

opponents of clerical wealth. Fraticelli-inspired treatises on clerical poverty became what John Monfasani has called a “growth industry” in the 1460s in Rome, while cardinals and curialists produced their own equally polemical counter-attacks. The situation culminated with accusations against the Fraticelli of heresy and anti-papal conspiracy in 1466.¹⁶ At the height of the controversy, Cardinal Jean Jouffroy came to the defense of curial wealth, summarizing the papal position on the tiara and treasures of gems and gold. He began with a quote from one of the Fraticelli who had seen the papal tiara with his own eyes and judged it to be scandalous:

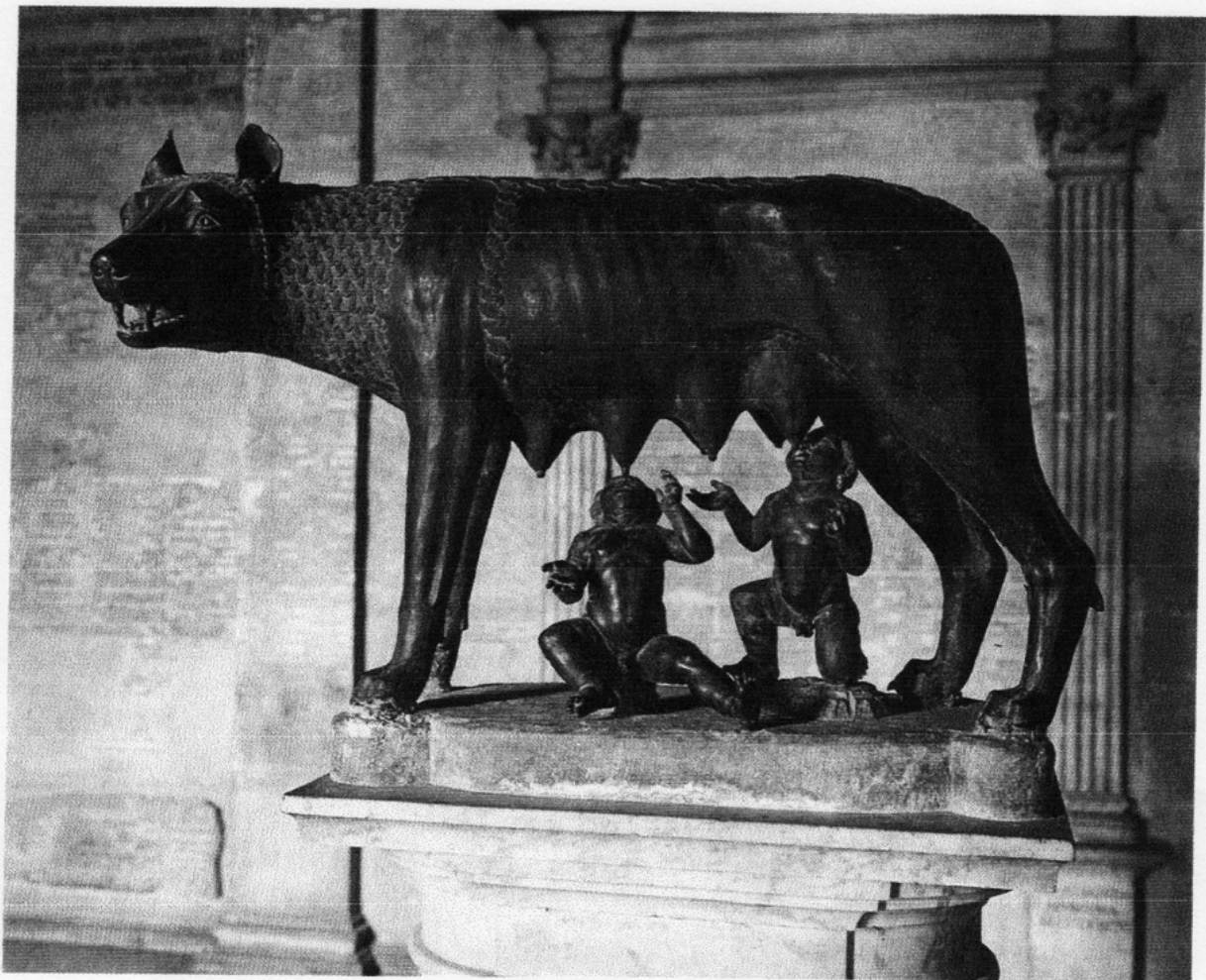
I saw the tiara of pope Paul II, and I was awestruck to see it so resplendent with gems, gleaming with rubies, glistening with diamonds; it shined so brightly all around that the pope's head seemed to burn. I asked myself: is this a sign of the humility and modesty of religion or of its infamy and ruination?¹⁷

In response to this criticism, Jouffroy argued that the tiara recalled the temporal power of the pope guaranteed by the “Donation of Constantine.” The jewels of the papal tiara, he concluded, were monuments of virtue (*monumenta virtutis*). Each gem stood for a particular aspect of Paul II's own excellence: diamond for his suppression of the Roman barons, emerald for his dignity, and pyrite for his clemency. This underlying meaning of the gems justified the tiara's expense, since each provided a visual *monumentum virtutis* to the eyes of beholders capable of stimulating imitation in others.¹⁸ Jouffroy here defined the gems in Barbo's tiara – visually dazzling, non-figural objects – as exemplary monuments. They stood on their own, emblematically, as objects of splendor that put temporal and spiritual authority on display.

What emerges from these debates is a contrast between the treasury and the written biography as methods of self-representation: one is a splendid display of the *imperium* handed to the popes from Constantine, the other an active means of proving the pope's own inner virtue. While Paul II clung to a rather blunt method of “owning” gems, jewels, and antique *mirabilia* (as his way of taking direct possession of the *imperium* and splendor of the ancient Roman emperors), as will be seen, Sixtus IV detached himself from the simple possession of rare and expensive objects, preferring instead the virtuous deed of “dedication” as his means of public persuasion. He did so with an awareness of an ancient discussion about the exemplary value of public statuary and in anticipation of the praise for his actions he would receive from humanist writers.

