

*A French King and a Magic Ring: The Girolami and a Relic of St. Zenobius in Renaissance Florence**

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In 1482, the episcopal ring of St. Zenobius, patron of the Florentine see, was sent from Florence to France in the hope that it would cure the ailing King Louis XI. This secondary relic belonged to the Girolami, a banking and mercantile family that claimed to be related to the saint. The present study examines the use of St. Zenobius' ring as a means of international and local diplomatic exchange. In addition, it traces the history of the Girolami's patronage of St. Zenobius' cult and relics, places it within the context of contemporary devotional practices, and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the patronage of privately-owned relics in Renaissance Florence.

The cruelties, the perjuries, the suspicions of this prince were rendered more detestable, rather than amended, by the gross and debasing superstition which he constantly practised. The devotion to the Heavenly saints, of which he made such a parade, was upon the miserable principle of some petty deputy in office, who endeavours to hide or atone for the malversations of which he is conscious . . . With a poverty of spirit totally inconsistent with his shrewd worldly sagacity, he importuned his physicians until they insulted as well as plundered him. In his extreme desire of life, he sent to Italy for supposed relics . . . It was not the least singular circumstance of this course of superstition that bodily health and terrestrial felicity seemed to be his only objects.¹

— Scott, *Quentin Durward*

Sir Walter Scott penned this uncomplimentary assessment of the character of the French king, Louis XI (r. 1461-83), for the 1831 introduction to his chivalric tale, *Quentin Durward*. Although students of French and European history have since shown that Louis XI was not as malicious and

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¹Scott, vi, ix, x.

lacking in spiritual integrity as the Scottish author suggests, his description of the king's reliance upon the power of relics and the skill of his physicians in an effort to prolong his life is not far off the mark.

According to the *Memoirs* of Louis XI's friend, ambassador, and biographer, Philippe de Commynes, during the first two decades of his reign, the king suffered from several ailments, including gout. However, after March 1479 when, at the age of 56, he had the first of a series of strokes, his mental and physical health deteriorated dramatically. The first stroke paralyzed his right arm and temporarily left him unable to speak. Even after he recovered his speech, the king continued to suffer from maladies that included dizziness, ringing in his ears, hyper-sensitivity to the cold, and a skin disorder which he believed to be leprosy.² Unable to take advantage of the healing touch he used to cure others of scrofula, Louis XI retained an *équipe* of doctors and surgeons.³ He also sought physical and spiritual help from his astrologers and, above all, from God and the saints.⁴

Commynes writes that, because the king felt that only divine intervention could alleviate his suffering and prolong his life, he launched a relentless search for a miraculous cure. For example, the king's biographer relates that, following his second and third strokes in 1481, Louis XI spent over 700,000 francs on various endowments and offerings and on saints' reliquaries.⁵ Some of this money was disbursed for a silver grille for the tomb of St. Martin at Tours, a shrine for St. Bernardino of Siena at Aquila, and a generous offering to the relics of the Three Kings at Cologne.⁶ Louis XI also commis-

²Commynes, 1972, 382-400. In 1479, Louis XI ordered a number of special sheepskin hats to keep his head warm. In July of 1483, he sent two ships on a mission to one of the Portuguese-owned Cape Verde Islands, where certain giant tortoises were to be found. The king hoped that a bath of tortoise blood would cure his presumed leprosy, but he died three weeks after the expedition departed from Honfleur. The following are a few sources in the vast literature on the life, state of health, and death of King Louis XI: Champion, 1928, 2:352-53; 1935; Ipcar, 5, 20-23; Malet, 114-15; Cleugh, 274-302; Tyrrell, 179-81; Gaussin, 381-435; Kendall, 356-70.

³For the healing powers of French and English kings, see Bloch; Barlow; Buc.

⁴Champion, 1928, 2:222; Ipcar, 32. According to Tyrrell (183-84), Louis XI's attempts to prolong his life were the result, not of his fear of death, but rather of his wish to live long enough to increase and secure his political power in France and the rest of Europe.

⁵Commynes, 1972, 389. See also De Lasteyrie, 12-13; Havard, 260-61; Huizinga, 180-82; Gaussin, 429-36.

⁶An entry dated 19 February 1481 in Lorenzo de' Medici's *protocolli* shows that Louis XI sent an agent to Aquila in order to measure St. Bernardino's body. The saint's shrine remained in Aquila until 1527, when it was confiscated by Spanish soldiers. Del Piaggio, 135; Chierici (unnumbered page). For Louis XI's offering to the relics of the Three Kings see Hoster, 56, 521-22.

sioned silver tabernacles for the relics of St. Servatius in Utrecht and an image of the Virgin Mary in Rouen Cathedral, and he donated gold chalices to St. John Lateran in Rome.⁷

When it was possible, the king had relics and sacred objects sent directly to him at his château at Plessis-du-Parc. Among these was the Ste. Ampouille from Reims, the vial containing the oil used to anoint the kings of France at the time of their coronation.⁸ As Sir Walter Scott noted, some of the relics Louis XI sent for came from Italy. For example, Pope Sixtus IV lent him several, including the corporal St. Peter used when celebrating mass, that were kept at St. John Lateran.⁹ Commynes does not mention it, but a relic believed to be the episcopal ring of St. Zenobius, a patron saint of Florence and its bishopric, was also sent to Louis XI in the hope that it would cure his various illnesses.

A goal of the present study is to recount the remarkably well-documented, but little-known, history of St. Zenobius' ring before and after it was sent to King Louis XI. It goes beyond the history of the ring and its trip to France to explore the way in which this relic was used to enhance political relationships on the international and local levels. This is, however, first and foremost a study of the patronage of a privately-owned relic. St. Zenobius' ring is of especial interest not just because it was sent to France, but also because it belonged to the Girolami, a prominent Florentine banking and mercantile family whose members claimed to be related to the fifth-century bishop. Thus, the principal aim of this essay is to explore the Girolami's relationship to St. Zenobius and to place their patronage of his relics within the context of city-wide devotion to this important local saint. It will also relate the Girolami's patronage of relics and reliquaries to that of other families in Tre and Quattrocento Florence. In addition, four appendices of previously unpublished documents show that the Girolami's decision to send St.

⁷Commynes, 1972, 390. For a more comprehensive account of the churches and saints' relics Louis XI patronized, see Champion, 1928, 2:205-09. Relics and sacred images were not the king's only spiritual aids, for in 1483 he had a Franciscan hermit, Francesco di Paolo, brought from Calabria to his palace at Plessis-du-Parc. He also had a hermitage built for the Calabrian holy man near the palace's chapel. Commynes, 1972, 390-91; Champion, 1928, 2:369; Louis XI, 531-33.

⁸The Ste. Ampouille was believed to have been sent down from heaven in the fifth century for the coronation of Clovis. It was upon their anointment with the oil from the vial that new monarchs were invested with the ability to heal others through their touch. Buc has shown that oil was believed to be curative but, although Louis XI was anointed with the oil a second time, it had no positive effect on his health. The sacred vial was still standing on his cupboard at Plessis-du-Parc when he died in August of 1483. Commynes, 1972, 399 n. 47.

⁹These objects were accompanied from Rome to France by a papal ambassador and by Louis XI's secretary, Jacques Sigaud. Commynes, 1972, 399; Lapeyre and Scheurer, 1:298.

Zenobius' ring to France had significant repercussions, for it led to a heated court battle between various members of this family over the ring's custody.

GIROLAMI PATRONAGE OF ST. ZENOBIUS' CULT AND RELICS

In Renaissance Florence, St. Zenobius (d. c. 424) was second only to the city's principal patron saint, John the Baptist, and his was the second oldest saint's cult in the city after that of the martyr, Minias (d. c. 250). Zenobius' prominence in Florence's pantheon of saints was due to his thaumaturgic powers, his role as the most important of the founding fathers of the Florentine church, and his proven efficacy as defender of the city in times of political and military crisis.

From the ninth century, the primary focus of civic, ecclesiastical, and popular devotion to St. Zenobius was his *place of burial*, first in the crypt of Santa Reparata and, after 1439, in a chapel dedicated to him in the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore.¹⁰ By the fourteenth century, each year on the saint's feast day of 25 May, the bishop and cathedral clergy, representatives of the Arte della Lana and other Florentine guilds, as well as the Signoria and the members of the *studio fiorentino* left offerings at the St. Zenobius altar.¹¹ Also celebrating this feast were two local confraternities, the Compagnia della Purificazione e di San Zanobi, and the *laudesi* Compagnia di San Zanobi — the latter playing an important role in preparing for the celebrations that took place on this holy day.¹²

It was in the cathedral that, in January of 1331, the bishop of Florence, Francesco Silvestro da Cingoli, presided over the exhumation of St. Zenobius' remains.¹³ According to the chronicler Giovanni Villani, the Florentine archbishop of Pisa and the bishops of Spoleto and Fiesole assisted Cingoli in recovering the relics. *The saint's remains were not entombed within the crypt's altar, but instead were buried below or near it, for Villani states that in order to find them it was necessary to:*

¹⁰It appears that his relics were placed in the crypt of the cathedral of Santa Reparata during the second half of the ninth century. Toker, 31-32. In April 1439, they were translated to the central chapel in Santa Maria del Fiore's east tribune. See Benvenuti Papi, 1994, 191-220.

¹¹Minorbetti, 67; Richa, 6:200-01.

¹²For the history of the Compagnia della Purificazione e di San Zanobi and its patronage of art and architecture, see Ahl and Matchette. For the Compagnia di San Zanobi, see Wilson, 1992, 56-57; idem, 2001.

¹³For Francesco da Cingoli's tenure as bishop, see Ughelli, 3:144-48.

dig down ten *braccia* before [the relics] were found in a box inside a marble sarcophagus, [and] from this sarcophagus they removed some of the saint's skull, [and] had it nobly placed in a head of silver [made] in the likeness of the face and head of the said saint, so that each year on his feast day it could be shown to the people with great solemnity.¹⁴

Villani's description of this event suggests that the silver St. Zenobius reliquary bust, signed by the Florentine silversmith Andrea Arditì, probably was made with the aim of increasing popular devotion to the saint (Fig. 1).¹⁵ In addition to being displayed on 25 May, it was, and still is, exhibited each 26 January on the anniversary of the saint's translation.¹⁶ In 1418, the rich reliquary was described in an inventory of the cathedral sacristy as:

a silver tabernacle in the form of a head with a mitre in wrought silver in which the head of the Blessed St. Zenobius is kept; and on the said mitre are twenty eight enameled figures of saints with twelve pearls and twenty eight plaques which hold enamels of many colors and with ten silver pendants attached by rings to the base of the said mitre, and with the said head are two [pieces of] cloth, one is at the neck and over it is the other which [is decorated with] the arms of St. Zenobius.¹⁷

Andrea Arditì's head reliquary was only one of several works of art commissioned for the cathedral during Francesco da Cingoli's tenure as bishop. The same inventory in which it is described shows that the bishop donated a large cross and two candlesticks to the cathedral, each made of enameled silver, and each marked with his personal *impresa*, a black scorpion on a gold field.¹⁸ In the past, Francesco da Cingoli has also been singled out as the pa-

¹⁴"convenne fare cavare sotterra per dieci braccia anzi che si trovasse; e trovato in una cassa commessa in una arca di marmo, di quello levato alquanto del suo teschio del capo, nobilmente il feciono legare in una testa d'argento a similitudine del viso e testa del detto santo, per poterlo annualmente per la sua festa con grande solennità mostrare al popolo." G. Villani, X, 168.

