobre la etimología de la voz “marrano” (criptojudío)*, in «Sefarad», 15, 1955, no. 2, pp. 373-385, who proposes a derivation from the verb “marrar” (as in “to deviate” or “to fail”, from the Latin “aberrare”), argues that the word assumed the meaning of “swine” only later. The term appears also in the third German edition (1877), a revised edition commissioned by Burckhardt himself from the German-Jewish historian Ludwig Geiger, who introduced numerous references to Jewish history. Cf. K. Herrmann, *Ludwig Geiger as the Redactor of Jacob Burckhardt’s Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*, in «Jewish Studies Quarterly», 10, 2003, 4, pp. 377-400, who also points out «the often observed phenomenon that anti-Jewish prejudices could go hand in hand with contacts to Jewish colleagues» (ibid., p. 383). Geiger attempted to attenuate Burckhardt’s severe judgement on the Kings of Naples. His additions to the text as well as to the notes result in a slightly more balanced image. The English translation of 1878 is dependent on that edition, but it eliminates the word “marrano” and speaks instead of a «half-caste Moor» and a «cross-bread house». Burckhardt, *The Civilisation* [1890], cit., pp. 37 and 38.
- 12 By contrast, Ryder, *The Kingdom*, cit., tells the story of «The Making of a Modern State», as reads the subtitle of his book. Cf. Abulafia, *The Crown*, cit., for a balanced account of the economy under King Ferrante that describes him as «an exponent of a rough-hewn sort of economic liberalism» (ibid., p. 130).
- 13 Burckhardt, *The Civilisation* [1890], cit., p. 44. Note that illegitimacy does not matter here. In fact, Burckhardt observes a «public indifference to legitimate birth» in fifteenth-century Italy; nevertheless, in the case of the kings of Naples illegitimacy becomes a matter of moral judgment (ibid., p. 21).
- 14 Ibid., p. 45.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 225-227.

- 16 Apart from being the subject of one of Alfonso's three medals by Pisanello from 1449 (see below), Panormita, the most important figure among the first generation of humanists at the Aragonese court in Naples, stresses Alfonso's liberality in his *De dictis et factis Alphonsi regis Aragoniae libri quattuor*, completed 1455, printed in 1485. The fifteenth-century manuscript in the Biblioteca Pública de Huesca (Ms. 106) features the following anecdotes from Alfonso's life under the subheader «liberaliter»: book I, § 24; book II, §§ 2, 16, 30, 35, 38, 57, 67; book III, §§ 11, 20, 25, 33, 42; book IV, §§ 2, 3, 44. A convenient transcription is to be found at: <<http://ww2.bibliotecaitaliana.it/xtf/view?docId=bibit000602/bibit000602.xml>>, a digitalization of the manuscript can be consulted at: <<http://bibliotecavirtual.aragon.es/i18n/consulta/registro.cmd?id=337>> (last access: 22.02.2018). Burckhardt follows J.-Ch.-L. Simonde de Sismondi, *Histoire des républiques italiennes du Moyen Âge*, Paris, 1807-1818, vol. 10 (1815), pp. 77-83, esp. pp. 82-83, with a severe critique of Alfonso's *liberalitas* that is based on Giovanni Pontano's ambivalent view developed in his treatise *De liberalitate*, begun before 1493. Pontano, who was in many ways Panormita's successor under King Ferrante, pointed out the positive as well as the negative consequences of Alfonso's liberality (and it is those that Burckhardt focuses on) and called him indeed a squanderer («profusior»). Cf. *De liberalitate*, X, in G. G. Pontano, *I libri delle virtù sociali*, ed. by F. Tateo, Rome, 1999, p. 66. Also Borso d'Este criticized Alfonso in a letter from 1445 for being too munificent, advising him to create a reserve fund for emergencies. C. Foucard, *Proposta fatta dalla corte estense ad Alfonso I re di Napoli (1445)*, in «Archivio storico per le province napoletane», 4, 1879, 4, pp. 689-752, pp. 711-714. Cf. J. Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity in Fifteenth-Century Naples. Pisanello, Cristoforo di Geremia, and King Alfonso's Imperial Fantasies*, in *Art and Politics in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy, 1250-1500*, ed. by C. M. Rosenberg, Notre Dame (Ind.), 1990, pp. 11-37, p. 19.
- 17 Burckhardt names the following works as his sources: Tristano Caracciolo's *De varietate fortunae* (after 1509), Camillo Porzio's *La congiura de' baroni del regno di Napoli contra il re Ferdinando I* (1565), Philippe de Commines's *Les memoires sur les principaux faits et gestes de Louis onzieme et de Charles huitieme, son filz, roys de France (1524-1528)*, Paolo Giovio's *Historiarum sui temporis* (1550-1552), Giovanni Pontano's treatises *De liberalitate*, *De obedientia*, *De prudentia*, *De magnanimitate* and *De immanitate*, and the so-called *Diario Ferrarese*. A systematic study would be necessary to accurately assess and interpret Burckhardt's use of sources related to Naples; this task lies beyond the scope and interest of the present contribution.
- 18 P. de Commines, *Mémoires sur Charles VIII et l'Italie (Livres VII et VIII)*, Paris, 2002.
- 19 Cf. *ibid.*, chapter XIII-XIV, pp. 121-133. Burckhardt's indebtedness to this particular source is signaled by his conclusion of the paragraph with a quotation from Commines: «But, as Comines one-sidedly, and yet on the whole rightly observes on this occasion, "Jamais homme cruel ne fut hardi:"» Burckhardt, *The Civilisation* [1890], cit., p. 38. The third edition, revised by Ludwig Geiger, highlights this dependence by inserting another explicit quote into the characterization of Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, «described by Comines as "the cruelest, worst, most vicious and basest man ever seen"». *Ibid.*, p. 37. In another addendum regarding King Ferrante Geiger points out that additional source material «would dispose us to moderate to some extent the harsh judgment which has been passed upon him.» *Ibid.*, p. 36, note 1.
- 20 Cf. P. Giovio, *Historiarum sui temporis. Tomus Primus*, Romae, 1957, p. 19. The contemporary Italian edition reads: «Essendo dunque ascoltato il Balbiano in publico e in secreto con animi affettionati, & spesse volte dicendo aspramente male de gli Aragonesi, poi che egli

hebbe mostrato, mescolando il falso col vero, che eßi erano stati i piu superbi & crudeli tiranni che mai fossero in Italia, finalmente chiamato in consiglio, fece questa oratione.» *La prima parte delle Historie del suo tempore di Mons. Paolo Giovio vescovo di Nocera. Tradotte per M. Lodovico Domenichi*, Venezia, 1555, pp. 20-21. See also P. Gilli, *Politiques italiennes, le regard français (c. 1375-1430)*, in «Médiévales», 19, 1990, pp. 109-123, esp. pp. 113-120, who identifies already in late fourteenth-century French writing the recurring theme of Italy as a country ravaged by unrightful and unjust tyrants, as opposed to the French model of the divinely ordained monarch.