SIXTUS IV'S STATUE DEDICATION

Immediately after taking office in 1471, Sixtus IV began to distance himself from Paul's excessively possessive and costly variety of collecting. In Platina's words, Paul II had “sought out ancient statues everywhere in the city and brought them together in the house he had built under the Capitoline. He even dragged off the tomb of Saint Constantia from Sant'Agnese, while the church objected in vain.” After Paul's death, however, Sixtus “had the porphyry sarcophagus brought back” to its original setting (*Barbo, no. 10). He also dealt swiftly with Paul II's private treasury, selling many



73 *Lupa Capitolina*, Rome, Musei Capitolini

items and using part of it as collateral for Medici loans that would help finance his papacy.¹⁹ Yet the most dramatic act of reversal initiated by Sixtus IV was the transport of ancient bronze sculptures from the Lateran to the Capitoline hill. In the first months of his reign, most of the bronze antiquities formerly on view at the Lateran ascended up the Capitoline like the statuary prizes once paraded up the hill during ancient triumphs.²⁰ The group of sculptures chosen for transfer included the bronze *Wolf* (Fig. 73) and the gigantic head and hand of an ancient bronze *Colossus*, works identified in Quattrocento antiquarian literature as the remains of a *Colossus of Nero* (Figs. 74 and 75).²¹ Sixtus IV's statue transferral almost certainly included two other well-known works whose display on the Capitoline was first described in the last decade of the fifteenth century. One was the *Spinario* (Fig. 76), a Hellenistic figure of a seated, nude boy pulling a thorn from his foot, whom Renaissance viewers could never manage to identify in any consistent manner.²² Another was the Capitoline *camillus*, a well-crafted bronze representing a young sacrificial attendant (Fig. 77). Some Renaissance viewers reversed its gender and nicknamed the figure "*La Zingara*" ("the Gypsy girl"), yet, as with all the statues except the *Wolf*, the question of its subject was left open to opinion.²³ The group of sculptures brought from the Lateran did not include the bronze



74 Colossal bronze head, Rome, Musei Capitolini



75 Colossal bronze hand, Rome, Musei Capitolini

equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius (see Fig. 70), a bronze ram once displayed with the *Wolf*, or the politically volatile *Lex de Imperio* (see Fig. 9). In the case of the *Marcus Aurelius*, it is difficult to know whether the problems involved in transporting such a heavy work simply left Sixtus with no options.²⁴ Yet, in view of rumors circulating about Paul II's plans to appropriate the statue for San Marco, Sixtus's decision to leave the statue in place may have been made in order to contrast his own good will with Paul's greediness. Instead of moving the bronze, Sixtus fixed the monument in place on a new base inscribed with the words: "Pope Sixtus IV restored this bronze horse and its rider, collapsed and damaged with age."²⁵ The re-installation of the equestrian monument seems to match the piety of Sixtus's return of Constantia's sarcophagus to Sant'Agnese, implicitly criticizing Paul II's hubris in wanting to take sole possession of Rome's Christian relics and ancient *mirabilia*.

At the Capitoline, the installation of sculpture was paid for and ordered by the pope but ostensibly carried out for the benefit of the Roman Conservators.²⁶ Most of the