¹⁵See also Trexler, 18.

¹⁶For the feast of St. Zenobius' translation and the rituals associated with that day, see Cornelison, forthcoming.

¹⁷"uno tabernacolo d'ariento ad forma di testa con mitera da testa d'ariento lavorata nella quale sta la testa del beato messer Sancto Zenobio, et in sulla decta mitera è ventiotto smalti affigure di santi con dodici perle e con ventiotto raperelle le quali legano vetri di più colori e con dieci toche d'ariento apichate appiè di d[itte ban]de della detta mitera, et colla decta testa sono due drappi, l'uno sta confitto e l'autro vi sta su, che à l'arme di Sancto Zenobio." Archivio dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, I.3, 10, fol. 1r. Published in Cocchi, 1901, 17; Strocchi, 139-40.

¹⁸BNF, MS. Magliabecchiana, XXXVII, 304, "Inventario di Santa Reparata di Firenze," fols. 20r, 21r. Published in Vasari, 1906, 1:442 n. 1, and Vasari, 1911, 365-66. The bishop was also responsible for the installation of a new altarpiece on Santa Reparata's high altar, a

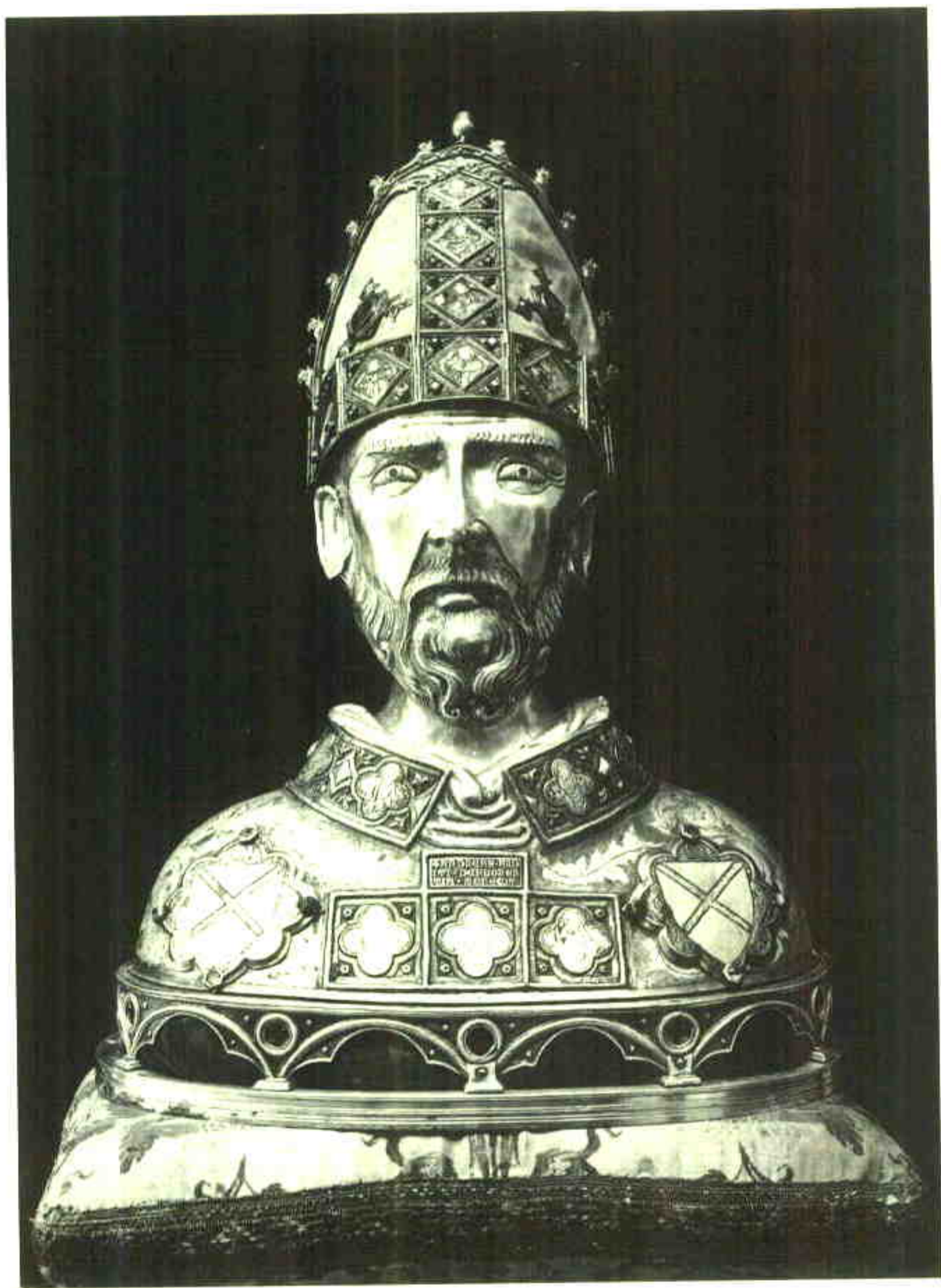


FIGURE 1. Andrea Arditì, Reliquary Bust of St. Zenobius, Florence, Santa Maria del Fiore. Alinari / Art Resource, New York.

tron of the St. Zenobius reliquary — an assumption which no doubt stemmed from Villani's statement that the Florentine bishop had the saint's skull placed in the Arditì reliquary.¹⁹ Cingoli, however, was not responsible for the bust's execution, for, if he commissioned the reliquary, it stands to reason that it, like the silver cross and the candlesticks that he donated to the cathedral, would be marked with his coat of arms. The bishop may have instigated the project to have the bust made, but we have seen that the 1418 inventory mentions the "arms of St. Zenobius," which decorate each of the bust's shoulders. These coats of arms — argent, a sable saltire, with a bishop's mitre above — belong not to the Cingoli, but rather to the Girolami family.²⁰ Their presence there, as well as on two silver chalices, also by Andrea Arditì and also described in the sacristy inventory, indicates that a member of this Florentine family, and not the bishop, was responsible for the execution of the reliquary and the chalices.²¹

In Florence, the Girolami arms were analogous to those of St. Zenobius because the family held that it could trace its lineage back to the saint's father, Lucianus.²² Indeed, the family was known as the Girolami "del Vescovo" because of its special relationship with the early Christian era bishop.²³ Moreover, its members professed that they and St. Zenobius were the descendents of Zenobia, the queen of Palmyra whose attempt to liberate her people from Roman rule ended in the year 273, when she was defeated by the Emperor Aurelian.²⁴ It is uncertain precisely when the Girolami came to be associated with St. Zenobius, as the early *vitae* state only that he was born into a noble Florentine family without specifying the Girolami. Malas-

painting which Spilner and Padoa Rizzo have identified as Bernardo Daddi's so-called San Pancrazio altarpiece in the Uffizi. See Padoa Rizzo, esp. 214. Paula Spilner discussed her unpublished research with me in May 1995.

¹⁹For example, in his late fifteenth-century life of St. Zenobius, Clemente Mazza (xxiv) attributed the reliquary's commission to the bishop, stating: "costui separò la testa di S. Zenobio dal corpo e cavatela della cassa del marmo, degnamente e bene la fece ornare in una testa d'ariento."

²⁰Richa, 6:181, had noted this as early as the eighteenth century. See also, Cocchi, 1901, 17.

²¹The 1418 sacristy inventory also mentions two silk altarcloths decorated with the "arms of St. Zenobius." BNF, MS. Magliabecchiana, XXXVII, 304, fol. 28r.

²²Passerini, 2; Callmann, 493; Mecatti, 58-59.

²³This appellation distinguished them from another branch of the family, the Girolami "del Testa" or "di Salvi," who resided in the parish of San Pancrazio in the quarter of Santa Maria Novella. Passerini, 6.

²⁴See Del Migliore, 28; Cocchi, 1900, 9 n. 1; Davidsohn, 1:64.

pini's *Storia fiorentina* of 1286 provides the first known reference to the alleged relationship between the saint and this family.²⁵

The Girolami coats of arms on the St. Zenobius reliquary are the only clues as to the identity of its patron(s). In this, it is similar to several head reliquaries commissioned by private patrons in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy. For example, the impressive reliquary bust containing the jaw of St. Anthony of Padua (1349) is decorated with the arms of its patron, Cardinal Guy de Boulogne.²⁶ The same is true of the St. Lawrence reliquary bust (c. 1436) at the Cloisters, New York. The names and arms of its patrons, the humanist Poggio Bracciolini and his wife, Selvaggia de' Buondelmonti, appear on that reliquary's gilt-copper base.²⁷ These two examples, however, differ from the St. Zenobius bust in that the presence of the Girolami coats of arms on the reliquary indicates not only that it is probably the product of Girolami patronage, but also that the saint was a member of the family that commissioned it. The same is true of the late fourteenth-century silver reliquary bust of the Blessed Umiliana de' Cerchi at the Museum of Santa Croce, Florence (Fig. 2). The Cerchi coat of arms decorates each of this bust's shoulders and an inscription on its breast records that the reliquary was commissioned by Giovanni di Riccardo de' Cerchi.²⁸ Unfortunately, the inscription on the front of the St. Zenobius reliquary records only the name of the artisan that made it, and a lack of documentation pertaining to its execution makes it difficult to associate its commission with a specific member of the Girolami family.²⁹

In Florence, the familial patronage of saint's relics and other sacred objects was not uncommon. Trexler has noted that the miraculous panel of the Virgin of Impruneta was associated with the Buondelmonte family and that the "consorterial association with valuable religious objects penetrated deeply into Florentine life."³⁰ While the Girolami's connection with St. Ze-

²⁵"anche i Girolami, che ne fu il venerabil messer santo Zenobio vescovo della nostra città." Malaspini, 50. Matteo Villani (III, 84) repeated this statement in the following century.

²⁶See Collareta, Canova and Spiazzi, eds., 89-92.

²⁷Rorimer, 246-51.

²⁸Liscia Bemporad, 1987, 59-68 and Montgomery, 1996, 363-91.

²⁹Spinello di Lapo de' Girolami, who had served as gonfaloniere di giustizia in 1301, may have provided funds for the reliquary, but he died around 1320 – over a decade before it was made. Even so, it is possible that, in addition to leaving property in the Pieve di Mugello for the construction of a Girolami family chapel in Santo Stefano al Ponte, he left a legacy to honor St. Zenobius' relics at the cathedral.

³⁰Trexler, 16. Benvenuti Papi, 1987, 79-115, also discusses the importance of familial associations with saints and relics.