- 21 An insertion by Ludwig Geiger into Burckhardt's text stating that «in this capacity [as a *condottiere*] he served kings and popes for thirty years after he became prince» hints at this connection, but does not make it explicit. Burckhardt, *The Civilisation* [1890], cit., p. 44.
- 22 The inscription is dated 1476 and mentions also Federico's appointment as *gonfaloniere* of the Pope: « FEDERICVS · MONTEFELTRIVS · DVX · VRBINI · MONTIS / FERETRI · AC · DVRANTIS · COMES · SERENISSIMI · REGIS · SI / CILIAE · CAPITANEVS · GENERALIS · SANCTEQVE · ROMANE · ECCLESIE · CONFALONERIVS · MCCCCLXXVI · ». Quoted from L. Cheles, *Lo studiolo di Urbino: iconografia di un microcosmo principesco*, Modena, 1991, p. 15, cf. fig. 10-12.
- 23 C. H. Clough, *Federico da Montefeltro and the Kings of Naples. A Study in Fifteenth-Century Survival*, in «Renaissance Studies», 6, 1992, 2, pp. 113-172.
- 24 Clough, *Federico da Montefeltro*, cit., p. 148.
- 25 This view finds confirmation in a famous dictum by Horaz: «Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes intulit agresti Latio» (Conquered Greece took captive her savage conqueror and brought her arts into rustic Latium). But cf. A. Wallace-Hadrill, *To be Roman, Go Greek. Thoughts on Hellenization at Rome*, in «Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies», 1998, 71, pp. 79-91, for contextualization and an insightful investigation of the "Hellenization" of Roman society.
- 26 See E. Battisti, *Piero della Francesca*, Milano, 1992 (nuova ed. riveduta e aggiornata), vol. 2, no. a.12, pp. 514-518.
- 27 See *El Renacimiento mediterráneo. Viajes de artistas e itinerarios de obras entre Italia, Francia y España en el siglo XV*, exhibition catalogue (Madrid-Valencia, 2001), ed. by M. Natale, Madrid, 2001, no. 90, pp. 527-529.
- 28 Making this comparison comes at the cost of extracting Federico's portrait panel from its original function as a pendant to the portrait of his wife Battista Sforza, who is treated in the scholarship on the diptych usually in connection with the use of her date of death (1472) as a *terminus ante quem*, but seldom as an integral part of the work itself. But cf. J. Woods-Marsden, *Piero della Francesca's Ruler Portraits*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Piero della Francesca*, ed. by J. M. Wood, New York, 2002, pp. 91-114, for a thorough discussion of the diptych with due attention to Battista Sforza. However, it is very probable, that another portrait panel by Piero della Francesca existed, in which Federico appeared alone; a poem by the Carmelite Ludovico Ferabò refers to such a painting. Cf. J. W. Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, London and New York, 1966, p. 319, note 8, as well as C. Gilbert's review of the book in «The Burlington Magazine», 110, 1968, 782, p. 282.
- 29 G. F. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals of the Renaissance before Cellini*, London, 1930, no. 41; *Pisanello: Le peintre aux sept vertus*, exhibition catalogue (Paris, 1996), ed. by D. Cordellier and P. Marini, Paris, 1996, no. 304; *Renaissance Medals. Volume One: Italy*, collection catalogue, ed. by J. G. Pollard, Washington, 2007, no. 21; *Gesichter der Renaissance. Meisterwerke italienischer Portrait-Kunst*, exhibition catalogue (Berlin-New York, 2011), ed. by K. Chris-

- tiansen and S. Weppelmann, München, 2011, no. 132; M. Warnke, *Liberalitas principis, in Arte, committenza ed economia a Roma e nelle corti del Rinascimento 1420-1530*, acts of a conference (Roma, 1990), ed. by A. Esch and C. L. Frommel, Torino, 1995, pp. 83-92. See *Pisanello: Painter to the Renaissance Court*, exhibition catalogue (London, 2001), ed. by Luke Syson and Dillian Gordon, London, 2001, pp. 123-130, on all three medals of Alfonso (with good reproductions in original size). Cf. also J. Barreto, *La majesté en images. Portraits du pouvoir dans la Naples des Aragon*, Roma, 2013, pp. 95-103, and Tanja Jones's essay in the present volume.
- 30 «corpore gracilis, vultu pallido, sed aspectu laeto, naso aquilo, et illustribus oculis, crine nigro, et jam albicanti, ad aures usque protenso, statura mediocri». Quoted from Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous*, cit., p. 307, note 6. Cf. the English translation of the passage in A. S. Piccolomini, *Europe (c. 1400-1458)*, transl. by R. D. Brown, Washington, 2013, p. 303: «He had a slender build, a face that was pale but cheerful in expression, a hooked nose, shining eyes, and black but now graying hair which reached his ears. He was average in height [...]» Pomponius Gauricus seems to have Alfonso's portrait in mind when he reads a curved and aquiline nose as a sign of royal character and magnificence: «De naso: [...] Aduncus qui et aquilinus, Regalem animum, ac magnificenciam». P. Gauricus, *De sculptura (1504): Edition annotée et traduction*, Genève, 1969, pp. 146-147.
- 31 M. Beaulieu and J. Baylé, *Le Costume en Bourgogne de Philippe le Hardi à la mort de Charles le Téméraire (1364-1477)*, Paris, 1956, p. 63.
- 32 On the medal, its origin and mediality see J. Burckhardt, *Das Altarbild – Das Porträt in der Malerei – Die Sammler. Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte von Italien*, München-Basel, 2000, pp. 360-363; G. F. Hill, *Classical Influence on the Italian Medal*, in «The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs», 18, 1911, 95, pp. 259-263 and 266-268; M. Pastoureau, *La naissance de la médaille. Le problème emblématique*, in «Revue numismatique», sér. VI, 24, 1982, pp. 205-221; Idem, *Une image nouvelle. La médaille du XVe siècle*, in «The Medal», 9, 1986, pp. 5-8; Idem, *La naissance de la médaille des impasses historiographiques à la théorie de l'image*, in «Revue numismatique», sér. VI, 30, 1988, pp. 227-247; J. R. Spencer, *Speculations on the Origin of the Italian Renaissance Medal*, in *Italian Medals*, acts of a conference (Washington, 1984), ed. by J. G. Pollard, London and Hanover (N.H.), 1987, pp. 197-203; S. K. Scher, *Immortalis in nummis: The Origins of the Italian Renaissance Medal*, in «Médailles & Antiques», 1, 1989, pp. 9-19; I. Lavin, *Pisanello and the Invention of the Renaissance Medal, in Italienische Frührenaissance und nordeuropäisches Spätmittelalter. Kunst der frühen Neuzeit im europäischen Zusammenhang*, ed. by J. Poeschke and F. Ames-Lewis, München, 1993, pp. 67-84; *The Currency of Fame: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance*, exhibition catalogue (New York and Washington, 1994), ed. by S. K. Scher, New York, 1994; M. Jones, *What Are Medals For? A Contribution to the Understanding of "useless things"*, in *XII. Internationaler Numismatischer Kongress*, acts of a conference (Berlin, 1997), ed. by B. Kluge and B. Weisser, Berlin, 2000, pp. 1398-1408.
- 33 On this see U. Pfisterer, *Lysippus und seine Freunde. Liebesgaben und Gedächtnis im Rom der Renaissance oder: Das erste Jahrhundert der Medaille*, Berlin, 2008, pp. 106-129 (chapter 6).
- 34 As has been pointed out by Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., p. 17.
- 35 This is a quality emphasized also by contemporary viewers. As M. Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators. Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition, 1350-1450*, Oxford, 1971, p. 90, astutely observes, Guarino Guarini's statement in a letter to Alfonso of Aragon dated 1447 that «unlike literature, paintings and statues [...] are poor vehicles for transmitting personal fame, first because they are *sine litteris*, unlabeled, and

