# BARTOLOMEO AMMANNATI

## IL GENIO MEDICEO

# BARTOLOMEO AMMANNATI (OR AMMANATI)

(Settignano, 1511 – Florence, 1592)

## IL GENIO MEDICEO

Circa 1556
Wax
Height 31 cm
Width 9.5 cm
Depth 17 cm

PROVENANCE

European Private Collection

LITERATURE

Francesco Caglioti in Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi and Dimitrios Zikos (eds), *L'Acqua, la Pietra, il Fuoco. Bartolomeo Ammannati scultore* (exh. cat. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 11 May–18 September 2011), Florence, 2011, pp. 404–7, cat. 14.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Laura Battiferri, *Il primo libro delle opere toscane*, Florence, 1560, ed. Enrico Maria Guidi, Urbino, 2000, pp. 135–40.

George Frederick Young, *The Medici*, London, 1909–11, repr. 1920, vol. 2, pp. 364, 372.

Bertha Harris Wiles, *The Fountains of Florentine Sculptors and their Followers from Donatello to Bernini*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1933, p. 93.

Annamaria Gabrielli, "Su Bartolommeo Ammannati", *La Critica d'Arte*, VIII, 1937, no. 2, pp. 89–95.

Claudio Pizzorusso in G. Capecchi, A. Fara and Detlef Heikamp (eds), *La reggia rivelata* (exh. cat. Florence, Palazzo Pitti, 7 December 2003–31 May 2004), Florence, 2003, p. 518, cat. 43.

Claudio Pizzorusso, "Mirone e Dafne. Su Bartolomeo Ammannati scultore e Laura Battiferri", *Artista*, 2003, pp. 72–87.

Claudio Pizzorusso in Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi and Dimitrios Zikos (eds), *L'Acqua, la Pietra, il Fuoco. Bartolomeo Ammannati scultore* (exh. cat. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 11 May–18 September 2011), Florence, 2011, pp. 408–11, cat. 15.

# WAX MODELS IN THE RENAISSANCE

Preparatory models in wax or clay, witnesses to the artist's creative process, preserve a spontaneity and an energy that is inevitably diminished in the delicately finished work of art. Collectors have been interested in this stage since the Renaissance; for example, Giambologna's patron Bernardo Vecchietti owned a number of modelled studies which he displayed in his villa *Il Riposo*, near Florence.[1] Despite this, such *modelli* – particularly those in wax – seldom survive, as they were above all tools employed in the final elaboration of the work and, in the artist's view, were not made to be preserved. Some wax models disappeared during the casting of a sculpture in bronze via the direct lost wax process, while others were destroyed or simply re-modelled by the artist himself. Moreover, the fragility of wax, which is sensitive to changes in temperature and environment, rarely allows them to be preserved. Thus, although the creation of wax *modelli* was a contemporary and widespread technique in all Florentine ateliers during the Renaissance, nearly all of the small wax models produced in the sixteenth century have since disappeared.[2]

Giorgio Vasari, Benvenuto Cellini and Raffaello Borghini have left us with a precise description of the fabrication and use of these *modelli*.[3] Sculptors used wax as well as clay as much in the study phase, during which they were copying and modelling nudes or other sculptures, as they did in the creation of works intended for realisation in marble or bronze. Generally, sculptors began by modelling one or several small wax studies that allowed them to establish the composition of the work. Beeswax was mixed with animal fat to make it more malleable; it was then cooled and rolled into slender sticks which were applied as needed, from the base up, around a metal or wooden structure. The wax was modelled and smoothed with the fingers and with various utensils. This was followed by a larger *bozzetto* and finally by a full-scale *modello* in terracotta or plaster. Wax had several advantages over clay. It could be reworked almost infinitely, whereas clay *bozzetti* had to be covered in wet cloths to prevent them from drying out too quickly. Moreover, the suppleness of wax and its internal structure allowed the creation of compositions with arms extended in space as in the present model, or the one of Perseus by Cellini (fig. 1).

Fig. 1
**Benvenuto Cellini, *Perseus*, wax. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello**

Fig. 2
**Jacopo Sansovino, *The Descent from the Cross*, wax.**
**London, Victoria and Albert Museum**

The sculptors of whom Bartolomeo Ammanati was a student or follower – Baccio Bandinelli (1493–1560), Jacopo Sansovino (1490–1570) and Michelangelo (1475–1564) – are all known for having regularly modelled in wax. Sansovino was so skilful at modelling and inventing that he worked up compositions in wax for painters. As such, the *Deposition of Christ* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (fig. 2), was created by Sansovino in 1510 to serve as the model for an altarpiece painted by Perugino.[4] Several years later he supplied Andrea del Sarto (with whom he shared a workshop in Florence) with models for his celebrated *Madonna of the Harpies* (Galleria Palatina, Florence) and probably also for his *grisaille* fresco cycle in the Compagnia dello Scalzo.[5] Michelangelo produced an immense number of models, but was in the habit of destroying, almost systematically, his preparatory studies. Thus, in spite of considerable contemporary

Fig. 3
**Michelangelo Buonarroti,**
***Young slave*, wax.**
**London, Victoria and Albert Museum.**

interest, few wax *modelli* have survived and those still considered to be autograph works are particularly rare. The small study in red wax now in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, preparatory for one of the slaves on the tomb of Julius II (fig. 3), attests to the extraordinary power and spontaneity of the modelling.[6] As Charles Avery has noted, Baccio Bandinelli was also obsessed with the creation of models. In this way he aspired to attain the great Michelangelo's style and technique, in the hope of eventually surpassing him. While numerous drawings by Bandinelli have survived to this day, only two wax *modelli* are still known. Ironically, these waxes are preparatory studies for two monumental statues Bandinelli devised to flank and – unsuccessfully – compete with the *David*. The *modello* kept in the Bode Museum, Berlin, shows an early idea (later abandoned) for the colossal statue of *Hercules and Cacus* (fig. 4) which Bandinelli executed in 1530–34 as a pendant to the *David*;[7] the other, at the Musée Fabre in Montpellier, is preparatory for the *Neptune* for the fountain on the Piazza della Signoria which Bandinelli started but was unable to finish before his death in 1560 (fig. 5).[8]