FIGURE 2. Reliquary Bust of the Blessed Umiliana de' Cerchi, Florence, Museum of Santa Croce. Alinari / Art Resource, New York.

nobius was a prestigious one, it was not unique, nor were they the only family in Florence associated with relics of city-wide importance. For example, the Pazzi claimed that during the First Crusade one of their ancestors, Pazzino de' Pazzi, removed from the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem the stones that were used each Easter Sunday to generate the spark that lit a firework-laden war cart placed between the cathedral and baptistery (the "scoppio del

carro").³¹ Similarly, the Girolami and the Cerchi were not alone in patronizing the relics of saintly family members. The Blessed Alessio Strozzi (d. 1383), a Dominican friar, was, and still is, buried under the stair leading up to the fourteenth-century Strozzi Chapel at Santa Maria Novella.³² At the same church, Fra Sebastiano Benintendi commissioned Bernardo Rossellino and his workshop to make a sculpted wall tomb for his grandmother, the Blessed Villana delle Botti (d. 1363).³³ The Corsini also did their best to promote and honor the relics of their holy relative, Sant'Andrea Corsini (d. 1374). They did so by commissioning a series of wooden and stone tombs and, in the late seventeenth century, by constructing an elaborate Baroque chapel for his relics at the Carmelite church of Santa Maria del Carmine.³⁴

The St. Zenobius head reliquary is not the sole example of the Girolami's patronage of the saint and his relics. It can be assumed that, because they were bankers, the Girolami relied on the intercession of their saintly ancestor and promoted his cult in an effort to counter the stigma of usury and improve their chances of salvation. Thus, as patrons they were quite prolific, and they regularly and publicly advertised their ties to his cult — a tradition that would last into the twentieth century. The Girolami's association with St. Zenobius and his relics was quite an asset because, among other things, it earned them the privilege of following trumpeters, communal heralds, and a banner painted with the Girolami arms in a procession on the feast of St. Zenobius each 25 May. This procession began at the Girolami tower and ended at the cathedral, where the family left candles at the St. Zenobius altar.³⁵ In addition, banners decorated with the Girolami arms hung over the saint's altar on his feast day.³⁶

For a time, there was a noticeable absence among the city and guild leaders who traditionally gathered at the cathedral on St. Zenobius' feast day. Contrary to the civic devotional rituals observed by most other Italian communes during the second half of the fourteenth century, the Girolami offering of candles was not matched by all Florentine officials.³⁷ On the occasion of the Guelph Party's first offering to St. Zenobius in May of 1392,

³¹ Raveggi.

³² Orlandi, 1:624-42.

³³ *Ibid.*, 2:227-31; Schulz, 59-63; Brocchi, 1:544-53.

³⁴ Richa, 10:60-83; *Monaci Moran and Meloni Trkulja; Ciappelli*.

³⁵ The testaments of Bernardo (1409) and Caccino de'Girolami (1415) included clauses which ensured the continuation of this practice. ASF, Compagnie Religiose Soppresse, 2170 ("Compagnia di San Zanobi, Libro di Testamenti"), fols. 15r-16r; Passerini, 2, 36-37.

³⁶ Wilson, 1992, 36.

³⁷ For communal rituals in late medieval Italy, see Vauchez.

an anonymous diarist commented that, until that time, the party had refused to make a similar offering at the saint's altar because:

[St. Zenobius] was Bishop of Florence and a Florentine citizen of the Girolami family of the parish of Santo Stefano al Ponte in Florence; the Guelph Party had never gone to make an offering on his feast day because the house of the Girolami was held to be Ghibelline, and thus the Guelph Party never went to make an offering, and in this day and year they began, in the name of God and the gracious St. Zenobius.³⁸

Based on the suspicion that they were Ghibellines, the Girolami, who were among the city's leading political families during the late thirteenth century, were denied the right to hold public office for over a century. Although Passerini states that this ban was in effect from 1301 until 1465, it seems instead that it began on 7 March 1357, when the Florentine *podestà* convicted Giovanni di Lapo de' Girolami (d. 1391) of being a Ghibelline sympathizer.³⁹ In spite of the Guelph prejudice against them, it appears that the family was never denied the right to celebrate publicly the feast of St. Zenobius.

Until its destruction by German forces during World War II, the twelfth-century Girolami tower, known as the "Torre di San Zanobi," stood at the corner of the Via Lambertesca, the former Canto de' Girolami, and the Via Por Santa Maria (Fig. 3).⁴⁰ A marble plaque decorated with a sculpted image of St. Zenobius and an inscription on the Via Lambertesca side of the tower informed passersby that: "the family of the Girolami perpetually gives and assigns the income from this tower every year for half of the offering [to] St. Zenobius, their consort."⁴¹ *Catasto* records confirm the import of this inscription, showing that the rent from an apothecary, or *speziale*, shop in the

³⁸"messer santo Zanobi, il quale fu veschovo di Firenze e cittadino di Firenze della famiglia de' Girolami, del popolo di Santo Stefano a Ponte di Firenze, che mai più no-v'erano andati, cioè la Parte Ghu[e]lffa, /a oferere per la sua festa, perché la casa de' Girolami sono te[n]uti ghibellini, e però la Parte Ghu[e]lffa mai no-vi andava a oferere, e in questo dì ed ano àno cominciato, al nome di Dio e di santo Zanobi gratioso." Molho and Sznura, eds., 140.

³⁹Passerini, 5, 8, 16. For the Girolami's political position in Florence see also Medici, D., 195-97, 228-29; Parenti, 261, 283-88; Davidsohn, 4:294.

⁴⁰It was destroyed 1944, but its appearance was recorded in a nineteenth-century painting and in photographs taken before the war. See Ginori Lisci, 2:595. See also Bargellini and Guarnieri, figs. 18, 20. The tower's entrance faced the Piazza Santo Stefano. In a *posta di decima* of 1495, it was described as "La Torre di S. Zanobi posta sulla Piazza di S. Stefano" and the same document states that "la Torre di S. Zanobi, ora de' Girolami, ha l'ingresso sulla Piazza di S. Stefano." ASF, Covoni-Girolami, 484, filza, 131. It was later absorbed into the fabric of the Palazzo Bartolommei in the Via Lambertesca.

⁴¹"La Famiglia de' Girolami in perpetuo dona, e diputa le rendite di questa Torre ogni anno per metà al offerta di Santo Zanobi loro consorto." Brocchi, 1:63; Richa, 6:282.

tower financed the Girolami *consorteria's* annual offering on 25 May. In addition, the income from the shop provided the Girolami with the means to maintain a chapel dedicated to St. Zenobius in their parish church of Santo Stefano al Ponte.⁴²

The presence of their home in one of the oldest, and therefore most prestigious, areas in Florence indicated to their contemporaries that the Girolami were one of the most ancient families in the city.⁴³ A wooden house, reputed to have been St. Zenobius' home, located near their tower in the Via Lambertesca further reinforced the family's status and connection to the Florentine saint. For Giuseppe Richa, writing in the eighteenth century, the fact that this house had survived, in spite of a number of particularly destructive fires that had swept through the city center over the centuries, testified to its sanctity.⁴⁴ The building was not so sacred, however, as to be uninhabitable, for by 1591, and probably much earlier, part of the "casa dell'asse nominata la casa di Santo Zanobi" was used as a rental property.⁴⁵ This house was only one of the Girolami's possessions that confirmed their ancestral ties to the Early Christian bishop, for we have seen above that they also owned what was believed to be St. Zenobius' episcopal ring.⁴⁶ This gold ring was kept in "a pouch, or shell, of silver [decorated] with the head of St. Zenobius" (uno breve overo guscio d'ariento colla testa di Messer Sancto Zanobi).⁴⁷

⁴²Although Paatz and Paatz, 5:220, dated its foundation from 1451, it seems that the chapel was constructed after the death of Spinello di Lapo de'Girolami in 1320. See above, n. 29. According to Piero di Spinello de'Girolami's *catasto* report of 1427: "esse [hanno] insieme con tutti loro consorti una torre in sul chanto di porta Santa Maria . . . anno in tutto fiorini 44 l'anno . . . de'quali del veruno di casa va affar al[l]'una cosa se non a fargli stribuire in fare l'offerta per San Zanobi et fare uficiare una chappella in Santo Stefano a Ponte et se alchuno cosa v'avanzo se non a farne fare pietanza a detta cappella per testamenti de'loro passati sono stati detti leghati et oblighi sichè alloro cerimonie chome padronio de'beni liti anno lodato per nota per non manchare cagione di patronaggio." ASF, Catasto, 68 (S. Croce, Gonfalone Carro), fol. 276v. See also Passerini, 2, 36-37.

⁴³Passerini, 1; Richa, 2:67.

⁴⁴Richa, 2:67.

⁴⁵1 October 1591 "allogarono a Mona Pellegrina, figliola di Niccolò torcitore di seta; una parte della casa dell'asse; nominata la casa di Santo Zanobi, cioè una sala con tre camere, e uno studiolo, con una volticella; per anni uno da comi[n]ciarsi il dì sopradetto." ASF, Covoni-Girolami, 499, unnumbered folio. An inventory of the Girolami's property in 1674 records that at that time the house was occupied by a certain Michele Ermini. ASF, Covoni-Girolami, 541.

⁴⁶In his edition of Minorbetti's description of the relics at Santa Maria del Fiore, Cionacci suggested that this relic was the episcopal ring of Zanobi Girolami, a bishop of Fiesole. Minorbetti, 48. A Zanobi served as bishop of Fiesole from 890 to 904, and another bishop by that name held the same post from 966 until 984. Ughelli, 3:214-16. See also Richa, 6:284.

⁴⁷See Appendix 4.



FIGURE 3. Girolami Tower, Florence, 12th century. Alinari / Art Resource, New York.

Inventories of 1383 and 1476 from the archives of the Compagnia di San Zanobi mention four shields decorated “with the arms of St. Zenobius.” The same sources also show that a red tapestry decorated with flowers, lions and the Girolami arms once hung behind the seats of the confraternity’s cap-

tains.⁴⁸ Moreover, at the ceremony held on the occasion of the translation of St. Zenobius' relics during the Council of Florence in April of 1439, the male members of the Girolami family had the honor of preceding the Florentine Signoria in paying their respects to his relics.⁴⁹ Zanobi de'Girolami (1406-75), a banker and politician who boasted the singular honor of owning St. Zenobius' ring, may have been at the fore of this procession of prominent Florentines. In 1409, Zanobi had inherited St. Zenobius' ring from his father, Bernardo di Filippo, and when he died, he left it to his eldest son, Francesco.⁵⁰ It was Francesco di Zanobi de'Girolami, who lent the precious family relic to King Louis XI in 1482-83.