second, because they are not conveniently portable», reads as a definition of the new medium of the medal *ex negativo*. Cf. G. Guarini, *Epistolario di Guarino Veronese*, Torino, 1967, vol. 1, no. 805, pp. 486-493, esp. p. 492. Filarete claims in his *Trattato di architettura* (1451/1464) that we really know the Roman emperors only thanks to their coins («medaglie»). It sounds like a response to Guarino when Filarete insists that we might know about their deeds through literature, but not what they would have looked like («somilitudine del viso»), since this cannot be shown in writing as it can in an image. Filarete, *Trattato di architettura*, ed. by A. M. Finoli and L. Grassi, Milano, 1972, book 24, p. 679. Of the same tenor are Angelo Decembrio's remarks in his *De politica letteraria*, written probably around 1450 at the court of Naples, in which Leonello d'Este appears with the following statement: «I often take great pleasure in looking at the heads of the Caesars on bronze coins – bronze having survived more commonly than gold or silver – and they impress me no less than the descriptions of their appearance in Suetonius and others. For the latter are apprehended by the mind alone.» M. Baxandall, *A Dialogue on Art from the Court of Leonello d'Este. Angelo Decembrio's De Politica Letteraria, Pars LXVIII*, in «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», 26, 1963, pp. 304-326, pp. 324-325. In a letter to Leonello d'Este dating from 1446, Flavio Biondo reports a conversation with Sigismondo Malatesta and cardinal Prospero Colonna about Leonello's commission of numerous coins or medals («nummos aeneos») with his name and portrait on them, emphasizing that by picking up this antique fashion, Leonello is achieving real and solid fame («veram ac solidam gloriam»). F. Biondo, *Scritti inediti e rari*, ed. by B. Nogara, Roma, 1927, pp. 159-160. Similarly, Timoteo Maffei, speaks of Matteo de' Pasti's medals for Sigismondo Malatesta as a medium to immortalize his name, specifying that they are produced in large numbers and in various materials to be sent abroad («ad extras nationes»), but also to be buried or immured – an act that is clearly directed at future reception. P. Pasini, *Note su Matteo de' Pasti e la medagliistica malatestiana*, in *La medaglia d'arte*, acts of a conference (Udine, 1970), Udine, 1973, pp. 41-75, p. 45. See also G. Satzinger, *Baumedaillen: Formen, Funktionen. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts, in Die Renaissance-Medaille in Italien und Deutschland*, ed. by G. Satzinger, Münster, 2004, pp. 97-137, with many other examples.

- 36 F. Bologna, *Napoli e le rotte mediterranee della pittura. Da Alfonso il Magnanimo a Ferdinando il Cattolico*, Napoli, 1977, pp. 106-108, who dates the painting to around 1457-1458. On the Malatesta portrait, which only after a technical analysis carried out in 1977 has been cleared of the suspicion of being a nineteenth-century forgery, see M. Laclotte, *Le portrait de Sigismond Malatesta par Piero della Francesca*, in «Revue du Louvre», 28, 1978, pp. 255-266; Battisti, *Piero della Francesca*, cit., vol. 2, no. a.2, p. 420; *Il potere, le arti, la guerra: Lo splendore dei Malatesta*, exhibition catalogue (Rimini, 2001), ed. by A. Donati, Milano, 2001, no. 87, p. 248; and again Woods-Marsden, *Piero della Francesca's Ruler Portraits*, cit., pp. 93-95, who stresses the dependence of Federico da Montefeltro's portrait on that of Sigismondo Malatesta.
- 37 On the *Fresco of Sigismondo Malatesta* see Battisti, *Piero della Francesca*, cit., vol. 2, no. a.3, and *Il potere, le arti, la guerra*, cit., no. 86, pp. 246-248. Also in this case a medal by Pisanello or by Matteo de' Pasti seems to have been the model for both, panel and fresco painting. Cf. Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait*, cit., p. 155, and Laclotte, *Le portrait de Sigismond Malatesta*, cit., p. 258. On the *Montefeltro Altarpiece* see Battisti, *Piero della Francesca*, cit., vol. 2, no. a.11, and M. Aronberg Lavin, *Piero della Francesca's Montefeltro Altarpiece: A Pledge of Fidelity*, in «The Art Bulletin», 51, 1969, pp. 367-371. In both cases the outlines of the faces in the aforementioned portrait panels are virtually identical with those of the kneeling donor portraits. Cf. C. Gilbert, *Change in Piero della Francesca*, Locust Valley, 1968, pp. 29-30, and p. 91, note

