

Heather Pollock  
University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN

**“Escaping the Niche: Donatello’s Crozier for *Saint Louis of Toulouse*”**

Donatello’s *Saint Louis of Toulouse* (1423-1425), commissioned by the *Parte Guelfa* for Orsanmichele, has never been ignored by scholars but necessitates a more critical examination, especially regarding specific details about Saint Louis’ life. This paper highlights specific details of this work that elucidate its patronage and historical and physical placement. Specifically, I investigate the putti on *Saint Louis of Toulouse*’s crozier. While Charles Dempsey has cited the putto’s important role in Renaissance art and Donatello’s integration of the figures into the larger themes of an entire work, these putti have not been exclusively explored. Inspired by Dempsey’s observations, I show the crozier’s putti are psychological indicators of mood and emotion that are integral in comprehending the statue. I argue that these figures provide a key for a deeper understanding of significant aspects of the saint’s life. I will also address Donatello’s construction method that involved bolting separate pieces together to comprise the whole statue, arguing that the technique was not only technically necessary, but also refers to the separation and translation of Saint Louis’ body after his canonization.