Prior to the time that he sent the ring to France, Francesco de'Girolami and his brother Filippo did their part to promote St. Zenobius' cult. The latter commissioned Clemente Mazza's 1475 life of St. Zenobius — a *vita* which, as Lightbown has noted, was the literary source for Botticelli's four panels depicting scenes from St. Zenobius' life.⁵¹ Two years after Mazza completed his *vita*, Francesco, perhaps not to be outdone by his younger brother, commissioned a life of St. Zenobius from Alessandro da Verrazano. Dated 25 May 1477, this *vita*, which is preceded by a laud to the saint, is a vernacular translation of an eleventh-century life of St. Zenobius written by Lorenzo of Amalfi.⁵²

Francesco and Filippo were business partners as well as brothers, and in November of 1475 they founded a banking company which remained in business until Filippo died on 3 June 1479.⁵³ In the years following his brother's death, Francesco and Filippo's family had a difficult relationship. On 19 June 1483, Filippo's widow, Agnola di Giovanni Lorini, appeared before the six officials of the Magistrato dei Pupilli, the Florentine institution founded at the end of the Trecento to protect the interests of widows and orphans.⁵⁴ At that time, she formally accused Francesco of withholding

⁴⁸Wilson, 2001.

⁴⁹Mazza, xxvii; Benvenuti Papi, 1994, 215-16; Passerini, 38.

⁵⁰See Appendix 4.

⁵¹Lightbown, 1:145; 2:106-11. Callmann, 495, and Barriault, 108, 153, believe the panels were probably commissioned for the family palace on the occasion of a Girolami wedding, but Blume, 164-65, has shown that their iconography, especially the scene of St. Zenobius repudiating his bride in favor of a religious life, is inappropriate for a wedding gift.

⁵²BNF, MS. Magliabecchiana, 7, 1140; "Vita di San Zanobi," Nardi, 2001."

⁵³Passerini, 39, erroneously dated Filippo di Zanobi's death 5 September 1499.

⁵⁴For the history of the Magistrato dei Pupilli, see Morandini, 1955, 522-51, esp. 522; 1956, 92-117; 1957, 87-104.

her and her fatherless children's share of the Girolami bank's profits.⁵⁵ She asked these officials to grant her the right to examine the company's records and, at the same time, insisted that Francesco owed her 700 florins.⁵⁶

This was not the only legal dispute to come between Francesco de'Girolami and his brother's family for, just five months later, Mona Agnola's three sons filed another suit against him. They protested that Francesco had disregarded their rights to St. Zenobius' ring and claimed part of a monetary reward that he had received from Louis XI. More importantly, they sought retribution for what they perceived to be Francesco's abuse of a precious reliquary that the French king had made for the ring.⁵⁷

LORENZO DE' MEDICI, LOUIS XI, AND THE GIROLAMI RING

In spring 1482, Louis XI first expressed a keen interest in St. Zenobius' ring. Later Florentine accounts vary in their explanations as to why the king wished to see the relic. Brocchi suggests that Louis XI requested that the ring be sent to France because of his great devotion to St. Zenobius, but Lami and Passerini state that it was because he suffered from either persistent headaches or leprosy.⁵⁸ It is clear that the latter two explanations are, for all intents and purposes, correct. Although Philippe de Commynes does not mention it in his memoirs, St. Zenobius' ring was no doubt sent to Louis XI in the hope that it would effect a cure. From the early fourteenth century, rings made from sanctified coins placed on an altar by an English king on Good Friday were used as talismans for healing. A similar practice was prevalent in France, but there commoners, rather than their king, carried out the ritual. These so-called "cramp" or "sacrament" rings were believed to be effective in preventing epileptic seizures, and Louis XI may have had them in mind when he began negotiations for the loan of the Girolami's relic of St. Zenobius.⁵⁹

Louis XI's request was not the first example of French interest in St. Zenobius' cult and relics, although the origins of this interest are obscure. What is certain is that, at least from 1383, a shield decorated with the arms

⁵⁵Although it is beyond the scope of this study, Agnola Lorini's case against her brother-in-law is an interesting example of a widow's attempt to defend her interests as well as those of her children.

⁵⁶ASF, Pupilli, 195, fol. 105r-v.

⁵⁷This was also not Francesco de'Girolami's only encounter with the Florentine legal system, for in 1491 the Officers of the Night (*Ufficiali di notte*) convicted him for sodomy. See Roche, 163.

⁵⁸Brocchi, 1:64; Lami, 533, 537, 579; Passerini, 42.

⁵⁹Bloch, 92-107. For a recent discussion of medicinal rings, see Cherry, 168-70.

of the King of France, together with those of the Florentine guilds, commune, and Guelph party, was displayed in the cathedral of Florence on the saint's feast day.⁶⁰ In the seventeenth century, Rosselli and Del Migliore each reported a rumor that part, or possibly all, of St. Zenobius' relics had been stolen and taken to France sometime during or after the Council of Florence.⁶¹ Moreover, Mazza wrote that the feast of St. Zenobius was celebrated in France and, more recently, Nardi has suggested that one of St. Zenobius' most celebrated miracles, his resurrection of a French pilgrim's son, was the source of Gallic devotion to the Florentine saint.⁶²

Louis XI may have learned of St. Zenobius' ring from Florentine merchants and ambassadors,⁶³ or from Philippe de Commynes, who had visited Florence in 1478.⁶⁴ Rather than directly contacting the Girolami about having the ring sent to him, Louis XI instead turned to Lorenzo de' Medici. The two men had corresponded since 1473, and in his letters the French king addressed Lorenzo as "my cousin" and "my friend." The Florentine did his part to maintain their long-distance friendship by giving Louis XI, who had a passion for dogs, a large guard dog for his bedroom.⁶⁵

Lorenzo de' Medici was well suited for the task of ensuring that the Girolami ring was sent to France, as he fostered a special devotion to St. Zenobius that may have been the result of the Pazzi Conspiracy of 1478. Haines has suggested that, after escaping from his aggressors, Lorenzo gave thanks to the intarsia image of St. Zenobius on the wall of Florence Cathedral's north sacristy where he found refuge.⁶⁶ Lorenzo was a member of the Compagnia di San Zanobi, and he also appears to have been involved with at least two artistic projects in which the promotion of the saint's cult figured prominently.⁶⁷ First, the presence of St. Zenobius' image in the Sala dei Gigli at the Palazzo Vecchio has been linked to Lorenzo's probable, but undocumented, participation in the project to renovate and decorate the room

⁶⁰Wilson, 1992, 36.

⁶¹Rosselli, 2:1101; Del Migliore, 27.

⁶²Mazza, xiii; Nardi, 1994, 112.

⁶³The Florentines had enjoyed good diplomatic relations with Louis XI since his ascension to the throne in 1461. See Milanese; Desjardins, 1:8-11, 100-02.

⁶⁴In a show of support for Lorenzo de' Medici, Louis XI dispatched Commynes to Florence shortly after learning of the Pazzi Conspiracy. In its aftermath, the king acted as a mediator between the Florentines and Pope Sixtus IV. Commynes, 1972, 375-78; 1867-74, 1:163-213, 3:11-42; Desjardins, 1:11.

⁶⁵Champion, 1928, 2:200; Desjardins, 1:10-11, 161. Cleugh, 282, mistakenly states that St. Zenobius' ring belonged to Lorenzo.

⁶⁶Haines, 1983, 146-48.

⁶⁷Wilson, 1992, 91-92.

in the 1480s.⁶⁸ In addition, Vasari states that Lorenzo led the campaign of 1491 to cover the vault of the St. Zenobius Chapel in Santa Maria del Fiore with mosaics. This must be accurate, for the end of the Opera's initial resolve to complete the project seems to have coincided with Lorenzo's death in 1492.⁶⁹

The first known reference to Louis XI's interest in St. Zenobius' ring is found in a letter that Guidantonio Vespucci wrote to Lorenzo de' Medici from Rome in April of 1482. This missive mentions "a ring that the king will do anything in order to have,"⁷⁰ and sometime shortly after it was written, Lorenzo sent the Governor of Provence, Palamède de Forbin, to Louis XI with St. Zenobius' ring.⁷¹ On 9 July, the king wrote to Lorenzo that he had seen the relic, but he asked the Florentine to confirm that it was indeed the ring worn by St. Zenobius. In addition, King Louis wanted to know precisely what miracles it had worked and if it had healed anyone.⁷²

Louis XI's reservations about the Florentine relic were well founded, for the ring Palamède de Forbin carried to France in the spring of 1482 was evidently not the relic owned by the Girolami.⁷³ The documents are silent as to why this might have been the case, but Rubinstein believes that the risks involved in sending such a precious relic to France led either the Girolami or Lorenzo to send the king a copy of St. Zenobius' ring.⁷⁴ In any event, the Florentines' subterfuge is apparent from a letter of 14 November in which Louis XI, seemingly undaunted by their presumed dishonesty, once again

⁶⁸For his involvement in the development of the Sala dei Gigli's iconography, see Rubinstein, 68, and Hegarty, 273.

⁶⁹Vasari, 1906, 3:237-38; Haines, 1994, 43-45. Although Lowe, 25, states that Lorenzo donated St. Zenobius' arm to San Giusto, it appears that he gave the arm of St. Justus to that church. In 1680, Cardinal Francesco Nerli II exchanged this relic, which he donated to Santa Maria del Fiore, for St. Zenobius' mitre. Minorbetti, 601; Richa, 5:197, 9:103-04; Cocchi, 18; Becherucci and Brunetti, 2:236; Bicchi and Ciandella, 94, for Lorenzo's relationship with Florence Cathedral, see also Kent.

⁷⁰"uno anello mi dica che il Re non ci lascia affare cosa alcuna per haverlo." ASF, MAP, filza XXXVIII, n. 433.

⁷¹On 5 May 1482, Louis XI wrote to Lorenzo de' Medici about Palamède's journey. ASF, MAP, filza XLV, n. 67.

⁷²ASF, MAP, filza XLV, n. 66. Published in Vaesen and Charavay, eds., 9:260 n. 1763; Louis XI, 527 n. 606. See also Champion, 1928, 2:352.

⁷³Louis XI was quite concerned about the authenticity of the relics whose curative powers he sought. In June of 1482 he ordered an investigation to determine which of the two heads of St. Lazarus in France was authentic. De Charmasse, Champion, 1928, 2:352; Louis XI, n. 592, 519; Montgomery, 1997, 51.

⁷⁴Nicolai Rubinstein shared his thoughts on this subject with me in early 1998. His view on this puzzling aspect of the ring's history has been published in *Medici, L.*, 195.

asked Lorenzo to send him St. Zenobius' ring.⁷⁵ The king also informed Lorenzo that he had commissioned his secretary, Pierre Parent, to contact Lorenzo and to send an agent to Florence. Parent wasted no time in carrying out Louis XI's wishes, for on the same day he wrote to Lorenzo, reiterating the king's request and notifying him that the agent, bearing a brief and an undisclosed sum of money, was on his way to Tuscany.⁷⁶ In a further letter of 4 December, Lionetto de' Rossi, manager of the Lyons branch of the Medici bank,⁷⁷ informed Lorenzo of the French agent's imminent arrival.⁷⁸

A note on the verso of Parent's letter and an entry in Lorenzo's *protocolli*, the registers recording his outgoing correspondence, show that the king's agent arrived in Florence on 12 December.⁷⁹ However, the *protocolli* also reveal that, during the previous month, Lorenzo had set about ensuring that the genuine relic was sent to France. On 14 November, he wrote to Louis XI that he would send the Girolami ring and advised the king to contact Filippo Lorini, a Medici agent who spent much of his time at the French court.⁸⁰ On the same day, Lorenzo also dispatched a letter to Lorini in which

⁷⁵Published in Vaesen and Charavay, eds., 10:16-17 n. 1821; Louis XI, 526-27 n. 605.

