Bram Bootsma
s1515926
b.m.bootsma@umail.leidenuniv.nl
Classics and Ancient Civilizations, MA
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Prof. C.H. Pieper
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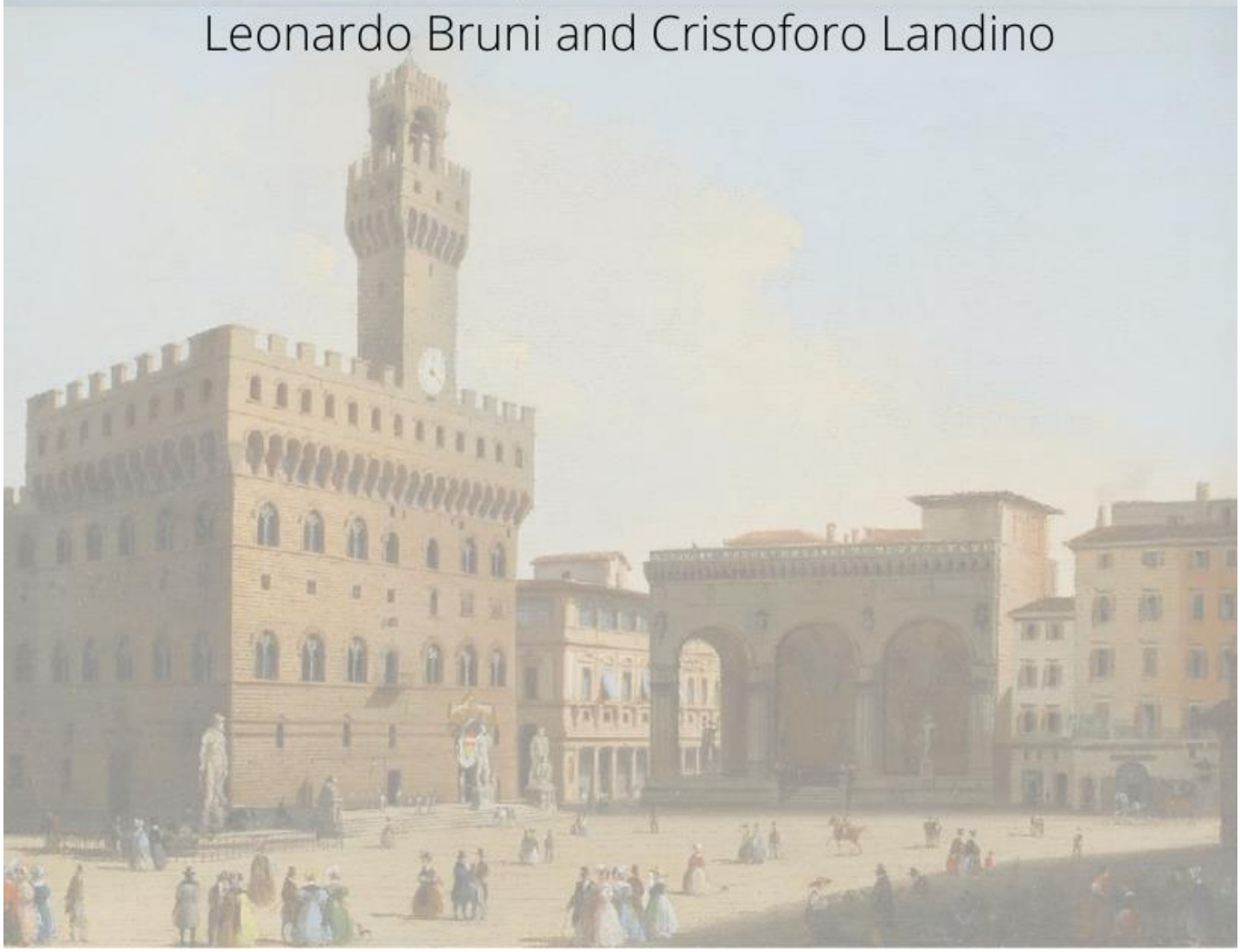
Republicanism in 15th century Florentine literature

A comparison between Leonardo Bruni and Cristoforo Landino



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Introduction

When we think of the renaissance of Latin literature, we think of the city of Florence. In the course of a few hundred years the city had developed itself into an independent, flourishing centre of commerce, power and the liberal arts. The political climate in Florence during the 14th century and especially during the 15th century, on which this thesis will place its focus, was exceedingly favourable to writers and artists who had the capability and will to represent Florence as a free, powerful and beautiful city. However, the image of Florence and its political leaders changed over the course of time due to various changes the city went through. At the beginning of the 15th century, the political system was a republican one, where multiple families and factions had a say in the government of the city. During the first decades of the 15th century, the most powerful of these families was the Albizzi family, but there was another that was on the rise: the Medici. This was not an ancient family descending from knights and lords or even the Romans, but its first noticeable ancestor was a banker, named Giovanni di Bicci de Medici.[1] The wealth he acquired with this bank was used to buy influence in the city, which gave him some political esteem. However, his political esteem and fame were far outdone by his son Cosimo, who became the leader of his family after his father died in 1429 up until his own death in 1464.[2] As the head of his family, he was first exiled from the city, but later gained control over Florentine politics in 1434.[3] This marked a turning point in Florentine politics, which also had its effects on literature. Whereas his father did not care much for being a patron of the arts, Cosimo spent an enormous portion of his fortune on the funding of projects of architects, painters, sculptors and writers. The literary production of 15th century Florence is immense and it can give us an insight into the effects the historical changes had on literature, and vice versa. On the one hand, literature is produced by an author that is not independent of his environment, that is to say, among other things, his family, his education and the power structures of the society he lives in. A literary work produced by such an author can therefore be seen as a reflection of the author's interpretation of his world. On the other hand, since historical events are represented by literature, literature's interpretation of those events has the ability to shape the perception people have of them.[4] One of these historical changes was the development of the system of government. The Medici were the ones to initiate this development and therefore it is not surprising to see the subject focus of Florentine authors shifting. At the beginning of the century, literature concerning the history of Florence was mainly focused on representing Florence as a free, wealthy and powerful republic from the time of its foundation. Later on, in the second half of the century, literature's perspective on Florentine history was changing to a

[1] Brucker, G., 'The Medici in the Fourteenth Century', in: *Speculum 32.1* (1957), 21-22.
[2] Hibbert, C., *The Rise and Fall of the House of Medici*, Hammondsworth (1979), 346-347.
[3] I will elaborate on the Florentine political scene in the first chapter of this thesis.
[4] Greenblatt, S., *Renaissance Self-Fashioning, From More to Shakespeare*, Chicago (1980). 1-9.

position more tolerable of autocratic rule. I do not mean to say that literature started supporting tyrants, but merely that it adopted a slightly more positive approach to autocrats throughout Florentine history.[5] The literature I choose to research in this thesis is that of the humanists. The term 'humanism' requires some explanation. Humanism is a literary movement that pursued to acquire moral virtue and inspire others to do the same, by learning from the examples of history set by antiquity. Humanists studied ancient texts from Greece and Rome and tried to apply their lessons to their own (political) life and, in the case of Florence, to their city. This movement created a shift to a focus on the human aspects of life rather than its spiritual aspects, which had been the focus of the Middle Ages. This approach expressed itself in literature, philosophy and art.[6] My choice for humanist literature is motivated by two reasons. First, in order to examine political tendencies in Florentine literature, it is necessary that the literary works have political content. Second, I want to investigate how Florentine literature used literary examples from ancient Greece and Rome to achieve portraying a certain image of the city of Florence.

The best example of Florentine literature in the first half of the 15th century is the *Historia Florentini Populi*, written by Leonardo Bruni.[7] This extensive twelve-book long treatise on the entire history of Florence was considered the official history of Florence by the Signoria, which was the city's government, and Bruni's *History* can therefore give us a proper view on history writing of the first half of the 15th century. The *History* was so popular even, that it earned Bruni the honour of the Chancellery, and, after he died, a state burial and a tomb in the Santa Croce.[8] Although the *History* was finished posthumously in 1444, Bruni had written the first book already in 1415, when Florence was ruled as an oligarchic republic.[9] At this time, the republic of Florence was expanding her borders in

[5] Baron, H., *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism: Essays on the Transition from Medieval to Modern Thought*, Princeton (1988), 17-18. Hans Baron argues that Florentine humanist writers were themselves firm believers in the republican institutions of Florence and that this belief is expressed in their work.
Hankins, J. 'The ''Baron Thesis'' after Forty Years and some Recent Studies of Leonardo Bruni, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56.2 (1995), 309-338. In this article, James Hankins rejects Baron's claim that these writers were themselves fervent republicans. He argues that their literary works were not a representation of their personal beliefs, but that these writers were professional rhetoricians who acted on the orders of their political masters, which means that their works could be seen more as state propaganda. When we adopt this view, it is easy to explain that the literary focus shifted along with the political realities during the fifteenth century.
[6] Maxson, B., *The Humanist World of Renaissance Florence*, New York (2014). 1-4.
Hankins (1992), 69-70.
[7] Hörnqvist, M., 'The two myths of civic humanism', in: *Renaissance Civic Humanism* (ed. J. Hankins), Cambridge (2000), 106-107.
[8] Griffiths, G., Hankins, J., Thompson, D., *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, Binghamton, New York (1987), 43.
Field, A., *The Intellectual Struggle for Florence: Humanists and the Beginnings of the Medici Regime 1420-1440*, Oxford (2017), 130-131.
[9] Hankins, J., The civic Panegyrics of Leonardo Bruni', in: *Renaissance Civic Humanism* (ed. J. Hankins), Cambridge (2000), 145, 153. The first book of the *History* is dated to the early 15th century. Bruni had written a work called the *Laudatio Florentine urbis* in 1404, which shows many similarities with the first book of the *History* in respect to their ancient literary models and themes.

Tuscany. In the first book of the *History*, Bruni tries to legitimize of the current political elite's position by shaping Florentine history in such a way that it shows a continuity in the city's republicanism. My choice for this book is motivated by the fact that it is dated to the early fifteenth century as well as by its content: the ancient foundation and early beginnings of the city of Florence, a theme that is much discussed by fifteenth century Florentine authors and that is adaptable to different purposes.

