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 uncompromising 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 Comynes, 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. Unable to take advantage of the healing touch he used to cure others of scrofula, Louis XI retained an équipe of doctors and surgeons. He also sought physical and spiritual help from his astrologers and, above all, from God and the saints.

Comynes 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. 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. Louis XI also commis-

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1 Comynes, 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; Maler, 114-15; Cleugh, 274-302; Tyrrell, 179-81; Gaussen, 381-435; Kendall, 356-70.

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

3 Champion, 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.

4 Comynes, 1972, 389. See also De Lasteyrie, 12-13; Havard, 260-61; Huzinga, 180-82; Gaussen, 429-36.

5 An entry dated 19 February 1481 in Lorenzo de’Medici’s protocoll/i shows that Louis XI sent an agent to Aquila in order to secure St. Bernardino’s body. The saint’s shrine remained in Aquila until 1527, when it was confiscated by Spanish soldiers. Del Piazzo, 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. Ampoule 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.

\(^7\)Commynes, 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.

\(^8\)The Ste. Ampoule 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. But 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.

\(^9\)These 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. 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. 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.

It was in the cathedral that, in January of 1331, the bishop of Florence, Francesco Silvestro da Cinigoli, presided over the exhumation of St. Zenobius’ remains. According to the chronicler Giovanni Villani, the Florentine archbishop of Pisa and the bishops of Spoleto and Fiesole assisted Cinigoli 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:

10 It 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.
11 Minorbetti, 67; Richa, 6:200-01.
12 For 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.
13 For Francesco da Cinigoli’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.  

Villani’s description of this event suggests that the silver St. Zenobius reliquary bust, signed by the Florentine silversmith Andrea Arditi, probably was made with the aim of increasing popular devotion to the saint (Fig. 1).  

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.  

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.  

Andrea Arditi’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.  

In the past, Francesco da Cingoli has also been singled out as the pa-  

14convenne fare cavare sottoterra per dieci braccia anzi che si trovasse; e trovatolo 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 Treyler, 18.  

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

17uno 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 ventiottio smalti affigure di santi con dodici perle e con ventiottio raperelle le quali legano vetri di più colori e con dieci toche d’ariento apichate appiè di d[ette ban]de della detta mitera, et colla decta testa sono due drappi, l’uno sta confitto e l’altro vi sta su, che à l’arme di Sancto Zeno- bio.” Archivio dell’Opera del Duomo, Florence, L3, 10, fol. 1r. Published in Cocchi, 1901, 17; Stroccoli, 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
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 Arditi 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 Arditi 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 descendants 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.

19 For 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.”

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

21 The 1418 sacristy inventory also mentions two silk altar cloths decorated with the “arms of St. Zenobius.” BNF, MS. Magliabechiana, XXXVII, 304, fol. 28r.

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

23 This 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.

24 See Del Migliore, 28; Cocchi, 1900, 9 n. 1; Davidsohn, 164.
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-

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

\(^{26}\) See Collareta, Canova and Spiazzi, eds., 89-92.

\(^{27}\) Rorimer, 246-51.


\(^{29}\) Spinello da' 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.

\(^{30}\) Trexler, 16. Benvenuti Papi, 1987, 79-115, also discusses the importance of familial associations with saints and relics.
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
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. 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). 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.

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. In addition, banners decorated with the Girolami arms hung over the saint’s altar on his feast day.