- 43 in particular, as well as Battisti, *Piero della Francesca*, cit., vol. 2, p. 527 and vol. 1, p. 279, fig. 200. The fresco in Rimini shows clearly that *spolvero* technique was used to transfer the cartoon drawing onto the wall. Cf. Laclotte, *Le portrait de Sigismond Malatesta*, cit., p. 259, and Battisti, *Piero della Francesca*, cit., vol. 1, p. 53-54 and figs. 10-14.
- 38 As suggested by Barreto, *La majesté*, cit., p. 317.
- 39 Vespasiano da Bisticci's *Vite* include the biographies of both, Alfonso and Federico. See V. da Bisticci, *Le vite*, Firenze, 1970-1977, vol. 1 (1970), pp. 83-117 («La Vita di Re Alfonso di Napoli») and pp. 355-416 («Comentario de la Vita del signore Federico, Duca d'Urbino»). On Panormita see above, note 16, as well as G. Resta's entry in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, ed. by A. M. Ghisalberti, Roma, 1960- (henceforth: *DBI*), vol. 7 (1970), s.v. «Beccadelli, Antonio». His *De dictis et factis Alphonsi regis* was a direct model for Bisticci, cf. N. Thurn, *Antonio Panormitas "De Dictis et Factis Alfonsi Regis Aragoniae Libri Quattuor" als literarisches Kunstwerk*, in *De litteris Neolatinis in America Meridionali, Portugallia, Hispania, Italia inter XV et XIX saeculum cultis*, ed. by D. Briesemeister and A. Schönberger, Frankfurt am Main, 2002, pp. 199-219, p. 204. Fazio's *De rebus gestis ab Alphonso primo Neapolitanorum rege* (completed in 1457) is mentioned by Bisticci, who wants to expand the account of Alfonso's deeds by including details of his private life, for which he cites Giannozzo Manetti and Panormita as his sources. Bisticci, *Le vite*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 83, 84, 88. On Fazio see P. Viti's entry in the *DBI*, vol. 44 (1994), s.v. «Fazio, Bartolomeo».
- 40 Bisticci, *Le vite*, cit., vol. 1, p. 358.
- 41 «piatosissimo» and «religiosissimo», Bisticci, *Le vite*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 85, 89 and pp. 399/400.
- 42 «clementissimo», Bisticci, *Le vite*, cit., vol. 1, p. 89 and p. 400
- 43 «liberalissimo», Bisticci, *Le vite*, cit., vol. 1, p. 91 and p. 386 («inaudita liberalità»).
- 44 «integrità et giustitia», Bisticci, *Le vite*, cit., vol. 1, p. 94 and p. 405.
- 45 «umanissimo», Bisticci, *Le vite*, cit., vol. 1, p. 101 und p. 403 («grandissima umanità»).
- 46 Bisticci, *Le vite*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 98-101 and p. 385.
- 47 Bisticci, *Le vite*, cit., vol. 1, p. 114.
- 48 «[...] da papa Nicola e il re Alfonso in qua, lo studio delle lettere et gli uomini singolari non hanno avuto ignuno che gli abia più onorati et premiati delle loro fatiche che ha fatto il duca d'Urbino», Bisticci, *Le vite*, cit., vol. 1, p. 385. Federico's library (which Bisticci, being its main furnisher, describes in some detail), as well as his predilection for Flemish panel painting and tapestries find their real model in Alfonso's collection, although Bisticci makes no mention of this in Alfonso's biography.
- 49 But cf. C. Tauber, *Die Flucht ins Decorum. Jacob Burckhardts neapolitanische Kapitulation*, in «Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte», 65, 2002, 1, pp. 73-90, on Burckhardt's problematic relationship with Naples that took shape already while he was working on his *Cicerone* (1855). However, in Burckhardt's late work, the admirable *Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte von Italien*, Alfonso appears in a much more favorable light, namely as an exemplary collector. Burckhardt, *Beiträge*, cit., pp. 320-321 and 307-311.
- 50 Federico was not the first nor the only one to adopt this title coined by Alfonso. Frederick III is designated as such on a painted portrait panel as well as on a medal that portrays him as Holy Roman Emperor, hence after his coronation in Rome on 19 March 1452. Frederick, who was married the same day to Alfonso's niece Eleanor of Portugal, proceeded to Naples where he was received with great splendor by his new uncle in law. Cf. Hill, *A Corpus of*

Italian Medals, cit., no. 1126, and M. Meiss, *Contributions to two Elusive Masters*, in «The Burlington Magazine», 103, 1961, pp. 57-66. On the reception see Barreto, *La maesté*, cit., pp. 89-95. Other medals with the designation «DIVVS» resp. «DIVI» include that of King Louis XI of France (after 1461) and that of René d'Anjou and Jeanne de Laval (1463). Cf. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 65 and no. 59. Among dukes the designation was used almost exclusively by Federico da Montefeltro and by the Este of Ferrara, namely by Borso d'Este and by his brother and successor Ercole d'Este, who was not only educated at the court of Naples, but also married King Ferrante's daughter Eleonora of Aragon in 1473. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 82, 116, 117, 364 and 365. Two more instances of the use of the term occur in Galeazzo Maria Sforza's early medal from 1457 and in the medal of Giulio Cesare da Varano, Duke of Camerino, possibly dating to the 1460s. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 81 and no. 88. It seems that among women the term «DIVA» was more common.

- 51 The words «DIVVS-LADIS-LAVS» are engraved in gothic majuscules on the pedestal of the equestrian monument that crowns the monumental tomb architecture. Cf. Michalsky, *The Local Eye*, cit., pp. 486-487 and note 8.
- 52 Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., p. 23 and note 83, believes that the medallion was made during Alfonso's lifetime, thus before 27 June 1458. Barreto, *La maesté*, cit., p. 62, fig. 226, connects this piece with two very similar pieces showing Augustus and Nero, both attributed to Agostino di Duccio and dated to about 1455 by F. Caglioti, *Fifteenth-Century Reliefs of Ancient Emperors and Empresses in Florence: Production and Collecting*, in *Collecting Sculpture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by N. Penny and E. D. Schmidt, Washington and New Haven, 2008, pp. 67-110, p. 81 and notes 78-79. Pope-Hennessy had dated the medallion to 1470-1480. Cf. *Catalogue of Italian sculpture in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, collection catalogue, ed. by J. W. Pope-Hennessy and R. W. Lightbown, London, 1964, vol. 1, no. 300, fig. 299. F. Bologna, *DIVI IVLI CAESARIS. Un nuovo busto federiciano e gli interessi dei circoli umanistici del Regno per Federico II*, in «Dialoghi di storia dell'arte», 2, 1996, pp. 4-31, p. 12, dates it even later, into the 1480s.
- 53 On this piece from the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid see M. Á. Granados Ortega, *Medallas de Alfonso V de Aragón y I de Nápoles conservadas en el Museo Arqueológico Nacional: los hechos y virtudes del rey merecedores de la fama*, in *Actas. XV Congreso Nacional de Numismática*, acts of a conference (Madrid, 2014), ed. by P. Grañeda Miñón, Madrid, 2016, pp. 614-616.
- 54 Giovanni Antonio Amadeo and the brothers Mantegazza began work on the façade around 1473-1474, the first roundels were placed in the *basamento* in 1480, and the project was complete by about 1500. Cf. A. Burnett and R. Schofield, *An Introduction to the Portrait Medallions on the Certosa di Pavia*, in *The Image of the Individual. Portraits in the Renaissance*, ed. by N. Mann and L. Syson, London, 1998, pp. 55-66, and the detailed account in Ch. R. Morscheck, Junior, *Relief Sculpture for the Facade of the Certosa di Pavia*, New York and London, 1978. A letter from 28 May 1465 by Bernardo Benedusio documents the intention to decorate the spandrels in the courtyard of Palazzo Bentivoglio in Bologna «com molte imagine de antiqui romani, e dopo queste interserire alcune imagine de signor dignissimi de Italia», which probably were relief roundels, designed after coins and medals. Quoted after *Documenti e fonti su Pisanello (1395-1581 circa)*, ed. by D. Cordellier, Verona, 1995, doc. 80, p. 173. Cf. Pfisterer, *Lysippus*, cit., p. 222.
- 55 On provenience and dating cf. M. Aronberg Lavin, *Piero della Francesca's Flagellation. The Triumph of Christian Glory*, in «The Art Bulletin», 50, 1968, 4, pp. 321-342, p. 337, note 85, and F. Sangiorgi, *Iconografia federiciana*, Urbino, 1982, p. 88.