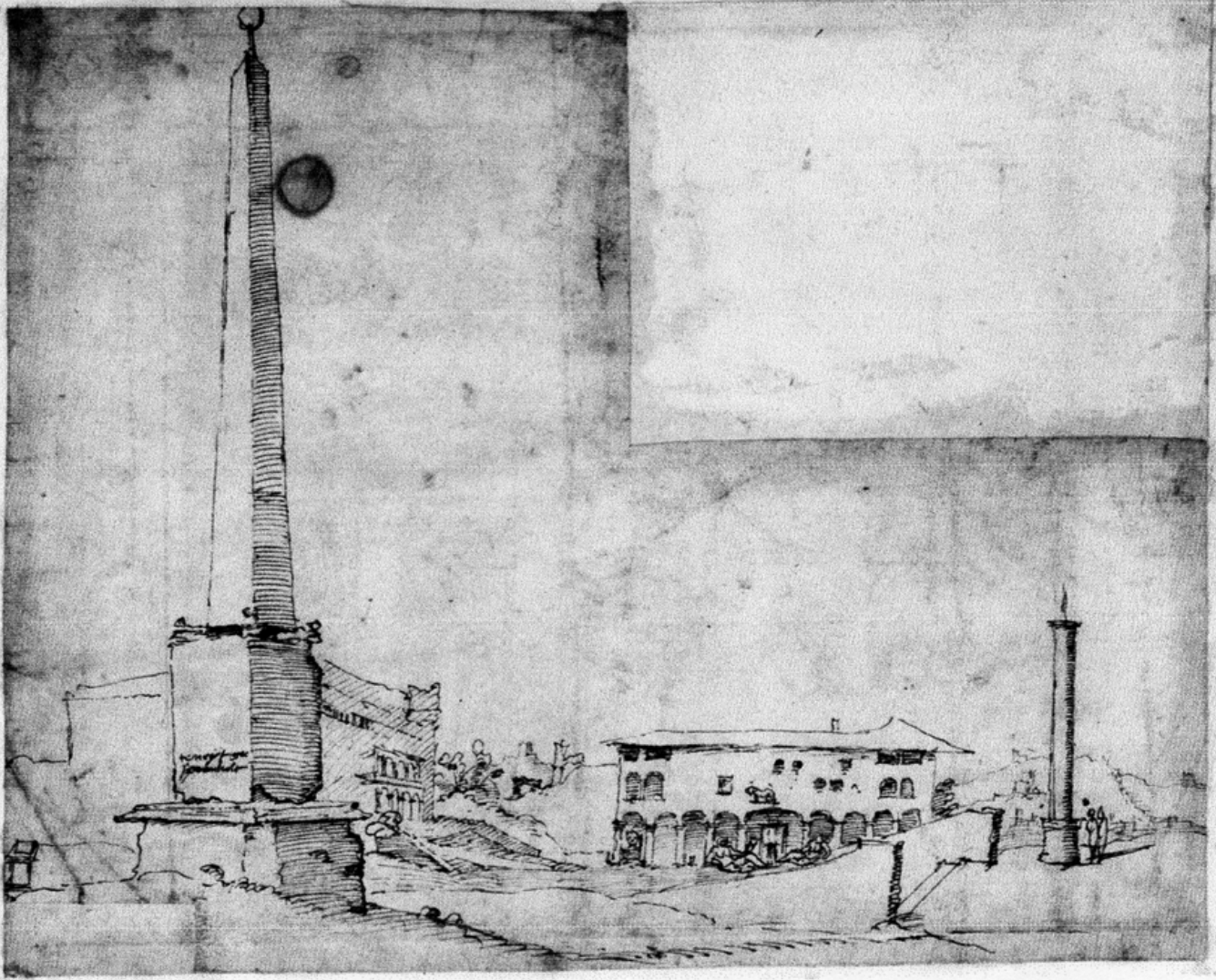


76 The *Spinario*, Rome, Musei Capitolini



77 The "Zingara," Rome, Musei Capitolini

statues were placed on view inside the loggia of the Palazzo dei Conservatori, a building that had been constructed less than twenty years earlier and was still in need of embellishment. The Palazzo and its loggia are depicted in several sixteenth-century representations, including a drawing by Maarten van Heemskerck (Fig. 78), several prints (Figs. 79 and 80), and a mid-Cinquecento fresco preserved inside the palace itself (Fig. 81). Van Heemskerck's view reveals that the *Wolf* was originally poised above the central doorway into the palazzo and that the bronze head was propped up on a base in the first bay of the loggia. Other drawings and descriptions clarify the position of marble antiquities displayed with the bronze head and hand inside this loggia. These works included several antique inscriptions (discussed in further detail below), a fluted column shaft which had long been used as a standard measurement for wine, and the marble *cippi* (funerary urns) of the Emperor Nero and his mother Agrippina which served as the official Roman measures for salt and grain (see Figs. 8 and 82).²⁷ When the *Spinario* is mentioned for the first time in 1490, it is said to have been in a *tri-*

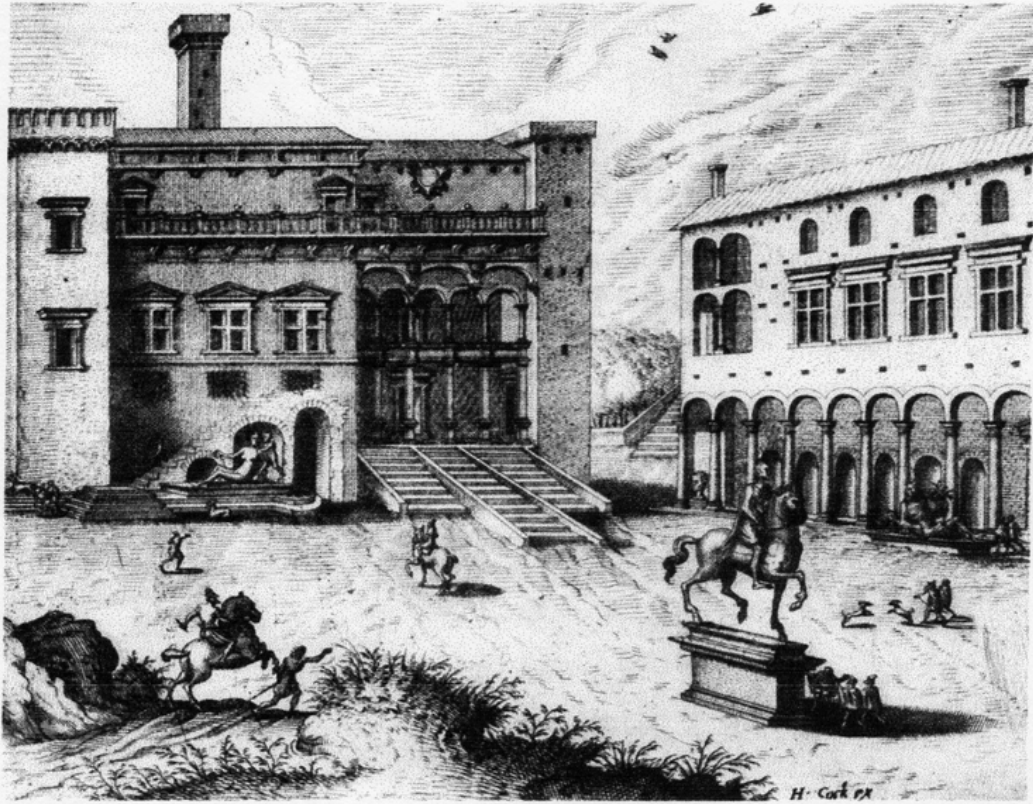


78 The Capitoline Hill, Maarten van Heemskerck, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 79.D.2a, vol. 2, fol. 72, c. 1532-7

clinium, sitting on a column, probably like the one shown as its base in a sixteenth-century print (Fig. 83).²⁸ Around 1500, visitors spotted the *Spinario* “up above” in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, with the bronze *camillus* “near” it. A description written in 1505 by a group of Venetian ambassadors is more precise. Set on top of columns, they relate, the *Spinario* and *camillus* watched over the large meeting hall on the *piano nobile* of the palace, where Jacopo Ripanda had recently completed a fresco cycle of Roman historical scenes.⁽²⁹⁾

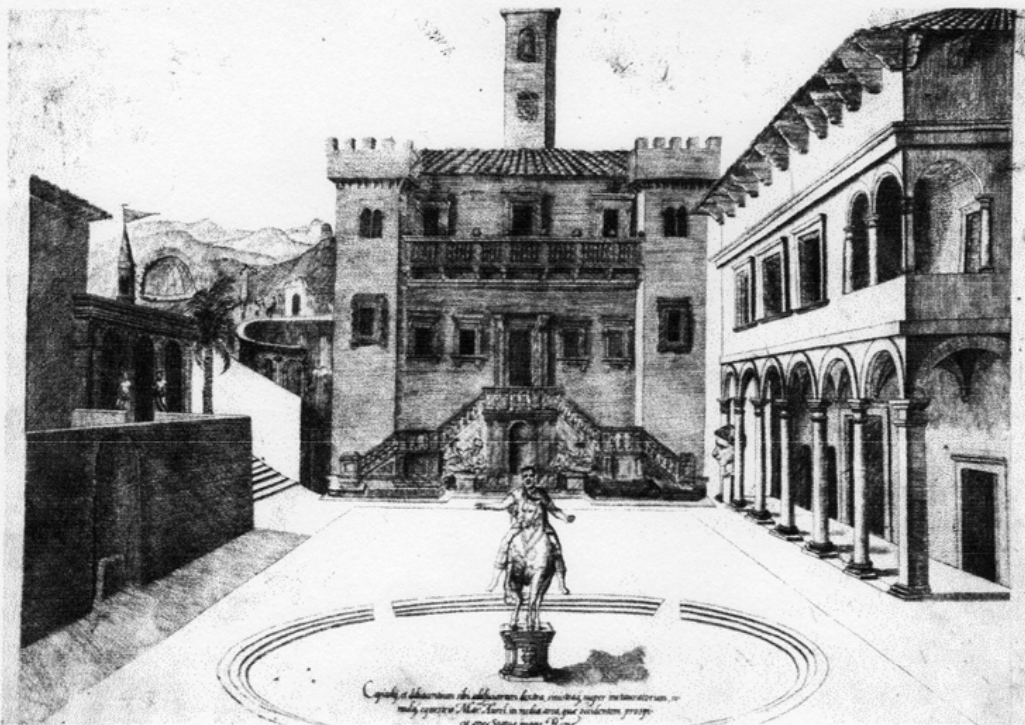
It is to be expected that the bronze statues transferred from the Lateran would be displayed in conspicuous places of particular civic significance, since Pope Sixtus offered them openly to the *populus Romanus*. Somewhere in the vicinity of the bronze statues, perhaps inside the ground-floor loggia, an inscription boldly claimed that Sixtus had brought the sculptures here to restore them to their rightful owners, the people of Rome:

Pope Sixtus IV, on account of his immense benignity, decreed that [these] famous bronze statues should be restituted and donated together as a monument of ancient



79 Hieronymus Cock, *The Capitoline*, c. 1550

80 Nicolas Beatrizet, *The Capitoline Hill*, in *Speculum romanae magnificentiae*, University of Chicago Library, *Speculum Romanae* A65, Rome: Antonio Lafreri, c. 1560

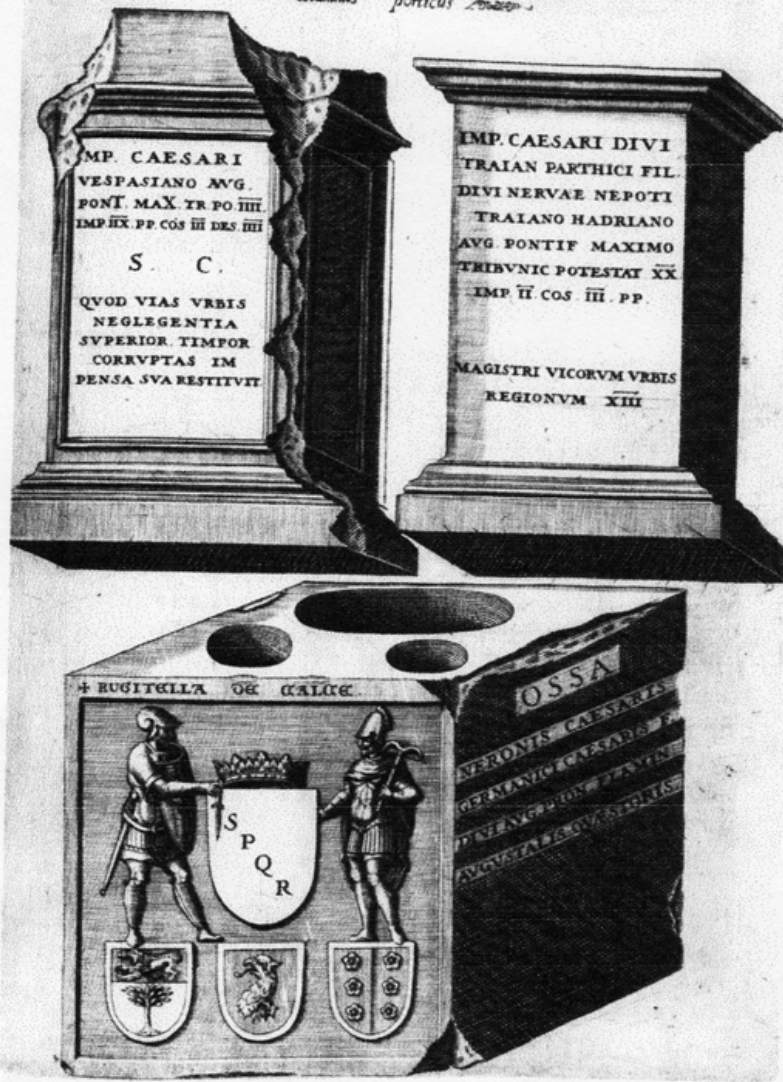




81 Anonymous, *Capitoline Hill*, Rome, Palazzo de' Conservatori, Sala delle Aquile, c. 1544

excellence and virtue to the Roman people whence they had originated, during the administration of the Cardinal Camerlengo Latino Orsini and the Conservators Giovanni Alberini, Filippo Palosci, and Nicolo Pinciaroni, in the year 1471, December 15.³⁰

The inscription has played an important role in scholarly interpretations of the statue transferral as a whole, and has usually been thought to announce the beginning of a new era in the history of collecting. Just what was “new” about the statue donation has, however, been a matter of debate. In an influential study of 1955, Wilhelm Heckscher drew a clear distinction between the older display of antique bronzes at the Lateran and their exhibition on the Capitoline. Formerly political tools and theological symbols, Heckscher argued, at the Capitoline they became works of art in a museological setting that emphasized their aesthetic and historical meanings.³¹ Tilman Buddensieg in 1983 also underscored the novelty of the Capitoline display but played down the idea that any new aesthetic values were introduced by Sixtus’s statue transferral. Pointing out that an aesthetic appreciation of antique sculpture can be found in medieval descriptions of ancient mirabilia, he emphasized the new topographical research carried out in Quattrocento Rome as the guiding principle behind Sixtus’s