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. On the occasion of the Guelph Party’s first offering to St. Zenobius in May of 1392,
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 speciale, shop in the

38“messer santo Ĉanobi, 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, la ofierere per la sua festa, perché la casa de’ Girolami sono re[n]ut ghibellini, e però la Parte Ghu[e]lffa mai no-vi andava a ofierere, e in questo dì ed ano ãno cominciato, al nome di Dio e di santo Ĉanobi gratioso.” Molho and Szura, 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 consortiería'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'azio ario collo testa di Messer Sancto Zanobi). 47

42 Although Paetz and Paetz, 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 futuri loro consorti una torre in sul chianto di porta Santa Maria ... anno in tutto fiorini 44 l'anno ... de' quali del venuto di casa va affar all'uno cosa se non a fargli stribuire in fare l'offerta per San Zanobi e fare ufficiare una chappella in Santo Stefano a Ponte et se alcunmo cosa s'avanzo se non a farne fare piacezza a detta cappella per testamenti de'loro passati sono stati detti legati et oblighi sicché allora cerimone chome padronio de'beni liti anno lodato per nota per non mancare cagione di patronaggio." ASF, Catasto, 68 (S. Croce, Gonfalone Carro), fol. 276v. See also Passerini, 2, 36-37.

43 Passerini, 1; Richa, 2:67.

44 Richa, 2:67.

45 October 1591 "allograrono a Mona Pellegrina, figliola di Niccolò torcitrera di seca; una parte della casa dell'asse; nominata la casa di Santo Zanobi, cioè una sala con tre camere, e uno studio, con una vorticella; per anni uno da cominciar si il di 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, 341.

46 In his edition of Minorbetti's description of the relics at Santa Maria del Fiore, Cioniucci 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.

47 See Appendix 4.
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. 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. 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. 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. 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 Verrazzano. 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.

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. 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. At that time, she formally accused Francesco of withholding

49 Mazza, xxvii; Benvenuti Papi, 1994, 215-16; Passerini, 38.
50 See Appendix 4.
51 Lightbown, 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.
53 Passerini, 39, erroneously dated Filippo di Zanobi’s death 5 September 1499.
54 For 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 relic that the French king had made for the ring.\textsuperscript{57}

\textbf{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.\textsuperscript{58} It is clear that the latter two explanations are, for all intents and purposes, correct. Although Philippe de Comynnes 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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{55}Although 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.

\textsuperscript{56}ASF, Pupilli, 195, fol. 105r-v.

\textsuperscript{57}This 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 Rocke, 163.

\textsuperscript{58}Brocchi, 1:64; Lami, 533, 537, 579; Passerini, 42.

\textsuperscript{59}Bloch, 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. 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. 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.

Louis XI may have learned of St. Zenobius' ring from Florentine merchants and ambassadors, or from Philippe de Commines, who had visited Florence in 1478. 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.

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. 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. 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

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60 Wilson, 1992, 36.
61 Rosselli, 2:1101; Del Migliore, 27.
62 Mazza, xiii; Nardi, 1994, 112.
63 The Florentines had enjoyed good diplomatic relations with Louis XI since his ascension to the throne in 1461. See Milanesi; Desjardins, 1:8-11, 100-02.
64 In a show of support for Lorenzo de Medici, Louis XI dispatched Commines 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. Commines, 1972, 375-78; 1867-74, 1163-213; 3:11-42; Desjardins, 1:11.
65 Champion, 1928, 2:200; Desjardins, 1:10-11, 161. Cleugh, 282, mistakenly states that St. Zenobius' ring belonged to Lorenzo.
in the 1480s.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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,"\textsuperscript{70} and sometime shortly after it was written, Lorenzo sent the Governor of Provence, Palamède de Forbin, to Louis XI with St. Zenobius' ring.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

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

\textsuperscript{69} Vasari, 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.

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{73} Louis 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.

\textsuperscript{74} Nicolai 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. 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. In a further letter of 4 December, Lionetto de’ Rossi, manager of the Lyons branch of the Medici bank, informed Lorenzo of the French agent’s imminent arrival.