Another famous Florentine author who wrote about Florence's ancient foundation and early beginnings was Cristoforo Landino, who was a humanist from Arezzo like Bruni, but around 50 years younger than him. He wrote philosophical works, commentaries on ancient works such as the *Aeneid*, and produced three books of elegiac love poetry named the *Xandra*. The main subject of the *Xandra*, which was finished in 1460, is a woman called Xandra, whom Landino's poetic speaker desires, but in the third book another subject is introduced: the city of Florence.[10] This last book will be the focus of this thesis, because here Landino glorifies the city of Florence, both its early beginnings and more current affairs. The first book was originally dedicated to Leon Battista Alberti, but after Landino had finished books two and three, he rededicated all of them to Piero de Medici.[11]

Since the political climate had changed from the time Bruni wrote the first book of the *History*, it is interesting to see how Landino, around forty years later, fashions the city's image: what similarities and differences can be detected when comparing the *Xandra* with Bruni's first book of the *History*? This leads me to the following research question: ''How did the literary presentation of the city of Florence and its leaders develop in the fifteenth century, exemplified by Leonardo Bruni's first book of the *History of the Florentine People* and Cristoforo Landino's *Xandra*?'' I will try to answer this question by means of intertextuality. As Graham Allen writes, the theory of intertextuality poses that a text has no meaning in itself, but that it derives its meaning from its references and relations to other texts.[12] The meaning of a text can therefore be traced by tracing those references and relations it has with other texts. Therefore, I want to examine the ancient literary models both Bruni and Landino allude to, refer to and quote in order to create a text that presents a certain image of the city of Florence. In addition to this, I want to look at how Bruni and Landino themselves interpret and adapt historical events to fit their intended image of Florentine history.

In the first chapter, I will provide a historical setting of fifteenth century Florence in order to give the reader the proper background when reading the following chapters concerning Bruni's *History* and Landino's *Xandra*. Then in chapter two, I will discuss Bruni's *History*, focusing on how he creates a republican framework for Florence' history. In chapter three, I will look closely at book three of

[10] Chatfield, M.P., *Cristoforo Landino: Poems*, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2008), xiii-xviii.
[11] McNair, B., *Cristoforo Landino: his works and thought*, Leiden (2019), 13.
[12] Allen, G., *Intertextuality*, London (2000), 1-2.

Landino's *Xandra* in order to find out whether Landino's image of Florence differs from that of Bruni and if so, to what extent.

Political struggles in 15th century Florence

At the start of the 15th century, the republic of Florence was a flourishing centre of commerce, architecture and arts, some examples of which can still be seen today: the San Lorenzo, the bronze doors of the Baptistery and the Santa Maria del Fiore. Florence had by then recovered from the Black Death that raged through the city in the during the 1340's, which caused a population shrinkage of 50%. When the plague had abated, many of the old nobility were now impoverished, since the price of real estate (which was for the largest part in the hands of the nobility) had plummeted due to the fact that there were now only half as many people left in the city that wanted to rent or buy a home. However, the mercantile sector, which was less affected compared to the old nobility, saw a chance to invest cheaply in new real estate, slowly transforming the city's appearance by replacing the old wooden shacks with beautiful stone homes.[13] Due to the drastic decline in population, opportunities had arisen for new families. There was a void to be filled in the banking industry after the three leading banking families of Florence went bankrupt in the middle of the 14th century. This void was initially filled by multiple banking families, among which was the Medici family.[14] This family has no ancient history and is of no major importance until Giovanni di Bicci de Medici shows up on stage when he takes over the Medici bank from his uncle Veri de Medici.[15] This Giovanni was responsible for the rapid growth of the bank, which made it an international player of importance when he passed control of it to his son Cosimo. Giovanni and his family will be discussed elaborately in this chapter, because the Medici were largely responsible for the political changes in Florence in the fifteenth century.

In 1343, after the *signore* Walter of Brienne was chased out of the city by the Florentine people, a republican government, or Signoria, was established by twenty-one of the guilds.[16] From these guilds, nine members were elected to serve on the Signoria, the government body with supreme authority. The members only served for two months when they were replaced by a new group, in order to prevent someone from taking control of the city for himself. The Signoria was advised on their policy by the twelve *buomini* and the sixteen *gonfalonieri*, who were also elected from the ruling guilds. This republican system did provide a larger political base, but it was far from democratic: the Signoria made

[13] Brucker, G., *Renaissance Florence*, New York (1996), 26-27.
[14] Herlihy, D., Santa Maria Impruneta, in: *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni* (eds. G. Griffiths, J. Hankins, D. Thompson), Binghamton, New York (1987), 271.
Brucker (1957), 5-7.
[15] Idem. 21-22.
[16] Brucker (1996), 132-133.

sure that only about ten percent of the members of the guilds were made eligible for holding office.[17] This reservation of offices enticed tension, which exacerbated between two factions, the Albizzi family and the Ricci family. The Albizzi's wanted to return to a more aristocratic government ruled by the old nobility, whereas the Ricci's wanted a more popular government, ruled by 'new men' and artisans. This tension reached its climax in the Ciompi revolt, a popular uprising in 1378. When the popular guild regime collapsed three years later, the Albizzi family had won and a government dominated by patricians was established. However, this was not an abrupt change, as the patricians moved carefully to establish their control. They made sure that the less important guilds were still allotted two places on the Signoria, but at the same time they worked to reserve political offices for the rich and noble families.[18] In the fourteenth century, this patrician regime had established a rapid expansion Florentine territory, fighting wars with Pistoia, Pisa, Arezzo and Siena.[19] Wars would continue to be fought in the beginning of the fifteenth century, for example against Milan and Naples.[20] This republican, oligarchic and expansionist political system was to survive until Cosimo de Medici gained non-official control of Florentine politics in 1434. It is necessary to know some details concerning the Medici's rise to power, in order to be able to fully understand the changes in Florentine literature. These details will provide a clear picture of the Medici's, and in particular Cosimo's, political, financial and artistic activities and their effect on the city of Florence.

The road to power was long and carefully planned by Cosimo and his father, Giovanni. Giovanni occupied himself more with expanding the business than focusing on civil affairs. However, he did occasionally occupy public office.[21] He managed to become the official banker of the Curia in Rome in 1410 and of the private accounts of people working for the pope.[22] Giovanni had accumulated great wealth, which he used to invest in property, but also to support public funds and charities, which brought him the favour of the *populo minuto* of Florence.[23] When he gave over the control of the Medici bank to his son Cosimo in 1420, Cosimo became the officious head of the family.[24] Nine years later, Giovanni would die at the age of 68.[25] He ordered his son Cosimo not to organize a grand public funeral, because he wanted to be seen as an ordinary citizen. However, whatever Cosimo's intentions,

[17] Brucker (1996), 133-134.
[18] Idem. 135-136.
[19] Idem. 130-131.
[20] Idem. 81.
[21] Hibbert (1979), 32. He attained political office in 1402, 1408, 1411 and in 1421 he became the *gonfaloniere* of the Signoria.
[22] Idem. 34-35.
[23] Idem. 31-32. The *populo minuto* or 'small people' were the poor people of the lower guilds.
[24] Kent, D., *The Rise of the Medici: Faction in Florence 1426-1434*, Oxford (1978), 42.
[25] Idem. 42.

Giovanni's funeral procession through the streets of Florence was attended by other Medici family members, the *gonfaloniere* and members of the Signoria and the guilds.[26]

Much like his father, Cosimo had a talent for banking. But, in a number of ways, Cosimo was also different from his father. His father's extreme cautiousness in getting politically involved or in wanting to appear as nothing more than an ordinary citizen was less visible in Cosimo, even though his moves were always calculated.[27] Aside from politics, Cosimo also took an interest in the liberal arts, as he received a humanist education from and was close friends with (and later patron of) one of Florence's leading humanists at the beginning of the 15th century, Niccolò Niccoli.[28] Cosimo's interest in literature and art, as well as his knowledge of their potential to shape and immortalize their subject, caused him to get involved in patronage.

Cosimo always carefully calculated his political moves and attempted to stay out of the public spotlight.[29] However, things did not always go according to plan, which almost caused Cosimo to be banished for ten years and to lose all his political power in Florence. In 1429, the Signoria, headed by Rinaldo degli Albizzi, decided to go to war with Lucca, since the city had sided with the enemy during the war with Milan. Cosimo was against this, since he predicted a negative outcome of the war and its disastrous financial consequences for the people of Florence. However, he was called to serve on the Committee of Ten (the war committee), to which he reluctantly accepted out of a sense of patriotic duty. The war ended disastrously for Florence, as it failed to capture Lucca and lost 50.000 florins to the Milanese condottiere Francesco Sforza.[30] In the next three years, the war would expand as Venice joined the Florentine side and the Genovese allied with Milan. In these three tumultuous years, Rinaldo degli Albizzi managed to move popular opinion against Cosimo. Rinaldo seized the momentum to elect a new *gonfaloniere* loyal to the Albizzi family, who summoned Cosimo to the Signoria. He was immediately imprisoned and later charged with 'attempting to raise himself above the rank of an ordinary citizen'.[31] Since the city of Florence was governed as a republic, this was a serious offense, punishable by death. However, despite Rinaldo's attempts to enforce the death penalty, Cosimo was instead given a less final punishment, mostly due to pressure from his banking connections in Ferrara, Venice and Rome: he was banished to Padua for ten years and he or his family could never hold public

[26] Hibbert (1979), 98.
[27] Idem. 60.
[28] Hankins, J., 'Cosimo de' Medici as a Patron of Humanistic Literature', in: *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici 1389-1464* (ed. F. Ames-Lewis), Oxford (1992), 71-73.
[29] Ansell, C.K. and Padget, J.F., 'Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434', in: *American Journal of Sociology* 98.6 (1993), 1263-1264.
[30] Hibbert (1979), 42-43.
[31] Strathern, P., *The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance*, London (2007), 61.

office in Florence again.[32] This might seem like a major setback for Cosimo's aspirations to take control of Florence, but it would later provide him with an even firmer grip over the city than before.

