

Predella journal of visual arts, n°43-44, 2018 www.predella.it - Monografia / Monograph 

www.predella.it / predella.cfs.unipi.it

Direzione scientifica e proprietà / *Scholarly Editors-in-Chief and owners:*

Gerardo de Simone, Emanuele Pellegrini - predella@predella.it

Predella pubblica ogni anno due numeri online e due numeri monografici a stampa /

Predella publishes two online issues and two monographic print issues each year

Tutti gli articoli sono sottoposti alla peer-review anonima / All articles are subject to anonymous peer-review

Comitato scientifico / *Editorial Advisory Board:* Diane Bodart, Maria Luisa Catoni, Michele Dantini, Annamaria Ducci, Fabio Marcelli, Linda Pisanit, Francesco Solinas

Coordinamento editoriale / *Editorial Assistants:* Elisa Bernard, Paolo di Simone, Silvia Massa, Michela Morelli

Impaginazione / *Layout:* Kaoutar Fatmi, Vittorio Proietti

Predella journal of visual arts - ISSN 1827-8655

The Mediterranean Context: Pisanello's Medals for Alfonso I of Naples

This paper focuses upon the three extant medals (c. 1448-1450) that Pisanello designed for Alfonso I of Naples (Alfonso V of Aragon), offering new insights into the range of meanings that the sculptures likely conveyed to viewers in Italy and beyond. Here the medallic iconography is considered against the backdrop of Alfonso's heritage, larger territorial claims, and commercial interests; appropriation of triumphalist iconography, crusade panegyrics, and prophetic traditions; and personal piety and reaction to papal calls for crusade. In this context, Pisanello's medals, designed for replication and dissemination, emerge as dynamic agents within an arsenal of propagandistic imagery that would have resounded with Christian audiences across the Mediterranean.*

The Veronese artist Pisanello (Antonio di Puccio, c. 1395-1455) likely arrived in Naples in 1448. Pisanello thus fulfilled a desire, expressed as early as 1443, to enter the service of Alfonso V of Aragon (b. 1396, r. 1416-1458), who had conquered the peninsular kingdom in the previous year¹. In a *privilegium* dated 14 February 1449, the monarch lauded Pisanello's «matchless art in both painting and bronze sculpture», designated the artist «*familiarem nostrum*», and awarded him a salary of 400 ducats annually². It is unclear how long Pisanello remained in Alfonso's service, as the *privilegium* is the final document connected with the artist prior to his death in 1455³. In any case, Pisanello's tenure at the court was particularly fertile: the artist produced three medals dedicated to Alfonso, left drawings for several others, and designed a medal for the king's chamberlain, Inigo d'Avalos⁴. Extant drawings document Pisanello's further activities, including designs for tapestries and tableware, and, on a monumental scale, cannon and a façade or architectural *apparato*⁵. Though Pisanello was well known as a painter, it was most probably his renown for creating the first cast bronze portrait medals since antiquity that inspired Alfonso's admiration and patronage.

This paper focuses upon the three extant medals that Pisanello designed for Alfonso, offering new insights into the range of meanings that the sculptures likely conveyed to viewers in Naples and beyond. Pisanello's cast bronze medals were produced in multiples, intended for circulation and dissemination. That function was supported by their handheld form; the medals that the artist produced for Alfonso were his largest, with extant casts ranging between 105 mm and 111 mm in diameter⁶. Indeed, Pisanello's medals were early modern propaganda tools *par excellence*, and their political value has frequently been addressed. Most notably, Joanna Woods-Marsden identified the Neapolitan medals as manifestations of the king's «imperial fantasies», aligning the works with Alfonso's well publicized appreciation for classical prototypes – both literary and visual – as signifiers of

royal magnificence⁷. The aim of this paper is to extend and amplify our understanding of the sculptures by addressing another aspect of their function, that of identifying the patron with one of the major Christian concerns of the period: the suppression of Ottoman aggression and the protection of Constantinople. Here the medallion iconography is considered against the backdrop of Alfonso's heritage, larger territorial claims, and commercial interests; appropriation of triumphalist iconography, crusade panegyrics, and prophetic traditions; and personal piety and reaction to papal calls for crusade. In this context, Pisanello's medals, designed for replication and portability, emerge as dynamic agents within an arsenal of propagandistic imagery that would have resounded with Christian audiences across the Mediterranean.

That this aspect of the medals' function has not been considered before points to several larger historiographic issues of note. The first relates to the traditional marginalization of Neapolitan material in (particularly English language) studies of early modern visual culture in Italy. As Cordelia Warr and Janis Elliott, among others, have suggested, this lacuna is the result of multiple factors, including the long held influence of the Florentine-centric model of Giorgio Vasari's *Lives*; perceptions of Naples as «peripheral» to major centers of artistic production; and significant archival and material losses⁸. Acknowledging Naples as a central node within a larger network of cultural connections that stretched across Europe, north Africa, and into the Near East offers the opportunity for significant new art historical insights⁹. The itinerant court artist Pisanello, who had been active in major city centers across northern and central portions of the Italian peninsula, was surely drawn to the Aragonese court in the hope of both a generous salary and the status that a position in the royal household afforded. The move would have been facilitated by existing patrons, particularly Leonello d'Este, marchese of Ferrara (r. 1441-1450). Leonello was one of Pisanello's most acquisitive supporters and had commissioned at least seven medals, as well as paintings, from the artist during the 1440s¹⁰. The largest of those medals, depicting Leonello on the obverse and dated 1444, commemorated the marchese's marriage to Maria of Aragon, Alfonso's daughter¹¹.

The study of Renaissance medals has also long occupied a somewhat liminal position in art historical discourse, due in large part to the uncomfortable elision of medals and numismatics¹². As a result, the earliest medals, produced by Pisanello in the 1430s, are most often viewed as rather straightforward, revivalist objects, intended to align the titular subject with antique modes of personal commemoration. To be sure, the medallion form, pairing an obverse profile portrait with an allegorical reverse, was inspired, in part, by ancient numismatics. Fifteenth-cen-

tury patrons and collectors of medals expressed their appreciation for the durable sculpted form – small in scale and portable – as able to secure their fame for future generations, much as did ancient coins for those whose portraits they bore. Roman coins, the most ubiquitous material evidence of antiquity, were admired and collected by many of Pisanello's patrons and even the artist himself¹³. Alfonso reportedly kept a collection in an ivory box, treating the objects «*come cosa sacra e religiosa in una ornata cassetta tenea*»¹⁴. Such reverential handling suggests that regard for ancient numismatics was grounded not only in their great age, but also in the *virtus* embodied by their subjects.

It was as relics of the past, and of the virtuous persons who shaped it, that ancient coins were proffered as models for fifteenth-century behavior. They were gifted in response to a range of contemporary, and even Christian, concerns¹⁵. That was the case when, at Siena in 1432, the inveterate traveler and humanist Cyriacus d'Ancona exhorted the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund to «crusade to repel the barbarians» and gifted him a gold coin of Trajan as a model for his efforts¹⁶. Pisanello's «invention» of the Renaissance medal, too, emerged from an environment charged with calls for crusade. The medal traditionally identified as the artist's first, dedicated to the penultimate Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaeologus (r. 1425-1448) (fig. 1), was created during the subject's attendance at the ecumenical Council of Ferrara and Florence (1438-1439)¹⁷. The Council was called by Pope Eugenius IV in the hope of affecting the reunion of the Greek and Latin Churches. The pontiff promised, if union was achieved, to organize a Western crusade to defend Constantinople from Ottoman incursion. This was a point of paramount importance to the Byzantine ruler as, in the late 1430s, invasion appeared imminent. In the end, the city did not fall until 1453¹⁸. While the Palaeologus medal commission is undocumented, Leonello d'Este, Alfonso's future son-in-law and then heir to the marchesate of Ferrara, may well have been responsible¹⁹.

By the time Pisanello arrived in Naples, Alfonso had a long and carefully cultivated history of alignment with crusader ideology. As the son of Ferdinand I (Trastámara) of Aragon (r. 1412-1416), who had gained fame with a victory over Moorish forces at Antequera in 1410, Alfonso was reared in a Spanish crusading tradition²⁰. His successful expeditions against Tunisian pirates in 1424 and 1432 off the coasts of north Africa were framed as that of the victorious Christian soldier in texts including the *Carmen de victoria Regis Aragonum*²¹. After his acquisition of Naples, Alfonso's attentions shifted to the East and to concerns with the Ottomans or, as they were most often identified by westerners in the fifteenth century, the Turks (*Turci* or *Teucri*)²². In 1444, reacting in part to the prompting of Philip the Good of Burgundy, Alfonso advanced a proposal to confront the Otto-

mans to the German Emperor as well as the English and French monarchs²³. The plan was for a crusade to free Jerusalem, a city for which, Alfonso noted, he had «special responsibility», a point to which we shall return²⁴. In 1451 and again in 1453 Alfonso submitted proposals to pope Nicholas V in which the monarch essentially presented himself as leader of the potential crusade – if financed by the papacy and endorsed by other Christian princes²⁵.