A note on the verso of Parent’s letter and an entry in Lorenzo’s protocols, the registers recording his outgoing correspondence, show that the king’s agent arrived in Florence on 12 December. However, the protocols 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. On the same day, Lorenzo also dispatched a letter to Lorini in which

75 Published in Vaesen and Charavay, eds., 10:16-17 n. 1821; Louis XI, 526-27 n. 605.
76 Le Roy vous éscrit et ma chargé aussi vous éscrit touchant l’anneau [de] saint Zanobi dans pardevant je vous avez éscrit, 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 emploie que je stag que le farait de bon [illéisible]. Monseigneur il vous envoyer par ung de mes gens... la piece de monnaie e la chose en maniere d’aguis des.” 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 Avallon. See De Charmasse; Lapye and Scheurer, 1:243-44.

77 The 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 è circa dieci o dodici di che passò per qui uno che il Re vi mandato per quel anello di san Zanobi, il quale chome io vi dissi per meglio ch’io vi scrissi per lui et ciòe pel detto messo anzi pare che a ogni modo glielo dobbiate mandare perche sia lungo andato anzi vi manderà presto ma vorter demandassì anche fargli segno presentare per uno de’nostri per mezzo del quale chi sarà per noi in chorte averà quella licenzia che servirà assai a altre chose.” ASF, MAP, filza X, n. 610.
79 Del Piazzo, ed., 217.
80 Lorini 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. Moreover, in a letter of 10 December, Lorenzo told the king and Lorini that Bernardo, Francesco de’Giorlami’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”).

Bernardo de’Giorlami, accompanied by the sacristan of San Giovanni, Andrea di Cristofano da Gaiuole, probably arrived at the French court in December of 1482. 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. In a further letter of 5 August, he reported that the boy was still enjoying the king’s favors in France.

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. 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.

81 Del Piazzo, 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 1.
84 “Ma io ti voglio dire un’altra cosa ti piacerà, che il figliolo di Francesco Girolami si trova appresso alla persona del Re di Francia e vuolgli gran bene perché 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 dall’buona provisione; per tanto ti conforto a scriverli e mantenerli 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 trova... 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 crece et anello da quelli che ha mandati, et che li manda la nota a punto di quando ha ristratto.” Del Piazzo, ed., 239.
87 Commynes, 1972, 399-400; Ipcar, 20.
THE COURT BATTLE OVER ST. ZENOBIOUS’ 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). 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. 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 casketta was decorated with an inscription recording by whom and for whom it had been made.

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.

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68 The manuscript’s colophon reads: “Cy finist la vie de Saint Zenobie par commande ment du Roy Loys XI’ translatee d’ytalian en Fransoyz par moy Jacques Sigaud secretaire dudit Seigneur Fan 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.

69 Appendices 3 and 4.

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

71 Appendix 1.
La nature du gloireux monseigneur saint Zenobie. En quel temps et sous quel prince. Et de quel pays et marf sut fils. Et comment avait qu'il eust dixmer ans il fut tresprudent et sainct fere.

Pres san de luminauon de sain secteur shiurest tres ser saizante zing. et le renom de ramuer. que auoit elle eu saint sieur apostolique sainte silvestre du tante. Et l'empereur constantin xve. ans en son empire. Il pleut a dieu ommitenir duquel vriement tous bien que eu selu temps que le monde estoit plan de tendre: saes seines et de sortes de infidélité. masque tant d' Unner: de bien en ce monde comme sur le seigneur monseigneur saint Zenobie fils: d'un noble cité en flore: nomme lucen de la fameuse: bonne maison des broumes. comme il eust est prophete pour l'edit nomm l u cenq. que d'un deuent tant d' Unner ou monde de samette. Et par sa nee qui se nommoit.
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 (disfactus). 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 1/6 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

92 Appendix 2.
93 Appendix 3.
94 Appendix 4.
one to be made by a certain Francesco di Matteo who was then to deposit it at the Medici bank. 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. Although the terms of his commission for the St. Zenobius reliquary were confirmed on 28 September, the reliquary may never have been executed. 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.