- 56 The inscription on the medal's obverse mentions again his appointment as captain of the royal troops and as *gonfaloniere* of the church: «DIVI · FE[DERICI] · VRB[INI] · DVCIS · MO[N]TE[FELTRI] · AC · DVR[ANTIS] · COM[ITIS] · REG[II] · CAP[ITANEI] · GE[NERALIS] · AC · S[ANCTAE] · ROM[ANAE] · ECCL[ESIAE] · CON[FALONERII] · INVICTI». Cf. *Gesichter der Renaissance*, cit., no. 121, and Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 389.
- 57 The piece from the Museo Civico in Pesaro is dated to c. 1475 and has been tentatively attributed to Francesco di Giorgio Martini. Cf. *Il potere, le arti, la guerra*, cit., no. 169, and Sangiorgi, *Iconografia federiciana*, cit., p. 82. At least two more portraits of Federico in this format survive. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 80, 86 and 76.
- 58 On this piece from the Louvre, dating probably to c. 1460, as well as on the image type and its connection to Aragonese patronage see Caglioti, *Fifteenth-Century Reliefs*, cit., pp. 67-110, and Idem, *Desiderio da Settignano: Profiles of Heroes and Heroines of the Ancient World*, in *Desiderio da Settignano. Sculptor of Renaissance Florence*, ed. by M. Bormand, B. Paolozzi Strozzi and N. Penny, Milano, 2007, pp. 86-101. Cf. also Barreto, *La majesté*, cit., pp. 61-63, who claims that the fashion of the antique-like portrait originated at the court of Naples in the 1450s. An invoice dated 20 July 1455 documents a marble portrait of Alfonso of Aragon by Mino da Fiesole for Castelnuovo. This image was highly praised by contemporaries and could be identified with the Parisian portrait relief, but the record might just as well refer to a three-dimensional bust that is lost. Caglioti, *Fifteenth-Century Reliefs*, cit., pp. 69-70 and note 29.
- 59 The inscription reads as follows: «ALFONSVS · REX · REGIBVS · IMPERANS · ET · BELLORVM · VICTOR» (obverse: King Alfonso, ruler of the princes and victor of wars), «CORONANT VICTOREM REGNI MARS ET BELLONA / CHRISTOPHORVS HIERIMIA» (reverse: Mars and Bellona crown the victor of the kingdom [of Naples] / Cristoforo da Geremia). Cf. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 754; Pollard, *Renaissance Medals*, cit., no. 240; *Italian Renaissance Medals in the Museo Nazionale di Bargello. I: 1400-1530*, collection catalogue, ed. by J. G. Pollard, Firenze, 1984, vol. 1, no. 156; *The Currency of Fame*, cit., no. 35; as well as Barreto, *La majesté*, p. 316 and Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., pp. 21-24.
- 60 The inscription reads as follows: «ALTER · ADEST C[A]ESAR · SCIPIO ROMAN[VS] ET ALTER SEV · PACEM · POPVLIS · SEV FERA · BELLA · DEDIT» (obverse: He is a second Caesar and a second Roman Scipio, whether he gives to the nations peace or fierce wars), «MARS · FERVS · ET · SVMHVM · TANGENS · CYTHEREA · TONANTEM · DANT · TIBI · REGNA · PARES · ET · TVA · FATA · MOVENT · / INVICTVS · FEDERICVS · C[OMES] · V[R]BINI / ANNO · D[OMINI] · M^oCCCCLVIII / OPVS CLEM-ENTIS V[R]BINATIS» (reverse: The fierce Mars and Venus, in conjunction with the mighty thunderer, unite to give you dominions and influence your destiny / Federico, unvanquished Count of Urbino in the year of our Lord 1468 / the work of Clement of Urbino). Cf. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 304; Pollard, *Renaissance Medals*, cit., no. 143; Pollard, *Italian Renaissance Medals*, cit., vol. 1, no. 78; *Il potere, le arti, la guerra*, cit., no. 115; *Le Muse e il principe: arte di corte nel Rinascimento padano*, exhibition catalogue (Milano, 1991), ed. by A. Mottola Molino and M. Natale, Modena, 1991, vol. 2, no. 23; Sangiorgi, *Iconografia federiciana*, cit., p. 100; mentioned by Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., p. 35, note 75.
- 61 Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., p. 34, note 68, states that «the remarkable realism of the portrait, which must have been based on personal observation, argues for a date within the king's lifetime», likewise G. Habich, *Die Medaillen der italienischen Renaissance*, Stuttgart, 1924, pp. 80-82, who also was the first to point out that Cristoforo da Geremia created a model that was widely imitated. J. Friedländer, *Die italienischen Schaumün-*

- zen des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts, 1430-1530. *Ein Beitrag zur Kunstgeschichte*, Berlin, 1882, p. 122, on the other hand, could only imagine a dating after Alfonso's death, and C. von Fabriczy, *Medaillen der italienischen Renaissance*, Leipzig, 1903, p. 78, tellingly, believed it was modeled on Federico's medal and therefore dated it after 1468.
- 62 Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 754, vol. 1, p. 197, catalogues seventeen examples and ends his list with the remark «And many others».
- 63 Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., p. 21.
- 64 On the Renaissance bust cf. I. Lavin, *On the Sources and Meaning of the Renaissance Portrait Bust*, in «The Art Quarterly», 33, 1970, pp. 207-226, esp. pp. 208-209. The cuirass is highly faithful to antique representations. Cf. H. R. Robinson, *The Armour of Imperial Rome*, London, 1975, pp. 147-152.
- 65 On Cristoforo di Geremia, who is perhaps best known for restoring the antique equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius in 1468, see again Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., p. 21 and p. 24, note 64, with the older literature to which can be added the updated version of Lucia Pirzio Biroli Stefanelli's article in the *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon*, ed. by G. Meißner, München and Berlin, 1983-, vol. 22 (1999), p. 343, as well as R. Stewering, *Cristoforo di Geremia, Lysippo und der Autor der "Hypnerotomachia Poliphili"*, in *Les mots de la tribu. Für Gerhard Goebel*, ed. by T. Amos, Tübingen, 2000, pp. 437-441, and Pfisterer, *Lysippus*, cit., pp. 105-112 and 208-219.
- 66 Another product of Cristoforo da Geremia's iconographical experiments with antique coinage is the medal showing Constantine the Great, according to Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 755. The identification of the portrait with Alfonso of Aragon, suggested by A. G. Sambon, *La medaglia napoletana di Cristoforo Geremia del 1456 rappresentante probabilmente Alfonso I e Lucrezia d'Alagno*, in «Bollettino del circolo numismatico napoletano», n.s., 15, 1936, pp. 53-55, is unconvincing.
- 67 If an artist that is documented in Rome in 1456 creates an all'antica medal in Naples, then there is certainly no need to return to Mantua to explain his antique references, even if Cristoforo da Geremia was in all probability Mantuan by birth. The medal of a certain Luca de' Zuhari, catalogued by Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 217, as «Mantuan School», shows a winged Venus running with Mars on its reverse and does not help to explain the iconography of Alfonso's medal, as has been suggested. See *In the Light of Apollo: Italian Renaissance and Greece*, exhibition catalogue (Athens, 2003), ed. by M. Gregori, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano), 2003-2004, vol. 1, no. I.36. It dates almost certainly from the end of the fifteenth century.
- 68 «Numismata illustrium imperatorum, C. Caesaris ante alios, per universam Italiam summo studio conquisita in eburnea arcula ab rege, pene dixerim religiosissime, asservabantur. Quibus, quoniam alia eorum simulachra iam vetustate colapsa non exarent, mirum in modum sese delectari et quodammodo inflammari ad virtutem ac gloriam inquebat.» Panormita, *De dictis et factis Alphonsi regis*, book II, § 12. Cf. above, note 16, and J. Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious. The Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance*, Princeton (N.J.), 1999, p. 36. Later, in 1494/1495, Marino Sanudo describes «un repositorio con gran artificio fatto, con 430 casselette una sopra l'altra, da cavar et metter, lavorate a oro, fatto per medaie et camei». M. Sanudo, *La spedizione di Carlo VIII in Italia*, ed. by R. Fulin, Venezia, 1873, p. 240. On ancient numismatics in the fifteenth century see R. Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity. Second Edition*, Oxford, 1988, pp. 167-179 (chapter 12) and A. M. Stahl, *Roman Imperial Coins as an Inspiration for Renaissance Numismatic Imagery*, in *Translatio*