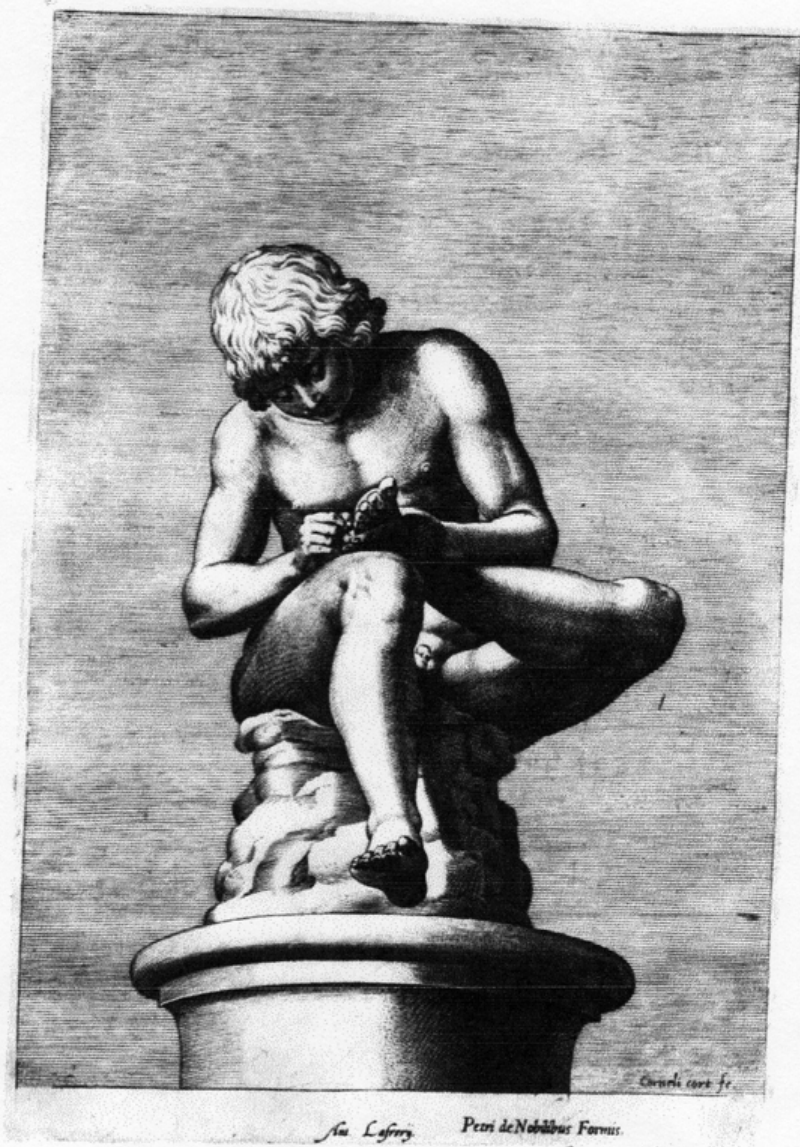


82- Cippus of Nero and antique inscriptions on view at the Palazzo dei Conservatori, in Jean-Jacques Boissard, *Romanae urbis topographia et antiquitates*, Frankfurt: Johannes Fejrabend, 1597, 2, pars 3, plate 98

dedication. According to Buddensieg, the antiquarianism of the early Quattrocento and its attempts to overturn medieval legends had enabled the identification of the “correct” sites where antique sculptures had once been displayed.³² The transferral thus returned statues that seemed to belong at the Capitoline for archeological and art-historical reasons.

It can be questioned, however, whether Quattrocento topographers ever researched the placement of ancient sculpture with anything like a scientific, archeological attitude, or whether the idea of returning statues to their original ancient locations was ever a matter of concern for Renaissance patrons. A search through the ancient authors would only have turned up a reference to a Capitoline *Wolf*, specifically, a description in Cicero of a gilded statue of “Romulus as a babe, sucking the udders of a wolf” displayed on the Capitoline until the gods struck it with lightning. No doubt the story could have informed the decision to transfer the *Wolf* to the Capitoline and to add

fn. 33.



83 Cornelius Cort, *The Spinario*, in *Speculum romanae magnificentiae*, British Museum. Rome: Pietro de Nobili, c. 1585

bronze twins underneath it. Yet a similarly antiquarian rationale cannot be found for the exhibition of the *Head and Hand* in a loggia or the *Spinario* and *camillus* on top of columns.

Exhibiting bronze sculptures at the Capitoline seems less novel if it is considered in the light of medieval precedents, particularly displays of antique sculptures at the Lateran and the Quirinal. As has been stressed in previous discussions, the papacy had used the Lateran *campus* as an open-air tribunal where authorities administered papal justice, sometimes in the form of corporal punishment. The *Liber Pontificalis* reports that John XIII (965–72) hung a rebel by the hair from the *caballus Constantini* (the Horse of Constantine), while the *Mirabilia* describes a figure of a barbarian used as a support for the horse's hoof, an overt reference to the potency of papal justice at this site.³⁴ Death sentences were pronounced near the bronze *Wolf* (at the *locus ad lupam*) in the ninth century and by the thirteenth the *Wolf*, a bronze ram (now lost), and the

Lex de Imperio inscription together adorned a fountain that was used for the hand-washing ceremonies that were part of tribunal rituals.³⁵ When the fountain was dismantled, the *Wolf* was moved to a new setting high up on the Torre dei Annibaldi in the Lateran piazza, where it continued to watch over punishments and executions. The antiquities placed in the loggia of the Conservatori – another site where justice was meted out – echo the display of ancient bronzes at the Lateran, and also another ensemble of antique sculpture that had long been visible at the Quirinal hill. There, four marble portraits of Constantine and his sons raised on high pedestals stood near a portico where, as Nikolaus Muffel described it in 1452, judiciary assemblies had their seat. A Renaissance drawing illustrates one of these statues on a pedestal to the right of the *Horsetamers* (see Fig. 33).³⁶ As the *Mirabilia* reported, a “woman wrapped in serpents” with a “shell in front of her” appeared as part of a fountain, spilling water into a conch-basin. The female figure with the *conca*, like the fountain at the Lateran, were probably incorporated into the hand-washing rituals used by the judges of the papal tribunal.³⁷