⁷⁶"Le Roy vous éscript et ma chargé aussi vous éscripe touchant l'anneau [de] saint Zanobi dans pardevant je vous avez éscripé, e je désire terriblement savoir que . . . s'il se pouvait faire. Monseigneur vous avez faiz au Roy, et a ses serviteurs beaucoup de plaisirs de ma part très humblement vous remercie, mais si vous lui pouvez faire a . . . lui envoyer le dit anneau vous ne lui saurai au monde faire plus grand service, et vous supplie le faire s'il vous est possible et vous y emploite que je stay que le fatait de bon [illegible]. Monseigneur il vous envoyer par ung de mes gens . . . la pièce de monnaie e la chose en maniere d'agnus dei." ASF, MAP, filza XXXVIII, n. 522. Louis XI employed Pierre Parent from April 1476 to December 1482. This was not the only relic-related assignment he received from the king, for in 1481 he was responsible for supervising the execution of the gilded silver reliquaries Louis XI commissioned for the relics of St. Bernardino of Siena and the head of St. Phallier. Moreover, in 1482, he was instructed to inquire about the authenticity of the head of St. Lazarus at Avalon. See De Charmasse; Lapeyre and Scheuter, 1:243-44.

⁷⁷The Lyons branch almost failed because of Lionetto's mismanagement. In 1482, his position was secure as, according to his reports, business was picking up. By 1485, however, the situation was so critical that Lorenzo lured Lionetto to Florence for a conference, but instead had him promptly arrested and incarcerated. De Roover, 300-04.

⁷⁸"Ed é circha dieci o dodici dì che passò per qui uno che il Re v'a mandato per quel anello di san Zanobi, il quale chome io vi dissi per meglio ch'io vi scrissi per lui et cioè pel detto messo anzi pare che a ogni modo glielo dobbiate mandare perchè fia lungho andato anzi vi manderà presto ma vorrei domandassi anche fargl[i]eglo presentare per uno de' nostri per mezzo del quale chi sarà per noi in chorte a[v]rà quella licenzia che servirà assai a altre chose." ASF, MAP, filza X, n. 610.

⁷⁹Del Piaggio, ed., 217.

⁸⁰Lorini was sent to France to supervise the troubled Lyons branch of the Medici bank. De Roover, 301, 466 n. 92.

he presumably notified him of the situation.⁸¹ Moreover, in a letter of 10 December, Lorenzo told the king and Lorini that Bernardo, Francesco de'Girolami's eldest son, would accompany St. Zenobius' ring to France. In still another letter written on 10 December, he instructed Lionetto de' Rossi to give the thirteen-year-old boy an especially warm welcome upon his arrival in Lyons ("che riceva detto Bernardo, e li facci carezze").⁸²

Bernardo de'Girolami, accompanied by the sacristan of San Giovanni, Andrea di Cristofano da Gaiuole, probably arrived at the French court in December of 1482.⁸³ In May of the following year, Alessandro da Filicaia wrote to his son Antonio in Nantes that Bernardo was a favorite at the French court because he had taken St. Zenobius' ring to Louis XI.⁸⁴ In a further letter of 5 August, he reported that the boy was still enjoying the king's favors in France.⁸⁵

This time, Louis XI appears to have been satisfied about the ring's authenticity, but he did question its ability to work miracles. This skepticism is apparent from a letter of 11 February 1483 in which Lorenzo informed the king that Bernardo Donati, who had witnessed some of the ring's miracles, was on his way to France to reassure the French monarch about its thaumaturgic powers.⁸⁶ In the end, neither St. Zenobius' ring, nor any of the other relics and sacred objects King Louis patronized during the last two years of his life, worked the miracle he sought so desperately, for he suffered a fourth stroke and died on 31 August 1483.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Del Piaggio, ed., 212.

⁸² Ibid., 217. In his *catasto* report of 1480, Francesco stated that Bernardo was eleven years old. ASF, *Catasto*, 1002, fol. 180r.

⁸³ See Appendix I.

⁸⁴ "Ma io ti voglio dire un'altra cosa ti pi[a]cerà, che il figl[i]o di Francesco Girolami si truova appresso alla persona del Re di Francia e vuogli gran bene perchè lui gli a portato l'anello di Sancto Zanobi, il quale il Re mandò a chiedere qui a Lorenzo de' Medici e dicemi Francesco Girolami che il Re lo vede così volentieri, e dalli buona provisione; per tanto ti conforto a scriverli e mantenerti l'amicizia sua." ASF, *Conventi Soppressi*, 78, 319, fol. 143. Published with some minor errors in Callmann, 494 n. 9.

⁸⁵ "il figlio di Francesco Girolami . . . si truova . . . in corte del Re di Francia dove riceve grande onore." ASF, *Conventi Soppressi*, 78, 319, fol. 149.

⁸⁶ Brocchi, 1:64-65; Richa, 6:283; Medici, L., 194-96. A curious entry in the *protocolli* suggests that the king refused to listen to Bernardo Donati's explanations about St. Zenobius' ring. Dated 16 April 1483, it states: "Al re di Francia, dolendosi che secondo la volontà sua non sia stato informato della croce et anello da quelli che ha mandati, et che li manda la nota a punto di quando ha ritracto." Del Piaggio, ed., 239.

⁸⁷ Commynes, 1972, 399-400; Ipcar, 20.

THE COURT BATTLE OVER ST. ZENOBIUS' RING

Although the Girolami's relic did not cure Louis XI, he demonstrated his devotion to St. Zenobius by commissioning an abbreviated French translation of Clemente Mazza's late fifteenth-century life of the Florentine saint. The first page of this manuscript, a copy of which is preserved at the Laurentian Library, is decorated with a miniature of St. Zenobius, an elaborate decorative border filled with birds, flowers, colorful vines, strawberries, and, at the bottom of the page, with the French king's coat of arms flanked by those of the Girolami (Fig. 4).⁸⁸ The ailing king also gave Bernardo de'Girolami an undisclosed sum of money and saw to it that the ring returned to Florence in a gold reliquary casket that weighed approximately fifteen pounds.⁸⁹ According to Del Migliore, this reliquary was covered with gems, but the one known contemporary document in which it is described states only that the *cassetta* was decorated with an inscription recording by whom and for whom it had been made.⁹⁰

Six months after the king's death, Francesco de'Girolami's nephews, in all likelihood acting according to their mother's wishes, took their uncle to court in an attempt to gain a share of the profits Francesco and Bernardo had received as a result of sending the ring to France. They first presented their case, which is recorded in a series of documents from the archives of the Magistrato dei Pupilli, on 4 February 1484. On that day, a certain Filippo di Michele di Tura, acting on behalf of the plaintiffs, stated that, although Francesco had promised that his eldest nephew, Giovanni di Filippo, could accompany his son Bernardo to France, Giovanni deliberately was left behind. As a result, Filippo di Tura requested that Giovanni and his brothers be awarded damages to the amount of 820 florins — a portion of the sum that Bernardo had received from the king of France.⁹¹

⁸⁸The manuscript's colophon reads: "Cy finist la vie de Saint Zenobie par commandement du Roy Loys XI^e translatee d'ytallien en Francoys par moy Jacques Sigaud secretaire dudit Seigneur l'an Mil CCCCLXXX et deux." Mazza, "Vie de Saint Zanobie," fol. 39r. For a commentary on this *vita* see Minorbetti, 64; Lami, 537-38. Rao suggests that Louis XI presented the manuscript to the Girolami, but it had passed to the Medici by 1495, when it was recorded in an inventory of that family's private library. Given Lorenzo the Magnificent's role in sending St. Zenobius' ring to Florence it is just as likely that he and the Girolami each received a copy of the *vita*. See also Nardi, 1994, 112.

⁸⁹Appendices 3 and 4.

⁹⁰Del Migliore, 29. He erroneously reported that Francis I had provided the reliquary. According to Appendix 3: "in su decto forzerino sono d[e]scripte punt[u]almente le lettere a contemplatione di chi et a chi fu facto decto dono."

⁹¹Appendix 1.

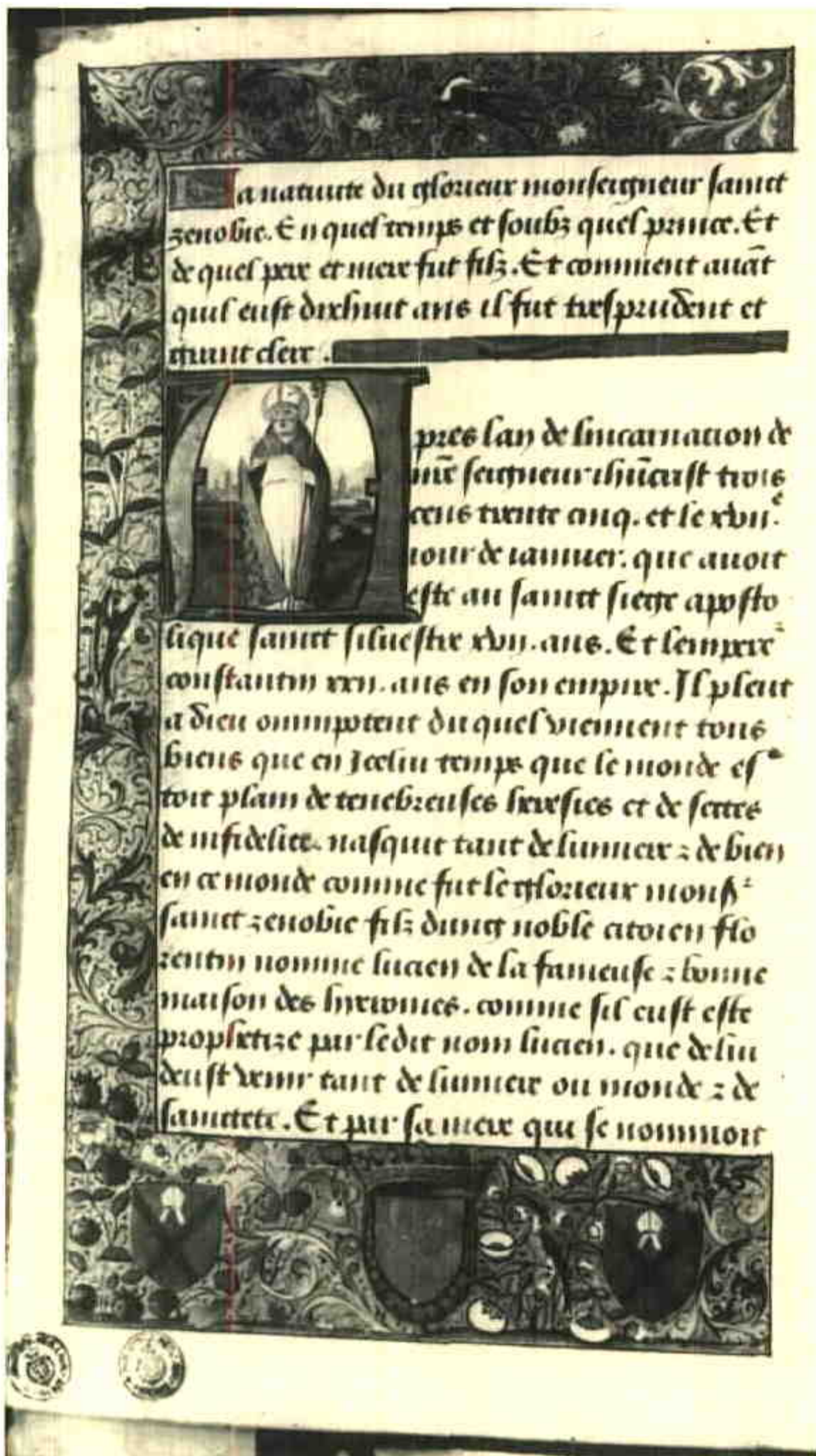


FIGURE 4. BMLF, Laurentianus, 61, 16, fol. 1r. MicroFoto srl.