Cellini, Tribolo and Giambologna, closer in age to Ammannati, are also described in contemporary sources as enthusiastic modellers. The *Autobiography* and treatises of Benvenuto Cellini (1500–1571) abound with references to the wax models which he produced for the majority of his works.[9] For him, wax *modelli* were not only part of the creative process but were also intended to be presented to patrons. Indeed, Cellini – trained as a goldsmith – produced works of great delicacy which wax better enabled him to achieve than did clay. Despite the many wax models executed by the sculptor (many of which were mentioned in his post-mortem inventory), only a single one has survived to the present day:[10] the preparatory *modello* for the large bronze statue of *Perseus* situated in the Loggia dei Lanzi in the Piazza della Signoria (1545–1554) (see above, fig. 1).[11] For this work, Cellini also executed a model in bronze of similar dimensions to the wax. The wax model in the Bargello, which must have been preceded by smaller sketch-models in wax and also perhaps by drawings, is an accomplished study of the composition as it was eventually realised. The wax was undoubtedly presented to the patron – Cosimo I – in order for him to sign off on the project. If the position of the figure is unchanged, a certain number of elements were modified en route to the finished bronze sculpture. The emaciated body of the wax becomes more muscular and Cellini's fine goldsmith's details, such as the curls of the hair, the feathers of the wings on the helmet, the serpents and the Gorgon's blood, are developed.

Fig. 4
**Baccio Bandinelli, *Hercules and Cacus*, wax. Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin**

Fig. 5
**Baccio Bandinelli, *Neptune*, wax. Montpellier, Musée Fabre**

Fig. 6
**Giambologna, *Florence triumphant over Pisa*, wax.**
**London, Victoria and Albert Museum**

Giambologna (1529–1608) remains the sixteenth-century sculptor with the greatest number of surviving wax *modelli*, although the attribution of certain examples is sometimes still questioned.[12] Several of the artist's waxes for sculptures in the round and for reliefs are conserved at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, whose collection comprises the most important ensemble of Renaissance wax *modelli*.[13] The process of creation of Giambologna's sculptures closely corresponds to that which Vasari described. This working method can be illustrated by the example of the marble sculpture representing *Florence triumphant over Pisa* (1565) in the Palazzo Vecchio for which – uniquely – the three preparatory stages have survived. A first sketch-model or *primo pensiero* of 25 cm, modelled in red wax around a metal armature, is preserved in the London museum (fig. 6).[14] The small wax, with its elongated proportions, was damaged over the course of the centuries, and the right arm and knee are now lost. The second stage is also found in the V&A: a *bozzetto* (as defined by Charles Avery) of intermediary size – 39 cm – realised in clay.[15] The modelling here is more refined and precise and the composition closer to that of the finished work. The monumental, final full-scale *modello* (2.6 m) has also, almost miraculously, survived.[16]

The creation of modelled wax studies was therefore a widespread practice in all sculptors' workshops and Bartolomeo Ammannati was no exception. At least one episode from his life, recounted by Filippo Baldinucci,[17] bears this out: after the death of Bandinelli, which left a gigantic block of unsculpted Carrara marble intended for the Piazza della Signoria *Neptune*, a competition was organised in which all the most illustrious sculptors participated, including Benvenuto Cellini and Bartolomeo Ammannati. On this occasion, Ammannati presented a small wax model to Cosimo I which illustrated what he was thinking of sculpting from the existing block; he won the commission.[18] Until the discovery of the present *bozzetto*, not a single wax by Ammannati was known. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, wax did not disappear completely but was nevertheless employed far less frequently by sculptors, who likely considered it too fragile. Clay *modelli* had the advantage of being able to be fired (terracotta) which made them much more durable, something that better suited collectors.

# BARTOLOMEO AMMANNATI, SCULPTOR TO THE MEDICI

A sculptor and architect, Bartolomeo Ammannati (1511–1592) is a major figure in Italian art of the sixteenth century and one of the most erudite artists of the Florentine Renaissance. Up to the mid-1550s, Ammannati travelled and worked throughout Italy, taking as models the greatest masters of his time. He then definitively returned to Florence, where he first entered the service of Cosimo I, then Francesco I de' Medici.[19]

***Venice, Urbino, Padua, Rome***

Born in Settignano to a family of stone carvers, the young Bartolomeo first trained in the Academy of Baccio Bandinelli. Between 1529–1535, he travelled to Venice where, according to Raffaello Borghini, he seems to have worked in the atelier of Jacopo Sansovino. Ammannati's career as a sculptor really began during his first return to Tuscany with a marble lunette for the Pisa cathedral and, toward 1536, his *Leda*, derived from a lost painting by Michelangelo (fig. 7). During the same years, he collaborated closely with Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli (1507–1563), whom he had known for a long time, and for whom he sculpted a statue of *St Nazarius* for the church of Santa Maria del Parto in Naples. The two artists, working in Florence, were strongly influenced by the statues of the Medici tombs in San Lorenzo and by the Biblioteca Laurenziana, which Michelangelo had left unfinished.

Fig. 7
**Bartolomeo Ammannati, *Leda and the Swan*, marble. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello**

Fig. 8
**Bartolomeo Ammannati, *Mars Gravidus*, bronze. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi.**

After a brief study trip to Urbino where Ammannati met Gerolamo (c.1476–1551) and Bartolomeo (1518–1558) Genga, he received a major commission, that of the tomb of the soldier Mario Neri, a member of the circle of Alessandro and Cosimo de' Medici, for the church of the Santissima Annunziata in Florence. The project soon became the object of a controversy as Neri had died in a duel. Never inaugurated and quickly dismantled, today it is partially preserved in the Bargello.

Around 1543, disillusioned by this controversy, Ammannati departed again for Urbino and then for Venice, to Sansovino, in whose workshop he then played a central role. During this sojourn the Florentine worked for the first time on bronze sculptures, as Jacopo was occupied, during these exact years, with the modelling and casting of the great bronzes for the Loggetta of San Marco. Subsequently, Ammannati lived in Padua (1545–46), a guest of the learned collector Marco Mantova Benavides (1489–1582). For his patron, the sculptor erected a colossal statue of *Hercules* and a triumphal arch, as well as a splendid funerary monument in the Chiesa degli Eremitani.

Far from returning to the Tuscan capital, Bartolomeo next moved to Rome, where he remained for almost ten years. He quickly captured the admiration of Pope Julius III Del Monte, who solicited his participation in several important commissions, including the family chapel in San Pietro in Montorio; he thus became one of the most renowned sculptors in the papal city. In Rome he was also able to improve his knowledge of the work of Michelangelo, and it was there that he became friends with Giorgio Vasari.