- nummorum. Römische Kaiser in der Renaissance*, ed. by U. Petera and B. Weisser, Mainz, 2013, pp. 201-206.
- 69 Cf. *A Dictionary of Roman Coins, Republican and Imperial*, ed. by S. W. Stevenson, Hildesheim, 1969 (Reprint), p. 540, s.v. «MARS VICTOR», and *Roman Imperial Coinage*, ed. by H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, London, 1923-1994 (henceforth: *RIC*), vol. IV-2 (1938), nos. 119-123 (Elagabalus).
- 70 Cf. *RIC*, vol. IV-2 (1938), nos. 300-302 (Severus Alexander). Whether Bellona was ever represented on antique coins is not clear. On her sparse antique iconography see *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, ed. by L. Kahil, Zürich-München, 1981-1999 (henceforth: *LIMC*), vol. III-1 (1986), s.v. «Bellona», especially the South-Italian Greek coins that might show Bellona (nos. 4a, 4b, 5).
- 71 This type is to be found among coins of Alexander Severus and Gordianus Pius III. Cf. F. Gneocchi, *I medaglioni romani*, Milano, 1912, vol. II, no. 16; *RIC*, vol. IV-2 (1938), no. 510; *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum (BMC)*, ed. by H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, London, 1923-1962, vol. VI (1962), nos. 667-670; *RIC*, vol. IV-3 (1949), no. 175. The idea to integrate Mars into this composition might have been sparked by a series of coins of Gordianus Pius III that show more figures including a helmeted *Virtus* in front of the emperor's throne. Cf. *A Dictionary of Roman Coins*, cit., p. 866, s.v. «VICTORIA AUG.», as well as Gneocchi, *I medaglioni romani*, cit., vol. II, nos. 44-47, 48, 59.
- 72 See Pausanias, *Description of Greece, Volume II: Books 3-5 (Laconia, Messenia, Elis 1)*, ed. by W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod, Cambridge (Mass.), 1926, pp. 436-437. Cf. H. Demisch, *Die Sphinx. Geschichte ihrer Darstellung von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, Stuttgart, 1977, pp. 84-85, 112 and 167-169, as well as G. M. A. Richter, *The Furniture of the Greeks, Etruscans and Romans*, London, 1966, p. 31 (cf. fig. 142) and p. 100 (cf. fig. 495 and 498). The acquaintance with Pausanias's *Description of Greece* in fifteenth-century Italy is documented by over twenty manuscript copies, probably dependent on a now-lost manuscript that was owned by the Florentine humanist Nicolò Niccoli. Cf. B. Cohen, *The "Rinascimento dell'antichità" in the Art of Painting: Pausanias and Raphael's "Parnassus"*, in «Source: Notes in the History of Art», 3, 1984, 4, pp. 29-44, p. 31, and A. Diller, *Pausanias in the Middle Ages*, in «Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association», 87, 1956, pp. 84-97, pp. 94-97. Guarino Guarini (d. 1460), who was in very close contact with the Neapolitan humanists (especially after his son Girolamo transferred to the court of Alfonso of Aragon in 1443), engages with another passage of Pausanias's text in an undated letter whose addressee was probably Nicolò Niccoli. Cf. M. Baxandall, *Guarino, Pisanello and Manuel Chrysoloras*, in «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», 28, 1965, pp. 183-204, pp. 185-186, and Diller, *Pausanias in the Middle Ages*, cit., p. 94. On Guarino see G. Pistilli's entry in the *DBI*, vol. 60 (2003), s.v. «Guarini, Guarino (Guarino Veronese, Varino)». The Statue of Zeus at Olympia, regarded by Pliny as Phidias's greatest work, was certainly known in fifteenth-century Italy, but it should be said that the Athena Parthenos received more literary attention, probably because Pliny described her in more detail. Cf. A. Thielemann, *Phidias im Quattrocento*, Köln, 1992, pp. 213-231.
- 73 With the difference that Robert's statue does not hold a sword, but a scepter. On Robert's monumental tomb in the choir of the Neapolitan church of Santa Chiara see recently V. Lucherini, *Le tombe angioine nel presbitero di Santa Chiara a Napoli e la politica funeraria di Roberto d'Angiò*, in *Medioevo: i committenti*, acts of a conference (Parma, 2010), ed. by A. C. Quintavalle, Milano, 2011, pp. 477-504. On the tradition of the orb as a regal symbol in the kingdom Naples see P. E. Schramm, *Sphaira, Globus, Reichsapfel. Wanderung und Wandlung*

eines Herrschaftszeichens von Caesar bis zu Elisabeth II., Stuttgart, 1958, pp. 128-130; on the crown of lilies see *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik. Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte vom dritten bis zum sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. by P. E. Schramm, Stuttgart, 1954-1978, vol. 2, pp. 415-417, and P. E. Schramm, *Kaiser Friedrichs II. Herrschaftszeichen*, Göttingen, 1955, pp. 16-41.