95“deliberaverunt quod Laurentius de Medicis et socii, bancherii, dent et solvant, Francisco Matrei aurifício florenos mille quingentos viginti quinque et septem octavos, aliter florini de auro in auro larghi, pro reficiendo casseptum de auro largitam per Serenissimum Regem Lodovichum Regem Francorum anulo Sancti Zenobii et de pecunii apud eos depositiis per Franciscum Zenobii de Hyeronimis et Bernardum eius filium in totem florini 1525 \( \frac{7}{8} \) larghi.” ASF, Pupilli, 98, fol. 136v. I thank Humphrey 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 officiis ut supra, servatis servandis etc., deliberaverunt et deliberando mandaverunt Francisco Matrei, aurifici, cui commissa est reficiendi cassetta aurea largita per Serenissimum Regem Lodovichum Regem Francorum, anulo Sancti Zenobii, ut quam primum per eum fuerit refecta, per eum consignetur et super bancho Laurentii de’ Medicis et sociorium de Florentia, ubi in quo et super quod stat modis, formis, nominibus et conditionibus, quibus sunt floreni 1525 \( \frac{7}{8} \) largi, apud eos depositiis 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 nell’anno 1485 adì 10 di settembre li officiali de’pupilli dettero 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 florini 1732 larghi ... per la valuta di libbre 18 d’oro di carati 21 et \( \frac{7}{4} \) rittari come si diceva di detta cassetta le quali danari si dovesse rifare un’altra cassetta d’oro per detto anello, conclude che detta sententia si dichiarassì 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. 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. 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. Even so, the documents related to this pious foundation show only that on 23 May, Francesco and his eldest surviving son, Raffaello, deposited a 600-florin endowment for the canonry at the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova.

According to Francesco's testament of 18 February 1511, he still had custody of St. Zenobius' ring, which he kept in his home. 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

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

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

101 Item quod ille sec deputatus et presentatus canonicius, nunccupetur canonicius canonicius tunculi ad honorem Sancti Zenobii, qui fuit de domo et familia de leronimis 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.

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

103 Confessio deputati. Dominus Leonardus Buonafé, hospitalarius hospitialis Sancte Marie Nove de Florentia, confessio fuit habuisse et hanc penes se in depositum a Francisco de leronimis et Raphaello eius filio, sub nomine capituli cathedrale ecleseie florentine, florenos sexcentos aurii 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 eius domo et in antiquitatis fuit apud cius predecesores anulum aureum olim sancti Zenobi archeiarchipelic florentini de familia dicti testatoris quod cum devotione custodiunt hic usque et propriam declaravit quod in futurum retinatur per dominum Jacobum eius filium infrascriptum canonicium sancte Marie Floris de Florentia dum viveci et successice per maiorem natu de descenditibus 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. If so, this truly was a miracle, as Rafaello died in 1532, one year before Ferrante's first son was born.

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. 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.

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.

105 Ferrante 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.
106 See the Gonzaga family tree in Simon, viii-ix.
107 "una cassetta intragiata 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).
108 Ibid. 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.
109 Bicchi 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. 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.

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110 See above, nn. 83 and 84.
Appendix 1

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

ASF, Pupilli, 193 (filze del cancelliere), fol. 338r-v.