### *Florence and the Medici*

Following the death of Julius III in 1555, Bartolomeo settled in Florence where Vasari presented him to the duke of Tuscany, Cosimo I de' Medici, who was then half-way through his reign and who was concerned with furthering his power and legitimacy through artistic commissions, following in the steps of his ancestor Lorenzo il Magnifico. Although not mentioned by biographers, Ammannati's first ducal commission (around 1556) was probably the *Genio Mediceo* under discussion here. Cosimo I next commissioned Ammanati the construction of a monumental fountain for the *Sala Grande* of the Palazzo Pitti, composed, according to contemporary sources, of an ensemble of sculptures in marble and bronze. It was never erected in the location for which it had been intended but was instead installed in the gardens of the Villa in Pratolino.[20] The marble figures are arranged around a rainbow crowned by a seated statue

of *Juno*. The *Mars Gravidus* in the Uffizi, executed between 1559–1560, may also have been part of the ensemble (fig. 8).[21]

At the same time, Bartolomeo was also asked to cast two monumental bronze sculptures for the decoration of the gardens of the Villa Medici in Castello, whose design had been conceived by Niccolò Pericoli, called il Tribolo (1500–1550) beginning in 1538 and continuing up to his death.[22] Ammannati realised the *Hercules and Antaeus* (fig. 9) in 1559–60 for the top of the great fountain sculpted by Tribolo and his pupils (including Pierino da Vinci).[23] Between 1563 and 1565, he created a half-length giant in bronze representing the mountains of the Apennines (fig. 10), which was placed in the midst of the fishpond.

Today, Ammannati is principally known for the *Fountain of Neptune* in the Piazza della Signoria, a commission he received following Bandinelli's death in 1560. He sculpted a marble statue of Neptune, mounted on a chariot drawn by seahorses, then, in the early 1570s, with the help of his workshop, he cast a

Fig. 9
**Bartolomeo Ammannati, *Hercules and Antaeus*, bronze. Florence, Villa della Petraia**

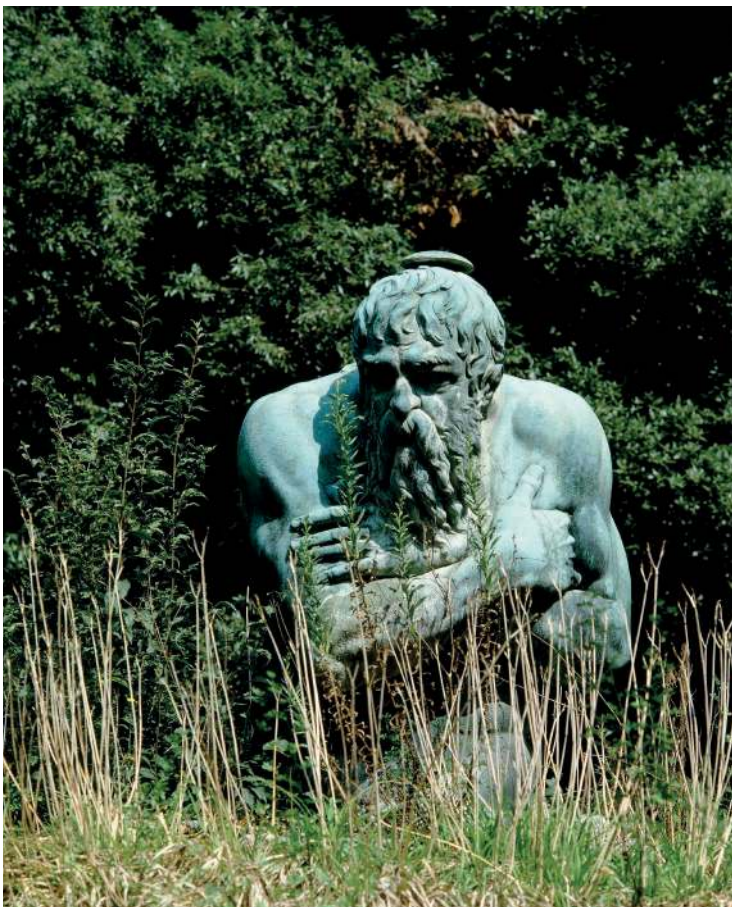

Fig. 10
**Bartolomeo Ammannati, *Allegory of the Apennines*, bronze. Florence, Villa di Castello**