After the fall of Constantinople, numerous humanists, notable among them Flavio Biondo (in *Ad Alphonsum Aragonensem de expeditione in Turchos*, 1453)²⁶ and Poggio Bracciolini (1455)²⁷, exhorted Alfonso to lead a Western effort to repulse the Turks. Of particular interest are the texts that Alfonso commissioned from humanists in his employ, including Giannozzo Manetti (1455) and Antonio Beccadelli (called Panormita, 1455-1458). These advanced their patron as leader of a crusade under the patronage of the Valencian pope, Calixtus III²⁸. Humanist panegyrics aligned Alfonso with classical and medieval exemplars of military prowess including the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius and Godfrey of Bouillon, first ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem²⁹. In a public declaration of his intentions to undertake such a mission, Alfonso made a crusader vow in the Cathedral at Naples in 1455. He subsequently shared news of the declaration with other European leaders via a series of missives³⁰.

But Alfonso took no such decisive military action. As a result, the opinions of historians have long been divided regarding the sincerity of the monarch's intentions to do so³¹. In the view of the papal historian Ludwig Pastor, Alfonso «cared for nothing but his own exaltation and that of his dynasty, and never struck a blow for the defense of Christendom»³². Conversely, for Francesco Cerone, the monarch's foreign policy was inspired by a Christian devotion to repelling the Turkish threat to Europe and to the remnants of the Byzantine empire³³. Alan Ryder views Alfonso's eastern policy as motivated primarily by economic, rather than Christian, concerns – particularly promotion of Catalan trade in the Levant³⁴. Considering Alfonso's ultimate inaction in assembling a sustained crusader effort within the larger realm of Mediterranean politics, Mark Aloisio recently suggested that while the king took a pragmatic view of the realities of stemming Ottoman incursion – one informed by his rule of Aragon and the long Spanish tradition of «interactions with Muslims» – he was nevertheless not «immune to the draw of crusading politics or the capital that he could derive» from alignment with the same³⁵.

Whatever Alfonso's precise motivations – piety, economics, posturing or, likely, a blend of all of these – the idea of crusade was critical to the king. As Joan Figueras notes,

Miti, propaganda, retorica sono termini indispensabili per capire la mise-en-scène attuata da Alfonso d'Aragona. [...] Ma non v'è dubbio che il progetto della crociata contro i Turchi, nonché l'immagine di Alfonso come eletto condottiero, occupò un luogo predominante³⁶.

That view aligns with recent reconsiderations of fifteenth-century responses to crusade calls. As James Hankins has observed, it was in the best interest of the wise Quattrocento prince to at least offer the appearance of supporting efforts to quell Ottoman advances. To do otherwise would have been deemed impious³⁷. A consideration of Pisanello's medals within the broader visual, textual and material culture of the Aragonese and Neapolitan courts suggests that the sculptures fulfilled this need for the monarch.

The reverse of one of the two undated medals Pisanello produced for Alfonso (fig. 2) has traditionally been identified with the monarch's famed triumphal entry into the city of Naples on 26 February 1443³⁸. According to primary source accounts, the event included a grand series of *apparati*. Among these were floats conveying personifications of virtues and Roman rulers of the past, most notably Julius Caesar, intended to affirm qualities possessed by the monarch³⁹. More than a decade after the *entrata*, the triumph was made permanent in the relief above the arched entrance to the Castel Nuovo in Naples (c. 1455) (fig. 3)⁴⁰. There, in an image that closely recalls the description of the *entrata* found in Panormita's *Alphonsi regis triumphus*, Alfonso appears holding an orb of power, seated beneath a canopy in a chariot drawn by four horses⁴¹. Pisanello's medal, likely created before the Castel Nuovo relief, features a triumphal car, also led by four horses; but rather than Alfonso, it bears a winged figure, in armor, holding a sword aloft.

The winged figure, sometimes identified in classical terms as a «*génie*» or «*genius*», bears further consideration, particularly within the context of the specifically Christian *apparati* of Alfonso's triumphal entry⁴². According to Panormita, the virtues of *Magnanimitas*, *Constantia*, *Clementia*, and *Liberalitas* were introduced during the *entrata* by an angel («*angelus*») who commended them to the victorious king⁴³. A mock battle was then staged between soldiers bearing the Aragonese arms and another group, dressed in Turkish costume. Magnanimity spoke, calling upon Alfonso to defeat the Turks in the great Spanish tradition of the *reconquista*⁴⁴. The battle was repeated annually thereafter in a procession through Naples. Each 2 June, a group of eight men, dressed in Turkish attire, processed through the city carrying a standard with the cross of St. George, symbolizing the ultimate defeat of the Ottomans by forces under the king's command⁴⁵. Against this backdrop it seems likely that the winged, armored figure seated atop the *carro* on Pisanello's reverse was meant to represent a specifically Christian being,

likely either St. George or the Archangel Michael⁴⁶. Alfonso held a devotion to both, and each, along with St. Anthony, appeared atop the completed triumphal arch in Naples⁴⁷. This supposition accords with the longstanding Catalan-Aragonese identification of St. George as protector and advocate in battles against Muslims⁴⁸, with the king's support of the Neapolitan cult of St. Michael, and with the fact that it was on Michael's feast day, 29 September, that Alfonso originally intended to take the cross at the Duomo in Naples⁴⁹.

The inscription in the field, • FORTITVDO / • MEA • ET • LAVS • MEA / DOMINVS • ET • FACTVS / EST • MICHI • IN • SALVTEM, a quotation from Exodus (15:2)⁵⁰, further amplifies the Christian significance of the imagery. The same passage, Moses' song of gratitude following the destruction of Pharaoh's army, was adapted by Eusebius in the *Vita Constantini* (1.38.5), to celebrate Constantine's defeat of Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge, under the sign of Christ⁵¹. That the text held an enduring identification with the defeat of enemies of the faith is confirmed by the *Canción en alabanza de la divina magestad por la vitoria del señor Don Juan*, a poem by Fernando de Herrera, that celebrated the expulsion of the Ottomans from Lepanto (1571) with the same passage⁵².

The medal obverse is dominated by a portrait bust of the monarch, in armor. Three lines of text bracket the figure, identifying the subject as • DIVVS • ALPHONSVS • AR/AGONAIAE •. Three kingdoms under Alfonso's rule are also cited: the two Sicilies (VTRIVSQ/VE • SICILIAE •), Valencia (VAL/ENCIAE •), and Jerusalem (HIE •). While the designation of Alfonso as «DIVVS» was likely inspired by classical numismatics, the application of the moniker in reference to a living ruler was without precedent⁵³. Additional texts, in the medal surround, abbreviate the names of other areas under Alfonso's control⁵⁴. The Aragonese crown interrupts these, appearing directly beneath the portrait bust. The arrangement inverts the natural position of head and crown, alerting the viewer to the triumphal nature of the imagery and the emblematic weight of the sculpture⁵⁵. The reference to Jerusalem invokes the kingdom for which the king held a self-professed «special responsibility»⁵⁶. Alfonso's claim to Jerusalem was based upon two traditions. First, Aragonese monarchs had adopted the title to the Kingdom of Jerusalem based upon the marriage, in 1262, of Pedro III to Constance, daughter of Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen. Upon their conquest of Aragon, so too did the Trastámara. Second, the title was claimed by all rulers of Naples following Charles I of Anjou (r. 1266-1285), who purchased it from Mary of Antioch in 1277⁵⁷.