Dinanzi a voi, signori ufficiali di pupilli et adulti del comune di Firenze, tutori et per tempo chur[atorij] de’figliuoli et heredità di Filippo di Zanobi Giroliam, 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 deceti figliuoli et heredità di deceto Filippo Giroliam constituto da voy et dal vostro ufficio legittimamente secondo et vostri or- dini et del comune di Firenze, che del[I’anno 1482 o in altro più vero tempo, in effecto Francesco di Zanobi Giroliam, ciptadino fiorentino, zio paterno di deceti vostri pupilli, essendo stato richiesto dal cristianissimo allora re di Francia che deceto 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’Giroliam e apartieni anchora a detti soprascritti vostri pupilli. Et che quando deceto Francesco fu requisito et richiesto dal deceto cristianissimo re di Francia del deceto anello, el deceto Francesco promisse liberamente a Monna Agnola vedova, madre et anchora actrice di detti vostri pupilli, che insieme adveranno alla deceta maestà del re di Francia col deceto anello. Bernardo, figliuolo di deceto Francesco, e Giovanni, figliuolo di deceto Filippo, vostro adulto oveto pupillo, chome è chonveniente et ragionevoele, stimando che il deceto cristianissimo rege di Francia rimunerarebbe chi deceto anello portassi alla sua maestà. Et che dipoy deceto Francesco, malitosamente et chon animo di fraudare et detti vostri poveri pupilli si d’onore chome d’utile, mandò al deceto cristianissimo re di Francia detto Bernardo suo figliuolo et uno prete Andrea di Cristofano da Gaiuole, al presente saerestano in sancto Giovanni di Firenze, con deceto suo figliuolo, lasciato indrieto deceto Giovanni vostro pupillo oveto adulto, contro alla voglia di deceta Monna Agnola, allora tutrice di detti vostri pupilli, et in grave danno et disonore di detti vostri pupilli et contro a ogni buono chostume et honesto vire, a volere attribuire a sse proprio quello è comune, chome se fussi suo proprio et non apartenessi ad altri. Et che per deceto chagione e deceta malitia di deceto Francesco di non volere che detto Giovanni, vostro pupillo oveto adulto, andassi con deceto anello in Francia col suo figliuolo et con deceto prete Andrea al cristianissimo re di Francia, chome affermativamente aveva promesso a deceta Monna Agnola, madre di detti vostri pupilli, allora tutrice, et vostri pupilli et heredità furono et sono in danno di fiorini ottocentoventi larghi, i quali sono venuti nelle mani di deceto Francesco indebitamente e quelli è et tiene, che tocchano et appartengono a detti vostri pupilli, oltre [sic] a quella somma che è avuto lui dal deceto cristianissimo re di Francia per deceto anello. Et quali fiorini ottocentoventi larghi et più, appartenti a’vostri pupilli il deceto Francesco à avuti et alle sua mani sono pervenuten, et quali tocchavan et tocchano a’vostri pupilli per cagione di più somme di danari et horo per il deceto cristianissimo re di Francia donati et dati a Bernardo deceto, figliuolo di deceto Francesco, che andò con deceto anello appartenate a’vostri pupilli chome a deceto Francesco, isbattuto le spese dello andare et tornare et stare là et [illegible] et ogni cosa, perché per deceto rispetto della casata et honore di deceto anello gli ebbe sì da deceto Filippo in deceto nome chome da deceta Monna Agnola. Et che deceto Francesco piú et piú volti [sic] è stato richiesto che dia et paghy detti fiorini 820 larghi a detti vostri pupilli et heredità e a deceto Filippo actore o a deceta Monna Agnola actrice, la quale chosa deceto Francesco è sempre ricusato et al presente richusa, in grave danno et preudito de’vostri poveri pupilli, et in disonore del vostro ufficio et contro a’buoni chos-
tumi et honorato et buono vivere et contro alla forma degli statuti si del vostro ufficio come del
comune di Firenze. Et pertanto il decto Filippo, in decto nome, constituto personalmente di-
nanzi a voy et al vostro ufficio, et adimandò et adimanda che per le vostre signorie si
pronumpiti, sententii et dichiari tutte le predecente cose essere state et essere vere, et decto
Francesco di Zanobi di Bernardo Girolami condenniate per vostra diffinitiva sententia a dare
et pagare overo al ristituire a decto Filippo di Michele di Tura, actore predecto, in decto nome,
e detti fiorini ottocentoventi larghi per le ragioni et cagioni sopradette et per altre che alle vos-
tre signorie si diranno et le spese fatte et che si faranno. Adimandando che per le vostre
signorie sommariamente si proceda et pronumpiti et sententii secondo le vostre conscientie,
veduto la verità del facto, rachommandando sempre e vostri poveri pupilli, che a lloro soveng-
hiate et a lloro siete aiutori perché a lloro è stato toltio et utile et onore senza loro colpa, perché
loro non sanno parlare, et per la età infantile et minore non sono capaci né d'onore né 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 Uficiali de' pupilli e adulti della città di Firenze e loro uficio detto, Francesco di Zanobi Girolami, cittadino fiorentino, in detta asserita causa et questione dinanzi a loro vertente intra detto Francesco Girolami, da una parte, et Monna Agnola, donna fu di Filippo Girolami, come asserta attrice et madre de'detti figliuoli et heredi di detto Filippo Girolami et negli asserti modii et nomi nella detta asserita causa contenti. E insistenti detto Francesco a ogni e qualunque cosa, altra volta per lui, in detta asserita causa, dette e allegate et da lloro non si partendo, disse et dice le cose adomandate per lui in detta asserita causa potersi et doversi fare per detti Signori Uficiali di ragione et secondo la forma delle statuti et ordini del Comune di Firenze et del vostro uficio, et così farsi et pronunziarsi domandò et domanda detto Francesco, et la parte adversa nelle spese di detta causa doversi conde[m]prene per le ragioni et cagioni altra volta per lui dette et allegate. Et acciò che le cose adomandate per lui in detta asserita causa si faccino et possansi fare per detti Signori Uficiali di ragione et secondo la forma de'detti statuti, detto Francesco in detta causa et dinanzi a detti Signori Uficiali provare intende et far fede de capitoli infrascripti, cioè:

In prima che la cosa fu et è sanza che mai dell'anno 1482 o altro tempo detto Francesco Girolami, da una parte, et detta Monna Agnola, vedova et donna fu del detto Filippo Girolami et madre et asserta et attrice de' di detti figliuoli et heredi di detto Filippo, dall'altra parte, havendosi a mandare detta reliquia de detto anello al detto serenissimo et cristianissimo re di Francia, si convenissino insieme et facessino alcuna convenzione che detta reliquia si mandasss per Bernardo, figliuolo del detto Francesco, et per Giovanni, figliuolo del detto Filippo, insieme di compagnia, e che ogni spesa che intorno a ceci si facessi e ogni guadagno che per ciò si trasse et risultasssussino comuni tra lloro. Ma la verità fu et è, in contrario, che volendo detto Francesco et essendo stato pregato et gravato da molti cittadini di Firenze et massime dalla Magnificenza di Lorenzo, che mandasss detto anello che detta Monna Agnola mandasss con detto anello detto Giovanni suo figliuolo et di detto Filippo, a ogni sua spesa et guadagno, mai detta Monna Agnola volle consentire ma sempre riuscì nè volle che detto Giovanni v'andasss nè fare alcuna spesa, e tre o quattro di inanzi detto Francesco mandasss detto Bernardo suo figliuolo et anche la sera dinanzi, ch'è poi la mattina seguente che detto Bernando andò, mandò a detto Francesco per più e più persone a dire come lei per nessuno modo voleva che detto Giovanni suo figliuolo andasss con detto anello nè fare intorno a ciò alcuna spesa, ma che era contenta che detto Francesco vi mandasss lui chi a lui pareva, a ogni sua spesa, e ch'è ogni guadagno che di ciò si facesse, si fusse liberamente di detto Francesco Girolami, massime considerato all'età di detto 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 sarebbe potuto fare tale camino, nè ella fare tale spesa intorno a ciò. E così fu et è vero, pubblico et notorio et pubblica voce et fama nella città di Firenze et massime 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 ufficiali de’ pupilli et adulci del comune di Firenze, tuto et chome tuto et per tempo curatori de’ figliuoli et heredità di Filippo di Zanobi Girolami decto, Filippo di Michele di Tura, ciptadinio fiorentino, actore et chome actore di decti figliuoli et heredità di decto Filippo di Zanobi Girolami et ne[i] modi et nomi che et chome altra volta comparì et adiminandò contro a Francesco di Zanobi Girolami, zio paterno di decti pupilli. Et insistendo el decto Filippo in decto nome in tutte le chose altre voltì [sic] per lui adomandate dinanzi a decti ufficiali et loro ufficio contro a decto Francesco Girolami, la quale comparigraphio fa el decto Filippo maxime per chagione d’un asserta comparigraphio et asserte excepcioni et capitoli, exibiti et dati per decto Francesco contro alla decta petizione, le quali excepcioni et capitoli non furono et non sono vere, ma furono et sono falsi, et se alcuno testimonio sopra a quegli examinati a probato alcuna cosa di quelle che nel capitolo si contenghiono a probato et pruova el falso, et chosi afirmò et afferma decto Filippo in decti nomi. Et perché decto Filippo, in decto nome, sa che la verità non sapino bene né vedere né intendere, se le vostre signorie non veghiono el forzerino d’oro di [libbre] XV o piú, fatto per el cristianissimo re di Francia, et decto anello non si esibisce et mostra ove si dipone apresso