Public access description

The portrait medal was used as a way of showing friendship, wealth and scholarship. It was inspired by doublesided Roman coins, which usually had a portrait of the emperor on one side and Latin inscriptions on both sides.

The large head of Lorenzo the Magnificent looms over this bloody scene. Conspirators led by the Pazzi family had attacked the two Medici brothers in Florence Cathedral on 26 April 1478. Giuliano (shown on the reverse) was killed, but Lorenzo survived by escaping into the sacristy.

Descriptive line

Medal, Pazzi Conspiracy, Bertoldo di Giovanni, 1478, Florence

Physical description

Bronze medal commemorating the Pazzi Conspiracy. Medal depicts: Obv.: the bust of Giuliano de'Medici, beneath which is the choir of S. Maria del Fiore, and the assassination of Giuliano; Rev.: the bust of Lorenzo de'Medici, beneath is the same choir, and without it, groups seizing the conspirators.

Dimensions

Diameter: 6.35 cm, Depth: 0.25 cm, Weight: 0.08 kg

Museum number

7139-1860

Historical context note

The medal was cast to commemorate the event in 1478 called the Pazzi conspiracy, when members of the Pazzi family assassinated Giuliano de'Medici (shown in profile on the right) and severely wounded his brother, Lorenzo 'the Magnificent' (shown in profile to the left) in the cathedral church of Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence. The scene below the profile heads shows the conspirators with their swords drawn. They are portrayed naked in imitation of antique figures.

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O158409/medal-di-giovanni-bertoldo/