Even though Rinaldo degli Albizzi practically had control over the city with Cosimo gone, it took only half a year until he lost that control again. In the summer of 1434 Florence again waged war with Milan and lost, but this time, Cosimo's Medici bank was not there to balance out the city's accounts. Elections were held and all seats on the Signoria, including the *gonfaloniere*, were filled by Medici supporters.[33] They invited Cosimo back into the city, to which Rinaldo took action: he posted mercenaries on the Piazza della Signoria, intending to break into the palazzo and overthrow the Signoria. However, the Signoria sent out the palace guards into the piazza, and a standoff ensued. Thanks to mediation by Pope Eugenius IV, who happened to reside in the city, the two opposing factions stood down and agreed that there should be no repercussions against either side. The Signoria then called a *Balià*, that voted that all Medici banishments were to be undone.[34] When Cosimo got word of this news, he returned to Florence and took control of the city.

Cosimo's return had an immense effect on Florentine writers, resulting in the production of propaganda, both pro-Cosimo and anti-Cosimo. For example, Poggio Bracciolini, a Florentine humanist under Cosimo's patronage, wrote a congratulatory letter to Cosimo on the latter's return to the city.[35] In the letter, Poggio writes that the entire Florentine populace was of the same mind: recalling Cosimo to the city and reinstating his former political powers.[36] A contrasting account is given by Francesco Filelfo in his *Commentationes Florentinae de exilio*, where he voices a common criticism of the Medici, namely that they had acquired their political power with money made by usury, which was a sin.[37] This, plus the fact that after Cosimo's return over seventy people were banished, proves that not everyone in the city felt the way Poggio describes.[38]

It must be clearly understood that Cosimo did not, at least openly, assume the role of tyrant. He knew that to do this, the city's traditional republican government, of which the Florentines were so proud, would have to be abolished and that he would face heavy opposition from all classes of Florentine society. The more prudent move was to leave all of the political institutions in place, feigning continuity, but to inconspicuously control these institutions completely. This is what Cosimo did.

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[32] Rubinstein (1996), 1.
[33] Idem. 1-2.
[34] Idem. 1-2.
Holmes, G., 'Cosimo and the Popes', in: *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464* (ed. F. Ames-Lewis), Oxford (1992), 24.
[35] Poggio, *Epistulae Familiares*, 5.3.
[36] Idem.
[37] Filelfo. *Commentationes Florentiae de exilio*.
[38] Hibbert (1979), 58.

First, Cosimo exiled the Albizzi faction from Florence in order to remove the most prominent opponents to his taking over the city.[39] Next, he also took unofficial control over the taxation system, which allowed him to impose a *castasto* on anyone he wished, so overestimating someone's property that he would immediately go bankrupt.[40] And, in order to secure the favour of the lowest, but largest class of society, he allowed a small number of that class to vote at an election of the Signoria.[41] This of course made little difference, since Cosimo had control over the *accoppiatori*, the people who selected the candidates who were considered electable for the Signoria, and he therefore had control over the Signoria itself.[42] All these political moves were made by Cosimo as a private citizen, not as the official ruler of the city. He was acutely aware of Florence's traditional republican values, which he was trying not to offend. He held office as *gonfaloniere* only three times during his life and he made no drastic changes in the city's constitution.[43] At least in appearance, Cosimo respected Florence's republican values.

As Cosimo now had control over Florentine politics, he directed his attention at improving the city's physical image by commissioning new buildings and works of art from the most prominent artists and architects: Donatello, Michellozzo and Brunelleschi. These were not the only artists Cosimo became involved with, since he also surrounded himself with humanist writers such as Niccolo Niccoli, Carlo Marsuppini and Marsilio Ficino.[44] There are different views on Cosimo's own interest in the literary works of the ancient Greeks and Romans, one put forth by Christopher Hibbert, the other by James Hankins. Hibbert writes that Cosimo dedicated so much attention and resources to patronage of humanist writers because of his own deep interest in ancient literature.[45] I agree with Hankins in rejecting that claim, since Cosimo did not have the ability to read Greek, nor to write elegantly in Latin.[46] This indicates that there must be another reason why Cosimo poured so much money into the employment of humanist writers.

Cosimo appointed his protégées to important offices in the city, the most important of which was the chancellery. The humanists Cosimo appointed were indebted to him for his financial and political

[39] Strathern (2007), 6.15. Despite pope Eugenius IV's assurance that there would be no banishments, Cosimo nevertheless banished the Albizzi faction to secure his control over the city.
[40] Rubinstein (1996), 100.
[41] Strathern (2007), 6.17.
[42] Rubinstein, N., *The Government of Florence Under the Medici (1434 to 1494)*, Oxford (1996). 13-20. The system whereby the accoppiatori could elect the entire Signoria lasted from 1434 until 1441, but after a three year interval it was reestablished. The power of the accoppiatori was diminished, from being able to elect all nine member to four. However, the Medici had by now consolidated their power enough to allow this change.
[43] Hibbert, C., 'The Rise and Fall of the House of Medici', London (1979). 59-60.
[44] Hankins, J., 'Patron of Humanistic Literature', in: Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464 (ed. F. Ames-Lewis), Oxford (1992), 71-73.
[45] Hibbert (1979), 44-45, 68-69.
[46] Hankins (1992), 75-77.

support, and in turn they showed their support for the regime. With his patronage, Cosimo did not only improve Florence's cultural status by attracting writers and artist from all over Italy to the city, but it also bought him political power.[47]

Just before Cosimo died in 1464, he ordered that his funeral should be without any large public celebrations, but this request was ignored. He received a marble tomb, on which the words *Pater Patriae* were inscribed. This title was once bestowed on Cicero, who was considered to be one of the best republican statesmen that the ancient world had produced.[48] The allusions of the title *Pater Patriae* are however not solely republican, since it was also bestowed on Augustus by the senate, and after him the emperors received the title.[49] The ambiguity of this title allows different interpretations by different writers of the time. After Cosimo's death, his 48-year old son Piero took over as head of the family. Even though he was afflicted by sickness, he managed to keep control over Florence and handled the Medici bank's affairs well, until his death five years later in 1469.[50]

From the historical events portrayed here, one can conclude that the political scene had changed drastically during the 15th century. At the end of the 14th and at start of the 15th century, the city was ruled as a republic, which was controlled by an oligarchy of noble families. This started to change, as people from other social classes managed to secure positions within the city's government, of which the most prominent and influential was the Medici family. Due to their extreme wealth, the Medici, starting with Cosimo, gained more and more influence in Florentine politics, resulting in Cosimo's unofficial taking of power in 1434. When Cosimo died, his son Piero succeeded him as unofficial ruler of Florence, implying the workings of a traditional autocratic system, where power was transferred from father to son. However, Florence was officially still a republic, which meant that Piero had to maintain appearances that the Signoria still held political power. In the next two chapters, I will examine texts written by Leonardo Bruni and Cristoforo Landino, in order to see how literature concerning the city of Florence in respect to its political climate changed during the 15th century. First, I will discuss the first book of Bruni's *Historiae Florentini Populi*, in which he fashions Florentine history in a republican manner. Second, an analysis of Landino's third book of his *Xandra* will show that literature regarding Florentine politics and history indeed has changed, and in what ways.

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[47] Hankins (1992), 80-81.
[48] Juvenal, *Satires*, 8.243-4.
Rubinstein, N., 'Cosimo optimus civis', in: *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici 1389-1464* (ed. F. Ames-Lewis), Oxford (1992), 19.
[49] Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 58.
Bennett, J., *Trajan optimus princeps*, London (1997), 54.
[50] Hibbert (1979), 101, 112.
Rubenstein (1996),

Leonardo Bruni's book I of the *History*: the continuity of republicanism

Leonardo Bruni was born in 1370 in Arezzo, Tuscany.[51] He started out as a student of law, but he abandoned these studies to become a pupil of the humanist Coluccio Salutati, who was the Chancellor of Florence at that time.[52] With him, Bruni gained access to the texts of ancient Greek and Roman writers such as Aristotle, Cicero and Sallust. Bruni, like Salutati, became what is now called a 'civic humanist': a fervent republican humanist who sought to improve the political climate of his city by inspiring virtue, learned from ancient models, in the city's leading citizens and to personally take an active role in politics.[53] Aside from the fact that Bruni was not a fervent republican himself, he is a prime example of civic humanism.[54] He first served as papal secretary (1405-1414) in Rome and later as Chancellor of Florence (1410-1411 and 1427-1444).[55] Especially the Chancellery brought Bruni prestige in Florence, both in politics and literature, because that position required great diplomatic as well as literary skill. The prestige and fame Bruni enjoyed, and still enjoys, is less for his political career than his literary career.

Bruni produced many different Latin texts: philosophical treatises, orations, historiographical texts and translations of Greek works.[56] The most famous of all is his historiographical work, the *History of the Florentine People*, in which he describes Florence's entire history from its ancient foundation up to just before his present day. As I have said in the introduction, this text was received so well by the cultural and political elite that it was accepted by the Signoria as the official history of Florence. Their appreciation of Bruni's work is surely due to the *History*'s elegant style, language and historical detail, but it is also due to its political content, which favours Bruni's intended audience: the political elite. This political elite however, had changed. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Florence's political elite before 1434 consisted of a number of powerful families that governed the Florentine republic, but after that year it was made up almost entirely of Medici family members or their supporters. In the case of the first book of the *History*, Bruni's intended audience would have been the powerful families that controlled Florentine government at that time. These families benefited from a republican view of Florentine history, as it legitimized their position of power within the city's government.

In the *Laudatio Florentine urbis*, Bruni had already represented Florence as the Roman republic's heir, both to their empire and to its position as the cultural and political centre of Italy, where all citizens

[51] Griffiths, Hankins, Thompson (1987), 9.
[52] Field (2017), 129.
[53] Baron (1988), 13.
[54] Hankins (1995), 329-330. In the introduction, I have already explained how Hankins nuanced Baron's term 'civic humanism'.
[55] Field (2017), 130-131.
[56] Griffiths, Hankins, Thompson (1987), 37-41.

are free and equal.[57] The primacy Florence has attained in Italy is a result of the city's republican institutions that secure that freedom and equality. Bruni continues to portray the republican vision of Florentine history visible in the *Laudatio* throughout the first book of the *History*. In this chapter, I want to find out how Bruni manages to portray a continuous republican picture of Florence's history by looking at the ancient literary models he uses for his narrative as well as his own interpretations and adaptations of historical events.

