

Sculpture in 15th century Florence



Introduction

- # It is often said that the renaissance really began in sculpture
- # To this end, 2 commissions were massively important: the competition for the Baptistery Doors and the niches for Orsanmichele
- # Two names stand out: Donatello and Ghiberti

Donatello and Orsanmichele

- # St Mark is arguably the first renaissance work of art
- # What's renaissancey about it then?



St George

- # Issues to consider:
- # Who commissioned it?
- # What was it made from?
- # What is the meaning behind it?



St George and the Dragon

- # This is an innovative work by Donatello introducing the rilievo schiacciato



Ghiberti at Orsanmichele



Similarities :

- # Subject matter
- # Style of sculptures
- # Style of niches

Issues to consider:

- # Who commissioned it?
- # What was it made from?
- # What is the meaning behind it?



The Baptistery Doors Competition



Brunelleschi v Ghiberti

The North Doors

Although the competition ushered in the classical revival the old gothic quatrefoil shape of the panels inhibited the composition



The Gates of Paradise

- # Doing away with the old shape enabled a whole new door design
- # What difference has this made?
- # Good website:
- # www.gracecathedral.org



Jacob and Esau

Rebekah Complains to God About Her Pregnancy, Rebekah Hears the Women Discuss the Birth of Twins Jacob and Esau, Esau Trades His Birthright for Food, Isaac Asks Esau to Hunt for His Favourite Food, Rebekah Tells Jacob Her Scheme, Rebekah Has Jacob Pretend to Be Esau to Obtain Isaac's Final Blessing

This complex story, with six scenes, returns to the theme of the divinely-favoured younger son, Jacob, and the rejected older son, Esau (*Romans 9.10-13*). Here, the mother, Rebekah, intervenes to trick her own husband, Isaac, into making her (and God's) favourite, Jacob, Isaac's heir.



Later in the century...

- # By the mid century sculptors were looking for new challenges and ideas
- # Along came Luca della Robbia who pioneered a whole new style and new media
- # Also the Pollaiuolo brothers dissecting bodies
- # And Verrocchio teaching Leonardo and getting very defensive...

Luca della Robbia

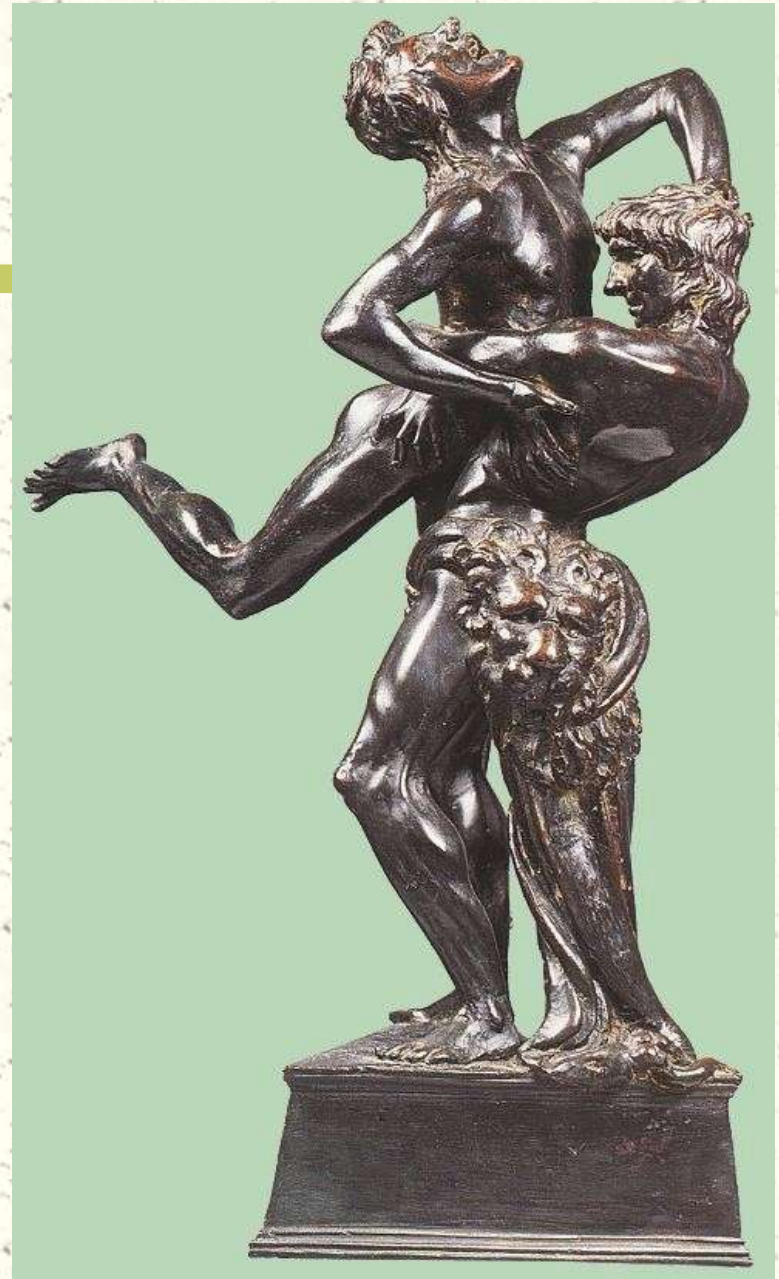
- # This work demonstrates his 2 contributions to sculpture
- # The Sweet Style and
- # Terracotta glazing



Those brothers...

Antonio Pollaiuolo's background as goldsmith equipped him to respond to the taste for small bronzes in the last third of the 15th century. The statuettes, frequently patinated to resemble antique bronzes, were meant for connoisseurs.

The Hercules and Anteus demonstrate Pollaiuolo's knowledge of anatomy (from dissecting corpses) and his ability to represent physical and emotional violence. The group was famous in the artist's own lifetime: Leonardo studied it and Michelangelo included a sketch of it on a sheet illustrating bronze casting. It is one of the earliest appearances of a mythological subject in the round..



Verrocchio - Boy with Fish

- # Why might this be classified as a typical renaissance work?
- # But is it good?



Verrocchio at Orsanmichele

- # They were still filling Orsanmichele by the end of the century
- # What is the theme of this work?
- # How does Verrocchio exploit the space of the niche?



Conclusion

- # Discuss the development of sculpture during the period
- # Discuss the work of two artists that show a revival of classicism
- # What innovations can be seen in sculpture during the period
- # Compare and contrast the work of Donatello with that of Ghiberti
- # Discuss the development of tomb sculpture with reference to 2 artists