Multiple elements of the portrait bust align the subject with prophecies surrounding Christian victory over the Turks. Pisanello's depictions of armor were highly accurate, even including, in multiple instances, makers' marks⁵⁸. In espe-

cially fine casts of this medal one can discern a series of Jerusalem crosses along the strap that transverses the bust diagonally from the upper right shoulder to disappear beneath a draped cloak⁵⁹. The crosses both allude to Alfonso's claim to Jerusalem and mark him as *crucesignato* (signed with the cross) – traditionally, one who has made a crusader vow. As Alfonso did not formally make the liturgical commitment to crusade until 1455, the image reads as a declaration of his ultimate intentions⁶⁰. The distinctive dragon or batwing design on the shoulder plate (*pauldron*) represents a pointed allusion to the bat (*pipistrello*), one of the king's favored emblems or *insignia*. The image likely evolved from the much older Aragonese emblem of the winged dragon or viper (*vespertilio*). The *pipistrello* appears in a Pisanello drawing, now at the Musée du Louvre (inv. 2307r) (fig. 4), which features, as we shall see, initial designs for another of the Alfonso medals⁶¹. The *insignia* bore a longstanding alignment with crusader ideology, one made explicit in the identification of Alfonso's father Ferdinand as «*vespertilio destructor sarracenorum*»⁶². The attraction of the emblem for Alfonso likely resided in both its earlier usage by the Hohenstaufen dynasty as well as a medieval, prophetic tradition that the *vespertilio* would mark the Last World Emperor⁶³. That messianic figure was identified as one destined to defeat the enemies of the Christian faith, free Jerusalem, and govern a universal Christian empire⁶⁴. Partaking of that tradition, a Valencian prophecy of 1449 predicted Alfonso's ultimate victory over the Turks, exhorting «*Surge, vespertilio, surge!*»⁶⁵.

Together the medal obverse and reverse identify the monarch as a Christian warrior in the grand imperial tradition. For Alfonso, as with Pisanello's other patrons, part of the attraction of the medal was surely its mobility and ability to convey complex, layered messages. Medals were created in multiples, passed from hand to hand, collected, and discussed. Their combination of text and image, as well as diminutive scale, invites and, in some cases, seems to necessitate close, extended viewing. Consideration of details such as the Jerusalem crosses on the Alfonso bust exemplify this. We do not know precisely how many casts of Pisanello's medals were originally produced, but it has always been assumed that they were relatively few⁶⁶. In the 1440s, medal patronage remained largely a royal or *signorial* prerogative; as such, the sculptures likely circulated among a select audience of fellow rulers and humanists⁶⁷. The network of relationships – familial, feudal, and political – that bound early modern elites, including Alfonso, with peers both on the Italian peninsula and abroad thus emerges as an essential factor in consideration of the sculptures⁶⁸.

It is surely no accident that the nearest comparator for the large scale of Pisanello's medals for Alfonso was the medal dedicated to the Byzantine emperor

John VIII Palaeologus, casts of which average 103 mm in diameter and which, we should recall, emerged from an environment charged with calls for crusade⁶⁹. Numerous aspects of the text and imagery of Pisanello's second undated medal for Alfonso (fig. 5), with a reverse image of boar hunting, appear to respond to and extend those of the Palaeologus medal, which also features a reverse image of the subject engaged in the hunt⁷⁰. The Alfonso medal obverse features the now familiar image of the monarch, distinguished by his aquiline nose and "bowl" haircut, again placed hierarchically above the crown. The text, here confined to the surround, repeats the identification of the subject via the imperial epithet *DIVVS* along with a full complement of abbreviations designating lands under his control⁷¹. On the medal reverse, the monarch, identifiable by his distinctive profile and coiffure, appears improbably clad in a diminutive pair of short pants, wields a long knife and leaps onto the back of a massive, charging boar. He is aided in the hunt by two canine companions, one of which is nearly obscured by the body of their quarry. To be sure, the king – like most European nobility – was an avid huntsman of a range of beasts, including boar⁷². But as the *all'antica* appearance of the medallion figure and the Latin text above (*VENATOR INTREPIDVS*, or «courageous huntsman») suggest, this image – a departure from the realities of Quattrocento hunting – was an allegorical one, designed to cast Alfonso's exploits within the ancient imperial tradition of the chase⁷³.

The skills of the hunter were historically aligned with military prowess. From antiquity, writers including Cicero in *De natura deorum* and Horace in *Romana militia* (*Satires*, 2.2.10-11) had made this analogy, Horace noting that the two activities required the same *virtus*⁷⁴. In *De liberis educandis*, Plutarch too stressed the importance of the hunt to the training of future soldiers⁷⁵. As Alfonso XI, king of Castile (r. 1312-1350) noted: «For a knight should always engage in anything to do with arms or chivalry and, if he cannot do so in war, he should do so in activities which resemble war. And the chase is most similar to war [...]»⁷⁶.

The medal reverse has frequently been identified with imagery on a Roman hunting sarcophagus with which Pisanello was familiar⁷⁷. But it bears comparison, as well, with explicitly imperial models, most specifically the *tondi* on the Arch of Constantine. The eight reliefs, produced under Hadrian (r. 117-138) and refashioned under Constantine I (r. 312-337), pair images of the imperial hunt with those of pious sacrifice⁷⁸. The boar-hunting *tondo* (fig. 6), located on the north-east face of the arch, depicts the emperor on horseback, his arm raised for the kill. Here, then, the model was not simply of classical origin but, given Constantine's traditional identification as first Christian emperor, bore devotional significance. The hunt was, throughout the middle ages, identified with Christian piety⁷⁹. Pisanel-

lo's earlier Palaeologus medal reverse, depicting the Byzantine emperor mounted and dressed for the hunt with bow and quiver at his side, paused in prayer before a roadside cross, offers vivid visual testament to the ideological triangulation of success in the hunt, piety, and martial prowess.

Another of the visual *topoi* adopted by Alfonso, the siege perilous (*sedia perigliosa* or dangerous seat), becomes relevant in this context. According to the thirteenth-century French chivalric tale *Le Queste del Saint Graal*, the siege perilous was the seat at Arthur's Round Table reserved for only the bravest and best of warriors; others who attempted to occupy it were engulfed in flames⁸⁰. In the narrative, only Lancelot's son Galahad is able to occupy the seat, portending his success in finding the Holy Grail, the cup of Christ. During his triumphal entry into Naples, Alfonso explicitly identified with Galahad via the emblem of the siege perilous. This is commemorated in the Castel Nuovo relief where sculpted flames appear at the monarch's feet. The *Queste* narrative was especially popular in northern Italy where *condottieri*, Pisanello's patrons among them, were eager to identify their battlefield exploits within the Christian chivalric tradition. Leonello d'Este owned copies of the text, as did Alfonso⁸¹. But Alfonso's employment of the emblem predated his conquest on the peninsula. The ruler had adopted the siege perilous as a personal emblem from at least the 1420s when he acquired the relic of the Grail⁸².

An additional element of the *Queste's* fifteenth-century appeal was likely its ready identification with contemporary calls for crusade; this as the noble Galahad carried the white shield and red cross of the crusader and, according to one tradition, the successful grail-questor Bohort, a compatriot of Galahad, was father to a mythical Byzantine emperor⁸³. The text of the chivalric narrative *Tirant lo Blanc* (c. 1460-1465), composed by the Valencian Joanot Martorell, affirms the widespread familiarity of these concepts. Martorell's narrative, written following his tenure at Alfonso's court in Naples and the monarch's death, is largely concerned with the defense of Byzantium⁸⁴. The hero, Tirant, who in one episode wears a helmet decorated with the Holy Grail, successfully reclaims hundreds of cities from Turkish control. He then enters Constantinople, is named Caesar, and is heir apparent to the imperial throne⁸⁵. In the imperial palace Tirant encounters images of «diverses històries de Boors e de Perceval e de Galeàs, com complí l'aventura del Siti perillós; a tota la conquesta del Sanct Greal s'i demostrava»⁸⁶. The connections between the chivalric narrative, the defense of Christendom, and Constantinople seems to have partially inspired the imagery on the reverse of Pisanello's Palaeologus medal which, I have suggested elsewhere, was indebted to that in numerous *Queste* manuscripts of north Italian provenance⁸⁷.

Alfonso's longstanding political relationship with the Byzantine imperial family and the monarch's larger ambitions in the Mediterranean theater highlight the implications of these comparisons. During the years in which Pisanello was in Naples, Alfonso was involved in a nearly continuous series of communications with the Palaeologi regarding the fate of the Eastern empire and his potential role in its salvation⁸⁸. The monarch's goals were brought into sharp definition in February 1451, during negotiations for a marriage between one of Alfonso's nephews and the daughter of Demetrios Palaeologus (1407-1470), Despot of the Morea. Demetrios was the brother of successive emperors John VIII and Constantine XI Palaeologus (r. 1449-53). A document sent by Alfonso to Demetrios stipulated that, upon successful completion of a crusade against the Turks, the king would assume the Byzantine imperial throne⁸⁹. To have done so would have aligned Alfonso with the prophesized emperor, destined to – as had Constantine I in antiquity – unite East and West, but this time in preparation for the ultimate victory of Christendom⁹⁰.