In the preface to the *History*, Bruni first explains why it is so important to learn about history.

'Nam cum provecti aetate homines eo sapientiores habeantur, quo plura viderunt in vita, quanto magis historia nobis, si accurate legerimus, hanc praestare poterit sapientiam, in qua multarum aetatum facta consiliaque cernuntur, ut et quid sequare et quid vites faciliter sumas excellentiumque virorum gloria ad virtutem excitere?' [58]

Because since men who are advanced in age are seen as wiser, as they have seen more in life, how much more could history, in which the deeds and decisions of many ages are observed, provide us with that wisdom if we read it accurately, so that you learn with ease what you should follow and what you should avoid, to inspire virtue with the glory of excellent men?

Bruni here voices what I have already said in the first chapter, that humanism aims at learning from literature that concerns history, in order to imitate the virtuous examples seen in that literature, and to inspire that virtue in others.[59] When we read this passage, it is important to keep in mind Bruni is the one that selects the historical events, the people that play a role in them and what role they play. Bruni aims to inspire in his readers the virtue that the great men of history expressed, but they were *his* great men. It is not some universal form of virtue that Bruni wants to show, but specifically republican virtue. The *History* should therefore not be read as a factual representation of history, but more as a rhetorical treatise to convince its readers of a certain view of history.

There were multiple stories about Florence's foundation that had been circulating in the city for centuries, but the version proposed by Giovanni Villani in his *Nuova Cronica* was most widely accepted

[57] Bruni, *Laudatio Florentine urbis*.
[58] Bruni, Hist. Flor. Pop. Preface, 1.19-24.
[59] See page 11.

as a good representation of the history of Florence.[60] The following passage shows that Bruni was aware of the fact that his version of Florentine history differs in a number of ways from what was commonly held to be true by the Florentines, and that he therefore had to present convincing evidence for his claims.

'Sed antequam ad ea tempora veniam, quae propria sunt professionis nostrae, placuit exemplo quorundam rerum scriptorum de primordio atque origine urbis vulgaribus fabulosisque opinionibus reiectis quam verissimam puto notitiam tradere, ut omnia in sequentibus clariora reddantur.'[61]

But before I will arrive at those times that concern our topic, it pleases to relate, following the example of certain historians concerning the beginning and origin of the city, after having rejected commonly held but fabulous beliefs, what I think is the most correct tradition, so that all things that follow are more clearly recorded.

What Bruni means to say in this passage, is that he will begin his history with the foundation of the city, like many other historians do, but that his version of historical events is the most truthful one, because he will present the facts instead of the fabulous stories of the common people. Bruni provides evidence for his claim to truth in the form of certain Roman sources, whereas Villani relied mostly on the *Chronica de origine citivatis*, a text about Florentine history written in the first three decades of the thirteenth century, whose sources are unknown.[62] Villani writes that Florence had been founded by Julius Caesar, after he had destroyed Fiesole.[63] This means that Florence was founded by the man that signified the end of the Roman republic, a view which was not acceptable to Bruni's republican view of Florentine history, which caused him to propose an different version while relying on much older sources than Villani did. He places the foundation in 80 B.C., when the Roman general Sulla sent his veterans of the Social War to colonize the territory around Faesulae.[64] Even though this adaptation by Bruni sets back Florence's foundation about only forty years, the difference is of major importance for Bruni, because now Florence had been founded under the Roman republic, by war veterans who defended that republic. This would mean that Florence had been republican right from its very foundation. Bruni's rejection of Villani's fictitious belief that Florence was founded by Julius Caesar is supported by two famous classical republican authors, Cicero and Sallust.[65] Cicero writes in his

[60] Weinstein, D., The Myth of Florence, in: *Florentine studies: Politics and Society in Renaissance Florence* (ed. N. Rubinstein), London (1968), 23-24.
[61] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. Preface, 3.7-11. The translations are my own.
[62] Prina, M., *Dante and the Florentine Chronicles*, Berkeley (2014), 7-9.
[63] Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, 2.1.
[64] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.1.
[65] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.4.

Catilinarians not only about the existence of these settlers, but also calls them 'men of complete loyalty and outstanding bravery'.[66] In these orations, Cicero defends the Roman republic against the tyrannical aspirations of Catiline. The fact that Cicero calls the founders of Florence loyal and brave, proves the founders' loyalty to the republican institutions of Rome. So when Bruni refers to Cicero, he does not only provide the reader with a source that is contemporary with Florence's foundation, but he also connects the Roman republic with Florence and he asserts that Florence's citizens had been loyal to the institutions of a republic right from the beginning.

Despite Florence's beauty and republican nature, the ancient city was limited in its growth by Rome.[67] The city of Florence had no political liberty, which means that it could not expand its territory, nor could its citizens hold high political office, while under the yoke of Rome. Bruni claims that this was true for all the Italian cities, since they flourished only before the rise of Roman power and after its decline.[68] As an example of this, Bruni presents the reader with a number of cities that were located in Tuscany, which is the region Florence was founded in and would later wield power over. The people that populated the area in ancient times were called Etruscans. Bruni provides information about them to convince the reader that Florence's heritage was not only Roman, but also Etruscan. Bruni writes of these Etruscans as a powerful people, who dominated northern Italy for hundreds of years, until they were forced to surrender to the Roman republic after many years of war. The fact that there was a people that ruled Italy before the Romans and even resisted them for a long time, suggests that that the decline of the Roman Empire is not to be considered as a negative thing, but as an opportunity for other Italian cities and peoples to flourish again.[69] Bruni, by stressing Florence's Etruscan and Roman heritage, which were the two major powers that had ruled Italy, designates Florence as the next great power in Italy.[70] In the following paragraphs, you will see how Bruni presents Etruscan history to support Florence's position of superiority in Italy.

Bruni writes that the origins of the Etruscans lay in Maeonia, whence a large group of Lydians sailed to Italy. After they expelled the indigenous inhabitants, they expanded their kingdom in northern Italy.[71]

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[66] Cicero, *Catalinarians*, 2.20. 'Hi sunt homines ex eis coloniis quas Sulla constituit; quas ego universas civium esse optimorum et fortissimorum virorum sentio'.
[67] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.4-5. Bruni writes that the settlers spent their money lavishly and buried themselves in debt by constructing magnificent public and private buildings, of which some still existed in Bruni's time. This is corroborated by Cicero, *Catalinarians*, 2.20.
[68] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.11.
[69] Baron (1988), 57-60.
[70] Schoonhoven, E., 'A literary invention: the Etruscan myth in early Renaissance Florence', in: *Renaissance Studies* 24.4 (2010), 461.
[71] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.13.

After a while they decided to do away with monarchy and set up a different system of government, which according to Bruni would prove to be the better one.

'Totam vero etruscam gentem in duodecim populos divisam fuisse veteres tradidere, sed eos omnes ab initio rex unus gubernabat. Tandem, ut regia potestas gravior illis visa, ex singulis populis singulos lucumones (sic enim magistratum vocitabant qui comuni consilio totam regeret gentem) creare coeperunt. Eorum unus certo tempore aliis praeerat, ita tamen ut auctoritate et honore, non potentia princeps esset. Sub hoc igitur magistratu per longa tempora pari voluntate auctoritateque duodecim populorum Etruria gubernata, qualis concordiae fructus esse solet, in tantas opes potentiamque accrevit, ut non solum urbibus passim opportunis locis per eam conditis virisque et divitiis intra fines floreret, verum etiam extra longe lateque dominaretur.'[72]

But the old sources related that the entire Etruscan nation was divided in twelve peoples, but from the start a king ruled over them all. Finally, as regal power seemed more burdensome to them, they began to elect from each people a single Lucumo (because that is what they called the magistrate who ruled the entire nation with a communal council. One of them ranked higher than the others during some time, but in a way that he was superior in authority and honor, not in power. Under this administration then Etruria was governed for a long time with equal will and authority, such is the fruit of concord wont to be, it multiplied in many riches and power, so that it not only flourishes with strength and riches in the cities founded everywhere in the suitable places within its borders, but that is also ruled outside them far and wide.

Bruni himself writes that his description of the Etruscans is based on multiple sources: Livy, Vergil, Servius, Horace, Pliny the Elder, Plutarch and Dionysus of Halicarnassus.[73] Livy's *Ab urbe condita* was a well-known work among humanists and it contains far more information on the Etruscans and their history than the other authors just mentioned. These facts explain why Bruni bases most of his account of the Etruscans on Livy. Bruni follows Livy in writing that the Etruscans consisted of twelve tribes that each had a ruler. All the other sources confirm that the Etruscans cities were ruled by kings. For example, Livy calls the ruler of a tribe or city *rex*, a king, whereas Bruni calls the ruler a *Lucumo*, a sort

[72] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.13.
[73] Bruni. *Epistulae*, 10.5. Bruni writes that these are the sources he consulted for his narrative.

of magistrate, and explicitly limits his supremacy.[74] The word *Lucumo* also appears in some of the other sources, but in them it is used as a proper name in a story, not as a name belonging to political office.[75] Bruni stresses the fact that the twelve *Lucumones* are elected and that the supremacy of the leading *Lucumo* was rooted in his honour and authority, not in political power. What Bruni does here is very clever. He uses classical models, most of whom were regarded as authorities on the subject of the Etruscans, to support his narrative, but he adapts his story in such a way that the monarchical overtones of Etruscan government are taken away. The communal council, the election of the *Lucumones* and the restriction of power of the leading *Lucumo* elicit the idea of a rudimentary republic. This system of government, where all twelve peoples ruled themselves *pari voluntate auctoritateque*, ensured *concordia*, which in turn ensured the flourishing of all Etruscan cities and Etruscan expansion into other regions. Since Florence was founded in Tuscany, which is the ancient region of Etruria, the city had an Etruscan heritage. This reinforces Bruni's argument that Florence is rooted in republicanism, because not only was the city founded by republican Rome, regionally it also had an even more ancient republican ancestor, Etruria.[76]

The Etruscans ruled northern Italy for many centuries, and when Roman power began to rise, they obviously collided. Bruni writes that there were wars fought intermittently for about four hundred and seventy years until the whole of Etruria was entirely subdued in 283 B.C.[77] In the beginning, the Etruscans were far more powerful than the Romans, but the tide started to turn when the Romans expelled the last king, Tarquinius Superbus, and founded the Roman republic. After the war, a peace was agreed between Rome and Etruria, up until the moment the Etruscan city of Veii broke that peace. Despite Veii's initial successes, sometimes in alliance with other Etruscan cities and sometimes alone, Rome eventually defeated Veii. Bruni feels the need to offer an explanation for Veii's defeat, because he had just described at length the power of the Etruscans.