- 74 On the interpretation of this rebus-like image see E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, New York, 1968, pp. 95-96.
- 75 The subject might also be identified as a battle between a Lapith and a centaur, although the billowing coat behind the man's back is probably best interpreted as a lion skin. It is clearly not a centaur and a nymph, as is commonly written, blindly following Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 754, nor is it derived from Mantegna's *San Zeno Altarpiece*. The composition is more likely drawn from an antique gem, such as the carnelian from the Kestner-Museum in Hannover (inv. no. K 625), which clearly shows Hercules (fig. 20 in the present essay); cf. *LMC*, vol. VI-2 (1992), s.v. «Nessos», no. 124, and *Antike Gemmen in Deutschen Sammlungen. Band IV: Hannover, Kestner-Museum; Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe*, ed. by P. Zazoff, Wiesbaden, 1975, no. 310E. Cf. *The Currency of Fame*, cit., no. 35, where the text contradicts the visual evidence given by the very good reproduction of Alfonso's medal's obverse on p. 118. For the detail in Mantegna's *San Zeno Altarpiece* see I. Favaretto and G. Bodon, *Andrea Mantegna e l'antico*, in *Andrea Mantegna. Impronta del genio*, ed. by R. Signorini, V. Rebonato and S. Tammaccaro, Firenze, 2010, p. 45, p. 67, fig. 14. On Alfonso of Aragon's collection of gems see Pontano, *I libri delle virtù sociali*, cit., p. 238 (*De splendore*, VII).
- 76 Federico da Montefeltro had lost his right eye in an armed encounter and from then on was always shown from the left, possibly also because this clever way of hiding ugliness had a model in antique art literature, namely Apelles's portrait of the likewise one-eyed king Antigonos (cf. Gaius Plinius Secundus, *Naturalis Historia*, book 35, § 90). On this see the thorough discussion in *Porträt*, ed. by R. Preimesberger, H. Baader, N. Suthor and K. Hellwig (*Geschichte der klassischen Bildgattungen in Quellentexten und Kommentaren*, vol. 2), Berlin, 1999, pp. 134-144.
- 77 It should be noted that Federico's medal unmistakably shows a man fighting a centaur. Despite the lower quality of the execution of Federico's medal, the scene is rendered more clearly legible by means of a simplification of the composition's outline and detail, namely by separating the man's head from the centaur's head, which now appears not in headlock but pulled back by the hair. Likewise, the *imago clipeata* has been turned into a simple wreath.
- 78 See Pfisterer, *Lysippus*, cit., chapter 9, esp. p. 235, on the function of medals as signs and tokens of acknowledgement and social affiliation, also by inter pictorial reference. On the storing and display of medals cf. L. Syson, *Holes and Loops. The Display and Collection of Medals in Renaissance Italy*, in «Journal of Design History», 15, 2002, pp. 229-244 and A. R. Flaten, *Identity and the Display of "medaglie" in Renaissance and Baroque Europe*, in «Word & Image», 19, 2003, pp. 59-73.
- 79 «Miser Matheo Malferito è venuto et ha facto una optima relatione de la signoria vostra in vostra grandissima laude et comendatione, ma cum luy non sonno ancora potuto essere ad ragionamento ordinato perché non so' stato fermo qua, ma la matina che'l se presentò al re alla Torre, giungendo io in camera, la maiestà sua me domandò et dedeme una medaglia de piombo che l'havea in mano dicendome: "Antonio, guarda se cognosci questa effigie". Io

vedutola respose che l'era la effigie de la signoria vostra, me disse che guardase bene se la ve somigliava, gli disse che me pareva molto naturale, allora sua maiestà cum volto molto alegro la ritolse dicendo ad molti signori che gli erano che havevati una buona presentia et così fossivo grandissimamente commendato da tuti. El grande siniscalco disse che'l non ve haveria recognosciuto parendoli che la vostra signoria fosse ingrassata, el re respose che non è da meravigliare perché vostra signoria è in Lombardia dove sonno le migliore cose del mondo, et che se sua maiestà gli fosse stata più che non fece crede che seria etiam ingrassato. Io respose che vostra signoria non era grassa ma che seti formoso de membre, sua maiestà ridendo disse ch'io faceva bene ad escusarve. El patriarcha d'Alesandria disse che ad luy etiam si dice che è grasso et che'l se excusa per eadem verba ch'io excusava la signoria vostra. El patriarcha prefato et lo principe de Salerno me hanno dicto che gli facia havere una de quelle medaglie, siché piacendo alla signoria vostra le potete mandare acìo ve possono contemplare.» *Dispacci sforzeschi da Napoli*, ed. by F. Senatore, Salerno, 1997-, vol. 1 (1997), doc. 168, pp. 447-448. The passage has been pointed out by A. Esch, *Der König beim Betrachten einer Medaille*, in *Westfalia Numismatica 2001*, ed. by P. Berghaus, C. von Kleist and H. Mäkelar, Münster, 2001, pp. 101-103, who provides a German translation.

- 80 It seems that the medal that is being discussed here is Pisanello's medal, dating perhaps as early as 1441, that is, fifteen years before the encounter described above (see Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 23). In the medal struck by Gianfrancesco Enzola, which is dated to 1456, the duke does seem a little more beefy (cf. *ibid.*, no. 281).
- 81 The inscription reads as follows: «LVDOVICVS · II · MARCHIO · MANTVAE · QVAM · PRECIOSVS · XPI · SANGVIS · ILLVSTRAT» (obverse: Ludovico second marquess of Mantua, which the precious blood of Christ adorns), « FIDO · ET · SAPIENTI · PRINCIPI · FIDES · ET · PALLAS · ASSISTVNT · / · MELIOLVS · SACRAVIT · / · ANNO · / · MCCCCLXXV» (reverse: Faith and Wisdom assist the pious and wise prince / Melioli dedicated it in the year 1475). Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 194; Pollard, *Renaissance Medals*, cit., no. 106. Note the striking difference from Ludovico's earlier, undated medal by Pisanello. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 36; Pollard, *Renaissance Medals*, cit., no. 17.
- 82 See Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., nos. 196, 203, and Pollard, *Renaissance Medals*, cit., no. 107. Cf. Habich, *Die Medaillen*, cit., p. 81.
- 83 Interestingly, the motif on the obverse is directly inspired by the medal of Marino Caracciolo, marshal of Naples from 1450, thought to have been made in Ferrara shortly before his death in 1467. Cf. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 362. Malvezzi's medal combines therefore a reference to the king's and his marshal's medal. On Malvezzi (d. 1505) see G. Tamba's entry in the *DBI*, vol. 68 (2007), s.v. «Malvezzi, Pirro». On Caracciolo see F. Petrucci's entry in the *DBI*, vol. 19 (1976), s.v. «Caracciolo, Marino».
- 84 Another instance of a direct reference by Federico to one of Alfonso's medals would have been the unfinished medal attributed to Francesco di Giorgio Martini and possibly dating to around 1475, whose reverse refers to Alfonso's «VENATOR INTREPIDVS» medal by Pisanello, as casually noted by G. F. Hill, *Notes on Italian medals – IX. Francesco di Giorgio and Federigo of Urbino*, in «The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs», 17, 1910, pp. 143-146, p. 146. Cf. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 307 and no. 42. Also worth noting are Paolo da Ragusa's small medals of Alfonso, dating as early as 1450, that again seem to have been the model for another medal by the same artist for Federico da Montefeltro. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., nos. 45, 46 and no. 47.
- 85 That Federico sent his eldest son Buonconte (and Ottaviano Ubalдини's son Bernardino) to

Naples in July 1458, at a moment when the succession of King Ferrante was in great danger, is certainly to be taken as a demonstration of the renewal of this loyalty. Clough, *Federico da Montefeltro*, cit., p. 122.