The following 12 May, Francesco denied all of Filippo di Tura's accusations. According to his side of the story, Giovanni's mother, Mona Agnola, had neither the means nor the desire to send her son on this mission. Moreover, he stated that she was willing to let Giovanni di Filippo forego the trip because he was only twelve years old and physically unfit for such a long journey.⁹²

Almost two months later, Filippo de'Girolami's heirs, seemingly unsuccessful in their first attempt to lay claim to a portion of the profits from Bernardo's trip to France, changed their accusations against Francesco, claiming instead that the ring in part belonged to them. On 6 July, Filippo di Tura declared before the court that Francesco's previous testimony was false. Although the documents suggest the relic was passed down from father to eldest son, Di Tura explained that both Francesco and his brother Filippo were their father's universal heirs, and that Francesco was thus obligated to share the custody of St. Zenobius' ring with his nephews. However, because Francesco refused to show them the gold reliquary Louis XI had made for the relic, Filippo di Tura proposed that Francesco produce it so that the court and plaintiffs could examine it — presumably because, as we have seen above, its inscription recorded the names of the Girolami family members to whom the king gave the casket. In addition, Di Tura suggested that if Francesco failed to exhibit the reliquary within four days he should be fined 500 florins.⁹³

By 7 December, the date of Filippo di Tura's next appearance before the court, Francesco had not complied with this request. Indeed, he professed that it was common knowledge (*publica fama*) throughout Florence that Francesco had the reliquary melted down (*disfacta*). He consequently requested that Francesco's nephews be awarded custody of the ring so that similar offences would not take place in the future. In his closing remarks, he asked the court to order Francesco to replace the lost reliquary.⁹⁴

In the end, the plaintiffs' argument was no longer about the equitable sharing of family assets, but rather concerned Francesco's worthiness to take care of the relic. Filippo di Tura's arguments must have been convincing, for on 27 September 1486, over two years after he first presented the case, the officials of the Magistrato dei Pupilli ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. As a result, Francesco and Bernardo de'Girolami were given four months in which to deposit 1,525 $\frac{7}{8}$ florins in the Medici bank. This extremely heavy fine, based on the value of the lost reliquary, was to finance the execution of a new

⁹²Appendix 2.

⁹³Appendix 3.

⁹⁴Appendix 4.

one to be made by a certain Francesco di Matteo who was then to deposit it at the Medici bank.⁹⁵ The terms of the sentence support Passerini's statement that Lorenzo de' Medici was to supervise the execution of the new reliquary for St. Zenobius' ring, since the artist from whom it was commissioned was probably Francesco di Matteo di Neri, a goldsmith who worked as a *factotum* in the Medici entourage for over twenty years.⁹⁶ Although the terms of his commission for the St. Zenobius reliquary were confirmed on 28 September, the reliquary may never have been executed.⁹⁷ A curious document from the Girolami family papers suggests either that Francesco petitioned the judges to nullify the sentence, or that the ruling was overturned because it had been handed down by a judge who lacked the requisite authority.⁹⁸

⁹⁵"deliberaverunt quod Laurentius de Medicis et socii, bancherii, dent et solvant, Francisco Mattei aurifici florenos mille quingentos viginti quinque et septem octavos, aliter fiorini de auro in auro larghi, pro reficiendo casseptam de auro largitam per Serenissimum Regem Lodovichum Regem Francorum anulo Sancti Zenobii et de pecuniis apud eos depositatis per Franciscum Zenobii de Hyeronimis et Bernardum eius filium in totum fiorini 1525 $\frac{7}{8}$ larghi." ASF, Pupilli, 98, fol. 136v. I thank Humfrey Butters and Michael Mallett for bringing this document to my attention. See also below, n. 97.

⁹⁶Passerini, 43. F.W. Kent informs me that this is the first known reference to Francesco di Matteo working as a goldsmith. His documented work for the Medici ranged from acting as a land agent to organizing banquets. For further information on Francesco di Matteo and his duties see Elam, 48-49; Borgo and Sievers, 248.

⁹⁷28 September 1486. "Prefati officialis ut supra, servatis servandis etc., deliberaverunt et deliberando mandaverunt Francisco Mattei, aurifici, cui commissa est reficiendi cassetta aurea largita per Serenissimum Regem Lodovichum Regem Franchorum, anulo Sancti Zenobii, ut quam primum per eum fuerit refecta, per eum consignetur in et super bancho Laurentii de' Medicis et sociorum de Florentia, ubi in quo et super quo stet modis, formis, nominibus et conditionis quibus sunt floreni 1525 $\frac{7}{8}$ largi, apud eos depositati per Franciscum Zenobii de Hyeronimis et Bernardum eius filium, ac etiam sub nomine et cum nomine Johanni, Alexandri et Filippi alterius Filippo Zenobii de Hyeronimis." ASF, Pupilli, 98, fol. 138r.

⁹⁸"Et che di poi nel[l]'anno 1485 adì 10 di settembre li officiali de' pupilli dettono sententia come se fussino i tali giudici competenti che detto Francesco Girolami et Bernardo suo figliuolo fussino tenuti fra 4 mesi havere pagato e depositato sopra il banco di Lorenzo de' Medici fiorini 1732 larghi . . . per la valuta di libbre 18 d'oro di carati 21 et $\frac{7}{8}$ ritratti come si diceva di detta cassetta le quali danari si dovessi rifare un'altra cassetta d'oro per detto anello, conclude che detta sententia si dichiarassi nulla come detta da giudice incompetente." ASF, Covoni-Girolami, 539 ("Lettere, testamenti, atti notarili e alberi genealogici"), unnumbered folio. Passerini's account of the dispute's outcome appears to have been based, at least in part, on this document. It differs from the documents cited above in nn. 95 and 97 in that it states Francesco was obligated to pay 1,732 florins and mentions neither Francesco's son, Bernardo, nor Lorenzo de' Medici and the Medici bank.

It is tempting to think that Francesco de'Girolami used Louis XI's reliquary to finance the construction of his grand palace, begun c. 1495, located on the present-day Lungarno Archibusieri between the Ponte Vecchio and the Uffizi.⁹⁹ However, it is possible that Francesco did not destroy the reliquary in the 1480s, especially as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources report that in 1506 he used the proceeds from the reliquary to establish a prebend in honor of St. Zenobius at Santa Maria del Fiore.¹⁰⁰ On 23 April of that year, the cathedral chapter did grant him permission to found a canonry dedicated to St. Zenobius, "who was of the house and family of the Girolami," and it may very well have been financed with money earned from the sale of the gold reliquary.¹⁰¹ Even so, the documents related to this pious foundation show only that on 23 May, Francesco and his eldest surviving son, Rafaello,¹⁰² deposited a 600-florin endowment for the canonry at the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova.¹⁰³

According to Francesco's testament of 18 February 1511, he still had custody of St. Zenobius' ring, which he kept in his home.¹⁰⁴ Assuming that his heirs honored the terms of this will, when Francesco died in 1515, the relic became the property of his son Jacopo, the cleric responsible for the Girolami canonry at the Florentine cathedral. The testament also stipulated

⁹⁹Ginori Lisci, 2:597-98. Behind the palace, the vaulted Via de'Girolami links the Piazza del Pesce and the Via de'Georgofili. Francesco's *catasto* report of 1480 shows that he purchased the land on which the palace was built from the Castellani family. ASF, *Catasto*, 1002 (S. Croce, Gonfalone Carro), fol. 179r. See also Fabriczy, 543; Limburger, 74; Stegmann and Geymüller, 10:4.

¹⁰⁰Brocchi, 1:64; Passerini, 43-44; Santoni, 41; Bicchi and Ciandella, 44.

¹⁰¹"Item quod ille sic deputatus et presentatus canonicus, nuncupetur canonicus canonicatus tituli ad honorem Sancti Zenobii, qui fuit de domo et familia de Ieronimis predictis." ASF, Notarile Antecosimiano, 10955, fols. 57v-59r. The foundation of the Girolami canonry is documented in the records of the Florentine notary Domenico di Giovanni Guiducci.

¹⁰²Bernardo died in 1492 following a horse-riding accident. Passerini, 44-45.

¹⁰³"Confessio depositi. Dominus Leonardus Buonafé, hospitalarius hospitalis Sancte Marie Nove de Florentia, confessus fuit habuisse et havere penes se in depositum a Francisco de Ieronimis et Raphaelle eius filio, sub nomine capituli cathedralis ecclesie florentine, florenos sexcentos auti largos in auro." The following day, the chapter of Santa Maria del Fiore elected Jacopo di Francesco de'Girolami to serve as the canon for the new canonry. ASF, Notarile Antecosimiano, 10955, fols. 69v-71r.