ydona persona, o seculare o faycha, chome pare al decto Francesco Girolami, che quello à nelle mani et apresso di sì contro alla vohtà di decto Filippo in decto nome, perché in su decto forzerino sono di scriture puntu[almente] le lettere a contemplatione di chi et a chi fu fatto decto dono. Sicché lo effecto sia che le vostre signorie, avendo a giudicare decto caso seconvo le vostre conscientie, è necessario veggiate et abbiate facultà di vedere decto forzerino, perché secondo i vostri ordinì avete a giudicare secondo le vostre conscienti[e], veduto la verità del facto. Et però al decto Filippo in decto nome adominandò et adominandò che per parte dal vostro ufficio sia chomandato a decto Francesco Girolami che diponga et exhiba el decto forzerino d’oro apresso a decti signori ufficiali o apresso a ydona persona alle predette cose, in modo che decti ufficiali et pupilli possano quello a ltoro piacevere vedere. Et tutto faccia infra quattro di dal dì di tale richiesta et chomandamento. Et se decto Francesco ricusassì che decto forzerino non si vedessì, la quale cosa non può né debbe fare né di ragione né secondo i vostri ordinì del vostro ufficio, allora in decto caso le vostre signorie sono tenute et debbono multare decto Francesco Girolami in fiorini 500 larghi pi pi, chome a ltoro pare, a dare al cassiere di camera del nostro comune di Firenze, perché ogni volta che nasce casi di disubbidienza in danno de’vostri pupilli, le vostre signorie debbono multare tali disubbidienti et con risesso et [illegibile] et chome pare alle vostre signorie. Et chosi adominandò et adominandò decto Filippo in decto nome che decto Francesco sia multato in detti fiorini 500 larghi o pi secondo gli ordinì sia, in quanto in quattro d dal dì sarà citato a vedere la presente comparigraphio non arà esibito et prodotto decto forzerino dinanzi alle vostre signorie o in altro luogo dove le vostre signorie abbino facultà de vederlo insieme co’vostri predetti pupilli, et quali per el decto Filippo vi si rachomandano et che a ltoro sia administrata ragione et giustizia sommarià et che in loro s’observino gli statuti et provisioni che in loro favore parlano, et che le loro ragioni siano suplitate per le vostre signorie et che non sieno oppressati né tenuti in litigio. Adominandò le spese fatte et ch farà el decto Filippo nella decta causa, et adominandò decto Filippo tutte le predette cose doversi notificare a decto Francesco Girolami per uno famigliol del vostro ufficio.
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 (filza 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, Alexandre 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 uffizio, et di deceto 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 deceto actorio nome di deci Giovanni, Alexandre et Filippo, vostri pupilli, et di deceto per lo adrieto Filippo loro padre h[e]redità et beni, che da X, XX, XXX, XXXX et 50 anni in qua proximi pasati, e da inde innanzi tanto che del contrario non esta memoria, la linea degli ascendentí di Zanobi di Bernardo Girolami anno avuto et tenuto et a llo è apartenuto la chustodia e governo d’uno anello d’oro in uno breve overo guscio d’arieto, colla testa di deceto Messer Saneto Zanobi el quale fu della sancta memoria di Messer San Zanobi, Veschovo di Firenze, et chome sua reliquia retenuto, avuto, trattato e riputato, et chosi lo