[74] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 5.33.9, 2.9.1.
[75] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 1.34.
Dionysus of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae*, 3.46-48.
[76] Hillard, C.S., *An alternate antiquity: The Etruscans in Renaissance Florence and Rome*, Saint Louis, Missouri (2009), 45-46.
[77] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.21-34. Since the books of Livy's *Ab urbe condita* that describe this event are lost, Bruni here relies on the account of Polybius.
Polybius, *The Histories*, 2.19.

'Extremum autem in quo subacta est, nullo communi tuscae gentis decreto sed privato consilio, ipsa intulerat bellum. Itaque, mox prementibus Romanis, denegata sibi ceterorum populorum auxilia fuerunt, indignantibus aliis quod citra commune gentis decretum sua ipsi auctoritate bellum movissent, et metu insuper Gallorum ad sua quosque tuenda retinente. Responsum denique in communi tuscae gentis conventu Veiis auxilia flagitantibus datum: ipsi per se, quando ita placeret, adversus romanam vim resistere curarent, nec in eo bello socios periculi quaererent in quo speratae ab initio praedae socium habere nullum voluissent.'[78]

Finally she was subjected however, when she started a war, not with the communal agreement of the Tuscan nation, but on their own accord. Thus, when soon the Romans pressed them, help was denied them by the other peoples, because the others were angry that they had started a war on their own authority without a communal decision of the nation, and because fear of the Gauls north of them, which made them want to protect their belongings, held them. The answer then was given in a communal convention of the Tuscan nation to the Veiians that requested help: that they should care to resist against the Roman force themselves, since that pleased them, and that they should not ask for allies in that war, in which they had not wanted to have an ally in the hoped-for booty from the start.

Veii did not consult the general council of the Etruscan peoples before going to war with Rome, which caused the other Etruscan peoples to refuse aid to Veii. Since Veii now stood alone against Rome, the Romans were able to capture and plunder the city after a siege of ten years. Bruni uses Livy as a model for this story, but again alters the latter's account slightly. Livy writes that when Veii was besieged, there was a communal council of the Etruscans, but they could not reach a decision whether they should provide aid to Veii or not.[79] When the people of Veii elected a king, the Etruscans refused to send them aid.[80] According to Livy, this election was the reason that the other Etruscans did not help Veii, because the Etruscans 'loathed not more the institution of kings more than the King himself'.[81] In both Bruni's and Livy's case, Veii's defeat was due to city's violation of the governmental institutions of the Etruscans. However, there is no mention of an election of a king in Bruni's narrative about the city of Veii. In my opinion, as Bruni had stressed Florence's Etruscan heritage, he leaves out this

[78] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.29.
[79] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 4.61.
[80] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 5.1.
[81] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 5.1.

element of Livy's account in order not to taint the republican character of Florence's ancestors with monarchical overtones. In Bruni's version, the reason for the Etruscans' defeat was Veii's unsanctioned attack on the Romans and the Etruscans' consequent failure to aid their countrymen. Bruni's Etruscans could still be criticized for not abiding by the laws of their communal government, but not for completely relinquishing their communal institutions by electing a king.

Once Veii had been defeated, the unified Romans moved on to capture the other Etruscan cities one by one. Only when it was already too late did the remaining Etruscan cities unite themselves, and as a result they were slaughtered at Sutrium and Lake Vadimonis.[82] However, the Romans dealt differently with the Etruscans than with other conquered peoples: they treated the Etruscans with respect. Bruni, following Livy's account, writes that the Romans took over from the Etruscans their clothing and insignia of kings and magistrates, their letters and learning and their religious, ceremonial and cultic practices.[83] The fact that the Romans imitated large parts of Etruscan culture proves to Bruni that the Romans respected the Etruscans.[84] This respect resulted in the Romans calling the Etruscans 'allies', which was not the Roman custom when dealing with defeated enemies.[85]

In order to summarize quickly: the Etruscans flourished as long as they stayed unified and held on to their communal government, but when they started to think only of themselves instead of the communal good, their power diminished. Their place was taken by the unified and thus superior Roman republic, which then incorporated some parts of Etruscan culture. Now that the Etruscans had lost their liberty, they could not attain to high political office nor could they put their effort into expanding their territory, which resulted in their decline. When the liberty of a people is taken away, Bruni claims, virtue will vanish along with it.[86] This also happened to the Romans, but in a different way. Whereas the Etruscans lost their liberty to a foreign power, the Romans lost their political liberty to a series of emperors. Consequently, the Roman empire declined.

[82] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.34.
[83] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.20.
Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 1.8, 9.36.
[84] Shipley, L., Guelphs, 'Ghibellines and Etruscans: Archaeological Discoveries and Civic Identity in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Tuscany', in: *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* 23.1 (2013), 7.
[85] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.35.
Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 9.37.
[86] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.36.

‘Declinationem autem romani imperii ab eo fere tempore ponendam reor quo, amissa libertate, imperatoribus servire Roma incepit.’

(…)

‘Cessit enim libertas imperatorio nomini, et post libertatem virtus abivit. Prius namque per virtutem ad honores via fuit, iisque ad consulatus dictaturasque et ceteros amplissimos dignitatis gradus facillime patebat iter, qui magnitudine animi, virtute et industria ceteros anteibant. Mox vero ut res publica in potestatem unius devenit, virtus et magnitudo animi suspecta dominantibus esse coepit.’[87]

Yet I think that the decline of the Roman empire must be placed from almost that moment when, after liberty had been sent away, Rome began to serve the emperors.

(…)

For liberty ceded to the imperial name, and after liberty virtue departed too. Because before, the road to honors was through virtue, and the way to the consulate and dictatorships and other very high positions of dignity lay open most easily for them, who excelled others in magnanimity, virtue and energy. But as the commonwealth soon fell into the power of one man, virtue and magnanimity began to be suspected by the emperors.

Bruni is drawing on a classical pretext of Sallust here. Sallust, in his work *Bellum Catilinae*, writes negatively of Rome’s late regal period. He says that the kings feared virtuous men, as they threatened his position of power, and appointed only bad men to political positions. But, when Rome became a republic and it was threatened by external foes, its citizens were forced to unify themselves and to take action in order to secure the survival of the state. In such a state, one could achieve glory by means of bravery and virtue. When the external foes are eliminated, the need for the citizens act virtuously on behalf of the welfare of the state vanishes and they become concerned with their self-interest only. Once this has happened, the state is doomed to moral decline.[88] Even though Sallust and Bruni provide a different starting point for Rome’s decline, the reason for the decline is similar: the departure of virtue from the citizens of Rome.[89] However, where Sallust lists the disappearance of

[87] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.38.
[88] Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, 7, 41.
[89] Bruni marks the transformation from the Roman republic to the imperial Rome as the start of Rome’s decline. Sallust marks the start of Rome’s decline after the Romans had defeated Carthage definitively (*Bellum Catilinae*, 10).

external foes as the reason for this departure, Bruni lists the disappearance of liberty from Rome's citizens. A free citizen was considered to be a person who is not subjected to the arbitrary power of somebody else.[90] To secure their own liberty, all citizens must have some share of political power in state government.[91] For Bruni, the people of Rome gave up their liberty from the moment they let an emperor govern them, because an emperor has absolute power over his subjects. The consequence of monarchy is, as Sallust had written, a moral decline in the political elite, as autocrats appoint only obedient flatterers, because they fear that virtuous men might take their place.[92] This development led to internal discord and neglect of the empire's foreign affairs, because the emperors and leading citizens of the Roman empire were only concerned with staying in power and less with the welfare of the state. As an example of this moral decline, Bruni lists multiple emperors who had committed horrific atrocities. Even the mostly positively viewed Julius Caesar and Augustus make Bruni's list of bad rulers for their spilling of Roman blood in the civil wars. The fact that a considerable number of emperors was murdered proves that there were a lot of internal power struggles. These struggles caused a loss of focus on foreign affairs, which created the opportunity for foreign peoples to invade the Roman empire. When the empire was divided and its actual power base moved to Constantinople, Rome did not even have the strength left to withstand foreign peoples to invade Italy, and in some cases the city itself was even sacked. Bruni makes no honorable mention of an emperor anywhere in his narrative about Rome's imperial period, but writes of the many wars fought and lost by Rome during that time.[93]

'Tunc enim primum Goti, Radagaso et Alarico ducibus, Italiam pervasere, iam ante ab imperatoribus paene neglectam, fatiscentibus certe opibus et potentia populi romani ad ruinam vergente. Gothos Hunni secuti sunt; Hunnos Vandali; Vandalos Heruli; post hos iterum Gothi; mox Langobardi multis sub regibus Italiam possidere.'[94]

It was then the Goths, under their captains Radagaisus and Alaric, that first pervaded Italy, already before the emperors neglected it, while their resources were diminishing and the power of the Roman people was verging on ruin. The Goths were followed by the Huns: the Huns by the Vandals: the Vandals by the Heruli: after them the Goths again; soon after them, the Lombards possessed Italy with many kings.

[90] Arena, V., *Libertas and the practice of politics in the late Roman Republic*, Cambridge (2012), 45-46.
[91] Idem. 54.
[92] Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, 7.
[93] Bruni, Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.41-60.
[94] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.37.

