

PREFACE

In 2002 one of my first acts the newly designated Director of the Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies at Villa I Tatti was to attend a planning session in Rome for the “Celebrazioni del VII Centenario della morte di Arnolfo di Cambio”. In due course it became clear that there was room for a compact but interdisciplinary conference at I Tatti that would conjoin Arnolfo scholarship from the English-speaking world with that of our Italian colleagues in an interdisciplinary endeavor.

Since Vasari’s *vita* Arnolfo studies have been regarded as the domain of the history of art. A long tradition of philological scholarship, especially represented by the late Angiola Maria Romanini, has given us a more precisely defined oeuvre, while also examining Arnolfo’s sculpture and his Roman ciboria in their architectural context. It was clear that the Arnolfo year would lead to a re-examination of every aspect of his oeuvre and to the discovery of new documents and a more refined chronology. The many events organized under the auspices of the Comitato Nazionale under the presidency of Msgr. Timothy Verdon promised to raise awareness among scholars and the wider public of the range of Arnolfo’s achievement. Most encouraging was the news of a major exhibition being planned by the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, “*Arnolfo alle Origini del Rinascimento Fiorentino*”, and the opportunity to work closely with the curator, Enrica Neri Lusanna.

Since Villa I Tatti is a center for all fields of Renaissance studies, it seemed appropriate to enlist scholars from a wide range of fields in addition to art history. I was fortunate to be able to call on three imaginative and energetic scholars to organize the conference: Margaret Haines, a Senior Research Fellow at Villa I Tatti and also a long-term collaborator of the Opera del Duomo di Firenze; Julian Gardner of Warwick University, an internationally recognized expert on Italian Gothic sculpture; and David Friedman of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, one of the most insightful students of Tuscan urbanism.

This team set to work planning a conference that would examine Arnolfo’s Sieneese roots and then pass on to the Roman work in the context

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of papal and curial patronage. It would hopefully throw light on Arnolfo's relationship with his younger, equally versatile contemporary, Giotto, and would clarify the ways in which a sculptor or painter might graduate to large-scale architectural projects. It would include the Angevin context both in sculpture and architecture, and it would need to examine the façade of Orvieto cathedral as well as that of the cathedral of Florence. Arnolfo's relation to power, both ecclesiastical and political, was to be a leit-motif of the conference. The ambitions of the bishop and canons, it was felt, would surely offer insights into the genesis of the new cathedral, as would a study of the relationship between the older magnate families living in the area and the emergent Comune. The Cathedral liturgy and music were also to be examined, along with the way in which the cult of the Virgin displaced that of Santa Reparata. The question of Arnolfo's role in urban planning was to be raised by studying the expansion of Florence within the final circuit of walls, the creation of urban space around the Baptistery, and the layout of new towns in the Florentine *contado*.

The conference entitled "*Arnolfo's Moment*", held at Villa I Tatti on May 26th and 27th, 2005, though short in duration, amply fulfilled these ambitions. The papers offered conclusions that were in many ways new and striking. After the conference the authors were given the opportunity for further reflection and mutual interaction. This period of gestation of the present volume was sustained with tact and wisdom by the editor residing in Florence and present continuously at Villa I Tatti, Margaret Haines, to whom I am particularly indebted, as I am to Fiorella Superbi Gioffredi, to whom the volume is dedicated.

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