The third medal Pisanello completed for Alfonso (fig. 7), dated 1449, again casts the ruler's martial exploits within the ancient, imperial tradition while simultaneously resonating with contemporary concerns⁹¹. The obverse features a bust of Alfonso, at center, clad in field armor⁹². He is flanked by the crown emblem at right and, at left, a parade helmet decorated with an image of the open book. The text in the upper surround identifies the monarch as • DIVVS • ALPHONSVS • REX •; that in the exergue proclaims him • TRIVMPHATOR • ET • PACIFICVS⁹³. The remarkable tableau on the medal reverse exemplifies the artist's ability to imbue a heavily emblematic image with naturalistic elements. A large eagle is at the center of the composition, perched upon a branch above a fallen deer; a group of smaller raptors crowd beneath⁹⁴. The eagle was another of Alfonso's favored emblems, alluding to an exalted lineage. The *insignia* was adopted by the rulers of Aragon based upon their relation to Emperor Frederick II (the «*grand aigle*»). That history served, in part, to support Alfonso's claim to Sicily and Naples, represented in the Aragonese arms by two eagles⁹⁵. Pisanello's eagle is bracketed with the text, LIBERA / LITAS • / • AVGV / STA •. The combination exalts Alfonso's generosity within the ancient tradition of imperial *largesse*, though the specific pairing of text and imagery – typifying Pisanello's originality – is without ancient precursor⁹⁶. Identifying the eagle with imperial or royal prerogatives, medieval and Renaissance treatises on hunting frequently evoked a political analogy in which falcons and other birds were designated subservient to the larger raptor⁹⁷. For the Neapolitan viewer, then, it has been suggested that the hierarchical arrangement may have evoked the monarch's distribution of rewards and titles to those nobles who aided in his conquest, control over the local nobility, relationship with foreign

ambassadors, or eventual distribution of holdings amongst heirs⁹⁸.

But reference to the larger realm of Mediterranean politics and eschatological predictions surrounding the house of Aragon suggests that the imagery likely held additional resonance. In 1449, the date on the medal obverse, Alfonso's troops were actively engaged in negotiations to support the efforts of Balkan regents battling Turkish incursion. Aragonese troops aided the Albanian leader Scanderbeg (George Castriota) in successful efforts to repel an army led by the Sultan Murad in 1449-1450⁹⁹. Also in 1450, in an action surely long prepared, Alfonso sent fleets to battle the Mamluks in his role as protector of the Hospital of Rhodes and Kingdom of Cyprus¹⁰⁰. Alfonso was, as well, titular King of Hungary, then governed by the regent John Hunyadi (r. 1446-52); that country was more or less under continuous attack¹⁰¹. Considered against this larger backdrop, Pisanello's image of the eagle sustaining other, less powerful birds might also be aligned with a Valencian prophecy of 1449 which described «*la gran aguila benaventurada, qui ves Apocalipsi, aquell tenant un peu en mar e alter en terra*», a reference to ground and naval forces of Alfonso («the grand, blessed eagle»), to be deployed throughout the Mediterranean – in the aid of other Christian princes – in the prophesied crusade¹⁰².

The medal obverse, frequently compared with the aforementioned drawing attributed to Pisanello (fig. 4), further identified the ruler as a Christian warrior¹⁰³. In the drawing, the *pauldron* of Alfonso's armor is decorated with a three-headed *putto* similar to that found on the reverse of one Pisanello's small Leonello d'Este medals (fig. 8)¹⁰⁴. The *insignia* is most often read as an allegory of Prudence, an essential virtue of the wise ruler¹⁰⁵. But in the years following the Council of Ferrara and Florence, the tri-visaged figure was also identified with the Union achieved there; it was agreement regarding the *filioque*, or nature of the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that led to the final resolution between Latin and Greek delegates. The martial implications of the image, as symbolic of the Union and the calls for crusade that emanated from the gathering, were made explicit in the Leonello medal where the tri-visaged *putto* is flanked by garlands constructed from battle armor¹⁰⁶. By framing the *putto* with a collar or ruff formed from the webbed wing of the *vespertilio* in the Neapolitan drawing, Pisanello amplifies identification of the imagery with calls for crusade. The elaborate helmet design, featuring a griffin supporting the Aragonese arms and a *pipistrello* helm ornament (*cimiero*) would have evoked the dynastic traditions to which Alfonso was heir, identifying the wearer as the prophesied ruler who, bearing the emblem of the bat, would ultimately lead a unified Christian world¹⁰⁷.

What, though, are we to make of the shift in imagery between the drawing and

medal? In the absence of additional documentation, we are unlikely to find definitive answers. To be sure, the revisions to the helmet, specifically its decoration with an image of an open book, would have reinforced Alfonso's well established identity as a learned ruler, humanist patron, and book collector¹⁰⁸. The monarch's true appreciation for ancient texts was lauded by numerous panegyrists and testified to by his daily reading of Caesar's *Commentaries*¹⁰⁹. The combination of book and helmet evoked, as well, the *topos* of the ideal prince – schooled equally in arms and letters – balancing the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*¹¹⁰.

Reference to the book of hours produced for Alfonso between 1436 and 1443 (British Library, Add ms 28962) offers additional insights into the range of meanings the book emblem held in the period. An oration titled *Preces pro intrandum bellum contra paganos* (fol. 78r) (fig. 9) features a half-page miniature depicting the armored Alfonso on horseback. The ruler is identifiable by his helm ornament (a *cimiero* with crown surmounted with the flames of the siege perilous)¹¹¹ and by the book *insignia* prominently displayed on the caparison of his charging mount. Alfonso, in an image that aligned the king with St. George, drives a lance through the shield and into the flesh of a falling enemy¹¹². The miniature also gives form to the frequent abjuration by fifteenth-century humanists that the Turks were "barbarian" enemies of learning. This was particularly the case after the fall of Constantinople, when reports reached Europe of the wholesale destruction of ancient texts¹¹³. But the identification of the Ottomans with «barbarous invaders» of the distant past – such as the Scythians – partook of a much older tradition of constructing the external enemy as a threat to culture¹¹⁴. The miniature presents Alfonso as the ideal, learned monarch and Christian champion, putting flight to the Turkish "other" while the red-cross pennant of the crusader flies in the background. In the foliate border at right, a joyful *putto* cheers on the hero, raising an open book in a triumphant gesture; another cherub, below, aims a miniature crossbow upward at the fleeing «*paganos*». The ideological and martial implications of this emblematic assemblage are suggested, as well, by a drawing attributed Pisanello. The sheet, in the collection of the Musée du Louvre (inv. 2293), features designs for three cannon bearing Alfonso's arms and emblems (fig. 10)¹¹⁵. That on the far left is distinguished by the inscription ALPHONSINA at the mouth of the weapon with the Aragonese arm held by a pair of griffons below; in the lower portion of the cannon is an eagle and the king's arms, including Jerusalem crosses; at center are the open book and siege perilous.

Recognizing Pisanello's medals as part of a larger program of textual and visual imagery that identified Alfonso of Aragon as an ideal, Christian warrior and defender of the faith offers new insights into the propagandistic value of these

sculptures. In each of the medals considered here, references to classical, medieval, and contemporary materials and concerns combine in a manner that would have resounded with the monarch's varied constituencies across the Mediterranean. Today, one most often views Renaissance medals in isolation, in a museum vitrine or on the pages of a catalogue, but we should recall that these small-scale sculptures were produced in multiples, intended for circulation and dissemination. Unfortunately, little information survives to document the movements of Pisanello's medals among the Renaissance courts. So, while it is tempting indeed to imagine that when King Alfonso wrote to Francesco Sforza in 1455 informing the ruler of Milan of his vow to crusade, the missive also contained one of Pisanello's medals, no documentation supports that theory at present¹⁶. In any case, study of the sculptures within the complex culture of their production activates the medals themselves as well as our understanding of the material, social, and ideological networks of which they – and Naples – formed a vital part.

I would like to thank the editors of this volume and the anonymous reader for their helpful insights and suggestions. I also thank Jack Freiberg for his ever generous support and shared wisdom.