The fact that consequently the Goths, the Huns, the Vandals, the Heruli, the Goths again, and the Lombards invaded and, for some time ruled, parts of Italy, proves Bruni's argument that the emperors were the cause of the moral decline of Roman citizens, to the point where they could not even stop foreigners from invading Italy. From the perspective of fifteenth century Florence, a foreign invasion into Italy was a frightening thing. The independent city-states of Italy were constantly in conflict with one another, but these quarrels never amounted to a full scale war that could change the equilibrium of power drastically. However, a foreign power such as France or Germany potentially had the ability to invade Italy and take away the independence of the city-states. Bruni, who is aware of the reader's fear of foreign invasion, tries to convince the reader of the detrimental effects of autocratic rule by connecting the Roman imperial period with foreign invasions and plunderings of Italy. Another argument against the success of autocratic rule that is present in this passage, is fact that the monarchs that invaded Italy followed each other up quickly and that they ruled only for a short period of time.[95]

After the last Western Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was overthrown in 476 A.D, Italy would go on without an emperor for more than three hundred years, until Charlemagne was crowned emperor by pope Hadrian in 800 A.D. Charlemagne was an autocrat, but Bruni nevertheless praises him for his many virtues. The emperor had proven himself superior in war, acted as a patron of arts and literature and was of high character. I will come back to Charlemagne, and his connection to the city of Florence, later in this chapter. Charlemagne's successors first settled in Italy, but as time went on they started to govern the empire from France and later from Germany, which caused the emperors to shift their attention away from Italian affairs.

'Postquam igitur in Germaniam imperium abiit ac pauci ex iis in Italia statione continua, plurimi vero adventiciis, cum erat opus, exercitibus ad tempus morabantur, civitates Italiae paulatim ad libertatem respicere ac imperium verbo magis quam facto confiteri coeperunt, Romamque ipsam et romanum nomen, veneratione potius antiquae potentiae, quam presenti metu recognoscere.

Denique quotcumque ex variis barbarorum diluviis superfue-

[95] Except for the Lombards, who ruled Italy for 204 years according to Bruni. (Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.67). The Lombards first came into Italy while they had a virtuous king, Alboin, who conquered Italy down to Ravenna and Tuscany. When he was killed by his wife, the Lombards went almost ten years without a king, during which time they conquered even more land, down to Brindisi and Tarentum. (Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.66). Again, when a people is not governed by autocratic rule, it can achieve more.

rant urbes per Italiam, crescere atque florere et in pristinam auctoritatem sese in dies attollere.'[96]

So, after that the empire went away to Germany and few of them stayed in Italy continually, but many dwelt there for some time with their foreign armies when there was need, and the Italian cities began to look back to liberty and to acknowledge the empire more in name than in reality, and to recognize Rome itself and the Roman name more through veneration of its ancient power than through present fear.

Then, those cities throughout Italy that were left by the various floods of barbarians began to grow and flourish and gradually regained their ancient authority.

As the emperors paid less attention to Italy, the various Italian cities regained more of their former liberty. As Bruni has argued, when a city is free, its people can achieve honor and high public offices by means of virtue and will therefore produce good citizens. The cities that survived barbarian invasions and the yoke of the emperors, which had caused a decline in virtue, started to flourish and expand their territories under its now more virtuous leaders. At first, the cities in Tuscany lived in harmony with one another, but when they expanded their borders, which they could now do as independent states that had no internal struggles to worry about, they started to have conflicts. This was also the case for Florence, which then started to flourish.

We have now seen how Bruni created a coherent history of Florence that is anti-autocratic and favours republicanism. However, one aspect of Florentine history should still be discussed: the connection between Florence and Charlemagne. In the medieval literary tradition, it was mostly agreed upon that Florence had been refounded by Charlemagne, after it had lain destroyed and without inhabitants for centuries. According to Villani, whom I have mentioned earlier, Florence had supposedly been completely destroyed and emptied of its inhabitants by Totila and remained so until the coming of Charlemagne.[97] He wrote that Charlemagne rebuilt Florence entirely and brought in new inhabitants from Rome, a view that Bruni contests.

[96] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.74-75.
[97] Villani. Nuov. Cron. 4.1-2.

'Nam novos quidem ex Romanis habitatores a Carolo ductos credere vanissimum est, praesertim tot calamitatibus involuta atque ita iam pridem multis cladibus urbe Roma afflicta, ut supplemento habitatorum ipsa potius indigeret quam aliis dare posset.'

(…)

'Video namque dives illud ac praecipuum Martis templum et alia quaedam aedificia supra aetatem Totilae vetusta extare, quae cum incolumia relicta conspiciam, totam urbem deletam credere non libet, neque haec ipsa absque habitatoribus tamdiu stetisse. Quare moenia potius a Carolo restituta et nobilitatem, quae diffisa munitionibus urbis frequentia in praediis suis castella munierat, intra urbem revocatam; urbem denique ipsam varie disiectam in formam urbis redactam, sed reparatam magis quam rursus conditam existimo.'[98]

For it is certainly very useless to believe that new inhabitants from the Romans were brought in by Charlemagne, especially after the city of Rome was involved with so many calamities and had been so afflicted by many earlier disasters, that it was itself more in need of a supplement of inhabitants than it could give to others.

(…)

For I see that that rich and extraordinary temple of Mars and other such ancient buildings from before the age of Totila still stand, when I look at those unharmed remains, I cannot believe that the entire city was destroyed, nor that these things themselves had stood without inhabitants for long. Therefore, it is more likely that the walls were restored by Charlemagne and the nobility, which had built numerous castles on their own estates as they distrusted the fortifications of the city, recalled into the city; then, I believe that the city itself, having been dismembered on various occasions, was brought back in the form of a city, but it was more restored than refounded.

First of all, there was no possibility that Charlemagne had brought in new inhabitants from Rome, since that city was itself barely populated. Neither was there a necessity for bringing in new inhabitants from other cities, because Florence was already inhabited. The unharmed state of buildings from the time before Totila indicates maintenance, which proves that there had to be some people living in Florence that took care of these buildings. Second, the existence of these buildings also proves that Florence

[98] Bruni. Hist. Flor. Pop. 1.76-77.

was not completely destroyed by Totila, in which case Charlemagne did not refound, but merely restored the city. In Bruni's view, Charlemagne did this to provide security for the nobility, which was then recalled to the city. It might be so that, according to Bruni, the new inhabitants from Rome that Charlemagne brought into the city were confused with the returning old nobility. The origins of these 'new' inhabitants are therefore Florentine, not Roman.

These adaptations of Villani's account are of major importance for Bruni, because he wants to create a sense of continuous republicanism in his narrative. If Florence was refounded by Charlemagne rather than restored, it would disrupt Bruni's continuity in Florence's history by separating Florence's ancient republican origins from its later imperial origins. This separation would mean that the current city had no more ties to its republican past, which is not acceptable for Bruni. If Florence remained emptied for centuries and Charlemagne brought in new inhabitants from Rome, all ties between the original population and the current population would be severed, and with them all ties to the city's original republicanism. The adaptations Bruni made are rather slight, but they ensure that the episode about Charlemagne does not disrupt the continuity of Florentine republicanism in the *History*.

In this chapter we have seen how Bruni uses ancient literary models such as Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*, Cicero's *In Catilinam* and Livy's *Ab urbe condita* while making slight adaptations to them to create a republican image of early Florentine history. By stressing Florence's republican heritage of both the Etruscans and Romans, Bruni sets up Florence as the next great power in Italy. The reason for Florence's primacy in Italy is their adherence to their republican institutions that secure the liberty of the citizens, which in turn ensures the city's flourishing. When Bruni's narrative moves further along in history, Bruni provides the reader with his own interpretations of historical events instead of referring to the ancient literary models.[99] He explains that Florence was able to resurge after the fall of the western Roman empire, due to relocation of the empire's centre of power to France and Germany. Lastly, he uses his own interpretative skills to debunk the myth of Charlemagne's refounding of Florence and thereby secures the image of continuous republicanism throughout Florentine history.

[99] One of the reasons for this shift is that there are no ancient literary models that are contemporary with the events Bruni describes, as is the case with the debunking of the myth that Charlemagne refounded Florence.

Cristoforo Landino's *Xandra*: innovating Florentine republicanism

Like Bruni, Landino was born in Arezzo and started out as a student of law.[100] After he had finished the course, he moved to Florence to study literature under the humanist Carlo Marsuppini. This is where he came into contact with the works of classical antiquity.[101] Another respect in which Landino and Bruni are alike, is their civic humanism. Landino was however less successful than Bruni, because the former only attained the position of secretary to the chancellery, whereas Bruni had made it to Chancellor.[102] Landino might have expected more of his political career, but on the other hand, his literary achievements would bring him lasting fame. As I have said in the introduction, Landino's *Xandra* is the work that will be examined in this chapter, because Landino describes the city of Florence in parts of this work. In the third book of the *Xandra*, Cosimo's importance to Florence is the main theme. As we have seen in the first chapter, Cosimo was the officious ruler of Florence, but since the city's political system was officially still a republic, Cosimo had to at least appear to act within the confines of that republic. There are different views on the way Landino portrays Florentine history and Cosimo's role in it. Alison Brown argues that there are three distinctive categories concerning the praise of Cosimo, which were never mixed and developed independently. First, Cosimo was portrayed as a republican statesman with practical and patriotic virtues. Second, the humanists shaped the image of Cosimo as an Aristotelian philosopher-ruler. The third and last category of praise contained texts that portrayed Cosimo as a generous Maecenas and an Augustan ruler. Brown places Landino's *Xandra* in the third category and thereby excludes the possibility that Cosimo is also portrayed as a republican statesman.[103] Donatella Coppini disagrees with this. Since Cosimo wanted to appear to be nothing more than an ordinary citizen in order to avoid suspicion of his one-man control over Florentine politics, Landino associates Cosimo only with republican statesmen and republican values to defend him from any suspicion.[104] In this chapter, I will try nuance to this debate by discussing a selection of poems from the *Xandra* that illustrate Landino's image of Cosimo and Florence. I will compare Bruni's purely republican version of Florence in the first book of the *History* with the image that Landino portrays of Cosimo and Florence in the *Xandra*, in order to see how literature concerning the city of Florence developed in the fifteenth century.

[100] Chatfield, M.P., *Cristoforo Landino: Poems*, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2008), xiii.
[101] Chatfield (2008), xiv.
[102] Chatfield (2008), xvi. Landino tried to obtain the office of Chancellor two times, in 1458 and in 1464-1465, but failed.
[103] Brown, A., The Humanist Portrait of Cosimo de' Medici, Pater Patriae', in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 24.3/4* (1961), 187-188, 200.
[104] Coppini, D. di, 'Cosimo togatus. Cosimo dei Medici nella poesia latina del Quattrocento', in: *Incontri triestini di filologia classica* 6 (2006-2007), 108, 112.