The difference between Sixtus’s Capitoline display and the Lateran exhibition seems to depend less on antiquarian advances than an attempt to maintain older associations with papal *auctoritas* while responding to a new, more complex political landscape in Rome. New powers – the native nobility and the *popolo*, cardinals from wealthy and influential foreign families, and the humanists in their employ – had created a more competitive and more challenging political environment for the papacy, one in which the blunt assertion of papal majesty no longer seemed the most effective means of maintaining authority. In the 1470s the popes wielded considerable power at the Capitoline: they had the power to appoint senators and the Curia had the right to choose the Capitoline Conservators. Yet Sixtus’s statue donation anticipates public critique of what might have seemed too much papal authority over Capitoline affairs. The decision to move the bronze statues to the Palazzo dei Conservatori, as the interpretations of Miglio and Sybille Ebert-Schifferer in the 1980s stressed, disguised papal dominance as a magnanimous gift, recognizing the Capitoline’s authority, yet simultaneously reinforcing the message that this government operated only because of papal *benignitas*.³⁸ Moving these bronze works away from the Lateran, a site that had already shed much of its symbolic value for the papacy, Sixtus IV had little to lose in terms of political capital. What he would gain at the Capitoline, however, would be a permanent off-stage presence reminding the *comune* that he “permitted” it to operate. The decision to place the bronzes at the Palazzo dei Conservatori, rather than the Senators’ palace, is significant in this regard: the bronze statues might well have been moved to an older loggia on the stairs of the Senators’ palace, next to which an ancient sculpture of a *Lion Attacking a Horse* had, for centuries, marked the spot (the *locus ad leonem*) where municipal governors pronounced their death sentences (see Figs. 7, 78, 84).³⁹ Yet the Conservators were a newer political entity that the pope was particularly eager to cultivate and control. In the Quattrocento the office was often occupied by Roman nobles, among them the sort of “new” men devoted to ancestral antiquities discussed in the previous chapter. The statue transferral of 1471, and later “donations” of antiquities to the Capitoline by Sixtus and his followers, recognize that the care for Rome’s antique



84 View from the Palazzo dei Conservatori, Maarten van Heemskerck, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 79.D.2, vol. 1, fol. 6 c. 1532-7

past had become a matter of intense pride for the native nobility and the *popolo romano* as a whole. While Sixtus's statue transferral openly celebrated the power of the Conservatori and the Maestri delle Strade over Rome's antiquities, his own active intervention in the city's archeological excavations, street works, and urban planning told a different story.⁴⁰ The *Wolf* set above the door of the Palazzo dei Conservatori looked, in Herbert Siebenhüner's words, "like a coat of arms," a trophy of *Romantitas* that defined the Conservatori as guardians of the city's antique heritage, yet their real potency over these matters was more an illusion than a reality.⁴¹

THE CAPITOLINE BRONZES AS EXEMPLARY MONUMENTS

By the 1480s Sixtus IV, his cardinals, and their historians, poets, and artists were proclaiming a new *restauratio Romae* brought about by his papacy. His policy of rebuilding and restoring Rome would define the pope as a civic steward, on the model of the ancient emperor Augustus.⁴² It took a step further the role of the papacy already

emphasized in Nicholas v's reign: the pope would act as a "governor, priest, and builder," using architectural patronage on an Augustan scale to re-establish Rome's imperial grandeur.⁴³ The success of Sixtus's efforts to present himself as the guardian of Rome would depend on the praise of humanist writers, especially those attached to Pomponio Leto's Academy, who portrayed the pope's care for Rome as the antidote to Paul II's excessive personal greediness and vanity. A letter by Jacopo Ammannati Piccolomini associated Paul II's love of material splendor with pagan *vanitas*: minting coins with his own image and burying them in the foundations of his palazzo, proudly inscribing his name on every architrave, and bringing back the frivolous *ludi* of the ancients, the pope had stepped far beyond the boundaries of proper conduct.⁴⁴ While Paul had defended his treasury as a repository that could fund future Crusades, for his arch-enemy Platina the papal collection had been detrimental to public welfare, distracting the pope from his duties and softening his character. The *damnatio memoriae* of Paul II found in Platina's biography of him reads: "In the matter of pontifical pomp there is no doubt that all of his predecessors were exceeded by this one man: particularly in his *regnum*, or tiara, into which he gathered together many riches, everywhere buying up at great prices diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, topaz, jaspers, pearls and any other precious gems he could find." Further on Platina writes, "It was difficult to speak to him during the day (since he slept then) or even at night, since he kept himself awake sifting through all his gems and pearls."⁴⁵ The whole treasury of the Church, Platina argued, had gone to satisfy the private pleasure of the pope. When he wore his tiara, he gibed, Paul resembled an effeminate "turreted Cybele," the Eastern goddess who wore a crenellated tower on top of her head. Platina even went so far as to claim that the pope had died of an apoplectic fit brought about by the excessive weight of his overloaded tiara.⁴⁶

Paul II had built a vast palace for himself and adorned it with the largest antique works he could find; an inscription by Il Porcellio outside the palazzo set the tone by boldly proclaiming "these are the monuments of Pope Paul II."⁴⁷ Sixtus IV did not shy away from ambitious building projects, of course, nor did he reject the aesthetic of the treasury and tiara. Yet, while the Venetian pope's monuments were personal – his treasury, his enormous palazzo, and his grandiose statues – Sixtus's statue transferral adhered to a different concept of monument making, one which took into account not only an ancient discussion about the virtues of dedicating statues but also the familiar distrust of images seen in the writings of Petrarch and his followers. In a letter of 1466 addressed to Paul II, Giovannantonio Campano laid out some of the problems he had with visual monuments, framed according to the differences he perceived between the patronage of writing and the patronage of the arts:

The only thing that may be believed is history, which can have general acceptance and can fictionalize nothing; it does not lie and it does not polish, yet it adorns everything. It is a faithful herald, an unbiased witness, a benign interpreter, a lasting monument and a firm, undoubted memory. For buildings, statues, trophies, triumphal arches, coins, and any other thing of this type, though they seem to be durable, are fixed in one place (they do not wander every which way) and they are not known widely, nor do they last for such a long time, nor do they produce that

much fame, nor are they certain whose they are or who built them. . . History . . . is never inverted; it is never changed. A name is woven into its fabric for eternity; it is never burnt or broken, and it never decays . . . It is seen by all and read by all, and it is read with pleasure.⁴⁸

Campano, like many others before him, raised serious doubts about the ability of any visual monuments to preserve fame. His defense of written history refers to the fear of future ruination that the Roman remains had long evoked. History is better than statues, Campano argued, since it could combine pleasure with the virtues of accessibility, permanence, and *utilitas*. These critiques of the visual monument seem to surface in Sixtus's statue dedication, for example in the fact that the inscription makes the point of transforming the display of sculpture into a worthy monument, an exercise in *benignitas* (a potentially ephemeral gesture of kindness and favor) that represented itself as the sort of exemplary deed that could be praised in a humanist biography, poem, or oration. Not only were the statues put on display for the Roman people to remind them of their own immortal virtue but the re-dedication of ancient sculpture in such a public manner put the dedicatee himself on display, transforming him into a living monument and a model for others. In emphasizing the piety and *benignitas* that stands behind the statue transferral, Sixtus's dedication acknowledged that immortal virtues should be prized more highly than ephemeral statues and that the exercise of good deeds was more praiseworthy – and more useful to society at large – than the possession of large palace or a treasury. Images can spur others to the imitation of great deeds, but virtue resides only in the soul and finds expression only in exemplary acts. As Petrarch had written, “statues are images of bodies, but *exempla* are images of virtue.”⁴⁹