- * Questo articolo è incentrato su tre medaglie (c. 1448-1450) che Pisanello disegnò per Alfonso I di Napoli (Alfonso V d'Aragona) e discute la molteplicità di letture che la produzione scultorea poteva offrire agli osservatori italiani e stranieri del tempo. Le soluzioni iconografiche rappresentate sulle medaglie costituiscono la spina dorsale della cultura di Alfonso, delle sue ambizioni espansionistiche, dei suoi interessi commerciali; così tradiscono la sua volontà di far proprie iconografie trionfali, il sistema panegirico legato alle crociate e alla tradizione profetica, una personale forma di pietismo unita alla pronta reazione alla chiamata alle crociate da parte del papa. In questo contesto, le medaglie di Pisanello, progettate per essere replicate e diffuse, si stagliano come dinamici agenti all'interno di un vero e proprio arsenale di immagini propagandistiche della cristianità che risuonò per tutto il Mediterraneo.
- 1 See J. Woods-Marsden, *The Gonzaga of Mantua and Pisanello's Arthurian Frescoes*, Princeton, 1988, p. 36. For the letters, see D. Cordellier, ed. *Documenti e fonti su Pisanello (1395-1581 circa)*, in «Verona Illustrata», 8, 1995, doc. 49, p. 117, doc. 51, pp. 119-120.
 - 2 «*eximia ac pene divina de singulari*», «*provisionem annuam ducatorum quatuorcentorum*»; the document, formerly Archivio di Stato, Naples, *R. camera della sommaria, Privilegi* vol. 4 ff. 93v-94v (destroyed in World War II), is transcribed in Cordellier, *Documenti*, cit., doc. 68, pp. 151-153; see also Woods-Marsden, *Gonzaga of Mantua*, cit., p. 37 and n. 47, p. 195.
 - 3 It is generally presumed, based on the relative silence surrounding Pisanello between 1450 and 1455, when his death was referenced in a letter to Giovanni de' Medici (see Cordellier, *Documenti*, cit., doc. 74, pp. 160-162), that the artist may have been inactive, perhaps due to illness. On this question see Woods-Marsden, *Gonzaga of Mantua*, cit., p. 37; and L. Syson and D. Gordon, *Pisanello. Painter to the Renaissance Court*, London, 2001, pp. 38-39.

- 4 The Alfonso medals are G. F. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals of the Renaissance before Cellini*, London, 1930, nos. 41-43.
- 5 On the scope of work, see Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., pp. 38-41. For the tapestry designs, see *Pisanello: le peintre aux sept vertus*, exhibition catalogue (Paris, 1996), ed. by D. Cordellier et al., Paris, 1996, nos. 309-313, pp. 440-446; on the architectural frontispiece (Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen, inv. l. 527), sometimes identified as an initial design for the façade of the Castel Nuovo in Naples, see *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 290, pp. 418-419. The other works are identified in discussions and notes below.
- 6 Based upon the measurements for multiple casts of each medal cited by Hill, *Corpus*, cit., nos. 41-43.
- 7 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. Rosenberg, Notre Dame, 1990, pp. 11-37; Eadem, *Visual Constructions of the Art of War. Images for Machiavelli's Prince*, in *Perspectives on the Renaissance Medal*, ed. by S. Scher, New York, 2000, in part. pp. 48-51.
- 8 C. Warr, J. Elliott, *Introduction: Reassessing Naples 1266-1713*, in «Art History», 31, 2008, 4, in part. pp. 423-424.
- 9 For the terminology used here, see C. Pell, *Social Network Analysis. History, Theory & Methodology*, London, 2012, in part. pp. 24-25, 166-74.
- 10 Pisanello appears in Ferrarese records intermittently from 1432-1448; his activities there are summarized in Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., pp. 102-106, 254-257; and *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., pp. 187-190, 383-398. The medals include five small ones (averaging 67-69 mm) depicting Leonello, likely cast between 1440-1442 (Hill, *Corpus*, cit., nos. 24-31); one dedicated to the humanist Pier Candido Decembrio, produced c. 1447 (Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 40); and the large Leonello medal (Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 32). The paintings include one of Leonello (now Bergamo, Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti) and another, now at the Musée du Louvre, often identified as one of Leonello's sisters or his first wife, Margherita Gonzaga (see *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 105, pp. 187-190; Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., pp. 102-106).
- 11 The obverse of the medal (Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 32) features a bust of Leonello at center and declares, via inscription, the marchese's rule of Ferrara, Reggio and Modena. The upper inscription, • GE • R • AR •, proclaims Leonello's kinship with the king: GE[ner] • R[egis] • AR[agonum]. See *The Currency of Fame. Portrait Medals of the Renaissance*, exhibition catalogue (New York, 1994), ed. by S. Scher, New York, 1994, no. 5, pp. 47-50; Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., p. 123; *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., nos. 272-273, pp. 397-98; *The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini*, exhibition catalogue (Berlin-New York, 2011), ed. by K. Christiansen, S. Weppelmann, New Haven and London, 2011, no. 69, pp. 202-205; and G. Pollard, et al., *Renaissance Medals*, vol. 1., *Italy*, New York, 2008, no. 10, pp. 17-18.
- 12 As George Hill observed over a century ago, while Pisanello's medallic imagery bears a debt to ancient numismatic precursors, it is «of suggestion and general stimulation only»; G. Hill, *Classical Influence on the Italian Medal*, in «The Burlington Magazine», 18, 1911, in part. pp. 261-62. Further to this point, see R. Weiss, *Le origini franco-bizantine della medaglia italiana del Rinascimento*, in *Venezia e l'Oriente fra tardo Medioevo e Rinascimento*, ed. by A. Pertusi, Venezia, 1966, p. 340; and Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., pp. 111-112, 119, 136-137.
- 13 A letter written by Carlo de Medici in 1455, after Pisanello's death, explains that he bought thirty antique coins from one of the artist's assistants; see Cordellier, *Documenti*, cit., doc. 74, pp. 160-162. On numismatic collecting and exchange, see R. Weiss, *The Renaissance*

- Discovery of Classical Antiquity*, Oxford, 1969, in part. pp. 167-79; and Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., pp. 109-111.
- 14 Quoted by Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., n. 17, p. 27, citing P. Colenuccio, *Compendio de le Istorie del Regno di Napoli*, ed. by A. Saviotti, Bari, 1929, p. 292.
 - 15 On exchange, see J. Cunnally, *Ancient Coins as Gifts and Tokens of Friendship during the Renaissance*, in «Journal of the History of Collections», 6, 1994, 2, pp. 129-143.
 - 16 F. Scalamonti, *Vita viri clarissimi et famosissimi Kyriaci Anconitani*, ed. and trans. by C. Mitchell, E. Bodnar, Philadelphia, 1996, pp. 66-67, 130, quoted and discussed by R. Glass, *Filarete and the Invention of the Renaissance Medal*, in «The Medal», 66, 2015, pp. 34-35; see also Weiss, *Renaissance Rediscovery*, cit., p. 170.
 - 17 The medal is Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 19. The bibliography is extensive, but the classic study of the medal is R. Weiss, *Pisanello's Medallion of the Emperor John VIII Palaeologus*, London, 1966. Subsequent literature is cited below as relevant.
 - 18 The classic study remains J. Gill, *The Council of Florence*, Cambridge, 1959.
 - 19 Weiss, *Pisanello's Medallion*, cit., p. 16; *Currency of Fame*, exh. cat., cit., no. 4a, p. 46; *Renaissance Portrait*, exh. cat., cit., no. 64, pp. 197-98.
 - 20 A. Ryder, *The Eastern Policy of Alfonso the Magnanimous*, in «Atti della Accademia pontaniana», 28, 1979, p. 10.
 - 21 The text was written by Antonio Canobbio, likely in Milan upon the visit of an Aragonese ambassador, and is published in G. Romano, *Guiniforte Barzizza all'impresa di Gerba del 1432 e un poemetto inedito di Antonio Canobio sullo stesso avvenimento*, in «Archivio storico siciliano», 17, 1892, in part. pp. 18-27. See J. Figueras, *Contra Turcos. Alfonso d'Aragona e la retorica visiva della crociata*, in *La battaglia nel Rinascimento meridionale. Moduli narrativi tra parole e immagini*, ed. by G. Abbamonte, et al., Roma, 2011, p. 98; and M. Aloisio, *Alfonso V and the Anti-Turkish Crusade*, in *The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century. Converging and Competing Cultures*, ed. by N. Housley, London, 2017, p. 66.
 - 22 On the terminology, see M. Meserve, «Note on Nomenclature», in *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, Cambridge, MA and London, 2008, pp. 18-34.
 - 23 Aloisio, *Alfonso V*, cit., p. 68; A. Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous. King of Aragon, Naples and Sicily, 1396-1458*, Oxford, 1990, p. 293.
 - 24 Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous*, cit., p. 293.
 - 25 Ryder, *Eastern Policy*, cit., pp. 11-12; Aloisio, *Alfonso V*, cit., p. 68.
 - 26 J. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples*, Princeton, 1987, pp. 164-65; N. Bisaha, *Creating East and West. Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks*, Philadelphia, 2004, pp. 25-26; P. Botley, *Giannozzo Manetti, Alfonso of Aragon and Pompey the Great. A Crusading Document of 1455*, in «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», 67, 2004, in part. pp. 141-42. Biondo's text is published in G. Nogara, *Scritti inediti e rari di Biondo Flavio*, in «Studi e Testi», 48, 1927, pp. 31-58, 107-114.
 - 27 Bisaha, *Creating*, cit., pp. 85-86; the text is published in Poggio Bracciolini, *Lettere*, ed. by H. Harth, Firenze, 1987, vol. 3, pp. 324-325.
 - 28 On Manetti's oration (of which four mss. survive, including *Oratio ad Calixtum summum pontificem*, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence, San Marco 456, fol. 59r), see Bisaha, *Creating*, cit., pp. 26-27, 81-83; and Botley, *Giannozzo Manetti*, cit., pp. 129-156. For Panormita's texts, see Bentley, *Politics and Culture*, cit., pp. 166-68; see also, and with inclusion of several docu-