The *Xandra* was at first dedicated to Leon Alberti Battista, but it was later dedicated to Piero de Medici, son of Cosimo, who became Landino's patron.[105] This rededication is in itself a sign that Landino's intended audience was the current political elite: the Medici faction. In this chapter, I will illustrate Landino's twin effort of trying to adhere to Bruni's widely accepted republican version of Florence, while at the same time he wants to accommodate the Medici. He does this by portraying the city of Florence in such a way that it supports the current form of government and the Medici's position in that government.

First of all, it is important to know that Landino not only read Bruni's *History*, but that he held Bruni's literary achievements in high regard, because these things would argue that Landino was influenced by Bruni. This is visible in poem 1.18, which is an epitaph for Bruni by Landino.

'Hic cui frondenti nectuntur tempora lauro
Romanae linguae dos, Leonardus, erat;
qui Florentini descripsit gesta Leonis,
transtulit et Latiis dogmata Graeca viris.'[106]

Here was Leonardo, a treasure to the Roman language,
where temples are entwined with that greening laurel;
who wrote of the deeds of the Florentine Lion
and translated Greek philosophy for Latin men.

In this short poem, Landino praises Bruni for three things: his Latin eloquence, his production of the *History* and his translation of part of Plato's and Aristotle's work into Latin.[107] These contributions, which earned him a laureled tomb in the Santa Croce, were so well received by Landino that he calls Bruni *Romanae linguae dos*, which is a great compliment. In addition to this, Landino in poem 3.7 equals Bruni's importance to Florence to Livy's importance to Rome, which means that Bruni's *History* enjoys the same literary prestige as Livy's *Ab urbe condita*.[108] These things, together with the fact that Landino often uses Bruni's *History* as a source for his poems, signify Landino's high regard for Bruni's work.

Now that we have established that Landino was influenced by Bruni and recognized his high literary status in Florence, we can assume that he follows Bruni's version of Florence in most respects. However, since Landino wanted to gain the favour of the Medici, who were then in power, the image

[105] Chatfield (2008), xiv.
[106] Landino. *Xandra* 1.18.
[107] Chatfield (2008), 331.
[108] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.7.205-206.

of Florence is different than Bruni's. In the opening poem of the third book, Landino dedicates the *Xandra* to Piero de' Medici in order to win his and his family's favour and material benefit.[109] He does this in the following way.

'Sunt acris nunc acta viri celebranda; sed illi
    hoc date, Castalia quas lavat unda, deae.
Namque favet Musis Medices: vos numina, Musae,
    vestra meo – meruit – conciliate Petro.

(…)

Nec tantum iuvit Fabius natusque paterque
    oppositus Poeno, consul uterque, duci,
quantum nunc Medices proceres natus paterque
    fregerunt lenta cum fera castra mora.'[110]

Now a fierce man's deeds must be celebrated;
    give this to him, goddesses whom the Catalian spring washes.
Because Medici shows favour to the Muses, do you, Muses,
    deliver your divine powers to my deserving Piero.

(…)

Neither Fabius helped as much, nor the son and father
    that opposed the Punic leader, though consuls both,
as now the Medici leaders have done, the son and the father,
    who broke the enemy encampments with slow delay.

In lines 5-8, Landino writes that the Piero favours the Muses and that the Muses should therefore favour him by inspiring Landino to record Piero's great deeds. The Muses do not actually have anything to do with the interaction between Landino and Piero, but Landino uses them here to express his intention gaining a mutually beneficial relationship between poet and patron. In lines 55-58, he shows his ability to praise the Medici. The comparison between Cosimo and Piero with Fabius Cunctator and the two Scipio's, who were generals of the Roman republic in the Punic Wars, evokes the association of Cosimo and Piero with great republican statesmen that saved their state and

[109] White, P., 'The Presentation and the Dedication of the Silvae and the Epigrams', in: *The Journal of Roman Studies* 64 (1974), 50-56. White explains the concept of the ancient Roman dedicatory poem in these pages.
[110] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.1.5-8, 55-58.

people from destruction.[111] The republican association is important to Cosimo and Piero, because they wanted to appear as great and important citizens, but nevertheless as citizens of a republic, not as official rulers of the city.[112] Landino here shows his talent and ability to portray the Medici as they would want themselves portrayed, hoping to win their favour.

After the first two dedicatory poems, book three really starts with poem 3.3, in which the foundation of Florence is described. This poem can be divided into two parts. The first part (1-44) contains information about Florence's foundation, while the second part (45-142) is dedicated to praising the Medici family. I will draw a comparison between both Bruni's and Landino's account of the foundation in order to examine in what ways Landino sticks to or departs the example set by Bruni.

'Has omnes lautis opibus quas suspicis aedes,
seu sacra te stupidum sive profana tenent,
nullas Syllanus miles conspexerat olim,
cum Fesulos primum forte teneret agros.'[113]

All these buildings with beautiful wealth that you see,
whether sacred of profane ones hold a stupefied you:
None of them the Sullan soldier had ever seen,
when he first chanced to occupy the Fiesolan fields.

Landino starts out by confirming Bruni's claim that Florence was founded by veterans of general Sulla, which means that Florence was founded under Roman republican rule. However, the emphasis of this founding is not so much on the republican aspect, as was the case with Bruni's *History*, as on the Roman aspect. Landino also plays down the role the Sullan veterans played in the city's foundation. Whereas Bruni writes that the Sullan veterans invested all their energy and resources in making the city of Florence great and magnificent, of which the results can still be seen today, Landino writes that none of these are still extant in his own time. This downplaying of the republican aspect of Florence founding can also be recognized in Landino's choice of ancient literary model for describing the origins of Florence: Propertius.[114] Propertius had produced four books of elegies: the first three are focused on private matters, while the last book is concerned with political matters.[115] When Propertius wrote his

[111] Chatfield (2008), 351.
[112] It was necessary for Cosimo and Piero to appear as republican citizens and not as rulers of Florence, because Florence was still a republic and would not simply accept the rule of one man or one family.
[113] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.3.1-4.
[114] Pieper, C.H., *Elegos redolere Vergiliosque sapere: Cristoforo Landino's Xandra zwischen Liebe und Gesellschaft*, Hildesheim (2008), 272-274. There are other literary models visible in the poem, but the first part of the poem is largely modelled on Propertius.
Murgatroyd, P., 'Landino's Xandra 3.3 and its ancient Latin models', in: *Renaissance Studies* 11.2 (1997), 57-58.
[115] This is also the case with the *Xandra*, save the fact that it is comprised of three instead of four books.

fourth book, Augustus was firmly installed as *princeps* of the Roman republic. In the opening poem of this book, 4.1a, Propertius' poetic speaker acts as a guide to a stranger visiting Rome.[116] He writes of Rome's humble beginnings and contrasts them with the present splendour of the city of Rome. He even writes that 'the Roman of his time has nothing of his ancestor but his name', indicating that today's Rome had to thank somebody else for its splendour: Augustus.[117] Augustus had initiated a large building program for Rome, so when Propertius names beautiful buildings that Augustus had built or renovated as marks of Rome's present splendour, it implies that this poem can be read as state propaganda.[118] Landino provides a similar contrast between Florence's early beginnings and its present splendour, but names no buildings associated with one particular person or family. Christoph Pieper points out that the early outlook of Florence was a perfect copy of republican Rome.[119] I disagree with this statement, because the buildings Landino lists are were also extant and in use in imperial Rome: a forum, a Curia, temples and theatres.[120] We should therefore refrain from claiming that these buildings represent either republican or imperial Rome, but instead just say that Landino focuses on the Roman aspect of Florence's foundation. But even if one prefers Pieper's view on this particular passage, Landino's description of Florence's foundation still puts far less emphasis on its the republican aspect of that foundation than Bruni did. Where Bruni had dedicated five paragraphs to the city's foundation and credited the Sullan settlers with part of the city's present splendour, referring to ancient republican authors to support his claims, Landino writes that all that was built by those settlers is now ruins, while using Propertius' 4.1a, a poem containing Augustan propaganda, as a literary model.[121] While no distinct departure from Bruni's republican version of Florence's foundation can be detected in Landino's poem, there are some clues that signal a decline in emphasis on Florentine republicanism.

After the first 44 lines, Landino leaves the subject of Florence's foundation and moves on to praising Cosimo. Cosimo is praised for his public duties for the city, which include the building of churches and the defense of the city against the Duke of Calabria.[122] These praises seem appropriate to any important statesman that achieved such things. However, even though the title of the poem is *De primordiis urbis Florentinae*, more than two thirds of the poem's length is dedicated to praise of Cosimo, which indicates Cosimo's major importance to the city of Florence. Again, this could be a case of just praise of a republican

[116] Propertius, *Elegies*, 4.1.1-2.
[117] Propertius, *Elegies*, 4.1.37.
[118] Favro, D., *The urban image of Augustan Rome,* Cambridge (1996), 228.
[119] Pieper (2008), 278.
[120] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.3.31-38.
[121] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.3.37-44. The buildings of the settlers are now ruins, while the people migrating from Fiesole had populated and enriched the city.
[122] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.3.104-114.

statesman without the poem having imperial overtones. At the end of the poem however, Landino casts some doubt upon this.

‘Hinc igitur felix populus felixque senatus
natis et Cosmo sospite noster erit.
Ille quidem magnos hoc consultore tumultus
reppulit et mitis ocia pacis habet.’[123]

Hence happy will our people be and happy our senate
so long as Cosimo and his sons are safe.
Indeed, with him as guide, it has driven back
great tumults and has the leisure of gentle peace.

Cosimo is not portrayed as anything more than a *consultor* to the people and the senate, who defends the state and secures peace for the Florentines. This praise would be appropriate for any virtuous citizen, were it not that this verse is modelled on Horace’ *Odes* 4.15.[124] The fourth book of *Odes* is dedicated to praising Augustus, who was at firmly in power as princeps of the Roman republic at the time of its publication in 13 B.C.[125] Since Cosimo was not officially the ruler of the Florentine republic, Landino could not praise him the same way Horace praised Augustus. Where Horace calls Augustus *custos* of the state, Landino’s Cosimo is merely *consultor*. *Custos rerum* is translated as supervisor or protector of the state, indicating that Augustus had a high, if not the highest, command in the Roman republic, whereas Cosimo’s role as *consultor* is only advisory to the senate and the people, a role which fits within the republican sphere. It must however be noted that the Medici’s wellbeing is directly connected with the happiness of the senate and the people, indicating that Florence could not do without the Medici. In this way, Landino maintains the Cosimo’s republican image, but at the same he time alludes to a connection between the political position of Cosimo and Augustus, which might create the impression for the reader that Cosimo is more than just an ordinary citizen and statesman.