- 86 The only two larger medals by Ferrante have no reverse and might be restitutions inspired by his coins and coin-like medals by Girolamo Liparolo. Cf. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., nos. 326, 327, and nos. 323-325. On Ferrante's coins see P. Grierson, *The Earliest Coin Portraits of the Italian Renaissance*, in «Rivista italiana di numismatica e scienze affini», 103, 2002, pp. 385-393 and Stahl, *Roman Imperial Coins*, cit. A model was provided already in the thirteenth century by emperor Frederick II and king Charles I of Anjou. Cf. P. Grierson and L. Travaini, *Medieval European Coinage. 14: Italy (III) (South Italy, Sicily, Sardinia)*, Cambridge, 1998, plate 28, nos. 515-517 and plate 33, no. 624. However, Ferrante's son, the latter Alfonso II, took up his grandfather's legacy and had medals made by Francesco di Giorgio Martini and Andrea Guazzalotti. See Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 311, and nos. 745, 746, 752; these last ones date from 1481 and commemorate the expulsion of the Turks from Otranto. It should be noted that no. 752 shares the same reverse with Guazzalotti's medal to pope Sixtus IV (no. 751), thereby exhibiting this military success as a joint effort of the Kingdom of Naples and the papacy.
- 87 Clough, *Federico da Montefeltro*, cit., pp. 158-160 and A. Conti, *L'ordine napoletano dell'ermellino e l'iconografia di Federico da Montefeltro*, in «Nobiltà. Rivista di araldica, genealogia, ordini cavallereschi», 89, 2009, pp. 199-220, esp. p. 205. Cf. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., no. 47.



Fig. 1: Follower of Piero della Francesca, Panel portrait of Alfonso V of Aragon, 59 x 45 cm, Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André (photo: Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André – Institut de France © Studio Sébert Photographs).



Fig. 2: Piero della Francesca, Panel portrait of Federico da Montefeltro (right wing of a diptych), 1460/1473, 47 x 33 cm, Firenze, Galleria degli Uffizi.



Fig. 3: Piero della Francesca, Panel portrait of Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, after 1451, 44 x 34 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre.



Fig. 4: Piero della Francesca, Montefeltro Altarpiece, 1472/1474, 251 x 172 cm, Milano, Pinacoteca di Brera, detail.

Fig. 5: Piero della Francesca, Fresco of Sigismondo Malatesta kneeling before San Sigismondo, 1451, 297 x 345 cm, Rimini, Tempio Malatestiano, detail.



Fig. 6: Pisanello, Medal of Alfonso V of Aragon (obverse), 1449, Ø 109 mm, 441 g, Berlin, Münzkabinett, inv. no. 18200213 (photo: Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz / Lübke und Wiedemann).

<https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18200213>

Fig. 7: Agostino di Duccio, Marble tondo with portrait of Alfonso V of Aragon, c. 1455, Ø 24.3 cm, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. no. A.97-1921 (photo: Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

Fig. 8: Marble tondo with portrait of Alfonso V of Aragon, Ø 43 cm, Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 50249 (photo: Museo Arqueológico Nacional / Raúl Fernández Ruiz).



Fig. 9: Marble tondi with portraits of Ottaviano Ubaldini and Federico da Montefeltro, 1474, Ø 50 cm, Mercatello sul Metauro, San Francesco (inner façade).

Fig. 10: Marble slab with portrait of Federico da Montefeltro, c. 1475, 46.5 x 39.5 cm, Pesaro, Museo Civico.

Fig. 11: Mino da Fiesole, Marble slab with portrait of Alfonso V of Aragon, c. 1460, 52 x 44 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre.



Fig. 12: Cristoforo da Geremia, Medal of Alfonso V of Aragon, c. 1458, Ø 76 mm, 206.56 g, Berlin, Münzkabinett, inv. no. 18265810, reproduced in original size (photo: Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz / Karsten Dahmen).

<https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18265810>



Fig. 13: Clemente da Urbino, Medal of Federico da Montefeltro, 1468, Ø 94 mm, 285.80 g, Berlin, Münzkabinett, inv. no. 18265815 (photo: Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz / Karsten Dahmen).

<https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18265815>

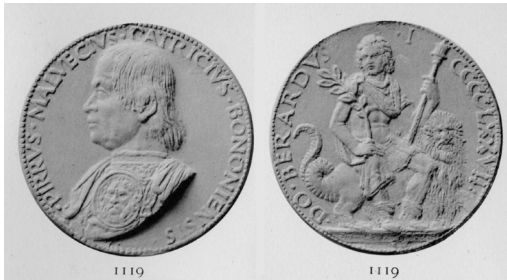


Fig. 14: Bartolommeo Melioli, Medal of Ludovico II Gonzaga, 1475, Ø 80 mm, Washington, National Gallery of Art (photo: National Gallery of Art, Washington).

Fig. 15: Bartolommeo Melioli, Medal of Christian I of Denmark, Ø 62 mm (from Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., vol. 2, plate 36, no. 193).

Fig. 16: «DO. BERARDVS», Medal of Pirro Malvezzi, 1477, Ø 72 mm (from Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals*, cit., vol. 2, plate 186, no. 1119).



Fig. 17: Silver Antoninianus of Elagabalus, MARS VICTOR, Rome mint, 219 AD, Ø 22 mm, 4.5 g (RIC IV-2, 120).

Fig. 18: Denarius of Severus Alexander, VICTORIA AVG., Antioch mint, 222 AD, Ø 18 mm, 3.2 g (RIC IV-2, 301).

Fig. 19: Medallion of Severus Alexander, Rome mint, 230 AD, 32.3 g (Gnechci II, 16).

Fig. 20: Carnelian with Hercules slaying the centaur Nessus, Hannover, August Kestner Museum, inv. no. K 625 (photo: LHS Hannover, Museum August Kestner / Chr. Rose).



Fig. 21: Pacio and Giovanni Bertini, Tomb monument of king Robert of Anjou, c. 1343/1346, Napoli, Santa Chiara, detail (from Gaudenzio Dell'Aja, *Il restauro della Basilica di Santa Chiara in Napoli*, Napoli 1980, p. 205, fig. 102).