- ments, J. Hankins, *Renaissance Crusaders. Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II*, in «Dumbarton Oaks Papers», 49, 1995, pp. 179-186.
- 29 For a brief overview, see Aloisio, *Alfonso V*, cit., pp. 70-71; and Bisaha, *Creating*, cit., pp. 25-26, 203, n. 89.
- 30 See Figueras, *Contra Turcos*, cit., p. 100; Botley, *Giannozzo Manetti*, cit., pp. 131-134; and Aloisio, *Alfonso V*, cit., pp. 65-66. The notice to Francesco Sforza of Milan is transcribed by F. Cerone, *La politica orientale di Alfonso di Aragona*, in «Archivio storico per le province napoletane», 28, 1903, pp. 186-187.
- 31 The literature review that follows is indebted to Aloisio, *Alfonso V*, cit., pp. 64-74.
- 32 L. Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, trans. and ed. by F. Antrobus, London, 1906, 2, p. 284; quoted by Aloisio, *Alfonso V*, cit., p. 64.
- 33 F. Cerone, *La politica orientale*, cit., 27, 1902, pp. 3-93 and 28, 1903, pp. 154-212; Aloisio, *Alfonso V*, cit., p. 64.
- 34 Ryder, *Eastern Policy*, cit., in part. pp. 15-19. See also C. Marinescu, *La politique orientale d'Alfonse V d'Aragon. Roi de Naples (1416-1458)*, ed. by M. T. Ferrer i Mallol, Barcelona, 1994; the text was believed lost in World War II and rediscovered, edited and printed only much later; on this, Aloisio, *Alfonso V*, cit., p. 72, n. 5.
- 35 Aloisio, *Alfonso V*, cit., p. 65.
- 36 Figures, *Contra Turcos*, cit., p. 98
- 37 Hankins, *Renaissance Crusaders*, cit., in part. p. 124.
- 38 The medal is Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 43. It exists in two variants, one with the signature on the reverse (see Pollard, et al., *Renaissance Medals*, cit., no. 23, pp. 36-37) and one without. Whether this medal was actually completed during Pisanello's tenure in Naples – or by a follower after his designs – has been a subject of some debate; on this question see *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., nos. 303, 304, p. 438; and R. Rugolo, *Pisanello médailleur: l'humanisme chevaleresque*, in *Pisanello*, ed. by L. Puppi, Milano, 1996, no. 22, p. 188. Two extant drawings (Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, inv. 2317r and 2306r) attributed to Pisanello appear to record multiple designs for the medal; see *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 302, p. 437, no. 308, pp. 439-440.
- 39 The events are described by, among others, Panormita, *Alphonsi regis triumphus*, in *De dictis et factis Alphonsi Regis Aragonum libri quatuor*, Basel, 1538 (via Biblioteca italiana, <<http://www.internetculturale.it>>); summarized in Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous*, cit., pp. 248-251; Rugolo, *Pisanello médailleur*, cit., p. 187; and Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., pp. 126-27. There also exists a recreation of the triumph on a cassone panel (1460s), now in a private collection; see C. Baskins, et al., *The Triumph of Marriage. Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance*, Boston, 2009, pp. 150-153. See also the essay by Philine Helas in the present volume.
- 40 On the arch, see J. Barreto, *La majesté en images: portraits du pouvoir dans la Naples des Aragon*, Roma, 2013, pp. 76-89. I thank Adrian Bremenkamp for bringing this source to my attention.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 See, for example, *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 303, 304, p. 438; and Rugolo, *Pisanello médailleur*, cit., no. 22, p. 187-188. The figure is identified simply as an angel by Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 43; Syson, Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., p. 127.
- 43 «Omnium primus angelus ad regem versus in hunc fere modum disseruit: 'Alphonse rex pacis,

ego tibi castellum hoc superstantes quatuor inclitas virtutes offero manumque trado, quas quomodo tute semper veneratus et amplexus es, nunc te triumphantem comitari gratanter volunt», via Biblioteca italiana <<http://ww2.bibliotecaitaliana.it/xtf/view?docId=bibit001050/bibit001050.xml&chunk.id=d5626e90&toc.depth=100&brand=newlook>>.

- 44 «*Proxima huic magnanimitas regem hortabatur ad animi excellentiam, subinde demonstrans barbaros illos ab Hispanis victos fugatosque ut intelligeret rex, si quando bellum suscepturus esset contra infideles et a Christi nomine abhorrentes, Hispanos praesto esse ac procul dubio victores evasuros*»; Panormita, *Alphonsi regis triumphus*, via Biblioteca italiana <<http://ww2.bibliotecaitaliana.it/xtf/view?docId=bibit001050/bibit001050.xml&chunk.id=d5626e90&toc.depth=100&brand=newlook>>. On this, and the long-standing Spanish tradition for similar exercises, see Figures, *Contra Turcos*, cit., pp. 101-102.
- 45 Figueras, *Contra Turcos*, cit., p. 104; Aloisio, *Alfonso V*, p. 71.
- 46 The figure has also recently been identified as St. Michael by Barreto, *La majesté*, cit., p. 102.
- 47 I thank Sarah Kozlowski for pointing out the figures' presence on the arch to me. For the sculptures, and Alfonso's devotion to the saints, see J. Barreto, *Une peinture de Pisanello à Naples? Hypothèse pour la Vierge à l'Enfant avec saint Antoine et Saint Georges*, in «*Studiolo*», 10, 2013, esp. p. 206 and fig. 9; and Barreto, *La majesté*, cit., pp. 80, 87-88.
- 48 Figueras, *Contra Turcos*, cit., p. 104-06; and idem, *Un emblem arturiano per Alfonso d'Aragona. Storia, mito, propaganda*, in «*Bullettino dell'istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo*», 114, 2014, pp. 254-255.
- 49 Confirmed via the correspondence of Manetti (*Epistola ad Calistum III summum pontificem echortatoria ut Alfonso bello adversus Turcum imperatorem proficeret Iannotii Manetti*); this is one of four mss. of the text published by Botley, *Giannozzo Manetti*, cit., pp. 131, 146. The same text is cited under a variant title by Bisaha, *Creating*, cit. The event was rescheduled to 1 November.
- 50 The source was noted by Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 43.
- 51 Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, trans. by A. Cameron, S. Hall, Oxford, 1999, p. 85; see D. Green, *The Milstätter Exodus. A Crusading Epic*, Cambridge, 1966, pp. 24-26.
- 52 Green, *Milstätter Exodus*, cit., pp. 25-27.
- 53 Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., pp. 17-18.
- 54 These are: • HVN[gariae] • MAIO[ricarum] • SAR[diniae] • COR[sicae] • REX • CO[mes] • BA[rcinonae] • DV[x] • AT[honarum] • ET • NEO[patriae] • AC C [interrupted by crown insignia] O[mes] • RO[sciblionis] • ET • C[ertinariae] •; see Pollard, et al., *Renaissance Medals*, cit., no. 23, p. 36.
- 55 The propagandistic significance of the image is amplified when we recognize that, in fact, Alfonso was never crowned king of Naples. The ceremony, arranged on multiple occasions with papal emissaries, was not executed. While it has been argued that his position as «the first King of Sicily and Naples not to receive the crown» was a strategic one on the part of Alfonso (A. Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous. The Making of a Modern State*, Oxford, 1976, p. 38), this view is challenged by F. delle Donne, *Il trionfo, l'incoronazione mancata, la celebrazione letteraria. I paradigmi della propaganda di Alfonso Il Magnanimo*, in «*Archivio storico italiano*», 169, 2011, pp. 447-467.
- 56 See note 24 above.
- 57 Frederic II's claim to the title King of Jerusalem was based upon his own marriage to Yolande