Picking up on the ancient and Trecento discussion of the exemplary virtues of civic statuary, the exhibition of bronze works as “a monument of ancient excellence and virtue to the Roman people whence they had originated” seemed to offer the Romans a reminder of their former selves, as a prompt for the memory of their own innate virtue. Yet just what sort of exemplary deeds or virtues might the sculptures on the Capitoline have called to mind? The question has been posed by Christof Thoenes, who rightly called attention to the myth of the popolo romano – that chosen race whose divine favor had granted them the eternal right to rule the world – and also to the artistic virtuosity of the statues themselves, a reminder of the city's artisan skills placed at the Palazzo dei Conservatori, the headquarters of the Roman guilds.⁵⁰ In their iconography, the figures resemble the sorts of objects favored by native Roman collectors in the Quattrocento: the image of a wolf, a portrait of a ruler, and a figure of a draped youth fit more or less comfortably into the realm of historical and civic imagery that they preferred to display at their own houses. In this sense they conformed with the visual language of Romanitas cultivated and cherished by the local nobility. If the colossal bronze head and hand were understood as fragments of the Colossus of Nero, perhaps their transfer into the hands of the Roman *popolo* sent out a moral message about the defeat of luxury and ambition. Re-dedicated on the Capitoline, they had become the booty of the SPQR, treasures offered to the people like the bronze statues set up by ancient emperors or donated to Rome by triumphant generals.⁵¹ The posi-

Roma
guild
etc

Ner

Q: Nero fragments: hawk

tioning of the imperial funerary urns of Nero and his mother displayed nearby, reduced to the status of mere measuring devices, perhaps also taught a lesson about Rome's tight control over tyrants. Yet the lack of a secure identification for the *Spinario* and *camillus* reminds us that the bronze statues could not – by their subject matter alone – express any single, coherent political message. Instead it seems that the size and material of these statues, as much as their iconography, gave them their exemplary status. The bronzes that Sixtus transferred to the Capitoline would have been deemed exemplary because of their illustrious materials, their longstanding presence in Rome, and also (in the case of the bronze head and hand) their immense size. The fact that the dedicatory inscription calls the statues *insignes* (which could mean “excellent,” “famous,” or “prominent”) looks back to the *Mirabilia* tradition and the high status given to bronze and large-scale sculpture in medieval Rome. These types of works were so prestigious that even in the mid-Quattrocento they were the only ancient sculptures Bracciolini bothered to discuss by name in his *Roma instaurata*. The Quirinal *Horse-tamers* and *Rivergods*, the *Marforio*, and the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius were, according to Poggio, the only six sculptures remaining of the “almost innumerable Colossi, those statues of marble or bronze (and it would not surprise me if there were gold and silver ones too) set up in honor of illustrious men because of their virtue,” as opposed to “other various works put on display for the sake of pleasure, or art.”⁵² His distinction between the *voluptas* of marble sculpture made on a human scale and the *virtus* of ancient Colossi in marble, bronze, or even gold and silver suggests that only colossal sculpture had the visibility and persuasive power to incite virtue in the public at large.

A hierarchy of value that favored large statues and works in bronze also guided the exhibition of other sculptures brought to the Capitoline during Sixtus IV's reign: a nude, bronze sculpture of Hercules and the gigantic marble fragments of a colossal statue of Constantine unearthed in the Basilica of Maxentius.⁵³ The prestige of bronze, thanks to its associations with weaponry, public wealth, and war booty, made it particularly suitable as a medium of civic art, as is seen in the longstanding Italian tradition of erecting bronze sculpture in civic centers.⁵⁴ In Quattrocento Florence, the Medici exploited these associations by displaying Donatello's *David* and *Judith* in their courtyard. At some time before the end of the 1460s the figures were accompanied by inscriptions, in which *David* encouraged Florentine “citizens” to conquer tyrannical foes, while *Judith* asserted that “cities rise through virtues.” With these tacked-on sentiments the Medici bronzes disguised their private ownership and seemed to offer themselves openly as gifts to the people, perhaps helping to inspire the rhetoric behind Sixtus's statue transferral. After the exile of the Medici, the *Judith* claimed a new civic role thanks to a re-dedication in front of the Florentine town hall and an added inscription, “Put up as an example for the benefit of the public, 1495,” with the *David* moved to the *cortile* of the town hall.⁵⁵ This transfer of “decontextualized” figural statuary to the town hall in Florence – seen in the installment of these Donatello bronzes and also in the display of Michelangelo's colossal *David* beside the entrance portal – can be compared to the statue dedication on the Roman Capitoline, where exemplary bronze statues and colossal statues were re-installed at the town hall and reclaimed for “the people.”

THE RESTITUTION OF ROMAN *IMPERIUM*

A number of ancient inscriptions were also put on display in the portico of the Conservatori palace and these played their part in contextualizing and legitimizing the dedication. Some drew a parallel between the duties of the modern Capitoline government and those of Rome's ancient emperors and municipal officers: near the spot in the Capitoline loggia where the Roman blacksmiths' guild met, for example, was an antique inscription honoring a certain Marcus Sutorius, the Decurius of a blacksmiths' college.⁵⁶ Next to the colossal bronze head was a large base listing the names of Rome's *magistri vicorum*, the ancient overseers of public works who were the equivalents of the fifteenth-century *Maestri delle Strade*.⁵⁷ In the vicinity of the bronze head was another inscription of immense proportions written in honor of the Emperor Vespasian, who had "at his own expense restored the streets of the city, in a state of decay due to previous neglect" (see Fig. 82).⁵⁸ Positioned near the bronze head was a large antique inscription praising the praetor Marcus Calpurnius for having constructed a building and the Emperor Trajan for having restored and amplified it.⁵⁹ The inscriptions displayed here underscored the close co-operation that had existed between ancient emperors and their municipal agents, the *aediles*, *magistri vicorum*, or praetors, presumably to obscure any modern-day conflicts of authority that might have troubled the relationship between the pope and the Capitoline governors.

