

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



The Pazzi Conspiracy with the Head of Lorenzo de' Medici (obverse) and Giuliano de' Medici (reverse)

Bertoldo di Giovanni (Italian, ca. 1440–1491)

Date 1478

Medium Bronze

Dimensions 2 5/8 in. (6.55 cm)

Credit Line Gift of Stephen K. and Janie Woo Scher, 2021

Accession Number 2021.2.04

Currently On View

Second Floor, Room 32, Medals Room

Commentary Unlike any other Renaissance example, the Pazzi Conspiracy medal collapses the traditional obverse and reverse, fusing the portraits, allegorical figures, and historical narrative. The medal commemorates the attempted coup led by the Pazzi family against the Medici brothers in April 1478. Each side shows one brother's bust hovering above a bird's-eye view of the attack in the Florentine cathedral, depicted in a continuous narrative. On Lorenzo's side, a priest leads mass within the octagonal choir. In the right foreground, Lorenzo—identifiable by his hat and swishing cloak—defends himself from conspirators not once but twice before fleeing the danger through the choir, resulting in the SALVS PVBLICA [public safety] achieved for Florence. On the reverse, the scene is observed from the other side of the choir. In the left foreground, Giuliano, wearing a long cloak, is accosted before collapsing on the floor to the right, where he is stabbed to death, leading to the LVCTVS PVBLICVS [public mourning] felt as the result of his martyrdom.