- (Isabel II), daughter of the titular queen; on this (and with gratitude for pointing out this connection to me), see J. Freiberg, *Bramante's Tempietto, the Roman Renaissance, and the Spanish Crown*, Cambridge, 2014, in part. pp. 148, 150-151.
- 58 These include medals of Ludovico Gonzaga (c. 1447) (Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 36) and Niccolò Piccinino (Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 22). See F. Rossi, *Pisanello et la représentation des armes. Réalité visuelle et valeur symbolique*, in *Pisanello, actes du colloque* (Paris, 1996), ed. by D. Cordellier, B. Py, Paris, 1998, vol. 1, pp. 299-334; see also Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., pp. 63-70.
- 59 The crosses are noted, but their meaning not commented upon, in *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 303, p. 438.
- 60 This is a particularly interesting point in terms of dating the medal if, as it has sometimes been suggested, it was designed by Pisanello but was actually executed somewhat later by his assistants; on this question see Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., p. 229. On *crucesignati*, see M. C. Gaposchkin, *From Pilgrimage to Crusade. The Liturgy of Departure, 1095-1300*, in «*Speculum*», 88, 2013, 1, in part. pp. 46-47.
- 61 On the emblems, see *Figures, Contra Turcos*, cit., pp. 107-110. For the drawing, see note 103 below.
- 62 An appellation originated by the French Jean de Roquetaillade in the prophetic *Liber Ostensor* (1356); see M. Aurell, *Messianism royal de la couronne d'Aragon (14e-15e siècles)*, in «*Annales Histoire, Sciences Sociales*», 52, 1997, 1, p. 140, n. 60; D. Barca, *Alfonso il Magnanimo e la tradizione dell'immaginario profetico catalano*, in *La Corona d'Aragona ai Tempi di Alfonso il Magnanimo. I modelli politico-istituzionali. La circolazione degli uomini, delle idee, delle merci. Gli influssi sulla società*, ed. by G. D'Agostino and G. Buffardi, vol. 2, Napoli, 2000, pp. 1285-1286; and *Figures, Contra Turcos*, cit., p. 109.
- 63 Barreto, *Une peinture*, cit., p. 198.
- 64 M. Aurell, *Messianism royal*, cit., in part. pp. 135-142; D. Barca, *Alfonso il Magnanimo*, cit., pp. 1285-1286; *Figures, Contra Turcos*, cit., pp. 108-109; and idem, *Un emblem*, cit., p. 255.
- 65 The text is found in Bibliothèque de Carpentras, ms. 336; see M. Aurell, *La fin du monde, l'enfer et le roi. Une prophétie catalane du xve siècle (Bibliothèque de Carpentras, ms 336, fol. 116v-156)*, in «*Revue Mabillon*», 1994, pp. 143-177; idem, *Messianism royal*, p. 141.
- 66 See S. Scher, *An Introduction to the Renaissance Portrait Medal*, in *Perspectives on the Renaissance Medal*, ed. by idem, New York, London 2000, pp. 2-3; and Pollard, et al., *Renaissance Medals*, cit., xvii, xx.
- 67 Exemplifying this is the note, dated 18 August 1448, from Leonello d'Este to Pier Candido Decembrio regarding the medal that the marchese had apparently commissioned and dedicated to the humanist. The medal is Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 40; for the document, see Cordellier, *Documenti*, cit., doc. 65, pp. 147-148.
- 68 This is easy to envision on the Italian peninsula as the majority of Pisanello's patrons were bound by such ties; on this point see T. Jones, *Vivified Heraldry: On Pisanello's Medallial Imagery*, in *Heraldic Artists and Painters in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. by T. Hiltmann and L. Hablot, Ostfildern, 2017, pp. 182-195.
- 69 Based upon the casts cited by Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 19.
- 70 The medal is Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 42; see also *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., nos. 305, 306, pp. 438-439.

- 71 The text is: SIVA HIE HVN • MA • SAR • COR • REX • CO • BA • DV • AT • E • N • C • R • C
- 72 Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous*, cit., in part. pp. 19-20, 308-309, 356-357. For the supposition that this image was meant to recall a specific event, a boar hunt held as part of the festivities surrounding his father's assumption of the crown of Aragon, in which the twelve-year-old Alfonso distinguished himself, see Barreto, *La majesté*, cit., pp. 97.
- 73 For the image as aligning the ruler with Hercules via reference to the hunt of the Calydonian boar, see Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., p. 130.
- 74 Ancient literary references to the hunt, and its utility as preparation for war, are collected in J. Aymard, *Les chasses romaines. Des origines à la fin du siècle des Antonins*, Paris, 1951, pp. 89-169, 469-477; and A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantine. Recherches sur l'art officiel de l'empire d'Orient*, Paris, 1936, Reprint, London, 1971, pp. 57-62, 133-144. See also S. Tuck, *The Origins of Roman Imperial Hunting Imagery. Domitian and the Redefinition of Virtus under the Principate*, in «Greece & Rome», 52, 2005, 2, pp. 221-245.
- 75 Aymard, *Chasses romaines*, cit., p. 474.
- 76 From the *Libro de la montería*; quoted by Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., p. 85; and J. Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk. The Art of Medieval Hunting*, New York, 1988, pp. 4, 272.
- 77 The second-century sarcophagus, then in Rome, is now at the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua (inv. Gen 6734); for that, and related drawings by Pisanello's workshop, see *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 306, pp. 438-39; Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., pp. 130-133; and Barreto, *La majesté*, cit., pp. 97.
- 78 For hunting scenes on Roman coinage, see Aymard, *Chasses romaines*, cit., pp. 544-547. The standard study of the Arch of Constantine is that of H. L'Orange and A. von Gerkan, *Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens*, 2 vols., Berlin, 1939. The subsequent literature is extensive; more recently, on the *spolia* and its meaning, see J. Elsner, *From the Culture of Spolia to the Cult of Relics. The Arch of Constantine and the Genesis of Late Antique Forms*, in «Papers of the British School at Rome», 68, 2000, pp. 149-184.
- 79 On the hunter as a Christian type, see M. Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature*, Ithaca and London, 1974, in part. pp. 40-46, 59-66; Cummins, *The Hound*, cit., pp. 153-159; and E. Patlagean, *De la chasse et du souverain* in «Dumbarton Oaks Papers», 46, 1992, pp. 261-263.
- 80 A. Pauphilet, ed., *La Queste du Saint Graal, roman du XIIIe siècle*, Paris, 1923. More recently, E. J. Burns, trans. *The Quest for the Holy Grail*, in *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation*, ed. by N. Lacy, New York and London, 1995, pp. 4, 3-87.
- 81 On the Estense mss., see Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., p. 56; and Woods-Marsden, *Gonzaga of Mantua*, cit., p. 23. On French chivalric mss. in Alfonso's library and Catalan translations of the *Queste*, see Figures, *Un emblem*, cit., in part. pp. 247-250.
- 82 He eventually installed the relic in the Cathedral of Valencia; see Figures, *Un emblem*, cit., in part. pp. 244, 249, 252-253.
- 83 M. Nievergelt, *The Inward Crusade: The Apocalypse of the Queste del Saint Graal*, in «Neophilologus», 92, 2007, pp. 1-17. For the imperial connection, see Woods-Marsden, *Gonzaga of Mantua*, cit., pp. 15, 31, 63-65; and E. Baumgartner, *Histoire d'Helain le Blanc: du Lancelot au Tristan en prose*, in *Et c'est la fin pourquoi sommes ensemble: Hommage à Jean Dufournet*, vol. 1, ed. by J-C Aubailly, Paris, 1993, pp. 130-148.
- 84 See D. Abulafia, *Aragon versus Turkey – Tirant lo Blanc and Mehmed the Conqueror. Iberia, the*