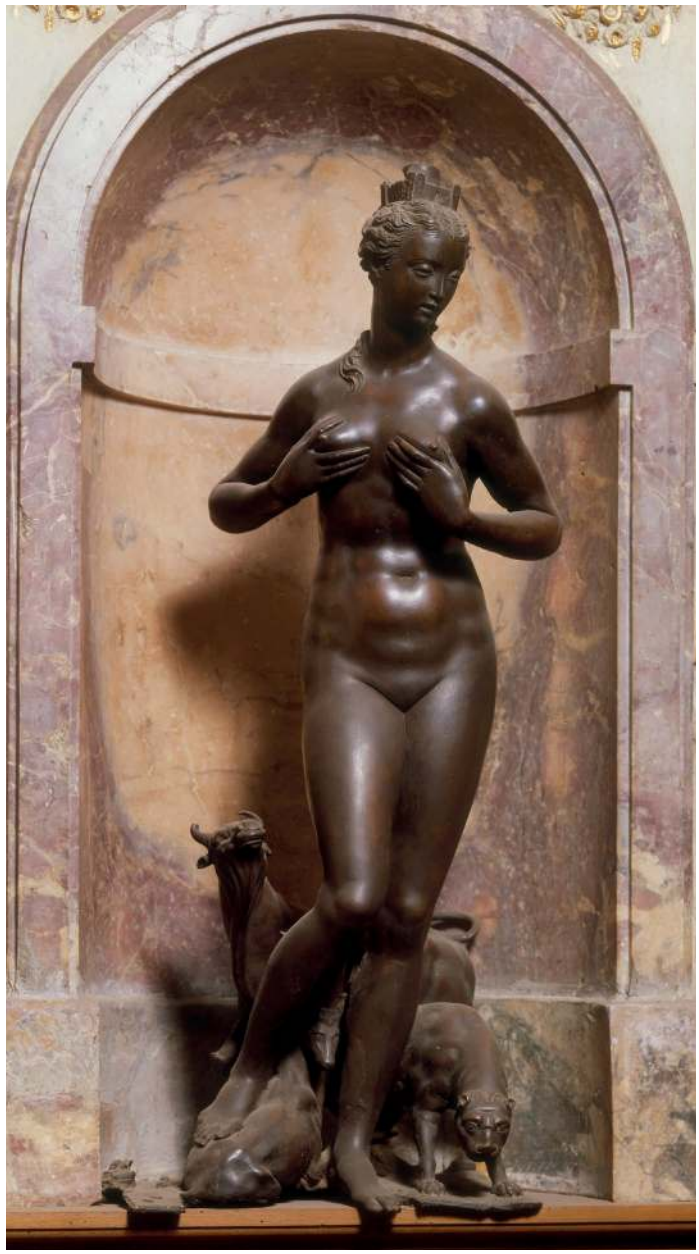

Fig. 11
**Bartolomeo Ammannati, *Opi*, bronze. Florence, Palazzo Vecchio**

series of twelve nymphs and fauns in bronze seated on the edge of the basin. One of Ammannati's last sculptures was the delicate *Opi* (1572–73) (fig. 11), commissioned by the Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici to adorn his *studiolo* in the Palazzo Vecchio along with other small bronzes. Ammannati then dedicated himself primarily to his architectural projects and wrote an architectural treatise toward the end of his life. His most notable projects included the enlargement of the Palazzo Pitti (1560–77), the new Medici residence, the Ponte alla Trinità (1567–70), which had been destroyed by the flooding of the Arno, and various *palazzi* in Florence and Pisa.

# THE PREPARATORY MODEL FOR THE GENIUS OF THE MEDICI BRONZE

This *bozzetto* in brown wax was presented for the first time on the occasion of the monographic exhibition on Bartolomeo Ammannati organised by the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in 2011.[24] The statuette represents a youth seated astride a baluster; looking down, he raises a ball in one hand and embraces a little Capricorn with his right arm. It is a preparatory study for the bronze sculpture of *The Genius of the Medici* (figs. 12, 13) in the Palazzo Pitti, now attributed with certainty to Ammannati thanks to Claudio Pizzorusso's excellent demonstration, to which we will return presently.

Figs. 12, 13
**Bartolomeo Ammannati, *The Genius of the Medici*, bronze. Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina.**

Fig. 14
**Domenico di Polo de' Vetri, *Medal with Cosimo I de' Medici and Capricorn*, bronze. London, The British Museum**

Fig. 15
**Agnolo Bronzino, *Portrait of Laura Battiferri Ammannati*. Florence, Palazzo Vecchio.**

### *The Genius of the Medici: Attribution and Dating*

Because of the attributes of the young *ignudo*, which make direct reference to Cosimo I de' Medici, in 1909 the bronze sculpture was dubbed 'The Genius of the Medici', the name by which it is still known.[25] The Medicean sphere, long part of the arms of the Medici family, also symbolises the association between 'cosmos' and 'Cosimo'. The Capricorn, a mythical animal with the head of a goat and the tail of a fish, was the symbol of the Roman emperor Augustus and had been chosen by Cosmo as his emblem (fig. 14).

The *Genius of the Medici* of the Palazzo Pitti was attributed in turn to Ammannati, Giambologna, Tribolo and even to the anonymous 'Maestro dei bronzi di Pratolino' before Claudio Pizzorusso provided the indisputable proof of its being an autograph work of Bartolomeo Ammannati, datable to shortly before 1560.[26] In his article published in 2003, Pizzorusso brought to light four sonnets by Lelio Bonsi (born ca. 1532), an erudite Florentine in the service of the Medici, published in 1560 by Laura Battiferri Ammannati (1523–1589), Bartolomeo's wife, in her poetry collection *Il primo libro dell'opere toscane* (Florence, Giunti, 1560). The poetess, originally from Urbino and married to Bartolomeo since 1550, was an eminent figure in Florentine intellectual circles. Close to the greatest artists and scholars of her time, such as Benedetto Varchi, her portrait was even painted by Bronzino, painter to Cosimo I (fig. 15).[27]

*Ride la dolce imago e tanta spira*
*gioia ridendo, sì par viva e bella,*
*che poco al nome vostro sia quanto ella*
*sostiene in man, picciolo Atlante, e mira.*
*Fin dove puossi, e nobil mastro aspira,*
*ch'alla natura esser rival s'appella,*
*giunto con marmi sete, e bronzi, in quella*
*arte che 'l mondo sovra l'altre ammira.*
*Coll'opre vostre si pregiate e tante*
*pria l'*età *prisca tutta ed or voi stesso,*
*di commune parer, passato avete.*
*Non più Fidia o Miron, chi torsi a Lete*
*cantando cerca, e gire al ver più presso,*
*l'Ammannati gentil celebri e cante.*

*L'Ammannati gentil celebri e cante*
*chi dal volgo lontano e da' suoi falli*
*i più risposti e men segnati calli*
*entra e sormenta con veloci piante.*
*Muovi, e quanti hai carmi leggiadri e quante*
*prose onorate, eterno Varchi, dalli*
*sacri d'Apollo, e liquidi cristalli*
*spendi in lui sempre a tutti gli altri innante;*
*e di', poi che a te sol conviensi, e solo,*
*nuovo Maron, nuovo Arpinate puoi*
*e sol n'è degna la bell'opera e 'l vale:*
*ch'a questo non fu par, né sia tra noi*
*bronzo, che ride e spira aura vitale,*
*e guarda, e regge l'uno e l'altro polo.*

*E guarda, e regge l'uno e l'altro polo*
*colla sinistra, e colla destra mano*
*il celeste animal, ch 'l re toscano*
*fece seco, nascendo in terra solo.*
*Il vivo bronzo, anzi fanciul che solo,*
*perch'opra è di tuo ingegno alto e sovrano,*
*non muove e parla e con sembiante umano*
*pur dice: -Ite a me lungi affano e duolo.*
*Ben sei mastro, e tuo merto e tua fortuna*
*felice, ch'opri alla natura pare,*
*e donna avesti che nel mondo è una.*
*Secco Ippocrene e morta in ver saria*
*scultura, se sì bello e nobil pare,*
*non fosse in questa età sì vile e ria.*

*Non fosse in questa età sì vile e ria*
*vostra onorata mano e 'ngegno altero,*
*che 'n chiari marmi e 'n vivi bronzi il vero*
*di natura e coll'arte or finge, or cria.*
*Non fossero i bei carmi e l'armonia*
*degna del ciel, ch'a lui n'apre il sentiero,*
*della, ch'a voi stelle benigne diero,*
*onesta e saggia e dolce compagnia.*
*Chi con incude mai, né con martello*
*far più d'altra potria longeva e adorna*
*del gran Duce toscan l'altera reggia?*
*Chi lui, che Flora e 'l secol nostro adorna,*
*rendere eterno a questo clima e a quello,*
*se Voi, coppia gentil, nessun pareggia.*