¹⁰⁴"Item considerans quod habet in euis domo et in antiquitus fuit apud cuius predecesores anulum aureum olim sancti Zenobii archiepiscopi florentini de familia dicti testatoris quod cum devotione custodivit huc usque et propria declaravit quod in futurum retineatur per dominum Jacobum cuius filium infrascriptum canonicum sancte Marie Floris de Florentia dum vixerit et successive per maiorem natu de descendentibus masculis dicti testatoris." ASF, Covoni-Girolami, 484, n. 26. Del Migliore, 29, and Brocchi, 1:64, were aware of Francesco's testament, which was drawn up by the notary Niccolò di Antonio Rovai.

that Jacopo was in turn to bequeath the ring to his brother Rafaello's male heirs. Although Rafaello was not the ring's legal custodian, he supposedly sent it to Mantua where it healed the epileptic son of Ferrante Gonzaga.¹⁰⁵ If so, this truly was a miracle, as Rafaello died in 1532, one year before Ferrante's first son was born.¹⁰⁶

CONCLUSION

There are no subsequent reports of the ring's miracles, and an inventory of 1613 shows that it was then kept in a small silver reliquary — possibly the same *breve overo guscio d'ariento* (pouch, or shell, of silver) in which it was carried to France in 1482 — in the chapel within the Girolami Palace.¹⁰⁷ By 1674, the ring, which was kept in a portable wooden altar, had been moved to a bedroom on the *piano nobile*. The relic was mentioned again in a further inventory of 1732, and it eventually became the property of the Covoni family, to whom the last of the Girolami, Piero di Zanobi (d. 1786), bequeathed his property and possessions.¹⁰⁸

The Girolami, and later the Covoni, carried on the centuries-old tradition of publicly celebrating their ancestral ties to St. Zenobius well into the twentieth century. In 1656, the Girolami donated to the cathedral a rich portable *baldacchino* that was used during the exhibition of the St. Zenobius head reliquary on the saint's feast day. Given that in the fifteenth century the ring was known for its healing properties, it is interesting to note that, in the seventeenth century, cathedral officials allowed relics of St. Zenobius to be removed from the cathedral and taken to sick members of the Girolami family. Finally, in 1940, the Principessa Borghese Covoni spent 50 *lire* on a garland to be hung on the Girolami tower in the Via Por Santa Maria in honor of St. Zenobius' feast day.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵Ferrante is said to have repaid the favor by intervening on Rafaello's behalf when he was imprisoned by Pope Clement VII for his spirited defense of the Florentine Republic during the siege of 1529. Del Migliore, 28-29; Brocchi, 1:91; Passerini, 63-64.

¹⁰⁶See the Gonzaga family tree in Simon, viii-ix.

¹⁰⁷"una cassetta intagliata e tocca[ta] d'oro nella quale vi è dentro una borsa di drappo dove è un cassetto d'argento nel quale si ripone l'anello di S. Zanobi appeso ad una catenuzza d'oro una carta di stola con libro dov'è l'orazioni ed inni per detto santo." ASF, Covoni-Girolami, 541 (carte sciolte).

¹⁰⁸Ibid. Piero's heirs were the sons of his sister Virginia, who married Francesco Maria di Marco Covoni in 1737. The Covoni had patronage rights to a chapel and the sacristy at the Badia Fiorentina. In the Badia's sacristy, there was a reliquary containing a fragment of St. Zenobius' shoulder which is now displayed in Florence's Museo di Santo Stefano al Ponte. See Richa, 1:201; Liscia Bemporad, 1992, 2:17-19.

¹⁰⁹Bicchi and Ciandella, 44-45, 47-49.

The private possession of relics or a familial relationship with a saint greatly enhanced a family's honor and prestige. This certainly was the case with the Girolami, for they had the distinction of being related to the focus of the second oldest saint's cult in Florence and, in the most literal sense, regularly paraded their familial ties to St. Zenobius before their fellow citizens. There were, however, both advantages and disadvantages associated with the private custody and promotion of saint's relics. On the local level, the advantage of owning St. Zenobius' ring led to the celebrity and monetary rewards Francesco de'Girolami and his son Bernardo enjoyed because the prestigious relic was sent to France. Conversely, Francesco's ownership and exploitation of the miraculous ring resulted in a power struggle within his extended family when his brother's heirs laid claim, first to a portion of the money that Louis XI gave Francesco and Bernardo and, later, to the relic and the reliquary the ailing monarch had made for it.

On the international level, the French king's interest in the Girolami's relic of St. Zenobius and Lorenzo de'Medici's role in sending it to France not only brought the family to the attention of these two illustrious men, but also increased its fame both at home and abroad. This renown is perhaps best expressed in the two letters Alessandro da Filicaia wrote in the spring and summer of 1483, letters in which he told his son of the honors that Bernardo de'Girolami received at the French court because he had carried St. Zenobius' ring to King Louis XI.¹¹⁰ The loss of the reliquary the king had made for the Florentine relic makes the late fifteenth-century saga of the Girolami ring a visual disappointment for art historians. Nonetheless, the history of the Girolami family's loan of its relic to the king of France provides unique insight into Renaissance devotional practices, the use of relics as a means of international and local diplomatic exchange, as well as the patronage of privately-owned relics in Renaissance Florence.

VIRGINIA TECH

¹¹⁰See above, nn. 83 and 84.

Appendix I

4 February 1484. Francesco de'Girolami is accused of having prohibited his nephew from accompanying St. Zenobius' ring to France.

ASF, Pupilli, 195 (filze del cancelliere), fol. 338r-v.

Dinanzi a voi, signori uficiali di pupilli et adulti del comune di Firenze, tutori et per tempo chur[ator]i de'figliuoli et heredità di Filippo di Zanobi Girolami, per lo adrieto vostro ciptadino fiorentino, chon ogni debita reverentia expone et dice Filippo di Michele di Tura, ciptadino fiorentino, actore et chome actore et difensore di decti figliuoli et heredità di decto Filippo Girolami costituito da voy et dal vostro uficio legiptimamente secondo e vostri ordini et del comune di Firenze, che del[]'anno 1482 o in altro più vero tempo, in effecto Francesco di Zanobi Girolami, ciptadino fiorentino, zio paterno di decti vostri pupilli, essendo stato richiesto dal cristianissimo allora re di Francia che decto Francesco dovessi mandare alla sua maestà del cristianissimo re di Francia l'anello che fu di sancto Zanobi, arciveschovo fiorentino, el quale anello fu ed per subcessione della famiglia et casato de'Girolami e apartiensi anchora a detti soprascritti vostri pupilli. Et che quando decto Francesco fu requisito et richiesto dal decto cristianissimo re di Francia del decto anello, el decto Francesco promisse liberamente a Monna Agnola vedova, madre et anchora actrice di detti vostri pupilli, che insieme andrebbono alla decta maestà del re di Francia col decto anello, Bernardo, figliuolo di decto Francesco, e Giovanni, figliuolo di decto Filippo, vostro adulto overo pupillo, chome è chonveniente et ragionevole, stimando che il decto cristianissimo rege di Francia remunerarebbe chi decto anello portassi alla sua maestà. Et che dipoy decto Francesco, malitiosamente et chon animo di fraudare e detti vostri poveri pupilli sì d'onore chome d'utile, mandò al decto cristianissimo re di Francia detto Bernardo suo figliuolo et uno prete Andrea di Cristofano da Gaiuole, al presente sacrestano in sancto Giovanni di Firenze, con decto suo figliuolo, lasciato indrieto decto Giovanni vostro pupillo overo adulto, contro alla voglia di decta Monna Agnola, allora tutrice di decti vostri pupilli, et in grave danno et disonore di detti vostri pupilli et contro a ogni buono chostume et honesto vivere, a volere attribuire a ssé proprio quello è comune, chome se fussi suo proprio et non appartenessi ad altri. E che per decta chagione e decta malitia di decto Francesco di non volere che decto Giovanni, vostro pupillo overo adulto, andassi con decto anello in Francia col suo figliuolo et con decto prete Andrea al cristianissimo re di Francia, chome affermativamente aveva promesso a decta Monna Agnola, madre di decti vostri pupilli, allora tutrice, e vostri pupilli et heredità furono et sono in danno di fiorini ottocentoventi larghi, i quali sono venuti nelle mani di decto Francesco indebitamente e quegli à e tiene, che tocchano et apartengono a detti vostri pupilli, altro [sic] a quella somma che à avuto lui dal decto cristianissimo re di Francia per decto anello. E quali fiorini ottocentoventi larghi et più, appartenenti a'vostri pupilli il decto Francesco à avuti et alle sua mani sono pervenuti, e quali tocchavano et tocchano a'vostri pupilli per cagioni di più somme di danari et horo per il decto cristianissimo re di Francia donati et dati a Bernardo decto, figliuolo di decto Francesco, che andò con decto anello appartenente a'vostri pupilli chome a decto Francesco, isbattuto le spese dello andare et tornare et stare là et [illegible] e ogni cosa, perché per decto respecto della casata et honore di decto anello gli ebbe sì da decto Filippo in decto nome chome da decta Monna Agnola. Et che decto Francesco più et più volti [sic] è stato richiesto che dia et paghy detti fiorini 820 larghi a detti vostri pupilli et heredità o a decto Filippo actore o a decta Monna Agnola actrice, la quale chosa decto Francesco à sempre ricusato et al presente richusa, in grave danno et preiuditio de'vostri poveri pupilli, et in disonore del vostro uficio et contro a'buoni chos-

tumi et honesto et buono vivere et contro alla forma degli statuti sì del vostro ufficio come del comune di Firenze. Et pertanto il decto Filippo, in decto nome, costituito personalmente dinanzi a voy et al vostro ufficio, et adimandò et adimanda che per le vostre signorie si pronumptii, sententii et dichiarì tutte le predeccte cose essere state et essere vere, et decto Francesco di Zanobi di Bernardo Girolami condanniate per vostra diffinitiva sententia a dare et pagare ovvero a restituire a decto Filippo di Michele di Tura, actore predeccto, in decto nome, e detti fiorini ottocentoventi larghi per le ragioni et cagioni sopradette et per altre che alle vostre signorie si diranno et le spese fatte et che si faranno. Adimandando che per le vostre signorie sommariamente si proceda et pronumptii et sententii secondo le vostre conscientie, veduto la verità del factò, rachommandando sempre e vostri poveri pupilli, che a lloro sovenghiate et a lloro siate aiutori perchè a lloro è stato tolto e utile et onore senza loro colpa, perchè loro non sanno parlare, et per la età infantile et minore non sono capaci nè d'onore nè d'utile, sicché bisogna che le vostre signorie sovenga loro.

Appendix 2

12 May 1484. Francesco de'Girolami responds to his nephews' accusations.

ASF, Pupilli (filze del cancelliere), 196, fol. 55r-v.