It is notable that the dedicatory inscription set up in honor of Sixtus's statue transferral echoes the verb *restituit* used in two of the ancient inscriptions displayed in the portico. In Sixtus's dedication, the verb *restituere* could have evoked many different connotations, meaning not only to restore, revive, reform but also to give back or return to a former condition. Above all it asserts that the pope has returned these sculptures to the Roman people, the original and rightful owners of these bronzes. If the pope's "return" or "restitution" of ancient sculpture carries with it the idea that these works had, in the past, belonged to the SPQR, the inscription inevitably raises the question of who had rights to these sculptures, and by extension, who had possession over the wider inheritance of ancient Rome. The Roman popes claimed to be the heirs to the *imperium* granted by the Roman people to their emperors. Papal intervention on the Capitoline – the seat of the *populus* and the eternal symbol of their right to Rome's empire – would thus inevitably have raised the question of who could rightfully possess this hill and the immortal *imperium* that it symbolized. As has been mentioned, the Romans had at some point set up antique marbles on the Capitoline hill as a reminder of the political authority of this spot, such as the marble *Lion Attacking a Horse* and the ancient obelisk standing in the communal piazza (see Figs. 7, 8, 78, 84). How, then, would Sixtus's statue dedication then compete with these older sculptures and how did it respond to the SPQR's sense of its own political rights?

When the issue of the pope's right to claim Roman *imperium* had raised its head at the Council of Constance (1414–18), different opinions had been expressed. Raffaele Fulgosio, an *advocatus* at the Council, asked whether the SPQR's *imperium* had been utterly annihilated by its transfer to Constantine, a concept that had the potential to transform the Capitoline into a political entity like any other, with a mortal rather than eternal life.⁶⁰ Yet another representative to the Council, Francesco Zabarella, invoked

the authority of the *Lex de Imperio* to argue that the Romans had not given all of their *imperium* to Constantine and his papal successors but continued to retain some part of it.⁶¹ This idea was strongly advocated in Lorenzo Valla's blistering critique of the "Donation of Constantine." For Valla, one of the greatest problems of the *Donation* was the idea that Constantine would have given the popes full authority over the Roman people, when ultimately – as the *Lex de Imperio* demonstrated – *imperium* could be granted solely by the SPQR. The question of whether the popes entirely ruled over the Romans led Valla to exclaim: "What new insult is this against the Quirites, about whom there is the elegy of the greatest poet, 'Remember, o Roman, that you must govern with *imperium*?' [Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.851–853]. The people who rules over other peoples is called the 'subject people.' It is unheard of!"⁶²

By ordering the "restitution" of antique bronzes to the Roman people, Sixtus seems to have anticipated these arguments by acknowledging the SPQR's right to *imperium* while at the same time taking possession of it. The simultaneous affirmation and appropriation of Capitoline *imperium* in the statue dedication implicates the Conservatori by making them the agents of Sixtus's rule. In the context of the Palazzo dei Conservatori the statues could act as pragmatic monuments teaching lessons of ancient virtue to civic leaders, in accord with the vision of the Roman ruins first proposed by Petrarch: Rome would act as a repository of *exempla* for her own citizens and a moral compendium for all modern-day rulers. Bracciolini stressed these concepts in his *De varietate fortunae* where he described Rome as the source of "military discipline, pure morals and lifestyles, established laws, examples of all the virtues, and rules for living well."⁶³ Placed before the eyes of the Capitoline governors, the pope offered these bronze statues as moral guides to those who would act as his representatives. The *Wolf* stood over the entrance door to the Palazzo dei Conservatori as a counterpart to the medieval fresco of a fierce lion sparing the life of a dog shown to each new senator as he passed underneath the door of the Palazzo dei Senatori.⁶⁴ In the loggia and in the Conservators' meeting hall, bronze statues realized a function similar to allegorical statues of fierce beasts or cycles of *uomini famosi* and *virtù* placed in town halls, examples set before the eyes of governors and aids to the day-to-day performance of their civic duties.

The notion that collecting and re-dedication could incite virtue in others recalls what Alison Brown (in her 1961 study of Quattrocento Florentine models) characterized as a "humanist" mode of art patronage. Looking at Cosimo de' Medici's architectural commissions, Brown demonstrated how, as Cosimo invested lavish sums of money on architecture, his apologists defined his patronage as a benefit to the state since it stood as a public example of his own virtues, namely, kindness and liberality.⁶⁵ While investing unprecedented sums in monuments, Cosimo de' Medici negotiated the ongoing clash between Franciscan ideals of poverty and classical texts extolling wealth, transforming monumental patronage into an opportunity for self-promotion. In a similar fashion, Sixtus's statue dedication would help to re-define what it meant to "collect" in Renaissance Rome, as passive ownership was superseded by great deeds, and as viewers were asked to judge patrons by their actions rather than their possessions. Implicit in the re-dedication was the idea that the Capitoline government would func-

tion well if it trusted its virtuous ruler and followed his moral example. The principles of the pope's political state would be *pietas* and care for public welfare, made evident by his *immensa benignitas*. Opening up the papacy to public critique also closed down a simpler language of *maiestas* found in the splendor of Paul II's treasury. Sixtus's act of dedication implied that neither divine will nor the papal office and its trappings could guarantee papal virtue. By great deeds, the papal *persona* would instead succeed as a human character, judged favorably by others because of its moral strength.⁶⁶ As Riccardo Fubini has written of the new climate that could breed criticism of the papacy not only on an institutional basis but also on an individual one: "the empire was no longer that universal, abstract entity that doctrine alone had configured, but a political entity, visibly existing in its own time and space."⁶⁷ Through persuasion of the intellect, rather than the mere demonstration of authority, Sixtus's mode of collecting proved an influential model for the future. In Manetti's biography of Nicholas V, the pope's famous deathbed speech had proposed that monumental building should be used as a simple means of encouraging public faith. Buildings increase belief for the multitudes with no access to texts, while they also fortify God's city against the Turks. It can be imagined that Paul II's patronage operated in a similarly monolithic fashion, given the bastion of magnificence and material wealth that was his fortified palace and private treasury. Sixtus IV's statue transferral continued to use the language of materially splendid and (in the case of the *Head and Hand*) immense objects as a means of public persuasion. Yet the new practices of re-dedication also acknowledged what was left of ancient Rome, a wreckage of fragmented things. Building and accumulation alone were not sufficient in the face of what the writers had proclaimed to be the failure of visual monuments. Instead, the "restitution" of objects by a virtuous patron seemed a more honorable and more permanent act.