tenne et chustodí deceto Zanobi mentre che lui vise, doppo la morte di deceto Bernardo suo padre. Et similmente lo tenne et chustodí doppo la morte di deceto Zanobi. Francesco et Filippo, sua figliuoli legíptimi et naturali et heredi universalí di deceto Zanobi. Et chosi doppo la morte di deceto Filippo, padre di deceti vostri pupilli, fu tenuto et chustodido da detto Francesco et dal detto Giovanni, vostro pupillo overo adulto oggi, et da Monna Agnola, donna fu del deceto Filippo, madre et tutrice allora di deceti vostri pupilli et come loro tutrice lo teneva et chustodiva. Et che dipoi, nello anno 1482 et del mese di noviembre di deceto anno o in altro più vero tempo, el serenissimo et cristianissimo re Lodovico, re di Francia, a reverentia di deceto Messer saneto Zanobi et per honoratamente tenere deceta sua reliquia, dòa a deceta reliquia una cassetta d’oro, di peso de libbre XVI o altro più vero peso, la quale cassetta pervenne alle mani di deceto Francesco Girolami è non vi si tiene dentro deceto anello chome fu la volonta del donatore, anzi richiesto più volte deceto Francesco si dalla deceta Monna Agnola si etiamdo dal deceto Filippo, actore predecto in deceto nome, che la tengha all’uso a che la fu deputata et che deceta cassetta et anello exisibicha, la quale cassetta non exibisce né anchora el deceto anello. El quale de presente è appresso al deceto Francesco Girolami et lui quello tiene, contro alla volonta de deceti vostri pupilli et di deceto Filippo loro actore in deceto nome. Ed è publica fama nella cipta di Firenze che deceto Francesco abbi detta cassetta disfarta, che sarebbe ed è contro alle leggi et buoni chostumi che quello che è una volta diputato a uso religioso s’adoperassì a uso humano. Pertanto deceto Filippo, actore predecto in deceto nome et chome actore de detti vostri pupilli, a quali vostri pupilli secondo le chose de sopra narrare s’apartiene tenere cura di deceta reliquia e che sia scondo che debbe stare et le sue chose et al comune servigio. E adomanda deceto Filippo in deceto nome che per vostra diiffinitiva sententia si pronumpti, sententii et dichiarì tutte le predette cose essere stare et essere vere, et deceto anello doversi tenere in luogo et modo che la custodia sia comune et possasi a ogni ora vedere per ciascuno de detti vostri pupilli et per le vostre signorí loro tutori et pro tempo curatori et mentre che fussino sottoposti al vostro uficio secondo gli ordini del vostro uficio, et etiamdo di deceto Francesco Girolami, et quello a petizione di ciascheduno de loro usare all’uso conveniente, et deceta cassetta doversi esibire da deceto Francescho et tenerla in quello luogo et chome è deceto dello anello, et essendo disfatta, come è pubblica fama, quella doversi rifare dal deceto
Francesco a detti effecti. Et a tutte le predette cose et loro effecti per vostro ufficio sententialmente si condanni et condannato si constringha decto Francescho, implorando il vostro ufficio li sia administrata ragione et giustizia, procedendo intorno a cibi di ragione et di fatto et giudicandosi secondo le vostre conscientie, veduto la verità del fatto, raccomandando sempre e vostri poveri pupilli, e quali per loro non sanno né dire né fare per difetto della infantile etate e pueritia, dicentes domino subveni pupillo et ei adiutor eris.
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