- Crusade, and Late Medieval Chivalry, in Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World after 1150*, ed. by J. Harris, et al., Oxford, 2012, pp. 291-312, in part. pp. 300; A. Soler, *La relació de Martorell amb la cort de Nàpols i la discreta presència d'Itàlia en Tirant lo Blanc*, in *More about 'Tirant lo Blanc' / Más sobre el 'Tirant lo Blanc'*, ed. by A. M. Babbi and V. J. Escartí, Amsterdam, 2015, pp. 35-52; and Aloisio, *Alfonso V*, cit., p. 71.
- 85 See the summary in Abulafia, *Aragon*, cit., pp. 296, 300-301.
- 86 J. Martorell, *Tirant lo Blanc i alters escrits*, Barcelona, 1999, cap. 119, p. 378, cited in Figures, *Un emblema*, cit., p. 250.
- 87 T. Jones, *The Renaissance Portrait Medal and the Court Context. On the Origins and Political Function of Pisanello's Invention*, Ph.D. Diss., Tallahassee, 2011.
- 88 J. Floristán Imizcoz, *La corona de Aragón y el imperio Bizantino de los Paleólogos in Mallorca y Bizancio*, ed. by R. Duran, Palma, 2005, in part. pp. 127-129; and F. Samper Sánchez, *Las relaciones entre Bizancio y la corona de Aragón en el siglo XV*, in *Identidades urbanas corona de Aragón – Italia. Redes económicas, estructuras institucionales, funciones políticas (siglos XIV-XV)*, ed. by P. Iradíel et al., Zaragoza, 2016, in part. pp. 185-187.
- 89 Other possibilities included ceding the throne to Demetrios or, if peace was contracted, securing the despot's lands; the document (Arch. de la Cor. de Arag., Reg. 2697, fol. 98-99 b.) is transcribed by Cerone, *Politica orientale*, cit., pp. 573-577. On these negotiations, see Floristán Imizcoz, *La corona*, cit., p. 128.
- 90 For this tradition and Alfonso, see Aurell, *Messianisme*, cit., in part. pp. 120, 152-154; Figures, *Un emblem*, cit., in part. p. 255; and Freiberg, cit., *Bramante's Tempietto*, p. 152.
- 91 The medal is Hill, *Corpus*, cit., p. 41. See also *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 300, pp. 435; Pollard, et al., *Renaissance Medals*, cit., no. 21, pp. 32-34; and *The Renaissance Portrait*, exh. cat., cit., no. 132, pp. 306-308.
- 92 Rossi, *Pisanello*, cit., p. 312.
- 93 On the ancient imperial and Christian connotations of the inscriptions, see Barreto, *La majesté*, cit., pp. 99-100.
- 94 A sheet of drawings now at the Louvre (inv. 2481) features (on recto) a profile study for a bust of Alfonso and (on verso) studies for the birds; *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 299, p. 434. For questions surrounding Pisanello's authorship of the drawing, see Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., pp. 230-231.
- 95 Aurell, *Messianisme*, cit., pp. 142-144.
- 96 Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., pp. 18-20.
- 97 Cummins, *The Hound*, cit., pp. 188-189.
- 98 For Alfonso's actions, see delle Donne, *Il trionfo*, cit., pp. 462-464. These theories are summarized by Barreto, *La majesté*, cit., pp. 100-101.
- 99 On this and Alfonso's antipathy to the Venetians, see Ryder, *Eastern Policy*, cit., p. 17.
- 100 On these actions as trade-motivated, see Ryder, *Eastern Policy*, cit., pp. 18-19. See also K. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, vol. 2, *The Fifteenth Century*, Philadelphia, 1978, p. 99, n. 72.
- 101 On Alfonso's commitment in 1448 (and never followed through) to personally lead troops in Hungary against the Turks, see Ryder, *Eastern Policy*, cit., pp. 19-20; and Setton, *The Papacy*, cit., pp. 99-100.

- 102 The text is based, in part, upon Revelation 10:2; see Aurell, *La fin du monde*, cit., in part. pp. 7-8.
- 103 On the attribution and function of the drawing (Louvre, inv. 2307r), including suggestions that it might have been completed in Ferrara prior to the artist's arrival in Naples, see Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., pp. 231-232; *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 301, pp. 435-436; and Pollard, *Renaissance Medals*, cit., no. 21, pp. 33.
- 104 The Leonello medal is Hill, *Corpus*, cit., no. 24; additional bibliography below.
- 105 Based upon a reference by Leonello's tutor, Guarino da Verona, in 1447; see *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 261, p. 282; and Pollard, *Renaissance Medals*, cit., no. 6, pp. 12-13.
- 106 For this line of argumentation, see Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, cit., pp. 121, 246, nn. 152-53; and A. Cavallaro, *Studio e gusto dell'antico nel Pisanello*, in *Da Pisanello alla nascita dei Musei Capitolini: l'antico a Roma alla vigilia del Rinascimento*, exhibition catalogue (Roma, 1988), ed. by A. Cavallaro and E. Parlato, Milano, 1988, p. 111.
- 107 The image also bears comparison with the representation of Alfonso on horseback, crowned, in armor and with the *vespertilio cimiero* in the *Armorial ecuestre del toison d'or*, c. 1433-35 (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arsenal, ms. 4790, f. 108r).
- 108 Barreto, *La majesté*, cit., p. 98-99.
- 109 On this topic, and for related bibliography, see Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., p. 16. On the imagery here as intended to align Alfonso with Julius Caesar, see Barreto, *La majesté*, cit., p. 99.
- 110 On commentaries by Panormita (*De dictis et factis Alphonsi, liber secundus*, XIV, 1455) and Paolo Giovio (*Dialogo dell'impresie militari ed amorose*, Rome, 1557), among others, that align the book emblem with the monarch's intellect, see Woods-Marsden, *Art and Political Identity*, cit., pp. 16, 30-31, nn. 35-36. Joos van Ghent's (also attrib. to Pietro di Spagna) portrait of Federico da Montefeltro and son (c. 1476-1477) depicting the *condottiere*-ruler reading and dressed in armor exemplifies the *topos*; see C. Rosenberg, *The Double Portrait of Federico and Guidobaldo da Montefeltro. Power, Wisdom and Dynasty*, in *Federico di Montefeltro: lo stato, le arti, la cultura*, ed. by G. Ceroni Baiardi and G. Chitolini, P. Floriani, Roma, 1986, 2, pp. 213-222.
- 111 The *cimiero* is similar to those in a Pisanello drawing (Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, inv. 2293) with designs for helms and cannon; see *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 295, pp. 422-423.
- 112 The manuscript was originally commissioned in Valencia by Alfonso's confessor, Cardinal Joan de Casanova. After the latter's death in 1436, it was completed under the king's patronage; see <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_28962>. On the elision with the saint, see Barreto, *Une peinture*, cit., p. 194.
- 113 Bisaha, *Creating*, cit., pp. 64-69. See also Meserve, *Empires*, cit., pp. 66; and Hankins, *Renaissance Crusaders*, cit., pp. 121-123.
- 114 On this tradition see Meserve, *Empires*, cit., in part. pp. 65-116.
- 115 *Pisanello*, exh. cat., cit., no. 295, pp. 422-423.
- 116 For the correspondence, see n. 30 above.



Fig. 3: Pietro da Milano, Domenico Gagini and Francesco Laurana, (det.) *Triumphal Arch of Alfonso V of Aragon, king of Naples*, Castel Nuovo, Naples. Photo: Scala / Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 4: Pisanello, *Alfonso V of Aragon in armor*, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, inv. 2307r. © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 5: Pisanello, *Medal of Alfonso V of Aragon, king of Naples*, c. 1449-1450, bronze, 108 mm. London, The British Museum, G3.NapM.3. Image: © Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 6: *Boar hunting*, c. 130-33 BC, reused in *Arch of Constantine*, 313-315 CE, marble, Rome.
Photo: © Vanni Archive/ Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 7: Pisanello, *Medal of Alfonso V of Aragon, king of Naples*, 1449, bronze, 109 mm. Berlin, Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen. Photo: bpk Bildagentur / Staatliche Museen / Reinhard Saczewski / Lutz-Jürgen Lübke / Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 8: Pisanello, *Medal of Leonello d'Este*, c. 1442, bronze, 68 mm. London, The British Museum, 1923,0526.1. Image: © Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 9: *Preces pro intrantibus bellum contra paganos*, fol. 78r, Book of Hours of Alfonso V of Aragon, Add Ms 28962. British Library, London. Image: © Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 10: Pisanello, *Designs for cannon*, c. 1449-1450. Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, inv. 2293. Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.