It has become clear that Landino connects the fate of Cosimo and his family with that of the Florentine republic. In poem 3.15, this relation is developed further. In lines 1-20 Landino writes a

[123] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.3.125-128.
[124] Horace, *Odes Book IV and Carmen Saeculare* (ed. R.F. Thomas), Cambridge (2011), 259. Ode 15 concludes the fourth book and signals the arrival of *pax augusta*.
‘Custode rerum Caesare non furor — *With Caesar as manager of affairs,*
civilis aut vis exiget otium, — *no civil fury or violence will drive out leisure,*
non ira, quae procudit enses — *nor anger, which forges swords*
et miseras inimicat urbes.’ (17-20) — *and makes enemies of unfortunate cities.*
[125] Davis, G., *A Companion to Horace*, Chinchester (2010), 27.

recusatio against composing poetry about the praises of Cosimo in a more elevated style, meaning epic. He continues praising Cosimo nonetheless, while keeping with the elegiac meter as he promised. Throughout the rest of the poem, Cosimo's republican nature is expressed in many different ways.[126] However, in lines 59-84 Cosimo is compared to Aeneas, whom he equals and sometimes trumps.[127] This comparison reaches its climax when Cosimo and his sons are compared to with Aeneas and Ascanius in respect to their importance for their homeland, Florence and Rome respectively.

'Quod si ille Ascanium, spes esset ut altera Romae,
edidit, unde domus Iulia nomen habet,
hic geminam eduxit patriae duo lumina prolem,
esset ut haec Medicum gloria magna domus.'[128]

If Aeneas begat Ascanius, who would be the second hope of Rome,
he from whom the Iulian house has its name,
he has raised two sons, both lights of their country,
so that the glory of the house of the Medici might be great.

Ascanius is called *spes altera Romae*, a phrase taken from the twelfth book of the *Aeneid*, the epic written by Vergil.[129] This phrase should be interpreted the following way. Ascanius and Aeneas are both embody the hopes for Rome's future, since they are the forefathers of the Roman people. The phrase *altera spes Romae* means 'second hope of Rome' in this passage, as in Ascanius being second to his father Aeneas.[130] However, Landino might have intended another meaning of the phrase, as he follows it up by saying that the Iulian house took its name from Ascanius. The Iulian house refers to the first emperors of the Roman empire, and thus draws a connection between Ascanius as the hope for Rome's future and the Iulian house. In this passage, *altera spes Romae* also means 'the second hope of Rome', but this second hope refers to Ascanius not as son of Aeneas, but as progenitor of the Iulian house, which had realized the hope for Rome's great future. Landino's juxtaposition of the Iulian house that represents the realized hope of Rome with the glory of the house of the Medici

[126] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.15. Cosimo is praised for his piety and wisdom (39), his promotion of liberty (46), his virtue and his civic constancy (49). Even though Cosimo is in charge of weighty affairs, he keeps to the measure of a private citizen (53-54).
[127] Coppini (2006-2007), 111.
Landino, *Xandra*, 3.15. While Aeneas, guided by his mother Venus, could barely escape from his home city in time of war, Cosimo ended wars and provided safe haven for his fellow Florentines (63-66). Where Aeneas only took his household gods with him when he fled Troy, Cosimo had built temples and furnished holy rites in his fatherland (67-70).
[128] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.15.81-84.
[129] Vergil, *Aeneid*, 12.167.
[130] Vergil, *Aeneid book XII* (ed. R. Tarrant), Cambridge (2012), 134-135.

then creates a more imperial image of the Medici. This connection between the Iulian house and the house of the Medici is confirmed by Landino in 3.18. In this poem, Landino eulogizes the grandson of Cosimo, Cosimino, who had died at a young age. When Landino describes the grief the Florentines felt at the death of Cosimino, he writes that 'the land of Romulus did not even groan so in lamentation over the young body of Marcellus when he was killed'.[131] Since Marcellus was the nephew and heir-designate of Augustus, a Iulian and therefore imperial association with Cosimo is evidently made.[132] Turning back to poem 3.15, it must be noted that this is just one allusion to a connection between Rome's first emperors and the Medici in a poem where Cosimo's virtues as a private citizen are constantly stressed. In this poem, Landino does therefore not fully break away from a republican image of Cosimo, but merely paints over the edges.

It begins to look like Landino is treating subject matter that is suitable for the epic genre, a fact he later acknowledges himself, when he says that he will stop writing about themes suitable for epic because his ability fails him.[133] This is just a set up for the next poem, where in fact does Landino write in dactylic hexameter to record Cosimo's deeds in an epic manner. Although Landino initially writes another *recusatio* against writing in elevated style about Cosimo's deeds, he ignores this *recusatio* and goes on to praise Cosimo in dactylic hexameter.

'Cosmum qui Latios privatus transvolat omnes
virtute atque opibus reges, ducibusque togatus
praevalet in rebus dubiis.'[134] (…)

Cosimo, who, as a private citizen, soars past
all Romans in virtue and all kings in wealth,
who, as a statesman, in doubtful affairs
prevails over captains.

In Mary Chatfield's translation of this poem, Cosimo surpasses all Romans in virtue, all kings in wealth and captains in dubious affairs, even *though* he is a private citizen and a statesman.[135] However, I believe Chatfield's *though* should be replaced with *as*, because this would support the republican image of Cosimo. Cosimo surpasses all kings and captains not despite the fact that he is a private citizen and a statesman, but precisely because of that fact. We have seen that both Bruni and Landino say that a republic ensures the citizen's liberty and that liberty ensures the citizens' welfare.

[131] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.18.51-52.
[132] Chatfield (2008), 368.
[133] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.15.91-96.
[134] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.16.20-23.
[135] Chatfield (2008), 203.

In an autocratic governmental system, there is no liberty and consequently no welfare for the citizens. Since Cosimo is a private citizen and a statesman in a republic, he is able to surpass kings and captains.

With this poem and more in particular with this passage, Landino shows his ability to capture Cosimo's character and deeds in epic style while maintaining Cosimo's republican image. Landino wrote this poem to show the Medici what they can expect from him, if they choose to accept his appeal for patronage. Landino himself acknowledges that this an appeal for patronage in poem 3.19, by saying that he will try to write an epic about the Medici, should they choose to repay him for the praise they received in the *Xandra*.[136] Throughout the third book of the *Xandra*, Landino creates a republican image of Florentine history and the Medici, because the Medici would benefit from an image that masked their true power in the Florentine republic.

In this chapter, we have seen that Landino mostly succeeds in keeping the republican image of Cosimo and Florence intact, but that he sometimes paints over the edges through imperial associations with the Medici. We can therefore conclude that neither Alison Brown was correct in her statement that praise of Cosimo can be divided in three categories that are mutually exclusive, nor Donatella Coppini in her statement that Landino's Cosimo must be sorted solely in the category of the republican statesman. Cosimo was praised both as a republican statesman with patriotic virtues and as Augustan ruler. The republican sphere created by Bruni's first book of the *History* is kept in the *Xandra*, but sometimes Landino hints at Cosimo's status as being more than just a private citizen. Therefore, the third book of the *Xandra* should not be read as either republican or Augustan literature, but it should be read as a work that shows the gradual transition from a republican outlook on Florence, to a more Augustan presentation of the city and its leader Cosimo.

[136] Landino, *Xandra*, 3.19.9-12.

Conclusion

In the first chapter, the political struggles and changes in Florence from the beginning of the fifteenth century to its end have been laid out in order to better understand the changes in Florentine literature. Bruni, writing in the first decades of the century, had written down the entire history of Florence and even describes the history of the Tuscan region from long before the city was even founded up to the present. In the first book, he manages to set up Florence as the next great power in Italy by stressing the city's position as heir to the Etruscans and the Roman republic. Florence's republicanism is stressed throughout the book, because Bruni names the republic as the best political system. A republic ensures that its citizens have liberty and liberty ensures that the citizens act virtuously in service of the state, since it is in their own best interest to do so. He provides examples of republican greatness as well as of autocratic failure, using both ancient literary models and his own interpretations and adaptions of historical events as evidence to support his claims. Bruni's version of Florentine history that showed continuous republicanism was received so well that it was accepted as the official history of Florence. We have seen in Landino's version of Florence's foundation that Landino follows Bruni's account in almost every aspect, which is a sign of Bruni's impact of Florentine literature. However, the great emphasis Bruni put on the republican aspect of this foundation is absent from Landino's account. After the foundation of Florence, Landino moves on to the subject of Cosimo within the same poem, stressing Cosimo's importance to the city. He does this as an appeal for patronage from the Medici. Throughout the *Xandra*'s third book, Cosimo status as a private citizen and republican statesman is confirmed over and over again. Landino does this because Florence was still a republic, which made Cosimo want to mask his true position of power in the city by appearing as not as ruler, which would incite Florentine republicans to rise up against him, but as a normal, though extremely wealthy citizen. However, there are hints in Landino's work that Cosimo might be more than an ordinary citizen. Landino draws on ancient literary models such as Propertius' *Elegies IV* and Horace's *Odes IV* to give the reader the impression that Cosimo was not just an ordinary citizen, because these models represent imperial praise. He then adapts these models in such a way that the actual description of Cosimo stays within the republican image Landino intended to create of him, but the hint at imperial praise remains. These hints are at times confirmed more obviously, as is the case in 3.15 and 3.18, where the house of the Medici is compared to the Iulian house and where Cosimino is compared to Marcellus respectively. We can therefore conclude that Florentine literature in the fifteenth century developed from having an exclusively republican outlook on the city of Florence, to more of a mixture of a republican and an Augustan view of Florence and its leaders. Bruni first book of the *History* had set the standard in the

beginning of the century and Landino had slightly altered that standard in the second half of the century by adding some Augustan overtones to Bruni's republicanism.

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