Bonsi's sonnets, dedicated to Bartolomeo Ammannati and conceived as a suite, clearly eulogise the bronze and its sculptor.[28] The poet praised this figure of a 'little Atlas', laughing and jubilant, holding 'the globe in his left hand, and in his right hand the celestial animal that the king of Tuscany has made his own'. As Victoria Kirkham and Claudio Pizzorusso have suggested, the spouses collaborated and helped each other in the creation of their works; no doubt it was the poetess who inspired the sculptor in the invention of the little *Genius*.[29]


Fig. 16
***The Genius of the Medici used as a fountain*, from Inigo Triggs, *The Art of Garden Design in Italy*, London, 1906, p. 74.**

The bronze *Genius of the Medici* had been conceived as a fountain, the water spouting from the ball and one of the grotesque masks positioned on the baluster. It was probably destined for the Palazzo Vecchio, much like the monumental marble fountain in the *Sala Grande*; Claudio Pizzorusso has proposed an identification with the fountain documented near the apartments of Cosimo I, which was being installed in 1557, and which may permit a more precise dating of the wax *modello* and the bronze sculpture to 1556–1557.[30] In 1906, Inigo Triggs indicated in his work on Italian gardens, with a supporting drawing, that the small fountain came from the Boboli Gardens (where it might have been relocated at another time) and that it was still in working order at the Palazzo Pitti (fig. 16).[31]

### *Wax Model versus Bronze Cast*

The *modellino* in wax measures 31 cm high, thus approximately '*un mezzo braccio*' as recommended by Giorgio Vasari in his introduction to sculpture.[32] The similarities between this piece and the bronze *Genius* are so obvious that it would appear to be not a first *pensiero* but rather a presentation model, probably shown to Cosimo I in order for him to sign off on the commission, following the example of Cellini's wax *Perseus* (fig. 1 above). Before arriving at this wax model, Ammannati no doubt developed the composition of the *Genius of the Medici* with the aid of drawings and other modelled sketches which have not survived.[33] As the final work in bronze is not a monumental sculpture (it measures 1.3 m), it is, on the other hand, unlikely that Ammannati realised another intermediary *modello* in wax or clay, as Giambologna generally did. The sculptor then created the full-scale model which would be used for the lost-wax cast and which would have included all the details still missing from the present wax.

A certain number of minor variations, necessary in the transition from *modello* to final work – which is four times larger – can be observed. Some of these transformations are due to the natural evolution of the composition in its creator's mind, such as the position of the left foot which is almost lifted in the wax (fig. 17) but which rests on the plinth in the bronze, or even the change of the left arm (fig. 18). As Francesco Caglioti has shown, the modification of the position of the left arm, extended in the wax, more flexed in the bronze, is not due to later restoration because the metallic structure in the interior of the arm has not been altered.[34] Ammannati himself must have changed the angle of the arm when he executed the full-scale model used for the casting of the bronze.

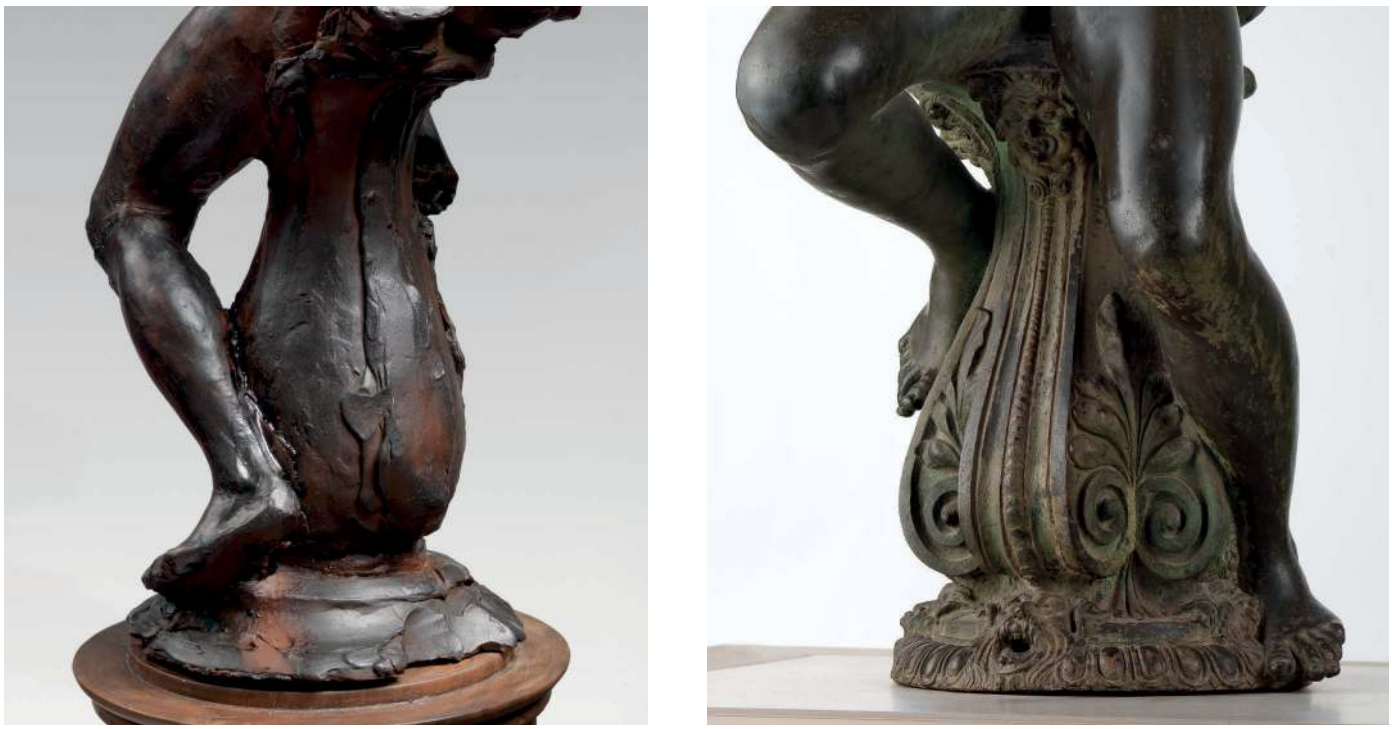

Fig. 17
**Comparative details of the left foot**

Fig. 18
**Comparative details of the left arm**

As a preparatory work, the wax – whose modelling displays a dynamism unique to such studies – does not yet possess all the details later added to the final sculpture. Thus the baluster, whose forms are more simply sketched in wax, is transformed in the bronze into a veritable piece of Mannerist ornament. The capricorn's coat and the youth's hair, depicted with the help of small pieces of wax, are later skilfully modelled and chiselled in order to precisely differentiate each hair (figs. 19, 20).