Compari dinanzi a detti Signori Ufficiali de' pupilli e adulti della città di Firenze e loro uficio detto, Francescho di Zanobi Girolami, cittadino fiorentino, in decta asserta causa et questione dinanzi a loro vertente intra decto Francescho Girolami, da una parte, et Monna Agnola, donna fu di Filippo Girolami, come asserta attrice et madre de'detti figl[i]uoli et heredi di decto Filippo Girolami et negli asserti modi et nomi nella detta asserta causa contenti. E insistendo decto Francescho a ogni e qualunque cosa, altra volta per lui, in detta asserta causa, dette e allegate et da lloro non si partendo, disse et dice le cose adomandate per lui in decta asserta causa potersi et doversi fare per detti Signori Ufficiali di ragione et secondo la forma delli statuti et ordini del Comune di Firenze et del vostro uficio, et così farsi et pronumptiarsi domandò et domanda decto Francescho, et la parte adversa nelle spese di decta causa doversi conde[m]pnare per le ragioni et cagioni altra volta per lui dette et allegate. Et acciochè le cose adomandate per lui in decta causa si faccino et possinsi fare per detti Signori Ufficiali di ragione et secondo la forma de'detti statuti, decto Francesco in detta causa et dinanzi a detti Signori Ufficiali provare intende et far fede de' capitoli infrascripti, cioè:

In prima che la cosa fu et è senza che mai dell'anno 1482 o altro tempo detto Francescho Girolami, da una parte, et detta Monna Agnola, vedova et donna fu del decto Filippo Girolami et madre et asserta et attrice di decti figl[i]uoli et heredi di detto Filippo, dall'altra parte, havendosi a mandare detta reliquia di detto anello al detto serenissimo et cristianissimo re di Francia, si convenissino insieme o facessino alcuna conventione che decta reliquia si mandassi per Bernardo, figliuolo del detto Francesco, et per Giovanni, figliuolo del detto Filippo, insieme di compagnia, e che ogni spesa che intorno a ccìò si facessi e ogni guadagno che per ciò si traessi et risultassi fussino comuni tra lloro. Ma la verità fu et è, in contrario, che volendo detto Francescho et essendo stato pregato et gravato da molti cittadini di Firenze et maxime dalla Magnificentia di Lorenzo, che mandassi detto anello che detta Mona Agnola mandassi con detto anello decto Giovanni suo figl[i]uolo et di decto Filippo, a ogni sua spesa et guadagno, mai decta Mona Agnola volle consentire ma sempre ricusò né volle che decto Giovanni v'andassi nè fare alcuna spesa, e tre o quattro dì inanzi decto Francescho mandassi detto Bernardo suo figl[i]uolo et anche la sera dinanzi, ché poi la mattina seguente che decto Bernardo andò, mandò a detto Francescho per più e più persone a dire come lei per nessuno modo voleva che detto Giovanni suo figl[i]uolo andassi con decto anello né fare intorno a ciò alcuna spesa, ma che era contenta che detto Francescho vi mandassi lui chi a lui pareva, a ogni sua spesa, e ché ogni guadagno che di ciò si facesse, si fusse liberamente di decto Francesco Girolami, maxime considerato all'età di decto Giovanni suo figliuolo, il quale era allora d'età d'anni XII o circa e così et di tanta età era comunemente tenuto da ognuno che lo conosceva per l'aspetto del suo corpo e perchè non harebbe potuto fare tale camino, nè ella fare tale spesa intorno a ciò. Et così fu et è vero, publico et notorio et publica voce et fama nella città di Firenze et maxime nel popolo di Santo Stefano a Ponte di Firenze.

Appendix 3

6 July 1484. Filippo di Tura responds to Francesco de'Girolami's testimony and asks that Francesco be forced to exhibit the reliquary Louis XI had made for St. Zenobius' ring.

ASF, Pupilli (filze del cancelliere), 196, fols. 87r-88r.

Compari dinanzi a decti signori uficiali de'pupilli et adulti del comune di Firenze, tutori et chome tutori et per tempo churatori de'figliuoli et heredità di Filippo di Zanobi Girolami decto, Filippo di Michele di Tura, ciptadino fiorentino, actore et chome actore di detti figliuoli et heredità di decto Filippo di Zanobi Girolami et ne[i] modi et nomi che et chome altra volta comparì et adimandò contro a Francesco di Zanobi Girolami, zio paterno di detti pupilli. Et insistendo el decto Filippo in decto nome in tutte le chose altre volti [sic] per lui adomandate dinanzi a detti uficiali et loro uficio contro a decto Francesco Girolami, la quale comparigione fa el decto Filippo maxime per chagione d'una asserta comparigione et asserte exceptioni et capitoli, exhibiti et dati per decto Francesco contro alla decta petitione, le quali exceptioni et capitoli non furono et non sono vere, ma furono et sono falsi, et se alchuno testimone sopra a quegli examinati à probato alchuna cosa di quelle che nel capitolo si contengono à probato et pruova el falso, et chosi affermò et afferma decto Filippo in detti nomi. Et perchè decto Filippo, in decto nome, sa che la verità non sapino bene né vedere né intendere, se le vostre signorie non veghono el forzerino d'oro di [libbre] XV o più, facto per el cristianissimo re di Francia, et decto anello non si exhibisce et mostra overo si dipone apresso ydonea persona, o seculare o laycha, chome pare al decto Francesco Girolami, che quello à nelle mani et apresso di sè contro alla voglia di decto Filippo in decto nome, perchè in su decto forzerino sono d[e]scripte punt[u]almente le lettere a contemplatione di chi et a chi fu facto decto dono. Sichè lo effecto sia che le vostre signorie, avendo a giudicare decto caso secondo le vostre conscentie, è necessario veggiate et abbiate facultà di vedere decto forzerino, perchè secondo i vostri ordini avete a giudicare secondo le vostre conscient[i]e, veduto la verità del facto. Et però al detto Filippo in decto nome adomandò et adomanda che per parte dal vostro uficio sia chomandato a detto Francesco Girolami che diponga et exhibisca el detto forzerino d'oro apresso a detti signori uficiali o apresso a ydonea persona alle predette cose, in modo che detti uficiali et pupilli possano quello a llo ro piacere vedere. Et tutto faccia infra quattro dì dal dì di tale richiesta et chomandamento. Et se decto Francesco ricusassi che decto forzerino non si vedessi, la quale cosa non può nè debbe fare nè di ragione nè secondo i vostri ordini del vostro uficio, allora in decto caso le vostre signorie sono tenute et debbono multare decto Francesco Girolami in fiorini 500 larghi o più, chome a llo ro pare, a dare al cassiere di camera del nostro comune di Firenze, perchè ogni volta che nascie casi di disubidienza in danno de'vostri pupilli, le vostre signorie debbono multare tali disubidienti et con riservo et [illegibile] et chome pare alle vostre signorie. Et chosi adimandò et adimanda decto Filippo in decto nome che decto Francesco sia multato in detti fiorini 500 larghi o più secondo gli ordini sia, in quanto in quattro dì dal dì sarà citato a vedere la presente comparigione non arà exhibitò et prodotto decto forzerino dinanzi alle vostre signorie o in altro luogo dove le vostre signorie abbino facultà di vederlo insieme co'vostri predetti pupilli, e quali per el decto Filippo vi si rachomandano et che a llo ro sia administrata ragione et giustitia sommaria et che in loro s'observino gli statuti et provisioni che in loro favore parlano, et che le loro ragioni sieno suplite per le vostre signorie et che non sieno opressati nè tenuti in litigio. Adimandò le spese fatte et che farà el decto Filippo nella decta causa, et adimandò decto Filippo tutte le predecete cose doversi notificare a decto Francesco Girolami per uno famiglio del vostro uficio.

Appendix 4

7 December 1484. Filippo di Tura asks the officials of the Magistrato dei Pupilli to award custody of St. Zenobius' ring to Filippo de'Girolami's heirs and to order Francesco to replace Louis XI's reliquary.

ASF, Pupilli (filze del cancelliere), 196, fol. 366r-v.

Dinanzi a voy, Signori Ufficiali de'Pupilli e adulti del comune di Firenze, tutori et pro tempore curatori di Giovanni, Alexandro et Filippo, pupilli, fratelli et figliuoli che furono di Filippo di Zanobi di Bernardo Girolami, vostri pupilli et sottoposti al vostro governo et del vostro uficio, et di decto per lo adrieto Zanobi heredità et beni, con ogni debita reverentia expone et dice Filippo di Michele di Tura, ciptadino fiorentino, actore et chome actore et in decto actorio nome di decti Giovanni, Alexandro et Filippo, vostri pupilli, et di decto per lo adrieto Filippo loro padre h[er]edità et beni, che da X, XX, XXX, XXXX et 50 anni in qua proximi paxati, e da inde innanzi tanto che del contrario non esta memoria, la linea degli ascendenti di Zanobi di Bernardo Girolami àno avuto et tenuto et a lloro è appartenuto la chustodia e governo d'uno anello d'oro in uno breve overo guscio d'ariento, colla testa di decto Messer Sancto Zanobi el quale fu della sancta memoria di Messer San Zanobi, Veshovo di Firenze, et chome sua reliquia retenuto, avuto, tractato et riputato, et chosì lo tenne et chustodì decto Zanobi mentre che lui visse, doppo la morte di decto Bernardo suo padre. Et similmente lo tenne et chustodì doppo la morte di decto Zanobi, Francesco et Filippo, sua figliuoli legiptimi et naturali et heredi universali di decto Zanobi. Et chosì doppo la morte di decto Filippo, padre di decti vostri pupilli, fu tenuto et chustodito da detto Francesco et dal detto Giovanni, vostro pupillo overo adulto oggi, et da Monna Agnola, donna fu del decto Filippo, madre et tutrice allora di decto vostri pupilli et come loro tutrice lo teneva et chustodiva. Et che dipoi, nello anno 1482 et del mese di novembre di decto anno o in altro più vero tempo, el serenissimo et cristianissimo re Lodovicho, re di Francia, a reverentia di decto Messer sancto Zanobi et per honoratamente tenere decta sua reliquia, donò a decta reliquia una cassetta d'oro, di peso di libbre XVI o altro più vero peso, la quale cassetta pervenne alle mani di decto Francesco Girolami e non vi si tiene dentro decto anello chome fu la volontà del donatore, anzi richiesto più volte decto Francesco sì dalla decta Monna Agnola sì etiamdio dal decto Filippo, actore predecto in decto nome, che la tengha all'uso a che la fu deputata et che decta cassetta et anello exhibischa, la quale cassetta non exhibisce nè anchora el decto anello. El quale di presente è appresso al decto Francesco Girolami e lui quello tiene, contro alla volontà di decti vostri pupilli et di decto Filippo loro actore in decto nome. Ed è publica fama nella ciptà di Firenze che decto Francesco abbi detta cassetta disfacta, che sarebbe ed è contro alle leggi et buoni chostumi che quello che è una volta diputato a uso religioso s'adoperassi a uso humano. Pertanto decto Filippo, actore predecto in decto nome et chome actore di detti vostri pupilli, a'quali vostri pupilli secondo le chose di sopra narrate s'appartiene tenere cura di decta reliquia e che stia sicondo che debbe stare et le sue chose et al comune servigio. E adomanda decto Filippo in decto nome che per vostra diffinitiva sententia si pronumptii, sententii et dichiarì tutte le predette cose essere state et essere vere, et decto anello doversi tenere in luogo et modo che la custodia sia comune et possasi a ogni ora vedere per ciascuno di decti vostri pupilli et per le vostre signorie loro tutori et pro tempore curatori et mentre che fussino sottoposti al vostro uficio secondo gli ordini del vostro uficio, et etiamdio di decto Francesco Girolami, et quello a petitione di ciascheduno di loro usare all'uso conveniente, et decta cassetta doversi exhibire da decto Francescho et tenerla in quello luogho et chome è decto dello anello, et essendo disfacta, come è publica fama, quella doversi rifare dal decto

Francesco a detti effecti. Et a tutte le predette cose et loro effecti per vostro uficio sententialmente si condanni et condannato si constringha decto Francescho, inplorando il vostro uficio li sia administrata ragione et giustitia, procedendo intorno a cciò di ragione et di fatto et giudicandosi secondo le vostre conscientie, veduto la verità del fatto, racchomandando sempre e vostri poveri pupilli, e quali per loro non sanno né dire né fare per difecto della infantile etate e pueritia, dicentes domino subveni pupillo et ei adiutor eris.

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