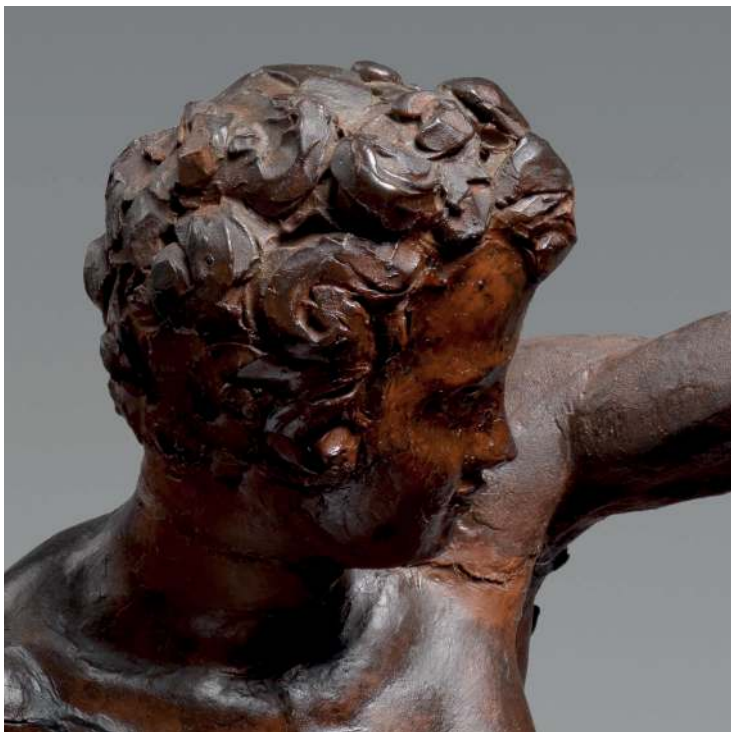

Fig. 19
**Comparative details of the boy's hair**

Fig. 20
**Comparative details of the Capricorn's fur**

Although the *modello* and the bronze are very close in terms of composition, the subtle evolution of the modelling and the pose have resulted in two slightly different impressions. The young *Genius* in wax seems to have been captured in the midst of movement, while the bronze figure is seated on the baluster in a manner that is more stable, but no less Mannerist. The physiognomy and anatomy of the two figures also differ. In the wax, the pronounced musculature of the torso and the slim, vigorous legs are those of a young man in the prime of life. The bronze *Genius*, however, has more childlike legs and a face still retaining traces of babyhood and topped with long curls, giving him the air of a young boy of about ten years.[35] Overall, the composition of the wax is more energetic and dynamic, with a liveliness of modelling peculiar to sketches. This energy is diminished in the finished bronze, which is a more subdued and balanced work.

### *The* Genio Mediceo *in context*

With his *Genius*, Ammannati paid homage to his master Jacopo Sansovino. From the *Bartolini Bacchus* (fig. 21), sculpted in marble in the 1510s, Ammannati borrowed the arm stretched toward the heavens and the mischievous smile that reveals the teeth. Sansovino's marble, given to Cosimo I by the Bartolini family around 1550, was installed in the Duke's apartments in the Palazzo Vecchio; the parallel between the *Bacchus* and *Genius of the Medici* when situated in the same location thus becomes particularly explicit. As Claudio Pizzorusso has noted, the influence of Niccolò Tribolo, whom Ammannati must have known personally in his youth, is just as striking. Moreover, Bartolomeo had a deep knowledge of Tribolo's work, since he himself executed the bronze *Hercules and Antaeus* for the fountain sculpted by Tribolo and his assistants. Thus, it was Tribolo's work (see for instance Tribolo's oil lamp in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, fig. 22) that inspired the grotesque mascarons on the baluster and the surprising idea of sublimating the sculptural material and endowing the decorative elements with a sense of life, so much so that one of these masks appears to be crushed by the young *ignudo*'s foot.[36]

The *Genius* is positioned at the heart of Ammannati's career and only just anticipates the period in which the sculptor's reputation reached its acme, when in 1560 he obtained the commission for the *Fountain of Neptune*. It was during these same years that Ammannati completed the casting of his most celebrated bronzes, *Hercules and Antaeus* and *Mars Gravidus* (see above, figs. 8, 9), sculptures which are, moreover, both mentioned in the verses published by Laura Battiferri.[37] In 1563, Ammannati also successfully cast the immense *Allegory of*

Fig. 21
**Jacopo Sansovino, *Bacchus Bartolini*, marble. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello**

Fig. 22
**Niccolò Tribolo, *Satyr*, bronze. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstkammer, 5917**

*the Apennines* of Castello (see above, fig. 10), thus demonstrating his mastery in the art of casting at a date when Giambologna had yet to achieve fame.

We can sense the stylistic foreshadowing of the *Genius of the Medici* in two of Ammannati's earlier works. The young boy is a reworking of a figure created some ten years previously for the top of the tomb of Marco Mantova Benavides in Padua (1545–45) (fig. 23). It also recalls the sculpted *putti* in the Del Monte chapel in San Pietro in Motorio in Rome.

The final bronze of the *Genius of the Medici* can be considered a legacy of Ammannati's youth with its references to Jacopo Sansovino and to Niccolò Tribolo, the conclusion of the sculptor's early maturity. On the other hand, with its tension and the dynamism of its elongated forms, the wax *bozzetto* heralds Ammannati's late style. We can already glimpse the monumental statues of fauns and nymphs posed on the edge of the *Fountain of Neptune* (1572–75) (fig. 24). The long face, with its straight, delicate nose and thin lips, also recalls the *bronzetto* of the goddess *Opi* (see above, fig. 11).

Fig. 23
**Bartolomeo Ammannati, *Tomb of Marco Mantova Benavides* (detail), marble. Padua, Chiesa degli Eremiti**

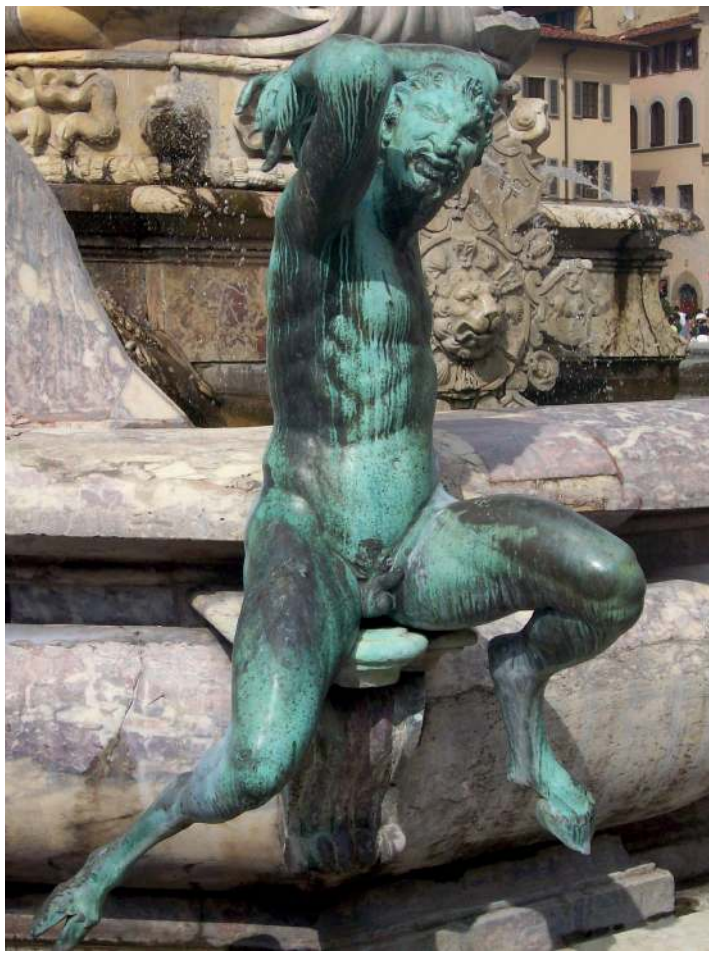

Fig. 24
**Bartolomeo Ammannati, *Faun*, bronze. Florence, Fountain of Neptune.**

# TECHNIQUE AND STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE WAX

Technical analyses and X-rays of the small wax model have reinforced the impression of the spontaneity of the work. The figure was modelled in a substance composed of beeswax with a low melting point, mixed with more heat-resistant vegetal substances (including, among others, colophony and resin). Some mineral particles complete this waxen mass.

According to the tradition described by Giorgio Vasari, the wax was modelled around a metallic structure clearly visible in the X-rays (figs. 25, 26). This metal skeleton, necessary for the stability of the sculpture, is composed of several elements.[38] A long central pivot passes through the centre of the baluster and protrudes slightly at the base, which allowed it to be connected with the old

Figs. 25, 26
**X-rays of the wax model**

Fig. 27
**The model under UV fluorescence**

wooden base (today replaced with a modern pedestal secured with the aid of an additional screw). From this pivot emerge various more or less mixed metallic wires constituting the young man's skeleton: a double wire composes the structure of the legs, the neck and the head, while numerous other wires are entangled in the torso. The arms, which are more delicate, contain only one wire each. The raised left arm, following earlier damage, was restored and reinforced with the help of a small pivot at the level of the elbow, but the wire which runs from the torso to the hand holding the ball has not been altered (fig. 27).

As Francesco Caglioti pointed out on the occasion of the 2011 Bargello exhibition, the *modello*'s state of conservation is particularly good, especially if compared to the other rare waxes of the same period. Aside from the left arm, restored at the level of the humerus, one must also mention the loss of the left foot and various small fractures at the level of the pelvis, in the right shoulder and in the neck, some of which have been filled in, while others remain visible. The damaged areas only reinforce the sense of wonder one feels at the preservation of such a fragile sculpture in the face of the ravages of time.

## NOTES

1 Charles Avery, 'Bernardo Vecchietti and the wax models of Giambologna', in *La ceroplastica nella scienza e nell'arte. Atti del congresso internazionale. Firenze, 3–7 giugnio 1975*, Florence, 1977, vol.2, pp. 461–76.

2 On wax sketch-models, see Charles Avery's pioneer and fundamental studies: Charles Avery, *op. cit.*, 1977 and Charles Avery, '"*La cera sempre aspetta*", Wax Sketch-Models for Sculpture', *Apollo*, CXIX, 1984, no. 265, pp. 166–76; repr. in Charles Avery (ed.), *Studies in European Sculpture II*, London, 1988, pp. 19–33.

3 *Le opere di Giorgio Vasari*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, Florence, 1878–85, reprint. 1973, vol.1, pp.152–5; Louisa S. Maclehose, *Vasari on Technique*, New York, 1960, p. 148–49; Raffaelo Borghini, *Il Riposo*, trans. Lloyd H. Ellis, London, 2007, p. 110; Benvenuto Cellini, *I trattati dell'orificeria e della scultura*, ed. Carlo Milanesi, Florence, 1857, for example, pp. XXIV, 72, 218; *Vita di Benvenuto Cellini*, ed. Francesco Tassi, Florence, 1829, for example vol. 1, pp. 78, 187, 195, vol. 2, pp. 157, 175, 320, 374, 398.

4 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 7595-1861: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O39628/the-descent-from-the-cross-model-sansovino-jacopo/ [consulted on 18.01.2018].

5 For a technical study of a wax model by Sansovino conserved in Budapest, see János Dávid Rátonyi, 'New aspects: technical analysis of the wax Madonna by Jacopo Sansovino', *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts*, 2011, no. 114/115, pp. 44–51.

6 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 4117-1854: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O70293/a-slave-model-michelangelo/ [consulted on 18.01.2018]. This wax model was acquired by the museum in 1854. It was one of a group of 23 sixteenth-century Italian wax models acquired in Florence as part of the Gherardini Collection. Of the 16 ascribed to Michelangelo at that time, this is the only one still generally thought to be by the hand of the master. The collection includes anatomical figures, or écorchés of parts or whole figures. On the Gherardini collection, cfr. John Pope-Hennessy, 'The Gherardini collection of Italian sculpture', *Victoria and Albert Museum. Yearbook*, 1970, no. 2, pp. 7–26 and Ch. Avery, *op. cit.* 1977.

7 Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 2612: http://www.smb-digital.de/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=867362&viewType=detailView [consulted on 18.01.2018].

8 Montpellier, Musée Fabre, inv. 825.1.335; see Volker Krahn, 'Bandinelli's modello for the Neptune in Piazza della Signoria, Florence', *The Burlington Magazine*, 2013, CLV, pp.763–8; Volker Krahn in Detlef Heikamp, Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi (eds), *Baccio Bandinelli. Scultore e maestro (1493-1560)* (exh. cat. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 9 April–13 July 2014), Florence, 2014, pp. 380–85, cat. 34.

9 See above, note 3.

10 See Cellini's wax models listed in the inventory or documented in Ch. Avery, 1984, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

11 Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, inventario cere, n. 424; Daniele Angellotto *et al*, 'Verso il Perseo: il modello in cera di Benvenuto Cellini al Museo del Bargello', *OPD restauro*, 2007 (2008), no. 19, pp.67–84, with previous bibliography.

12 On Giambologna's models, see in particular Ch. Avery, *op. cit.* 1977; Ch. Avery, *op. cit.* 1984, p.29–30 and Volker Krahn, 'I bozzetti del Giambologna', in Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi and Dimitrios Zikos (eds), *Giambologna, gli dei, gli eroi* (exh. cat. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 2 March–15 June 2006), Florence, 2006, pp. 45–61.

13 See note 6.

14 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 4118-1854: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O110862/florence-triumphant-over-pisa-statuette-model-or-giambologna/ [consulted on 18.01.2018].

15 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, A.24-1979: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O90425/florence-triumphant-over-pisa-statuette-giambologna/ [consulted on 18.01.2018].

16 The plaster model stayed in Giambologna's workshop after his death until the mid-eighteenth century, when it was moved to the Accademia. It is now in the Palazzo Vecchio, near the marble sculpture.

17 Filippo Baldinucci, *Notizie dei professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua*, ed. consulted Milan, 1811 vol. 7, p. 424.

18 It may be for this reason that the *Neptune* wax in the Musée Fabre had been catalogued as 'Ammannati' when it first entered the collection in 1830 (see above, note 8).

19 For Ammannati's biography see Alessandro Cherubini, 'Su Bartolomeo Ammannati,

scultore fiorentino e architetto', in Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi and Dimitrios Zikos (eds), *L'Acqua, la Pietra, il Fuoco. Bartolomeo Ammannati scultore,* (exh. cat. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 11 May–18 September 2011), Florence, 2011, pp.47–93, and previous bibliography.

20 On the fountain in the *Sala Grande*, see in particular Detlef Heikamp, 'Ammannati's Fountain for the Sala Grande of the Palazzo Vecchio', in Elisabeth B. MacDougall (ed.), *Fons sapientiae. Renaissance garden fountains*, Washington, 1978, pp. 137–8; Dimitrios Zikos, in *L'Acqua, la Pietra, ... op. cit.*, 2011, pp.370–7, cat.6.

21 Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, inventario 1914, n. 38; Alessandro Cherubini, in *L'Acqua, la Pietra, ..., op. cit.*, 2011, p.396–97, cat. 12.

22 On Tribolo's work in the Castello garden, see Alessandra Giannotti, 'Niccolò Tribolo e l'invenzione della fontana ad isola negli spazi del giardino', in Beatrice Garzelli *et al.* (eds), *Idee di spazio*, Perugia, 2010, pp. 101–12; Gabriele Capecchi, *Ipotesi su Castello: l'iconografia di Niccolò Tribolo e il giardino delle origini (1538–1550)*, Florence, 2017.

23 Mirella Branca in *L'Acqua, la Pietra, ...., op. cit.*, 2011, p.382–7, cat. 8.

24 Francesco Caglioti, in *L'Acqua, la Pietra, ...., op. cit.*, 2011, pp. 404–7, cat. 14.

25 George Frederick Young, *The Medici*, London, 1909–11, 2 vols.; repr. 1920, vol. 2, p. 364, 372.

26 On previous attributions see a complete summary in Claudio Pizzorusso, 'Mirone e Dafne. Su Bartolomeo Ammannati scultore e Laura Battiferri', *Artista*, 2003, p.72.

27 For the portrait see Raffaele de Giorgi, in Carlo Falciani and Antonio Natali (ed.), *Bronzino pittore e poeta alla corte dei Medici* (exh. cat. Florence, Palazzo Strozzi, 24 September 2010–23 January 2011), Florence, 2010, pp. 218–9, cat.IV.8.

28 For a detailed study of the sonnets and their relation with the bronze sculpture, see Cl. Pizzorusso, *op. cit.*, 2003, pp.74–80. See also Laura Battiferri, *Il primo libro delle opere toscane*, ed Enrico Maria Guidi, Urbino 2000, CXXIa–CXXIVa, p. 135–9 and Alessandro Cherubini, in *L'Acqua, la Pietra ... op. cit.*, 2011, pp.454–55, cat.37.

29 Victoria Kirkham, 'Creative Partners: the Marriage of Laura Battiferri and Bartolomeo Ammannati', *Renaissance Quaterly,* LV, 2002, no. 2, pp. 498–558; Cl. Pizzorusso, *op. cit.*, 2003, in part. pp. 77, 81.

30 Cl. Pizzorusso, *op. cit.*, 2003, p. 78.

31 Inigo Triggs, *The Art of Garden Design in Italy*, London, 1906, p.74. Le fonctionnement ne semble cependant que partiel à cette date puisque l'eau ne sort plus que de la boule.

32 *Le opere di Giorgio Vasari*, op. cit., 1973, p. 152. A "braccio fiorentino" corresponds to 58 cm.

33 On Ammannati's drawings, see Amedeo Belluzzi, in *L'Acqua, il Fuoco..., op. cit.*, 2011, pp. 436–43, cat. 28–29.

34 Fr. Caglioti in *L'Acqua, la Pietra, ...., op. cit.*, 2011, p. 406.

35 Fr. Caglioti in *L'Acqua, la Pietra, ...., op. cit.*, 2011, p. 406.

36 Cl. Pizzorusso, *op. cit.*, 2003, pp. 72, 81.

37 See Laura Battiferri, *op. cit.*, 2000, III, p. 36 and CXIa p. 122.

38 On the technical aspects, see Fr. Caglioti in *L'Acqua, la Pietra, ...., op. cit.*, 2011, pp. 404–6.


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